

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 13TH JULY 2010

ANNUAL REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY 2009-10

REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGER

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This is an information report that outlines the overall health and safety performance of the Council between April 2009 and March 2010.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the contents of the report are noted and the proposed key actions for 2010-11 be endorsed i.e.

- 1. Working jointly with the Primary Care Trust, continue to promote and develop cost effective measures to improve employees' health and wellbeing.**
- 2. Ensure that health, safety and wellbeing is integrated from the planning stage onwards in restructuring, new ways of working and new Council buildings including the new Civic Offices.**
- 3. Ensure that every service complies with the corporate standards of health and safety performance and monitoring.**
- 4. Revise the Council's corporate health and safety policy.**
- 5. Review health and safety training to ensure it is of a suitable standard, effective and economical.**
- 6. That the impact of the Council's new 'Wellbeing & Attendance' policy on employee attendance at work be carefully monitored.**

3.0 SUMMARY

3.1 The key findings of the report are:

- Occupational health continue to provide a well used service including leading on the provision of swine flu vaccination to front line social care staff.

- The corporate health and safety committee was instrumental in developing and agreeing a revised Wellbeing and Attendance Policy. The remit of the committee has been widened under the One Council Vision.
- The corporate health and safety team lead on providing health and safety advice, monitoring health and safety performance and contributing significantly to training to ensure standards are maintained.
- Two corporate health and safety awards were presented.
- The key actions proposed for 2010-2011 are as set out in 2.0 above.
- Working days lost due to stress have reduced although there has been an increase in days lost due to accidents.

4 INFORMATION

4.1 The health and safety performance information is given both in terms of reactive monitoring where incidents have occurred and proactive monitoring to show what is being done to ensure that we have robust systems in place to prevent injury and ill health. The detail of this information is set out in the three appendices attached:

- **Appendix 1 Reactive safety performance** This covers accidents, violent incidents and enforcement.
- **Appendix 2 Health performance** Covering occupational health, counselling services and stress related sickness absence.
- **Appendix 3 Proactive health and safety performance** Includes detail on training, reviews, consultation, awards, safety of buildings and progress on the corporate plan for health and safety.

5.0 BACKGROUND

The Health and Safety Executive encourage employers to include reporting on health and safety performance in their annual reports as part of the drive to achieve the targets set in strategy statement “Revitalising Health and Safety”.

5.1 Equal opportunities

Some health and safety issues are gender specific, for example the safety and health of new and expectant mothers. Work carried out on the Wellbeing and Attendance Policy has improved both gender and disability equality for employees.

5.2 Environmental impact

None.

5.3 Legal comment

The Council, as an employer, is required in accordance with the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and associated legislation, to take all reasonable measures to seek to ensure the health and safety of its employees. There is also a duty to prepare and revise as necessary a written health and safety policy.

5.4 Link with corporate priorities

Managing health and safety contributes to an efficient community focussed council.

5.5 Financial implications

Most of the measures will be resourced from within existing resources, as they are now. The embedding of Health, Safety and wellbeing at the planning stage of restructuring and new ways of working and new Council buildings is an issue for sound project resourcing and any impacts should be included in project budgets during planning as for any project.

RP-27/5/10

5.6 Opportunities and Risks

The opportunities and risks associated with these actions have been identified and assessed. Arrangements will be put in place to manage the risks and maximise the opportunities that have been identified.

6. WARD IMPLICATIONS

Borough wide implications.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual reports of health and safety performance for 2007-8 and 2008-9 (21st July 2009 CB46/09)

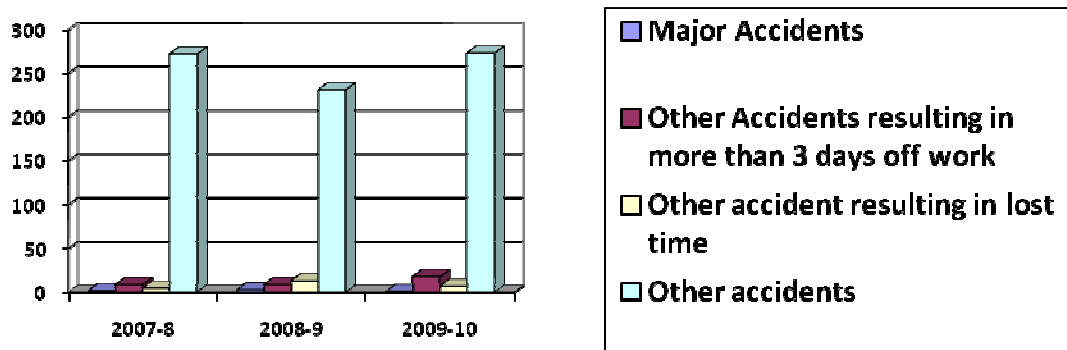
Any queries regarding this report please contact: Jo Revell, Health and Safety Manager TEL: 383625 or email: jo.revell@telford.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

REACTIVE SAFETY PERFORMANCE –Accidents, Violent Incidents and Enforcement

1. ACCIDENTS TO EMPLOYEES

Chart 1 Accidents to Employees



1.1 The target of reducing accidents causing more than three days to be lost from work (19) to below the average of the preceding three years (14) not achieved in 2009-10.

2. CAUSES OF LOST TIME INCIDENTS: 2009-10

2.1 There was just one major injury reported that occurred when an employee entangled their leg in an electric cable, fell and broke their arm.

2.2 14 lost time incidents were due to slips, trips and falls on the same level. Three of these were due to slips on the snow and ice during the very extreme winter weather, these accounted for 31 days being lost from work.

2.3 Two accidents were due falls from height, both at schools, one where a teacher fell off a wall and the other where an employee tripped going down some stairs.

2.4 Three were as a result of handling lifting and carrying (kick boards in a sports hall, tables and a service user out of bed.)

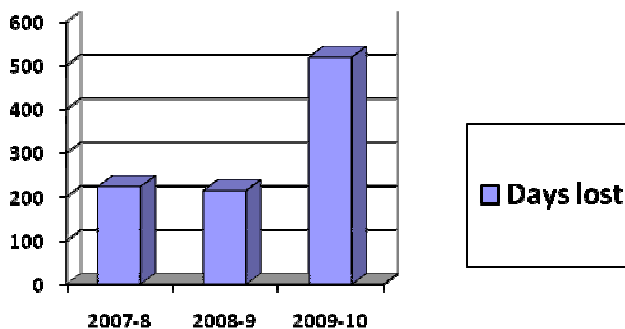
2.5 There were three accidents where the cause was being hit by a moving, flying or falling object (a swinging gate, a closing door and a metal hand rail).

2.6 In two cases an employee was hit by a moving vehicle whilst driving a car. In neither case was the employee driving at fault.

2.7 Two incidents causing lost time were as a result of physical assault, both in education premises. One day was lost in each case. One was where a child dropped to the ground in temper at a nursery pulling employee's shoulder. This was not a deliberate attempt to injure. In the other incident a teacher at a school was hit across the face, this was a deliberate act, albeit one by a special school pupil.

2.8 Two incidents resulted in protracted absence. One trip aggravated a previous knee injury resulting in 140 days absence. The other, where tables fell onto the employee's hand at a primary school, resulted in 139 days absence.

Chart 2: Employee days lost due to accidents and violent incidents

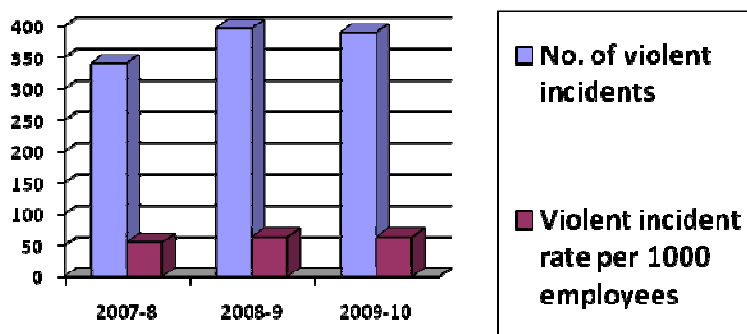


2.9 There was, therefore, a significant increase in recorded days lost due to accidents in 2009 -10.

3.0 VIOLENT INCIDENTS to employees

3.1 In 2009-10 there were 242 physical assaults on staff, 39 incidents of physical violence directed towards persons or property and 108 reported instances of abuse/threats. Only two incidents resulted in time lost – see detail in 2.7 above.

Chart 3: Violent incidents towards employees



3.2 A violent incident is any incident in which an employee is verbally or physically abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment.

3.3 There were 389 violent incidents reported in 2009-10 a slight decrease over the previous year. Many of these incidents arise when employees are working with clients or pupils who have significant behavioural and communication problems. 62% of the reported incidents involved physical assault although the injuries inflicted were very minor in the majority of these cases.

4.0 FIRE INCIDENTS

4.1 A fire overnight at Granville House in April 2009 required major repairs to the building. Some Council teams had to be temporarily relocated as a result.

4.2 The fire service attended a fire that started in a laser cutter at a secondary school and another at a primary school where a cooker had been inadvertently left on. No one was hurt in either incident and the lessons learnt have been shared with other schools.

4.3 A minor fire incident at the Business Development Centre was caused when a tenant in one of the units was carrying out some welding.

5.0 ENFORCEMENT ACTION AND HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE (HSE) INVOLVEMENT

5.1 The HSE visited a number of school construction sites during 2009-10 and advised contractors on some site safety issues.

5.2 The Council's Occupational Health and Safety team assisted the HSE with their enquiries into an incident where a carer found that a gas oven had been left on but unlit for several hours in a resident's home.

5.3 The HSE carried out a full inspection of one of the Borough's secondary schools. The inspectors were generally satisfied but made some verbal recommendations on improvements to asbestos management, working at height, maintenance of water systems and control of contractors.

5.4 The HSE visited the Council to look in detail at the management of asbestos particularly in system built schools and were satisfied with the actions already taken and the plans in place.

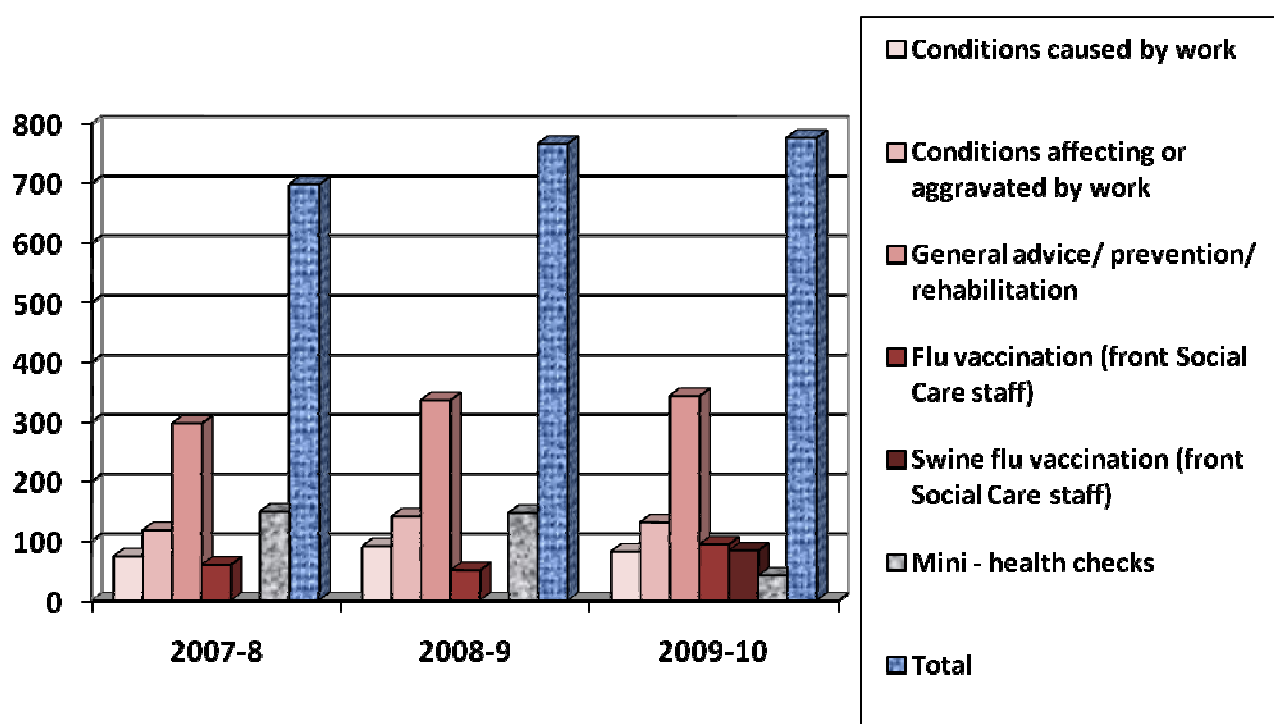
5.5 The Fire Service inspected several schools and gave advice on improving fire safety. No formal enforcement action was necessary.

APPENDIX 2

HEALTH PERFORMANCE - Occupational Health, Counselling Services and stress related sickness absence

1.0 CONSULTATIONS WITH OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH:

Chart 4: Reasons for consultations with occupational health



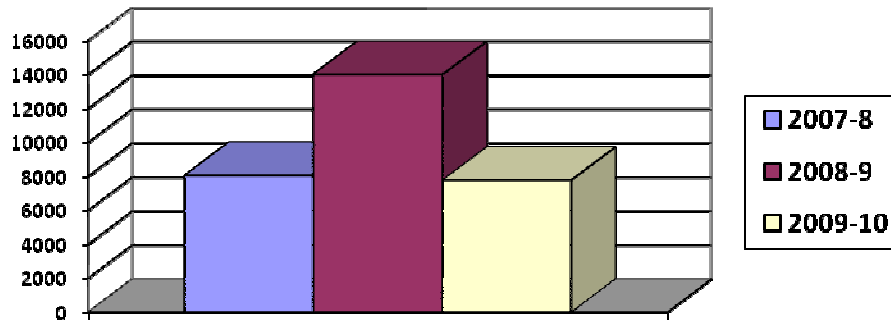
1.1 The Occupational Health Service continues to be well used and played an active part in delivering swine flu vaccinations to front line social care staff. This inevitably reduced the time available to carry out some other functions and as a result fewer mini health checks could be offered to employees this year.

2.0 CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELLING SERVICE

2.1 Stress continues to be a major cause of long term sickness absence. This is a common experience in public sector organisations. Encouragingly there has

been a significant drop in days lost due to this reason over the last year (see chart 5).

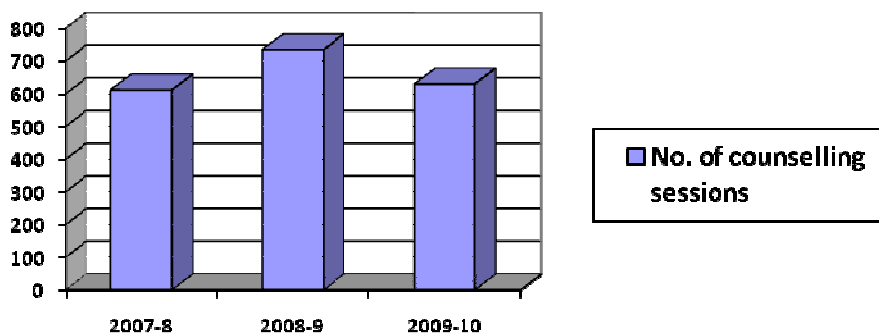
Chart 5 Working days absent due to stress



2.2 Confidential counselling sessions are available for employees who need some support to resolve difficulties at home or at work that may be causing stress.

2.3 In 2009-10 239 employees used the employee counselling service, the average number of sessions was 2.6 (on average this costs £123 per employee using the service). 84% of employees using the service continued working. The reasons given for seeking counselling were about 24% work, 51% personal and 25% mixed. This is a very similar picture the previous year.

Chart 6: Number of counselling sessions



2.4 Comments on the evaluation forms about the service are very favourable. Some examples are shown below.

This is the first time I have used any such service. I found the fact that the counsellors are not employed/attached to any particular Council department re-

*assuring, consequently making the initial decision to approach the service easier. The counsellor I saw was skilled, being both supportive/comforting and yet challenging thereby helping me to see my own particular issues from a different perspective ultimately therefore leading to my recovery. **June 09***

*I am so pleased this service is available. I have been on my GP's waiting list for nine months and I still have not heard a thing. - **March 10***

*I found this service excellent. I found the counsellor was extremely respectful, warm and helpful. Her support has helped me to address my difficulties and maintain my dignity and self worth at a challenging time. Her help also supported me to maintain full attendance at work. Thank you for this service - **July 09***

APPENDIX 3

PROACTIVE HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE

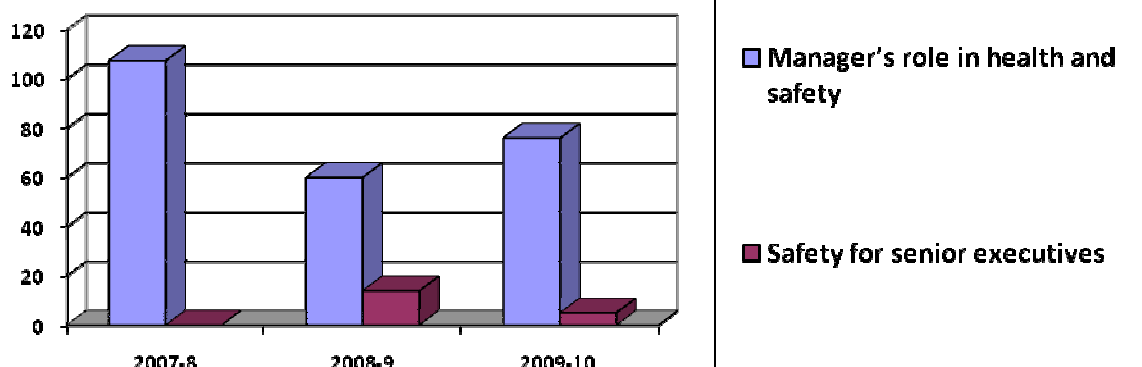
1.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

1.1 Health and safety training is itself a legal requirement and the key to achieving health and safety compliance in other areas as well. It can empower employees to take action to make their work places safer for themselves, their colleagues and anyone else affected by their work.

1.2 Due to their roles and responsibilities some employees will require formal training in some aspects of health and safety. Many of these trainings are delivered in house by members of the occupational health and safety team to ensure that they are relevant, effective and good value for money.

1.3 Managers' competence in managing health safety is key to maintaining and improving health and safety standards throughout Telford & Wrekin Council. It was encouraging that the level of up take on this training has remained at a high level.

Chart 6 Attendance by managers on corporate health and safety training



2.0 REVIEWING HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1 A corporate programme of reviews of health and safety management has gathered momentum in the last year. Managers are asked to carry out a detailed health and safety audit to inform this process. Action plans for improvements have been drawn up and agreed with managers where necessary.

2.2 Schools also carry out a detailed safety audit at least once a year, which is used to target help and advice to enable them to comply with health and safety regulations.

3.0 EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION

3.1 During the year the corporate health and safety committee met four times to consider health and safety issues of Council wide significance.

3.2 As part of the One Council vision the corporate health and safety committee has now absorbed the role of the Chief Executive's Health and Safety Group to monitor health and safety performance. This committee is now the central forum for the consideration of a wide range of health and safety issues, not just those that directly affect employees. It is chaired by a member of the corporate management team and aims to engage with a wider range of employees.

4.0 MAINTAINING SAFE PREMISES AND STRUCTURES

4.1 The Council is continually active in trying to ensure the safety of the buildings and structures it is responsible for. The work is prioritised by means of risk assessment and includes a wide range of activities. A few examples are given below:

- Managing asbestos.
- Maintaining water systems to ensure they pose no risk from Legionella.
- Improvements to fire detection, warning and evacuation systems.
- Road safety improvements.
- Work to rationalise the use of buildings, reducing the use of those where compliance with modern health and safety standards is difficult to maintain.

5.0 CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARDS

5.1 Two corporate health and safety awards were presented during the year. One to Dan Mackriell of Stirchley Recreation Centre and one to Wrockwardine Infants and

Nursery School. In both cases the award was made in recognition of sustained improvements made in health and safety standards to the benefit of all.

6.0 PROGRESS ON THE TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL PLAN FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

There were two key actions in 2009-10:

1. Promotion of employee health and wellbeing.

- A revised Wellbeing and Attendance policy was agreed and implemented.
- The Council worked in partnership with the PCT (Primary Care Trust) to develop a number of health promotion initiatives for employees. This work needs to continue.

2. Embedding the health and safety strategy across the Council.

- The use of health and safety audits across the Council was improved and progress with these was regularly reported on to the Chief Executive's health and safety group. The restructuring of the Council gives an opportunity to continue and develop this rigour.

7.0 PROPOSED KEY ACTIONS FOR 2010-11

The following are proposed by the corporate health and safety committee as key actions for 2010-11:

1. Working jointly with the PCT, continue to promote and develop cost effective measures to improve employees' health and wellbeing.
2. Ensure that health, safety and wellbeing is integrated from the planning stage onwards in restructuring, new ways of working and new Council buildings including the new Civic Offices.
3. Ensure that every service complies with the corporate standards of health and safety performance and monitoring.
4. Revise the Council's corporate health and safety policy.
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