

The Highland Council
Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
25 August 2016

Agenda Item	14.
Report No	ECAS 58/16

Care and Learning Health and Safety Annual Report

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report advises Committee of the Service's performance during 2015/16 in respect of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and outlines the priorities for the forthcoming year.

1. Background

1.1 At the time of writing The Care and Learning Service employs 7361 staff (5442 FTE). Staff are located in a large number of different establishments across Highland, many in very rural locations. The nature of the Service's work and client base means that some staff deal regularly with both adults and children with troubled backgrounds and/or severe learning difficulties. Lone Working, Violence at Work, and Manual Handling are health and safety risks for the Service. A proportion of school staff (those delivering technical or science subjects) work with equipment such as high revving cutting equipment or hazardous chemicals. Many staff have jobs that involve regularly driving long distances. A large proportion of the staff of the Service work with Display Screen Equipment.

2. Service Health and Safety Consultation

2.1 The Care and Learning Service Health and Safety Group meet on a quarterly basis. The Group has a wide range of staff representatives covering the various elements of the Service. Representatives from the EIS, GMB and UNISON also attend. Minutes of the meetings are published on the Intranet. A wide range of matters are discussed at the Group meetings, ranging from specific issues or concerns in particular service functional areas, through to cross-cutting health and safety matters relating to the wider Service. Main themes for discussion during the course of 2015/16 have been staff training in health and safety matters, and actions to improve awareness and attendance, and concerns raised about, and updated actions being taken in relation to Violence at Work issues.

3. Risk Identification and Management

3.1 Risk identification and management is a complex issue in such a large and diverse Service. Given the nature of the services and clientele the Service provides for, risk identification and management arrangements must be in place for both staff and clients, and manage the conflict that can arise in trying to balance health and safety concerns for both groups.

3.2 Given the nature of the functions provided, risk identification and management

is well embedded in many parts of the Service, for example:

- The Service's residential and day care facilities for children are required to register with the Care Inspectorate, and appropriate risk assessments, including hazard identification, are a condition for such registration.
- Guidance and systems are in place for outdoor excursions for school children, with risk assessment being at the core of that process. The Evolve system is in place to record all such excursions, with support provided by Highlife Highland for staff.
- Risk assessments within schools vary but those with the best practice have comprehensive risk assessments covering issues such as traffic management, security, hygiene issues in toilets and kitchens, safety of stairwells, fire safety, electrical issues, risks from equipment and hazardous materials, lone working, physical play and activities, and many more.
- The Catering, Cleaning and Facilities Management Service have all risk assessments required for operational activities and equipment. They are held in SharePoint and reviewed annually and following accidents
- The Criminal Justice Service has a comprehensive set of risk assessments. The Principal Officer, all Team Managers, and all Community Payback Officers have all received risk assessment training.

3.3 However, it is recognised that there remains a need for the Service to do more in identifying gaps in staff knowledge and training in relation to risk identification and management, and the formal recording of risk assessment. That has been a core part of the Health and Safety activity progressed during the year, with further information set out in section 5 and 9 below.

4. Accidents and Incidents

4.1 A total of 1040 Accident Reports were submitted from the Service from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, the vast majority of which reported violent incidents. Excluding violent incidents and incidents of verbal abuse, there were 136 incidents in the category of "Accident", with the largest number of those falling within the sub-category of trips and falls on the same floor level. The figure should be viewed within the context of a Service with over 7,300 staff.

4.2 For the forthcoming year the Service will be receiving quarterly accident statistics data from the Health and Safety Team, which will allow improved monitoring of trends and action in response.

5. Health and Safety Training

5.1 As set out above, the need to raise awareness of training opportunities, and increase attendance at Health and Safety related training courses has been a key focus of activity during the 2015/16 year.

5.2 Arrangements have been made to deliver an initial programme of training in the 2016/17 financial year to school based technical staff in the Safe Use of Woodworking Machinery. It is intended that every school will have at least one person so trained, who can share good practice within their school. Once this is achieved the Service will give further consideration to the most effective means to roll out training to all school staff working within technical classrooms and science labs.

5.3 During the course of the year 27 staff of the Service attended core training for reviewing and approving outdoor visits involving young people, bringing the total to 67 over the last two years. Three more courses are planned this year. Another 4 members of staff attended EVOLVE administration training only.

5.4 The numbers of staff who attended health and safety related courses arranged by Learning and Development, since last August, are as follows:

Accident Reporting and Investigation – 18
Fire Marshall – 2
Lone Working – 28
Management of Lone Working – 19
Management of Health and Safety – 8
Manual Handling – 21
Management of Manual Handling Risk – 20
Manual Handling Line Worker – 1
Moving and Handling – 14
Moving and Handling People - 1
Risk Assessment – 20
Stress Awareness – 19
Violence at Work – 1

5.5 Whilst 45 CAL staff attended the Mentally Health Workplace training up to March 2015, none attended during 2015-16. This will require action by Service management.

6. Policy and guidance

6.1 A new Service Health and Safety Policy was approved by the ECAS Committee in August 2015, and is reviewed on an annual basis.

6.2 In relation to risk assessments, work is underway to consolidate existing risk assessments across the Service, and best practice, so that a single resource can be developed which would make a generic range of risk assessments available to staff.

7. HSE Involvement

7.1 There has been no HSE involvement specifically with the Care and Learning Service in the past year.

8. Health and Safety Achievements (previous 12 months)

8.1 As mentioned above, during the past year a new Service Policy was developed, and the Service Health and Safety Group has met regularly and been well-attended. A working group was established to consider Violence at Work reporting mechanisms, and a new reporting mechanism is to be trialled in schools in the forthcoming school session. Steps have been taken to increase awareness of and attendance at health and safety training courses.

9. Health and Safety Action Plan

9.1 The Service health and safety priorities for the forthcoming year will be:

- (i) Continue to promote the need for risk assessments and identify any gaps in the assessments,
- (ii) Continue work to consolidate best practice and existing risk assessments into a single resource available to staff,
- (iii) Continue to raise awareness of and attendance at health and safety staff training courses,
- (iv) Provision of training for school staff involved in the delivery of Craft, Design, and Technology,
- (v) Monitor Violence at Work issues and the impact of the new reporting mechanism,
- (vi) Continue to work with Corporate Health and Safety on improving the collection of Accident Reporting statistics.
- (vii) Develop a range of Health and Safety performance indicators for future monitoring and reporting.

10 Implications

- 10.1 **Resources:** There are implications arising from some of the training referred to above which will be provided from within existing training budgets. It is necessary for the Service to commit to the provision of resources if this is required to enable compliance with the law.
- 10.2 **Legal:** The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to provide, as far as is reasonably practical, all information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of their employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to take into account all employees' capabilities with regard to health and safety. Failure to follow legislative requirements can lead to enforcement action by the HSE and/or civil action by staff, students or members of the public.
- 10.3 **Equalities:** No implications arise specifically from the subject matter of this report.
- 10.4 **Risk:** The action detailed above is aimed at minimising the risk of legal challenge to the Council, by ensuring we comply with relevant legislation.
- 10.5 There are no specific implications for **Gaelic, climate change/carbon clever, or rural** issues.

11. Recommendation

- 11.1 Committee is asked to note the content of the above report.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

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