

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Resources Committee – 18th February 2009

The Highland Council – Annual Health and Safety Report 2007- 2008

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Summary:-

This report outlines the Highland Council's Health and Safety performance for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 and includes statistical information relating to accidents and incidents reported to the Council's Health and Safety Team during that period.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Highland Council's Health and Safety Policy incorporates a commitment to the production of an annual report on its health and safety performance, in line with the Governments "Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy".
- 1.2. The format of this report follows guidance published by the Health and Safety Commission and addresses the following key areas:
 - (i) Health and Safety Principles
 - (ii) Health and Safety Targets
 - (iii) Health and Safety Performance

2. Health and Safety Principles

2.1. Policy

- 2.1.1 The councils General Statement of Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect changes in Service structures and Operational Areas. The revised policy document has been signed by the Chief Executive and copies were distributed to all staff in leaflet form.
- 2.1.2 The Policy on Health and Safety Consultation and its accompanying guidance have been updated to reflect changes in Operational Areas. Additional guidance has been incorporated in respect of Service specific health and safety groups.
- 2.1.3 The Display Screen Equipment Policy and Guidance has also been updated to incorporate changes in legislation and the decision to increase the Councils contribution toward the cost of glasses required for use with display screen equipment.
- 2.1.4 The full range of health and safety policies can be accessed via the Health and Safety website on the Councils intranet.

<http://ntintra1/persintra/health&safety/health&safety.htm>

2.2. Plans

- 2.2.1. The Council's current Corporate Plan 2007 – 2011 contains a commitment to meeting the Government's Revitalising Health and Safety Targets by 2010.
- 2.2.2. All Service Plans have continuing commitment to the improvement of health and safety standards through the development of Service specific policies, guidance, risk assessments and action planning. Details of Service Plans are on the Council's Intranet site under Service Management.

2.3. Consultation

- 2.3.1. The Central Safety Committee (made up of Elected Members, trade unions and Managers) meets on a quarterly basis to consider policy development and issues raised by Area Health and Safety Groups (staff and trade unions) that are of a corporate nature. Health and Safety Groups have been established in each of the Council's Areas to monitor the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy. Several Services have established their own Service specific Health and Safety group to improve the process of communication and consultation on Health and Safety issues.
- 2.3.2. The Council's Health and Safety Consultation Policy requires that health and safety be included on the agenda of all management meetings and team briefings etc. to ensure that all employees are informed and consulted on health and safety issues.
- 2.3.3. The second three year Health and Safety Partnership Agreement with the Trade Unions ended on 31st March 2008. Discussions have taken place regarding continuation of the partnership approach with the development of a new agreement to cover the period from 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2011. This three year plan will continue to support the development of an effective network of trained Trade Union Safety Representatives. (UPDATE – NEW PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ESTABLISHED NOV 08 – SIGNED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES)

3. Health and Safety Targets

- 3.1 Several Health and Safety targets have been established and the following tables indicate progress to date:-

Corporate Plan

Target	Progress to date
Improve Occupational Health Service Provision	On-going review of Occupational Health Services.
Meet the Revitalising Health and Safety Targets by 2010	On target – further detail in Accident Statistics section of the report.

Partnership Initiative

Target	Progress to date
To train an additional 30 trade union safety representatives by 31 st March 2008	Total of 28 Trade Union Safety Representatives recruited and trained to TUC Health and Safety Stage one.
Establish a Safety Representatives Charter	Charter developed and signed by the Chief Executive and representatives of the Trade Unions in 2007.
All trained Union Safety Representatives to complete a minimum of 4 workplace inspections per year	Target not achieved but the Trade Unions are continuing to encourage Safety Representatives to carry out workplace inspections.

4 Health and Safety Performance

4.1 Health and Safety Training

4.1.1 The following table indicates the Health and Safety training organised and delivered through the Training and Development and Health and Safety Teams during the year.

	Risk Assessment	Food Safety	Manual Handling	Violence at Work	First Aid Cert	Emergency First Aid	First Aid Refresher	C.O.S.H.H	Health & Safety Induction
Total	31	250	278	62	66	284	63	32	6

4.1.2 A programme of health and safety training for Senior Management has commenced. This will ensure that every Senior Manager including the Chief Executive, Directors, Corporate Managers and Heads of Services complete the IOSH accredited Safety for Senior Executives course. Three courses were developed during the period to which this report relates with a total of 36 Senior Managers in attendance. (UPDATE - 55 SENIOR MANAGERS TRAINED BY DEC 08)

4.1.3 In addition the following Service specific health and safety training has been delivered:-

a) TECS

- Day one inductions for new employees 76 staff
- Health & Safety Refresher/Updates 614 staff
- Specialised training related to H & S Competence 252 staff

b) Social Work

Calm Training

- 2 day Theory Training for Children Residential staff
3 courses, 35 staff attended

- 2 Day Basic Physical Intervention Training Children Residential staff
3 courses, 25 staff attended
- 1 Day Physical Intervention Re-accreditation Children Residential staff
4 courses, 32 staff attended
- 2 Day Theory Training for Adults Learning Disability Staff
2 courses, 28 staff attended
- 2 Day Basic Physical Intervention Training Adults Learning Disability Staff
2 courses, 26 staff attended
- 1 day Physical Intervention Re-accreditation Adults Learning Disability Staff
16 courses, 126 staff attended

Fire Safety Training

- Awareness Training – ½ day course
10 courses, 159 staff attended

c) Housing and Property Services

- 135 staff attended a one day Working at Height course.
- 44 staff attended a Mobile Access Towers certificated course.
- 136 staff attended a half day Asbestos Awareness course.

d) ECS

- Programme to deliver health and safety awareness training to all janitorial and care taking staff – 74 staff trained.

4.2 Health and Safety Enforcement

- 4.2.1 There has been no enforcement action taken by the Health and Safety Executive in respect of Highland Council work activities during the period to which this report relates.

4.3 Other Issues

- 4.3.1 A new post of Moving and Handling Co-ordinator has been established. A job description has been prepared and the post is to be jointly funded by Social Work and Education, Culture and Sport. When filled, the post will ensure that all Highland Council activities relating to the moving and handling of people are dealt with in a consistent manner. It will also ensure that the delivery of appropriate training, supply of equipment and transport arrangements are consistent with those of the NHS. (UPDATE - POST FILLED ON INITIAL 6 MONTH SECONDMENT FROM 16th FEB 09)
- 4.3.2 Education, Culture and Sport Services has established a new Service Health and Safety Group, chaired by the Head of Support Services. The group contains representatives from all sectors of the Service and recognised Trade Unions. It has developed an action plan to be delivered over the next three years to address a range of issues including Asbestos Management, Risk Assessment, Moving and Handling, Fire Safety, Dust Extraction, Violence, Anti-social Behaviour and Security.
- 4.3.3 Chief Executives Service has also established a new Service specific Health and Safety Group chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive. The group will concentrate on developing an action plan for the Service following the recent merger with Corporate

Services. It will ensure that health and safety responsibilities are clearly identified and issues such as risk assessment and health and safety training are addressed.

- 4.3.4 Service specific Health and Safety Groups continue to function well in TEC, Social Work and Finance Services.
- 4.3.5 With the recent change to three Operation Areas, it was agreed that health and safety consultation would still continue in the main administrative centres of Inverness, Dingwall, Fort William, Portree, Wick, Drummie, Kingussie and Nairn. This allows Service staff and Trade Union Representatives based in those areas an opportunity for active involvement in the health and safety consultation process.
- 4.3.6 Following discussions with inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive, it was agreed to establish a Stress Management Steering Group. The group is chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive and comprises representatives from each of the Council Services and the Trade Unions. The group will ensure that the HSE Stress Management Standards are addressed through the effective implementation of the Work Positive approach to stress risk assessment. It will help to identify key areas of risk and monitor the development of action plans and the implementation of identified measures to control the risk of stress.

4.4 Accident Statistics

- 4.4.1 The statistical information contained in this report relates to the twelfth year of the Highland Council. It gives details of all accidents involving Highland Council employees as reported to the Health and Safety Team, between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2008.
- 4.4.2 The information contained in this report is used to identify trends and accident patterns that may require remedial action. Individual report forms also enable further investigation to take place in the event of serious accidents and assist in identifying the need for additional training and/or the development of corporate policy and guidance.
- 4.4.3 A total of 2,095 accident reports were dealt with by the Health and Safety Team during the year. Of these 606 related to employees and the statistical information regarding these is contained in the Appendix to this report.
- 4.4.4 The remaining 1,489 reports mainly related to pupils in schools and Service users in residential and day care establishments.
- 4.4.5 The following table shows the comparison of the employee accidents with the previous year's statistics:-

	2000/2001 "Revitalising" Benchmark Year	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008
Total Employee accidents	501	740	677	665	606
Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0
Working day's lost	1590	1073	1309	1330	741
Major injuries	11	12	12	7	6
Over 3-Day injuries	55	62	66	44	37
Total reportable to HSE	66	74	78	51	43
Accident Incident Rate (HSE) <u>reportable injuries x 100,000</u> Average no. of employees	573.9	587	619	425	344
National AIR for public sector (HSE source)	1196.4	1177	1118	1200	1092

- 4.4.6 It can be seen that there has been a significant improvement in all of the figures compared to the previous year. The number of working days lost due to accidents has fallen to the lowest figure recorded since the Highland Council was formed. The number of serious incidents which to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive has also fallen for the second year running and is now well below the 2000/2001 benchmark figure.
- 4.4.7 The Council's Accident Incident Rate (AIR) has reduced as a result of the decrease in reportable (to HSE) incidents. The AIR is used by the HSE to compare accident rates in different employment sectors. It is based on the total number of reportable injuries (to HSE), multiplied by 100,000, and then divided by the number of employees in an organisation.
- 4.4.8 The AIR is a useful benchmark and the Council's accident rate is normally compared with other organisations using this figure. It can be seen that it compares favourably to HSE data on all public sector organisations and that of a similar sized Scottish Local Authority.

	05/06	06/07	07/08
Highland Council AIR	619	425	344
National AIR for public sector (HSE)	1118	1200	1092
Other Scottish LA	685	620	598

4.5 Areas of Concern

- 4.5.1 The three main areas of concern continue to be Slips, Trips and Falls, Manual Handling and Violence. Together they account for 72% of all accident injuries to employees during the period.

	00/01 Benchmark Year	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Slips, Trips and Falls	149	152	134	111	102
Manual Handling	92	125	137	107	96
Violence	65	263	147	194	239

- 4.5.2 The figures have fluctuated over the 5 year period, however, there has been a reduction in numbers of slips, trips and falls and manual handling incidents compared to the previous year.
- 4.5.3 There has been an increase in the number of violent incidents reported but the figure is still below the peak of 380 incidents recorded in 02/03. The increase may be due to raised awareness of the need to report all incidents following the roll out of recent training initiatives.
- 4.5.4 Only a small percentage of the violent incidents recorded relate to actual physical violence. The majority of incidents relate to threatening behaviour and verbal abuse.
- 4.5.5 Most violent incidents are recorded in Education, Culture and Sport, and Social Work Services and mainly relate to staff working with adults and children with learning

difficulties or special education needs. Both Services have taken action in recent years to address the problem however through improved reporting and procedural arrangements, management intervention and targeted training.

4.5.6 The proposed introduction of a violent incident recording system in 2009 will ensure that Services share information on such incidents. This will allow front line staff access to information which will assist in work planning and ensure that appropriate risk control measures are in place before visits or meetings etc.

4.5.7 The number of manual handling incidents recorded has shown a further reduction to 96 from the 05/06 peak of 137. This may be as a result of action plans developed to reduce risks associated with manual handling activities by the three Services recording the majority of incidents (Social Work, Education, Culture and Sport and TEC Services).

4.6 Targets

4.6.1 Progress in relation to the "Revitalising Health and Safety" targets adopted by the Council in relation to accidents is as follows:-

- (i) Reduce the number of working days lost from work related injury and ill-health by **30% by 2010**.

2000/01 - 1590	2007/08 - 741	= <u>53% reduction</u>
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- (ii) Reduce the incidence rate of fatal and major injury accidents by **10% by 2010**

2000/01 - 66	2007/08 - 43	= <u>34% reduction</u>
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- (iii) Reduce the incidence rate of cases of work related ill-health by **20% by 2010**

Currently there are no accurate figures relating to this measure. It is anticipated that in the future the Personnel/Payroll database system will allow this information to be captured for future reports. The Councils overall sickness absence is recorded however and forms one of the statutory performance indicators monitored by Audit Scotland. The Council has a good sickness absence record and is ranked in the top quartile of Authorities in Scotland in respect of this statutory performance indicator.

- (iv) Achieve **half the improvement** under each target **by 2004**.

More than half the improvement was achieved by the end of 2004. It is recognised, however, that annual variations may result in targets not being achieved year on year, and figures will continue to be monitored in relation to the aim of achieving the 2010 targets.

4.7 Conclusions

4.7.1 There has been a noticeable reduction in the number of accidents reported and in the number of working days lost.

4.7.2 The Councils accident record still compares favourably with the Public Sector figures published by the Health and Safety Executive, and that of a similar sized Scottish Local Authority.

4.7.3 Action plans produced in response to the Public Partnering Initiative with the HSE should help to further reduce accidents in the 3 key areas of Manual Handling, Slips, Trips and Falls and Stress (including Violence).

- 4.7.4 It is important however that all Services continue to seek reductions in the incidences of accidents and work related ill-health through the process of risk assessment and risk control.

5. Recommendations

- (i) That the Committee notes the contents of the Annual Health and Safety Report and details of the accident statistics for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008.

Signature:

Designation

Author/Reference: Allen Williams, Health & Safety Manager

Appendix 1 – Highland Council Accident Statistics 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008

