



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **Health and Safety in Wokingham Borough Council**

## **Annual Report 2016/17**

## Foreword

This report takes a look back at both our internal health and safety performance across the last year and that of our community schools as a whole, as well as looking ahead to our plans and priorities for health and safety for the forthcoming year. As an organisation which regulates health and safety in other workplaces we know how important it is that we lead by example and one way in which we do that is by making this report a public document.

We are currently transforming and reshaping ourselves to help us continue to meet the various challenges facing our Council. Referred to as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Council Programme, change will touch all aspects of our business including that of health and safety. This means focusing on what really matters and what action will best deliver meaningful health and safety outcomes; avoiding bureaucracy, our processes will be streamlined and our people better equipped to fulfil their responsibilities in a more self-reliant way. As we move ahead we will continue to take a sensible and proportionate approach to health and safety management and remain committed to learning lessons along the way to improve further.



### **Andy Couldrick**

Chief Executive

Wokingham Borough Council

## Introduction

Wokingham Borough Council has a well established health and safety management system in place that aligns with the 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' approach recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Our framework for managing health and safety includes:

- defined roles and responsibilities for health and safety
- consultation with employees on health, safety and welfare matters
- designated health and safety leads at Director and Executive level
- in-house health and safety professionals on hand to provide advice
- tailored health and safety training programmes
- arrangements for the monitoring and review of health and safety performance both centrally and at local level

## Incident Reports

We encourage our employees to report all incidents, regardless of the outcome or severity of the resulting injury, enabling each of those incidents to be proportionally investigated and for suitable remedial action to be taken to prevent a recurrence. In broader terms this data enables the identification of potential trends leading to the more effective control of risks and improvements in safety overall.

### Incident Reports – Services

Table 1 shows the total number of incident reports raised by service employees during the 2016/17 performance year along with a breakdown by type.

<b>TABLE 1 - Service Employee Incidents</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Deaths	0
RIDDOR - specified injury	0
RIDDOR – over 7 day injury	1
Minor injury	49
Near miss events	5
Verbal abuse	3
Work related ill health	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

**Note I:** Average 2016/17 service employee numbers = 1,126

**Note II:** RIDDOR - The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

Of the 58 incidents reported by service employees, 49 resulted in minor injuries such as bruising, cuts, sprains and strains etc. the majority of which did not require first aid treatment. The remaining non injury events presented the organisation with opportunities to learn lessons to help prevent future harm.

During the performance year an increase of slip and trip incidents created a discernible trend which was responded to in the form of an employee awareness raising campaign to promote good housekeeping practices.

The single service employee incident that met the reporting requirements of The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 related to a road traffic incident; a load being transported on the back of a truck came loose and struck a school crossing patroller who was standing on the pavement.

For external comparison purposes, the national statistics produced by the HSE for employees working in public administration in 2015/16 gave an average RIDDOR reported injury rate of 230 per 100,000 employees; the equivalent

reportable injury rate for Council service employees in 2016/17 was 89, a figure significantly lower than the most recent published national average.

Table 2 below provides for a comparison across a three year period using an incidence rate per 100 employees which allows for fluctuations in employee numbers.

<b>TABLE 2 - Incidence Rate for the Services Workforce</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Incidence rate per 100 employees	5.3	3.8	5.2

The increase in incidents reported by service employees during 2016/17 over the previous year is considered to be a positive indicator in response to the ongoing efforts to raise awareness of the importance of incident reporting and encourage a greater degree of formal recording of health and safety events.

### **Incident Reports – Community Schools**

Table 3 shows the total number of incident reports raised by school employees during the 2016/17 performance year along with a breakdown by type.

<b>TABLE 3 - School Employee Incidents</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Deaths	0
RIDDOR - specified injury	1
RIDDOR – over 7 day injury	0
Minor injury	195
Near miss	24
Work related ill health	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>220</b>

**Note.** Average 2016/17 school employee numbers = 2,577

Once again the vast majority of incidents reported by school employees had either a minor injury outcome or resulted in no injury but with the potential for there to be so. Levels of incident reporting in relation to the often complex and challenging requirements of pupils with special educational needs remain a main feature; this type of reporting supports the strategy to gather this essential information to feed into individual pupil behaviour management plans designed to help protect all parties.

Slips and trips continue to be a noteworthy causal factor in incidents reported by school employees. An ongoing priority for the Schools' Workforce and Health and Safety Committee, this hazard type continues to receive the Committee's attention, assisting in the development of further employee awareness raising initiatives.

The one RIDDOR reportable injury relating to the schools workforce involved an employee who suffered a fractured ankle as the result of a fall in a car park during an educational offsite visit whilst supervising a school trip.

As a benchmark for RIDDOR reporting within the school employee category, the HSE gives a reportable injury rate for the education sector in 2015/16 as 142 injuries per 100,000 employees; using the same formula, the Council's reportable injury rate for employees working in education during 2016/17 is considerably lower at 39.

To enable a comparison of incidents against previous years that takes into account the decrease in school employee numbers due to academy conversions, the data in Table 4 below is shown as an incidence rate per 100 employees.

<b>TABLE 4 - Incidence Rate for the Schools Workforce</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Incidence rate per 100 employees	9.3	12.2	8.5

The decrease in the number of school incident reports in 2016/17 from the previous year will be studied in more detail by the Schools' Workforce and Health and Safety Committee to determine whether there were any significant factors that may have affected the reporting rate.

### **Non Employee RIDDOR Reports**

One non employee RIDDOR report was raised in relation to the provision of Council services during 2016/17; this was in respect of a tenant who sustained a fracture as a result of a trip on an uneven pathway immediately outside of their Council property.

In relation to schools, an incident involving a pupil who received hospital treatment following a finger trapping injury in a door met with RIDDOR reporting requirements.

### **Performance Related to Enforcement Action**

During 2016/17 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.

### **Highlights of 2016/17**

**Employee Wellbeing:** a number of health and wellbeing initiatives were delivered including blood pressure checks, promoting stroke awareness and participation in national employee wellbeing initiatives such as the Active Lunch Challenge where we offered employees free or discounted fitness activities.

**Health and Safety Training:** an e-learning module for new service managers was launched during 2016/17 whilst the health and safety management training offer for school leadership teams was extended to include a half day refresher course.

**Health and safety guidance:** work is underway to produce more user friendly and pragmatic guidance for both schools and the service areas.

### **Looking forward**

The overall priority for 2017/18 is to support the delivery of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Council Programme by simplifying processes, enabling a self-service approach wherever possible and ensuring our people are equipped with the necessary skills they need to deliver safe services.

Our aim is achieve this by continuing to take a sensible, proportionate approach to managing the hazards associated with our work activities.