

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	3 July 2018
Cabinet Member:	Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer:	Geraint Owen
Contact Telephone Number:	32335
Title of Item:	Health, Safety and Well-being Annual Report

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

Approval of the annual report.

2 THE REASON WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

The Council Leader has committed within the Council's Health and Safety Policy that the Cabinet will monitor the Council's health and safety performance. This report strives to give an overview of the general situation as regards health and safety matters within the Council.

3 INTRODUCTION

This report is submitted in order to give Cabinet members an overview of current health and safety management across the Council, as well as what the main activity and incidents were over past year. An annual report has been received on the Council's financial position for some years; more recently, a Human Resources annual report has been submitted, but until this year, a summary of the health and safety situation has been restricted to the Consultative Joint Committee and the Health and Safety Panel. Formal reporting on this important field is a significant step forward in the Council's procedures, and a number of work streams have already been identified to develop and build on this important foundation in future. This includes incorporating the Council's corporate Property safety matters within the report, and highlighting the obvious relationship between the ability to defend personal injury financial claims against the Council with health and safety arrangements, as these arrangements form the basis of the Council's defence of each claim.

The purpose of this report is to detail the current situation regarding the management of health, safety and well-being within the Council, whether in

Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



relation to risks to Council staff, or all Gwynedd's residents. We will outline these matters and the risks to the Council that require assistance in being moved forward at a leadership level.

4. PEOPLE PLAN: DEVELOPING MANAGERS AND STAFF

One of the work streams within the Gwynedd Council People Plan 2016-18 is to empower and enable the Council's managers and staff. In relation to health and safety, this means empowering managers to lead and manage risks within the Service, by establishing a more distinct advisory role for the Health, Safety and Well-being Service. This is especially important following the cuts that came into force within the central Unit during 16/17. Fundamentally, this involves developing the Council's business and management models, and adjusting the Health, Safety and Well-being Service's role (and that of a number of other central services) as a business partner, with the clear responsibility for day-to-day risk management and arrangements falling to Managers.

Considerable work has been undertaken over the past two years to prepare the Departments for this change, and it is clearly a substantial change - there is no doubting this. Indeed, it is a project in itself. Over the years, it is fair to note that the work of risk management in the areas where the Council's main risks exist, has been led to a great extent by competent Officers from the Central Unit.

Significant projects have been established to empower Managers as it is inevitable that there will be a reduction in the support available to them in the future. These projects include one in the field of care, relating to risk assessments on service users, and another within the Highways and Municipal Department where 217 staff and managers have been trained in various aspects of health and safety. The following flow chart shows the process that has taken place within the Provider Service (residential) in the form of traffic lights (red, amber, green) to empower the Service's staff to manage risks.

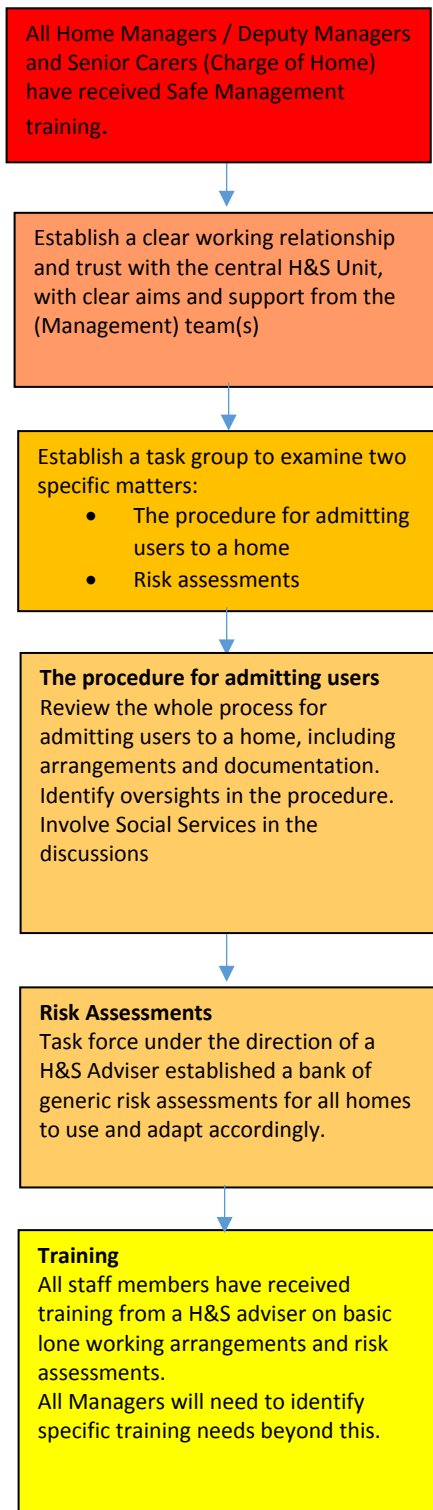
Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



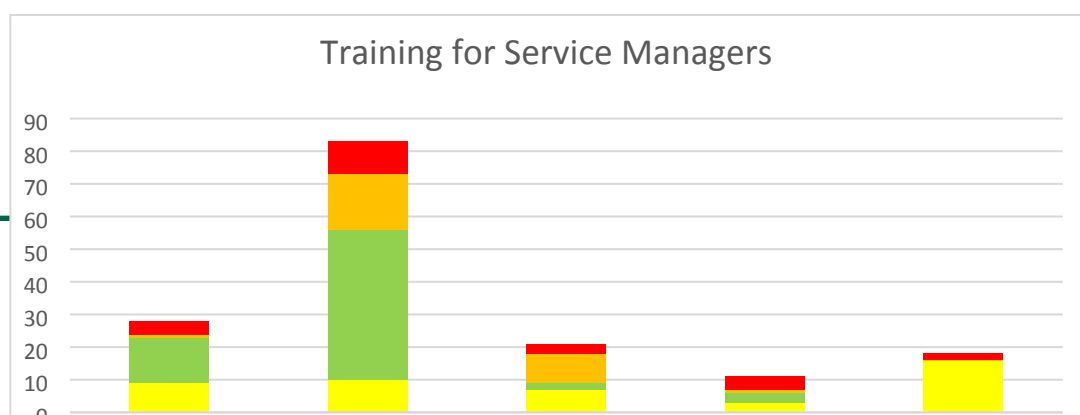


In order to reach green, it must be demonstrated that the arrangements are sustainable within the service following staff turnover etc. The same project is due to start imminently within the community care service.

Much more work needs to be conducted in this field, and some Departments are more prepared than others in moving forward e.g. some Departments have ensured that all service managers have attended an internal three-day '*Safe Management*' course, which outlines the whole management system that Managers must implement for their Service. There are gaps within other Departments, with Managers who manage significant risks not having attended any training. This is a legal requirement, as having competent managers who understand their responsibilities is the foundation for establishing an effective system within each Service. It cannot be stated with any assurance that there are satisfactory arrangements in place within any specific Service unless this foundation is in place.

Similarly, of course, it is essential that Senior Managers and Heads of Services are clear about their responsibilities, and that in moving forward they hold Managers to account. There is a legal requirement that everyone on each level of the organisation receives training that is relevant and commensurate with the level of their post.

The graph below illustrates the situation in relation to Managers' training in some of the Council's Departments where there were significant risks up to 31/3/18. The number of managers that have attended training has increased substantially during the year, and more have registered to attend over the coming months. In November 2017 the situation regarding health and safety training was reported to the Cabinet within the Portfolio Leader's performance report, and it was noted then that the issue of Managers who manage significant risks failing to attend health and safety training would, in future, be subject to the Council's capability framework.



Contact:
679868
679490
www.gwynedd.gov.uk

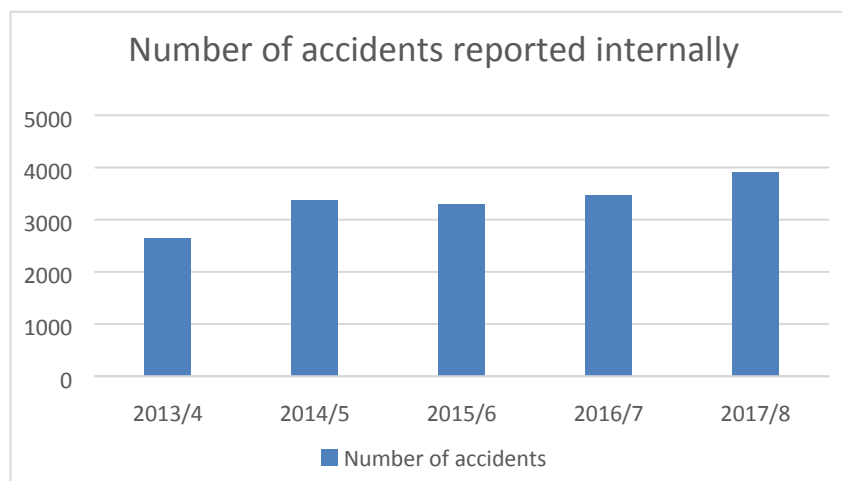


Further to the above, the Health and Safety Unit has had to consider and prioritise the Unit's work. To this end, the work streams noted below are areas in which the Unit cannot deliver in moving forwards. Alternative arrangements have been implemented for some work streams and prioritisation is taking place in relation to some other streams. However, some streams need consideration by the Departments as they are statutory aspects, and an external resource will need to be considered in future.

The streams are:

- Coordination of First Aiders and fire marshalls in the Council's main offices - this responsibility has now been transferred to the Site Managers.
- Manual handling training: one internal trainer remains, and work in the field of care will be prioritised. It is possible that an external company will be used for some of the manual handling of objects training.
- 'Schoolwatch' meetings – the Council will no longer coordinate these meetings.
- Personal Safety Training (for lone workers). The Learning and Development Unit is in the process of finding an external trainer to provide this training in future.
- Advice on including risk assessments for manual handling of weights. There is no expert in this area to advise managers on the health issues of heavy lifting as the post of Back Care Adviser has been removed from the structure.

5. THE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS



The number of incidents that need to be reported to the HSE has remained fairly consistent over the past three years, but there has been an increase in incidents and accidents reported internally on the accident/incident forms. Undoubtedly one of the major factors behind this increase is the increased awareness of the need to report, especially in relation to near misses where an incident was avoided, but where something serious could have happened.

6. HSE

HSE is the Health and Safety Executive, which is the authority that is responsible for the enforcement of health and safety in public organisations.

From the incidents reported to HSE, three cases were followed up. Any HSE intervention incurs a cost where there has been a material breach in compliance with health and safety legislation i.e. failure to comply with statutory requirements. This cost is currently £129 per hour, which is payable for the whole time in which an inspector spends investigating a case. Where no breach is found, there is no cost.

- a) A case where a resident receiving emergency care in one of the Council's residential homes fell, and died as a result of the fall. During the subsequent investigation, improvements in relation to general management, risk assessment processes and training were identified as being necessary, and HSE served an Improvement Notice. A fee of £2824.56 was incurred for the HSE's time in this case and the Notice has since been complied with.
- b) A case where an employee within the Highways and Municipal Department had developed tendonitis due to the repetitive nature of his work. Health conditions caused by work are currently under close examination by HSE, and reporting on any health condition that is work-related is highly likely to be followed up. In this case, an HSE inspector came to examine the matter, and although the quality of the risk assessment did not satisfy her, she was happy with the quality of the detailed training that the staff had received. This was mainly due to the comprehensive training that had been provided to the individual on the risks involved with his work and how to safely undertake the work. This was internal training provided by the Back Care Adviser that had spent considerable time researching the nature of the work and preparing good practice guidelines for the cohort of staff who carry out this type of work. *(It should be noted that this type of work will not happen in future as the post of Back Care Adviser has been removed from the Department's structure).*

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



- c) A case of hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS). The Council's Physician diagnosed a member of staff in the Country Parks Service with hand arm vibration syndrome. This was reported under the RIDDOR arrangements and was followed up by HSE. The investigation concluded that the Service had not conducted an appropriate or sufficient risk assessment of vibration work prior to the diagnosis, and that it was likely that the individual had been exposed to a level of vibration that was higher than the legal maximum. On this basis, a material breach was found and a fee of £1780 was incurred. Although the inspector acknowledged that further steps had been taken to implement arrangements, some of further recommendations have been made.

There were no enforcement steps by the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to fire matters.

7. INSURANCE

Over recent years, insurers in general have taken more interest in health and safety matters, and insist on robust health and safety arrangements being in place, and attainment of specific standards before offering cover. This year the Council's insurers held inspections in a number of schools, and restrictions were placed on insurance cover in relation to fire damage. This is due to deficiencies relating to bin storage in schools (unsecured bins and concerns that bins could be set on fire, and spread to the school building).

8. AUDITS

The Health and Safety Unit have a cycle of audits that check the health and safety arrangements in each of the Council's Services and Sites in turn. It should be noted that these are audits to check the basic arrangements i.e. to check that key staff have received appropriate training and that there are risk assessments in place, the inspections do not check in detail whether each assessment is appropriate and sufficient. During 2017/18, the programme has focussed on schools in the Arfon area and the Adults Service. 55 audits were held this year, and of those, a improvement were found to be necessary in 28 sites / Services. Some of those improvements have already been implemented.

10. CORPORATE HEALTH STANDARD

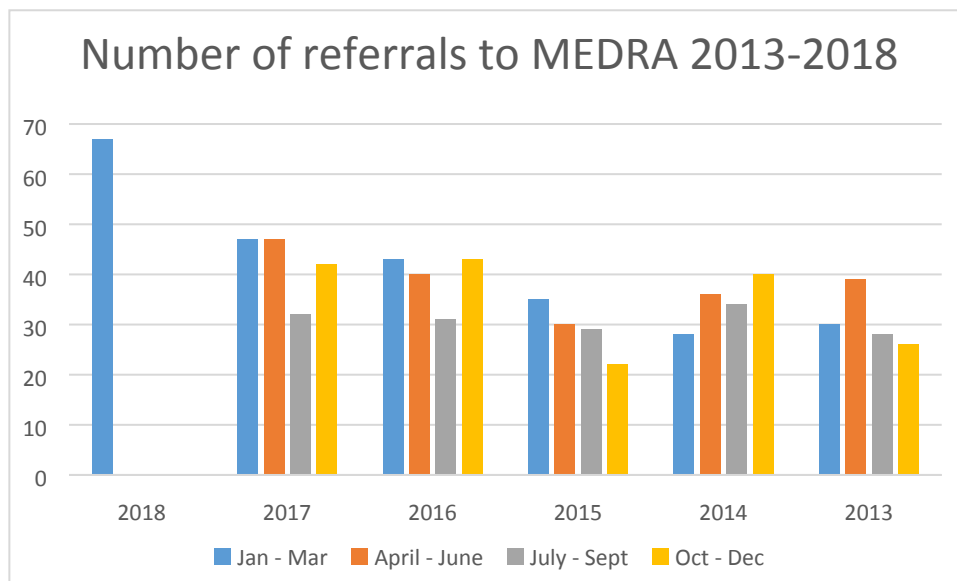
Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



The Council has held the Gold award for the standard of corporate health for a number of years. During 17/18, assessors from the Assembly conducted a full re-assessment, and scrutinised all elements of the support available to staff in the field of health. The gold award was awarded again for a three year period. As usual, a report has been received confirming the award, and include some suggestions on how to further develop the arrangements.

11. STRESS AND MENTAL WELL-BEING PROJECT OFFICER

One very positive development in relation to health and well-being is the post of Stress and Mental Well-being Project Officer created for a one-year period within the Health, Safety and Well-being Service, to review all the Council's arrangements in this area. This development was warmly welcomed by the assessors of the Health Standard. The officer has been researching best practice nationally, and will submit a report in June, making recommendations on any additional steps that the Council could take in this area. It is timely that the annual figures on staff use of the new Medra Counselling Service have been published, and that the latest quarter showed a very substantial increase in the number of staff using the Service (see overleaf).



CONCLUSIONS

Substantial work has been undertaken during the year to develop the Council's management model and empower Managers to manage health and safety matters within their Services. The work of changing the culture has been very slow, and

Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



has been a much bigger project than first anticipated. However, there has been substantial change within some Services, and the work is now gathering momentum.

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

