

Spotlight

on Health & Safety

eZine

June 2023

Understaffing

A Health and Safety Matter

Management is responsible for ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of their staff. In assessing risks to staff it is reasonable that if there are insufficient numbers of staff required to complete the work that the knock-on effect could be detrimental to staff that are present.

As Health and Safety Reps we can request the complement of staff for our local workplace, this information will advise if there is any understaffing. If you have discovered that there is significant understaffing, you should convene a health and safety committee meeting.

At this meeting you can ask management:

- How they intend to manage understaffing to protect the health, safety and welfare of their staff?
- Have they developed a plan, and can it be shared?
- Will there be a priority status of work that will be completed and a list of work that will not be able to be completed?
- How will they inform staff of their plan and how often will it be re-assessed?

In assessing the plan and its ability to protect our members there needs to be a clear regard for health and safety. It should state clearly what pieces of work will no longer be completed and that there are sufficient resources (staff) to complete the work that they are stating will be completed.

It should state that a review should take place at a point in time or sooner if staff levels reduce further.