



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Health and Safety within  
Wokingham Borough Council**

**Annual Report  
2018-19**

## **Foreword**

Having only recently joined Wokingham Borough Council I am delighted to introduce this report that looks back at our own internal health and safety performance over the last year. Reviewing how well we have done and what we have learnt from our experiences enables us as an organisation to identify our priorities for health and safety going forward and helps us make improvements that will benefit the Council, its workforce and those who access our services.

I welcome the transparency of this report in that it signals the Council's strong commitment to health and safety, something that is of great importance to me both on a professional and personal level. Good health and safety is integral to everything we do as a local authority and will remain a constant priority and consideration as our organisation continues to change and adapt to meet the needs of our community.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to say I look forward to working with all colleagues to maintain our focus on continuous improvement in health and safety.

### **Susan Parsonage**

Chief Executive

Wokingham Borough Council

## **Introduction**

Our well established health and safety management system reflects the good practice recommended to employers by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). With an approach to health and safety management that is both sensible and proportionate in relation to work-related risks, our arrangements for managing health and safety include:

- defined responsibilities for health and safety by role
- consultation with employees on health, safety and welfare matters
- designated health and safety leads at both Director and Executive level
- in-house health and safety specialists providing advice and support
- health and safety policies and guidance
- health and safety training programmes tailored to suit the setting
- investigations into the causes of accidents, incidents and near miss events
- arrangements in place centrally and locally to monitor and review health and safety

## Scope

This report relates to the Council's internal health and safety performance during the period between April 2018 and March 2019. It covers our workforces in both 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, no matter how minor, 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 2018-19 performance year together with a breakdown by type.

Type	2018-19
Deaths	0
RIDDOR - specified injury	0
RIDDOR – over 7 day injury	0
Minor injury	37
Near miss events	1
Verbal abuse	3
Work related ill health	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>

**Note I:** service employee numbers = 1,071

**Note II:** RIDDOR - The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 places duties on employers and other responsible persons to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences.

During 2018-19 there were no RIDDOR notifications raised in relation to service employee work-related injuries. For information purposes the most recent national statistics published by the HSE give an overall reportable injury rate for employees working in public administration in 2017-18 of 139 injuries per 100,000 employees.

In the case of 37 of the 41 work-related incidents reported by service employees the outcome was minor in nature such as bruising, cuts and sprains; three quarters of those incidents required no first aid treatment.

Whilst the report of a miss event did not result in any injury or damage it represents an opportunity to be proactive in preventing future harm. Furthermore, the reporting of work-related violence, including threats and abuse towards our staff, enables relevant risk controls and prevention strategies to be further developed and strengthened.

Slips, trips and falls on the same level accounted for 20% of incidents reported by service employees during 2018-19. Whilst this figure is similar to the previous two years a notable point is that poor housekeeping was not given as a casual factor in any of the 2018-19 slips, trips and falls. On closer analysis of incidents in this category the only discernible trend to be identified indicated that steps, staircases and slopes were more often involved.

Table 2 below provides for a comparison of incidents 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>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Incidence rate per 100 employees	5.2	3.3	3.8

Although marginally higher than the previous year the 2018-19 incidence rate for the services workforce remained fairly static.

### **Incident Reports – Schools**

Table 3 shows the total number of incident reports raised by school employees during the 2018-19 performance year along with a breakdown by type.

<b>TABLE 3 - School Employee Incidents</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Deaths	0
RIDDOR - specified injury	0
RIDDOR – over 7 day injury	1
Minor injury	439
Near miss	1
Work related ill health	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>441</b>

**Note 1:** 2018-19 school employee numbers = 2,584

**Note II:** RIDDOR - The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 places duties on employers and other responsible persons to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences.

One school employee incident met the requirements of RIDDOR in respect of an over seven day incapacitation relating to burns to a hand from a hot liquid whilst carrying out a teaching experiment. Following investigation additional controls were put in place to prevent a recurrence of this incident.

To provide a benchmark for RIDDOR reports for school employees the HSE statistical reportable injury rate in 2017-18 for the education sector nationally was 140 injuries per 100,000 employee. Using the same formula the Council's reportable injury rate for employees working within its schools during 2018-19 would be considerably lower at 39 per 100,000 employees.

The majority of employee incidents in schools resulted in either a minor injury or no injury; on 62% of occasions first aid assistance was not required.

A high proportion of the incident reports raised by school employees during 2018-19 related to a special school where the varied and often complex needs of pupils can lead to challenging behaviors; the incidents reported by this school also accounted for the significant rise in the 2018-19 overall incident numbers. By adopting an approach of total reporting this supports the school's care strategy; gathering and feeding this vital information into the dynamic care and behaviour plans for individual pupils assists in protecting all parties. Training staff in behaviour management and intervention techniques is another key strand of the school's health and safety strategy.

During 2018-19 3% of employee incident reports related to slips, trips and falls on the same level, a slight reduction against the previous year. A particular hazard trend identified within this category related to poor housekeeping, for example, a wet or slippery floor; another trend involved trips while assisting in outdoor play areas. Slips and trips are widely recognised as being a common cause of injury in the education sector with the involvement of employees viewed as essential to successful accident prevention. Our Schools Workforce and Health and Safety Committee leads in this respect and on other safety 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>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Incidence rate per 100 employees	8.5	11.5	17.1

The increased incidence rate for 2018-19 in relation to the previous year relates directly to the aforementioned special school's positive health and safety culture.

### **Non-Employee RIDDOR Reports**

One RIDDOR notification was made to the HSE during 2018-19 in respect of a pupil in a community primary school who sustained a broken hip having tripped over cardboard being used in a practical session. Following investigation action was taken by the school to prevent such an incident from happening again.

## **HSE Enforcement**

During 2018-19 no Improvement Notices or Prohibition Notices were served on the Council by the HSE for health and safety breaches nor were there any health and safety prosecutions against the Council.

## **Key actions 2018-19**

- A risk based health and safety assurance programme was carried out in schools to support the development of greater health and safety competency at local level through self-evaluation whilst also providing the Council with assurance that key health and safety risks are being adequately controlled. The findings of the programme form the basis of the Council's strategy for the continual improvement of health and safety management in schools.
- Asbestos management building surveys were updated and a new framework for the management of asbestos was rolled out across the organisation including schools.
- The development of new guidance in relation to lone working and workplace stress.
- Corporate health and wellbeing initiatives included the offer of staff information sessions during Mental Health Awareness Week and diabetes testing.

## **Looking forward – our health and safety priorities for 2019-20**

- With input from our school representative groups, to follow through on the actions that came out of the 2018-19 health and safety assurance programme for schools.
- To review the Council's violence at work policy and arrangements for protecting employees against all types of workplace violence including verbal abuse and threats.
- To update existing health and safety electronic learning modules and develop new topics to support the competencies required for the effective management and delivery of health and safety.