

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE 9 MAY 2012

Vaccination Policy

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents the new Vaccination Policy for Wiltshire Council.

Background

2. It is a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 for employers to identify and control significant risks as far as is reasonably practicable. Currently there is no consistent policy for identifying or providing employees with vaccination where work activities expose (or have the potential to expose) employees to certain communicable diseases. Local arrangements exist but these are unlikely to either fully capture the range of employees at risk or provide the corporate overview and record-keeping that would enable the council to be able to demonstrate that these duties are being met.
3. The emphasis of this policy is on risk reduction measures that seek to reduce the reliance upon vaccination as a control given that such a programme can only ever be undertaken on a voluntary basis. The policy therefore includes a Biological Risk Assessment Tool to help managers identify suitable working practices that minimise any risk of exposure and hence reduce the likelihood of employees acquiring blood borne viruses and other communicable diseases as a result of work activities.

Main Considerations for the Council

4. The policy has been created and formatted in line with the new HR policy template.
5. The main points of the procedure include:
 - The people to whom, and circumstances in which, the policy should apply. This predominantly relates to blood borne viruses but with some reference to other communicable diseases and a summary table is included.
 - Information regarding the risk assessment and risk reduction measures that should be followed where workplace exposures exist. This

includes a specifically created Biological Risk Assessment Tool and flow charts to direct managers towards appropriate outcomes.

- The process to follow regarding actual vaccination which will be conducted by an external provider. This includes the schedule for vaccinations and outlines the action that should be taken in the event of an incident requiring post exposure support.
6. The procedure also provides clarity over the respective functions and responsibilities of employees, line-managers, the agreed vaccination provider, the Occupational Health and Safety Service and Human Resources.
 7. The establishment of a secure and robust record keeping procedure significantly enhances the overall impact of this policy beyond the current ad-hoc and non-existent arrangements.

Consultation

8. The policy was devised following consultation with stakeholders from the services affected and was approved by the Health and Safety Joint Consultative Committee on 15th March 2012 which included trade union representation.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

9. None

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

10. The policy ensures that all employees affected by this risk will have appropriate access to the full gamut of suitable and sufficient control measures.

Risk Assessment

11. The absence of a consistent approach to this set of workplace hazards increases the risk of employee ill-health, subsequent staff absence costs and potential litigation. The council always seeks to lead by example in standards of employee health and safety.
12. A specific risk assessment is incorporated into the policy to help managers ensure that suitable control measures are identified and subsequently implemented.

Financial Implications

13. It is anticipated that the introduction of this policy will be broadly cost neutral. Services are already funding local arrangements but without the benefit of any economy of scale. However the anticipated saving from using a single provider may be balanced by an increase in numbers if the awareness of the service is significantly raised by the introduction of this policy.
14. Suitable providers across Wiltshire have been asked to provide details of costs and the council is well placed to secure a competitive rate once risk assessments have been undertaken and the scale of the demand has been confirmed.
15. It is intended that funding responsibility will remain with each service enabling local budget management control to be retained. This will also encourage a proactive and diligent approach to risk assessment avoiding any temptation to adopt an unnecessary and costly blanket approach to the vaccination of whole staff groups.
16. The avoidance of staff absences and litigation as well as the avoidance of any reputational damage to the council has a positive but undeterminable financial effect.

Options considered

17. None

Recommendation

18. To recommend that Staffing Policy Committee approve the new procedure.

Paul Collyer
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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: Various