

**THE MORAY COUNCIL  
HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT  
(January 2019 to December 2019)**

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the performance of the council in ensuring the health and safety of the workforce and service users. This is done through the utilisation of monitoring data and includes recommendations for improvements required to procedures and/or systems.
- 1.2 The national context for similar organisations on incidents and enforcement action is also considered for the purposes of shared learning.

**2 Summary of Key Themes**

- 2.1 Health and Safety Culture – this remains a key theme for the council. Previous reports have emphasised the challenge and long term nature of implementing and sustaining culture change. The information available through analysis of data and feedback from services is that while there are improvements in some services, there continue to be areas for improvement.
- 2.2 Violence and Aggression in schools continues to be a major theme. While the national lockdown created a pause in work to address this, it remains of significant concern and is therefore a key priority going forwards.
- 2.3 Incidents based on human error continue to occur. Organisational development support will be targeted within service areas with the highest rates of incidents, seeking to understand the underlying causes and create improvements in embedding health and safety awareness into the workforce.
- 2.4 While not a factor in the 2019 statistics, it is of note that COVID-19 has had a substantial impact on the way the council operates and service delivery. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future and for that reason, all health and safety activity will be considered from a COVID-19 perspective.

**3 Review and Monitoring of Council Performance**

**3.1 Statistical Review**

- 3.1.1 **Appendix A** sets out the analysis of health and safety incidents that were reported during the year January – December 2019, with comparison to previous years' performance.
- 3.1.2 The main points to note are:
  - a) There was a significant rise in the number of accidents and dangerous occurrences reported in 2019 (an increase of 49) with the increase split between Education and Environmental Services. Analysis indicates that this is due to incidents being reported across a range of reporting categories in small numbers in both Education and Environmental Services, with no apparent pattern or underlying issue other than increased reporting which has been encouraged centrally. Appendix A contains further information.

- b) Social Care reported incidents continue to reduce (although this could be due to under-reporting, which is to be addressed).
- c) Variation in numbers between types of incidents continues although no clear pattern emerges.
- d) Reported incidents of violence and aggression in schools continue to rise.

### 3.2 Review of Incidents/Accidents

3.2.1 The following incident summaries are presented as a sample to illustrate the nature and range of risks the council has faced and to inform decisions on improvements for the future with appropriate remedial actions.

- a) A driver left the depot with an unsecured load being carried on a vehicle that was unfit for this purpose, the load fell onto the carriageway striking a passing vehicle and only narrowly avoiding causing a serious injury. This incident led to an investigation into load safety training and supervision, a program of checks and inspections were put into place.
- b) A near miss at a recycling centre where a member of the public narrowly avoided being struck by an HGV being driven against the flow of traffic led to an audit of the recycling centres and a number of improvements were made to site rules and signage.
- c) A member of the public sustained a major injury after tripping on metal studs that had become exposed when a large metal gate had been temporarily moved to enable access for large vehicles. The risk assessment for this task has been reviewed and changed with a system now in place to ensure no trip hazards are created during this procedure.

### 3.3 Review of Progress

3.3.1 Health and Safety activity is set out in the annual action plan and is monitored through the council's performance management framework via the service plan and the more detailed workforce plan. This section provides an overview of the main work streams in the plans.

3.3.2 The restructure of the health and safety team has helped to provide an improved balance between the reactive operational requirements and the planned work, however managing this balance does still remain challenging given the small corporate health and safety resource and the unpredictability of the operational demands.

3.3.3 Vehicle and Transport: investigate underlying issues and develop actions plans to address and mitigate risks – analysis showed no real trend or identifiable pattern. Monitor for further review as required.

3.3.4 Violence and Aggression: develop improvement plan in conjunction with services – an outline action plan was developed with further detail to be provided by a small working group of officers.

3.3.5 Contractor Control: development of arrangements and processes for monitoring site performance – improved monitoring methods have been agreed with Property Services providing corporate oversight of project work involving contractors.

- 3.3.6 Safe Working Methods: audit of risk assessments in high risk areas – audits of specific issues overtook planned work. To be carried forward in 2020 and 2021 action plan.
- 3.3.7 Improved Reporting and Monitoring: training for supervisors and managers on monitoring of practice – training is in the early stage of development and was overtaken by the demand from dealing with reactive work.
- 3.3.8 Culture: enhancing manager and employee awareness of health and safety responsibilities – Work including regular safety alerts, improved liaison arrangements in some high risk areas and Connect articles have focused on improving health and safety awareness.
- 3.3.9 Fire Risk Assessments: audits in schools – ongoing with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

#### **4 Benchmarking and National Developments**

- 4.1 The council's overall trend of increasing incidents does not reflect the national HSE report for 2018/19 which found that the rate of self-reported non-fatal injury to workers generally shows a downward trend, however within the statistics, 'slips, trips and falls' remains the highest occurring incident at 20%. This reflects one element of the council's own pattern of incidents of this type.
- 4.2 Violence and aggression towards staff in schools from pupils is an issue that is being considered at a national level in Scotland. The Review of Additional Support for Learning chaired by Angela Morgan and reporting to CoSLA and Scottish Government identified a range of improvements for provision of ASN across Scotland. Among the issues highlighted was the 'significant work to be done' to ensure those children and young people who express stress and distress through behaviour and those involved in supporting them are 'fully supported for principled and effective prevention and intervention'. Appendix A refers more specifically to the Moray context in this regard.

#### **5 Conclusions and Proposed Developments**

- 5.1 While this report covers the period January – December 2019, it is being written after a period of national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic remains an important factor with regard to the health and safety of the workforce and as such any development activity and proposals for action take account of the additional considerations of working in a Covid-19 safe environment, however, the specific health and safety requirements within each service remain a high priority.
- 5.2 The number of incidents reported has increased during 2019. Analysis shows that there is no clear trend or pattern to the increases, rather they are made up of a small number of reports over a wider number of categories. Within Education most incidents are due to minor mishaps in science lessons or Home Economics and with PE sessions. PE incidents have been reported as an issue in the past and it should be noted that the number of 'falls from a height' has reduced by over 20% within the small number reported. Within Environmental Services the increase shows no underlying issues or contributory causes.
- 5.3 A refreshed programme of reminding managers of the need to monitor and raise awareness amongst their teams in targeted areas will be introduced with support

from the Organisational Development team in terms of using different tools and techniques and communications.

- 5.4 A targeted programme of auditing and inspection of the risk assessments for high-risk issues and areas will continue in line with the aims of the safety policy contributing towards the improved use of safe working methods.
- 5.5 The issue of violence and aggression in schools will be reviewed by the working group who had been tasked with developing improvement actions, in the light of COVID-19 and a refreshed plan will be brought forward thereafter. The Central Health and Safety Committee will continue to oversee and direct this work with updates to Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee.
- 5.6 Risk assessment relating to the impact of COVID-19 will continue to be a significant factor for all services for the foreseeable future. A corporate approach to risk assessment has been developed and this will be further developed to ensure continual review in line with any national, public health or professional standard recommendations that emerge.

## 6 Action Plan

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the corporate health and safety team will continue to be involved with ongoing pandemic demands across services. Combined with the requirement to complete a proportion of audit and monitoring work, including fire risk assessments across the school and corporate estate, as well as managing the ad hoc operational work, it should be noted that this is likely to impact considerably on other development or improvement work that the team might be able to progress.

ACTIONS	TARGET FOR COMPLETION
Accident/Incident – monitor high risk areas	31 March 2022 with review at March 2021
Risk Management – improve manager understanding and activity and introduce OD support in targeted areas with high or increasing incident reports	
Audit/Inspection – targeted programme of high risk areas and issues	
Violence and Aggression – refreshed plan and implementation	30 June 2021 and 2022
Risk Assessment:COVID-19 – embed continual review into business as normal	Ongoing
Fire Risk Assessments – continue with programme in line with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Ongoing