

Safety, Health & Environment

Annual Report 2016/17



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1. Introduction

“Gloucestershire County Council’s arrangements for managing health and safety have continued to evolve to reflect the changing nature of risk. The SHE Panel has an important role to play in overseeing those risks, how we manage them and in sharing the learning across the organisation. During the last 12 months, the Panel has covered a wider portfolio, including waste.

This annual report gives a comprehensive account of key activities in 2016/17. Our thanks go to the members of the SHE Panel for their interest and on-going support to keeping health and safety in the spotlight. Our particular thanks go to the former members of the Panel for their service.”

Cllr Ray Theodoulou Member SHE Champion and Jane Burns, Director SHE Champion.

2. Safety Management in GCC

The Safety, Health & Environment (SHE) Annual Report 2016/17 summarises the Council’s management of the health and safety of its employees (and others affected by its activities).

Our safety management arrangements include:

- maintaining a corporate risk register which includes a high level h&s entry;
- taking a risk based approach – using risk assessment with controls applied in a proportionate manner;
- working with Commissioning leads to ensure appropriate h&s consideration in the commissioning cycle;
- promoting ownership by line managers;
- giving access to a wide range of practical advice and guidance;
- coaching to support ownership and delivery;
- having a SHE Member Champion (Cllr Ray Theodoulou) and Director SHE Champion (Jane Burns, Director: Strategy & Challenge);
- monitoring safety performance including in schools where GCC is the employer;
- continuing to provide a service centred upon the provision of competent advice for any school buying the SHE service;
- auditing health and safety management systems at local and operational levels to help maintain standards or drive continuous improvement.

3. Trades Union Involvement

Our SHE Panel is the main consultation body for employee health and safety. The Panel comprises:

- TU Safety Representatives;
- Elected Members; and

- Directors/ officers.

The Panel meets three times per annum with the chair passing annually between a Member and TU Safety Representative (GMB, Unite, UNISON and ATL). This year's meetings were chaired initially by Cllr Colin Hay and latterly by Peter Clark, a UNISON Safety Representative. At present, only GMB and UNISON participate matching experiences in many other local authorities but plans are in hand to find a remedy and to engage more widely with employees in 2017/18.

Agendas consist of core items such as safety performance and current subjects of interest such as Health & Safety Executive research papers or matters of specific local interest, some of which are referenced elsewhere in this report.

During the year a SWOT analysis was done. Key points included:

- Strengths – SHE team; TU's appreciate being able to speak to Members direct; Examples of having an impact e.g how special schools record their data.
- Weaknesses - data could be improved, e.g normalised data as standard, establish long term trends etc; attendance at the Panel can fluctuate; TUs feel that their opinions are not always respected if they don't agree with the GCC 'line'.
- Opportunities - do more to share good practice, including visits etc; reporting on risks and flagging up big issues.
- Threats - the unknown unknowns; further academisation of schools will remove our ability to understand the risks for Gloucestershire's children.

Specific areas of risk contribute to the meetings; these are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • SHE (for corporate h&s) | • Property Services |
| • Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service | • Waste |
| • Highways | • Human Resources |

4. Safety Management - Proactive Approach

4.1 Information for Managers/ Employees

The main thrust of h&s is to identify risks and have sensible and proportionate measures in place to enable employees to work safely.

A wide range of guidance – around 70 subjects (including aspects of risk assessment) – is published on Staffnet and Schoolsnet; it had been expected that the new StaffNet website would enable direct access by employees but as a login is still needed this deters users from searching; the solution being implemented is to duplicate SHE material on Staffnet and Schoolsnet. Guidance that SHE provides aims to help managers prevent accidents and find solutions to workplace issues; it is based on Health & Safety Executive material or other good practice.

4.2 Compliance

A programme of audits operates annually. These critically examine a location's safety management system to highlight deficiencies and recognise good practice but, essentially, seek to support line managers and assist them manage risks.

Similarly, fire risk assessments explore a premises' fire risks and the active and passive means of preventing fires or limiting the impact. Evacuation plans and routine testing/ servicing of alarms, emergency lights and fire fighting equipment are checked and any actions to rectify non-compliances are recorded. As with audits, local managers/ Governing Bodies are expected to address any items raised.

5. Reactive Monitoring

Despite having measures in place, accidents still will occur and this data can be used to determine priorities for intervention. This year, our accident reporting database – SHE Assure – has been updated and a portal provided to enable any employee to report an accident. This has resulted in more events being notified and availability of a much better standard of data.

5.1 Safety Performance

Note – this report contains the headlines within the sphere of safety performance. Trends and detailed comparisons with previous years have little validity in many groups (e.g. schools) as not all locations report accidents on the SHE Assure database and, of course, academies have no duty to report to GCC. The key point is that schools locally do record their accidents and investigations and this is checked when h&s audits take place. Again this year, the bulk comprises low risk mishaps that would be expected – playground falls, collisions etc with little or no consequence. The data that we do have to hand is sufficient to indicate the main causes, and what impacts upon workplace safety, and these do not vary year by year. The main variation will be specific accidents where an unsafe act or condition has contributed to a serious injury but these seldom occur.

5.2 Support Services/ Core Cluster

Workplace risks are generally low within the core cluster functions and so the accidents reported are few. This year 8 employee and 1 visitor accidents were reported. The main causes for employee events were abuse from service users and slips/trips/falls plus a road accident injury and one minor burn from an exposed fridge light bulb.

5.3 Adults

Reporting within Adults continues to be diligent no doubt as a reflection of the vulnerable service users (e.g. frailty) and greater risk profile (e.g. moving and handling people; workplace violence); as reporting to CQC takes place, this also influences attention to detail.

A total 245 reports were recorded this year, 43 for employees and 201 for service users.

Most commonly recorded causes for employees were 18 various forms of abuse/assault, 7 slips/trips/falls plus 6 involving moving and handling.

For service users, 123 falls were listed but most of these were classed as 'minor'; typically, they may involve slipping off a chair or bed; a further 13 were attributed to 'health condition/frailty'. '16 assaults' by service users on others were noted. 3 scalds also occurred from hot drinks. Data also revealed 29 medication errors but the SHE team had a close look at this early in the year and these reports refer to self-medication errors by SU rather than staff administering incorrect doses/ medicines.

The SHE team also worked with the manager of Wheatridge Court so that effective use could be made locally of their accident data; this was very encouraging as, too often, especially in schools, the impression gained is that this is just an administrative task rather than a means to prevent recurrence. It should also be noted that the behaviour/ circumstances of a single SU can dramatically affect the number of events recorded in a care home.

5.4 Children & Families

In 2015/16 much work was done with Children's and Families to ensure good safety practices were in place. In the course of that year (15/16) we saw 37 employee accidents recorded whereas, this year (16/17), there were 16, all to employees. Ideally this would be an outcome from better control of risk but it is more likely to be attention waning. No SU accidents were recorded (1 in 2015/16). The SHE team is working on renewed engagement with Children & Families.



Causes were predictable – 5 associated with anti-social behaviour/violence, 4 slips/trips/falls and 1 moving and handling; of particular note were 2 reports of employees with minor injuries in a high potential incident when a section of ceiling fell without warning. Property Services do have a regime to check lath and plaster ceilings but this one clearly deteriorated between inspections.

5.5 Local Authority Schools

Primary Schools

Schools (as with any workplace) have a statutory duty to report accidents and use of a database (SHE Assure) is offered through an annual Service Level Agreement; it is expected that minor mishaps will be recorded locally (and checked at audit) and the database used for those of a more serious nature or those requiring more-than-basic first aid or hospital treatment. 80 primary schools choose to use the database.

375 entries were made, 61 to employees and 314 to pupils. The main causes were:

- Employees -
 - 23 slips/trips/falls generally minor in nature though we noted one involving a teacher falling when getting off a table; this was well investigated and remedial action taken. Others too were preventable, for example, where food had been spilt and not cleaned-up or wet floors caught out the unwary;
 - 8 events centred on biting/ aggression, all by pupils;
 - 6 reports concerned being 'hit by objects' – one was a light cover falling and 2 occurred when pupils were moving netball posts;
 - 3 sharps accidents were recorded including a high potential one to a caretaker who incurred a needlestick wound while clearing litter outside the school boundary. This was preventable and SHE advice was sought on investigation and prevention of similar accidents;

- Pupils
 - the bulk (146) of reports involved minor mishaps by pupils doing the things that children do – running around the playground, playing on outdoor play equipment and so on. Where appropriate, there was evidence of investigation, for example, use of CCTV;
 - associated with the above were 53 reports of pupils running into people and objects. It is expected that, whilst minor, schools do review their local records in case any trend emerges e.g. accident prone people, deteriorating playground surfaces, untreated icy paths etc.
 - 26 incidents happened during PE/sport. If the cause was a deficiency in an aspect of the curriculum e.g. inadequate supervision, they should be reviewed more carefully;
 - 7 events involved 'horseplay/ fighting' and 2 were pupil-on-pupil assaults;
 - 6 were attributed to a pupil's medical condition;
 - 4 'sharps' injuries were recorded caused by nails, a stapler and damaged wire on a fence;
 - inevitably we noted instances of items being swallowed and objects (e.g. Lego) being lodged in an ear (3 in 2016/17).

Secondary Schools

18 events (1 'employee', 1 'member of the public' and 16 'pupil') were recorded by the one LA secondary school.

The main causes were:

- Employees
 - 1 hit by a door in a science laboratory;

- Pupils
 - 7 slips/trips/falls all 'minor';
 - 4 in PE/sports. As contact sports are more common in secondary schools it is to be expected that reports will be made but the volume is low and is a reflection of good teaching standards;

- 3, however, occurred in science, a higher risk part of the curriculum. In one event a pupil removed her safety glasses and got acid in eye; two involved boiling water splashing on pupils when tripods being used in experiments were knocked over. The frequency of curriculum related accidents is low considering the number of teaching hours annually;
- 1 case of violence by a pupil on another was recorded.

Special Schools

Much work was undertaken in 2015/16 to establish a protocol with Special Schools so that incidents involving pupil behaviour (a key workplace risk in these locations) were solely recorded locally whereas those where an injury is incurred should still be recorded on the SHE Assure database. During this work it was quite clear that robust arrangements were in place to use this information to develop pupil behaviour plans and so duplication on SHE Assure was confirmed as being unnecessary. Six Special Schools in 2016/17 reported 24 employee and 15 pupil accidents; hitherto, 300+ events would have been recorded annually.

The main causes were:

- Employees
 - 17 assaults – all by pupils on staff were entered on the database though it was unclear why a few continue to be entered;
 - 2 slips/trips/falls – one on a flight of steps and one when a pupil pulled a chair away as a teacher was sitting down;
 - 1 resulted from a burn from hot grill pan.
- Pupils
 - 1 assault by a pupil on another;
 - 4 slips/trips/falls in the playground, playing games or using play equipment
 - 4 others concerned instances of pupils running into doors and being hit by objects such as balls.

5.6 Libraries

Accidents in libraries again have been summarised separately as the Libraries and Information team strives to manage risks well and maintains close liaison with the SHE team. An example of the proactive joint work was the Open Plus scheme at Bishops Cleeve library where accredited users can gain access outside core hours. Inevitably libraries attract a variety of members of the public some of whom present challenging behaviour and this is reflected in this year's data.

55 events were recorded, 45 to 'employees/volunteers' and 10 to members of the public.

Causes included:

- Employees
 - 30 involving various degrees of abuse and unpleasant consequences such as discovering the smoking of illegal substances;
 - 2 falls attributed to damaged chairs and weak shelving;

- 1 exposure to blood whilst helping a library user;
- 1 instance of physical frailty of a volunteer doing gardening;
- 1 sharps injury sustained while investigating an item of lost property.
- Public
 - All reports involved either coming to the library with an ill-health condition, falling of chairs or an assault by one member of the public on another. There was also a hand cut caused by a sharp edge on a door fixing.

5.7 Academy Schools

Non LA Primary Schools

53 primary academies reported a total of 172 – 34 to employees and 138 to pupils (136), visitors (1) and contractors (1)

The most frequently recorded causes were:

- Employees
 - 13 slips/trips/falls including falling over pupils, on uneven ground, and slipping on spilt food;
 - 5 instances of being run into by children or hitting objects e.g. shelves;
 - 2 cases of biting/aggression by pupils;
 - 2 scalds by hot water;
 - 2 sharps injuries on broken glass.
- Pupils
 - 81 slips/trips/falls mainly in the playground or while using playground equipment;
 - 13 during sport/PE;
 - 2 cases of swallowed object or foreign bodies in ears;
 - 2 sharps – one cutting fruit and one case of a broken strand of fence wire cutting eyelid that could have turned out quite differently.
- Others:
 - 3 slips/trips/falls on frosty paths, falling over equipment left stacked in a corridor and a stumble on a kerb.

Non Local Authority Secondary Schools

24 chose to use SHE Assure and they reported a total of 785 incidents of which 92 were to employees and 693 to pupils.

The main causes were:

- Employees
 - 23 slips/trips/falls attributed to ground conditions, misjudged steps, water on floor;
 - 12 manual handling accidents while setting up tables, collecting recycling bags or moving goalposts;

- 7 assaults by pupils;
- 4 during PE/sport activities.

It is noteworthy that considering the wide range of tasks involving a reasonable degree of risk, Site Managers featured in only three reports two of which were manual handling and one when a foot was trapped by a gate. Generally, at audit it is found that site maintenance teams have measures in place to manage their risks and these statistics would reinforce that view.

- Pupils:
 - 165 PE/ sport accidents;
 - 62 collisions with people/ objects mainly in break periods;
 - 50 involving aggression between pupils;
 - 35 in lessons such as D&T and science involving contact with items such as soldering irons or hot pans;
 - 4 reports of substance abuse which occurred outside school hours but the impact had to be managed by school staff;
 - 2 road accidents on the way to school but nevertheless reported by the schools as they again had to manage the consequences.

Non Local Authority Special Schools

None of these schools buy the SHE service and so no data is available.

5.8 Near misses

27 reports (from all areas/ functions) were classed as a 'near miss'. Mostly these were minor events but one involved a science demonstration on an open evening when a glass beaker shattered. The school science service (CLEAPSS) is quite clear about the risks associated with these situations and they advise that there is little value in showing eye-catching experiments that will not feature in the curriculum certainly for newly joined Y7 pupils. Another report detailed a member of the public attempting to tailgate a member of staff entering Shire Hall. Several involved the frailty of vulnerable service users and inevitably there was a cryptic example, this one concerning the case of the fire brigade being call to remove a traffic cone from a child's head.

6. Findings at Audit

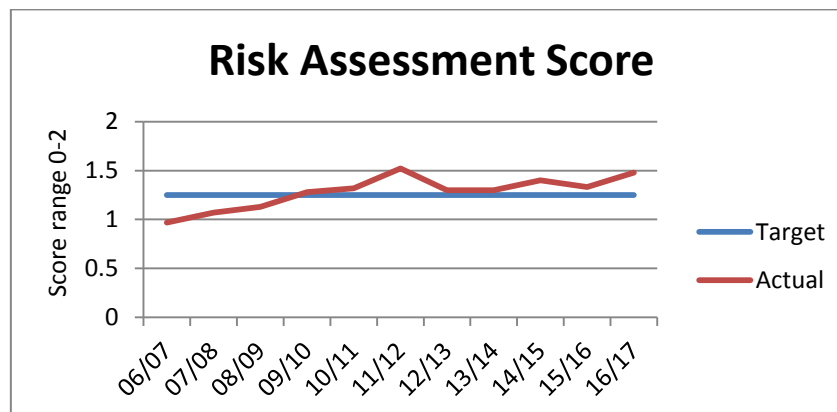
Broadly, schools' compliance has improved greatly in the last decade and this is attributed to the provision of easy-to-use tools for those leading h&s in schools/ teams, training courses run by SHE and Property Services plus the ease of obtaining advice.

Recurring areas for strengthening that are noted include:

- transfer of responsibility when a key member of staff leaves ;
- occasional shortcomings in risk assessment;
- h&s policy documents that are generic and do not reflect specific arrangements in that school.

Strengths noted include:

- strong communication of safety material/ messages;
- maintenance and servicing arrangements;
- control of transport (on and off-site).



7. Findings in Fire Risk Assessments

Generally, compliance with fire safety standards is good but this did not prevent a fire in a non-LA primary school where an electrical component inside a cabinet failed; the disruption to education and the impact on the community in this instance was limited but it did underline the importance of robust active and passive fire protection.

It is encouraging to see new schools being provided with appropriate technology (e.g. water mist systems and self-testing alarms) but human factors (good housekeeping, not obstructing exits etc) also need to be positive influences on fire safety.

A recurring finding this year in both audit and fire risk assessment has been cessation of activity such as testing alarms and other mandatory functions when a key member of staff leaves; these duties must be disaggregated to other employees until the post is filled. This has been communicated to schools via Heads Up.

8. RIDDOR (HSE reportable events)

RIDDOR reports, where GCC was the employer, amounted to 6 events either as a consequence of the severity of the injury or due to the number of working days lost. The causes were:

- a teacher falling off a table;
- a social worker who incurred broken bones in her hand when a service user being moved gripped her hand too tightly;
- a fall on boxes stored inappropriately;
- a slip on a wet floor left without any warning sign;
- a slip on decking in a school playground;
- a pupil who injured his wrist jumping over a fence.

9. Sickness Absence

The statistics for 2016/17 are configured into the 'clusters' within the Council's organisation rather than for the former directorates. However, the totals for 'absence reasons' for the previous two years are shown as a comparison below. The sickness absence instances by 'reason' and by service area for 2016/17 are:

Absence Reason	Previous years		2016/17				
	Total 14/15	Total 15/16	Adults	Children's	Communities	Core	Total 16/17
Back and neck Problems	224	262	113	45	46	19	223
Burns poisoning	4	5	4	0	0		4
Chest and respiratory	150	188	51	56	34	10	151
Dental and oral	70	76	25	17	4	10	56
Endocrine glandular	22	21	19	7	5		31
Eye, ear, nose or throat	215	234	80	70	32	47	229
Genito-urinary	86	103	43	25	14	10	92
Headache and migraine	492	462	159	98	88	79	424
Heart blood circulation	52	74	58	21	17	5	101
Infections cold 'flu	1523	1474	565	401	315	287	1568
Infectious diseases	85	79	40	34	5	9	88
Muscloskeletal	270	310	114	49	33	48	244
Nervous system disorder	51	56	49	35	3	8	95
Operations	248	233	85	57	32	24	198
Pregnancy related	57	55	20	17	9	5	51
Skin disorders	36	52	33	5	4	1	43
Stomach, liver kidney	964	768	370	199	143	123	835
Stress, depression	443	427	183	138	68	70	459
Substance abuse	1	7	3	6	0	1	10
Swine 'flu	0	3		3	0		3
Tumours and cancers	46	40	11	15	5	21	52
Unknown	5	3	2	0	1	1	4
Total	5044	4932	2027	1298	858	778	4961
Normalised per 1000 FTE	1.56	1.58	1.88	1.29	1.55	1.56	1.58

NB - FTE figures are based on the standard headcount report for 1st April 2017 (headcount of 3145). In line with standard reporting, these figures (and the sickness absence figures) exclude all staff on zero hour, casual, temporary, non-standard or off-scale contracts, as well as all Elected Members and Temporary Staff Register staff. This enables consistency to be achieved with all previous reports. The figure for the Communities Cluster does not include Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service, again to ensure consistency.

The three year position is:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Days lost to long term absence per FTE	3.9	3.9	4.01
Days lost to sickness per FTE	8.07	7.8	7.85
Days lost to stress per FTE	1.89	2.03	2.11

The SHE Panel was informed of the Absence Benchmark published in November 2016 (CIPD Absence Management Survey). The headlines were that Public Sector (overall) absence levels decreased from 8.7 days per employee to 8.5, a decrease of around 2.2%. Local Government absence was 9.9 days per FTE, up from 8.0 days per FTE the previous year.

GCC sickness absence levels for the 2016/17 year increased slightly from 7.8 days per FTE in 2015/16 to 7.85 days per FTE in 2016/17. HR's observations are that:

- this increase is attributable to an increase in long term absence, as short term absence levels overall have remained the same;
- HR has continued to work with managers to ensure the accuracy of recording absence, which will in part continue to explain no recorded decrease in long term sickness;
- 'hot spots' continue to be in front line services, including Reablement and Social Care;
- there was a slight rise in the number of days lost to stress in 2016/17, recorded mostly in the Adults and Children's clusters.

One means of support relevant to sickness absence is the process contained in SHE/GN/44 *Stress Risk Assessment Toolkit*. A good number of coaching sessions (including 1:1 stress management cases) have been provided for line managers seeking to apply this technique and assist employees to return to work.

10. Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

During the year there has been a noticeable increase in requests to advise teams on aspects of the use of display screen equipment (PCs). This is a low risk activity but as there are so many habitual users in GCC it is inevitable that various musculoskeletal disorders occur, some of which result in referrals to Occupational Health.

Plenty of informative advice is available on the SHE webpage and many site visits have been made during the year not always resulting in adoption of remedial action to mitigate these risks. The tolerance of discomfort by some employees is remarkable too. Often the solution is a better adjusted chair and work area but too many dilapidated chairs have been identified. These items are 'work equipment' and should be fit for purpose.

11. Off-site Visits

The volume of educational/ off-site visits remains buoyant; in 2016/17 727 notifications for review were made to the SHE team, an increase of 6 on the previous year. Around 40% are to venues operated by activity providers (such as PGL and JCA) who hold a licence issued by the Adventurous Activities Licensing Scheme. Overseas destinations (Russia, Malawi, Vietnam, and Japan plus European states) featured again this year; Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions are plentiful though a trend to using firms specialising in this subject rather than school-led expeditions has

been noted. Advice, based on publicly available information from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office, was also provided to schools.

In September, a complete new suite of easy-to-use risk assessments was sent to every Off-site Visits Co-ordinator. This latest version combined separate risk assessments (e.g. 'activity provider', 'travel' and residual items remaining in the school's control) into single versions. Completion of this planning task by trip leaders should be even more straightforward now though the emphasis remains on safe delivery of visits.



12. Training

Corporate provision of training has been reduced as take up was falling. Now, courses will be run when there are sufficient applicants or, if not, an external provider will be used. First aid certificates are now renewed using two fully populated courses per annum rather than spreading delegates thinly across several courses.

The SHE team ran a fully subscribed (24) course for Off-site Visits Co-ordinators in the spring and a Managing Health and Safety in Schools course attended by 55 headteachers, business managers and site managers. Feedback remains very positive.

Other opportunities are taken to evangelise the safety message; new headteachers' induction and local school clusters plus a few Shire Hall team meetings being recent examples.

13. Property



Refurbishment of Shire Hall is evident to anyone in the vicinity of the campus and has been delivered safely to-date. Selection and oversight of contractors is managed by Property Services; creation of secure compounds, to contain worksites, separates the

work from GCC workplaces and where minor issues have been brought to attention (e.g. dust), remedial action has been implemented rapidly.

Further success has been achieved with the introduction of the Shire Hall zonal fire evacuation scheme which seeks to confine disruption to single blocks. Reconfiguration of the fire alarm system as well as work such as enclosing staircases has made this possible. The e-learning package on fire safety has had a high take-up.

Other property subjects brought to the SHE Panel have included:

- a paper on the extent of radon, a naturally occurring gas; the prevalence depends upon local geology and there are a few hotspots in Gloucestershire. Arrangements to manage this risk include ventilation of sumps or other places where the gas might accumulate;
- a protocol for office moves to reduce the risk from hazards such as manual handling of crates and furniture.

14. Waste

Reporting safety performance within GCC's waste activities featured for the first time last year. These activities include monitoring contractors' performance at Household Recycling Centres (HRC) at Fosse Cross, Hempsted, Oak Quarry, Pyke Quarry and Wingmoor Farm (composting, anaerobic digestion and landfill). In addition, there are Waste Transfer Stations at Cirencester and Lydney plus food and garden waste recycling by in-vessel composting operated by M.F. Bennion at Rosehill Farm near Dymock.



GCC's contractors are responsible for managing risks on sites and GCC meets them to monitor safety performance. Among the measures used by contractors is a System Infringement Notice. Examples of incidents reported using this process were a) speeding vehicles; b) lack of PPE; and c) reversing into the composting zone with the rear body raised and the compost

shovel driver being unaware. Accidents to contractors' employees and to members of the public are few; typical causes included cuts while placing items in skips, hitting face on an open control panel door, and being struck by a bin thrown by a member of the public into a cordoned off area.

GCC also participates in the Gloucestershire Waste Safety and Health (GWASH) Group also attended by the HSE, District officers, waste collection contractors and Cory Environmental. Subjects covered have included updated guidance, the interface between contractors' drivers and the public on sites, and support a promotion to make the public aware of the dangers careless driving can cause when trying to pass kerbside collection vehicles.

15. Highways

In last year's report, we drew attention to one very significant event – a cable strike on 28th May 2015. A sub-contractor of Amey was burned when an 11,000 volt cable was struck during work to renew a traffic signal post in Gloucester city centre. The HSE investigated as did Amey at Group level. The line of enquiry focussed upon whether all buried cables had been identified by the drawings and CAT scan. The outcome was a prosecution and fine of £600,000 for Amey LG Ltd. The scale of the



fine takes into account the degree of harm, a company's turnover and any aggravating or mitigating features of the case.

The SHE Panel reports are based upon Amey Gloucestershire QSE (Quality, Safety, Environment) Reports which cover proactive means of monitoring safety as well as information on

accidents. Statistics typically cover:

- accident data;
- days since a RIDDOR reportable accident occurred at each depot;
- 'Visual Felt Leadership Visits' (safety tours) by senior managers to depots and work sites;
- 'close call' (near miss) events.

16. Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service

In 2016/17 a joint initiative between GF&RS and the SHE team, multiple occurrences of skin reddening during compartment fire behaviour training (CFBT) at Severn Park were investigated to determine whether these generally low impact events were preventable. In this scenario, firefighters tackle fires in a steel container and incident reports recorded by GF&RS show that the majority of reddening events happened during the CFBT Attack 2 exercise and involved the lead fire-fighter operating the hose reel; most of the reddening had occurred to the arms and wrists and at temperatures recorded at the mid height probe significantly above 150 degrees Centigrade. Examination of the training and use of thermal imaging established that the correct position of a firefighter's arms so that they remain in lower temperature zones was critical as was the size of PPE worn; GF&RS is now looking into PPE sizing and attempting to get all those burnt this year to a PPE re-sizing session. This will bring the investigation to a conclusion.

In February, the SHE Panel met at the GF&RS education facility at SkillZONE, Gloucester, where the tripartite focus was on a) GCC's approach to managing workplace fire safety; b) property aspects of fire safety including Shire Hall developments; and c) GF&RS work in the community to proactively reduce causes of fire.



After the meeting members were given a tour of the site. SkillZONE is a state-of-the-art life-size village. It is a fully interactive learning environment to teach people of all ages how to recognise dangerous situations and stay safe. There are 16 zones which cover a range of scenarios including roads, rail and water safety, an internet café, as well as home and personal safety.

GF&RS also monitors accidents and it was noted this year that those occurring in training scenarios are becoming more common as greater training provision has to be made to compensate for fewer real incidents, the reduction being caused by the success of fire prevention strategies in workplaces and the wider community. Another main cause is collisions either with other vehicles or walls and trees on narrow rural lanes. Aggressive behaviour towards fire personnel by members of the public again featured in 2016/17 often when appliances were positioned at incidents and so delayed motorists.

17. Health and Wellbeing

The Council's health and wellbeing policy was adopted in 2016/17 and a strategy document is shortly to go to CoMT. GCC continues to offer a range of means for employees' health and wellbeing to be managed well including:

- stress management – risk assessment process for individuals and team offering solutions;
- Brilliant Basics training for line managers including 'absence management' and 'managing staff under pressure';
- Employee Assistance Programme – a 24 hour confidential telephone counselling and support, access to information and advice specialists, and on-line health information;
- referrals to Occupational Health; including access to counselling and physiotherapy;
- health and wellbeing MOTs;
- Occupational health can also offer team interventions such as health and wellbeing workshops and on-site support from a counsellor after a traumatic or critical incident in the workplace;
- a range of employee clubs and societies such as yoga, mindfulness and cycling club that contribute to the health and wellbeing policy.
- Gloucestershire's One You Pledge campaign.



18. Environmental Compliance

In the context of this report consideration is restricted to environmental legal compliance issues rather than wider resource management and carbon reduction issues.

Findings from SHE audits again reveal no substantial failings in environmental or waste compliance but, rather, occasional minor failings. Historically these have included disposal of fluorescent light tubes or paint cans with inert wastes in skips.

The *Waste Regulations 2011* increased the legal duty to ensure that the best waste management option is selected from the 'waste hierarchy' - typically establishments are reusing and recycling wherever practicable as an alternative to disposal. Whilst food waste in many cases continues to be mixed with general waste, largely due to

the small volumes produced, at individual establishments there has been some shift towards segregation of this waste into waste food 'digestion' facilities.

The Council's contract for residual waste (waste that cannot be recycled which is currently landfilled) is currently progressing with the construction of an Energy from Waste plant at Javelin Park. The Council has invested significant resources into maintaining oversight of the contract throughout its various phases, from contract evaluation and then construction and commissioning through to operations. Although strictly outside the scope of employee safety, this oversight includes continued monitoring of health and safety and environmental criteria. SHE is represented on the project management team and the team currently undertake regular monitoring of the construction works as well as the ongoing detailed process engineering design work.

Overall environmental compliance is deemed to be satisfactorily controlled and managed across the council's operations.

19. HSE Intervention

There have been no interventions or enforcement action by the HSE in 2016/17 other than the investigation of the cable strike involving a sub-contractor of Amey detailed above.



20. Other Points of Interest

To keep SHE Panel members abreast of current issues, the agenda include relevant items such as research reports or national initiatives. Among those discussed this year were:

HSE business plan which contains four aims with overall goals are stated as being:

- *leading and engaging those who undertake or influence health and safety. We will seek to change behaviour through guidance, raising awareness and leadership;*
- *ensuring the regulatory framework remains effective and that we are delivering the government's regulatory reform agenda and Business Improvement Target;*
- *securing effective risk management and control through a variety of interventions with businesses. This includes permissioning and licensing activities, inspections, investigations of incidents and concerns raised by workers and others. It also means holding to account those who fail to meet their obligations to protect people from harm;*
- *reducing the likelihood of low-frequency, high-impact catastrophic incidents and the potential for extensive harm to workers and the public.*

Sentencing guidelines

The Ministry of Justice introduced new sentencing guidelines for health and safety, corporate manslaughter and food safety and hygiene offences. Courts are now required to assess the overall seriousness of the offence based on the offender's

culpability and the risk of serious harm, *regardless of whether any harm was in fact caused*. The guideline then sets a starting point and a range of possible fines based on the seriousness of the offence. Different starting points and ranges apply depending on the size of the organisation, based on turnover or the equivalent. A number of cases have been subject to this regime including the cable strike detailed above.

21. Looking Ahead

With little legislative change on the horizon, key activity in 2017/18 in employee safety will include:

- strengthening existing practices and processes to mitigate risks further typically within Adult Services and in Children & Families;
- providing more coaching for line managers in order to build confidence in managing risks as this is proving to be time well spent;
- continued management of risks associated with the major refurbishment of Shire Hall;
- acting upon any workplace fire safety factors arising from the Grenfell Tower fire (June 2017).