

Scottish Qualifications Authority

Policy name: SQA Health and Safety Policy

Policy author: Simon Parsons

Policy owner: Jacqui Faulds

Business area owner: Facilities Management

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SQA Health and Safety Policy

SQA has always been concerned for the health and safety of employees and under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 has a statutory duty to them and to others. The Act is primarily designed to promote safety awareness and an effective safety organisation. It places not only duties on employers but also duties on employees.

Health and safety in the working environment is the responsibility of every member of SQA, from the Chief Executive to the most junior member of staff. It is part of good management to ensure that every job in SQA is done safely as well as efficiently. Protection is largely a matter of common sense and application of the general instructions outlined in this Policy.

The main purpose of an effective health and safety policy is to ensure the safety of all staff and visitors. We must also ensure that safety is recognised as everyone's personal responsibility. Careful thought and imagination, with appropriate action, will reduce considerably the risks of injury or damage.

SQA recognises its responsibility to:

- ◆ provide and maintain equipment, systems of work, places of work and working environments which are safe and where risk to health is minimised, taking into account statutory regulations
- ◆ make arrangements designed to ensure the safety and absence of risk to health arising from the use, handling, storage and transport of all articles and substances
- ◆ provide such information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to promote the health and safety at work of all its employees
- ◆ provide appropriate first aid facilities
- ◆ bring to the attention of all employees their statutory obligation and the need for their continuing interest in the support for health and safety at work
- ◆ provide an environment which is safe and where risk to health is minimised for any visitors to the premises

SQA will allocate the necessary resources and enlist the active support of all employees to ensure the above responsibilities are met.

The policy statement, the organisation and arrangements will be reviewed and amended from time to time as deemed necessary.

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| Why do we need this policy? | To clearly specify SQA's aims and objectives for the management of health and safety and to outline the role of management and staff in the compliance of health and safety legislation. |
| Which parts of SQA are affected? | All employees, including temporary staff. Visitors and contractors. |
| What does the policy apply to? | The maintenance of safe systems of work and procedures to ensure compliance with current health and safety legislation. |
| What support is available to help SQA implement this policy? | Support and advice on this policy area is available from Facilities Management. |
| Partnership | This policy and its procedure have been developed in partnership with SQA's Recognised trade unions and in accordance with the Partnership Agreement — <i>Forward Together</i> . |

SQA Health and Safety Policy

1 Policy statement

The Scottish Qualifications Authority recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer to provide a safe and healthy workplace and working environment for all of its employees.

SQA will do everything it can to meet this responsibility, paying particular attention to:

- ◆ provide a safe place of work and healthy working environment
- ◆ provide and maintain plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe
- ◆ provide arrangements designed for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
- ◆ provide sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision designed to enable all employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own safety and health at work
- ◆ provide appropriate first aid facilities
- ◆ provide and maintain sufficient welfare facilities
- ◆ consult with employees on matters affecting their health and safety
- ◆ review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals

The arrangements outlined in this policy document and the various safety provisions made by SQA cannot in themselves prevent accidents or ensure safe and healthy working conditions. Only good working practices will secure safety. Every reasonable step will be taken to reduce hazards to a minimum but all staff should understand that their own safety, and that of others, also depends on their individual conduct and vigilance.

2 Legal responsibilities

SQA has taken note of the provision of Section 3(i) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which says that:

‘It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety’ and recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of others using its premises.

3 Policy aims

The aims of this policy are:

- ◆ to promote health and safety awareness to our staff
- ◆ to ensure compliance with current health and safety legislation
- ◆ to help minimise the number of workplace accidents

4 Organisation

Overall responsibility

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the provision and maintenance of standards necessary to achieve compliance with the policy statement outlined in Section 1. In this capacity she will ensure implementation of the policy and in particular:

- ◆ ensure that all necessary procedures are established
- ◆ initiate all necessary instruction and training programmes with the assistance of Organisational Development
- ◆ check periodically that all relevant guidelines and procedures are fully implemented by SQA staff
- ◆ put procedures in place designed to ensure that all managers fully understand and carry out their responsibilities under the SQA Health and Safety Policy
- ◆ keep the SQA Health and Safety Policy under review and adapt and amend whenever necessary with the assistance of the Facilities Manager

Managerial responsibilities

The members of the Executive Management Team are immediately responsible for the health and safety of members of their staff and those temporarily on the premises. They are also responsible for the protection of any SQA property and premises under their control.

All Heads of Service have a duty to ensure that all staff have adequate knowledge of their responsibilities at all times. Each Head of Service will therefore:

- ◆ ensure that all managers and supervisors understand and implement the SQA Health and Safety Policy
- ◆ establish procedures and provisions, wherever necessary, to ensure the safety and health of all persons under her/his control
- ◆ make periodic checks to see that procedures are being properly carried out
- ◆ ensure that the provisions and procedures relating to the safety, health and welfare of staff under her/his control are fully known to all staff under their control
- ◆ acquaint new staff with health and safety procedures

- ◆ report any accident or incident of a serious nature to the HS&E Officer (Health, Safety and Environmental Officer) to ensure that appropriate records are made and preventative steps taken
- ◆ consult and discuss health and safety matters with members of staff — this can be done directly or through the Health, Safety and Environmental Committee but in all cases should be done before the introduction of new technology and/or methods of work

Head of Facilities Management

It is the specific responsibility of the Head of Facilities Management to:

- ◆ ensure the maintenance of the provisions and procedures relating to health and safety within the premises
- ◆ ensure the premises are periodically inspected, internally and externally, at least annually and immediately after any layout changes. This inspection should be recorded on an Annual Inspection Form and corrective actions should be completed within the specified time
- ◆ comply fully with procedures published in this policy and ensure that all contract staff are conversant and comply with the laid down procedures
- ◆ report regularly to the Executive Management Team and the Board of Management on all matters relating to health and safety
- ◆ recommend changes which could lead to improvement and ensure implementation of those that are accepted
- ◆ monitor the work of the Health, Safety and Environmental Committee

Health, Safety and Environmental Officer

The Health, Safety and Environmental Officer is responsible for the day to day administration of all health and safety matters. It is his responsibility, on behalf of senior management, to ensure that SQA complies with all current health and safety legislation. He acts as the liaison between management and staff for all health and safety issues and advises, manages and leads on any necessary changes to procedures that may become necessary. He will also:

- ◆ act as the Responsible Person under the management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- ◆ undertake risk assessments and specific fire-risk assessments
- ◆ identify any specific health and safety issues
- ◆ identify/request training requirements, eg manual handling, ladder safety, floor marshalls
- ◆ arrange the agenda for, chair and liaise with, the Health, Safety and Environmental Committee

Staff responsibilities

Every member of staff has a responsibility to ensure their own safety and that of others. Careful thought and imagination, with appropriate action, will reduce considerably the risks of injury or damage.

It is the responsibility of all SQA employees to:

- ◆ make themselves familiar with the provisions of the SQA Health and Safety Policy
- ◆ make themselves familiar with the organisation and arrangements in force for compliance with the policy
- ◆ comply with all published procedures of SQA relating to health and safety
- ◆ co-operate fully with SQA and others in the implementation of such procedures
- ◆ bring to the attention of his/her line manager any process, situation or other circumstances which in their opinion constitutes a hazard
- ◆ take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions

Health, Safety and Environmental Committee responsibilities

SQA has an established Health and Safety Committee comprising representatives from all buildings and trade unions. This committee will meet regularly to discuss health and safety matters in line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 and other relevant legislation. The recognised trade unions may appoint employees as safety representatives to act for the employees in consultation with SQA. Those appointed must have worked for SQA for a minimum period of two years or have had at least two years' experience in similar employment.

5 Arrangements: accident procedures

Prevention

Accidents do not always happen to other people — you could be next. Everyone must increase their safety consciousness to minimise the risk both to themselves and to others.

Each person has a role to play in accident prevention. It is your responsibility to:

- ◆ behave at all times in a safe manner, comply with any safety instructions and information given to you, and follow safe working practices at all times
- ◆ keep your work area clean and tidy and free from obstructions and fire hazards
- ◆ avoid trailing cables across walkways
- ◆ report any damage or worn carpet tiles, handrails and stairs to Facilities Management

- ◆ by visibly checking make sure that all office furniture and equipment is suitable for its purpose and in good condition and report any defects to Facilities Management
- ◆ use the correct equipment and tools for the job you are carrying out and report any defects or faults that may lead to an accident or cause personal injury immediately to your line manager
- ◆ make sure you have observed and understood the operating instructions prior to using office equipment — any maintenance and repairs to office equipment such as computers, telephones, photocopiers, fax machines etc must be left to suitably qualified people arranged through Facilities Management
- ◆ clean up any spillages and avoid walking on wet floors

Please remember — never take unnecessary risks and do not be afraid to ask questions about methods of work, equipment or substances which affect you.

6 Reporting

All accidents on SQA premises, no matter how minor, must be reported to the Health, Safety and Environmental Officer. The injured person must also make an entry into the Accident Record Book which is required to be kept under current legislation. Accident books are held by Facilities Management in Optima and Lowden.

Any incident (eg trip, fall, damage to property etc) which does not result in an injury should also be reported to the immediate line manager. The circumstances of such an incident can then be investigated to enable action to be taken, where relevant, to prevent recurrence. An Accident Near Miss Alert Form is available for this purpose in Find a Form which, when completed must be sent to Facilities Management.

To enable SQA to fulfil its obligations under the regulations as well as those imposed by the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979, two Internal Accident Report Forms have been introduced and are attached as Appendix 1 (Personal Injury) and Appendix 2 (Damage to Property). An 'Accident Report Form' should be completed by/for each occurrence the same day as the incident in respect of all but the most trivial of accidents occurring at work. (Note: 'near misses' should also be recorded). These forms are available in the Forms Database and should be e-mailed to the Health, Safety and Environmental Officer the same day as the accident. Any accident occurring on the premises should also be reported to the Head of Human Resources by immediate line manager.

In addition, in the case of a fatal accident, or accident resulting in hospital treatment, or dangerous occurrences, the immediate line manager (if available) and the Facilities Manager must be advised by telephone immediately.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR) Regulations 1995 require the reporting of work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences and apply to all workplace activities, but not to all incidents. All serious injuries (including any injury which results in absence from the workplace for a period of more than seven days) have to be reported to the appropriate authority. Facilities Management will complete the necessary reporting paperwork, where this is required, and submit this under the regulations to the enforcing authority.

COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)

There are certain liquid or solid materials in use in the offices which may be hazardous if handled or stored incorrectly, eg they could give rise to flammable or toxic vapours or be liable to cause skin irritation from contact. Notice should always be taken of any manufacturer's instructions or written warnings as to usage/storage, or any SQA procedures which may be in force for these substances.

It is the responsibility of the business area to identify all substances used which need a COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessment. All materials listed as toxic, harmful, corrosive or irritant will be assessed at six-monthly intervals by the Health, Safety and Environmental Officer. Certain very low risk substances (eg washing up liquid) will only require an annual assessment.

An external specialist will be consulted if, by the very nature of the substances involved, a competent assessment cannot be carried out.

7 Emergency evacuations

Bomb threats

Most bomb threats turn out to be hoaxes but our policy is to treat each case as 'real' and evacuate the premises using our established fire drill procedures and to take Police advice on search/re-entry. A possible exception could be when the caller is a child or when background noises (eg laughter) might suggest a joke, but in every instance Police advice on search procedure will be sought. The Police advice to us will depend on a number of factors and it is therefore essential to give as much information as possible. The details on the Bomb Threat Checklist (available in the Forms Database) should (as far as possible in a difficult situation) be completed by the recipient of any bomb threat as soon as practicable after the event. This form is available in the Forms Database and should be e-mailed to the Facilities Manager on completion.

If the call is received from the Police, a newspaper or similar authority, the evacuation drill will be followed and this must be the practice wherever there is doubt.

In most cases a bomb threat will almost certainly be received via the helpdesk but could be received on any telephone. Once the threat has been received the member of staff must quickly ask a few details such as where the device is located, its appearance and when it is due to go off. They should then disengage from the conversation and alert a member of senior management. Normal evacuation procedures will be implemented and Police alerted. Depending on Police advice, an alternative assembly point may be designated for additional safety reasons. However, the first priority is to safely evacuate the premises. A Director or Head of Service will consider the implications and dangers of evacuation and in consultation with the police, decide whether to:

- ◆ evacuate and search the building before re-entry
- ◆ search without evacuation
- ◆ ignore the message

Fire evacuations

Fire Action Notices giving instructions to be followed in the event of a fire are displayed on noticeboards throughout SQA premises. Notices are building specific and staff should make themselves familiar with all buildings they may have cause to work in and/or visit. Evacuation routes and fire fighting equipment are routinely inspected and maintained.

Fire alarms are tested on a weekly basis:

- ◆ Optima — Mondays at 10am
- ◆ Lowden — Mondays at 10am

Suspect packages

All staff who are likely to receive mail must be constantly alert for the possibility of such packages.

Any suspicious incident must be notified to the Facilities Management immediately, who will advise on whatever action is necessary.

Suspect packages are not likely to be in large parcels but in a flat letter approximately 150 x100 mm, weighing up to four ounces or in packets the size of a book or mobile phone. They could contain either explosives or biological or chemical contaminants. These packages are designed to cause harm on opening and suspicious packages should therefore be carefully examined, paying particular attention to the following:

- ◆ delivery — it may have been delivered by hand from an unknown source or posted from a unusual place
- ◆ wrapping — if a package, it may have excessive wrapping
- ◆ writing — there may be poor handwriting, spelling or typing
- ◆ source — it may be wrongly addressed or come from an unexpected source
- ◆ stamps — there may be too many stamps for the weight of the package

Suspected explosives

Further evidence of an explosive device could be any of the following:

- ◆ stains — grease marks on envelopes or wrapping
- ◆ smell — an unusual odour such as marzipan or machine oil
- ◆ holes — pin-points that may be wire, visible wiring or tinfoil, especially if the package is damaged
- ◆ weight — the envelope or package may feel heavy for its size
- ◆ balance — the weight distribution may be uneven; the contents may be rigid in a flexible envelope
- ◆ rattle — may indicate a loose part

Whenever a suspect explosive package is received it must be placed out of reach of all persons. The room should be cleared of staff, locked and the incident notified immediately to Facilities Management who will take whatever action is necessary.

Suspect contaminants

Further evidence of a contaminated package could be one of the following:

- ◆ visible crystals or powder
- ◆ smell — an unusual odour such as bleach or battery acid

Whenever a suspect contaminated package is received, the area the package is in must be secured and quarantined along with any person or persons who have had contact with the package. The incident must be notified to Facilities Management immediately, who will take whatever action is necessary. For quarantine purposes it is unlikely that any suspect package will get beyond the Mail Room. All Mail Room staff have received training in dealing with suspect packages.

8 First Aid

Trained first aiders are provided at both buildings and their locations are displayed on noticeboards. Suitably stocked first aid cases are held by first aiders for use when required.

A further first aid box is located at reception.

In the event of an accident/illness which cannot be treated by a first aider, the appropriate emergency services will be contacted.

No drugs of any description will be dispensed from the first aid box or via a first aider. Likewise, no antiseptic will be used for the treatment of cuts or grazes.

Defibrillators are located at Lowden and Optima receptions. All first aiders have been trained in their use.

9 Housekeeping

Access and means of escape

Adequate and safe access to the premises are provided and will be properly maintained. Exits and means of escape must be kept clear and unobstructed at all times. Fire doors are designed to resist the passage of fire when closed, so they must never be left open.

Electrical appliances

Only electrical equipment provided by SQA may be used in SQA premises. Portable appliance testing (PAT) is carried out at appropriate intervals by a suitably trained person. All equipment is clearly labelled with the last PAT test date.

Regular visual checks should be made on electrical equipment and any defects reported to Facilities Management, who will arrange repair/replacement.

Electrical leads and telephone wires

Staff must ensure that wires do not trail across corridors or other places where people could trip over them. This is particularly important where equipment is only used occasionally or on a temporary basis. Damaged or worn cables, poorly fitted plugs etc should be reported immediately so that repairs can be arranged.

Managers must ensure that their areas are periodically inspected. No office layouts should be changed without liaising with Facilities Management.

Floors, passageways and stairs

All floors, stairs and corridors should be kept free from obstruction and from any substance likely to cause slips. Facilities Management will ensure that all areas are of sound construction and properly maintained. Staff should not run within SQA buildings as this can lead to accidents. The only exception to this is where a life-threatening situation occurs.

Handling and storage of materials

Articles must be stored so they will not fall from a height. A high standard of tidiness is required in all storage areas. Only places designated for storage must be used for this purpose. Access to articles stored out of reach must be by the use of ladders or kick-stools. All ladders must be checked periodically and any defects notified to Facilities Management.

Staff should not carry excessive weights or bulky items likely to cause themselves injury. Lifting should be done by bending the knees rather than by bending over. The strain is then taken by the leg muscles and not the back

muscles. A back injury is easily sustained and can be long-lasting and incapacitating in its effects. Manual handling training is provided regularly by Facilities Management. Leaflets on the correct handling of heavy/bulky items are available from Facilities Management and are also displayed on notice boards.

10 Plant and equipment

Facilities Management are responsible for ensuring that all plant which requires maintenance (routine checks, servicing, thorough examinations) is identified and that the maintenance is carried out. Records of these checks and details of any follow-on work is held by Facilities Management.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that any new equipment meets health and safety standards and that all necessary maintenance checks etc are carried out and recorded. They must also ensure that staff have been trained on the use of the equipment and that they do so in a safe manner. Any defects must be notified to the appropriate manager immediately.

Where safety guards are supplied/fitted, these must be used at all times. Many items of office equipment are totally enclosed in their normal operating conditions. Protective panels should not be removed by staff to carry out minor repairs, even where it clashes with the interests of productivity.

Staff must wear protective clothing where this is provided and follow the instructions regarding its use. Anti-cut gloves are provided for use when using safety knives.

Lifts

Passenger lifts will be regularly maintained. When the lifts are out of use adequate notices stating this will be displayed outside the lift doors. Notices giving details of emergency action to be taken if the lift stops between floors are displayed inside the lifts.

Mobile devices

Mobile devices are issued to staff who can demonstrate a clearly defined business need.

Hand-held mobile phones/Blackberries must never be used when driving. Phones should be switched off or diverted to voicemail before beginning a journey. Although safety of employees is our first priority, under Government legislation it is an offence to hold a mobile phone while driving.

11 Risk assessments

Display screen equipment eye tests

Although there is no evidence that using display screen equipment (DSE) causes eye damage, SQA is anxious to ensure that all users are comfortable with their

visual environment. Where your optician considers corrective spectacles are required for work on DSE, SQA will make a contribution towards the cost. A DSE Form and claim procedures can be obtained from the Facilities Management office in Lowden.

General risk assessments

General risk assessments will be undertaken by Facilities Management and from time to time with assistance from safety representatives. The Facilities Manager will be responsible for approving the action required to remove/control risks and for ensuring the changes are implemented. The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to the Health, Safety and Environmental Committee and will be posted on the HS&E portal for staff to see at any time.

Fire Risk Assessments

Fire risk assessments are carried out annually on each SQA building. Details of the risk assessment are published on the HS&E portal.

New and expectant mothers risk assessments

Working conditions generally considered acceptable may no longer be so during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. There is a requirement for an individual, specific risk assessment to be carried out on new and expectant mothers, and for this to be reviewed throughout the pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

Risk assessments will be carried out on a self-assessment basis and it is important that any advice received from your doctor or midwife, that could impact on the assessment, is highlighted during this process. Some possible risks might be:

- lifting/carrying loads
- standing or sitting for long periods of time
- workstations and posture
- travel, particularly flying

Risk assessments should be carried out as early in the pregnancy as possible and all information received will be treated confidentially. Self-assessment forms are available from Human Resources or Facilities Management. Facilities Management will evaluate the risk assessment and take any follow-up action necessary.

Workstation risk assessments

Workstation risk assessments must be undertaken by staff via a screen-based self-assessment. Facilities Management will administer the system and process any follow-up action necessary.

Assessments will be reviewed at timescales to suit the procedure involved or when the work activity changes.

Specific travel, lone workers, home workers and drivers risk assessments will be undertaken and updated periodically. These and other risk assessments are posted on the H,S & E Portal where further detailed information is also posted.

12 Security

Car parks

Staff using the car parks do so entirely at their own risk. Therefore, cars should always be locked and normal precautions taken to prevent theft of personal belongings.

Access to the car park at the Optima Building is by means of a security fob system, which operates the automatic gate. Thereafter, access to the building is via the main stairwell.

Safe walkways and crossings are provided to allow pedestrians to use the safest routes when moving within the car park areas. Drivers are asked to note these pedestrian routes and to take due caution to prevent injury to pedestrians entering or leaving the car park areas. A 5 mph speed restriction must be observed when entering, leaving and within the car park areas.

General security

Each member of staff will be issued with a photo ID access card. These badges are issued for identification purposes and to allow access to restricted areas. ID badges must be worn at all times whilst in the building and lost badges should be reported to Facilities Management.

Temporary staff will be asked to register at reception each morning before being issued with a temporary card that will allow them to access internal restricted areas. They should also sign out when leaving the building at the end of each day and deposit their badge. Depending on the duration of the temporary contract, a photo ID badge may be issued.

No member of the public or personnel attending meetings will be permitted free access to any part of the buildings. All visitors/contractors will be asked to register at reception before being directed to the appropriate floor or member of staff. Visitors and contractors will be issued with appropriate badges when they register at the reception area and staff should be vigilant to ensure that these badges are worn at all times while on the premises.

Any member of staff, such as security staff, who has to work in any of our buildings alone, must adhere to a personal protection plan, previously agreed with their line manager in conjunction with Facilities Management.

Any person calling at a building with a general enquiry will not be permitted access to working areas of the premises. The Receptionist will contact an appropriate member of staff who should speak to the visitor at reception or in a

more appropriate area if the enquiry is of a personal nature. In the latter event, the visitor must sign the visitor register and collect a visitor's badge.

The visitor should be escorted back to reception and not left unattended within the building at any time.

At weekends the Lowden and Optima SQA receptions are staffed by security staff and visitors must sign in and out in the normal way. It is the responsibility of the meeting organiser to ensure this is complied with.

All staff must be vigilant to ensure that no person by-passes the security system. If members of staff are in any way suspicious of a visitor they should contact Security immediately.

Lowden and the Optima Building are protected by closed circuit television systems which cover the reception areas, front entrances and car parks.

Personal possessions

Staff are strongly advised to avoid leaving cash or personal items of value unattended at their workstation — especially handbags or wallets. It is advisable to avoid bringing personal items of high value into the office and to always make use of locker facilities or locked desk drawers, which provide limited protection. In common with all commercial organisations it is SQA's policy not insure against loss through theft of personal possessions.

Smoking

In line with the Smoking Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Prohibition of Smoking in certain premises (Scotland) Regs 2006 legislation, no smoking is permitted within any SQA building or within the perimeter of the building, apart from the designated smoking shelter provided at Lowden. No smoking is permitted in any office vehicle.

13 Training

General

Organisational Development in conjunction with HR will, in its induction programme for new and temporary employees, ensure that basic training is given covering both health and safety at work and fire and safety evacuation procedures, in line with this policy. Managers will instruct their staff on health and safety issues specific to their area of work.

Technical

Designated first aiders will receive the appropriate training which will be provided by a specialist agency. Manual handling training is available on request from Facilities Management. Managers should ensure that all staff who lift or move heavy/bulky items during the course of their work receive this training. It is the

responsibility of Heads of Service to identify any specific health and safety training requirements.