

**TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Health and Safety Performance Report**

**REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Acting Chief Executive**

---

---

**SUMMARY**

This report provides the year end assessment of performance on occupational health and safety matters for 2015/16 within Gateshead Council.

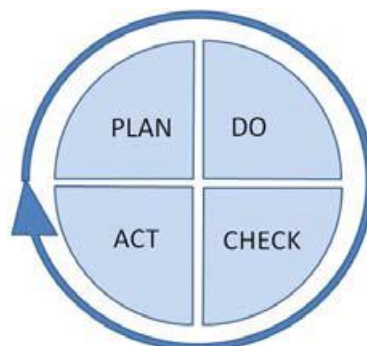
---

---

**Introduction**

1. This annual report sets out the Council's occupational health and safety performance during the year 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. It is structured in such a way as to reflect Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and is split into a number of sections highlighting the key issues that councillors need to be aware of.
2. The update provides an indication of the effectiveness and success of the health and safety control measures the Council has in place with evidence showing training delivered, progress towards meeting health and safety aims and objectives and the number of accidents recorded.
3. As noted in the body of this report, considerable work was also undertaken in areas such as Asbestos Management, Contractor Management, Educational Visits, Fire Safety and Legionella Management.
4. The ongoing emphasis is on a sensible, risk-based approach. Building health & safety into the normal way of working, rather than regarding it as an 'add on' will help to ensure that we get it right and keep it that way.

**Gateshead Council's Approach to Managing Health & Safety Risks**



5. The Council's Health & Safety management System includes key elements of the Health & Safety Executives document HSG65 – 'Managing for Health and Safety'. The HSE has moved away from using the POPMAR (Policy, Organising, Planning, Measuring Performance, Auditing and Review) model of managing health and safety to a 'Plan, Do Check, Act' approach.

6. It describes the principles and management practices which provide the basis of effective health and safety management. The HSE follows a model of managing health and safety, using the Plan; Do; Check and Act approach set out in Table 1.

Table 1

Plan	Do	Check	Act
Determine the policy	Profile the health and safety risks	Measure Performance	Review performance
Plan for implementation	Organise for health and safety	Investigate accidents and incidents	Learn lessons
	Implement the plan		

7. To manage the health and safety risks it faces and to follow the Plan, Do, Check, Act model, the Council takes the following approach:

### Plan

8. **Policy** – The Council has documented health and safety (H & S) management arrangements including a Corporate Health Policy (approved by Council 21 April 2016), as well as a range of corporate procedures and guidance.
9. **Plan for Implementation** - Each group / service has developed health and safety action plans. These are reviewed regularly.

### Do

10. **Group / Service and Team Meetings** - Health & Safety is included as a standard agenda item for discussion at regular meetings. A H & S Adviser also attends group management team meetings quarterly to discuss corporate issues and share relevant information.
11. **General Health & Safety Advice** – The H & S Advisers acting through the Occupational H & S Manager provide independent technical advice on all aspects of health and safety at work to managers and employees. They also advise managers via various reporting mechanisms on how to control risks identified and how to comply with legislation. From 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 the H & S Advisers carried out 142 advisory visits, 18 incident investigations and 220 inspections and audits.
12. **Fire Safety Advice** – The H & S Advisers now also play an important part in fire safety. All of the advisers undertook training in November 2015 to enable them to carry out suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments. Following the training a new fire risk assessment template was developed; the assessment programme was reviewed and updated to determine what needed to be carried out in order of priority, residential care properties being top of the list. The advisers also provide advice and deliver fire warden training. During the reporting period 31 fire risk assessments and reviews were carried out. All of the fire risk assessments for the high risk properties identified in the new programme (18) have been completed. Fire risk assessments will continue to be carried out over a five year period based on the level of risk and resources available to the team. The team are also working with the Asset Management Team to ensure up to date information relating to each council property is updated on the GP2 system.

13. **Occupational Health** - In the last year the Council has appointed a new Senior Occupational Health Adviser. Work has commenced on developing a strategy to assist the Council reduce sickness absence which remains a priority. Occupational Health will work closely with HR managers to take a fresh approach to sickness absence management. Ill health due to stress, depression and anxiety (including work-related stress continue to emerge as a clear priority for us. A summary of the work carried out is set out in the tables 2 and 3 below.

**Table 2 - Occupational Health Appointments**

Type	Year			Comments
	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	
Health Surveillance	389	362	351	
Driver Medical	113	95	48	
Vision Screening	107	84	66	
Medical Referral – OHA	488	508	280	
Medical Referral – OHP	367	376	433	
Pre-employment questionnaires	1149*	1165*	1105*	Employees – desk top exercise
Pre-employment questionnaires	397*	218*	156*	Volunteers – desk top exercise
Physiotherapy	1017	789	618	
Counselling Sessions	804	897	851	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4831</b> (3285*)	<b>4494</b> (3111*)	<b>3908</b> (2647*)	Figures down on previous years due to five month period with no Senior OH Adviser in post.

**Table 3 - Occupational Non-attendance**

Type	Year			Comments
	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	
Health Surveillance	58	44	17	
Driver Medical	5	3	1	
Vision Screening	11	14	9	
Medical Referral – OHA	54	53	41	
Medical Referral – OHP	33	22	23	
Physiotherapy	78	64	46	
Counselling	22	23	24	
<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b> (7.9% excl *)	<b>223</b> (7.2% excl*)	<b>161</b> (6.0% excl*)	

Further information on the role of Occupational Health is given in the 6 monthly OSC 'Sickness Absence / Health of the Workforce' report.



14. **Health & Safety Training** – This is delivered by internal and external trainers. Individual Service areas are responsible for specialised safety training and will hold records of training that they have arranged. Figures below show the number of employees that have received H&S training in 15/16.

#### **Competence – Training**

- 131 employees attended 10 corporate H & S training courses (see Table 8).
- Care Wellbeing & Learning provided a range of training for 995 employees delivered by Workforce Development.
- Communities & Environment
  - Construction Services provided over 1800 training opportunities to staff and operatives in over 95 specific areas. These included but were not limited to Plant Operation, Manual Handling, First Aid and Specialist Technical areas. Staff and operatives transferring from Mears to Construction Services attended a 4 day intensive induction covering areas such as Site Safety, Manual Handling, Asbestos Awareness, Working at Height as well as corporate elements including Corporate Induction and Customer Care.
  - Facilities Management provided training for 270 employees in 11 specific areas including Food Safety, Allergen Awareness, Risk Assessment, Dynamic Risk Assessment, Manual Handling, COSHH, Asbestos Awareness and Working at Height.
  - Fleet Management provided training for 43 employees in 6 specific areas including Driver Certificate of Professional Competence, Safe Towing, Abrasive Wheels and Training for Advanced Motorists.
  - Waste Services & Grounds Maintenance continually assessed frontline staff and provided training for 488 employees which included: Reversing Assistant; Load Safety and Lashing Down; Roadside Verge; Driver CPC; C & G Signing/Lighting/Guarding; Safe Use of Pesticides; Automatic Bin Lift Operation and Induction Training.

412 Health and Safety e-learning modules were accessed. This was a significant decrease from 3202 units in the previous year. However, most H & S training courses do not require annual refresher which may account for this.

15. **Risk Assessment** – Risk assessment procedure, guidance, generic assessments and training was provided to appropriate managers to enable them to carry out suitable and sufficient assessments within their service areas.
16. **Health & Safety Information** – An intranet H & S section is freely accessible for all employees to view policies, procedures and guidance together with examples of generic risk assessments. The intranet page is also used to communicate minutes of the Corporate H & S Committee.

17. **Corporate Procedures and Codes of Practice** – Form part of the overall health and safety policy, providing safe systems of work for employees to follow and to adapt them to their service areas as appropriate. New documents were produced for Response to Verbal / Threatening Incidents in Civic Centre and other Public Areas. Documents were also revised for COSHH, Driver Medicals, Fire Safety, H & S Induction, H & S Performance and Stress.

## Check

18. **Reporting to the Corporate H & S Committee** - Quarterly reporting by the OH & S Manager and H & S Advisers to the committee consisting of senior management and union representatives. Updates are given on H & S Audits, New Legislation and Guidance, Incident Statistics, Occupational Health, Fire Safety, Work Related Stress and HSE Investigations, with the opportunity also being available for those attending to discuss other health and safety issues that may be relevant.
19. **SMG H&S Update Reports** - Quarterly reporting by the OH & S Manager to the Senior Management Group, advising on the status at the time of the H&S management system and of hazards that have been identified, recommending to SMG any reasonable actions to be taken.
20. **Monitoring of Hazards** – The H & S Team utilises a system for the recording of hazards identified by employees. Checks are carried out to ensure appropriate action has been taken by the relevant manager to address concerns.
21. **Incident Investigations** – Where appropriate, incidents are investigated with findings and recommendations communicated to responsible managers for them to take action to prevent reoccurrence. Summaries of lost working time accidents are reported to the Corporate H & S Committee and group committees for their consideration.
22. **Annual Reporting on Corporate Health & Safety** – Annual reports are produced for SMG and OSC to inform senior managers and councillors of the work undertaken in the last 12 month period and including details on H & S performance and incident statistics.

## Internal Assurance

23. The Corporate H & S Team was audited during the year by internal audit. The objectives of the audit were to ensure:
  - There is an adequate H & S policy in place.
  - That H & S audits are planned and carried out in a consistent manner to assess compliance with legal requirements and best practice standards.
  - Recommendations made during a H & S audit are implemented.
  - There is adequate performance monitoring arrangements in place.

The auditor's conclusions were that the control systems and procedures in place were satisfactory.

24. The following section reviews the action taken in the higher risk areas during the reporting period to demonstrate what has been done to identify, eliminate and

control the hazards and risks effectively to prevent injuries, ill health, incidents or losses.

## **Asbestos Management**

The Asbestos Management Team (AMT) who sit within Council Housing, Design & Technical Services, Communities & Environment working closely with the H & S Team have achieved the following in the reporting period:

- Arranged the annual inspections of all schools who have bought in to the gateway scheme and all the operational / non-operational buildings.
- Updated Asbestos Management Registers as the re-inspection reports are received.
- Continued to offer a Site Specific Asbestos Management Plan writing service to aid those who do not feel confident / competent enough to write their own.
- Provide technical advice to schools which have bought in to the gateway scheme.
- Reviewed and updated the corporate asbestos management plan.
- Provided most of our registers to the end users electronically in PDF format eliminating the need to print hard copies off.
- Checked all asbestos registers for accuracy before going to print.
- Surveyors reported any Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) requiring immediate remediation or removal to the AMT during inspections.
- Ensured that any Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) that cannot be managed are removed by a licensed contractor as soon as possible. This urgent work is arranged by the AMT and then recharged to the client ensuring work is carried out quickly and by competent contractors.
- Arranged refurbishment / demolition surveys for design as and when required.
- Provided information we hold on file to design thus occasionally eliminating the cost for refurbishment / demolition survey for new projects.
- Assisted with the input of all asbestos data in to the GP2 system.

## **Contractor Management**

During the 6 week and half term holidays (2015), the H & S Advisers visited all schools and other sites where they were notified that contractors would be working. This enabled activities to be monitored and risk assessments, method statements and training records to be checked. When the necessary standards were not being achieved the work was stopped until corrective action was taken.

## **Educational Visits**

The H & S Advisers provide advice and support to teachers, youth workers and other Council employees who take young people out on educational and out-of-centre visits. Under the banner of the Educational Visits Advisory Team, they are also responsible for the implementation of, and monitoring compliance with, the policy and procedures which ensure the Council meets its statutory responsibilities for the safety of such activities. The Team maintains the EVOLVE on-line visit planning, recording and approval system for Gateshead.

EVOLVE has been adopted by the majority of Local Authorities throughout the country and is endorsed by Ofsted as a good practice system for managing safety with the minimum of bureaucracy. EVOLVE, together with the resources of the

Council's Care Call service, provide a robust Critical Incident response in the event of an emergency on an Educational Visit, by making detailed information almost instantly available to emergency services and others managing the incident.

EVOLVE also provides the Council with a clear picture of the great range of learning outside the classroom opportunities being provided for Gateshead children. In the academic year 2015/16 we recorded 7194 visits (an increase from 5365). Of these, 768 involved residential stays, adventurous activities or travel overseas to countries including Beijing, Borneo, Ethiopia, Russia, New York, Shanghai, Tanzania as well as our closer European neighbours.

### **Legionella Management**

The Water Hygiene Team who sit within Council Housing, Design & Technical Services Communities & Environment working closely with the H & S Team have achieved the following in the reporting period:

- In all buildings visited or audited no significant issues were found. Ensured that all Council buildings continue to have their risk assessment documentation updated if: there is a change to the water system or its use; a change to the use of the building where the system is installed; new information available about risks or control measures; the results of checks indicating that control measures are no longer effective; changes to key personnel or a case of legionnaires' disease / legionellosis associated with the system.
- 191 samples were taken in 2015 with no positive legionella results returned. At the same time samples were taken for pseudomonas with 4 positive samples returned. Remedial action was taken and the properties resampled. All 4 buildings came back with negative results demonstrating that our control methods are robust and where positive results have been identified they have been dealt with quickly.
- Retained Legionella Control Association Accreditation to prove good practice and to allow them to do work in the private sector.
- Have started to risk assess water systems on all domestic properties owned by Gateshead Council as part of a ten year scheme. 1500 properties have been assessed so far.

25. **Performance Indicators** - The tables set out below detail the performance indicator data for 2015 - 2016 and how this compares to previous years. These are common indicators for occupational health and safety, and help to track performance and compare against other organisations.

**Table 4 - Incidents / Industrial Diseases (ID)**

Type	Year			Comments
	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	
<b>RIDDOR</b>	26	32	25	Injuries resulting in over 7 days absence reported to HSE
<b>Specified Injuries</b>	9	4	2	Significant injuries such as fractures, amputation, loss of sight, crush injury, significant burn injury and degree of scalping
<b>ID</b>	2	0	0	Industrial diseases reported to the HSE
<b>&gt; 3 day</b>	13	2	3	Injuries > 3 days but < 7 days noted for information

**Table 5 - Incidence Rates**

Type	Year			Comments
	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	
<b>RIDDOR</b>	3.8	5.8	4.88	Incidence Rate for over 7 day injuries (number of over 7 day injuries per 1000 employees).
<b>Specified Injuries</b>	1.2	0.72	0.39	Incidence Rate for specified injuries (number of injuries per 1000 employees).

The statistics (include LA schools) show improvements in some areas compared to the previous year:

- Total number of incidents down from 518 to 420
- Specified injuries down from 7 to 2
- Non employees sent direct to hospital down from 5 to 1
- Increase in near miss reporting from 136 to 151 which includes 48 reports of verbal threatening behaviour.

The main cause of over 7 day incidents is handling, lifting and carrying. The specified injuries were as a result of handling, lifting and carrying and slip, trip and fall. These occurred in various locations at different times of the year so could not be linked to any trends. Detailed quarterly reports are given to groups on the recorded incidents to enable them to take relevant action to help reverse any trends, identify training needs etc.

**Table 6 – Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Enforcement Action**

Type	Year			Comments
	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	
<b>Prosecution</b>	0	1	0	Ryton Train Incident 2012
<b>Prohibition Notice</b>	0	1	0	Inadequate Working at Height arrangements
<b>Improvement Notice</b>	0	1	0	Fire Risk Assessment for Timber Frame Build inadequate
<b>FFI</b>	0	1*	0	*(£458.80) Related to improvement and prohibition notices



**Table 7 - Sickness Absence (Stress / Work Incidents)**

Type	Year			Comments
	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	
<b>Sickness Absence</b>	53,466	54,818	60,166	Total sickness absence days
<b>Stress</b>	28.2%	21.7%	23.8%	Percentage of total days lost due to stress, depression and mental health including work related stress
<b>Work incident</b>	3.1%	3.4%	2.81%	Percentage of total days lost due to work related injury and ill health

**Table 8 – Training**

Type	Year			Comments
	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	
<b>Corporate</b>	107 (9 courses 99% average attendance rate)	282 (19 courses 93% average attendance rate)	131 (10 courses 84% average attendance rate)	Number attending corporate health and safety training courses (Accident investigation, Asbestos Management, Accident Investigation, DSE, Fire Warden, H & S for Managers and Risk assessment).
<b>e-learning</b>	<b>3238</b>	<b>3202</b>	<b>412</b>	

**Act**

26. **Auditing and Performance Review** are the final steps in the health and safety management control cycle. They constitute the ‘feedback loop’ which enables the Council to reinforce, maintain and develop its ability to reduce risks to the fullest extent and to ensure the continued effectiveness of the health and safety management system.

The H & S audit team carried out the audits of Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance looking at Driving at Work and Hand Arm Vibration, Construction Services looking at Assessment, Engagement & Management of Contractors; Excavations; Fire Safety; Hand Arm Vibration; Work at Height and Workplace Health, Safety & Welfare. Audits were also carried out in all services looking at the risk assessments for the highest risks in the services identified as part of the annual health and safety performance review. A new self – audit template for schools was prepared and tested in several schools in preparation for it to be introduced fully in 2016 – 2017. There were no major issues identified. However, inconsistencies in management arrangements were identified which are being addressed locally.

Audits are carried out based on the level of risk. This is determined by reviewing accident statistics, previous audit findings, safety alerts issued, existing intelligence/knowledge from within the H & S Team and enforcement action including, prosecutions, prohibition/improvement notices and fee for interventions.

27. **Review of Policies and Procedures** – Considerable ongoing review of the H & S policy, corporate procedures and guidance takes place. New documents are developed or others amended. See number 16 for details.
28. **Lessons arising from the use of private sector contractors at 7 Queen Elizabeth Ave** – In June 2015 the Corporate H & S Team were alerted of plans to crane lift a modular unit extension to the rear of 7 QE Ave. As it appeared that

appropriate procedures had not been followed the work was stopped. A thorough review was carried out by the H & S Team and an investigation by the Service Director, Commissioning & Business Development. As a result of the review and investigation a number of issues were identified which need to be adopted when assessing, engaging and managing contractors. These include the following:

- Lessons learnt from previous incidents such as the Ryton train incident must be communicated effectively through all tiers of the workforce and embedded in management practices
- Procedures and protocols must be followed
- Procurement procedures must be followed
- Abilities of employees must be recognised and training given where necessary
- Risk assessments and method statements must be verified prior to work commencing
- Employees raising concerns must be supported fully
- The level and frequency of health and safety monitoring should be decided before the start of any project
- Advice and support should be sought from Health and Safety to minimise potential risk and exposure of the Council.
- The need for the improvements has been acknowledged by the Senior Management Team and there have been concerted efforts by key personnel in attempts to see these through to completion.

### **Health & Safety Executive**

29. To the best knowledge of the H & S Team there were no prosecutions, enforcement notices or fee for intervention issued by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in respect of any health and safety failures within the Council during 2015/16.

### **Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service**

30. To the best knowledge of the H & S Team, there were no prosecutions or enforcement notices issued by the Fire Service in respect of any fire management failures within the Council during 2015/16.

### **Summary**

31. As mentioned at the start of this report, the Council's approach to health & safety management continues to follow the guidance document HSG65 – 'Managing for Health and Safety'. Commitment from senior management is strong and substantial progress has been made in delivering improvements.
32. Throughout the last year there has been increased focus on asbestos and fire safety management and contractor health and safety performance.
33. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in this reporting period have not visited any of the Council's sites.

### **What will we do next?**

34. The corporate H & S team will work with the Group Management Teams to ensure that progress is made on a continual basis.
35. Group Management Teams and Head Teachers will be informed of any significant changes to the Council's corporate health and safety policies and procedures or when action is necessary as a result of any health and safety failing via a health and safety briefing note.
36. SMG will be advised on a quarterly basis on the progress being made and any issues to address.

### **Recommendation**

37. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sought as follows:
  - Is the Committee satisfied that the actions taken are appropriate and effective to maintain or improve the health and safety management system?

Contact: Susan Smith

Ext. 2272