

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
DATE: THURSDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2012
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING
SUBJECT: HEALTH & SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a summary report on accidents and incidents in schools during the academic year September 2011 to August 2012 and a summary of high level actions taken by the Council to support schools in achieving healthy and safe learning environments.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Local Management of Schools requires that school employees, Governing Bodies and the Local Authority work together to ensure Health, Safety and Welfare objectives are achieved.

2.02 The school is responsible for all areas it has control of; all school governing bodies have responsibility for health and safety as occupier and body in control of the premises.

2.03 The data presented in this report is based on accident reports from schools provided to the Corporate Health and Safety Unit.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Accidents and Incidents

3.01.1 The total number of accident / incident report forms received for the academic year 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012 = 3093. This compares with 2912 reports received over the same period in 2010/11 (an increase of 185 reports). Statistics show a year on year increase in the number of reports received since 2008/09. This increase may be consistent with a greater awareness of reporting requirements and increase in the reporting of minor injury incidents, particularly by primary and special schools.

3.01.2 **Accidents to Pupils**

Pupil figures in total show an increase on last year and year on year. For the period 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012 a total of 2801 accidents related to pupils. This figure compares with 2619 recorded for the previous year. Primary school figures have increased from 1711 recorded in 2010/11 to 2139 recorded for 2011/12. Special school pupil figures have increased from 128 to 152. Secondary school pupil figures show a reduction on last year from 780 to 510 (a reduction of 294 reports).

3.01.3 **Accidents to Employees**

Employee figures remain virtually unchanged on last year with 293 reports recorded for 2010/11 compared to 292 recorded for 2011/12. The highest recorded figure for employees relates to special schools with figures increasing from 97 recorded for 2010/11 to 155 for 2011/12 (an increase of 58 reports). Figures relating to employee injuries in primary schools show a reduction from 123 to 88. Secondary schools employee figures have also reduced from 73 to 49.

3.02 **Actions Taken**

3.02.1 **Contractors**

The Lifelong Learning Health and Safety Directorate document 'Management and Control of Construction and Contractor Works on Schools and other Lifelong Learning Premises' has been reviewed and amended to take account of CRB and safeguarding of children guidance and procedures (re-issued September 2012). An additional risk assessment checklist for premises manager use is also provided.

3.02.2 **Fire risk assessments** have been completed on each school site resulting in property improvements and enhanced fire prevention and management arrangements where identified as necessary.

3.02.3 **Asbestos in Schools:** All schools have been surveyed with re-inspection taking place on a programme of at least every 2 years. There is a continual programme of removal works in accordance with priority risk assessments and/or any planned refurbishments, repairs or maintenance at school premises. Each school is given advice and guidance in respect of asbestos management on site. Each school is provided with their survey manual via a visit to explain content and any school requirements. A model risk assessment on control of asbestos is provided to schools; there are clear protocols for managing contractor works on school sites.

3.02.4 **Governor training:** Annual health and safety training took place in October. School Governor training reinforces health and safety management in schools. There appears to be an increase in the formalisation and undertaking of safety inspections in schools generally in the last 12 months.

- 3.02.5 **Caretaker training** has been provided on Fire Safety and Control of Legionella.
- 3.02.6 **Physical Violence** In response to an increase in physical violence and aggression injuries the Inclusion Service has facilitated further training for the schools in question. Local Authority guidance on physical restraint has been updated and shared with schools in June 2011.
- 3.02.7 **Toilets** Surveys have been carried out in schools, the main issues pointed to internal management and budget responsibilities. Hygiene in schools is currently being audited by Healthy Schools officers.
- 3.02.8 **Kitchens** Operational Handbooks containing revised risk assessments and safe working procedures have now been issued to all kitchen facilities. Gas Safety: a programme of annual inspection, testing and servicing of kitchen equipment and installations is now in place in accordance with legislative requirements. Two sites remain to be inspected by the end of November. The next annual programme commences in January 2013. Ventilation surveys have been completed detailing site by site requirements and risk ratings. A programme of upgrades is underway, with 18 kitchens highlighted as priority for 2012/2013. It is anticipated that full completion of upgrading will take 2 to 3 years to complete. Sites not prioritised for immediate upgrade will continue to be monitored and managed regarding the effectiveness of site specific risk assessments and adopted safe systems of work.
- 3.02.9 **Cash handling** risk assessment in respect of school kitchen employees has been reviewed and new arrangements are implemented in part to provide greater security.

3.03 Arrangements for oversight

- 3.03.1 Schools are expected to retain their own copies of accident forms to enable more frequent and individual school specific analysis of accidents on their premises. Schools are expected to provide reports to school governors and to ensure that accident prevention measures are implemented as appropriate.
- 3.03.2 The overview of Health and Safety management is within the remit of the Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group which monitors all Council services on an annual review cycle.
- 3.03.3 The Directorate Health and Safety Steering Group promotes best practice and monitors compliance and progress against the Corporate Health and Safety Management Standards.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the report and the initiatives taken to improve health and safety in schools.

4.02 Lifelong Learning Overview is requested to recognise the monitoring and evaluation of practice role of the Corporate Health and Safety Group.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None arising from this report

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None arising from this report

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None arising from this report

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None arising from this report

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None arising from this report

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

9.01 None arising from this report

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

None

12.00 APPENDICES

None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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