



Safety, Health and Wellbeing

Annual Report 2013-14

Extended Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Annual Report covers the period for the 12 months up to 31st March 2014. This summary document provides a brief overview for elected members, senior officers and all staff. It shows what action has been taken to protect our staff, employees, contractors, clients and service users, pupils and members of the public over the past 12 months.

The approach to health and safety management within Suffolk County Council (SCC) is stated in the Council's corporate health and safety policy documents HS01, HS02 and HS03 which have been fully reviewed and revised this year. The health and safety policy statement (HS01) is signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. This policy is supported by the Health and Safety (H&S) Strategy 2013-16 which provides the focus for the primary activity of the Council to develop and improve the management of safety, health and wellbeing. This has an annual action plan which is implemented and monitored through the Safety, Health and Wellbeing (SHAW) Board on behalf of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) of the Council. This annual report provides an opportunity to review the progress of this strategy one year on.

Progress

Current progress on delivering the actions identified under the H&S strategy's three core themes of Communication and Engagement, Competence, and Compliance are:

Actions completed	8 (53%)
On track to complete within timescales	4 (27%)
On track to complete but need more time	3 (20%)

Activity included the development of the **Communication and Engagement** plan which resulted in several roadshow events linked to other key Council activities to provide a better platform for promotion of health and safety. Work is progressing to roll out the Safety and Wellbeing champion programme over the coming months. H&S training has been provided to most senior managers (95%) through four one day sessions delivered by Eversheds. 46 councillors also attended a 2 hour H&S workshop with the cabinet members receiving similar but more focused input. Work has progressed to develop a generic H&S **competency** matrix. A working group is currently completing this work and preparing relevant materials to equip managers to implement it in their services.

For the six risk priorities the current progress in delivering the actions identified are:

Actions completed	9 (26%)
On track to complete within timescales	9 (26%)
On track to complete but need more time	17 (49%)

Activity included a new training package for **Fire** and **Asbestos** management launched in April along with revised policies and guidance. The Contract Management Board received specific training on H&S in procurement and **contract management**. A risk proximity

matrix has been developed with supporting guidance to better equip the Council in its procurement and contract management processes. This will provide a clear evaluation of both potential and current contracts, in terms of their H&S risk and cost in order to improve measures in procuring and managing contracts. New policy and guidance is being developed to support staff whilst **driving** and for monitoring driver paperwork including insurance and licenses.

Stress guidance has been updated and there has been extensive promotion of the HM Assist counselling and advisory service for corporate staff. We are one of the highest users of this service per head across the provider's customer base with over 9% of corporate staff accessing these services. In the area of **Musculoskeletal Disorders** (MSD), guidance and advice on mobile working has been provided to support changes in IT provision over the last year with more laptop use and increased hot-desking etc... Our E-learning modules have been revised to reflect the changes in mobile working. The SHAW Board has monitored stress and MSD absence and costs.

The Working Well for Suffolk (health and wellbeing) Strategy has made some progress in the last year. An organisational and directorate self-assessment tool as well as the strategy and revised action plan will be presented to the SHAW Board in April.

The use of the quarterly dashboard at each SHAW Board over the last year has provided a real improvement to the Board's monitoring capabilities. The dashboard includes the progress of the H&S strategy action plan along with its leading and lagging indicators; incident and training data; and occupational health performance data. The leading and lagging indicators have provided useful monitoring data and we are in a better position to set realistic and meaningful targets for the coming year. Our leading indicators measure compliance for our buildings in terms of fire and asbestos, training take up for stress and MSD, and usage of our HM Assist advisory service. Our lagging indicators measure failures related to fire and asbestos in our buildings; reportable and driving incidents; the cost of absence for stress and MSDs; insurance claims and costs; and effective usage of the occupational health service.

The H&S strategy action plan is being reviewed and a new action plan for the coming year will be developed and approved by the SHAW Board in July 2014.

Other areas of progress and achievements

In April last year the SHAW Board approved the mental health policy which was subsequently endorsed by CMT. A staff network group has been set up and awareness has been improved. The topic has been promoted at several events over the year.

There has been a good ongoing relationship with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) with regular liaison meetings through the year. There has been no enforcement notices or prosecutions. The HSE have an ongoing investigation for an asbestos incident in a school in 2012.

The number of recorded incidents has shown a marked decline in terms of the number of incidents for staff, clients and RIDDOR (reportable) incidents this year.

There has been a good take up in training with both face to face and E-learning H&S courses. Except for the manual handling face to face course which has seen a 50% drop over the year. The Council needs to continue to improve the capture of training provision across the services.

The current occupational health contract has been extended for a further year to April 2015. The relative volumes on the contract have stayed the same despite staff numbers declining considerably over the last 3 years. This is partly due to better referring by managers and faster referral. Work is still required to improve the referral process as up to 20% of our face to face appointments are not being attended. This is reflected in the appointment waiting times. Mental health made up 38% of referrals (40% work related) in the year and MSDs made up 26% (17% work related). Anonymised feedback is received from managers and users of the service and the feedback is good overall but the response rate is still very poor. Some work has been done to improve this but more work needs to be done.

As confirmation of this ongoing hard work to continually improve safety, health and wellbeing, the Council has won a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Occupational Health and Safety Silver award. RoSPA states that "Silver Award winners have achieved a high level of performance underpinned by good management systems which are delivering consistent improvement and are working towards the level of excellence required for a Gold Award".

The report makes four recommendations and these include modifying our risk priorities to better reflect our risk profile hence the inclusion of 'personal safety' as a risk priority. Also that the health and wellbeing strategy "Working Well for Suffolk" becomes a standard agenda item of the SHAW Board and a board member has responsibility to report on progress each quarter.

The full annual H&S report is available on the Council's intranet (COLIN) [here](#)