



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Health and Safety in  
Wokingham Borough Council**

**Annual Report  
2017/18**

## Foreword

As an organisation we take health and safety seriously and are committed to the continuous development and improvement of our health and safety management system. With that aim in mind, and as part of our overall governance arrangements, at this time each year we revisit and review our internal health and safety performance across the preceding twelve months and, taking that information into account and the lessons we have learned along the way, agree our current priorities for health and safety.

The programme involving the implementation of a new model of working and organisation for the Council is well underway and is bringing with it many benefits to our customers. The Council's investment in new technology is also enabling our employees greater self-reliance and by streamlining processes the burdens relating to bureaucracy are being systematically tackled and removed. Health and safety is part and parcel of our change programme and as we move forward we continue to ensure our approach to health and safety management remains both sensible and proportionate in relation to the work-related risks we face.



### **Manjeet Gill**

Interim Chief Executive  
Wokingham Borough Council

## Introduction

Wokingham Borough Council has a well established health and safety management system in place that reflects 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
- health and safety policies and guidance
- tailored health and safety training programmes
- investigations into the causes of accidents, incidents and near misses
- arrangements for the monitoring and review of health and safety performance both centrally and at local level

## Scope

This report relates to the Council's own health and safety performance during the period between April 2017 and March 2018. It covers our workforces in the services and those schools where the Council is the employer which is the case for community schools including special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units.

## Incident Reports

Employees are encouraged to report all incidents at work, regardless of the outcome or severity of the resulting injury, enabling each of those incidents to be investigated in a proportionate way and for suitable remedial action to be taken to prevent a recurrence. In broader terms this data enables the identification of patterns and trends leading to the more effective control of risks relating to work and improvements in safety overall.

### Incident Reports – Services

Table 1 shows the total number of incident reports raised by service employees during the 2017/18 performance year along with a breakdown by type.

<b>TABLE 1 - Service Employee Incidents</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Deaths	0
RIDDOR - specified injury	1
RIDDOR – over 7 day injury	0
Minor injury	29
Near miss events	4
Verbal abuse	2
Work related ill health	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

**Note I:** 2017/18 service employee numbers = 1,080

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

The one service employee incident that met the requirements of The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 related to a fractured ankle as a result of a slip on an icy path whilst collecting the newspapers for a community library. Following investigation additional control measures were put in place to help prevent a recurrence.

To provide a benchmark, the national statistics produced by the HSE for employees working in public administration in 2016/17 gave an average RIDDOR reported injury rate of 237 per 100,000 employees; using the same formula the Council's reportable injury rate for employees working within its service areas during 2017/18 would be considerably lower at 93 per 100,000 employees.

Minor injury outcomes were the case for 29 of the 36 incidents reported by service employees. With bruising, cuts, sprains and strains being the typical injuries, two thirds of these incidents did not require first aid treatment. With four reports of near miss events, these incidents did not result in injury or damage; however, as an important part of our management of risk they presented the organisation with opportunities to learn lessons to help prevent future harm.

Slips and trips accounted for 19% of reported incidents in 2017/18, a figure very similar to the previous year. Weather related conditions and hazards featured as the only discernible trend. Slips, trips and falls due to poor housekeeping saw an 80% reduction over the previous year; this decrease could to some degree be due to an employee awareness raising campaign promoting good housekeeping practice. This workplace hazard remains a priority and actions to help prevent these avoidable slips, trips and falls continue.

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

<b>TABLE 2 - Incidence Rate for the Services Workforce</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Incidence rate per 100 employees	3.8	5.2	3.3

Compared to the previous year the 2017/18 incidence rate for the services workforce fell. Whilst a reduction in incidents at work could be viewed in a positive manner our organisation is not complacent. Efforts to raise awareness amongst employees of the importance of incident reporting are ongoing, particularly in respect of verbal abuse and threats made against our staff.

### **Incident Reports – Schools**

Table 3 shows the total number of incident reports raised by school employees during the 2017/18 performance year along with a breakdown by type.

<b>TABLE 3 - School Employee Incidents</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Deaths	0
RIDDOR - specified injury	0
RIDDOR – over 7 day injury	0
Minor injury	294
Near miss	17
Work related ill health	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>311</b>

**Note I:** 2017/18 school employee numbers = 2,705

**Note II:** Figures exclude academy conversions during 2017/18

There were no RIDDOR notifications raised for school employees across 2017/18. For information purposes, the most recent statistics published by the HSE which relate to 2016/17 give a reportable injury rate of 139 injuries per 100,000 employees for the education sector nationally.

Minor injuries made up the vast majority of incidents reported by school employees; the remainder of reports resulted in no injury but had the potential to do so. A high proportion of the incident reports raised by school employees related to a special school where the varied and often complex needs of pupils can lead to challenging behaviors. A total reporting approach is essential in supporting the school's care strategy; by gathering and feeding this vital information into the dynamic care and behaviour plans for individual pupils it assists in helping to protect all parties. Training employees in behaviour management and intervention techniques features as another key strand of the school's health and safety strategy.

Slips, trips and falls on the same level decreased for schools by a third from the previous year. There were several trends of note; weather related conditions, spills on floors and poor housekeeping. Slips and trips are considered avoidable and are regarded nationally as a key hazard across educational premises. Efforts continue centrally to support schools to proactively manage the risks relating to slips and trips and to drive employee awareness raising initiatives

To enable a comparison of incidents against previous years that takes into account the fluctuating employee numbers in schools, 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>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Incidence rate per 100 employees	12.2	8.5	11.5

The increase in the number of school incident reports in 2017/18 against the previous year was directly related to a drive by a special school to boost incident reporting amongst their employees.

### **Non Employee RIDDOR Reports**

There were no RIDDORs in 2017/18 in respect of non-employees i.e. members of the public including pupils injury incidents of a work-related nature.

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

During 2017/18 no Improvement Notices or Prohibition Notices were served on the Council by the HSE nor was any other type of enforcement action taken against the Council for breaches of statutory health and safety duties.

## 2017/18 – Key actions

**Audit:** the commissioning of an internal audit to gain assurance that the leadership and control of health and safety management at senior level meets with required standards. It was concluded that overall the health and safety controls are effective with leadership that is strong and committed to good health and safety practice. Robust plans have been put in place ensure that areas identified for improvement are followed up with actions implemented and their effectiveness monitored.

**Fire safety:** a fresh round of fire risk assessments was completed for all workplace types and the Council's fire safety policy subjected to a comprehensive review.

**Building management:** reviews were undertaken centrally to ascertain the effectiveness of the day-to-day management of satellite workplaces; feedback was sought from local managers regarding the issues they face that create challenge. An improvement plan was developed in response and is being taken forward.

## Looking forward – health and safety priorities for 2018/19

### To continue the work to:

- simplify processes, supporting employee self-service and self-reliance
- focus on the development of managers and staff through training in health and safety
- engender a culture that delivers good health and safety in a way that is both sensible and proportionate

**Personal safety at work:** to protect the health and safety of our employees by:

- strengthening lone working arrangements and working practices
- reviewing the risks associated with violence at work ensuring the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing measures in place to prevent or control those risks

**Seeking health and safety assurance programme in schools:** to deliver a risk based review of health and safety management in schools to:

- support our schools to develop greater health and safety competency at a local level and enable self-evaluation of compliance; and
- provide the Council with assurance that key health and safety risks are being adequately controlled.