

## **Commitment 2- Identify top three health risks**

### **1. Introduction**

The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Powering Improvements Commitments require organisations to identify their top three health risks and ensure that they are effectively managed.

### **2. Identifying health risks**

To support this commitment ENA have developed the Health and Wellbeing Framework, which aims to facilitate the continuous improvement of health performance against a set of protocols which encapsulate all the requirements of an effective health and wellbeing programme. One of the elements within this framework outlines the requirements for effective management of health risks in the workplace, and a second element provides advice on managing individual health risks.

[http://www.poweringimprovement.org/images/stories/pdfs/Occupational\\_Health\\_content/ENA\\_HWB\\_Framework\\_050811.pdf](http://www.poweringimprovement.org/images/stories/pdfs/Occupational_Health_content/ENA_HWB_Framework_050811.pdf)

Practical applications of these processes have been outlined in a number of case studies that ENA members have made available through the ENA web site. This provides valuable practical examples of how these organisations have approached identifying their health risks and discharged their duties.

<http://energynetworks.squarespace.com/occupational-health/>

The ENA have also developed a needs assessment tool which will help organisations identify a basic understanding of the health needs within their organisation. This can be found on the Powering Improvement website.

[http://www.poweringimprovement.org/images/stories/pdfs/Occupational\\_Health\\_content/PI\\_Health\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_Tool.pdf](http://www.poweringimprovement.org/images/stories/pdfs/Occupational_Health_content/PI_Health_Needs_Assessment_Tool.pdf)

It should be remembered that within organisations the top health risks will change dependent upon the following factors:

- Type of work undertaken
- Age, experience and fitness of the workforce
- The psychological, psychosocial factors of the team and the work
- The environment they work in
- Control measures implemented
- The success of minimising exposure to workplace hazards.

### **3. Considerations**

Workplace health risks also differ from societal, domestic and individual health problems but these still have a significant impact on employee performance and attendance at work.

Generally ageing workforces and increasing complex home and workplace lives impact upon health and for some organisations, or parts of organisations, these may be their most significant risks to employee health and organisation performance.

In determining the most significant health risks organisations should consider the following:

- Specific Legal Obligations – often there because of the capacity to do harm and includes, Noise induced Hearing Loss, Stress, Exposure to vibration, Workplace Ergonomics (DSE), Substances Hazardous to Health etc
- Levels and reasons for absence
- Referrals into occupational health
- Outputs from medical surveillance
- Intelligence from wellbeing programmes or National Statistics on likely health problems within the workforce
- Outputs from employee surveys

- Costs to the organisation
- Level of impact on individual employees

#### **4. Where to start?**

Start by gathering the data that is already available within your organisation this might include:

- Sickness absence data
- Accident data
- Occupational Health referral information
- Insurance data
- Risk Assessments
- Lifestyle check data
- Employee Assistance Programme information

Don't forget that having identified the health risks within your organisation the next step is to identify how to reduce these risks!

#### **5. Further Information**

- Energy Networks Association. Health & Wellbeing Framework  
<http://2010.energynetworks.org/occupational-health>
- ENA Occupational Health Toolkit <http://2010.energynetworks.org/occupational-health>
- Hill et al, What works at work (2007)
- IOSH Working Well (2009)
- OHAG Guidance Note 1.1 Occupational Health in the Electricity Industry