

**News release: 'Employee attitudes represent greatest challenge for social care professionals implementing health and safety policies': NASHiCS research**

Employee attitudes represent the greatest challenge for social care professionals in implementing health and safety policies, according to research conducted by the National Association for Safety and Health in Care Services (NASHiCS). When asked to rate by greatest difficulty, over a fifth (20.9%) highlighted employee attitudes, compared with just over a tenth (10.9%) marking operational and practice, and under 5% (4.7%) staff skills and training. The association polled 300 professionals in the social care sector by email in April 2013, in advance of its Learning and Development Forum on June 20 in Manchester.

Other key findings include:

- Almost a third (31.7%) report that financial resources devoted to health and safety are being reduced.
- Nearly one in ten (8.9%) do not provide accident statistics, and a fifth (20%) do not provide accident investigation reports, for senior managers.
- A total of 8% find health and safety compliance guidance 'confusing'.
- Over 85% (85.4%) rate the impact of negative publicity surrounding the sector as challenging (65.9% Somewhat challenging; 19.5% Significantly challenging.)
- Fire safety tops the list of health and safety concerns (57.1%). Followed by: medication errors (19%), challenging behaviour (14.3%); Legionella (4.8%); scalding (2.4%) and nutrition (2.4%).

Comments Chris Jackson, national chairman of NASHiCS, 'This research suggests some interesting but worrying trends.

'First, that employee attitude problems rate so high in comparison with possibly more obviously 'fixable' problems such as operational processes and skills training. This suggests possible weaknesses in both recruitment processes and people management, and a need for further questioning of the efficiency of these systems.

'Second, that there appears to be an information gap in many organisations, where senior management are not receiving appropriate frontline reports regarding health and safety incidents. Not only that, but a further finding is that less than a fifth (17.9%) of ceos/directors are involved in back to the floor visits, again suggesting that they may be lacking knowledge of the 'real' situation and are relying on reports which are short of important details.

'Third, although the figure is just 8%, that a significant number of professionals find health and safety policy confusing. This is a concern given the emphasis that the Health and Safety Executive has recently put into providing guidance. Additionally, respondent comments supporting the ranking of fire safety as top concern indicate that this is a major area of confusion.

'Finally, that malnutrition ranks low on the list of concerns indicates a need for greater understanding of the way in which nutrition impacts on wellbeing health and safety

'A number of these issues will be addressed at the Learning and Development Forum. Key sessions tackle fire safety, emotional intelligence, malnutrition and standards. Additionally, a presentation by Margaret Flynn, serious case review chair of the Winterbourne View Castlebeck investigation, will provide insights into the broader spectrum of health and safety issues.'

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Note to editors:

The National Association for Safety and Health in Care Services (NASHiCS) organises the UK's only dedicated learning and development forum for everyone with a responsibility for health and safety in social care. It features expert speakers, breakout sessions, exhibition networking, a safety risk

helpdesk and awards luncheon. Key speakers for 2013 include: Margaret Flynn - Serious Case Review Chair, Winterbourne View Castlebeck; Professor Gillian Leng – NICE; and Sarah Waller – Programme Director, King’s Fund. The event takes place at the Concorde Centre at Manchester Airport on June 20. [www.nashics.org](http://www.nashics.org)