

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

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| Agenda Item | 11 |
| Report No | RES/10/19 |

Committee: Corporate Resources Committee
Date: 27 February 2019
Report Title: **Annual Occupational Health and Safety Report 2017/18**
Report By: Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1. **Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Highland Council's Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy includes a commitment to the production of an annual report on its Occupational Health, Safety And Wellbeing (OHSW) performance. Annual reporting on health and safety performance is also reflective of best practice. This report presents the council's OHSW performance, achievements and progress in 2017/2018.
- 1.2 The key challenges for the Highland Council for 2018/19 are:
- Ensuring sensible, proportionate risk management
 - Improved accident, incident, near miss recording and reporting
 - Delivering a programme of prioritised workplace fire risk assessments
 - Ensuring Service health and safety plans for improvements to specific risks are actioned, implemented and monitored regularly.
- 1.3 The key OHSW achievements for 2017/18 were:
- Reduction in accident severity and accident rate
 - Introduction of new reporting process for violence and aggression in schools.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- Note the achievements and performance for 2017/18
 - Approve the OHSW Annual Report

3. **Implications**

- 3.1 Resource – Health and safety should be an integral part of management; failure to properly consider, plan and make sufficient resources available for health and safety will result in a negative impact on resources – both staff time and budget.
- 3.2 Legal – Failure to follow health and safety legislation can lead to enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) which can range from the serving of a Notification of Contravention, Improvement Notice, Prohibition Notice or Court Proceedings. HSE intervention is now charged at a cost of £129 per hour. Additional costs to the Council will always be required to rectify the breach of legislation.
- 3.3 Risk – Failure to ensure staff safety can lead to civil action against the Council
- 3.4 Equality, Climate Change, Carbon Clever, Rural and Gaelic – none

Designation Occupational Health & Wellbeing Manager

Date 11 February 2019

Author Gena Falconer

Background Papers



Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing

Annual Report 2017/2018


1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Highland Council's Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing (OSHW) Policy includes a commitment to the production of an annual report on its Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing (OHSW) performance. Annual reporting on health and safety performance is also reflective of best practice. This report presents the council's OHSW performance, achievements and progress in 2017/2018 and presents the OHSW plan for 2018/19.
- 1.2 The OHSW policy is based on the Health and Safety Executive's model for successful health and safety management: Plan-Do-Act Check cyclical and this report is structured in a similar manner.



- 1.3 The OHSW team is based in the People and ICT Team in Corporate Resources. The team is responsible for:



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- Ensuring that the Council meets its statutory obligations in respect of the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and all others affected by its activities;
 - Developing policies, procedures and standards
 - Monitoring and inspecting workplaces and investigating accidents, incidents and occupational ill-health;
 - Managing the occupational health contract;
 - Providing health and safety training.

2.0 Plan

2.1 Policy

2.1.1 The Corporate OHSW policy reflects the Council's values, beliefs and commitment to provide a safe and healthy workplace. The policy includes link to further guidance on managing the hazards faced by staff in the Council. The last review of the policy was in May 2018.

2.1.2 In addition to the corporate policy, each Service should have its own service-specific health and safety policy which sets out the Service's arrangements for managing health and safety. The Corporate Resources policy is still to be approved following the merger of Corporate Development and Finance Services. These policies are all available on the Health and Safety [Intranet site](#).

2.2 Planning for implementation

2.2.1 Effective planning for health and safety is concerned with prevention through identifying and controlling risks. This involves:

- designing, developing and implementing suitable and proportionate management arrangements, risk control systems and workplace precautions
- operating and maintaining the system while also seeking improvement where needed
- linking it to how other aspects of the Council are managed

2.2.2 Each service has nominated a Head of Service (other than Corporate Resources which is a small service) to take on the role of Service Health and Safety Co-ordinator. Their responsibilities include coordinating health safety and wellbeing issues within their service and championing health and safety. They play a major part in implementing the corporate policy into their Service and in developing their health and safety plan.



3.0 Do

3.1 Risk profiling

3.1.1 The Council's health and safety delivery model covers the significant hazards faced by staff as they conduct their work activities. Not all services face the same hazard (or level of risk), and the Service health and safety action plan should focus on relevant risks, how they will be addressed within the Service and meet the requirements of Council policy and guidance.

3.1.2 There is a strong focus on the use of risk assessment as a management tool and ensuring that controls are proportionate to the risks. A continued emphasis on sensible, proportionate risk assessment will be one of the main themes for the OHSW team in 2018/19.

3.2 Organising

3.2.2 Health and safety responsibilities are described in the Corporate Policy and reflected in Service Policies. In addition to Service H&S Coordinators, individuals with specific responsibilities in Services for: risk assessment, Responsible Premises Officers, first aid, fire wardens, key workers (lifting and handling), trainers, assessors etc. have been identified. The basic requirement that everyone is responsible for the health and safety of themselves and others is one that is oft repeated.

3.3 Plan Implementation

3.3.1 OHSW plan

The main actions in the 2017/18 OHSW plan were to:

- Maintain the OHSW Management System (ongoing)
- Work with Services to maintain H&S plans (ongoing)
- Reduce the number of occupational health appointments where employees did not attend (ref 4.5.8)
- Review Violence and Aggression reporting in schools (ref 5.1.10)

3.3.2 Communication

The Staff Intranet and use of email are the main means of communication health, safety and wellbeing issues. The most important messages are published on the Intranet home page as well as the health and safety site. Health and safety advisers also raise issues at Area, Service and other health and safety meetings.

3.3.3 Communication messages have mainly focussed on security issues; mental health awareness; safe driving and safety alerts regarding battery disposal, safe use of ladders, sun exposure and manual handling. All messages can be found on the [OHSW news page](#).

3.3.3 Co-operation and consultation

3.3.3.1 The Central Safety Committee (CSC) is the main arena for health and safety consultation in line with the requirements of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977. Reports on the occupational health service, health and safety updates and property health and safety issues are all standing items on the agenda. Where Services have had HSE intervention, there is an expectation that update reports will be submitted to the committee until the issue has been closed out.

3.3.3.2 In line with the Policy and Guidance on Consultation, Service and Area health and safety meetings are held quarterly. Service meetings are regularly held (other than in Corporate Resources). Area meetings can sometimes be negatively impacted upon due to poor attendance – even though these now include the ability to join remotely. Improving attendance at Area meetings is included in the 2018/19 Action plan. Actions raised at these meetings can be escalated to the CSC if not addressed in a timely manner.

3.3.3.3 The appropriate health and safety adviser attends Service and Area meetings. A representative from D&I's Property Management Team is also invited to the meetings to discuss health and safety property-related issues.

3.3.3.4 All work teams are encouraged to have health and safety as a regular item on the agenda for team meetings to ensure that issues can be raised and addressed.

3.3.5 Training

3.3.5.1 Health and safety training is, in the main, delivered by the health and safety team, without cost to the service, except where specialist input is required. The OHSW team can deliver training across the Council's geographical area, where there are adequate numbers of delegates.

3.3.5.2 The table below shows the number of Council staff attending health and safety courses in 2017/18:

| Course title | 2017/18 | Trend |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| Dealing with challenging behaviour | 31 | ↑ |
| Mental Health Representative | 39 | ↑ |
| Accident Investigation and Reporting | 79 | ↑ |
| Responsible Premises Officer | 53 | ↑ |

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| First Aid Certificate | 47 | ↑ |
| First Aid Certificate Refresher | 58 | ↑ |
| Emergency First Aid | 255 | ↓ |
| Moving and Handling (People) | 152 | ↑ |
| Evac chair / ski pad | 45/9 | ↓ |
| Evacuation procedures | 12 | ↓ |
| Fire Marshal | 73 | ↓ |
| Lone Working | 19 | ↓ |
| Managing Health and Safety in HC | 23 | ↓ |
| Manual Handling | 205 | ↑ |
| Risk Assessment | 137 | ↑ |
| Stress Awareness | 48 | ↑ |
| Mentally Healthy Workplaces | 36 | ↓ |
| Preventing Violence at Work | 21 | ↓ |
| E-learning courses | Complete (in progress) 2017/18 | Trend |
| Alcohol and drugs in the workplace | 50 (8) | ↑ |
| Mentally Healthy Workplaces | 100 (52) | ↑ |
| Preventing violence and aggression | 455 (380) | ↑ |
| Snow and ice clearing | 35 (33) | ↑ |
| Working with Computers | 279 (89) | ↓ |
| Managing stress | 46 (40) | ↑ |
| Extinguishing Fires | 91 (75) | ↑ |
| Introduction to OHSW | 441 (114) | ↑ |

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|---------------------|---------|---|
| Occupational Health | 55 (49) | ↑ |
|---------------------|---------|---|

3.3.5.3 The general trend is an increase in attendance at health and safety training whether it is delivered face to face or by e-learning. This training is an important element in improving safety culture and safety behaviours.

3.3.5.4 The Managing Health and Safety in Highland Council is aimed at 3rd tier managers, the majority of whom have now attended. A new course – Supervising Health and Safety in Highland Council - will be offered to other managers/team leaders and supervisors commencing 2018/19.

3.3.5.5 The Fire Awareness, Introduction to Health Safety & Wellbeing and Display Screen Equipment modules are all a mandatory part of the Induction process. In addition, new managers are expected to complete the Occupational Health module. The uptake of these courses does not reflect the number of new starts to the Council. The disparity will be investigated and, where required, Services will be reminded of the need for new starts (office based) to complete these courses.

3.3.5.6 Two new certificated Health and Wellbeing courses will be offered to staff, at no cost, via e-learning as of November 2018. These courses are:

- Level 2 Certificate in Personal Exercise and Nutrition
- Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Nutrition and Health

4.0 Check

4.1 Monitoring performance

4.1.1 Ensuring and encouraging compliance with OHSW policy and associated guidance, as a minimum standard, is at core the core of the proactive work of the OHSW team whilst also promoting a culture of continuous improvement. The quarterly CSC receives reports on the Council's health and safety performance as well as that of the contracted-in occupational health service.

4.1.2 Benchmarking, peer support and sharing of experience and policy and guidance is a core part of the North of Scotland Health and Safety group. This group is comprised of health and safety senior officers from CNES, Orkney, Shetland, Moray, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. A sub group has recently been established to share information and resources for the management of HAVS across these Councils.

4.2 Investigate accidents, etc.

4.2.1 There were 1171 incidents to staff reported in the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, compared to 1915 in the previous year. This year's trends and rates compared to the previous 5 years are presented in the table below:



| | 2011/ 2012 | 2012/ 2013 | 2013/ 2014 | 2014/ 2015 | 2015/ 2016 | 2016/ 2017 | 2017/ 2018 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Total employee accidents | 691 | 746 | 886 | 937 | 1196 | 1915 | 1171 |
| Fatalities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Working days lost | | | | 1348 | 1237 | 916 | 555 |
| Major injuries | 2 | 1 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Over 7 day injuries | 26 | 15 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 11 | 8 |
| Total reportable to HSE | 28 | 16 | 18 | 22 | 21 | 19 | 17 |
| Accident Injury Rate (AIR)* | 356 | 158 | 215 | 213 | 261 | 244 | 145 |

***AIR = (reportable injuries/no. employees)*100,000**

4.2.2 The majority of the incidents were reported as Violence and Aggression: 853 reported in schools and 52 by other staff. This is a reduction in the number reported last year and again, none of these incidents were reportable to the HSE.

4.2.3 The severity of the outcome of the accidents has reduced – as noted in the decrease in the number of over 7 day absence injuries and those reported to the HSE.

4.2.4 In terms of benchmarking, the reduction in the AIR places the Council in 2nd place when compared to the 6 neighbouring Councils in the North of Scotland.

4.2.5 In addition to the above, 7 Gas Incidents were reported to the HSE.

4.2.6 Only 6 near miss incidents were reported over this time period. It is considered essential that the Council makes more use of incident and near miss reports, results from accident investigations, inspections etc. to ensure sufficient learning from these and that appropriate responses are made to prevent recurrence of incidents and loss. This will be raised with Services over the next year.

4.3 Performance Indicators

4.3.1 Health and Safety targets have previously been established and the following table indicates progress to date.

| Target | Progress |
|---|--|
| Improve occupational health provision | Iqarus Occupational health took over the contract in 2016. Contract performance and service uptake is monitored by the Central Safety Committee. The service is currently out to tender, with a starting date of 1 April 2019 for the new contract. |
| Train an additional 30 trade union safety representatives by 31 March 2018. | Complete |

4.4 HSE Involvement

4.4.1 Crematorium

Following an unplanned visit by the HSE to Kilvean Crematorium the Council was issued with a Notice of Contravention with regards to risk assessment, control of substances hazardous to health, manual handling and lifting equipment. All actions were subsequently addressed and no further action was taken.

4.4.3 Partnership on Health and Safety (Scotland) (PHASS)

4.4.3.1 The OHSW Manager represents Scottish Local Authority Health and Safety Teams on this cross sectoral group which is chaired by HSE. As part of their 2016 Scottish Plan of Action on Safety and Health, the Council have taken the lead in setting up the Scottish Social Care Partners Forum where health and safety staff in all parts of the care sector are working together to share best practice and improve health and safety standards. In addition, the Waste Team are working with STUC in a project looking at worker engagement.

4.5 Occupational Health

4.5.1 Iqarus Occupational health took over the contract in 2016 following their buy-out of RS Occupational Health.

4.5.2 A total of 905 management referrals were seen by occupational health between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. This represents an increase from 516 referrals in the previous year. Following a lean review of the referral process a revised process was introduced in May 2017 – managers now do not include HR in the referral process but rely on Iqarus to answer any queries they may have regarding the referral.

Service use can be broken down as follows:

| Service | No. Referrals |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Corporate Development/Finance | 73 |
| Care and Learning | 598 |
| D&I | 49 |
| Community Services | 185 |

4.5.3 The main reason for referral to occupational health is for mental health issues, 45% of management referrals are classified thus by the medical staff. This is a decrease on the rate of 50% of cases in 2016-2017. There is a requirement for staff who are absent with mental health issues to be referred immediately, as early intervention is viewed as crucial to recovery and getting back to work. It should be noted that not all referrals (for any condition) are made when staff are off ill: some are referred while staff are still at work in order to prevent absence.

4.5.4 Where work related stress has been identified, the management report aligns the cause to the HSE Stress standards (demands, control, support, role relationships and/or change) and this way the employee and the manager can focus on these areas specifically. Managers are advised to complete Stress Risk Assessments as part of the return to work process.

4.5.5 Statutory health surveillance is required for all employees who are exposed to certain defined hazards (such as noise) or to certain processes such as


working with vibrating equipment. Health surveillance is any activity which involves obtaining information about employees' health and which helps protect employees from health risks at work. There is also a requirement to offer night workers a health assessment. The table below shows the health surveillance activity in this period.

| Community Services | 2016/17 |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Audiometry | 533 |
| HAVS paper screen | 520 |
| HAVS Tier 4 | 7 |
| Skin | 530 |
| Respiratory | 538 |
| D&I | 2016/17 |
| Audiometry | 5 |
| Respiratory | 4 |
| Skin | 4 |
| HAVS paper screen | 2 |
| HAVS Stage 4 | 1 |

4.5.6 Did not attend appointments (DNAs) are those where the employee fails to give more than 24 hours' notice of being unable to attend their appointment – in many cases there is no communication from the employee at all and they do not turn up. Both manager and employee receive notification of appointments and managers are expected to discuss this with the employee.

4.5.7 Under the terms of the contract, the Council is charged the full appointment cost for DNAs. The table below shows a breakdown of DNAs by service.

| Service | Management Referral | Physio |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Corporate Resources | 6 | 5 |
| Care and Learning | 44 | 11 |
| D&I | 5 | 8 |
| Community | 21 | 13 |



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|----------|--|--|
| Services | | |
|----------|--|--|

4.5.8 The 113 DNAs is a significant increase on the 62 DNAs from the previous year; however in percentage terms this is 12.4% compared to 12%. As any DNS is costly, a number of steps have been introduced to try to keep this number as low as possible.

- the OHSW team now text employees 48 hours prior to their appointment to remind them of the details;
- managers are requested to remind employees of their appointment and double check the time/date is suitable;
- managers are asked to report as to why the employee DNA'd.

4.5.9 DNAs will continue to be monitored at Central Safety Committee.

4.6 Fire safety

4.6.1 The team provide input to the Corporate Fire Safety Group which was formed after the Grenfell fire tragedy. A prioritised programme of fire risk assessments for Council workplaces is being developed and progressed will be reported back to Central Safety Committee.

5.0 ACT

5.1 Achievements


5.1.1 Updates to health and safety policy and guidance included:

- Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Policy on mental health and wellbeing
- Guidance on the use of Display Screen Equipment
- Trade Union Safety Representatives Charter and Partnership
- Dyslexia at work:
- Managing stress at work:
- Radon Policy
- Occupational health

5.1.2 In partnership with colleagues in HR and Learning and Development, there was significant input to the development and delivery of the new course for Mental Health Reps: there are now 57 reps across the Highland Area.

5.1.3 The OHSW Team were involved in providing advice to a number of projects including the Fort William Office Project and the Depot Rationalisation Project.





5.1.4 Continued support to the radon management group which focus on measuring and managing radon levels in all Council workplaces in high/medium radon levels.

5.1.5 The OHSW team also achieved 100% attendance at Area and Service health and safety consultation groups.

5.1.6 The Highland Council again participated in the UK wide Step Challenge run by Paths for All. The 8 week challenge started in May and completed in June 2017. Teams of five participated in the challenge. The teams came from all services and a variety of locations. The combined effort from all the teams resulted in the equivalent of 29,204 miles, which took them completely around the world and then onto Grenada in the Caribbean. In comparison to last year's summer challenge the team average step count increased from 1184 miles to 1537 miles per team. The top team - Fallen Arches, from Osprey House, Alness – were among the top 30 teams in the UK, with a phenomenal team effort of 5,421,536 steps.

5.1.7 A new framework for the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was launched by Scotland Excel on 2 June 2017. To mark the launch the Council held a Vendor's Day where a number of vendors on site in Dochfour Drive to display their PPE and discuss concerns and ideas with users and managers.

5.1.8 As part of the Council's work with Police Scotland (CONTEST) a number of training courses were introduced including:


- Run Hide Tell (Firearms/weapons attack)
- Document Awareness (Checking passports etc.)
- Project Griffin (Awareness for Street Cleaners, Traffic Enforcement and FM)


5.1.9 The development of a security manual is also underway to give staff additional advice and information on how to stay safe and protect buildings whilst the National security threat stays at Severe.

5.1.10 The violence and aggression report form for use in schools was revised and re-issued.

6.0 OHSW Work plan for 2018/19

6.1 The 2018/19 workplace was approved at Resources Committee in May 2018. It includes commitments to:



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- Work with colleagues in D&I to address fire safety issues arising from the Council's work to address actions following the Grenfell fire, including a prioritised programme of fire risk assessments in Council workplaces.
 - Work with Services to ensure that effective health and safety management runs throughout the Council. This will include ongoing monitoring and input to Service OHSW Plans which will identify health, safety and wellbeing needs and a focus on sensible, proportionate risk management, especially through the redesign process.
 - Maintain and develop the OHSW pages to ensure continued access to competent health and safety information.
 - Complete a review of lone working arrangements and controls
 - Work with Services to improve uptake of mandatory health and safety courses
 - Rollout new stress risk assessments (Talking Toolkits) in school and care settings
 - Work with Services to improve attendance at Area health and safety meetings
 - Investigate the possibility of introducing a confidential Employee Assistance Programme for staff as a way of supporting those with stress/mental health issues will be explored.
 - Investigate the possibility of introducing an electronic health and safety management system to record accidents, outcomes from investigations, audits, inspections etc. and manage and report on the same.
 - Achieve the Healthy Working Lives' Gold Award for health promotion. This will involve setting up a cross-Service Group, developing a health and wellbeing strategy, reviewing our health related policies and organise health promotion events.
 - Continue to work with Police Scotland on CONTEST issues
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