

RISK News

Issue 32

December 2005

New Rehabilitation Service

In March this year we reported the start of the Musculoskeletal Injury Rehabilitation Service (MIRS) scheme provided by a company called IPRS. This scheme provides fast-track access to physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic and podiatry treatment for NCC employees who have acute injuries that cause absence from work or affect their ability to do their normal duties.

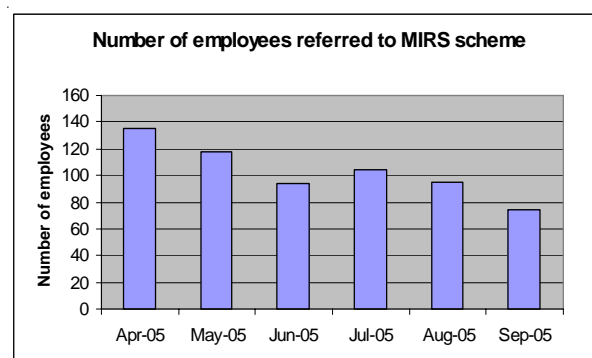
Training of referral managers

A key aspect to the success of the scheme is enabling fast access to treatment. To ensure this happens, over 600 employees, mainly managers and supervisors, have received training to refer people either online or by fax. In this way, the moment a manager becomes aware an employee has an injury, the employee can be referred directly to IPRS by the manager.

To book a place on referral manager training, which takes place monthly, contact Liz Kiybet at elizabeth.kiybet@norfolk.gov.uk

The first 6 months

In the first 6 months 620 employees have been referred to the scheme for treatment. There was a surge of referrals to start with (which was expected), when long-term injuries were referred. However, this is gradually reducing as employees are referred as the acute injury occurs.



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Special features

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Produced by the Risk Management section of the Department of Finance

Comment

Welcome to the latest issue of Risk News.

As this issue is being put together it is snowing outside and the temperature is several degrees below. It therefore seems appropriate to include a few articles about managing risk in winter.

We also feature two success stories. Our lead article is about the first few months of the rehabilitation scheme for employees with musculoskeletal injuries. This is making a real difference to the individuals concerned and also helping the authority by getting people back to work more quickly and in a fitter state.

The second success is at the Larkman schools site in Norwich where the introduction of CCTV has made a tremendous difference to the security of the site. Not only have claims and incidents been virtually eliminated, but the well-being of the staff and the behaviour of the pupils have also improved.

If you would like to contribute to a future issue of Risk News, or have any other comments, please contact any of the people named below.

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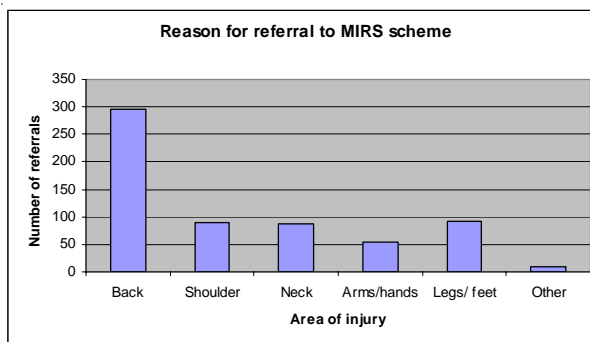
Production of Risk News

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Of those seen, the majority had back injuries, although every area of the body was treated, as the table below shows.



The majority of employees seen work within Adult Social Services, partly because of the high level of manual duties they perform, but also because of the excellent network of referral managers that they have established.

Real people, real lives

The number of referrals represent employees whose working and home lives are affected by musculoskeletal injury. The following two cases illustrate how the scheme is helping employees get treatment, and helping NCC to get workers back into the workplace.

Case Study 1: A female home care assistant was referred and seen for an assessment in June. She had been off work for 6 weeks, and was quite depressed due to pain in her lower back, which radiated down her leg. After receiving 3 treatment sessions of both rehabilitation and physiotherapy, she was able to return to work. She was able to perform activities with minimal pain, and felt positive towards her return to work.

Case study 2: An employee had twisted her knee in a gym class, and was on crutches when she came in. She was in a lot of pain, and fearful to put weight on the

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leg. She had been advised she might need keyhole surgery. After 4 sessions of combined physiotherapy and rehabilitation, she was able to put weight on the leg, and has since been pain free. Consequently she does not require surgery, thus preventing a lengthy absence in the future.

The future

At present the effect on overall sickness absence levels has been slight. However, the scheme, whilst treating acute injuries, will have an effect on absence levels in the long term. This is because injuries are

prevented from becoming chronic or, as Case Study 2 demonstrates, prevents the need for surgery and longer term injury related absence.

A survey will be issued to all referral managers in the near future to establish their opinion of the scheme.

Questionnaires will also be issued to employees who have had treatment, to find out their opinion of the scheme as well.

To find out more about the scheme, speak to the referral manager in your workplace, your HR Officer or log on to www.iprs-ncc.co.uk

Winter driving tips

Now that the weather is getting worse and this winter is forecast to be colder than usual, it's worth reminding yourself of the key points for driving safely in bad weather.

The Highways Agency has a useful website that gives comprehensive tips on winter driving in conditions such as fog, ice, snow, rain and floods. It also explains what to do if you do get in trouble and how to avoid problems by maintaining your vehicle and preparing it for bad weather.

Their site is www.highways.gov.uk/knowledge/winter/winter_driving_nov04/

The key messages are

- Keep your vehicle maintained with lights working, all windows clear and tyres at the correct pressure and tread depths
- Drive more slowly
- Drive more carefully
- Be prepared for problems and carry an emergency pack in your vehicle
- Unless your journey is essential, don't drive



Information about the latest weather conditions and which routes in Norfolk will be gritted is available on the Transport and Streets section of the NCC internet site.

New systems for better management

An organisation-wide project to improve the way NCC manages performance, risk and planning is being developed by the Risk and Insurance Team and the Policy and Performance Team.

The project will deliver important changes to the way the Council approaches and manages performance and risks, and how services are planned. Most importantly it will bring together these strands of work in an integrated way so that members, managers and staff can simply and clearly access the information they need to make informed decisions and judgements.

Central to the project is the procurement of an electronic information management system.

Along with making information-sharing processes more efficient, the system will significantly change the way we use information to drive up performance.

Individuals will be able to enter data from their desks, and relevant, accessible and easy-to-understand reports will be available at any time, drawing on the most up to date information. In short, it will be possible to quickly get to all of the information that managers will need to make planning decisions and to assess performance.

A dedicated Project Team has been set up to oversee the progress of the project. The team is located in Room 510 at County Hall and will be working with colleagues throughout the organisation in the coming months to oversee training and implementation.

Further updates on the progress of the project will be provided in future editions of Risk News. In the meantime, for further information please contact:

Rachel Gillis (Project Manager) on 01603 228871 or Chloe Drew (Project Team Member) on 01603 224490

Risk News feedback

Thank you to all of you who took the trouble to reply to the survey in the last issue of Risk News.

We are delighted that you think it is worthwhile and of interest. We asked you to rate it on four categories; layout and style, readability, interest and relevance. You gave it satisfaction scores of between 84% and 87% across these headings, which are slightly up on the previous time we asked you for your opinions.

Pleasingly, you also felt it had increased your understanding of risk management, with an average satisfaction rating of 84%.

Interestingly, in this era of electronic communications, over 86% of you wanted to retain Risk News in paper format so that is what we will do.

This is the most interesting and best laid out of the in house publications

Very readable, accessible and informative

CCTV success in Norwich schools

Three Norwich schools are seeing a dramatic reduction in security problems at their shared site after CCTV was installed earlier this year.

Larkman First, Larkman Middle and Earlham Early Years Centre share the one site in western Norwich and have for years suffered from trespass, vandalism and criminal damage.

In late 2004 the site suffered three arson attacks in three weeks and there was a very real risk that one of the schools would be burnt to the ground. Crucially, the local community and parents formed a view that this could not continue and enlisted the support of both local councillors and Charles Clarke MP. At the same time the schools, Risk Management and the LEA were reviewing site security.

The extent of trespass and criminal damage and the potential for a major incident meant that CCTV was the only realistic option. The need for full coverage of the outside of the buildings and for an immediate response to an incident resulted in sophisticated, controllable, digital cameras with off site monitoring being put in place.

Funding was agreed between the schools, Risk Management and NELM, (the local community improvement group funded by central government). The system was installed and operational from May 2005, with the schools sharing the running costs.

So what effect has it had?

Martin Neave, Head of the First and Middle schools explains. "The CCTV has been a huge success. The site is almost completely deserted overnight and at weekends and acts of vandalism have reduced to zero. I am told it was the

Insurance claims in the 3 years to May 2005:

Arson	4	£20,659
Thefts and		
Break ins	4	£ 1,698
Vandalism	56	£31,115
Total	64	£53,472

Insurance claims since May 2005:

Arson	0	£0
Thefts and		
Break ins	0	£0
Vandalism	0	£0
Total	0!!	£0!!

quietest summer holiday ever and contractors who were on site did not even lose one brick! Another benefit is that the children's behaviour in the playground has improved as they know the system is recording and monitoring at all times.

"It should also be pointed out that the Police were very supportive when the cameras were first installed and were very quick to make home visits to discuss issues with parents and children."

Ron Saunders, Site Manager has also seen big benefits. "It's great not to have that feeling of dread on a Monday morning, wondering what I might find at the school after the weekend! The schools look better and staff feel safer in the evenings."

Managing premises

Guidance for premises managers

If you are a premises manager there are probably 101, or even 1001, areas that you are expected to know about or have responsibility for. To help with some of this, NCC runs a rolling series of one-day training courses that are free to attend.

This course is aimed at people in control of or responsible for the maintenance of premises, who need to understand how to manage premises and health, safety and risk management issues.

At the end of the training, delegates should understand NCC's systems for managing:

- Asbestos
- Fire safety, including hot works
- Contractors
- Legionella
- Statutory inspections of plant & equipment
- The role of premises managers

Your Departmental Health and Safety Adviser will be able to tell you if your name has been put forward for this course, so please contact them to find out. The aim is that everyone who is a premises manager will go through this course.

Safe sites

We have a general duty to maintain each of our sites to ensure they are reasonably safe for use. This is for anyone who is likely to be there, whether they are visitors, contractors, staff, pupils or even trespassers. There is less of a duty towards trespassers, but still a duty, and there should be no hazards that it can be reasonably assumed would injure someone.

Regular inspections should be carried out to identify any obvious hazards or defects and then actions need to be taken to remedy them.

Gritting

In icy or snowy weather a decision will have to be taken by the establishment manager about whether the premises is to

remain open. From a service continuity point of view every effort should be made to keep the premises open. However, this needs to be balanced against the risk to people's safety.

Car parks and the main walkways to the building should be gritted or swept so they are reasonably safe to use, at least with care. If someone does fall and gets injured, it doesn't mean they will automatically try to make a claim, and even if they do, it doesn't mean they will be successful.

By deciding to grit, you are not admitting the area is dangerous, merely making it safer to use. In cold and icy conditions any reasonable person should still know to proceed with caution and should not make the assumption that surfaces have the same grip as a dry, clear path.

Burst pipes

Normally at this time of year we give advice about how to prevent burst pipes arising in your premises if it is closed for the Christmas break. For the last few years we have been fortunate in that the weather has been mild and no problems have arisen. This year may be different as the long term forecasts are for a more severe winter than usual.

A few checks before the building is closed for the break will pay off.

Further advice can be found on the Risk and Insurance intranet/esinet site by searching for “cold weather checklist”.

- Check that water pipes are adequately lagged
- Turn water off at the mains if practical
- Ensure thermostats are working and kept on over the period
- Where fitted, turn off stop cocks to the water inlet pipes of mobiles and drain the systems
- Check the premises regularly over the holiday, especially if the temperature drops below freezing

Disclaimer notices

We often receive enquiries about whether disclaimer notices should be placed on school sites, perhaps by outdoor play equipment, to inform unauthorised users.

First of all, disclaimer notices do not absolve the establishment of all responsibilities. There is always a general duty to ensure the site is safe for all users, including unauthorised visitors. Equipment must be properly maintained and reasonable measures taken to prevent foreseeable incidents.

If for instance, a site has play equipment designed for use by 5 year olds but they know that the local teenagers do mess

about on it in the evenings, other preventative measures may be required if the equipment is not robust enough to take mis-use. This might be by securing the whole site or fencing off the relevant area.

What a notice will do, however, is to make it clear to all non-approved users that they should not be using the equipment, or be in the area, so that in the event of an injury they couldn't claim they weren't informed.

Wording for notices should be simple so they are easily understood.

Typical examples of notices that might be suitable for some of our premises



'tis the season to be jolly.....

..... but you won't be feeling too festive if you fall for any of the numerous Christmas scams that tend to operate at this time of the year.

First up, the Charity Christmas Calendar and/or Diary

This is where companies (or individuals) try to extract a commitment from you to advertise in their calendar, diary or something similar. As an incentive they say they will make contributions to charity for each advert placed. However, the cost of the advert is usually higher than would normally be expected for a similar type of advertisement (but then it is for charity isn't it!).

Before signing up, try to find out how much of your payment is going to the charity, (always assuming that a given charity is named). In some cases, it can amount to just a few pence! Consider whether money raised from sponsored events would be better utilised if sent direct to the charity, instead of to some third party, who will no doubt deduct their costs (and sometimes VAT) first.

In addition, beware if you are requested to purchase items such as these. It is not unknown for products never to materialise once paid for.

Next, your offspring or young relative in print

Is your "little Johnny or Jemima" a literary or artistic genius? Some organisations out there think everyone's offspring are.

Beware of competitions that, as well as offering prizes for individuals and schools, later go on to say that the standard of work was so good that they want to publish the results in a book or magazine. Don't be fooled. Some unscrupulous companies charge an over-the-top price for the subsequent publication, safe in the knowledge that parents, grandparents, great aunts etc. are unlikely to refuse purchasing a copy for posterity (after all, they would make ever such nice Christmas presents for other relatives and friends, wouldn't they?)

Remember, if you really can't resist, and you must buy, once paid for they might not even materialise, especially if payment is in advance which has to be made to a box number.

If you need this newsletter in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the Helpline on 01603 223488 (minicom 223833) and we will do our best to help.



A Risk Management guide to Christmas

According to S Crooge, the well-known Risk Manager, there are many risks and hazards that can arise during this time of festivities and goodwill to all. Avoid anything that might count as fun and instead worry about this lot.

Repetitive strain and fatigue caused by:



Writing out loads of Christmas cards to people you haven't met for twenty years and never will meet again.



Battling your way round the pre-Christmas sales for all of December



Excessive use of chip and pin, leading to bruised finger tips and headaches when the statement comes in

Back injuries from:



Forcing a 15lb turkey into a 12 lb oven



Sleeping on couches in pubs or wherever you fall



Over competitive cracker pulling

Falls from height when:



Attaching a 12 foot high singing and dancing reindeer next to the inflatable Bart Simpson on the top of the roof of your house



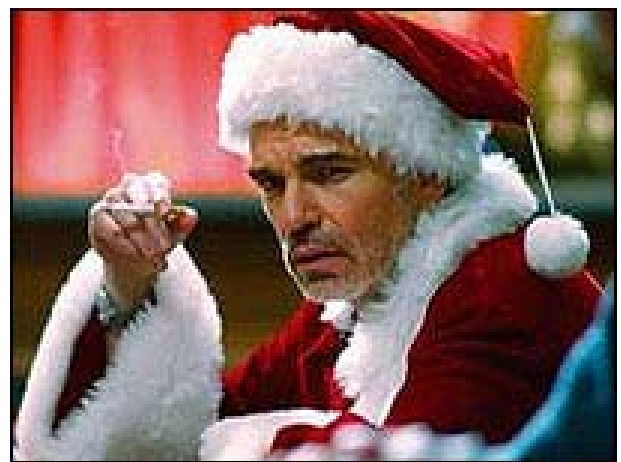
Getting hidden presents from the top of the wardrobe – well at least that's how you'll explain it to the nurse

Electrocution

Don't water the Christmas tree with the lights switched on (apparently, at least five people die each year from doing this!)

Stress

Don't stand in the kitchen doorway asking "is there anything I can do?" while the cook juggles three trays and six saucepans on one oven. You may get more stuffing than you bargained for!



Even Santa gets stressed sometimes!

Remember, an elderly relative is not just for Christmas – some will still be with you way past Boxing Day!

Happy Christmas
to all our readers

Fast track for school contents claims

The last issue of Risk News mentioned that there can sometimes be significant delays in dealing with minor insurance claims for school contents, normally due to paperwork not being passed to the Claims section.

New procedures have now been developed and these were issued under an MI sheet to all schools in October. The aim is to provide a cash settlement to the school for claims under £1,000, rather than wait for a replacement item to be purchased, thus speeding up the whole process and reducing administration time. The procedures can be summarised as follows:

- Types of claims involved will be for theft, loss or damage to items of equipment, such as laptops, audio equipment etc.
- Schools should notify the Claims section as soon as they know of the incident, as now. Preferably this should be by phone.
- If the school has established the replacement cost of the item with one of our usual suppliers at the time of reporting, we will arrange for payment to be made to the school within a few days.
- If the school does not know the replacement cost, or an assessment of damage is required, they will be advised to obtain this information when the claim is notified.
- Once the missing information is notified to us, we will settle the claim to the school.
- More complicated claims, such as multiple damage or major losses, together with glazing claims, will be dealt with under the existing claims process.

The Claims section can be contacted on 01603 223180 or 222839

Counterfeit goods

Fake goods are a huge problem nationally and are becoming more widely available. Technology has improved so much that it is easy for criminals to make sophisticated copies.

The most common fakes are:

- Designer labelled clothing, watches, perfume and cosmetics
- Alcohol
- CDs, DVDs, video and audio tapes
- Computer games software
- Vehicle parts



A haul of fake DVDs

Be suspicious about bargains.

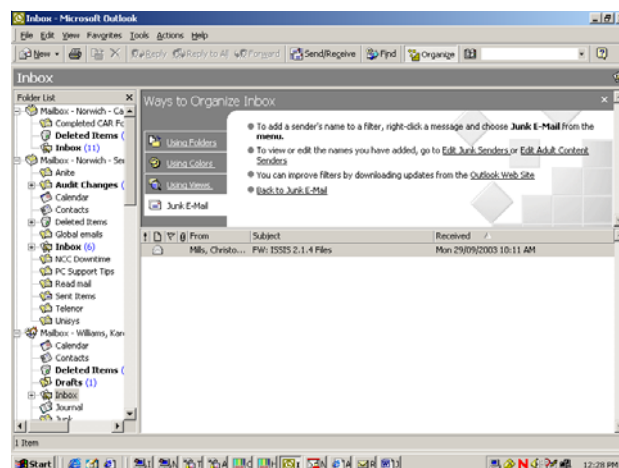
Take extra care at street markets, car boot sales, pubs and computer fairs, and anywhere where it will be difficult to get in touch with the vendor again. Remember, the goods may be dangerous – from cosmetics that cause skin problems to fake car parts or tools that may cause accidents.

Spam, Spam, Spam . . .

Are you getting fed up with emails from Barclays Bank asking you to input your account details, tired of fabulous money generating offers from HondaHandle, don't need any more cheap software or Viagra from people who's name would be a good score in Scrabble?

Well unfortunately the NCC server can't stop them getting through as the emails are fragmented and use random email addresses. The general advice is never to reply – just ignore them and delete them. One thing you could do, however, is to set up a Junk Email rule on your machine so that these emails automatically go into the junk box and don't clog up your inbox.

1. Make a note of the junk email address(es) you have received.
2. Click on the 'Organise' button on the toolbar.
3. Click on the 'Junk Email' button on the left hand side of the Organise window.
4. Set the top line to 'Automatically **move** Junk message to **Deleted items**'.
5. Click on the 'Turn on' button on the top line.
6. Now click on the 'click here' button which will display the following screen.



7. Click on 'Edit Junk Senders' and then click on the 'Add' button.
 8. Enter the email address that you want to add to the Junk Email senders list.
- NB: You will probably want to add the address from the @ sign onwards as the rule will then operate on all emails from that domain (e.g. @aol.com), rather than just one specific address (e.g. john.smith@aol.com). Whether you do this will depend on whether you expect to receive legitimate emails from other addresses on that domain (e.g. you wouldn't add @norfolk.gov.uk as the rule will then send all emails from NCC to the deleted items folder, even if it is tempting!).
9. Click on the OK button, and the next OK button.
 10. Now click on the 'Organise' button on the toolbar to close the Organise window.
 11. Once the Junk Email rule is turned on, as and when you receive new junk emails you can add them to the Junk Email senders list as follows:
 - a) Right click on the new email, select Junk Email and click on 'Add to Junk Senders list'.
 - b) A confirmation message will then be displayed. Click on the OK button to complete the process.

Risky business

Vehicle theft

We all know that cars need to be locked and secured to reduce the chance of theft. Recently, though, some cars have been stolen when there was no need for the thief to break in.

On cold frosty mornings some people have been starting their cars in their drives and leaving the engine running while they go back indoors to wait for the vehicle to warm up. The opportunist thief then just has to get in the vehicle and drive it off.

This is bad enough for the owners but it gets even worse. When they try to claim from their insurance company they are told that they failed to take reasonable care to prevent theft and the claim is turned down.

The price of drink

UK employers are generally unaware of the growing problem of alcoholism and how it may detrimentally impact on the workplace, overall productivity and profitability, according to a

recent study by disability insurer Unum Provident.



They estimate that inappropriate drinking costs employers £6.4bn annually through absence, accidents and violence. Up to 17 million working days are lost through alcohol related sickness absence and up to 20 million days are lost through lower activity rates and increased mistakes due to alcohol consumption.

Pornography at work

(that's got your attention!)

It's a common misconception that most pornographic images get onto work-based equipment from home.

In fact, a recent survey has found, 70% of internet porn traffic happens during working hours.

In one publicised case last year at the Department of Works and Pensions, 2



million pornographic images were found on the network, of which 18,000 were deemed illegal!

Did you know that under current UK legislation, senior managers and companies can be found both criminally and civilly liable for illegal or inappropriate images found in the workplace?

NCC already has strict policies in place regarding inappropriate images, transferring images received via email, and restricted access to the internet. Breaches of the policies are disciplinary offences.

And finally . . .

A man in Gloucester was charged with robbery after allegedly snatching a woman's handbag and then running into a wall and knocking himself out! He was taken to hospital for treatment and then arrested.