

The Highland Council
Central Safety Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the Central Safety Committee held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 12 August, 2016 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Mr A MacKinnon
Dr D Alston
Mrs M Smith

Staff Side Representatives:

Mr A Wemyss, UNITE
Mr D Griffiths, GMB

In attendance:

Mr S Walsh, Head of People and Transformation, Corporate Development Service
Ms G Falconer, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Corporate Development Service
Mrs C Campbell, Head of Performance and Resources, Community Services
Mr I Jackson, Education Officer, Care and Learning Service
Mr S Duncan, Property Risk Management Officer, Development & Infrastructure Service
Mr W Munro, Inverness, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Operational Area Health and Safety Working Group
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

The Committee was informed that, in terms of its Membership and Remit, following an Election of Councillors and annually thereafter, it was required to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair from amongst its members. If the Chair appointed was one of the Employer's representatives, the Vice-Chair should be one of the Staff Side representatives, and vice versa.

Mrs M Smith, seconded by Dr D Alston, moved that Mr A MacKinnon be appointed as Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr MacKinnon was duly appointed, and took the Chair.

Mr A Wemyss, UNITE, seconded by Mrs M Smith, moved that Mr D Griffiths be appointed as Vice Chair. There being no other nominations, Mr D Griffiths was duly appointed.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Fernie and Mr F Parr of the Employer's Side, Mr M Hayes of the Staff Side and Ms D Grant, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Health & Safety Working Group.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

There had been circulated Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 22 April, 2016, the terms of which were **APPROVED**.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. Minutes of Area Health and Safety Groups

There had been circulated, for information, the Minutes of the:-

- i. Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey Joint Health and Safety Working Group held on 27 July, 2016;
- ii. Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Health and Safety Working Group held on 2 June, 2016; and
- iii. Ross, Skye and Lochaber Health and Safety Group held on 2 June, 2016.

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes.

7. Annual Health Safety and Wellbeing Reports

i Community Services Annual Health Safety and Wellbeing Report

There was circulated Report No. CSC/6/16 by the Director of Community Services which outlined Community Services performance in relation to Health and Safety during 2015/16.

The report set out the Services achievements in the last year and priorities going forward. There had been significant changes in Community Services in the last year and the priority was to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing for all staff within the Service. A key element for all Managers in the Service was to focus on health and safety, and management had to ensure that staff who changed roles were adequately prepared for the changes, e.g. by ensuring effective induction, effective training needs assessment and effective implementation of training and development requirements.

The Service was issued with an Improvement Notice from the Health and Safety Executive in relation to the management of hand arm vibration. Significant activities

had taken place to identify areas that required strengthening and an action plan was produced. The Health and Safety Executive had now lifted the improvement notice and work was on-going to ensure compliance.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

ii Care and Learning Service

There was circulated Report No. CSC/7/16 by the Director of Care and Learning which advised of the Service's performance during 2015/16 in respect of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, and outlined the priorities for the forthcoming year.

It was advised that since the new Service was formed there had been progress on health and safety matters. A Care and Learning Service Health and Safety Group met on a quarterly basis and had a wide range of staff representatives covering various elements of the Service. Progress had also been made on staff training although it was acknowledged that more required to be done on this. In terms of priorities for the future, one of the main aims was to continue to promote the need for risk assessments and identify any gaps in the assessments.

In discussion, it was noted that whilst 45 Care and Learning staff attended the Mentally Health Workplace training up to March 2015, none attended during 2015-16 and this would require action by Service Management. Further, it was noted that there was only one member of staff who had attended violence at work training since last August and this seemed very low given the high level on incidents of violence and aggression within the Service. Staff required to put themselves forward for these training courses, and therefore action by Service Management was required to encourage them to do so. It was advised that during the school holidays a number of care staff and non-teaching staff had attending violence and aggression, risk assessment and manual handling training courses. The numbers of participants at these course would be provided for the Committee as part of the next annual report.

It was queried if staff received training on personal security. It was advised that the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing team were working with the Chief Executive's Office and the Learning and Development team to do personal security training. In particular, staff in the mail room, had been on a mail handling course in order to help them identify suspicious packages. A DVD called 'Run, Hide' soon to be launched for all staff and would inform on what to do in a terrorist or other attack. Bomb searching training was also to be provided.

The Committee:

i **NOTED** the content of the report; and

ii **NOTED** that information on the number of participants within the Service who had attended violence and aggression, risk assessment and manual handling training during the school holidays would be provided for the Committee as part of the next annual report.

iii Corporate Development Service

There was circulated Report No. CSC/8/16 by the Head of People and Transformation which provided an overview of health, safety and wellbeing activity within Corporate Development for 2015/16.

In particular, it was advised that health and safety issues/updates were discussed at quarterly meetings with the Service's Heads of Service and trade union representatives. A number of Risk Assessors had gone through the voluntary redundancy scheme and replacements were required. All Heads of Service had attending the Mentally Healthy Workplace training and over the next year, junior members of staff will be encouraged to take part in this training to increase awareness.

In discussion, it was queried if the health and safety issues discussed at the Service's quarterly health and safety meetings included sickness absence monitoring. It was advised that a report on attendance management would be submitted to the next Resources Committee meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

8. Care and Learning Health and Safety Policy

There was circulated Report No. CSC/9/16 by the Director of Care and Learning which advised of the annual review of the Service Health and Safety Policy.

It was advised that some minor changes to the Policy were proposed in relation to the inclusion of registered volunteers and mention of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

The Committee **NOTED** the review of the Service Policy and **APPROVED** the amendments highlighted in the report.

9. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team: Update on Current Health, Safety and Wellbeing Issues

There was circulated Report No. CSC/10/16 by the Head of People and Transformation which provided an update on current health and safety issues and developments in relation to Health and Safety Executive issues; Health and Safety management system updates and other relevant issues.

In particular, it was advised that following the improvement notices on the Council by the Health and Safety Executive in respect of the management of hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), an audit of HAVS management in Community Services depots had commenced. Additional training on Risk Assessment and Accident/Incident Investigation had been identified as a priority need and was being progressed by the Service. Further visits by the HSE in relation to separate issues were also reported.

Work was ongoing on the development of guidance on Noise at Work. The policy and guidance on managing occupation road risk (MORR, formerly Driving at Work) was also being reviewed. One of the proposed changes to the MORR guidance was the check of correct insurance for grey fleet drivers. Many drivers had Class 1 business cover, but Class 3 business cover was required if any equipment (including

laptops) was carried in the car.

It was queried if consideration had been given to offering training to drivers in relation to managing occupation road risk, such as an additional driving qualification. It was understood that this could reduce insurance risk and provide considerable savings in the cost of insurance. It was advised that this was being looked at in terms of the review of the policy and guidance on managing occupation road risk.

It was also queried if there would be an additional cost for having class 3 business cover for grey fleet drivers, who required to carry equipment in their cars. Information from research carried out suggested that there may be a cost for some drivers, but most drivers would already be covered under Class 1 business cover for carrying equipment in their cars. It was queried if an employee carrying, for example, a Council owned laptop in their car was covered by the Council's insurance or was the onus on the driver to have it covered under their own insurance. It was advised that these queries would be put to the Council's Insurance Officer and a response provided to the Committee.

A project looking to support the management stress/mental health in Educational establishments would be launched at the beginning of the new school term. Further, a review of the reporting of violence and aggression incidents in Primary schools had been undertaken and a new form had been developed which would be piloted in three Primary schools in the new term.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the updated information on health, safety and wellbeing issues and developments contained in the report; and
- ii **AGREED** to the revised corporate health, safety and wellbeing policy going forward to Resources Committee.

10. Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report and Review of Corporate Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

There was circulated Report No. CSC/11/16 by the Head of People and Transformation which presented the Council's occupational health, safety and wellbeing performance, achievements and progress in 2014/2015 and presented the plan for 2016. New proposals for health and safety performance indicators were presented. The revised Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy was also presented.

In discussion, it was advised that currently the cost of 'Did not attend appointments' (DNAs) (where employees fail to give more than 24 hours' notice of being unable to attend their appointment) was met by the Occupational Health budget in People & Transformation. However from this month onwards, the cost of DNAs would be charged to the employee's Service allowing more money to be spent on Occupational Health Services for staff.

The Committee **NOTED** the content of the Annual Report, Performance Indicators and the revised policy and **AGREED** for all to be submitted to Resources Committee.

11. Occupational Health Report

There was circulated Report No. CSC/12/16 by the Head of People & Transformation which provided an overview of the work undertaken by RS Occupational Health for the period April to June, 2016.

A total of 141 management referrals were seen by RSOH in this period. This was a decrease in the number of referrals from the previous quarter. The main issues that staff were presenting with were anxiety, depression, stress, etc; or musculoskeletal problems. These were also the main issues for referral in the previous periods.

It was noted that there was difficulty in resolving the issue of DNAs as employees were not giving reasons why they did not attend appointments. It was advised that the possibility of emailing/texting to remind staff about Occupational Health appointments was being investigated. Directors were asked to investigate these DNAs with the assistance of Human Resources. The support of trade unions in ensuring staff attend appointments was also of assistance. It was suggested that an analysis be carried out between the relationship of DNAs and the distances employees required to travel to Occupational Health appointments, to see if this was a reason for non attendance.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the information contained in the report;
- ii **AGREED** that an analysis be carried out between the relationship of DNAs and the distances employees required to travel to Occupational Health appointments.

12. Pilot Project – Self Referrals to Occupational Health Service

There was circulated Report No. CSC/13/16 by the Head of People and Transformation which outlined a pilot project allowing staff to self refer to the Council's Occupational Health Service. It was proposed to run the pilot project for a period of three months (September to November) after which the project would be evaluated.

It was queried why employees would need to attend appointments in their own time. It was advised that employees currently had to attend Doctor or Dentist appointments in their on time and Occupational Health appointments should be consistent with that policy. Also, if an employee was going to a confidential self referral appointment in core working time, they would require to get permission from their Manager, which would mean the issue would not be confidential. So if the self referral was to remain confidential it had to be done out with core working hours. However, it was advised that such issues would be considered after the pilot project had concluded.

The Committee **AGREED** to a three month pilot project allowing staff to Self Referral to the Occupational Health Service.

The meeting concluded at 11.15 a.m.

Date of Next Meeting – Friday, 4 November, 2016 at 11.45a.m