

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 24 JUNE 2010

HEALTH AND SAFETY

REPORT BY CHIEF CONSTABLE

Introduction

- 1.1 Significant progress has been made to improve the management of health and safety across the Force over the last 12 months. The Head of Health and Wellbeing has identified some areas of concern in the way Sussex Police is currently discharging its duty of care in respect of Health and Safety across the Force. This has prompted some initial investigation and resulted in the requirement for a full force-wide review of Health & Safety to address the areas of concern for the Force and ensure the organisation is compliant with the legislative obligations in respect of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations, guidance and best practice.
- 1.2 This paper aims to provide a summary of the current situation, drivers for the review, projected timescales and additional associated factors.
- 1.3 Responsibility for the governance and management of Health and Safety in Sussex Police lies between three Chief Officers;
 - Deputy Chief Constable Giles York – Overall governance and Chair of Force Safer Working Committee.
 - Marion Fanthorpe, Director of HR – Overall professional Health & Safety lead as well as Health and Safety functions relating to staff within Health and Wellbeing and Learning and Development functions.
 - Mark Baker, Director of Finance – In respect of the physical environment through Estates and Facilities functions.
- 1.4 There is currently no lead member of the Police Authority for Health and Safety and it is suggested that the Committee appoint a lead member to this area of policing who would also represent the Authority on the Review Group.

Progress to date

- 2.1 A progressive and constructive approach to Health and Safety management has been taken within Sussex Police and good progress has been made in the last 12–18 months. The following activities summarise the work completed and ongoing:
 - A clear strategy has been produced which sets out the principles of a “can do” approach to health and safety based on proactive risk management.

- A new Health and Safety policy was created and adopted in line with the revised approach, along with new supporting guidance.
- A fit for purpose Accident Management System is being developed following the principles of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and HSG65 which is the Health and Safety Executive's Publication, Successful Health and Safety Management. This is due to go live in the coming months.
- Work on individual static, dynamic and duty of care risk assessments has been ongoing and progressive. This has involved working closely with the organisation and line managers to develop user friendly tools and provide line managers with a clearer understanding of the Force's responsibilities in this area.
- Work is in progress to increase the provision of training in respect of health and safety.

2.2 Overall there has been a 23% reduction in the number of injuries / incidents and assaults in 2009-10 from 2008-09.

Review of Health & Safety within Sussex Police

3.1 The review of Health and Safety has been commissioned by Chief Officers and will be led by Julie Keylock, Head of Health and Wellbeing. A small project team of interested shareholders from across the Force has been identified to assist with the review. The review will be undertaken using the Force's newly drafted Health and Safety Framework which is based on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) recommended framework HSG65. In addition, the review will be supported by the principles of the following key documents:

- Health and Safety Executive paper, "*Striking the Balance between Operational and Health and Safety Duties in the Police Service*".
- National Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Health and Safety benchmarking standards.
- Health & Safety Executive Police Inspection reports (including Sussex Police and other Forces).

3.2 There are three main key drivers for the review:

- The moral case - ensuring the organisation appropriately addresses its duty of care to its people.
- The legal case - ensuring the organisation meets its legislative obligations in respect of the Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974 and associated regulations, guidance and best practice.
- The financial case - recognising the financial impact of poor health and wellbeing in terms of the costs of injury, absence, disengagement, reduced performance and increased staffing costs. Also ensuring costs associated with legal claims are avoided.

Current Challenges

- 4.1 Although progress has been made with implementing the new strategy on health and safety within Sussex Police there is still further work required to fully embed the changes inline with the strategy. Some fundamental changes to both our systems and practices are required. The review will have a particular focus on addressing the following current challenges:
- Insufficient clarity around roles and responsibilities that mean we are possibly not legally compliant in respect of designated 'Duty Holders', and in general ensuring line managers are aware of and able to discharge their core health and safety responsibilities
 - A lack of IT systems to assist the Force in managing health and safety effectively. There is a cumbersome paper / email system for accident reporting that is not always consistently applied, potentially creating risks about what gets reported to the HSE. In addition, there is not a clear health and safety management system for risk management which can result in poor management information and reporting mechanisms.
 - Progress has been made to introduce risk management at an operational level which is working well. However more work is required to identify, register and manage corporate health and safety risks which will be taken forward.
- 4.2 There is proactive ongoing work from the Health and Wellbeing Unit to address any concerns raised, guide and coach people towards new ways of working and investigate new and improved systems and processes to overcome the barriers.

Health and Safety within the Police Service

- 5.1 Sussex Police is not the only Force with development needs in respect of the management of Health and Safety. A recent report (September 2009) was released of HSE Inspections of Police Forces 2007-8. Having inspected seven Forces during 2006-07, they inspected a further seven Forces during 2007-8. The report highlights common issues and gaps found across these forces.
- 5.2 Their general conclusion was "HSE Inspectors have noted some examples of good health and safety practice in frontline policing activities in most of the police forces visited. However we concluded that these were generally not being achieved through a managed and systematic approach but rather by diligent individuals who were including health and safety issues within their overall work or managerial responsibilities." The report goes on to say that they "also observed some examples of poor health and safety performance and significant compliance failures in other areas." It is that understood several of the forces received Improvement Notices.
- 5.3 The HSE report provides a benchmark and a framework against which forces can compare their current Health and Safety performance, and

recommends that every force produces an overall Health and Safety strategy and annual health and safety improvement plan based on the recommendations contained in the HSE report.

Approach to the Review

- 6.1 In order to improve transparency and add legitimacy to the review, external benchmarking will be undertaken and an external expert view of the process, findings and recommendations will be sought.
- 6.2 The over-arching objective for the review is to ensure Sussex Police is a safer environment in which to work. This will be achieved by:
 - Benchmarking how appropriately the organisation is discharging its duty of care in respect of Health and Safety through good and positively embedded structures, systems, understanding, approaches, practice and organisational learning and development.
 - Benchmarking how effectively Sussex Police is discharging its responsibilities in respect of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other associated guidance and regulations.
 - From the findings, developing an action plan to address any areas identified that fall short of the required standard and the agreed action plan would be submitted to the Force Safer Working Committee and subsequent force and the Corporate Governance Committee.
 - Ensuring that any actions taken are done so efficiently and effectively, ensuring a cost benefit analytical approach is taken, making best use of available resources.

Timescales

7. The Terms of Reference for the working group have been agreed and the membership of the group is being finalised. The review is due to be completed by September 2010 which will include an action plan to address areas for improvement developed and implemented. The results, including the action plan will be presented at the Force Safer Working Committee and Force Executive Board.

Summary

- 8.1 Significant progress has already been made at changing the organisation's approach to Health and Safety as outlined in this report.
- 8.2 Other police forces are facing similar challenges in respect of the effective management of Health and Safety.
- 8.3 It is recognised that there is further work to be done in making Sussex Police a safer place to work and ensure that the organisation is appropriately discharging its legal responsibilities in respect of Health and Safety. Key findings and actions to improve the situation will be progressed from the major review to be completed by September 2010.

Recommendation – that

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a Lead Member for Health and Safety be appointed by the Committee to engage with the review of Health and Safety.

MARTIN RICHARDS
Chief Constable

Contact: Julie Keylock, Head of Health and Wellbeing
e-mail: Julie.keylock@sussex.pnn.police.uk
Tel: 0845 607099