

**The Highland Council**

**Resources Committee  
27 August 2014**

Agenda Item	<b>20</b>
Report No	<b>RES/ 48/14</b>

**Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report**

**Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development**

**Summary**

This report presents the Council's occupational health, safety and wellbeing (OHSW) performance, achievements and progress in 2013/2014 and presents the plan for 2014/15.

**1. Background**

- 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. This report presents the Council's OHSW performance, achievements and progress in 2013/2014 and presents the OHSW plan for 2014/15.

**2. Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team**

- 2.1 The health and safety advisory team are all Chartered Members of the Institution of Safety and Health, meaning they can demonstrate a high level of qualifications and experience, and take part in continuing professional development to maintain this status.
- 2.2 The team also oversee two corporate contracts: the provision of Occupational Health Services and that of Ergonomic Advice and Equipment.

**3. Performance**

3.1 Accident/Incident Analysis

- 3.1.1 There were 886 incidents to staff reported in the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. This is an increase from last year's total number of incidents (746). This rise is attributed to awareness raising of the need to report accidents/incidents and the inclusion of violent incidents to staff.
- 3.1.2 63% of all incidents are attributable to violence and aggression reported in schools or child care. This is the highest cause of incident.
- 3.1.3 Slips/trips/falls account for 6% of all accidents (a reduction from 9%), hit by moving object (including 3 incidents involving vehicles) account for 3% and manual handling 2%, a significant reduction from 8% last year.

- 3.1.4 The number of incidents reportable to the Health and Safety Executive fell from last year's 20 to 18. This category refers to accidents which resulted in either 7 or more working days lost or a serious injury. This reduction continues the trend seen in the last few years.
- 3.1.5 Reportable injuries resulted in a total of 340 working days lost; a significant reduction on last year's 595 working days lost.
- 3.1.6 This year's trends and rates compared to the previous 8 years are presented in the table below:

	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009 /10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14
Total employee accidents	677	665	606	779	845	701	691	746	886
Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Working days lost	1309	1330	741	1136	990	838	467	595	340
Major injuries	12	7	6	8	4	9	2	1	6
Over 7 day injuries	66	44	37	64	38	27	26	15	12
Total reportable to HSE	78	51	43	72	41	36	28	20	18
Accident Injury Rate (AIR)*	619	425	344	576	424	368	356	158	215

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

- 3.1.7 The rise in the AIR, despite the drop in reportable accidents, can be attributed to the drop in FTE from previous years.
- 3.1.8 Services are urged to continue to investigate the root cause of all accidents and incidents and draw up action plans in order to reduce or eliminate these types of accidents.
- 3.2 Training
- 3.2.1 The following table indicates the level of health and safety training delivered by both the Employee Development and Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing teams:

Course title	2013/2014	Trend
First Aid Certificate	56	↓
First Aid Certificate Refresher	57	↓
Emergency First Aid	226	↓
Moving and Handling (People)	171	↓
Evac chair	39	↓
Wheelchair tie-down and occupant restraint	36	↓
Fire Extinguisher Training	16	↓
Lone Working	49	↑
Management of Stress	182	↑
Mini-Bus Assessments	67	↓
Manual Handling	52	↑
Risk Assessment	139	↑
Stress Awareness	40	↓
Violence at Work	24	↓
IOSH Safety for Senior Executives	6	One off

E-learning courses	2013/2014	Trend
Alcohol and drugs in the workplace	14	New
Display Screen Equipment	277	↓
H&S Building Files	320	↑
Mentally Healthy Workplaces	248	↑
Preventing violence and aggression	149	New
Snow and ice clearing	56	↑
Managing stress	77	New

3.2.2 There has been a slight drop in the number of people attending health and safety training which is in part attributed to the reduction in staff numbers and in part due to the completion of the moving and handling training programme.

3.2.3 Risk assessment training, which can be considered to be the cornerstone of health and safety systems, continues to attract large numbers.

### 3.3 Performance Indicators

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

Target	Progress
Improve occupational health provision	RS Occupational Health was appointed in August 2011 to provide occupational health services to the Council. The contract is monitored by the Central Safety Committee where quarterly reports are submitted.
To train an additional 30 trade union safety representatives by 31 March 2015.	This target has been met. 3 trade union safety reps achieved the TUC Health and Safety Diploma. Further training has been scheduled for 2014/2015.

#### **4. Occupational Health**

4.1 RSOH has been the Council's occupational health provider since September 2011. The following information relates to 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

4.2 There were 444 management referrals made to occupational health – these can be broken down by Service:

<b>Service</b>	<b>No. Referrals</b>
C. Exec	13
HSC	70
Finance	31
P&D	16
HAPS	36
ECS	221
TECS	57

4.3 The main reason for referral to occupational health is for mental health issues - 50% of management referrals are classified thus by the medical staff. 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 still are at work in order to prevent absence.

4.4 184 referrals were made to the physiotherapy service: the most common reason for referral was for lower back problems.

#### **5. Achievements**

5.1 There was no HSE enforcement action served on Council activities in this period. The improvement notice served on the Council in 2011 for failure to comply with the requirements of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 was lifted in 2013 when evidence relating to the management of building health and safety files and staff training was submitted and verified by the HSE Inspector.

5.2 The occupational health and safety management system has been further developed over this period. In addition to the revised Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy (acknowledging the appointment of a new Chief Executive and the Council's organisational restructure) updated guidance on managing smoking at work and the management of first aid provision were issued.

5.3 A reference manual for Responsible Premises Officers – giving information on what this role entails and providing links to training and further advice – was also published.

5.4 A strategy for supporting staff with dyslexia was approved – this signposts diagnosis routes and advises on potential reasonable adjustments in the workplace which can be introduced to maintain and support staff at work.

- 5.5 The Council was awarded the Healthy Working Lives Mental Health Commendation Award as a result of the work undergone to raise awareness of mental health and stress issues in the organisation. This included the recent Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace policy and training, which is mandatory for all managers; the roll out of the Work Positive stress risk assessment toolkit; mental health/stress awareness events and other Corporate projects such as the “See Me” campaign.
- 5.6 Building on the success of the mental health work, a number of events were held across the Highland Council area to mark Stress Awareness Day 2013 on 6 November 2013. These included introductory mindfulness sessions, massage, relaxation sessions, a nurse-led stress drop-in clinic and workplace walk events.
- 5.7 To further support staff experiencing and dealing with stress, an information booklet on managing personal stress for employees was published and supplements the Stress Awareness training course offered by Learning and Development.
- 5.8 A free, 24-hour, confidential counselling line for teachers was launched in March. The national charity The Teacher’s Support Network offers telephone support and advice to teachers on a range of issues.
- 5.9 As part of the partnership approach with Trade Union representatives, three TU Representatives achieved their TU Health and Safety Diplomas. Angus Cameron, Michael Hayes and David Griffiths (all Community Services), along with five other TU Representatives from partner organisations, were presented with their awards by the Depute Leader. The Council’s Safety Representatives Charter and Agreement are seen as leading the way for health and safety partnership working across the public sector in Scotland.
- 5.10 The OHSW team have contributed to the work of the liaison group for the office rationalisation project. This has included provision of information and advice to ensure compliance with health and safety workplace legislation and health and safety briefings for affected staff. A number of checklists for staff, line managers and RPOs have been posted on the office rationalisation microsite. Presentations to staff affected by moves were delivered (approximately 70 staff) and moving and handling awareness sessions offered to staff to minimise potential injury when packing and unpacking.
- 5.11 E-learning courses on a variety of topics aimed at all staff were launched during this period:
- Occupational Health
  - Health and Safety Induction
  - Stress Management
  - Prevention of Violence and Aggression

5.12 The OHSW team have been one of the lead representatives working with other Scottish Local Authorities, the NHS and the HSE to develop the Scottish Manual Handling Passport. The overall aim of the Passport is to ensure consistency of manual handling education across Local Authorities (LAs) and NHS Health Boards in Scotland, thus allowing employees to transfer their skills when moving within participating organisations by assisting in the standardisation of skills and knowledge throughout LAs and the NHS in Scotland. Services have been identifying key workers who will assist in the rollout of the passport later in 2014.

5.13 The team have provided support and input to some of the HR Lunch and Learn sessions –focussed sessions for staff delivered in bite sized sessions. The first of these was on the topic of “Completion of OH referral forms”.

## **6. OHSW Work Plans for 2014/15**

6.1 The OHSW management system will continue to be reviewed to ensure that guidance for staff is up-to-date and meets legislative and best practice requirements. Guidance due for review include:

- Accident reporting and investigation
- Risk assessment
- Management of stress
- Management of radon
- Smoking policy
- Water management
- Monitoring protocol
- Manual handling/moving and handling
- Display screen equipment
- Transport policy (previously driving at work)

6.2 It is anticipated that new guidance will also be developed to assist services to manage health and safety requirements. This will include:

- Use of personal protective equipment
- Use of respiratory equipment
- Workplace equipment
- Work in confined space

6.3 We will continue to work with Services to ensure that effective health and safety management runs throughout the Council. This will include development of new Service Policies and Plans which will identify health, safety and wellbeing needs.

6.4 We will continue to develop the range of health, safety and wellbeing courses that are offered, both as face-to-face workshops and by e-learning, or a combination of both.

6.4.1 Safety for Senior Executives will be offered to senior managers (Directors/Heads of Service) who have not previously attended, and refresher courses will be offered to those who attended the course some years ago.

- 6.4.2 A new course – Health and Safety for Managers – will be offered to all managers as of October 2014.
- 6.4.3 The previously offered one-day Management of Health Safety and Property course will be amended to include a number of elective modules with the aim of making the course more relevant to the needs of RPOs.
- 6.4.4 A new course – Living and Working with Long Term Conditions – will be offered to all staff who have been diagnosed as such. This course will be offered in partnership with “Let’s get on with it together”, a Highland-based team made up of NHS, voluntary sector and Council representatives. The aim is to teach the concepts of self-management: giving people living with long-term conditions the tools, skills and support they need to improve their own wellbeing and, hopefully, maintain productive employment.
- 6.5 We aim to work with officers in HR and CIP with a view to using Resourcelink as the method to record workplace accidents and injuries. One benefit of this is that managers will have access to Service-specific health and safety management information, including accident trend monitoring. We will also be able to record, and report on, insurance costs against individual incidents.
- 6.6 The dedicated OHSW pages on the Council’s Intranet will be maintained and developed to ensure continued access to competent health and safety information.
- 6.7 Work to prepare for the re-tender of the Occupational Health Service will be undertaken with colleagues in the HR team.
- 6.8 An OHSW management audit system will be rolled out in October 2014 which will review and measure how health and safety is being managed across each Service.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Legal/Resources/Risk Implications**

- 7.1.1 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 an Improvement Notice to Court Proceedings. HSE intervention is now charged at a cost of £124 per hour and is applied from when a HSE Inspector enters the premises NOT from the identification of any breach of legislation.
- 7.1.2 There will also be resource implications arising from the findings of inspections/assessments of premises (such as fire risk assessments) where improvements/repairs to premises, to ensure they meet legal standards, are identified. These costs will be monitored by Services.
- 7.1.3 Failure to ensure the safety of staff, students or the public can lead to civil action against the Council.

7.2 Other implications

7.2.1 There are no Equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Gaelic or Rural implications arising from this report.

**8. Recommendation**

8.1 Members are requested to:

- i. APPROVE the content of this report.

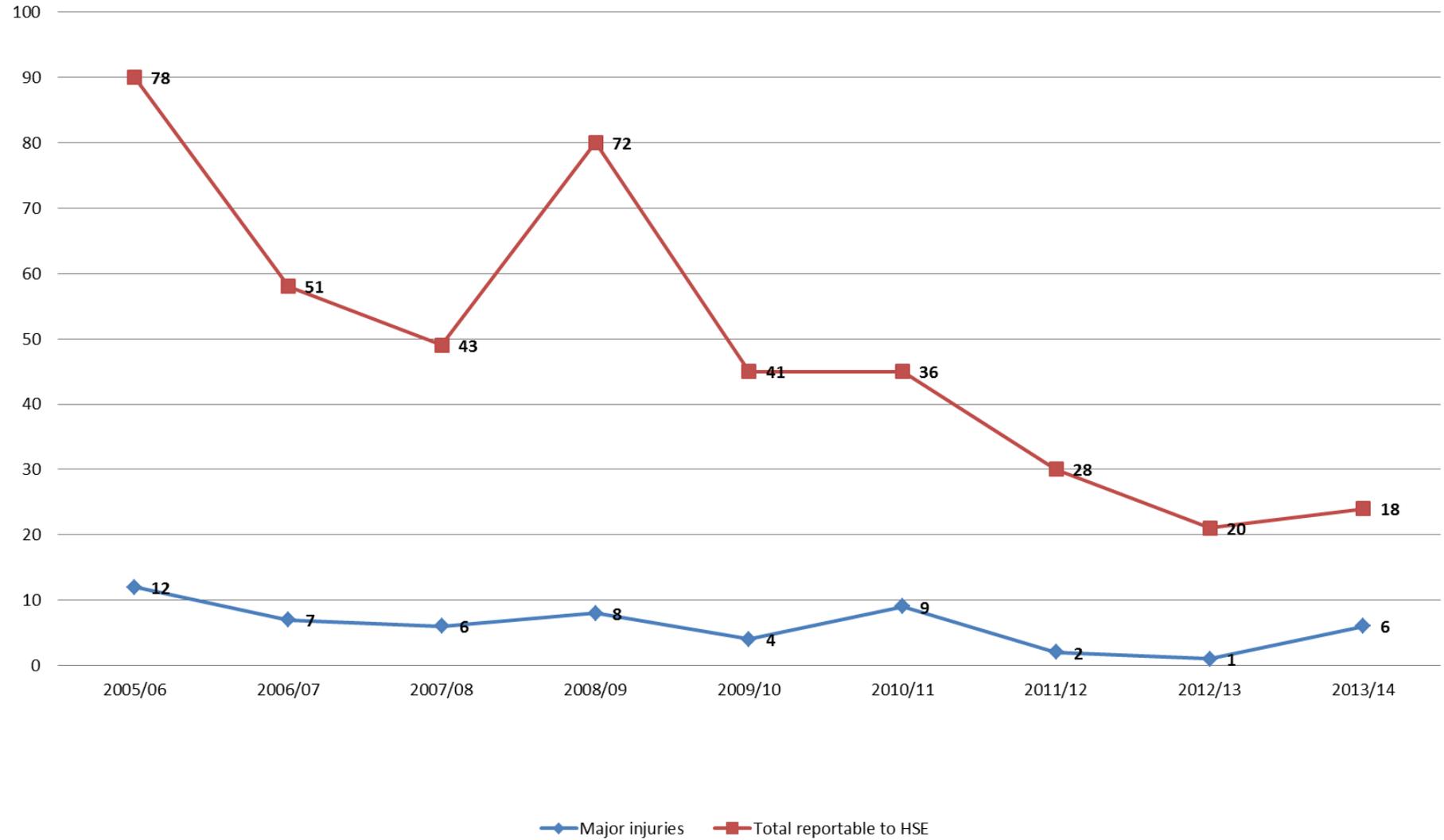
Designation: Head of People & Performance

Date: 15 August 2014

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Background Papers:

## Major and reportable accidents



### Accident Injury Rate (AIR)

