

First aid at work stakeholder meeting, 2 May 2008

Redgrave court, Bootle

Summary note of meeting

Attendees

- David Arnold, Patrick Spry – Association of First Aiders (AoFA)
- Peter Pocock, Ian Irwin – Association of Independent First Aid at Work Training Organisations (AIFAWTO)
- Ian Kershaw, Paul Walker – Federation of First Aid Training Organisations (FOFATO)
- Audrey Edwards, Steve Best – First Aid at Work Council (FWC)
- Elaine Wilde, John Lavery – Qualifications and Curriculum Authority/ Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (QCA/ Ofqual)
- George Brown – Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- Janet Hulbert, Steve Cressey – EDI/ ASET
- Peter Baker (Chair), Dil Sen, Richard Elliott, Mark Woods, Andrew Moore, Richard Moss, Christine Bethell, Sheila Brennan – Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Overview

Peter Baker introduced the meeting and emphasised the need for change and the potential advantages for:

- employer duty holders in accessing competent first aid, providing a proportionate response to their first aid needs and reducing burdens on business;
- first aiders in building or adding to a portfolio of skills and introducing them to lifelong learning;
- first aid training providers in presenting the opportunity to deliver a range of courses leading to QCA/ SQA accredited qualifications and influencing the standards and quality of general first aid training.

Dil Sen presented an overview of the findings of the recent consultation exercise followed by consideration of the implementation plan working towards delivery of the changes to first aid training and approval arrangements.

There was a period of discussion during which a number of legitimate issues were raised by training provider organisations, particularly in relation to the QCA/ SQA Awarding Bodies offering the emergency first aid at work (EFAW) qualification. These included:

- the potential for dual standards between HSE approved training providers and Awarding Body approved training centres;
- the cost of gaining Awarding Body approval;
- the administration associated with Awarding Body approval;
- monitoring standards;
- funding.

Key points made in discussion

During the discussion, all participants had the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions. The following points were emphasised:

- HSE will remain the standard setting body for first aid at work (FAW) and EFAW.
- HSE has discussed costs with the QCA, SQA and Awarding Bodies. Both cost and administration should not present a significant impediment to training centres gaining approval with an Awarding Body. While costs may vary between Awarding Bodies, a training centre may expect to be charged around £400 for initial approval and a certification fee of approximately £15. Depending on the number of courses delivered, the certification fee will cover the cost of annual monitoring.
- HSE is working with the QCA, SQA, Skills for Health and Awarding Bodies to ensure that HSE's requirements are met for both the standard of training and monitoring of approved training centres, in delivering EFAW.

Overall, the meeting was positive and the following points were confirmed:

- By the end of the meeting, valid issues raised by stakeholders were addressed by participants. Having fully considered the points made and responses to them, HSE intends to progress the QCA/ SQA model for new training providers wishing to run EFAW courses.
- The date for introducing the changes to first aid training arrangements will be **1 October 2009**. This is the date from which employer duty holders will be expected to implement the changes.
- Awarding Bodies will work towards establishing the EFAW qualification from 1 April 2009 so that training centres can obtain approval in advance of 1 October 2009.

In closing the meeting, Peter Baker stressed that HSE would have to focus its limited resources to achieve the desired outcomes by 1 October 2009. HSE needed the help and cooperation of all of the industry representative bodies to do this, and that success relied on all groups working positively and constructively together with HSE to achieve this goal.