

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Health and Safety Annual Report 2017/18</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on 26 July 2018
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Director of Corporate Services - Graham Ebers
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Norman Jorgensen, Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

The Council has a legal duty to protect the health and safety of employees and other people who come into contact with its undertakings e.g. customers, pupils, contractors etc.; the standard set by law for employers is to do what is considered to be 'reasonably practicable'.

The effective management of health and safety is an essential part of good corporate governance. Furthermore, the active management of accidents at work is essential, not only to protect people from harm but to also minimise financial loss through employee absences and other direct and indirect related costs.

The legal responsibility and accountability for health and safety lies with the employer. In addition to staff working in the services, the Authority is the employer in the case of community and community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nurseries and pupil referral units. In respect of foundation schools, voluntary aided schools, academies and free schools the Governing Body is the employer.

This report does not include the health and safety performance of Wokingham Borough Council wholly owned subsidiaries. Operating as separate companies their respective boards monitor and review their own internal health and safety performance.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Executive is requested to:

- 1) note the corporate health and safety performance for 2017/18; and
- 2) endorse the approach described and the health and safety priorities for the current municipal year 2018/19.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Whilst not a statutory report, the preparation and issue of an annual health and safety report by a local authority (a health and safety regulator in its own right) in respect of its own internal health and safety reflects good practice and provides assurance to senior levels of the organisation.

In overall terms the health and safety performance across the entire organisation (both schools and services) during 2017/18 can be viewed as positive in that the number of serious incidents i.e. those that require notification to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) reduced for the fourth year running to the figure of one.

However, there can be no complacency, efforts to reduce the risks associated with our work activities never cease.

Incident reporting by employees in schools went up in 2017/18 by 41% over the previous year from 220 incidents to 311. This increase was directly attributable to one special school who initiated a positive drive to achieve total reporting in order to ensure their risk prevention strategies designed to protect the health and safety of staff and pupils alike are kept up to date and well informed.

The number of incident reports raised by service employees saw a 40% decrease over the previous year from 56 incidents to 36. Whilst a decrease in headcount within the services will likely have played a part in this reduction, generally speaking a fall in incident reporting does not necessarily equate to there being less accidents in the workplace. There could be other reasons behind why employees have not made a formal report of an incident hence efforts are ongoing to raise employee awareness of incident reporting requirements and the important reasons for doing so.

No enforcement action was taken against the Council for health and safety breaches during 2017/18.

## **Background**

The Health and Safety Annual Report 2017/18 is a high level report that looks back at internal health and safety performance during that twelve month period, highlighting the main achievements over the year and outlining key priorities for the current year.

The annual report is transparent; it provides stakeholders with information on health and safety performance to enable an understanding of the key issues facing Council staff together with assurance to the Executive that the main risks have been identified, appropriately prioritised and are being adequately addressed.

The annual report is reviewed internally by various management and staff consultation groups. The Corporate Leadership Team, along with the central employee consultation forums for services and schools, receive supplementary information in the form of statistical charts with data breakdowns, for example, by work area and hazard type to aid analysis, identification of trends and patterns and to support the ongoing development of suitable risk prevention strategies.

## **Analysis of Issues – Services**

- For the second year in a row a total of one statutory notification in respect of the services workforce was made to the HSE in 2017/18 under RIDDOR. Tasked with collecting newspapers from a local newsagent for use in a community library, a library assistant slipped and fell on an icy pathway fracturing an ankle. Procedures have since changed in that newspapers are now delivered.
- The Council's reportable injury rates for employees are considerably lower than the most recently published national average for comparable sectors. Every Council RIDDOR incident is subjected to a comprehensive corporate investigation with an action plan drawn up and progressed to prevent a recurrence.
- A total of 36 incident reports were raised by service staff during 2017/18, a decrease of 40% over the previous year. A decrease in incident reporting should not be viewed solely as a positive indicator of performance. There can be a number of factors affecting incident reporting by employees including lack of awareness of the organisation's incident reporting policy; being unfamiliar with the incident reporting system; and not recognising the benefits of reporting minor/near miss events towards future accident prevention. Efforts to raise employee awareness of incident reporting and to encourage greater reporting continue.
- All bar one of the total 36 incidents reported by service employees fell into the classifications of minor or no injury incident.
- 47% of the service employee incident reports were raised by staff working at the Bridges Resource Centre and were in connection with the provision of care for children and young persons with special needs that are often complex. A strong incident reporting culture is essential to the effective protection of staff and the children and young persons accessing the service alike.
- 2017/18 saw service employees report 7 incidents relating to slips, trips or falls on the same level, a figure very similar to 2016/17. 4 slip incidents were as a consequence of weather conditions where pathways were slippery underfoot. The

number of housekeeping related slip and trips reduced from 5 incidents in 2016/17 to one in 2017/18. This improvement in performance could in part be due to the organisation's continued focus on the importance of maintaining good housekeeping practice to aid accident prevention. Efforts to raise employee awareness in this respect continue with the introduction of a more structured approach to hazard spotting inspections in the workplace due to be implemented in Autumn 2018.

- In terms of violence at work there was one report in 2017/18 of an employee being physically assaulted by a member of the public. Although minor in nature, there was the potential for a more serious outcome; risk assessments have been strengthened. Two incidents involving verbal abuse against staff were reported. It is considered likely there is a degree of underreporting of these types of incidents by service staff hence initiatives to increase violence at work reporting awareness are underway.

### **Analysis of Issues – Services (continued)**

- RIDDOR requires for work related injuries involving members of the public to be reported where the injured person was taken straight to hospital for treatment. There were no RIDDOR notifications during 2017/18 in respect of members of the public being harmed in connection with the Council's service delivery.
- The 2017/18 annual report highlights completion of various internal reviews of health and safety management aimed at determining where arrangements could be further improved and strengthened.

### **Analysis of Issues – Schools**

- The Health and Safety Annual Report 2017/18 excludes data for schools which converted to academy status during the performance year.
- There were no RIDDOR reports in respect of serious injuries sustained by school employees in 2017/18.
- A total of 311 incident reports were raised by employees in the Council's schools during 2017/18, an increase of 41% over the previous year. This increase can be directly attributed to Addington School which caters for pupils with moderate, severe or profound learning needs many of whom have associated sensory motor and/or behaviour difficulties including autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Addington School's incident reports more than doubled from 133 in 2016/17 to 270 during 2017/18 with the outcome of those incidents involving injury mostly being of a minor nature e.g. a scratch, bruise or temporary discomfort. A positive reporting culture is critical to the ongoing development of tailored pupil behaviour and support plans designed to protect staff and pupils alike. New admissions to the school and pupils returning after breaks can bring about a higher number of incident reports as the pupils settle in. Staff are trained in Team Teach methods, a highly regarded training programme aimed at managing challenging behaviours through positive interventions; training in these key skills is repeated and refreshed periodically.
- Reports of slips, trips and falls on the same level in 2017/18 fell by 33% from the previous year. In terms of the severity of outcome, a total of 12 of the 16 reports of slips, trips and falls on the same level in 2017/18 were minor with no medical attention necessary or need for first aid treatment.

- Slip and trip trends included hazards such as toys or equipment left on the floor, wet and slippery floors and staff running after pupils. Slips and trips are a common cause of injury in the education sector and the involvement of employees is an essential part of accident prevention. The Schools' Workforce and Health and Safety Committee continues to be the lead in respect of this and other safety initiatives.
- There were no school related RIDDOR notifications during 2017/18 in respect of persons who are not employees.
- The 2017/18 annual report highlights the completion of a fresh round of fire risk assessments across the Council's schools together with a focus on asbestos management, both at a local level and centrally.

### Health and Safety Priorities for 2018/19

- Violence at work towards Council employees (including threats and abuse directed at our staff through social media and other remote channels) together with the potential risks faced by lone workers.
- Continuing the work to simplify health and safety guidance and processes, enabling a self-service approach wherever possible and ensuring our people are equipped with the necessary skills they need to safely deliver services.
- Undertaking the Seeking Health and Safety Assurance programme in schools; a two stage process involving self-evaluation of compliance at local level alongside securing assurance for the Council that key risks are being effectively controlled.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	Yes	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	Yes	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	Yes	

<b>Other Financial Information</b>
None

<b>Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation</b>
Not applicable

<b>Resourcing and Timeline for Next Steps</b>
Not applicable

<b>Timeline for Review and Evaluation</b>
Not applicable

<b>List of Background Papers</b>	
The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and 'Managing for Health and Safety' (HSG65), a guide for employers published by the HSE.	
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