



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Health and Safety in Wokingham Borough Council

Annual Report 2015/16

FOREWORD

As a local authority one of our statutory duties is to regulate health and safety in other workplaces and, as such, we feel it important we set a good example to others and one way we do that is through this report. For over a decade now Wokingham Borough Council has produced and shared publically its annual report outlining internal health and safety performance and priorities, along with that of our community schools as a whole.

We place great importance on protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees and others as we continue to take a sensible and proportionate approach to health and safety management. As an organisation we firmly believe in learning lessons from accidents, incidents and other performance related information, sharing good practice internally, and, where possible, externally.

There has been a change to the format of this report this year, not only to make it more straightforward and easier to understand but to also bring it up to date with the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) latest guidance in relation to the management of health and safety. The 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' approach treats health and safety management as an integral part of good management generally, rather than as a stand-alone system; the sections of this report have been aligned to reflect that model, outlining the key elements of the Council's health and safety management system and the progress made during 2015/16 against our corporate plan for internal health and safety.

As every successful organisation knows, a positive health and safety culture is reliant on the commitment and participation of the entire workforce; as I do with every annual report, I take this opportunity to acknowledge everybody's input and efforts passing on a particular note of thanks to the many individuals across the organisation who make additional contributions by carrying out valuable roles such as first aiders, fire wardens and risk assessors.



Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive
Wokingham Borough Council

PLAN

Wokingham Borough Council (the Council) is committed to providing its employees with safe working conditions and having effective arrangements in place for the management of health and safety. Our aim is to set and maintain sensible and proportionate standards of health and safety management to protect our staff and those others who may be affected by our activities; in doing so we can also minimise losses to our Council, both financial and reputational, from work-related ill health and injuries.

The Council's health and safety policy is reviewed and updated each year; jointly signed by the Chief Executive and the Wokingham Borough Mayor, the policy signals the Council's commitment to health and safety and sets out the direction for service departments and our community schools to follow.

Roles and responsibilities for health and safety are defined and a framework for managing health and safety has been put in place.

DO

Corporate Leadership Team

The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) leads on the overall direction for internal health and safety and monitors progress of the Council's three year health and safety plan. The Finance and Resources Director, along with an Elected Member have been designated as the leads for internal health and safety matters.

Health and safety consultation with employees

In addition to consultation arrangements at the local level, changes to policies, plans or decisions affecting the health, safety and welfare of employees are discussed by two parallel central committees consisting of workforce and management representatives. The quarterly Corporate Works Council for service employees is chaired by the Chief Executive whilst the Council's Head of Learning and Achievement is the Chair of the Schools' Workforce and Health and Safety Committee which meets on a termly basis.

Provision of competent advice

In-house health and safety professionals are on hand to provide technical advice on all aspects of health and safety at work to assist and enable CLT, managers and Headteachers to discharge their health and safety responsibilities.

Training

Based on identified needs, training in the core health and safety competencies is delivered by either in-house trainers, external specialist training providers or via an e-learning platform; examples of the courses available centrally include: risk assessment; fire warden, first aid; asbestos awareness and managing team

stress. Where technical, job specific health and safety training is required this is organised at local level.

Framework for health and safety management

Linking to the three year plan in which the overall priorities are determined by risk, the Council's framework for health and safety management converts the health and safety policy into action; it includes, amongst others, arrangements for occupational health, risk management, incident reporting and investigation.

Progress during 2015/16 against the corporate plan for health and safety included the following:

- completion of the schools' seeking health and safety assurance programme; a process involving guided self-evaluation supported and supplemented by a corporate review
- follow through on the health, safety and welfare issues raised by staff in the services' 2015 Employee Engagement Survey
- promoting and better enabling the reporting of incidents, accidents and near miss events
- a review of the Council's arrangements for protecting staff from the risks associated with lone working and violence at work

CHECK

Incident Reports

It is our internal policy for all accidents and incidents (no matter how minor), work-related ill health and near miss events to be formally reported, investigated and for suitable remedial action to be taken.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) require certain specified work-related accidents to be reported to the HSE.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team undertake the routine monitoring of all incident reports to enable the wider identification of emerging trends and to ensure actions to prevent recurrences are appropriate, proportionate and timely. In addition, statistical data is reviewed by management and staff groups.

Where incidents of a more serious nature occur investigations are more exacting and extensive and as such are overseen by the Corporate Health and Safety Team to ensure that the root cause(s) are established with suitable follow up action identified and taken.

During 2015/16 no enforcement action was taken against the Council for breaches of statutory health and safety duties nor were any Improvement Notices or Prohibition Notices served upon the Council by the HSE.

Incidents – Services

Table 1 shows the total number of reports raised by service employees across a three year period.

Table 1 the total number of reports by service employees across a three year period

Type	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Deaths	-	-	-
RIDDOR - specified injury	-	1	-
RIDDOR – over 7 day injury	-	1	2
Minor injury	32	40	33
Near miss events	12	11	8
Verbal abuse	1	-	1
Work related ill health	-	-	-
Total	45	53	44

Note. 2015/16 service employee numbers = 1,100 – 1,200

During 2015/16, service employees reported a total of 44 incidents; although a reduction on the previous year, in comparative terms across the three year period the numbers of reported incidents for this element of the workforce have remained relatively static. Of the 44 incidents, 33 resulted in minor injuries such as bruising, cuts, sprains and strains whilst 9 were non injury events that presented the organisation with opportunities to learn lessons. There were three injury incidents that had the potential for a RIDDOR notification of which two required a report to the HSE.

25 reports relate to employees working with children and young people with learning and/or physical disability disabilities, all of which resulted in minor or no injuries. Good reporting of incidents in such areas helps inform individual care plans and risk assessments to help protect all concerned.

RIDDOR reports – services

Table 2 shows the total number of RIDDOR reportable events relating to Council services across a three year period.

Table 2 the total number of RIDDOR reports for services across a three year period

RIDDOR Category	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Deaths	-	-	-
Specified injuries to employees	-	1	-
Over 7 day injuries to employees	-	1	2
Occupational diseases	-	-	-
Dangerous occurrence	-	1	-
Injuries to non-workers	1	1	1
Total	1	4	3

When comparing reporting trends year on year, the number of RIDDOR reports within the Council's service areas remains comparatively static.

In relation to the employee injury RIDDOR reports, both incidents resulted in over 7 days incapacitation; one due to a manual handling injury whilst working outdoors on a Council site, the other a fall within a Council workplace.

For comparison purposes, the provisional national statistics produced by the HSE for employees working in public administration in 2014/15 gave an average RIDDOR reported injury rate of 254 per 100,000 employees; the equivalent reportable injury rate for Council service employees was 171.7 in 2015/16, a figure significantly lower than the most recent published national average.

The one non-employee injury RIDDOR report during 2015/16 related to a child who received hospital treatment following a finger entrapment incident in respect of a door on Council premises.

Incidents – Schools

Table 3 shows the total number of reports raised by employees in community schools across a three year period.

Table 3 the total number of reports by school employees across a three year period

Type	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Deaths	-	-	-
RIDDOR - specified injury	2	3	1
RIDDOR – over 7 day injury	1	-	-
Minor injury	124	270	352
Near miss	4	13	15
Verbal abuse	-	-	2
Work related ill health	-	-	-
Total	131	286	370

Note. 2015/16 school employee numbers = 3,300 – 3,400

During 2015/16 employees in community schools reported a total of 370 incidents, 29% up on the previous year. The incremental increase in reporting levels over the three year period continues to represent the positive reporting culture in special schools that cater for the often complex and challenging requirements of pupils with special educational needs. In the majority of cases the outcome for the staff member was minor, for example, a scratch, bruise or temporary discomfort; however, the employees' diligence in incident reporting provides school management teams with an opportunity to review and update individual pupil behaviour management plans and in doing so help support and protect all parties.

Across schools more generally, a discernible, continuing trend is that of slips and trips; this hazard type remains an ongoing priority for the Schools' Workforce and Health and Safety Committee who oversee risk prevention strategies and lead on employee awareness raising initiatives.

On 16 occasions the injured employee went to hospital (in most cases a precautionary visit and none of the employees involved were detained) and / or was absent from work for a short period of time. None of these incidents fell into the RIDDOR reportable category.

Table 4 the total number of RIDDOR reports for schools across a three year period

RIDDOR Category	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Deaths	-	-	-
Specified injuries to employees	2	3	1
Over 7 day injuries to employees	1	-	-
Occupational diseases	-	-	-
Dangerous occurrence	-	-	-
Injuries to non-workers	1	-	1
Total	4	3	2

The one RIDDOR reportable incident relating to the 'specified injury' of an employee followed an event where a school employee tripped over the support bar of a wooden sandpit; a fracture injury resulted.

As a benchmark for RIDDOR reporting within the school employees category, the HSE gives a reportable injury rate for the education sector in 2014/15 as 144.1 injuries per 100,000 employees; using the same formula, the Council's reportable injury rate for education in 2015/16 is considerably lower at 29.2.

The single 2015/16 non-employee injury RIDDOR report related to a pupil who suffered a fractured arm whilst taking part in a high jump activity at a school.

ACT

The Council's three year Health and Safety Plan includes the following key objectives for 2016/17:

- To review health and safety reference material and improve intranet content with the aim of providing managers and Headteachers with straightforward, practical and easy to use guidance.
- Deliver a new health and safety induction training programme for service managers to better reflect the needs of the individual.
- Building upon the successful seeking health and safety assurance model rolled out across community schools during 2015/16, to develop and deliver a similar programme to support managers working in the service areas.

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