



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD 2nd February 2016

<h3>Health and Safety</h3>

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This paper is intended to inform the Commissioner of the annual Health and Safety report which provides information about strategic health and safety issues and performance over the 2014 / 2015 period.

This report stipulates a number of aspects relating to health and safety within the force and includes data from the current financial year and the previous financial year to provide a comparison and perspective.

This was presented to the Command team in October 2015 and it was endorsed by the Chief Constable.

INTRODUCTION

West Midlands Police fully accepts its responsibility in relation to the management of health and safety in relation to police officers, police staff, volunteers, third parties and the communities it serves.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner on the activity taken within the field of health and safety in the last financial year.

To ensure a proactive, good governance approach to health and safety management within the force, the health and safety committee structure is used to ensure the Force Health and Safety Policy is being implemented effectively.

The force committee is chaired by the ACC designated as functional lead for health and safety and has representation from key stakeholders within the force. The local committees are chaired by a member of the SLT and have representatives from across their LPU / Department.

This infrastructure ensures that health and safety management is given equal importance in comparison with all other aspects of force business.

HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERSHIP

The Chief Constable has overall responsibility for health and safety. However, he has designated functional responsibility to the ACC (Security), supported by the Head of Human Resources.

As part of the strategy to ensure that senior leaders throughout the organisation are engaged in and contribute to the health and safety culture, a briefing was held focussing on the following subjects:

- Legislation – Dispelling the myths and Fee for Intervention
- Senior management responsibilities
- Safety management systems – What good looks like
- Risk management – Making risk assessment work as an enabler.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The current Health and Safety Policy became effective in May 2014 following a review to incorporate changes in legislation and organisational structure. The policy will remain under annual review to ensure that it reflects the continuing transformation brought about by the WMP2020 change programme.

INTERNAL AUDIT

In June 2014, the Health and Safety function were subject to a second follow up of a internal audit report which identified:

“The aim of this review was to confirm that recommendations which were outstanding at the time of our follow up review in January 2014 have now been implemented as agreed. It has been concluded that all 3 of the outstanding recommendations are now closed and the overall opinion is that the area of Health and Safety is controlled”.

HEALTH AND SAFETY SUPPORT

The force employs a team of health and safety practitioners, consisting of one Health and Safety Manager and three Health and Safety Advisors supported by two Health and Safety Coordinators.

The team are responsible for developing health and safety policies, procedures and guidance. Other key tasks include conducting audits, inspections, accident / incident investigations, completing strategic risk assessments and fire risk assessments, all in support of a robust safety culture.

This year the department has teamed up with Federation Safety Representatives to provide ‘real time’ support at some of the large policing operations. As a result of this, it has been possible to further develop the risk assessment process in relation to operations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTATION

Force Health and Safety Committee

The Force Health and Safety Committee is chaired by ACC (Security) and meets on a quarterly basis. The committee takes a strategic overview of health and safety management to drive improvement in performance and culture.

Some of the subjects that have been discussed at the Force Health and Safety Committee over the last year include:

- Internal audit progression and closure of actions
- Risk in relation to the spread of infection from spitting
- Clinical governance of first aid provision and training
- Inspections and action taken by enforcing authorities
- Major and notable incidents

Incident data is a standing agenda item at each committee meeting, where findings are presented from the analysis conducted into incidents that have been recorded generally or analysis of specific incidents, such as a major policing event.

Local Health and Safety Committees

Each LPU / Department has a bimonthly health and safety meeting chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The meeting follows a standard agenda to promote consistency throughout the force and to ensure all salient points are discussed. In order to support the LPU / Department an information pack is provided by the health and safety helpdesk with the relevant information for the meeting, e.g. accident / assault information, walkthrough inspection returns etc.

All actions relating to health and safety are recorded on an action plan that is updated by the health and safety helpdesk.

Consultation Meetings

The Consultation Meetings are chaired by the Head of Human Resources and meet on a monthly basis. The purpose of the meeting is the early identification of emerging issues to allow for swift resolution.

The meeting is attended by the Health and Safety Team and the lead Representatives from the Police Federation, Superintendents Association and Trade Unions.

This meeting has proved very effective and has greatly contributed to the collaborative approach to health and safety between the force, the Police Federation, Superintendents Association and Trade Unions.

Some of the subjects that have been discussed at the Force Health and Safety Committee over the last year include:

- Provision of glasses for DSE users and operational officers / staff
- Patrol strategy risk assessment
- Driver fatigue
- Community engagement activities
- Circumstances relating to specific incidents.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In order to monitor the progress of developments relating to health and safety, the force has produced a development plan that includes a range of actions that are listed under four headings:

- Policy and Initiatives
- Compliance and Audit
- Skills and Knowledge
- Data and Information.

The progress of the plan is monitored at the Force Health and Safety meeting, where persons responsible for actions provide updates. Some slippage has occurred with actions due to limited resources and the impact of unforeseen circumstances, however 17 actions have been closed this year.

The Police Federation, Superintendents Association and Trade Unions were all encouraged to provide an input to the plan through the committee to ensure we had a joint approach in relation to the content and priorities.

The Development Plan is currently on target and a copy is attached in Appendix A.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDITS

The team have committed to deliver a themed audit every quarter, and have detailed these within the Development Plan. Following the audits, actions are managed through the action plan process for the relevant LPU / Department.

Themed audits conducted in the last financial year included:

- First aid provision and training
- Work equipment management
- Asbestos management
- Fire safety arrangements

The force has also been the subject of an audit by the Radiation Protection Advisor appointed to support the Police Service nationally, on the arrangements we have in place to manage equipment containing a radiation source.

INCIDENT DATA

All accident, assault and near miss records are held within the iCASS system and there is a process in place to ensure that accidents are proportionately investigated with the aim of preventing a recurrence by taking timely remedial action.

Accidents

In the last financial year the force has had an accident rate of 0.08 per FTE establishment, which is consistent with the last two financial years, and 0.01 per FTE resulted in lost working time. The actual number of accidents has been reduced by 2% year on year.

Similar to a number of other services / industries, the most frequent accident type is slips, trips and falls, accounting for 20% of all accidents, however over 58% of them occur off our premises usually in an operational situation.

Assaults

In the last financial year the force assault rate was 0.05 per FTE, which is an increase on the previous year's figure of 0.04 per FTE, and 0.005 FTE resulting in lost working time.

Despite the increase in assaults per FTE being low, when taken as a percentage it is a 21% increase year on year and 52% of all recorded assaults occurred during the restraint or arrest of an individual. In order to put some context to the figures, 0.7% of arrests made resulted in a police officer or staff member recording an assault. However, despite the increase in recorded assaults, there was no decrease in officers working time which suggests the severity of assaults was low.

Whilst it is recognised that the role of a police officer will require them to place themselves in harm's way upon occasion, it is not acceptable that they should be assaulted or indeed accept being assaulted as part of the role.

The force ensures that all operational officers and staff are trained in personal safety techniques and provides them with protective equipment to support them whilst they serve and protect our communities. As a response to the findings of our analysis, we are currently working with the Staff Associations, Trade Unions and Learning and Development to review the impact and content of our personal safety training.

Alongside the PST review, we have formed a joint working group to focus specifically on the assault data in order to identify any further action that can be taken to prevent assaults. The group are also reviewing the welfare arrangements implemented following an assault and the investigation arrangements. The group includes representation from the Staff Associations, Trade Unions and key stakeholders within the force.

Near Miss

In 2014 / 2015, the force recorded 0.06 near misses per FTE, which are hazards and incidents that did not result in an injury. Analysis of the reports, which are mostly regarding premises, processes or equipment related issues, ensures early identification so that swift remedial action can be instigated to prevent further occurrence.

HSE Reportable Incidents

Certain incidents have to be reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). As a force, the majority of reports we make are for incidents that result in the injured person being restricted / absent for more than seven days rather than the specified injury category.

In the last financial year, the force made 0.01 reports per FTE to the HSE, which is consistent with the previous year. When the reasons for the reports were analysed, there were no trends identified in relation to cause.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None