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Ref: GD:003:04	RE: Health and Safety Consultation – Guidance for the Establishment of Local Health and Safety Committees		
Issue date:	November 2016	Revised Date:	July 2020
Author(s):	National Health and Safety Function		
Consultation With:	National Health & Safety Function & Quality Improvement Division		
Responsibility for Implementation:	All HSE Line Managers		
Note:	<i>The information provided is for general guidance only, should you require more specific advice please contact the Health & Safety Help Desk. The management of any occupational safety and health issue(s) remains the responsibility of local management.</i>		

Introduction

Over recent years the health service has placed an emphasis on quality, staff and service user safety by developing an infrastructure for integrated quality, safety and risk management. The aim is to achieve excellence in governance for quality and safety (HSE, 2016). Under priority 2 (Employee Experience) of the *People Strategy* the HSE redefines ‘engagement as a continuous approach embedded in services and teams, and fosters an environment that supports employee engagement and co-production working with stakeholders in defining, designing and delivering change’ (HSE, 2019).

In line with this commitment, the HSE actively promotes and supports employee engagement when establishing arrangements for securing co-operation in the workplace on all matters pertaining to safety, health and welfare. Consultation will be made in advance and in a timely manner to allow employees to consider, discuss and provide opinion on matters before managerial decisions are implemented (HSE Corporate Safety Statement).



Context

In accordance with Section 26 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and in line with HSE Governance arrangements as outlined in the HSE Corporate Safety Statement, a Safety Committee is established by local management (Local Senior Managers/Line Managers as appropriate) to include a balanced representation of management, staff and Safety Representatives. The number of members provides for a compact and workable group. In smaller facilities the role and functions of the Safety Committee are incorporated into and clearly defined in the Terms of Reference of Team Meetings.

Purpose

This document provides guidance, sample terms of reference and other useful resources for services to adapt when establishing local Health and Safety Committees.



Guidance for the establishment of Local Health and Safety Committees

Purpose - Local Health and Safety Committee

The main purpose of the local Health and Safety Committee is to provide a forum that facilitates employee participation on the steps taken to safeguard their safety, health and welfare within the workplace.

Objectives - Local Health and Safety Committee

Identify a set of goals that the Committee plans to achieve. To be most effective objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART), within the scope / remit of the committee.

Examples include:

Monitoring

- The quality and safety of the local service measured through proactive risk management processes including risk assessments, risk registers, incident analysis and investigation reports, HSA Correspondence, etc.
- Representations made to the employer
- Staff Training
- Implementation of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) arising from:
 - Level 2, National audit reports
 - Level 1, ward / department level audit reports
 - Claims / costs

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/safetywellbeing/healthsafetyand%20wellbeing/audits.html>

Identifying Trends

- Accident / incident statistics
- Areas of excellence

Assurance

- Legislative requirements are complied with
- Risk assessments are completed in consultation with employees and actions escalated where necessary
- Policies, procedures and guidelines are available to staff and being adhered to

Key Performance Indicators

- Revision of Site Specific Safety Statement
- Reduction in incident numbers
- Reduction in reportable occurrences
- Increase in % staff receiving statutory health and safety training
- Increase in resources expended on health and safety
- Increase in number of self-assessments (level 1 audit)
- Reduction in the number of non-compliances
- Reduction in cases of occupational injury
- Reduction in claims and costs



Role of the Safety Committee:

In accordance with Section 26 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and in line with HSE Governance arrangements a Safety Committee shall be established by local management (Local Senior Managers/Line Managers as appropriate) to include a balanced representation of management, staff and Safety Representatives. The number of members shall provide for a compact and workable group. In smaller facilities the role and functions of the Safety Committee may be incorporated into, and clearly defined in the Terms of Reference of Team Meetings.

The Safety Committee shall assist the HSE and employees in relation to the implementation of the relevant statutory requirements.

The Committee shall have clear terms of reference that specify the roles of the committee and the conditions under which it will function. It shall meet regularly under a specific agenda which should include the monitoring and review of, and the consideration of action on, the following:

- Any representations made to the employer, to include representation from the Safety Representative(s) on any matters relating to safety, health and welfare
- The implementation of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) arising from audits (see <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/safetywellbeing/healthsafetyand%20wellbeing/audits.html>)
- Information relating to incidents, dangerous occurrences and instances of occupational ill-health at the place of work
- Progress reports on the implementation of risk assessments and the Site Service Safety Statement
- Implementation of the health and safety training programme and review health and safety training reports
- The promotion of activities on safety and health at work and wellbeing programmes
- Compliance and recommend actions that will improve the effectiveness of the local safety management system
- The integration of safety, health and welfare into each respective service
- Local Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in line with HSE objectives to measure compliance with legislation
- The effectiveness of consultation arrangements regularly

Please note where integrated committees exist ensure that staff safety, health and welfare is afforded appropriate time to address all relevant issues at each meeting and receives appropriate action.



Membership of the local Health and Safety Committee

In accordance with Schedule 4 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (Appendix 1), the Safety Committee shall consist of balanced service wide representation of Managers, Employees and Safety Representatives (where appointed). It is imperative that senior management (see note 1 below) are represented in order to facilitate the decision making process. The number of members on the Safety Committee should be representative to facilitate a workable group (please refer to Appendix 1) and include representation from those working in high risk areas. It is recommended that Employee participation on the Safety Committee is rotated as this raises awareness and promotes engagement by including a wider group of people.

Membership of the Safety Committee: (non-exhaustive list)

- Senior Manager¹ Department Heads
- Employee representatives
- Safety Representatives
- Appropriate support service representation e.g. Occupational Health, Health and Safety, Quality/Safety/Risk (as required)
- Administrative support

Note 1:

It is within the remit of the management of each site /service to determine who, at high level would be best placed to chair the committee and discharge the functions as set out above. The key purposes of the role are governance, escalation, coordination and consultation. This person shall have the appropriate level of seniority and have access to resources to deliver on the functions of the role.

Accountability of the Safety Committee

The chair of the Safety Committee is accountable to the Executive Quality and Safety Committee and where this committee does not exist, to the management team. A clear organogram mapping how the committee sits within the overall governance and accountability arrangements of the service should be developed and documented in the site or service safety statement. A sample organogram can be found in Appendix 2.

¹ This person shall have the appropriate level of seniority and access to resources to deliver on the functions of the role.



Frequency and Duration of Meetings

The frequency, duration and times of meetings shall be agreed by members of the Safety Committee and be identified during the development of the Terms of Reference. There is a provision in the legislation that safety committees should not meet more frequently than once every three months and the duration should not exceed one hour.

Setting the Agenda

The agenda should be set in consultation with safety committee members, taking into account issues identified by the Executive Quality and Safety Committee or management team and circulated in advance of each meeting accompanied by any supporting documentation. To improve efficiency, topics should be arranged in line with objectives. Please refer to Appendix 4 for a sample agenda.

Reports

In line with the objectives of the Safety Committee, the content and frequency of reports to be agreed with the Executive Quality and Safety Committee or management team. Please refer to Appendix 5 for sample report template.

Performance

The Safety Committee should clearly identify the quality indicators and outcomes that will be measured by the Executive Quality and Safety Committee or management team to ensure that the committee is performing effectively. Performance measures could include:

- Percentage attendance of members
- Review the progress of the group – how well are they operating? How do they feel they are performing? How do others feel they are performing?

Approval and Review Date

The Terms of Reference are prepared in consultation with the Executive Quality and Safety Committee or management team, communicated and agreed by members of the local Health and Safety Committee. The terms of reference should be reviewed annually. Please refer to Appendix 3 for Sample terms of reference.



Appendix 1 Schedule 4 Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005

Section 26

1. Should they so wish the employees employed in a place of work to which *section 26* applies may select and appoint from amongst their number members of a safety committee to perform the functions assigned to safety committees under this Act
2. The number of members of a safety committee shall not be less than 3 and shall not exceed one for every 20 persons employed in a place of work at the time when the committee is appointed or 10, whichever is the less
3. Where pursuant to *paragraph 2* the number of members of which a safety committee is to be comprised is:
 - 4 or less, one member of the committee may be appointed by the employer, and the remaining members of the committee may be selected and appointed by the employees,
 - Not more than 8 and not less than 5, 2 members of the committee may be appointed by the employer, and the remaining members may be selected and appointed by the employees, and
 - More than 8, 3 members of the committee may be appointed by the employer and the remaining members may be selected and appointed by the employees
4. Where, in a place of work, a safety representative or representatives have been appointed under *section 25*, at least one such safety representative shall be selected and appointed by the employees to be a member of the committee
5. Where a safety committee is appointed under section 226 the following provisions shall have effect :
 - The safety committee shall assist the employer and employees concerned in relation to the relevant statutory provisions,
 - The quorum for a meeting of a safety committee shall be such number, being not less than 3, as shall for the time being be fixed by the committee,
 - Where a member of a safety committee ceases to be employed in the place of work concerned, he or she shall at the same time cease to be a member of the committee,
 - The employer shall be entitled to attend personally, or to nominate a person or persons to attend on his or her behalf at each meeting of the safety committee,
 - The employer or his or her nominee or nominees shall attend the first meeting of the safety committee and shall, as soon as may be after it is available, present to the members of the safety committee the statement required under *section 20*, and
 - The safety committee shall consider any representations made to it by the employer on matters affecting the safety, health and welfare of persons employed in the place of work

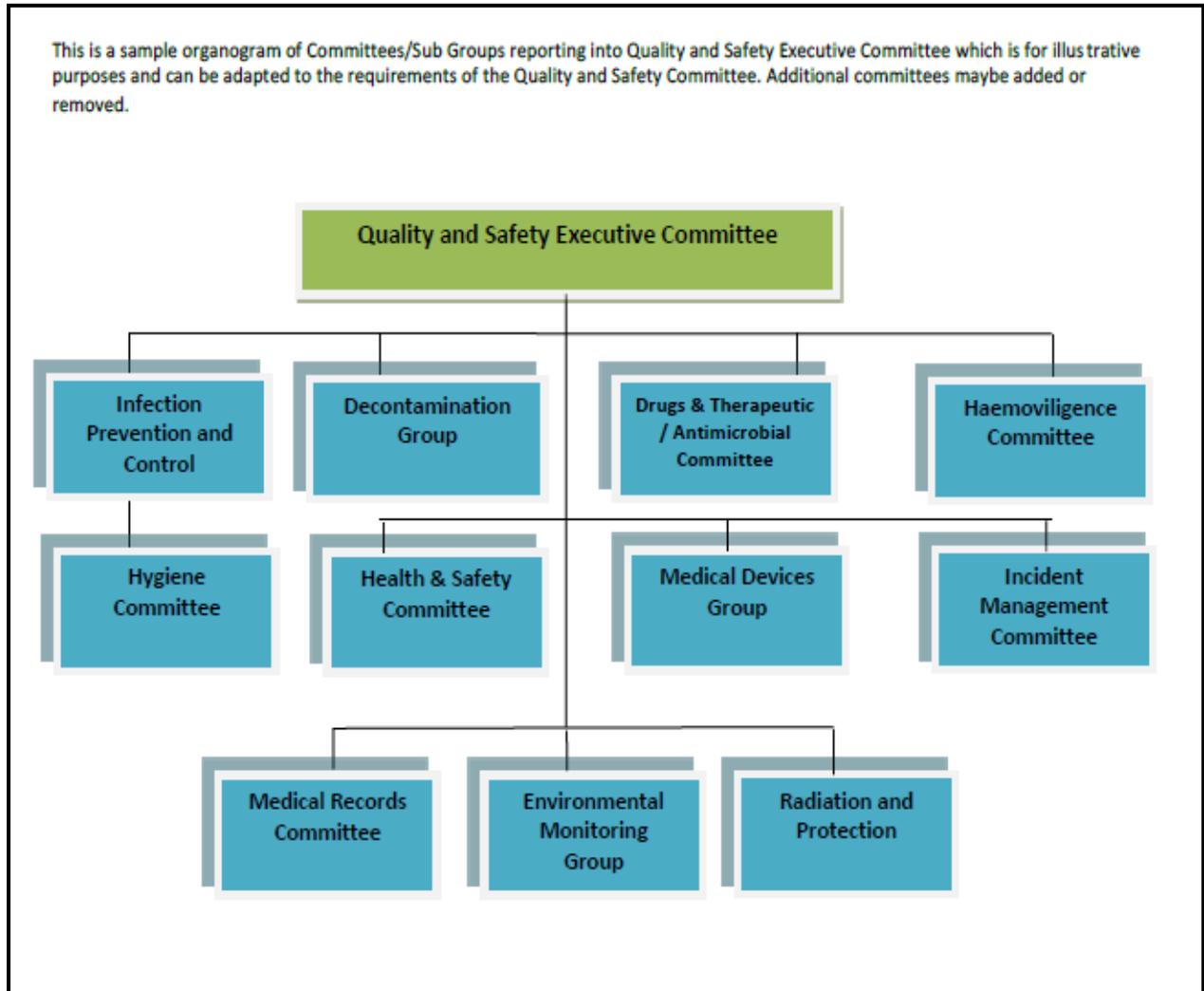


6. On a request being made in that behalf by a safety committee, the employer shall consult with the safety committee with the object of reaching agreement concerning:
 - (i) Facilities for holding meetings of the safety committee, and
 - (ii) The frequency, duration and times of meetings of the safety committee

7. Subject to the terms of any agreement between the employer and a safety committee, meetings of the safety committee shall be held from time to time on such days as the committee shall decide and such meetings may be held during normal working hours, without loss of remuneration to the members of the committee if the following conditions are satisfied, namely:
 - (i) Except in the case of an emergency such meeting shall not be held more frequently than once every three months;
 - (ii) The duration of each such meeting shall not exceed one hour;
 - (iii) The number of members of the safety committee attending such a meeting shall be at least such as is required to form a quorum, and
 - (iv) The times at which the meetings of the safety committee are held shall be compatible with the efficient operation of the place of work



Appendix 2 Sample Organogram





Appendix 3 Sample Terms of Reference

1. Purpose
 - Aim
 - Objective
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Membership
4. Accountability and Reporting Relationships
5. Frequency of Meetings
6. Reports
7. Performance
8. Administrative Support
9. Approval and Review Date



Appendix 4 Sample Agenda

1.	Minutes of Previous meeting & matters arising		
2.			
a	Risk Assessments & non clinical risk register		
b	Departmental Self Assessments		
c	Dangerous Goods		
d	Audit Reports (QIPs)		
e	Monitoring		
f	Budget for safety		
g	KPIs		
3.			
a	Incident reporting		
b	HSA correspondence		
c	Safety alerts		
d	Procurement		
4.			
a	Training		
b	Representations		
c	News and events		
5.			
a	Report to Quality and Safety Executive		
6.	AOB		
a			
7.	Schedule of Meetings		
a			



Appendix 5

Sample Report template for committees reporting to the Quality and Safety Executive Committee or Management Team

Report prepared by: _____ (Chair)

Sub-committee name: _____

Date: _____

Identify	<p>Report Prepared For: <u>Quality and Safety Executive /Mgt Team</u></p> <p>Report Prepared By: _____</p> <p>Specialty/Committee: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p>
Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please attach the changes to the Terms of Reference /Committee’s most recent Terms of Reference • Committee’s key priorities for the last 12 months / Progress made on achieving priorities • Please list local PPPGs developed and updated by the committee
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress made on achieving priorities • Risks Identified by the committee recorded on a local risk register
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external reports monitored by the Health and Safety Committee • Quality Improvement Initiatives currently in progress • Key Quality Indicators developed and monitored by the committee • Risks Identified by the committee recorded on a local risk register
Recommendations to the EQSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please include risks identified for escalation to the Executive Quality and Safety Committee



Appendix 6

References

- Health Service Executive Corporate Safety Statement Available at <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/safety-statement.html>
- Health Service Executive (2016) Quality and Safety Committees – Guidance and Resources, Quality Improvement Division, available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/governancequality/gqcommittee/>
- Health Service Executive (2016) Guideline Document on Safety Consultation and the Selection / Election of Safety Representatives, Available at <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/safety-consultation-and-safety-representation.html>
- Health and Safety Authority (2016) Safety Representative and Safety Consultation Guidelines, Dublin, Health and Safety Authority.
- Health Service Executive(2019), People Strategy 2019-2024 available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hrstrategiesreports/people-strategy-2019-2024.html>

Legislation

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005: S.I. No. 10 of 2005