

RoSPA E-Bulletin OCTOBER 2003: EDUCATION

RoSPA publishes two journals giving news and views about workplace health and safety:

- **Occupational Safety & Health** is published monthly and is aimed at those with specific responsibility for ensuring employees (and all those who may be affected by their work activity) work safely and in safety.
- **Safety express** is published bi-monthly and is aimed at the non-specialist who has an interest in occupational safety and health (osh).

Both journals are supplied as part of RoSPA's occupational membership package – though they are available by individual subscription.

The material in this E-Bulletin (you should have 7 pages) is produced by the editors of these two journals. Much of the content is being published in the RoSPA journals. However, some material has been prepared for print but has not been used because of lack of space.

RoSPA also publishes the *Safety Education* journal which is published every term. It contains news, reviews, articles, updates and briefings to keep readers in touch with government initiatives and with good practice from colleagues around the UK. Every issue supports both the teaching of safety in the curriculum as well as the management of safety - *teaching safety and teaching safely*.

To find out how to subscribe to any of the RoSPA journals, contact the RoSPA sales department on 0121 248 2051 or email sales@rospa.com

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SAFETY EDUCATION JOURNAL HAS JUST UNDERGONE A COMPLETE RE-DESIGN. TEACHERS WHO WISH TO SEE A SAMPLE COPY OF THE AUTUMN ISSUE SHOULD E-MAIL jcave@rospa.com WITH THEIR NAME AND ADDRESS.

SIMILARLY, IF YOU WOULD LIKE A SAMPLE COPY OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH OR SAFETY EXPRESS PLEASE E-MAIL jsteemson@rospa.com (Don't forget your address)

SUPPLIES OF ALL THE JOURNALS ARE LIMITED SO COPIES WILL BE SUPPLIED ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS

Teacher jailed for manslaughter of pupil

Paul Ellis, a teacher from Fleetwood High School, pleaded guilty to manslaughter at Manchester Crown Court. He was sentenced to one year for manslaughter and six months for a breach of Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act to run concurrently.

The prosecution, brought by the Crown Prosecution Service, followed the death of Max Palmer, a 10-year-old boy, in May 2002. Max was with his mother who was helping with a trip from the school to the Lake District organised by Paul Ellis. Mr Ellis led an activity which was to jump into a natural rock pool in Glenridding Beck. Max got into difficulties in cold and turbulent water, and was swept out of the pool and down the beck. Mrs Palmer and another pupil from the school were airlifted to hospital suffering from hypothermia.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Head of Operations Janet Wilson said: "Outdoor adventure trips have great value in developing young people, and offer an excellent opportunity for risk education. The vast majority take place without serious incident.

"HSE would not want to see school trips stopped, or teachers refuse to lead them, as a result of this prosecution. But it is essential that they are planned properly and carried out safely. We know that most teachers put the safety of their pupils at the top of their agenda, and follow good practice.

"HSE and the police have worked together on the investigation that led to this case. We are still considering whether health and safety charges should be brought against any other parties. We have also been active in ensuring that schools and education authorities learn the lessons from this tragic event.

Advice on the planning and organisation of visits can be found on RoSPA's website (www.rospace.com) and the DfES website a (www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits)

Discussing first aid at work

Opinions on the regulation of first-aid at work are being sought by HSE. The Discussion Document asks fundamental questions, such as whether or not the current legislation is the most appropriate and cost effective way of delivering first-aid provision to employees and why many employers appear to have difficulties in understanding their duties under the Regulations.

It also specifically seeks views on:

1. extending the application of the Regulations to members of the public;
2. the content and structure of first-aid training and the issue of training standards;
3. the approval by HSE of first-aider training courses;
4. the provision of first-aid equipment, medications and related medical issues.

Colleen Bowen, Head of HSE's Occupational Health Support Unit, says: "Research has confirmed that first-aid is considered by most employers and employees to be a valuable welfare provision, but the last twenty years have seen many changes to the structure and types of employment in Great Britain and we need to explore how well the current arrangements work.

"Our Discussion Document develops the issues raised by the research and seeks views on whether we need to make any changes to existing duties or guidance to suit the changing workplace."

The Discussion Document can be found on the HSE website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/live.htm>

It includes an easy to use questionnaire for return electronically to HSE.

A comprehensive topic page including useful "frequently asked questions" can be found on the HSE first-aid Website at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/index.htm>

Managers and mental health

New research conducted by Ceri Diffley, Survey and Diagnostics Unit, the Work Foundation and published by ***mind out for mental health*** and The Foundation reveals that mental health problems in the workplace are far greater than previously realised - and that many line-managers are ill-equipped to deal with them.

To address this issue, mind out for mental health, the Department of Health's anti-stigma campaign, has launched The Line Managers' Resource Pack - a practical guide to managing and supporting mental health in the workplace.

Mental health issues are a reality in the workplace. Two thirds (66%) of employees report that they, or a work colleague, have experienced a problem whilst 70% of line managers have managed a member of staff with a diagnosed or suspected mental health problem.

Almost half (46%) of all employees said that they would go to their line manager if they were affected by mental health issues and 65% anticipated that their manager would be understanding. However, few employees thought

that their managers would be able to provide practical support and only 2% thought they would have the knowledge and skills to handle the situation well.

Lack of information about mental health is a real problem for line managers:

- Over half (52%) of all line managers feel that they do not have adequate information available about how to manage people with mental health problems
- Three quarters (76%) of respondents report that their organisation does not have adequate policies or procedures to deal with mental health, or if they do, they do not know about them.
- Only 4% of managers who have access to policies and procedures would know EXACTLY how to handle the situation and deal with it well and still less than four in ten (37%) would know enough to handle it and deal with it OK.

Health Minister, Ms Rosie Winterton MP, said: "This research reveals that mental health issues are common in the workplace and that most people will turn to their line manager for practical support and understanding. However, there is a clear information gap amongst line managers about mental health. It is hoped that the resource pack launched today will help to fill this gap so that people with mental health problems can be managed and supported effectively in the workplace."

Chief Executive of the Work Foundation, Will Hutton, said: "Mental health difficulties hurt individuals. They also damage business. Productivity, performance, attendance, staff retention and morale - all are affected when individuals experience stress, depression, eating disorders, panic attacks or other difficulties. Therefore it makes good business sense to take mental health seriously."

Chairman of HBOS plc, Lord Stevenson, said: "The research shows that many line managers are unsure about how to engage with a person who is in mental distress. They worry that they will say the wrong thing or open a can of worms that they have neither the time nor experience to handle. The resource gives clear and practical advice on how to talk to an individual who is having difficulties - what to say, what to do and sources of information and advice.

Copies of The Work Foundation Managing Mental Health Research report can be obtained by emailing contactcentre@theworkfoundation.com or telephoning 0870 165 4700.

Copies of The Mind Out The Line Managers' Resource Pack - a practical guide to managing and supporting mental health in the workplace can be obtained by emailing mindout@codestorm.co.uk or telephoning 0870 443 0930

TUC debate violence in schools

Supporting the motion on Improving Workplace Safety at this year's TUC Congress, Sue Rogers, National Treasurer of NASUWT, said:

"In schools, research by NASUWT indicates that there is an act of abuse aimed at a teacher every seven minutes. Such incidents include verbal abuse, physical assaults, racial and homophobic abuse, intimidation and sexual assault. Most of these were perpetrated by pupils but some were the actions of parents.

"Half of teachers are not satisfied with the action employers take to protect them. We urge schools to put in place reporting systems which lead to strong action against perpetrators of abuse. Every month the National Executive receives requests for around six ballots for action to refuse to teach abusive pupils.

"More needs to be done. This year, a case taken to the House of Lords, (Shirley) Pearce versus Mayfield School, was lost because of the absence of adequate legal protections for lesbian and gay workers

"Shirley's case highlighted the extent of abuse suffered by teachers and school staff. Shirley suffered a sustained, five-year campaign of homophobic abuse. Shirley has received no redress either for the behaviour of the pupils at her school or for the failure of her school to protect her from homophobic abuse. This is unacceptable and by no means untypical of the experience of too many teachers.

"Shirley's judgement, which overturned the so-called Manning judgement, leaves school staff vulnerable; a hospital might not be liable if it fails to protect its staff from abuse from patients; employees of a retail company, bank or transport body could find themselves vulnerable to abuse from their customers without suitable protection or redress from their employer.

"We believe that this decision must be challenged and new protections afforded to all employees, and to ensure that all employers take seriously the need to protect workers from abuse."

RoSPA publishes new managing road risk guidance

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has published *Managing Occupational Road Risk – The RoSPA Guide* with the aim of helping businesses and organisations adapt to recent guidance from the Health and Safety Executive and the Department for Transport on driving for work.

It will be particularly valuable to fleet managers, as high-mileage company drivers are known to be among those most at risk on the road.

Roger Bibbings, RoSPA's Occupational Safety Adviser, said: "It has been estimated that between 800 and 1,000 road deaths a year are in some way work-related. Many bosses have ignored this problem in the past, but the HSE has now made it clear that employers have duties under health and safety law to manage the risks faced by their workers on the road.

“As the organisation that identified work-related road crashes as the biggest safety problem facing UK employers today, RoSPA was the first to develop guidance on the subject and has continued to lead the field.

“The fully-revised RoSPA guide explores the issue in more depth than the HSE document, and will be an invaluable tool for any business or organisation. It explains how to put the people, policies and procedures in place to successfully manage occupational road risk.”

The document covers the problems facing businesses with employees who drive for work. Topics explained in detail include benefits to be gained from introducing a policy for managing occupational road risk (MORR), the law, developing a risk management approach, risk assessment and control measures.

As well as the moral case for preventing road accidents, there are sound business reasons. In just over three years, Palmer and Harvey McLane Ltd, the first winners of the RoSPA award for MORR, almost halved their accident rate and dramatically reduced costs.

Copies of the RoSPA guide (priced £25, plus package and posting) can be obtained by ringing 0870 777 2090, e-mailing sales@rospa.com or visiting RoSPA's on-line shop at www.rospa.com

Drugs Blueprint project in action

Schools in the North West and East Midlands will pilot a groundbreaking drugs education programme for 11 to 13-year-olds which will inform the teaching of drugs education in England.

The £6million Blueprint Research Programme is intended to arm teachers in 23 selected schools with the necessary tools to work with pupils and their parents and educate them about drugs issues. It will then assess, over a two-year period, the effectiveness of the programme.

This innovative project is based on evidence gathered from drug education programmes around the world. They show that open and supportive communication between parents, teachers and children can postpone or prevent the onset of drug taking.

Government minister Caroline Flint said:

"This is the most significant research programme of its kind in this country. The Blueprint programme builds on the evidence of successful projects in other countries and aims to develop a school-based drugs education programme for 11 to 13-year-olds and their parents.

"Blueprint is about equipping young people with life skills, and not

preaching to them. This project will give credible information to help young people understand the real impact of drugs and give them the confidence to make their own decisions.

"Prevention is the key. One of the most powerful tools we have is education. It is essential that we support vulnerable young people at an early stage, before they get involved in drugs and their problems escalate.

"This initiative is only one of many in the Government's drug strategy to engage young people. The innovative FRANK campaign was launched in May to give young people and their parents advice about drug use. FRANK is already handling 1,200 calls a day and he has received over 320,000 hits to his website. Anyone who has concerns about drugs should contact FRANK on 0800 77 66 00 or on the internet at talktofrank.com."

Blueprint is a joint project with the full backing of the Home Office, Department of Health and Department of Education and Skills. Speaking about the project, Stephen Twigg, Schools Minister, said:

"Blueprint will pave the way ahead for drug education in schools and will ultimately benefit young people throughout the country. It will deepen our understanding of the best ways to teach pupils about drugs and the harm they can cause.

"Many schools are already doing an excellent job on drug education. We want to enhance their good work and find out how it can be done even better. Young people can be exposed to drugs from a very early age and Blueprint is a huge step forward in our work ensuring that they fully understand what is out there and the associated risks."

E-Bulletin ends