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First-Aid in Practice, (specifically with reference to the change in HSE requirements and the implications for employers).

Paul first gleaned that of the 35 attendees today, 9 had a valid first-aid certificate - a healthy proportion - and that defibrillators were available in 5 member organisations.

Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations

The current Regulations were issued in 1981. Changes are now being introduced following the review produced by Professor Regnar E Löfstedt in 2011. The practical implications for business are:

- ✚ To establish First-Aid needs in a business, and
- ✚ Select appropriate training to meet business needs.

The review found many positives about Health and Safety Culture within the UK. Three are relevant to this presentation:

- ✚ The existing regulatory requirements are broadly right with regard to Health and Safety
- ✚ Regulations place responsibilities primarily on those who create the risks
- ✚ A number of factors drive businesses to go beyond what the regulations require and beyond what is proportionate.

Key Change to the Regulations

The HSE have removed the requirement for them to approve the training and qualifications of appointed first-aid personnel. This means that organisations will now have the flexibility to choose training providers who will offer what is right for their workplace, and possibly reduce costs. Professor Löfstedt wanted to give back ownership and responsibility to companies to look at their own risk assessments and the dangers specific to their environment, such as working at height, use of chemicals, and hot works. These contrast with the relatively low risks posed by office environments.

However, compliance with the **amended Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981** is still the gold standard and all training must meet these regulations.

Establishing Training Needs

If, as a company, you are looking to source a first-aid training provider, how would you go about it and what are your choices? Firstly, each organisation

must carry out a 'first-aid needs' assessment, the findings of which will become the foundation for due diligence.

Training Due Diligence

Due diligence checks include:

- the qualifications expected of trainers and assessors
- monitoring and quality assurance systems
- teaching and standards of first-aid practice
- syllabus content
- certification

Qualification Options

Providers either:

- ✚ offer **Regulated** qualifications. These are delivered by training centres recognised by a regulated 'Awarding Organisation' (AO).
- ✚ operate under voluntary accreditation schemes; or
- ✚ operate **independently** of any such scheme.

Paul commented that those who are non-regulated are not necessarily any less competent.

Awarding Organisations

AOs are regulated by the qualification regulators (Ofqual, SQA or the Welsh Government) and they must have dedicated quality assurance processes to approve and monitor their recognised training centres. Registered centres are subject to validation procedures and tutors are required to provide evidence of professional standards and CPD.

Independent Qualification Schemes

If using a non-regulated organisation, responsibility for due diligence falls to each business (with an awarding organisation the vetting has already been done for you). So the employer should satisfy themselves that training meets the amended 1981 First-Aid Regulations.

Regulated Training

Typically, this will be either:

- 1 day Emergency First-Aid at Work (EFAW) Level 2
- 3 day First-Aid at Work (FAW) Level 3 (used to be a 5 day course)

Other training for specialist needs include:

- Paediatric First-Aid
- AED Training (Automated External Defibrillator)

Summary

- ✚ The changes have been effective at challenging organisations to closely assess first-aid risks and to be clear on the level of first-aid provision that is appropriate for them according to the size of their organisation, the scope of their business, number of employees and nature of the environment.

✚ The use of a regulated Awarding Organisation is, for many organisations, one prudent way to manage first-aid risk.

Members' Comments

Mark Hoare made the point that tailoring of first-aid courses is very important in order to match the needs of particular workplaces and specific risks.

Lee Dargue raised the point that mental health was now being given increasingly more prominence and **Mental Health First Aid England** is a body that offers an educational course which teaches people how to identify, understand and help a colleague who may be developing a mental health problem.

Another member added that in many businesses mental illness has now outstripped first-aid and many more people are at risk of stress-related illness than slips, trips and falls.

George concluded that mental health in the workplace could very well be a worthwhile subject for a future Members' Corner slot and thanked Paul for his most interesting presentation.