

meeting date: WEDNESDAY, 25 MAY 2016
title: ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report presents a review of the management of health and safety by the Council during the period April 2015 to March 2016.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – Effective management of health and safety risks supports the Council's ambition to make people's lives safer and healthier for staff as well as for the community.
- Community Objectives – Effective risk control systems for staff, contractors and members of the public supports the Community Strategy theme to promote health and well-being within the community.
- Corporate Priorities – Health and safety reports provide the information needed by people in the Council who have particular responsibilities within the health and safety management system; these people include directors, senior managers, managers, supervisors, health and safety professionals and employees/safety representatives.
- Legal – To ensure legal compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, applicable Regulations and Approved Codes of Practice and, in particular, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 5, (health and safety arrangements).

2 OVERVIEW

2.1 Senior managers, managers and supervisors have generally shown a positive attitude towards the Health, Safety and Welfare of their staff, however the 2015 staff survey revealed that there had been a fall in the percentage of respondents that felt the Council provides a safe and healthy work environment. The results were referred to the Council's Health and Safety Group by CMT and we also carried out the Health and Safety Executive's Health and Safety Survey to check the current climate for health and safety across the Council, the results of which are the subject of a separate report. Health and Safety continues to be an agenda item at all staff meetings and features appear regularly in Backchat and on Health and Safety Notice Boards. The Chief Executive and selected Senior Managers attend the quarterly Health and Safety Committee meetings, which serve as a forum for consultation with Unions and employees on matters such as risk assessments and safe working procedures, the meetings are well attended and effective.

2.2 The Management of Health and Safety within the Refuse Collection Service was the subject of an intervention inspection by the Health and Safety Executive in 2012, with no intervention found to be necessary. However, the HSE are planning to revisit Local Authority Waste Services in the 2015/2016 period and have recently carried out an intervention at South Lakeland District Council following separate incidents in which two women were killed by reversing refuse collection vehicles. The

investigation found that South Lakeland District Council's poor risk management left it over-reliant on refuse collection crews to identify and avoid hazards. It is therefore important that current best practice guidance and standards in the management and monitoring of this service are implemented. As a result of three, recent, fatal accidents in the refuse collection industry, all occurring in a two week period, the HSE may extend their intervention programme in the coming year.

2.3 Effective management of health and safety risks helps the Council to:

- maximise the well-being and performance of its employees;
- stop people being killed, injured or suffering ill-health by their work;
- prevent damage to its reputation in the eyes of customers, suppliers, other stakeholders and the wider community;
- encourage better relationships with contractors, and more effective contracted activities; and
- minimise the likelihood of prosecution and consequent penalties.

2.4 The Council's Health and Safety Management System utilises the model provided in HS(G)65 1997, POPMAR, (Policy, Organising, Planning, Measuring performance, Auditing and Review). This guidance was refreshed and simplified in December 2013 and explains the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach showing how a balance between the systems and behavioural aspects of management can be achieved.

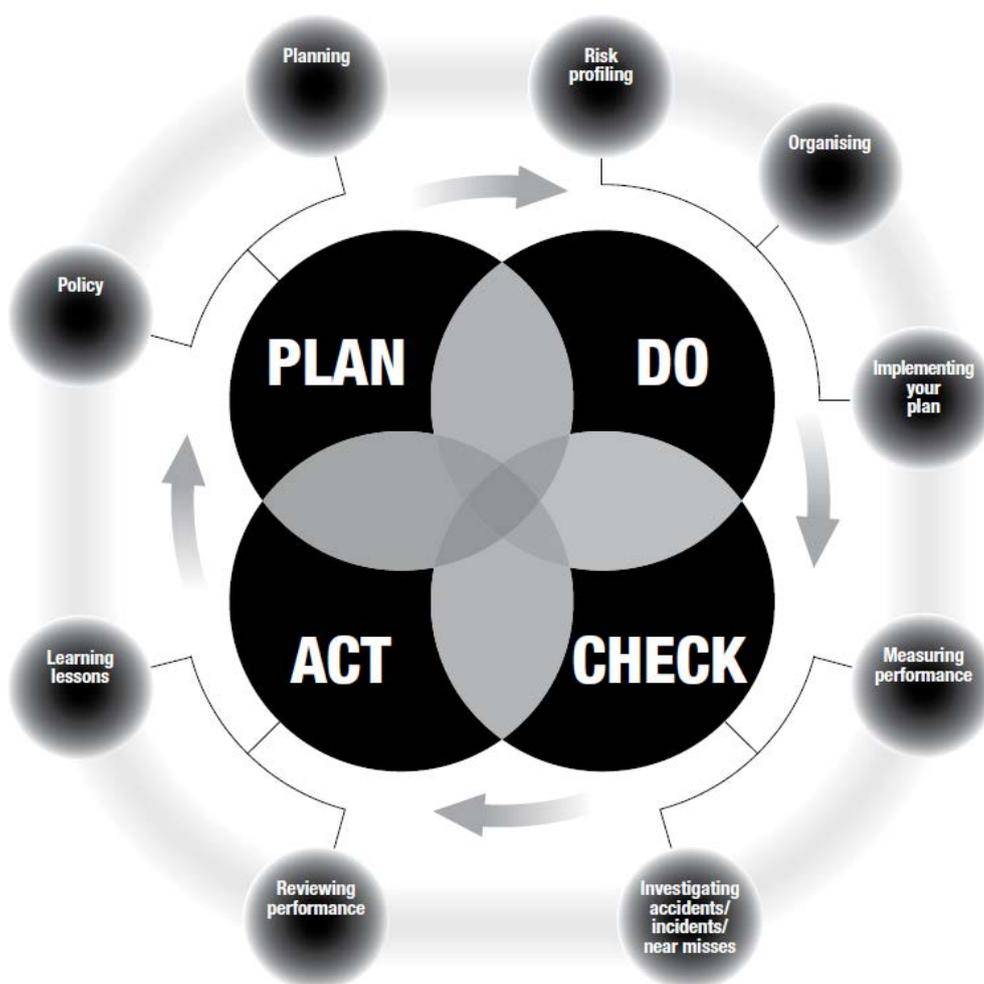
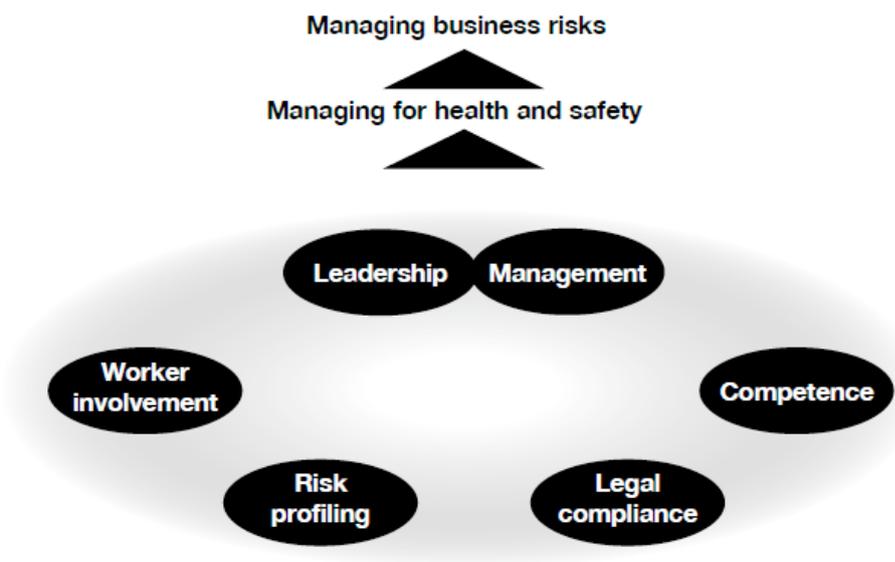


Figure 1. HSG65, 2013

- 2.5 The simpler “Plan, Do, Check, Act” approach treats health and safety management as an integral part of good management generally, rather than as a stand-alone system. However, the Council will continue to use the POPMAR model of managing health and safety as this system is still appropriate for the risk level and complexity of the organisation and already incorporates the core elements identified in the refreshed guidance.
- 2.6 HSE encourages a common sense and practical approach as part of the everyday process of running an organisation and an integral part of workplace behaviours and attitudes, as does the Council. The core elements, underpinned by an understanding of the profile of risks the organisation creates or faces links back to wider risk management and is pictured below.



3 POLICY AND PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The Council’s Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed and updated in line with changes in legislation and guidance. The Policy is set out in three sections: -
- **The statement of general policy on health and safety at work** sets out the Council’s commitment to managing health and safety effectively.
 - **The organisation section** sets out who is responsible for specific actions
 - **The arrangements section** contains the detail of what will be done in practice to achieve the aims set out in the statement of health and safety policy and includes information on how the risk of hazards will be eliminated or reduced.

4 THE COUNCIL’S SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS

- 4.1 Construction - The Construction Design and Management (CDM) regulations 2015 came into force on 6 April 2015. The main changes were the replacement of CDM co-ordinators by “Principal Designers”, (appointed by Clients for projects involving more than one contractor), full inclusion of domestic projects and an overall attempt to reduce bureaucracy and communicate the key roles and responsibilities in a clearer manner.

The Council should ensure that designers who take on the Principal Designer role have not only good technical ability but also sufficient skills, knowledge and ability in

terms of design and construction health and safety risk management. When the new CDM Regulations ask for skills, knowledge and experience, it is referring to construction health and safety skills, knowledge and experience.

- 4.2 Transport – this includes the waste transfer station and depot management, occupational road risk and vehicle operations and maintenance; Vehicles at work continue to be a major cause of fatal and major injuries. Every year there are over 5000 incidents involving transport in the workplace. About 50 of these result in people being killed. Estimates suggest that up to one-third of all road traffic accidents involve someone who is at work at the time. Transport risks at the Council include drivers of Refuse Collection Vehicles, Depot plant, vans and pick-ups, casual vehicle and lease car drivers, all involved in driving for work. In 2015/16, 5 claims were made in respect of Own Damage, (3 settled, 2 still under investigation). 14 claims were made in respect of Third Party Damage, (7 settled, 7 still under investigation). Own damage settlements amounted to £1382.00, third party damage totalled £4131.00.
- 4.3 Fire – this is an important area due to the potential severity of any incidents and the size of the authority’s property portfolio. In 2015/16 there were two false alarms necessitating implementation of the Emergency Evacuation Plan for the Council offices which were carried out effectively. Refresher training for all Fire Marshals was undertaken and included instruction on the Emergency Evacuation Plan and Fire Extinguisher identification and use. The fire alarm detection system is tested every Thursday at 10.00 hours.
- 4.4 Mental health problems – these are the biggest cause of sickness absence in local government. Stress, anxiety and depression are the main issues, 220 working days were lost at the Council in 2015/16.
- 4.5 Musculoskeletal injuries – bad backs, muscle damage and sprains are not just caused by lifting or moving heavy things, repetitive tasks such as intensive keyboard use can also be to blame along with slip or trip accidents, 633 working days were lost at the Council in the year 2015/16 due to this type of injury.
- 4.6 The estimated costs to the Council of these absences is £85,300 based on a conservative cost of £100/day and it is clear that considerable cost savings can be made through effective, preventive and protective measures, primarily through robust management, supervision and monitoring of safe working practices.
- 4.7 Waste Management – Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum. WISH is a multi-party forum made up of representatives from the HSE, main trade associations, trade unions, recycling organisations, and national and local governing bodies. The WISH Forum has created a blueprint which outlines 24 immediate action points under 5 strategic themes:
- Providing strong leadership;
 - Involving the workforce;
 - Building competence;
 - Creating healthier and safer workplaces;
 - Providing support for small to medium sized employers.

The blueprint is intended to cover the five-year period up to 2018; WISH will be reviewing the plan on a yearly basis.

- 4.8 Following the previous inspection initiative with Local Authority (LA) waste and recycling collection activities, the HSE carried out a programme of further inspections

to LAs (England, Scotland and Wales) to re-assess health and safety standards in 2015/16, whether the service is delivered in house or contracted out. Inspections were to take place between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016. The Council was not inspected. However, nationally refuse collection personnel and members of the public continue to be killed by reversing refuse collection vehicles. It is therefore imperative that safe systems of work are implemented by competent operatives and supervisors, sufficiently monitored by senior managers and managers, and that robust corrective action is taken where activities fall short of identified standards. The recommendations from the Glasgow Bin Lorry inquiry should be implemented where practicable.

- 4.9 The HSE Fees for Intervention (FFI) scheme began on Monday, 1 October 2012. The scheme places a duty on the HSE to recover its costs for carrying out its regulatory functions. Inspectors who identify material breaches at the sites they visit and are required to intervene will now charge organisations £129.00 an hour for the time they spend investigating and resolving the breaches. A material breach is where a Health and Safety law has been broken and an inspector judges this is serious enough for them to notify the organisation in writing. This will either be a notification of contravention, an improvement or prohibition notice, or a prosecution.
- 4.10 There were no contraventions, prosecutions, improvement notices or prohibition notices issued to RVBC by the HSE during 2015/16 and therefore no Fees for Intervention were applied.
- 4.11 On 1 February 2016, the new sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences came into force. They direct the courts to consider the sentencing of offending organisations by way of a step-by-step approach, primarily examining culpability, the seriousness of harm risked and the likelihood of harm, which are divided into a number of different levels to reflect the scale within each category. In light of a number of preceding Court of Appeal judgments expressing the same view, the guidelines then require an assessment of turnover in order to set a starting point for a fine that is intended “to bring the message home to the directors and shareholders of offending organisations”, as stated by the Judge in the environmental prosecution of Thames Water. The majority of the other sentencing steps relate to the consideration of increasing or decreasing the level of fine according to a range of factors. There are similar guidelines for the sentencing of individuals for health and safety offences, with a stronger focus on the risk of a custodial sentence for those found guilty of serious breaches.

5 SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

- 5.1 The Council’s Health and Safety Policy clearly sets out how the Council will manage the Health, Safety and Welfare of all employees and others who may be affected by its undertakings, therefore the health and safety goal of the Council is to effectively implement all sections of the Policy.
- 5.2 Overall, again, 2015/2016 was a positive year in terms of health and safety management and achievements include:
- 5.2.1 A proportionate approach to event safety management on Council property including the Tour of Britain, the Food Festival, Beacon Lighting and the Clitheroe Bonfire. The Health and Safety Advisor continues to play a proactive role in advising event organisers in the management of event safety and the production of Event Safety Management Plans.
- 5.2.2 The Health and Safety Advisor attended an Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, IOSH, one day seminar on “Working towards a Safer Workplace” the main theme of which was “Changing Workplace Culture”, this has

assisted in implementing the Safety Climate Survey. The Health and Safety Advisor also attended a Confined Space Training Course which enabled safely managed access to the underground valve and sump pump at Ribblesdale Pool, and renewal of the pump. The gas monitor used for this work identified the presence of methane and therefore any further access will require a gas monitor specifically for detecting methane, and competent personnel. The Health and Safety Advisor continues to Chair the Lancashire Local Authority Health and Safety Advisors Forum and the RVBC Health and Safety Committee.

- 5.2.3 A Health and Safety Climate Survey was undertaken to establish the current "Safety Culture" of the Council. The purpose of a Health and Safety Climate Survey is to gain a measurement of each component of the Culture, or personality, (perceptions and attitudes) of the Council. Probably the most important indicator of a positive safety culture is the extent to which all employees, including Senior Managers are actively involved in safety on a daily basis. The results are the subject of a separate report.
- 5.2.4 Risk assessments and procedures have been reviewed and updated for the Amenity Cleansing Service.
- 5.2.5 The extensive refurbishment works on the roof covering and replacement windows to the Council Offices was completed with zero accidents or incidents.
- 5.2.6 Joint Workplace Inspections with Safety Representatives from Unison have taken place regularly throughout the year. Any issues raised were speedily resolved and a positive working relationship with the Unison continues. Voluntary health checks were carried out following the tragic waste collection vehicle accident in Glasgow in December 2014.
- 5.2.7 A detailed Legionella risk assessment has been undertaken for the underbody vehicle wash at the depot, the Refuse and Transport Manager is responsible for the necessary checks and records.
- 5.2.8 Significant proactive and reactive work has been undertaken providing a wide range of support both corporately and operationally.

6 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT STATISTICS

6.1 Accidents

In the 2015 – 2016 period there were 66 accidents, 25 involving Council employees. 36 accidents happened at the Pool; the majority being slips, trips and falls, there was a minor injury involving a contractor at Salthill Depot, a Councillor slipped on leaves on Railway View Car Park and a young child was injured by a large wood splinter in the Castle Field Public Conveniences, necessitating a visit to hospital. There were 2 accidents on the football pitches, one resulting in a broken collar bone. The Refuse Collection service accounted for 5 of the accidents to RVBC staff. The Health and Safety Advisor will continue to investigate accidents, incidents and ill health, along with managers, supervisors and safety representatives in accordance with the Policy and Procedure for the Reporting and Investigation of Accidents and Incidents, in order to prevent reoccurrence and further lost time incidents and associated losses.

6.2 Incidents

The total number of “incidents”, no loss events, reported by employees was 4; there was 1 incident of verbal abuse and 1 physical assault to staff. 1 person’s name was added to the Awareness Register.

7 TARGETS FOR 2016/2017

7.1 Construction

7.1.1 Monitor the implementation of the Policy for the Health and Safety Management and Control of Contractors and Consultants to ensure compliance at procurement stage and during works on site.

7.1.2 Continue to implement the Council’s Control of Asbestos and Legionella Bacteria Policies and carry out monitoring, sampling and testing as appropriate.

7.1.3 Monitor compliance with the duties imposed by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, (CDM 2015), and ensure that they are carried out for all applicable design and construction works.

7.2 Transport

7.2.1 Implement the Council Policy for the Management of Occupational Road Risk, (MORR), reviewing and revising the Council’s risk assessments for driving vehicles including, the “grey fleet”, and carry out driving assessments where appropriate.

7.2.2 Continue to monitor the number of incidents resulting in damage to refuse collection vehicles and implement an initiative to reduce the number of incidents and lower the burden of repair costs for vehicles and property.

7.3 Fire

7.3.1 Implement the corporate policy for Fire Safety which identifies roles and responsibilities for those employees with duties in the event of Fire and Emergency in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) Order 2005.

7.3.2 Carry out basic fire safety refresher training for employees and further specific Fire Safety training for all Fire Marshals in accordance with the Fire Safety (Employees’ Capabilities) (England) Regulations 2010.

7.3.3 Ensure fire alarm testing and practice evacuations of public buildings are carried out regularly and liaise with the Fire and Rescue Service during statutory inspections and audits.

7.4 Mental Health Problems

7.4.1 Monitor instances of work related stress symptoms including anxiety and depression and assist Heads of Service, Managers and HR in the risk assessment process for individual cases.

7.4.2 Work alongside the HR Section in developing strategies for reducing the number of working days lost due to work related stress, through implementation of the Health and Safety Executive’s Management Standards and the Council’s Policy on the Management of Stress at Work.

7.5 Musculoskeletal Injuries

- 7.5.1 Review workstation risk assessments for all users of display screen equipment in accordance with Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002).
- 7.5.2 Conduct Advanced Display Screen Assessments where musculo-skeletal disorders have been identified and ensure ergonomic adjustments are carried out and monitored.
- 7.5.3 Continue to monitor manual handling activities carried out by Council employees and where necessary conduct risk assessments where appropriate.
- 7.5.4 Provide in-house training and refresher sessions for all employees where appropriate and in particular in the Refuse Collection and General Works Services to reduce the number of working days lost through accidents and injuries.

7.6 Waste Management

- 7.6.1 Waste collection and recycling continues to be one of the highest risk activities undertaken by the Council. Transport operations associated with collection activities (municipal and commercial) and at a range of waste management and recycling sites represent the most significant risk of serious or fatal accidents to workers and members of the public. Nationally, 'Struck by moving vehicle' accounts for about only 4% of all reported accidents, however, over 40% of all fatalities fall within this category. The intervention strategy of the HSE is likely to continue into the 2016/17 period, these interventions will include both in-house and contracted collection services.
- 7.6.2 Continue to liaise with the HSE and monitor the progress of the WISH strategy, guidance and blueprint development.
- 7.6.3 The teams continue to operate on a "Group Task and Finish" basis. This type of system is recognised by the HSE as requiring a greater level of management and supervision as it may encourage workers to rush the job and take dangerous short cuts, robust monitoring of the service must therefore be carried out with instances of non-compliance with safe systems of work reported to managers and appropriate enforcement action applied.

7.7 Events

- 7.7.1 Provide Health and Safety support and input for events including the Summer days Festival, Clitheroe Food Festival and the Clitheroe Bonfire alongside the Clitheroe Bonfire Committee.

7.8 Accidents and Incidents

- 7.8.1 Implement the Policy and Procedure for the Reporting and Investigation of Accidents and Incidents.

7.9 First Aid

- 7.9.1 Provide staff briefings for emergency use of defibrillators at the Council offices and at Salthill Depot following the campaign by the NHS and the British Heart Foundation.

7.10 Professional Development

- 7.10.1 The Health and Safety Advisor continues his professional development by attending courses and seminars arranged by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, IOSH, The Institution of Civil Engineers, ICE, both of which he holds Graduate Membership for and the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management of which he is a full member.
- 7.10.2 The Health and Safety Advisor undertakes Continuing Professional Development (CPD), with the above organisations and continues to Chair the Lancashire Local Authority Health and Safety Advisor's Forum, regularly attending evening meetings of the Manchester and District IOSH Branch and Public Services Section.
- 7.10.3 The Health and Safety Advisor continues to chair the RVBC Health and Safety Committee meetings.

8 RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 8.1 Heads of Service/Managers are accountable to their Director for implementing the Council's Health and Safety Policy, encouraging and assisting in developing safety procedures and ensuring that risk assessments are in place and that established safe working practices are adhered to. They must also ensure that Supervisors are properly trained and receive the support they need to perform their duties. Staff can contribute to risk control by being involved in the development of policies, procedures and systems of work.
- 8.2 All Heads of Service/Managers need to remain aware of the importance of setting good examples in their own behaviour to promote positive health and safety performance by others and to nurture a positive health and safety culture by "doing things properly". They should encourage supervisors and staff to take ownership of the risk assessment process and to actively implement the control measures identified.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The waste management and recycling industry has grown rapidly over the past decade in response to the environmental challenge. Unfortunately, it remains an industry with a poor health and safety performance – with fatality rates reaching over ten times the all industry average – second only to agriculture.
- 9.2 Local authorities continue to have a major role to play in reducing these high rates of fatal injury, and the high rates of other injuries which accompany them. They are the clients for this work if it is contracted out, and are the direct employers if the service is delivered in-house. The HSE is very aware of the competing pressures on local authorities. One key principle is that there is no need for this to be seen as a trade-off – meeting recycling targets and achieving improvement in health and safety performance are compatible and complimentary goals.
- 9.3 Effective management and monitoring of safe working practices is essential in maintaining standards. The in-house collection and disposal of paper waste re-introduced manual handling of sacks to our systems and there were minor reported injuries in the service during 2015/2016, nevertheless close control and management will continue to be key in managing this risk.
- 9.4 Health and Safety leadership must continue at the top, the attitude, behaviour and example of leadership at Chief Executive and Director level must continue to

permeate throughout management and supervisory levels, so that everyone knows what they need to do and that they have the skills, abilities and resources to do their jobs safely. Senior managers have significant health and safety duties and responsibilities. These must be discharged effectively in order to maintain and improve health, safety and welfare standards and to control the Council's risks at a legally and morally acceptable level.

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