

23 January 2013**Agenda Item: 9****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND
CUSTOMER SERVICE****ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REVIEW 2011/12****Purpose of the Report**

1. To advise Personnel Committee on Nottinghamshire County Council's Health and Safety performance and plans to secure continuing effective and efficient management of risk and legal compliance. The report examines the effectiveness of safety management systems and identifies action required to address specific high priority risk issues and address any areas of potential weakness.

Information and Advice**General**

2. The conclusions and recommendations in this report are based on the outcomes of a programme of audits/inspections, regular contact/site visits and incident investigations carried out by the Health and Safety Team. It is evident from this that performance has continued to improve, with high levels of compliance and significant reduction in accidents and employee civil claims. This has enabled the authority to prioritise and more accurately target resources on key risk areas and ensure that suitable action is taken to maintain and improve levels of health and safety risk management.
3. A framework of corporate and departmental meetings has driven performance improvement through regular consideration of key risk issues, by challenging non-compliance and monitoring progress. Regular updates to Corporate and Departmental Leadership teams by the Health and Safety Manager have ensured that senior officers are regularly updated on key issues and performance.
4. Formal consultation with recognised trades unions has continued throughout this period at Central Health, Safety and Welfare Panel, Departmental and Corporate Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panels.

Safety Management System

5. The County Council has maintained a planned and systematic approach to health and safety management, to an internationally recognised standard that is externally assessed.

Property, Highways, Catering and Facilities Management have had positive external assessments during the previous 12 month period.

6. The scope of the county council’s certification has been extended to include Country Parks, National Watersport Centre and the Youth Service. Phase 1 audits of all three areas started in April 2012 and phase 2 audits are due to be completed in January 2013.

Audits and Inspections

7. All audits and inspections were carried out using a standardised assessment process, scoring from 1 to 4, with 1 reflecting the highest levels of management/compliance and 4 representing a lack of effective management systems or operational compliance. The average *audit score* for 2011/12 was 2.6, against a target of 2.5. This is indicative of generally high standards of health and safety risk management across the authority. The average *inspection score* of 2.4 was also close to the target value of 2.0, again indicative of generally high standards of health and safety risk management across the areas inspected.
8. A review of issues identified during audit and inspection activity identified the following areas as requiring further improvement;
 - Risk assessment
 - Property management (fire, legionella, asbestos, electrical systems)
 - Statutory Inspections
 - Control of construction/maintenance and contractors
 - Lone working
 - Violence & Aggression

Lagging Indicators

9. Targets for incident reduction, set at 20% between 2010 and 2015, are on course in all categories. Table 1 provides an overview of key statistics. Reported work related injuries have generally reduced over the period continuing the downward trend. Whilst significantly reduced, the number of reported violent incidents continues to be a concern. Action has been taken to address this by revising policy and guidance relating to this issue as well as auditing and inspecting areas with continuing high levels of incidents.
10. Action is being taken to develop an on-line incident reporting process which is due to go live next year.

Table 1 Work related injury causes in 2011-12

	Incidents		% Change	RIDDORs*		% Change
	2011	2010		2011	2010	
<i>Incident data is for employees only</i>						
Accidents/Incidents	2414	3546	-32	45	97	-54
Slips/trips/falls	305	360	-15	13	35	-63
Violent Incidents	1114	1423	-22	2	1	100
Manual Handling Incidents	143	243	-41	11	27	-59

*Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations

Asbestos

11. The Asbestos and Condition Survey Team commenced a programme of annual asbestos register updates in January 2011 and are currently on the second round of visits. During their visits they also raise any urgent asbestos management issues, provide asbestos management advice and check that Local Asbestos Management Plans are in place.
12. The Health and Safety team have recently visited all maintained schools to review and revise Local Asbestos Management Plans and raise awareness of asbestos. The introduction of a Building Works notification process has also been effective in helping to identify potential safety issues at the planning stage.
13. A new code of practice, aiming to reinforce roles, responsibilities and procedures has also been agreed by Corporate Leadership Team and this is now being implemented.

Fire

14. Throughout this period the Fire Safety Team have focused on commissioning improvement works based on recommendations from fire risk assessments. The team has been particularly successful in its management of improvement works, having delivered a reduction in priority one actions from 23% to 9% of the total number of issues. The fire risk assessment programme has continued and is ahead of schedule for completing reviews, to the point where 75% of fire risk assessments are now less than two and a half years old.

Legionella

15. Throughout this period, the Water Hygiene team have focused on commissioning improvements identified by legionella risk assessments, responding to monitoring programmes and developing opportunities for improvement brought about by capital improvement projects. The removal of cold water storage tanks (1200 reduced to 705) and installation of associated modern water heaters has been a priority. This has reduced the risk from stored water and the potential for contamination. The review of risk assessments has continued and 98% of assessments are less than two years old.

Competence and Training Indicators

16. The competence and awareness of senior managers has been a particular focus during the twelve month period to date. The outcome is that almost half of all managers have been trained against a target of 33%. This includes 48% of Team Managers attending 'Health & Safety Essentials for Managers' and 48% of Senior Managers attending 'Active Safety Management'. Action is being taken by departmental Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Groups to identify and ensure that all relevant staff have attended this training.
17. Whilst the focus of the corporate training programme has been on the development of management competencies, there has also been an increase in the delivery of ad-hoc training to front line staff and for specific subjects including;
 - Nominated Property Officer / Nominated Property Contact training
 - Food Safety
 - Control of contractors
 - Control of asbestos

In addition, a programme of training to schools has resulted in the delivery of 86 safety-training sessions.

Horizon scanning

18. The government are reviewing health and safety with a view to simplifying, reducing bureaucracy and have introduced new charging mechanisms for Health and Safety Executive enforcement interventions. The authority is currently reviewing its policy and guidance to reflect this philosophy and new approach.
19. The incorporation of Public Health functions into the County Council will require a degree of work to review and ensure consistency of practice in this area over the rest of this year. Action has already been taken to start this process but it is unlikely to require major resource input.

Action Plan

20. The NCC Health & Safety Action Plan is designed to address potential weaknesses that have been identified by our annual and on-going review processes. The action plan consists of proactive and reactive programmes of work that aim to deliver improvement in key risk areas across the authority. Good progress was made on all key aspects of the action plan for the period 2011/12. Where actions were not fully completed or required further input or development, they have been included in the new Health and Safety action plan, which is attached as Appendix 1.
21. The action plan allows the authority to target resources to provide tailored support to specific 'high risk' services. There will continue to be significant focus on property related issues in 2013. This will be supported by further focused audits, inspections, training and communication to raise awareness and compliance in this as a priority risk area.
22. The other key issues identified by this report and targeted by the action plan include Risk Assessment, Statutory Inspections, Control of construction/maintenance and contractors, lone-working, violence and aggression. Action to address all issues has been included in the action plan.

Other Options Considered

23. A range of options have been considered in developing the action plan.

Reasons for Recommendation

24. The report aims to update members, to inform them of key risks and planned actions required to revise and reinforce effective risk management processes.

Statutory and Policy Implications

25. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and

where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Human Resources Implications

The safety of service users and employees is of the upmost importance to the County Council and the planned actions attached to this report take careful account of how this can best be achieved, moving from compliance to a position of modelling best practice. The delivery of safer working practices and environments includes close working with staff representative groups including the recognised trade unions and the human resource implications are considered at every stage of the development of Health and Safety policy, procedures and relevant guidance. The trade unions welcome the evidence of performance improvement contained in the report but have stated an expectation for improvement to continue.

RECOMMENDATION

That Personnel Committee note the key findings of this report and the action that is being taken by the County Council to address the key areas of risk.

Marjorie Toward
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Constitutional Comments (KK 21/12/12)

26. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (MB 20/12/12)

27. There are no specific financial implications arising from the report.

Background Papers

Trade union side comments.

Electoral Division(s) and Members(s) Affected

All