

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

LCHS4001

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The role i chose was that of a health and safety advisor within the trade union. The health and safety advisor plays a key role in ensuring that the working environment is safe for staff, visitors and customers. This role involves monitoring the workplace environment, ensuring it complies with legal requirements, and acting as a representative for the employees' health and safety concerns. In this role safe workplace practices and good wellbeing practices will be promoted.

One of the main responsibilities of this role is conducting risk assessments which would identify hazards within the workplace, such risks may include unsafe manual handling practices and the usage of faulty or broken equipment such as ladders or rails. The assessments must be carried out in line with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, which places a legal duty of care the employers to protect its employees (UG Government, 1974). The Health and Safety Executive emphasise that a fundamental part of preventing workplace accidents and injury is carrying out risk assessments (HSE,2023).

Another important duty in this role is to investigate accidents and incidents within the workplace. An example of this is an employee is using a pump truck to transport boxes from the stock room to the sales floor and it is over filled, the boxes then fall off an hits the employee in the head, as an advisor an investigation would have to be carried out to ascertain the cause of the incident and recommend preventative methods. This would have to be reported under RIDDOR and guidance from the HSE (HSE, 2013). Promoting safe working practices and delivering training is also a part of the job role also working along with

the union which is USDAW to ensure staff concerns are addressed. these concerns can be useful when developing policies which would highlight any risks including mental health and stress, these are increasingly being recognised within the workplace as hazards (World Health Organization, 2020).

I found the following skills very essential for the role as a health and safety advisor, Communication, this is essential because as an advisor it is important to convey complex safety information clearly for both staff, union representatives and management to understand especially when presenting findings and reports. This skill is vital because ineffective communication can cause issues such as misunderstanding health and safety practices which could lead to an increase of accidents within the workplace.

Analytical and problem-solving skills are needed to assess risks and investigate incidents effectively for instance, if several staff report incidents the advisor would have to assess whether it is a result of poor training or faulty equipment, therefore recommendations would have to be made upon identifying the root cause of the incident for improvements. Evidence based problem solving is a key principle in improving healthcare safety (NICE, 2021).

The most important skill in this role would be having a strong understanding of the legislation which would ensure compliance with the law, an example of this would be to ensure that employers carry out their duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, which outlines a safe system of work. it will also be important when advising staff of their rights in the event of non-compliance which could lead to penalties and in some cases harm. understanding legislation allows advisors to apply safety standards effectively (UK Government, 1974).

Due to the importance of the fore mentioned skills, it is very important to improve and keep them updated. Some strategies which could be used to improve these skills are as follows; to improve communication skills attend communication training when available, this will help to develop clear verbal pronunciations and written communication, thus improving the ability to explain procedures. It is important, where possible to seek feedback from colleagues as this will help to identify any weakness and improve communication. It will give insight as to how the message was received and understood and if the accurate context was used. Health and safety advisors regularly communicate with a wide range of individuals so care has to be taken when communicating as each group may interpret it differently. For example, if a training course is being conducted it would be important the correct message is being delivered so the correct procedure is in place and understood, so after the course feedback could be sought from the attendees to ensure that the correct information was received. the feedback will determine whether the communication was understood correctly. This also contributes to a safer working environment which is the aim.

Practice regular risk assessments, this helps to build practical knowledge, easily identify hazards, evaluate risks. This also helps to build confidence when carrying out tasks and eventually this repeated practice will improve the ability to recognise both obvious and less visible risks, which may include staff fatigue and poor layout of workspaces. Revise past cases this can help to improve recognition of any patterns, which will help in future decision making, for example if multiple incidents occur in the same area, this may indicate a deeper problem such as inadequate staffing or poor housekeeping. Learning from past cases is supported by guidance given from the Health and Safety Executive, which emphasises the

importance of investigating incidents and using the findings to prevent any future reoccurrence (Health and Safety Executive,2023). Complete any problem-solving training as this will help to maintain and improve knowledge. Training course can provide techniques that can be used for analysing and identifying causes so informed decisions can be made. This training could include risk management training, incident investigation and decision making under pressure. Ongoing training is also important as laws and regulations can change overtime and updated knowledge is key in remaining effective in the role.

Always keep Improving knowledge of health and safety legislation by staying updated with guidance and any changes that may be made to the laws. Attend courses and workshops which would improve understanding of legal responsibilities. Review policies from legislations such as Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, Health and Safety Executive and USDAW. Regularly reviewing workplace policies is essential and it also improves knowledge of the legislation, but it also put both theory and real-life practice together. Many work policies and procedures are based on the legal framework of such legislations as the Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, it is then adapted to suit the organization.

To conclude, the role of a health safety advisor the role of a health and safety advisor requires a combination of key skills to ensure safe working environments and protect employees. The three essential skills identified—communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and knowledge of legislation—are all critical to performing the role effectively. Communication enables the advisor to clearly share safety information and influence staff behaviour, analytical skills support accurate risk assessment and incident investigation, and knowledge of legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, ensures that all practices meet legal requirements.

The strategies discussed, including seeking feedback from colleagues, practising regular risk assessments and reviewing past cases, completing problem-solving training, and studying workplace policies, all contribute to strengthening these skills. These strategies are effective because they combine practical experience, continuous learning, and reflection, allowing the advisor to improve their performance over time. Guidance from organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive highlights the importance of ongoing development and learning from workplace experiences to maintain high safety standards (Health and Safety Executive, 2023).

Overall, developing these skills through targeted strategies ensures that a health and safety advisor can confidently identify risks, communicate effectively, and ensure compliance. This ultimately contributes to safer working environments, improved staff wellbeing, and a stronger safety culture within the organisation.

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