

# How to choose a competent Health and Safety consultant

## Information for Employers and Duty Holders

### Why might you need support from a Health and Safety consultant?

Employers have a legal responsibility to appoint one or more competent persons to help with Health and Safety. Whether you decide to have someone inside or outside the organisation, or a combination of both, it is vital that they are competent to do the job.

Many organisations have an in-house professional to manage Health and Safety. That way they have someone who is familiar with the organisation's operations. However, in smaller organisations this isn't always possible. Additionally, in all businesses, whatever their size, there are times when getting outside help can support the in-house Health and Safety manager.

#### An external Health and Safety consultant can:

- Provide fresh thinking on good practice.
- Help you to ensure safety is 'designed in' to new processes.
- Deliver specialist training.
- Provide specialist support in areas outside the competence of in-house professionals, such as fire safety, COSHH, etc.
- Help with investigating accidents or incidents.
- Help with external accreditation with ISO 45001 or SSIP schemes.

### What is a competent consultant?

Competence is a mixture of experience, skills, knowledge and qualifications, as well sector expertise. Potential clients may want to check a consultant's competence and will find it easier if they appoint a Member of a professional body such as IOSH, the Chartered professional body for Health and Safety or BOHS the professional body for Occupational Hygienists who provide support in dealing with occupational health risks.

#### A competent consultant will:

- Have relevant experience, knowledge, skills and qualifications.
- Have the ability to apply the above appropriately, recognising the limits of their competence.
- Undergo training and other professional development activities to maintain their competence.

#### The IOSH Members' Code of Practice commits consultants to:

- Ensure that they are competent to undertake proposed work.
- Undertake appropriate continuing professional development.
- Ensure that they make clients, employers and others who may be affected by their activities aware of their levels of competence.

We would be happy to discuss how our Competent Person support can help you. Please contact David Paveley at [davidpaveley@pragmaandassociates.co.uk](mailto:davidpaveley@pragmaandassociates.co.uk) or by phone on 01302 499050.

Pragma