

**Health Professions Council
Finance and Resources Committee Meeting –27th April 2006**

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES - PUBLIC PAPER

Executive Summary and Recommendations

1. Introduction

2. Decision

The Council/Committee is requested to note the document. No decision is required.

3. Background information

In terms of managing health and safety, we have recently identified two separate but related groups of health and safety issues. One group is facilities-related i.e. their cost is driven by the number and size of facilities, as well as by legislative requirements. Examples include; Disabled access (to various rooms and offices), Fire Risk Precautions and Asbestos Assessment. The second group is people-related i.e apart from legislative requirements, their cost is driven by the number of employees, contractors, CCM's and partners. Examples include; Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and First Aid training. See attached diagram for what we believe is a comprehensive list of the issues, the legislation relating to each issue and the efforts to date on appointing a supplier to manage the issue.

For each group, there is typically some Government legislation (an Act of Parliament or some government regulations) for organisations to comply with. There are also over-arching pieces of legislation requiring compliance namely, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. As the Government legislation is amended and as case law is updated, the onus is on HPC to monitor its ongoing compliance obligations in this area.

To date, health and safety compliance has been dealt with at the departmental level, with assistance from the HR Manager on employee-related health & safety, and Office Services Manager on facilities-related health & safety. HPC has a Health and Safety policy (section 5f of the Employees Handbook), last updated in December 2003. We believe it needs a fundamental re-write at this point. In addition, while the policy was created for employees, to date, little has been created in the way of health and safety policies for Council and Committee members (CCM's), Partners or contractors working on HPC premises.

To date, we have outsourced the management of a few health and safety issues to external suppliers. For example, we have used St John Ambulance to provide first aid training to staff. The suppliers typically provide services such as initial assessment, implementation programme, training and ongoing monitoring services.

For a wider group of health and safety issues, we are effectively addressing them at present for the first time. Examples include identifying health and safety compliance risk relating to vehicles used for HPC business reasons, commissioning a specialist supplier to provide a disability access assessment of our premises, and actively sourcing a supplier to provide DSE assessments for employees working offsite.

Regarding how HPC health and safety management relates to the latest version of the HPC Risk Assessment Register (March 2006), risk 4.9 identifies safety of Council members, risk 6.3 identifies safety of Partners and risk 9.5 identifies health and safety of employees. The risk significance is rated as medium, high and high respectively. The risk probability is identified as low in all cases. The only reference to legislative non compliance (other than tax) is in risk 1.2 “Unexpected change in UK legislation” which has a high significance and medium probability rating. In future copies of the Register, H&S legislative non compliance probably needs to be separately identified and rated.

4. Resource implications

Minimal, if health and safety issues are outsourced (overall management, assessments and implementations for compliance). To elaborate, we believe current HPC employees do not have the necessary skill-set to ensure compliance with the legislation. Outsourcing the assessments and implementations will leverage skilled expertise external to the organization, enable a faster rate of compliance, ensure continuity in compliance (less person risk) and enable HPC to achieve more flexibility in the implementation (select from a range of H&S compliance services available and specify the level of robustness in compliance we deem essential). Because of the complexity, our intention is to appoint one external supplier to handle overall Health and Safety issues (assessment and implementation programme) and relationships with sub-contractors in this area.

5. Financial implications

There is a £50k “Contingencies cost” in 2006/07 Office Services Annual Budget. H&S Assessments costs are estimated at £15-20k in 2006/07. Implementation/compliance spending in 2006/07 is estimated at the time of writing at £40-60k. There is also likely to be ongoing compliance costs, yet to be determined, beyond 2006/07.

6. Background papers

HPC Health and Safety Issues schedule
Risk Assessment Register March 2006.

7. Appendices

Nil

8. Date of paper

13th April 2006