

ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE

Purpose

1. This report provides details of the council's health and safety performance during the period October 2012 – September 2013 and sets out the planned areas of work for the future reporting period. The re-introduction of an annual performance report was a recommendation of the audit undertaken by the corporate health and safety service earlier in 2103. It is intended to inform the corporate leadership team about key indicators and trends and to obtain its endorsement of the plan to address areas in need of on-going attention.

Background

2. The report covers the health and safety of our employees and of the customers and members of the public we provide services to. It relates to all work activities under the council's direct and indirect control for which the council has a statutory duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated legislation.
3. It includes schools and non-schools workplaces and is timed to provide a convenient reporting period for schools.
4. All of the information relating to accidents in this report is based solely on that reported through the proper and agreed reporting systems. There will have been events that have not been reported or have been misreported. Efforts continue to minimise these omissions and errors.
5. All of the statistical data and graphs are best viewed on screen using the 'return to contents' link to navigate.

Main Considerations for the Council

6. It has been a successful year for the council and the Health and Safety Service with:
 - a reduction in the majority of trend patterns of accidents and, more significantly, incidence rates;
 - an absence of any enforcement action from the Health and Safety Executive;
 - a positive assessment from the South West Audit Partnership;
 - very high customer satisfaction feedback.
7. It has also been a year in which the H&S Service has successfully supported FM and the Transformation and Property Services teams to achieve corporate goals of shared workplaces and partnership working.
8. Quarterly information reports have been introduced to give Service Directors and Heads of Service greater detail than ever regarding localised health and safety performance.
9. Health and safety performance has been integrated into the corporate appraisal procedure.

10. The H&S Service has successfully set up trading arrangements with 50% of all Academies, generating new income of over £17,000. Total H&S earned income achieved through subscription services and training courses for the period is >£27,000.
11. These positive performance results are set amongst the context of a downsizing of the team creating savings well in excess of £100,000; and an increase in additional duties brought about by the restructuring of other services.
12. National benchmarking is still relatively unscientific in respect of comparing like for like but from the raw 2012 data available it does appear that Wiltshire is performing well in comparison with other unitary authorities. Figures for 2013 are not yet available from the benchmarking group.

Key statistical data

13. 401 incidents/accidents to non-school employees were reported of which 39% related to violence or aggression towards staff.
14. 329 incidents/accidents to school employees were reported of which 53% related to violence or aggression towards staff.
15. In both settings, the challenging behaviour of customer/client/student was cited as the predominant contributory cause.
16. 189 accidents to non-employees were reported in the non-school sector and 82 from within schools.
17. 122 near misses were reported in the non-school sector and 35 from within schools. This represents a significant increase in near miss reporting brought about by changes to the coding system and a specific campaign geared towards identifying near misses.
18. 18 incidents involving employees and 5 involving non-employees needed to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the RIDDOR Regulations.
19. 104 workplace audits were carried out in this period which highlighted good practices and provided information for managers to address any shortcomings.
20. 599 training places were provided. The customer evaluations show a staggering 99.8% satisfaction rating.

Financial Implications

21. Minimisation of accident rates helps to avoid the costs associated with staff absences, service delivery disruption, litigation and fees for HSE intervention.

Legal Implications

22. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and The Health and Safety at Work Act set out the expectations of a suitable infrastructure to address health and safety and establish the broad duties of care that must be met. Any significant failing in meeting this legislation would leave the council vulnerable to Corporate Manslaughter legislation in the event of a work-related fatality.

Safeguarding considerations

23. Safety measures are in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults as much as employees. All episodes involving the use of physical force to control children or vulnerable adults as part of a health and safety incident are reported and passed onto the appropriate team for monitoring and further action if necessary.

Public health implications

24. None

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

25. None

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

26. Sound health and safety management helps support reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and customers and ensures a consistent standard is applied across all workplaces and activities.

Risk Assessment

27. The corporate risk register currently has an amber rating against workplace health and safety but with direction of travel towards green.
28. The reduction in the potential for violence and aggression to employees must remain the main corporate priority in continuing the downward trend of accidents and incidents.
29. The safety management of learning outside of the classroom (primarily school trips), the responsibility for which has now transferred to the corporate health and safety service, will become the second most significant area of review and development.
30. Other priorities based on risk assessment will include:
 - a. employee well-being
 - b. musculo-skeletal hazards
 - c. lone working
 - d. increasing use of volunteers
 - e. shared workplaces
 - f. commissioned services

Other Options Considered

31. None

Conclusions

32. The evidence presented indicates that health and safety is generally well managed at Wiltshire Council and that the Health and Safety team is a high-performing service.
33. Performance indicators are positive and the corporate risk register shows that the ongoing direction of travel is towards green RAG rating.
34. The issue of violence and aggression towards staff in the course of their duties remains a significant concern and must be at the forefront of on-going work with services and individuals.

Proposals

35. It is proposed that Staffing Policy Committee acknowledges the positive outcomes within this report and approves it.

Reason for Proposals

36. To continue the proper safeguarding of the health, safety and well-being of those within the council's duty of care and to retain the confidence of those groups.
37. To avoid criminal and civil litigation including Corporate Manslaughter legislation.
38. To minimise personal, financial and reputational losses.

Report author: Paul Collyer

Job title: Head of Occupational Health and Safety
