Introduction
As part of the rolling Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing (OHSW) audit programme, Head Teachers were invited to meet with a Health and Safety Advisor to review their Schools health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) management arrangements.

The purpose of the health, safety and wellbeing audits were to:
- Highlight areas of good HSW management
- Identify areas where further action may be required to raise standards of health and safety; and,
- Provide advice and support to the Head Teacher and staff

This supports the business, and enables the School and Council to meet its legal obligations. The Council has a responsibility to set standards for HSW in Schools and monitor that these standards are being met. The School has a responsibility to meet these standards.

Summary
All infant, junior and primary schools which are the responsibility of the local authority were audited between October 2015 and July 2016. All have received an individual report. The main findings of the programme as a whole are set out in the report below.

Encouragingly, a high number of infant, primary and junior schools did extremely well with the health, safety and wellbeing management of their school. The schools also achieved a higher overall risk rating than the previous audit programme undertaken. This is evident that the schools have a positive and committed approach to managing health, safety and wellbeing in their schools.
Generally good arrangements were in place to manage health, safety & wellbeing, however, evidence to demonstrate this was sometimes not in place.

Each school was given a risk rating broken down by section. Overall all schools were judged green/good – apart from 6 judged yellow – some action required.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that each school completes the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Leadership Check and Plan, with Governors, on a regular basis as part of a self audit. This will assist schools to identify and rectify any gaps and set a clear direction for managing HSW in the school.

It is then advised that an action plan is developed to assist the school to coordinate HSW management systems, arrangements and ensure continuous improvement. The HSW action plan should be based on:

- Recommendations within the individual school report
- Building services and equipment maintenance/servicing regime (inclusive of the school kitchen)
- The review of risk assessments and safe systems of work.

It is also important that Schools work to formalise existing systems to enable them to demonstrate the positive work already being undertaken.

This will support the school to prevent accidents and incidents to those who may be affected by the schools environment or activities, prevent prosecution and litigation.

Below are **key recommendations** which were consistent in most schools:

- **Policy, Planning, Monitoring**
  It was evident from the Health, Safety & Wellbeing audits that some schools did not have the Leadership Check & Plan in place, despite being implemented by the Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team in 2012. There are some gaps in the HSW in some schools and the Leadership Check and Plan would enable schools to identify and rectify any gaps and set a clear direction.

- **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Training**
  Gaps were identified in health, safety and wellbeing training for Head Teachers/Managers and employees. It is recommended that schools undertake a training needs analysis to indentify what training is required. At a minimum all employees should receive ‘Health, Safety and Wellbeing Awareness Training’, whether this is undertaken locally or the school uses the OHSW team to deliver this training. Managers should also consider ‘Managing Health, Safety and Wellbeing’ Training. Since the HSW Audit School Programme, there has been an increase in schools attending Health, Safety & Wellbeing training, according to Learning & Development.

- **Contractors and Suppliers**
  Whilst some schools use the Council arrangements for engaging and managing Contractors and Suppliers via Assets and Commercial Services some schools choose to engage and manage directly. Where the schools engage their own contractor(s), evidence for ensuring the contractor(s) has been assessed prior to engagement is not always in place. To ensure responsibilities are met, robust systems for contractor management need to be put in place; from pre-engagement,
ensuring contractor competencies with regards to health and safety, agreeing safe systems of work and monitoring the contractor(s) to the agreed safe systems. The OHSW intranet has guidance and templates to support schools with this. In addition to this, a link for the guidance and template has been incorporated into the HSW audit reports, enabling schools to have access to the intranet to access the information required.

- **Accident & Incident Reporting**
  Generally, schools are reporting accidents and incidents, however, previous and current accident & incident statistics proved that some schools were under-reporting. During the audit programme, advice was given to each school regarding the procedure and process of reporting. In addition to this, the link for the accident and incident form and accident flowchart was incorporated in the HSW audit reports.

- **Fire Precautions**
  All schools had fire risk assessments in place, with two or three schools fire risk assessments being out of date. These gaps were flagged up and identified during the health, safety & wellbeing audit. Recommendations were made in the audit report for schools with out of date fire risk assessments, to ensure that these was put in place.

  Any premises which does not have a current fire risk assessment, is in breach of the **Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 (RRFSO)**. Failure to have a comprehensive and up to date Fire Risk Assessment in place could result in prosecution.

  Useful information and guidance for fire safety management can be found on the OHSW intranet, which also has templates to support schools.

- **Control of Substance Hazardous to Health (COSHH)**
  Most schools had COSHH assessments in place, in addition to this; some schools had obtained COSHH data sheets. The COSHH assessment is based on the data sheet together with how the substance is used. The purpose of this assessment is to support the school in adequately controlling the risk if exposure can not be prevented. COSHH assessments are undertaken to ensure the safety of those who may be exposed to hazardous substances. Encouragingly, most schools have used the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) COSHH Essentials Tool, which will assist the schools to form their risk assessments. The link to the HSE’s COSHH Essentials Tool has been incorporated into a small number of HSW audit reports, enabling schools, who do not currently have the assessment in place to use this tool to assist them.

- **Risk Assessment**
  In general, schools have suitable and sufficient risk assessments in place for significant hazards. However, there are some gaps, in particular for Caretaking activities, including the use of power tools, manual handling, violence & aggression and workstation DSE assessments. These gaps were flagged up during the school HSW audits and recommendations were made in the audit report, enabling schools to follow these recommendations to ensure that the risk assessments were put in place.

- **Personal Safety of Staff**
  It was identified that a small number of schools did not have risk assessments in place to assess for significant hazards, in particular for lone working and violence & aggression. The Domestic Violence Employee Policy was incorporated into the HSW
audit reports for each school half way through the audit programme. Helen Jenner, Corporate Director of Children’s Services wanted information and the link to the Domestic Violence Employee Policy to be part of the audit report. During the audit, the Domestic Violence Policy was explained to Head Teachers and School Business Managers. This has been well received by schools and the information about the policy has been placed on information boards in some schools and the policy discussed and circulated to staff for information and support.

- **Manual Handling**
  A small number of schools were not aware of the Manual Handling Guidance, which is available on the staff intranet. Links for the guidance was incorporated into the HSW Audit reports, where the schools were able to gain access to the document. In addition to this, manual handling training was not provided to a number of Caretakers and Site Managers.

- **Employee Wellbeing**
  It was identified at the HSW audit that a small number of schools did not provide sufficient employee wellbeing provisions for staff, such as the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), or services to improve staff wellbeing. The Pressure & Resilience risk assessment was not always in place in some schools. This was encouraged during the audit, with some schools understanding the importance for the Pressure & Resilience risk assessment need to be carried out. The Remploy free and confidential Mental Health service was explained to Head Teachers and School Business Managers at every HSW audit. An electronic version of the Remploy leaflet was attached to each HSW Audit report. In addition to this, the LBBD Occupational Health 30 minutes health check leaflet was attached to each HSW audit report. Some schools have taken up the Remploy services, as well as the 30 minutes health check.

**Outcomes**

The Head Teacher and Corporate Director should ensure that the contents of this report are discussed and shared with health and safety employee representatives/trade unions and taken to the relevant Departmental Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Every audit recommends that the Head Teacher as Duty Holder assigns appropriate actions to named individuals, with timescales for completion, of recommendations.

Finally, we would like to thank all Schools for their assistance with this audit programme and the department management team for their support.

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