

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 1st December, 2010. - Minute of Meeting of the CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Leslie, Chairperson; and Mike Middleton (GMB), Vice-Chairperson. City Council Representative:- Councillor McDonald.

Trade Union Representatives:- Carole Thorpe (EIS); Neil Watson (GMB); Sid Sandison (SSTA); and John Noble (UCATT).

Officers in attendance:- Ciaran Monaghan, Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive; Ewan Sutherland, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development; Charlie Penman, Head of Education Development Policy and Performance; Mary Agnew, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager; Graham Hossack, Operational Support Manager, Social Care and Wellbeing; Mike Hearn, Directorate Support Manager, Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure; David Leslie, Directorate Support Manager, Housing and Environment Graham Elman, Health and Safety Adviser; and Karen Riddoch, Committee Services Officer (Clerk)

Also in attendance:- Bavaneesha Naidoo from Workplace Options (for items 2 and 5 on the agenda).

ORDER OF AGENDA

1. The Clerk proposed a change to the order of items before the Committee, those being:- to take item 5 (Employee Assistance Programme Report) after item 2 (Workplace Options Presentation); and to take item 16 (Health and Safety Annual Report, April 2009 to March 2010) after item 9 (Revitalising Health and Safety Targets).

The Committee resolved:-

to accept the changes to the order of the agenda.

APOLOGIES

2. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Kevin Stewart, Wendy Stuart and Young; Joe Craig and Steve Robb (Unite) and Leslie Kirk, Directorate Support Manager, Education, Culture and Sport.

WORKPLACE OPTIONS PRESENTATION

3. The Committee received a presentation from Bavaneesha Naidoo from Workplace Options which provided members with details on the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

In summation, the presentation provided an overview of the EAP service, how the EAP supports Human Resources, Occupational Health and Management. Conceptually, EAP aims to cover as many of the main issues and factors which may impact on the emotional and physical wellbeing of an employee. In her presentation, Bavaneesha Nidoo identified such factors as work and personal relationships, work-life balance, family, changes in the workplace and life changes as being paramount to the emotional wellbeing of an employee. Providing a confidential, independent and impartial service, free of charge and always available, EAP aims to save time by helping to address issues early on.

EAP provides various information packs, one to one counselling, and a comprehensive website. It also provides additional support for managers/supervisors who may be working with someone experiencing personal difficulties.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to thank Ms Naidoo for her presentation; and
- (ii) to note the content of the presentation.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME REPORT, JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2010

4. With reference to Article 5 of the minute of its meeting of 27th August, 2010, the Committee had before it a report prepared by Workplace Options on behalf of the Council which provided information relating to the usage of the Employee Assistance Programme by employees for the period 1st July to 31st October, 2010.

The report advised that over the period in question, Workplace Options had dealt with 44 cases and 91 web logins had been received. The report provided statistical information broken down into sub categories and categorised as either personal or work related issues. The support provided to employees was in the form of face to face (50%), telephone support (43.2%), telephone by counsellor (4.5%) and debt specialist (2.3%). Information on the types of website categories that had been accessed were contained in the report.

In response to a question from Councillor McDonald on the methods used to try to increase the usage of the service from male members of staff, Mary Agnew advised that she would be discussing options with Bavaneesha to see how the service could be promoted throughout the Council and in particular to male members of staff.

Some members from the Trade Unions advised that they hadn't seen any publicity materials in their workplaces and requested that they receive them to promote the service.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that Mary Agnew would progress ways in which to promote the Employee Assistance Programme;
- (ii) to request Mary Agnew to liaise with each operational/directorate support manager on the issuing of the promotional material for the Employee Assistance Programme and for her to arrange for additional materials where appropriate; and

(iii) to otherwise note the information contained in the report.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 27th August, 2010.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute.

MATTERS ARISING

6. With reference to Article 4, resolution (i) Mary Agnew advised that (a) the revised Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy was currently with the Corporate Management team which included the Workload Statement previously discussed at this Committee; and (b) the policy would be issued in due course as part of the formal consultation process.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT, JULY TO SEPTEMBER, 2010

7. With reference to Article 6 of the minute of its meeting of 27th August, 2010, the Committee had before it a report by the Director for Corporate Governance, which provided details on the number and type of accidents, incidents and occurrences during the period July to October, 2010.

The report also highlighted the health and safety activities such as health and safety compliance monitoring, training, initiatives, campaigns and any Health and Safety Executive (HSE) interventions.

The report provided information broken down into the following categories:-

Accident/Incidents, Reportable Accidents/Incidents and Accident Rates

- 69 employee accidents were reported of which 23 were reportable to the enforcing authority;
- 31 accidents to third parties were reported of which 8 were reportable to the enforcing authority. Of all the third party accidents 19 involved school pupils;
- 114 incidents were reported by employees;
- manual handling accidents accounted for 30% of the total employee reportable accidents and slips and trips accounted for 26% of all reportable accidents by employees;
- 3 people were injured in falls from height, accidents which identified remedial actions from accident investigations being undertaken where appropriate to prevent reoccurrence; and
- the accident rate for the period was 2.59 accidents per 1,000 employees.

Workplace Health and Safety Management Performance Overview

- a total of 29 visits were undertaken during July to October, 2010;
- the main areas of weakness identified were -
 - lack of documentation and availability of risk assessments;
 - failure to follow up actions identified in workplace inspections; and
 - lack of first aid methods, needs assessments and co-ordination of first aid during the restructure.

Fire Risk Assessment

- the Health and Safety Adviser (Fire) post had been vacant since September 2010. The post had been advertised as a fixed term contract and the interviews would be held the week commencing 6th December, 2010. Due to resource issues for the Team, health and safety inspections (including fire observations) had been undertaken by the Team of opening buildings.

Health and Safety Training

- 291 delegates attended health and safety training over the period in question; and
- Grampian Police had delivered training on how to deal with threats of terrorism to employees, trade unions and Elected Members which comprised of Project Griffin and Project Argus. Both courses would be run again in the future to give employees, trade unions and Elected Members an opportunity to attend.

Gas Safety

- the Housing and Environment and Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Services had produced a Corporate Gas Safety policy for housing and non-housing, which had been approved at the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee on 25th November, 2010.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE Intervention)

- the HSE had issued a letter to the Council relating to compliance of the statutory duties in relation to LPG tank installations at the Crematorium. Action had been taken to address the issues raised to ensure compliance on this site and another identified site.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee refer the report to the Corporate Management Team -

- (a) to discuss and encourage review of statistics by Heads of Service;
- (b) to support actions to reduce accidents and work related ill-health in line with the health and safety targets; and
- (c) to disseminate and take action on the health and safety information in the report.

In response to questions raised by trade union members, relating to the level of first aid training and the recipients of training, Mary Agnew advised that not all Pupil Support Assistants were designated First Aiders but were used for emergency situations. Mary also explained that the HSE had issued revised guidance on the level of training that was required for first aid and that the time for training had reduced (number of days) however they would be held more frequently.

Information on first aid training provision was available on The Zone and Health and Safety Adviser that were allocated to each Service were available to advise Directors and Heads of Service on the new provisions.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORT – JULY TO SEPTEMBER, 2010

8. With reference to Article 7 of the minute of its meeting of 27th August, 2010, the Committee had before it a report by Serco, Occupational Health providers, which provided an update on the occupational health referrals and actions for the period July to September, 2010.

The report provided information on the number of appointments and cancelled appointments, those being:-

- 180 appointments were delivered by Serco on behalf of the Council;
- 7 of these were medicals, 11 were paper screens and 162 were referrals;
- 36 people did not attend, with a further 2 cancelling within 24 hours
- 3 tier – 3 HAVS assessments were carried out;
- 56 physiotherapy sessions had been carried out; and
- 93 Hep B vaccinations and 19 Hep B titres blood tests, had been carried out.

The report contained various graphs which presented the volume of referrals by Service, the reason for referrals, an overview of the diagnosis categories, an overview of the outcome of referrals and further action recommended for all referrals.

The Committee discussed the issue of people not attending appointments and the cost associated with each missed appointment. At present the service/directorate have to pay for those employees who fail to attend their appointment or cancel under 24 hours. The appointments were a management instruction to the employee to attend and all non-attendance was investigated. Mary Agnew advised that she received data on a monthly basis from Serco on non-attendance levels which she discussed with the relevant managers.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that for future agendas the report be issued in colour, specifically the pie charts and graphs as they were hard to read in black and white; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTION PLAN

9. With reference to Article 8 of the minute of its meeting of 27th August, 2010, the Committee had before it for information, the latest position statement of the Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan, prepared by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager.

Mary Agnew advised that she had reviewed the Plan and updated it accordingly and that in relation to:-

- item 1 (Leadership of Health and Safety) - that there was a need to have strong direction from the management of the Council in relation to Health and Safety;
- item 2 (Review of Policies and Procedures) – that the Corporate Asbestos Policy had been approved by the Corporate Policy and Performance Committee on 25th November, 2010 and the Management of Stress Procedure would be amended but not the policy following discussions at the Corporate Management Team;
- item 3 (Reduce the Number of Accidents and Work Related Ill-Health) – there was a need to set new targets as the Council were at the end of the target period (Article 10 of this minute refers);
- item 8 (Health and Safety Input into Major Projects) – the Health and Safety Team were required to be involved at the project planning stage of all major projects; and
- item 9 (Recognised Awards) – the aim for the Council was to achieve the Health Working Lives Silver award and the Mental Health Commendation award.

In response to a question relating to the Employee Good Health Group, Mary Agnew advised that due to reduced resources she had been unable to lead the Group and that she didn't think it would be possible until after the appointment of the Principle Health and Safety Adviser had been made.

The Committee resolved:-
to note the information.

REVITALISING HEALTH AND SAFETY TARGETS AND HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT – APRIL, 2009 TO MARCH, 2010

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which presented the Health and Safety annual report for April 2009 – March 2010. The purpose of the report was to summarise health and safety activities in Aberdeen City Council for the period April 2009 – March 2010. The commitment to produce an annual health and safety report is part of the Council's health and safety policy and is also reflective of best practice. As one of RoSPA's Scottish high achiever organisations, Aberdeen City Council are also committed to going public on their health and safety performance.

The report provided information broken down into various categories including:-

- Reportable accidents/injuries
- Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)
- Noise Awareness
- Dangerous occurrence/Dangerous gas fittings
- Revitalising health and safety initiative: targets for 2010
- Health and Safety Executive Involvement
- Health and safety matrix
- Occupational health
- Employee Assistance Programme

- Employee Good Health Group (EGhG)
- Health and Safety Training
- Managing attendance
- Key projects for 2010/11

In June 2000 the Health and Safety Executive launched its Revitalising Health and Safety strategy statement which set three national targets for improving health and safety performance by 2010. The Annual Report set out Aberdeen City Council's current progress towards these targets. Mary Agnew advised that there was a requirement to set new Revitalising Health and Safety Targets for the next 5-10 years.

The Committee discussed this in detail. Mary proposed setting the targets for the next 5 years in line with the 5 year business plan at a higher level than previous while keeping these targets under review on an annual basis. They should be achievable but need to be realistic.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the report;
- (ii) to approve the publication of the report on the Council website; and
- (iii) to agree Health and Safety initiative Targets for the next five years as:
 - Target 1 – 20% reduction in the incidence rate of all reportable employee accidents;
 - Target 2 – 40% reduction of days lost from work related injury and ill health;
 - Target 3 – 20% reduction of the reported cases of work related ill health

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT SERVICE REPORT

11. The Committee had before it a report on behalf of Education Culture and Sport covering health and safety from 1 October 2009 to 30 September 2010.

The report provided information on the number and type of accidents and incidents, and the number of employees who had attended Health and Safety training courses.

Questions were raised as to the unavailability of an annual comparison with last years figures and the committee were advised that the statistics for Education, Culture and Sport were collated as a Directorate only from April 2009. Prior to this point the data was collated on a Neighbourhood basis and, thus, a 'like for like' comparison would be difficult.

Concern was raised regarding the occurrences of assaults and threatening verbal behaviour and the committee were advised that there was now a more robust type of reporting in place and stronger reporting mechanisms may be a main contributor to higher figures.

The Committee were advised that there was potentially issues not being reported in the correct way and that this would require to be looked at.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that concerns over the potential non-reporting of incidents be discussed at the next Education, Culture and Sport Union Management Committee and that the findings be reported to the next meeting of this Committee; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

OFFICE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE SERVICE REPORT

12. The Committee had before it a report on behalf of the Office of Chief Executive summarising the health and safety activities undertaken within.

The report provided information on the number and type of accidents and incidents, and the number of employees who had attended Health and Safety training courses.

The committee were advised that all OCE staff were now located in the Town House and they are currently updating policies and performance overviews appropriately.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information given.

COMMITTEE DATES 2011 AND SERVICE REPORTING TIMETABLE

13. The Committee had before it proposed meeting dates and the Service reporting timetable for the Committee for 2011.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree the meeting dates as follows:-
 - Friday, 25th February,
 - Friday, 27th May,
 - Friday, 26th August, and
 - Friday, 2nd December;
 - (ii) to agree the Service reporting timetable.
- **GORDON LESLIE, Chairperson.**