

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 23 March 2017

Health and Safety Performance in 2016

Item number 7.6
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards

Executive Summary

In 2016, the Council built on progress made in 2015, with a focus on greater clarity, competence and culture in relation to health and safety matters.

The health and safety governance framework, which is aligned to the Council's risk management framework, was embedded in 2016, ensuring robust governance for oversight and decision making for health and safety. There was also a strong focus on risk management, and increased focus on the provision of operational health and safety support to service areas during a period of significant organisational change, and following the collapse of a wall at Oxfangs Primary School.

The Council achieved a 29% decrease in the number of reportable injuries to employees in 2016 compared with the previous year; these represent the more serious injuries that are required to be reported externally to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This builds on the 15% decrease in 2015 compared with 2014.

The Council will continue to build on progress made in the previous couple of years, ensuring that health and safety risks are managed in a proportionate and efficient way.

Links

Coalition Pledges [P27](#)
Council Outcomes [CO27](#)
Single Outcome Agreement

Health and Safety Performance in 2016

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee is asked to note this report.

2. Background

- 2.1 The [Corporate Health and Safety Plan](#) for 2016/17 was agreed by the Finances and Resources Committee in March 2016. The Plan set out to build on progress in 2015/16 across the key priority areas, with an increased focus on three key principles – clarity, competence and culture.
- 2.2 The purpose of this report is to update on progress and performance in 2016 for health and safety.

3. Main report

- 3.1 During 2016, the Council built on progress made in 2015 across the six key priority areas set out below, with an increased focus on clarity, competence and culture.

Health and Safety Governance, Assurance and Oversight

- 3.2 The health and safety governance framework, which is aligned to the Council's risk management framework, was embedded in 2016, ensuring robust governance for oversight and decision making for health and safety. Further work is underway at service level to ensure health and safety committees and working groups are working effectively.
- 3.3 The second year of the Communities and Families Assurance Framework, which included a programme of 15 joint audits by Internal Audit, Corporate Health and Safety and Information Governance, was extended to include early years centres, community centres and residential centres. A number of changes were made to embed the programme in 2016 and to respond to feedback from its first year of operation. Corporate Health and Safety will continue with their rolling programme of audit visits in 2017, with the Internal Audit component of the programme being replaced by a Communities and Families review process where the assurance framework has matured in the past year.
- 3.4 Eighty-three health and safety audits were carried out in 2016 as part of the rolling Health and Safety Audit Programme. These included audits of units, services, topic audits and contractor audits. Contractor audits were introduced in 2016, and will be

part of the Audit Programme going forwards. In addition, joint audits were undertaken for the first time with NHS Lothian.

Risk Management

- 3.5 Refreshed guidance and templates to support risk assessment were launched at the Health and Safety Conference in April 2016, with additional risk assessment training courses subsequently delivered by Corporate Health and Safety.
- 3.6 Risk profiling workshops were held across the services areas to identify key health and safety risks. The Council's risk methodology was used to identify and score the inherent risks. Work is ongoing to consider the residual risks, which will in turn support the identification of what further controls are needed, and will also inform the Corporate Health and Safety strategic priorities in 2017/18.
- 3.7 There was an increased focus in 2016 on the provision of operational health and safety support to service areas during a period of significant organisational change.
- 3.8 Corporate Health and Safety were part of the Corporate Incident Management Team after the collapse of a wall at Oxfords Primary School and subsequent closure of 17 schools. The team carried out 50 visits to schools to provide health and safety and fire safety advice, and continue to liaise with the Fire and Rescue Services who are undertaking fire safety audits at all PPP1 schools.
- 3.9 Guidance and tools to support health and safety risk management in natural playgrounds were developed for Communities and Families.
- 3.10 A 'blue print' document to set out operational roles and responsibilities for health and safety in schools was developed in collaboration with Corporate Property and Facilities Management. This information has been used to inform the development of new service level agreements between Corporate Property and Facilities Management, and Communities and Families.

Measurement

- 3.11 Quarterly and annual health and safety performance dashboards were produced by Corporate Health and Safety to provide oversight on health and safety performance at Council-wide and Directorate levels. The dashboards contain leading and lagging metrics including health and safety incident statistics and thematic audit findings.

Leadership and Accountability

- 3.12 The second annual Health and Safety conference, hosted by the Chief Executive, in April 2016 was attended by over 300 managers and representatives from Trade Unions. The focus was on risk assessment and the message that 'health and safety is everyone's responsibility' was reinforced.

Training

- 3.13 Corporate Health and Safety achieved accreditation to deliver the IOSH Leading Safety course. The course will be available from April 2017 and is aimed at Senior Managers.

- 3.14 The suite of Corporate Health and Safety training courses has been refreshed, with additional courses added to meet the training needs of the service areas.
- 3.15 Training needs analysis guidance has been introduced to support managers to identify health and safety training needs for their teams, with ongoing support from Corporate Health and Safety.

Communications

- 3.16 To increase the profile and raise awareness of health and safety in the Council, a new visual identity was developed. The design for communication materials including posters, presentation slides and training were researched with colleagues from across the Council who attended focus groups.
- 3.17 Modern design and imagery is now being used to convey key health and safety messages to maximise the impact.

Health and Safety Performance in 2016

- 3.18 The Council achieved a 29% decrease in the number of reportable injuries to employees in 2016 compared with the previous year; these represent the more serious injuries that are required to be reported externally to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This builds on the 15% decrease in 2015 compared with 2014.
- 3.19 In 2016, the employee injury rate was 8.6 per 100 employees. This compares with 7.3 per 100 employees in 2015. 60% of employee injuries were due to violence and aggression, with the majority of these incidents involving pupils with additional learning needs in schools.
- 3.20 Housing Property Services retained their RoSPA Gold medal in 2016. This award is based on an organisation's health and safety performance assessed against the judging criteria.
- 3.21 Regrettably, the Council was prosecuted in December 2016 for a breach of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, dating back to 2011, specifically in relation to the South Neighbourhood Taskforce's ground maintenance and forestry services department for failure to implement adequate controls for hand and arm vibration. The sentence imposed was a £6K fine.
- 3.22 The Crown Office has confirmed that a fatal accident inquiry will be held in June 2017 at Edinburgh Sheriff Court, following the tragic fatality of a pupil at Liberton High School in April 2014.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Measures of success include:
 - 4.1.1 reduction in losses arising from work related injury and ill health, caused by failure to manage health and safety;

- 4.1.2 reduction in potential for criminal or civil prosecution caused by failure to manage health and safety or failure to meet legal and regulatory requirements; and
- 4.1.3 reduction in potential for reputational damage, associated with failure to manage health and safety.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There is no financial impact as a result of this report.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The potential impact of failure to manage health and safety and welfare includes: death, injury, ill health, in addition to legal liabilities, regulatory censure, financial losses, business disruption and reputational damage.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no direct equalities impact as a result of this report.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no direct sustainability impact as a result of this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Report to Finances and Resources Committee, 17 March 2016: [Proposed Health and Safety Plan](#).

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P27 – Seek to work in full partnership with Council staff and their representatives.
Council Outcomes	CO27 – The Council supports, invest in and develops our people.
Single Outcome Agreement Appendices	