

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 27 March 2018

Health and Safety Performance in 2017

Item number	7.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

Substantial progress has been made in 2017 to improve the Council's health and safety performance, building on progress made in previous years. The focus in 2017 was to provide greater clarity on health and safety roles and responsibilities, aligned with the revised Council organisational structure. These were set out in a new Council Health and Safety Policy, and in new sub-policies for fire safety and asbestos.

The Council achieved a 16% reduction in the number of reportable injuries to employees in 2017 compared with the previous year, which further builds on the significant reductions in 2015 and 2016 (15% and 29% respectively). In the past 3 years, the Council has achieved an overall 49% decrease in the number of reportable injuries to employees, including a 69% decrease in major/'specified' injuries (such as fractures).

However, the findings from health and safety audits and assurance reviews continue to highlight areas for improvement.

Health and Safety Performance in 2017

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee is recommended to review and be assured by health and safety progress and performance in 2017.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council has duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and subordinate legislation, to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who could be affected by its undertaking.
- 2.2 The purpose of this report is to update on progress and performance in relation to health and safety in 2017.

3. Main report

- 3.1 During 2017, the Council built on good progress made in 2016 and 2015 across the six key priority areas set out below.

3.2 Health and Safety Governance, Assurance and Oversight

- 3.2.1 Governance maps were developed for each Directorate setting out governance reporting lines for health and safety groups and forums.
- 3.2.2 63 health and safety audits were carried out in 2017, as part of the rolling Health and Safety Audit Programme. These included audits of buildings, services, thematic audits (play parks and lone working) and contractor audits.
- 3.2.3 Following successful collaboration with Internal Audit on the assurance programme across schools and community centres managed by Communities and Families in 2015 and 2016, a 'centre based' assurance review was included in the 2017/18 annual plan approved by the Governance Risk and Best Value (GRBV) Committee in March 2017, focussing on Council-run care homes for the elderly. 10 health and safety audits were carried out in conjunction with Internal Audit and Information Governance.
- 3.2.4 PwC undertook an audit of contractor management. The audit identified areas for improving for contractor safety, including inter-departmental liaison. In response,

guidance was developed in collaboration with Strategic Asset Management for managers planning to modify/refurbish Council assets.

- 3.2.5 A review was carried out on the management of *Legionella* bacteria in water systems. Areas for improvement were identified and are being progressed, including a new Water Safety Policy which sets out roles and responsibilities.

3.3 Risk Management

- 3.3.1 The new Council Health and Safety Policy was approved by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 27 March 2017, following consultation with Trades Unions and stakeholders. The policy considers the new organisational arrangements and provides greater clarity on health and safety roles and responsibilities.
- 3.3.2 New sub-policies for fire safety and asbestos were also developed and approved, following consultation with Trades Unions and stakeholders.
- 3.3.3 Corporate Health and Safety were part of the Corporate Incident Management Team, led by Housing Property, following the Grenfell fire. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) carried out fire safety inspections for all 44 high rise Council properties. A communications plan was put in place by Housing Property, and an offer was extended to residents' groups for SFRS and Housing Property staff to attend residents' meetings to discuss the fire safety precautions in place within their blocks. This offer was welcomed by Edinburgh Tenants Federation who have been extremely positive about the quick response and overall approach from the Council following the tragedy at Grenfell.
- 3.3.4 A new 'Take 5' initiative was developed with colleagues in the Place Directorate. The process is basically about taking five minutes to think about the job and the hazards, and is a simple and effective way to increase safety awareness. The tool will be used to augment the health and safety risk assessments. The initiative was piloted in Road Services, and will be rolled out in other services in 2018 taking a similar approach.
- 3.3.5 There was an increased focus on operational support for Household Waste Recycling Centres. Work was undertaken to support the development of new risk assessments, a new training programme, signage upgrade and improved arrangements for fire safety.
- 3.3.6 Ongoing health and safety support and expert advice was provided for Communities and Families throughout 2017 in response to complaints raised regarding two natural playgrounds in primary schools. Work was undertaken to substantiate the specialist advice provided from the Council's external accredited advisor on playground safety to ensure the risks in the playgrounds are within acceptable limits.
- 3.3.7 The Council's proposed Corporate Health and Safety Strategy and Plan for 2018-2020 has been set out for approval by this Committee. One of the Council's key

strategic aims is to build a strong health and safety culture, where health and safety roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are fully understood and competently discharged.

3.4 Measurement

- 3.4.1 Quarterly and annual health and safety performance dashboards were produced by Corporate Health and Safety to provide oversight on health and safety performance at both Council and Directorate levels. The dashboards contain leading and lagging metrics including information on health and safety incident statistics, thematic audit findings and training.
- 3.4.2 Benchmarking was carried out with seven other Councils in Scotland for 2016 injury statistics. The Council compared favourably with other Councils for RIDDOR reportable employee injuries (2nd out of 8), and was mid table for all employee injuries (4th out of 7). One of the Councils benchmarked against was unable to provide data on the total number of injuries. The top causes of employee injuries were broadly consistent across all Councils: violence and aggression, manual handling, and slips, trips and falls.
- 3.4.3 Further benchmarking was carried out with six Councils in England of comparable economy and population. However, the benchmarking exercise revealed that most of these Councils are not comparable in terms of services delivered, with several higher risk services outsourced.

3.5 Communications

- 3.5.1 A suite of health and safety posters was developed to improve health and safety awareness for topics including fire safety, asbestos, vibration, and near-miss reporting.
- 3.5.2 A new 'blue print' health and safety notice board was introduced with the new health and safety branding. New notice boards have been installed at several locations, including Waverley Court, household waste recycling centres and street cleansing depots.
- 3.5.3 The health and safety landing page on the Orb (intranet) was re-designed with improved signposting. Further work is underway to re-design the navigation on the Orb for health and safety resources.

3.6 Training

- 3.6.1 A new one day health and safety training course for schools was developed for Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers, and Business Managers in response to feedback about the impact on school staff of having to attend training. The new course has been well received and is included in the Essential Learning Matrix as mandatory training to be completed every three years.

- 3.6.2 The suite of health and safety e-learning modules, available on CECil (the Council's e-learning system) was refreshed.
- 3.6.3 Corporate Health and Safety achieved accreditation to deliver the new IOSH¹ Leading Safety Course aimed at Executive Directors and Senior Managers. The course is currently being rolled out to the Wider Leadership Team (WLT), and its wider roll out across the Council will follow.

3.7 Leadership and Accountability

- 3.7.1 The Health and Safety Conference in October 2017, hosted by the Chief Executive, was attended by 300 senior managers and key stakeholders, including Elected Member representation, Trades Unions, regulators, and partners. The keynote address was by Lawrence Waterman OBE, who shared his experience of leading health and safety for the successful London 2012 Olympics build. This impactful presentation, highlighting the importance of leadership in shaping the health and safety culture, was especially well received.
- 3.7.2 The Chief Executive, Executive Directors, colleagues in service areas and schools, and Trades Unions, participated in a short film to affirm their personal commitment to health and safety and to promote the message that 'health and safety is everyone's responsibility'. The film was first shown at the Health and Safety Conference and will be used in training.
- 3.7.3 The Council continued to engage positively and collaboratively with Trades Unions on health and safety matters, recognising the important role of accredited safety representatives.

3.8 Health and Safety Performance in 2017

- 3.8.1 The Council achieved a 16% decrease in the number of RIDDOR² reportable injuries to employees in 2017 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), and builds on the 29% and 15% decreases achieved in 2016 and 2015, respectively. In the past three years, the Council has achieved an overall 49% decrease in number of reportable injuries to employees, including a 69% decrease in major/'specified' injuries (such as fractures), and a 45% decrease in injuries resulting in over-seven days absence from work.
- 3.8.2 There were 1574 employee injuries, 633 excluding assaults. The employee injury rate for 12 months is 8.4 per 100 and 3.4 excluding assaults. This compares

¹ Institution of Occupational Safety and Health

² Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

favourably with 8.6 per 100 employees (2% decrease) and 3.4 excluding assaults (equal) in 2016, respectively.

- 3.8.3 Employee injuries resulting from violence and aggression/assaults accounted for 60% of all injuries, comparable with 2016. The majority (90%) of these injuries were in schools, and mostly in relation to service users with additional support needs for learning. In 2017, there was a 28% decrease in injuries in special schools but a 42% increase in primary schools. The increase in primary schools is considered to be attributed in part to increased awareness on reporting of injuries resulting from violence and aggression. Property and Facilities Management are currently leading on initiatives to reduce the incidence of assaults and enhance the learning and teaching experience in special schools, primary schools with language classes, and young persons' centres. Work is also underway in care homes, and is being carried out in collaboration with the Dementia Centre at Stirling University who have provided advice and training for Property and Facilities Management staff.
- 3.8.4 The findings from health and safety audits, assurance reviews and incident investigations carried out in 2017 have highlighted a number of significant risks, including life safety risks such as fire safety, water safety (*Legionella*) and asbestos, where improvements are required. The audits in care homes also highlighted areas for improvement for patient safety. The thematic report for the Care Homes Assurance Review was reported to Governance Risk and Best Value Committee in March 2018.
- 3.8.5 The Council has already recognised the poor condition of some of its estate, and the associated health and safety risks. Following approval of the Council's budget for 2018/19, a plan is in place to upgrade the estate to minimise these risks.
- 3.8.6 Housing Property retained the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold medal in 2017. This award is based on an organisation's health and safety performance assessed against the judging criteria.
- 3.8.7 A fatal accident inquiry was held in June 2017 at the Edinburgh Sheriff Court, following the tragic fatality of a pupil at Liberton High School in 2014, as the result of the collapse of a free-standing wall. In the determination, the Sheriff concluded that there were no reasonable precautions where the pupil's death, or the accident, might have been avoided. The determination also reported that the Council had taken all reasonably practicable measures to ensure the wall was inspected and maintained.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Measures of success include improved health and safety performance, with a strong safety culture where health and safety roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are fully understood and competently discharged.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The staffing costs for the Corporate Health and Safety team in 2017 was £480K. This was lower than the budgeted cost due to ongoing difficulties with filling advertised roles.
- 5.2 The cost of delivering the Health and Safety Conference was £9,500.
- 5.3 The annual renewal cost for the electronic incident reporting system was c. £8,000.

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 adverse equality impacts arising directly from this report. However, implementation of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and supporting procedures and guidance will help to ensure that reasonable workplace adjustments are made for those individuals who require them.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse sustainability impacts arising from this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 There has been ongoing consultation and engagement with Trades Unions and other stakeholders.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Council Health and Safety Policy](#).
- 10.2 Report to Finance and Resources Committee, 27 March 2018: Proposed Corporate Health and Safety Strategy 2018-2020.

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11. Appendices

None.