



GREAT YARMOUTH

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Environmental Health

Health and Safety Service Plan 2015 – 2016

1. Introduction

This service plan describes the health and safety service provided by Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

Section 18 of The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 places a duty on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authorities (LAs) to make adequate arrangements for enforcement of Health and Safety, including details such as service planning, the officer capacity required to enforce in the Borough and the competency of those officers.

This health and safety service plan details how we will comply with these requirements as well as the actions we are taking to ensure the health and safety of local residents, visitors to the Borough as well as employees and those who operate businesses within our Borough.

The plan also provides information regarding:-

- what we plan to do this year;
- how we intend to do it and
- the work we have completed in the previous year

It is a requirement for this plan to be submitted to the Health and Safety Executive after due consideration by the Council.

2. Profile of the Borough

The Borough of Great Yarmouth has a population of approximately 97,800 residents and is growing, with a prediction to reach 105,400 by 2021. Great Yarmouth has been a seaside resort since the late 18th century. Today the Borough is one of the most popular British seaside resorts and has over 70,000 available bed spaces, caters for around 4 million day visits and nearly 5 million visitor nights each year. In the summer months the population effectively doubles which places a seasonal demand on the Health and Safety Service. There is heavy dependency on the tourist industry and 78 per cent of the jobs in the borough are service-based.

The ethnic minority population is small and currently makes up approximately 3.1% of the population in the Borough. The majority of migrants in Great Yarmouth come from Portugal, Poland and Republic of Lithuania. Greater than expected numbers of people where the first language is not English place greater demands on the service.

Great Yarmouth has a working age population of 58,200, 47,200 of which are economically active. The majority of these are employees and work full time but a small proportion of the population are self-employed. 78 per cent of the workforce is employed in the service industry, in particular in hotels and restaurants. This service sector generates most complaints in respect of Health and Safety.

3. Background to provision of the Health and Safety Service

Health and Safety enforcement within businesses in the UK is divided between Local Authorities (LAs) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The Council is responsible for health and safety in a wide range of commercial workplaces. Our aim is to ensure these premises are safe for employees, self-employed persons and members of the public who may visit these premises.

The Health and Safety Team in Great Yarmouth currently enforce in approximately 2,500 businesses covering a range of workplaces including shops, catering premises, warehouses, caravan sites and seafront leisure activities amongst others.

During the summer months we also have a significant increase in the number of visitors to the area and it is important that they are safe when visiting the premises in our Borough.

The health and safety function is carried out within the Commercial Team of Environmental Services along with a wide range of other activities including food safety, licensing and commercial nuisance. This team is also responsible for the port health function.

4. Key Challenges for the Future

A key challenge for the Commercial Team for the future years is to respond to the changes to health & safety enforcement following the Government's commissioning of Professor Löfstedt's independent review of health & safety legislation, the Government's response and the resulting National Local Authority Enforcement Code.

The aim of the new national code is to ensure that Local Authorities and the Health and Safety Executive take a more consistent and proportionate approach to health and safety.

The national code recognises that although the primary responsibility for managing health and safety is the responsibility of a business, the local authority have an important role to support, encourage, advise and where necessary enforce against businesses to ensure that businesses can effectively manage the health and safety risks they create.

As a result of this new guidance the service has changed how we plan, target and carry out interventions with our businesses.

Proactive inspections can only now be carried out in premises in business/activity sectors identified by the Health and Safety Executive or where we may receive intelligence that risks in a business are not being effectively managed e.g. through accidents or complaints etc.

This change in enforcement has allowed Environmental Services to develop a range of alternative intervention tools and to target our work more specifically within identified industry sectors and provide targeted educational and informative interventions for businesses within the Borough.

5. Defining our Purpose

It is important before we deliver the service for us to identify the purpose of the health and safety service, which is currently defined as:-

'To protect the health, safety and welfare of employees and members of the public from workplace activities'

This is to be achieved by facilitating changes in health and safety management and culture within businesses to reduce the health and safety risks associated with the business.

6. Objectives

Our main objectives when delivering this service are to:-

- Assist businesses by providing clear information and guidance to help them to meet legal requirements and to raise standards to provide safer workplaces.
- Protect the health, safety and welfare of people employed in workplaces within the Borough.
- Provide a safe environment for the many visitors to the Borough.
- Prioritise high risk inspections and effectively target resources in line with national priorities.
- Deal appropriately with accident notifications, service requests, complaints and enquiries concerning matters of health, safety and welfare.
- Develop standard procedures and/or practices in light of any new legislation and guidance from the HSE.
- Work in partnership with other local councils, specifically the Norfolk Health and Safety Liaison Group as well as the HSE and other Stakeholders.
- Ensure all staff involved in the delivery of the service are appropriately trained and competent.

7. Accessing the Service

The Commercial Team of Environmental Services is based at the Great Yarmouth Town Hall Offices on Hall Quay in Great Yarmouth and can be contacted in a number of ways:-

- A reception facility is operated between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.
- The Environmental Health Service has a dedicated telephone contact number on 01493 846478 which provides a link to the Commercial Team.
- By email at health@great-yarmouth.gov.uk
- By fax on 01493 846415.

- The Environmental Health Service also has an out of hours answer phone that directs callers to the Council's 24 hour Central Control number in the event of emergencies.

Depending on the nature of the call an appropriate Officer may be called or the matter may be referred to an Officer the next working day.

The Council has recently launched a new website that provides access to further information and advice and this can be accessed at www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk

There are a number of languages other than English identified as in use within the Borough. The majority of proprietors are, however, able to communicate in English or have somebody present at the premises that can translate. In many cases where there may be language difficulties the service has the use of Language Line (Intran), a telephone and translation service to which the Council subscribes and the use of Intran (Cintra) when a face to face interpreter is required. Correspondence can be sent where necessary in languages other than English.

8. Scope of the Health and Safety Work and Demands on the Service

The demands on the service can be split into two distinct categories. There is reactive work and proactive work; both can lead to enforcement action being taken.

8.1 Reactive Work

Reactive work forms a large proportion of the work of the Health and Safety Team. Notifications of accidents, incidents and poor workplace facilities provide the team with valuable information about businesses that may not be managing health and safety risks adequately. In keeping with current government guidance and the National Code, no restrictions are placed on reactive work.

The types of reactive demands that we deal with are wide ranging and include:-

8.1.1 Accident Investigations

Some work related accidents are reportable under the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995, reports are received electronically through a central database. A total of 69 workplace incidents were reported to the Council and investigated as appropriate.

Currently reportable accidents are investigated on a case by case basis, as a minimum a letter is sent. The decision to visit will be made by the investigating officer and will be based on prior performance of the business in relation to health and safety and the details of the accident that occurred and if measures can be put in place to prevent further occurrences.

8.1.2 Complaints from Employees and Members of the Public

All health and safety complaints are investigated - in each instance the investigating officer considers the past performance of the business to determine what kind of intervention is most appropriate. The Health and Safety Team dealt with approximately 30 complaints relating to health and safety and welfare standards in the year 2014 - 2015.

8.1.3 Requests for Health and Safety Information

Requests for advice or information from businesses are responded to either verbally, in writing or face to face. Last year the team responded to 10 requests for advice regarding health and safety. Businesses can now also access health and safety information on the Great Yarmouth website. The department has also provided a small business advice pack that provides guidance to businesses, not only about health and safety but all aspects of Environmental Health, including for example food safety and licensing.

8.1.4 Asbestos Notifications

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 requires notification of most works to asbestos containing materials. These notifications are received and evaluated by officers and visits are made to premises as required to ensure works are being planned and executed safely.

8.2 Proactive Work

Proactive work covers a variety of interventions from programmed formal inspection of premises to promotional activities to help educate and inform employees and employers on health and safety issues.

In line with the National Code we will be inspecting our high risk (Category A) premises and carry out other inspections as necessary in specified business activities/sectors

8.3 Enforcement Action

In the year 2014-2015 officers in the team served eight improvement notices and one prohibition notice. A premises is also in the process of having court action taken against it for significant breaches of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

9. Intervention Planning

Proactive project work is planned every year and takes into account the following:-

- National & regional priorities, targets and plans
- Locally derived objectives
- Relevant guidance and policies

9.1 Proactive Interventions Completed 2014 - 2015

During 2014/15 the team completed the following range of interventions and project work:-

9.1.1 Safety of Coin Operated Rides

This project was carried out during the summer holidays along the seafront in Great Yarmouth. This was completed because:-

- There are a significant number of leisure premises located on the main tourist routes that provide small coin operated rides for use by young children.
- The Service had seen a number of incidents and accidents in recent years with coin-operated rides.
- Often these rides are poorly maintained both electrically and structurally. They are used by young children and it is important they are maintained in a safe condition.
- The service also has intelligence that a person who is unregistered to carry out ADIPS (Amusement Device Inspection Procedures Scheme) inspections of rides has been inspecting such rides in the area and has left them in an unsafe condition. This is currently being pursued.

An Environmental Health Officer and the Seafront Enforcement Officer inspected premises along the seafront, mainly amusement arcades, providing advice and guidance regarding the safety requirements for these rides to businesses. It was pleasing to note most rides were found to be in good condition with a small amount of electrical hazards found.

9.1.2 Inspections of Inflatables on Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Beach

This was completed with all inflatable sites on the seafront in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston, being visited by an Environmental Health Officer and the Seafront Enforcement Officer. The majority of these inflatables are located directly on the beach and are heavily used during the short summer season. This project was completed due to:-

- Intelligence received over the last few years indicating a number of serious accidents to young children using inflatables provided on the seafront in Great Yarmouth.
- The service regularly received complaints regarding the lack of supervision on the rides and the condition of some inflatables.
- These inflatables create significant risk of injury to users if they are not inspected, maintained, correctly installed, operated and supervised.

The main findings were that:-

- Access was possible to the blowers at the rear of the inflatables.
- Residual current devices to the electrical system were not appropriate.
- Supervision was poor at times.
- School children were being employed without the necessary paperwork.
- Operators were not aware of the maximum occupancy for the individual pieces of equipment.

All sites were provided with an inspection report and revisited to ensure they had complied with any safety issues found by the inspectors.

9.2 Proposed Interventions 2015 - 2016

In addition to the reactive work for this year, local and national concerns have lead the team to identify three important projects that are of concern specifically in the Great Yarmouth area. These are:-

9.2.1 Gas Safety with Tandoori Ovens

Accident statistics of fire and explosion incidents investigated by inspectors in the UK showed a considerable number of incidents occurred during the manual ignition of gas-fired catering equipment. A significant proportion of these incidents were attributed to tandoori ovens.

In Great Yarmouth officers have found safety issues with this type of equipment.

The aim of this project will be to increase the awareness of local business operators with respect to the dangers of this type of equipment used mainly in our Indian restaurants.

Officers will be visiting these premises where possible to provide advice and guidance.

9.2.2 Premises using Lasers for Tattoo and Hair Removal

Tattoo removal using lasers is becoming popular and more premises, mainly tattooists have recently begun to offer this service in Great Yarmouth.

In 2010 use of Class 3b/4 lasers and IPLs in cosmetic practices was deregulated with enforcement being transferred to local authorities. Optical radiation devices including lasers or intense pulsed light (IPL) systems are used by these premises to remove or fade the tattoos. The optical radiation emitted by such lasers and IPLs has potentially hazardous effects on clients and equipment users. Hazards from lasers will depend on the type of laser but problems can include - eye injury; skin burns; fire/explosion; smoke inhalation.

Lasers are also used to aid hair removal and are used by beauty salons. Again the risks of laser hair removal are due to the potential damage that may occur when the skin surrounding the hair follicles absorbs the laser. The most common symptoms following treatment can involve skin irritation such as redness, swelling and mild pain.

An initiative will be carried out to send a self-assessment questionnaire to any of our premises using lasers to provide advice and guidance to ensure they are using them safely, with follow up inspections as required

9.2.3 Hand Car Wash and Valeting Premises

In July 2015 a multi-agency initiative was carried out with the Norfolk Constabulary, the UK Border Agency, the Planning Department of the Council and the Environmental Services Community Protection Team. Visits were made to some of these premises to investigate issues including exploitation, immigration and housing provision for these workers. During these visits officers in the Community Protection Team identified poor health and safety standards in respect of chemical storage, electrical safety, unsafe systems of work, lack of personal protective equipment as well as the issues with smoking in the workplace.

Poor health and safety standards in hand car wash premises can lead to death or serious physical harm especially if there is a failure to train employees, maintain electrical equipment, identify serious health and safety hazards and control risks.

A recent regional project by 23 Local Authorities in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Essex, along with Health & Safety Awareness Officers from the HSE, identified significant health and safety issues with hand car wash businesses. The hazards identified included faulty and damaged electrics, incorrect outdoor sockets and unsafe handling and storage of chemicals. Employees were also inadequately protected or trained.

It is proposed that a multi-agency initiative will be carried out with Norfolk Constabulary and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) to all car wash premises in the Borough to provide advice and guidance to operators to ensure their sites are safe not only to employees but also to members of the public using the facility.

9.2.4 Builder Merchants' Stacking of Lightweight Materials

In 2014 a significant accident occurred to an employee at a builder's merchants in the Great Yarmouth area. The employee suffered significant leg injuries when a poorly stacked pallet fell on him in poor weather conditions.

It appears it may be trade practice in poor weather, especially high winds, to stack lightweight goods with items such as pallets that could potentially make a load insecure.

- A short project will be carried out making all our builder's merchants aware of the safety risks associated with poorly stacked products, together with the effect poor weather can have on the stability of these stacked products.
- This will mainly be achieved by an information letter to builder's merchants containing guidance and information on how they can control the risks from this activity.

This initiative was not completed last year as the accident investigation is still on-going.

9.3 Emerging Intelligence, Matters of Evident Concern and Liaison with Other Organisations

Planned interventions and projects undertaken will continually evolve depending on intelligence received from:-

- Complaints and incidents reported from members of the public and employees.
- Discussions with the Norfolk Health and Safety Liaison Group. This group:-
 - Each year produces a joint Health and Safety Work Plan to identify local and national priorities that jointly the seven Norfolk Authorities can consistently work together on to improve health and safety in these identified sectors.
 - The group also provides advice and guidance to each other regarding emerging risks and local priorities.

- The Health and Safety Executive, especially via the local Enforcement Liaison Officer (ELO), The Local Authority Unit (LAU), Trading Standards and NHS England.
- Other external partnership agencies such as the Care Quality Commission and Norfolk County Council Education Services.
- Liaison with other services within the Council such as the Planning and Licensing.

9.4 Enforcement Policy

Enforcement decisions will be made in line with Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Environmental Services Enforcement Policy and following completion of an assessment using the HSE's Enforcement Management Model.

All decisions for enforcement action will be agreed by the Service Manager to ensure consistency and adherence to Enforcement Policy.

9.5 Communication

The Health and Safety Team are committed to providing up to date and relevant information and guidance to businesses in a variety of formats. A number of guidance documents have been updated over the past year and will continue to identify areas where further guidance is needed by businesses.

This year we will continue to extensively use internet based communication. The Environmental Services website is regularly reviewed to provide up to date guidance and health and safety information to businesses, as well as information regarding initiatives and projects we are carrying out.

Facebook and Twitter will also continue to be used where appropriate to communicate with small businesses in the Borough.

9.6 Corporate Health and Safety

From June 2013 the corporate internal health and safety function was transferred to the Commercial Team. Unfortunately, the Officer performing the Health and Safety Advisor role left and we are currently recruiting for a replacement. From 1 July 2015 Norfolk County Council has been assisting the Council by taking on an advisory role. Pending recruitment to the vacancy, Officers within the Commercial Team are providing a day to day service for corporate health and safety.

10. Service Performance and Review

10.1 Performance Measures

The purpose of interventions is to improve the control of health and safety risks within businesses and reduce associated risks, therefore, the best performance measure for the service will be a reduction of risk rating of businesses in the Borough over time.

10.2 Review and Monitoring

Review and monitoring is by way of a number of methods:-

- Routine review of planned interventions is carried out through team meetings. Local and regional intelligence will feed into this review and intervention priorities are subject to change.
- Meetings area carried out regularly with officers to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions and to assess progress with this plan.
- All health and safety interventions are now being recorded on the recently introduced Civica computer database.
- Annual data returns are provided to the HSE for national performance monitoring.
- The Norfolk Health and Safety Liaison Group champions opportunities for peer review between Local Authorities throughout Norfolk.

10.3 Appointment, Competency and Authorisation of Officers

All Officers are appropriately trained in accordance with Section 18 Guidance.

Officers are appointed by the Commercial Team Manager and Service Group Manager and prior to picking up work their competence is assessed by the Commercial Team Manager. Officers carrying out enforcement work are appropriately authorised according to their ability, qualifications, expertise and experience.

The health and safety service continues to identify training and development needs of the individual Officers.

On-going training is organised for team members in relevant areas and training needs are assessed on an individual basis to ensure Officers have the required competencies.

Training is provided through externally provided courses, in-house training sessions provided throughout the year, discussing internal procedure regularly through Commercial Team meetings and through joint visits with experienced officers.

Currently all officers need to complete the Regulators Development Needs Analysis Tool (RDNA). This is a training needs assessment tool, which will allow training needs to be identified and managed at a local level and between Norfolk Authorities. The results of this will be incorporated into officer's PDRs.

Officers also undertake a minimum of 10 hours Continued Professional Development annually in the area of health and safety.

Officer's competence is also continually assessed through regular one to one meetings and PDR reviews.

Due to significant recent staff changes, the documented policy for staff competency is currently under review in accordance with the Section 18 guidance; this policy will provide evidence of officer competency and ongoing training.

The service also takes part in peer reviews with other Local Authorities to ensure consistency.

10.4 Staffing Allocation

All the health and safety work is covered by the Commercial Team of Environmental Services. The current staffing of the team is as follows;

Two full time Environmental Health Officers (EHO)

Three part time EHOs

Four full time Technical Officers (TO)

Currently one of the full time EHO positions is vacant and under recruitment

Not all staff have the required competency to deal with health and safety issues, this is restricted to all the EHOs and one TO. Overall the team spend about 15% of its time dealing with health and safety issues.