



Report to: Audit, Governance and Improvement Review Committee
Date: 27th September 2007
Subject: Health and Safety Risk Management
Report of: Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Finance & IT
Contact officer: Brian Holt ext 2696 and Martyn Kenyon ext 2550

Purpose / summary: To provide Members with an overview of the Health and Safety Management arrangements within the Council

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: No alternatives

Recommendation / decision: The Committee note the report

Risks / Implications: Failure to actively address Health and Safety Issues results in additional costs, reduced levels of service delivery and leaves the Council, and individual officers, exposed to potential prosecution.

Financial: Opportunity to reduce absence and compensation costs by reducing the numbers of accidents

Staffing: Opportunity to reduce working days lost due to work related accidents

Policy: Within existing policy framework

Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted? Yes – no impact

Wards affected:

Property – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?
No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?
No

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?
No

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes / No ***

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes / No ***

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **Yes / No ***

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

	X
Discussion	
Decision	
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council

Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section: **Central Safety team in Corporate Personnel Services, Chief Executive Dept.**

Policy/Service Area:
Health and Safety Policy

Person Completing Form: Brian Holt	Date: 29 Aug 07
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Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race		X	Disability		X
Ethnicity		X	Gender		X
Age		X	Religion		X
Class		x	Sexual Orientation		x

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?
Sikhs are allowed dispensation on construction sites with regard to hard hat regulations

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?
Council's Safety network

Action Plan – *What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?*
N/A

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?
Yes

Timescale	
Responsibility	
Comments	

Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?

Departmental Service Plan	
Section/Team Plan	
Other (Specify)	

Date for further review Policy reviewed every two years and when health and safety legislation changes.

Wigan Council Annual Safety Report 2006/2007

1. Introduction

- The Government's *Revitalising Health & Safety Strategy*, (Action Point 13) requires all public bodies to summarise their health and safety performance and plans in their annual reports.
- This report is not intended as a comprehensive analysis of the Council's work on health and safety, but a series of headline issues that identifies the commitment, ability and direction in addressing and managing occupational health and safety.

2. Commitment

- Wigan Council is committed to providing a safe place of work and safe systems of work to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and all others affected by the Council's undertakings.
- The benefits of an effective approach to Health and Safety are wide ranging:
 - Reduced accidents or injuries to staff and service users
 - Reduced risk of litigation by reducing the numbers of injuries
 - Reduction in days lost through sickness absence
 - Improved reputation as a Council and as an employer
- A number of courses within the induction process and training calendar have been identified as "mandatory" so all staff are required to attend training in:
 - Safe working
 - Competent safety management
- Regular checks, "single subject audits", are performed to ensure awareness of proper procedures in specific areas. The two subjects chosen for 2006/7 were:
 - a second (follow up) audit on computer work (Display Screen Equipment) - concentrating on any possible ill health from the work activity. This indicated some good levels of awareness but further action is needed in some areas. and
 - adherence to the Legionella ACOP by premises managers. The Legionella audit indicated good compliance.
- Health and Safety procedure manuals have been issued to all managers and information relating to a whole range of health and safety related issues is on the intranet (eg see http://web/pers/safety/html/general_3.htm and so can be accessed by the majority of employees'
- Where employees have no access to the intranet, eg. highways, cleansing, these employees have been issued with handbooks specific to their work activities

3. Corporate Management

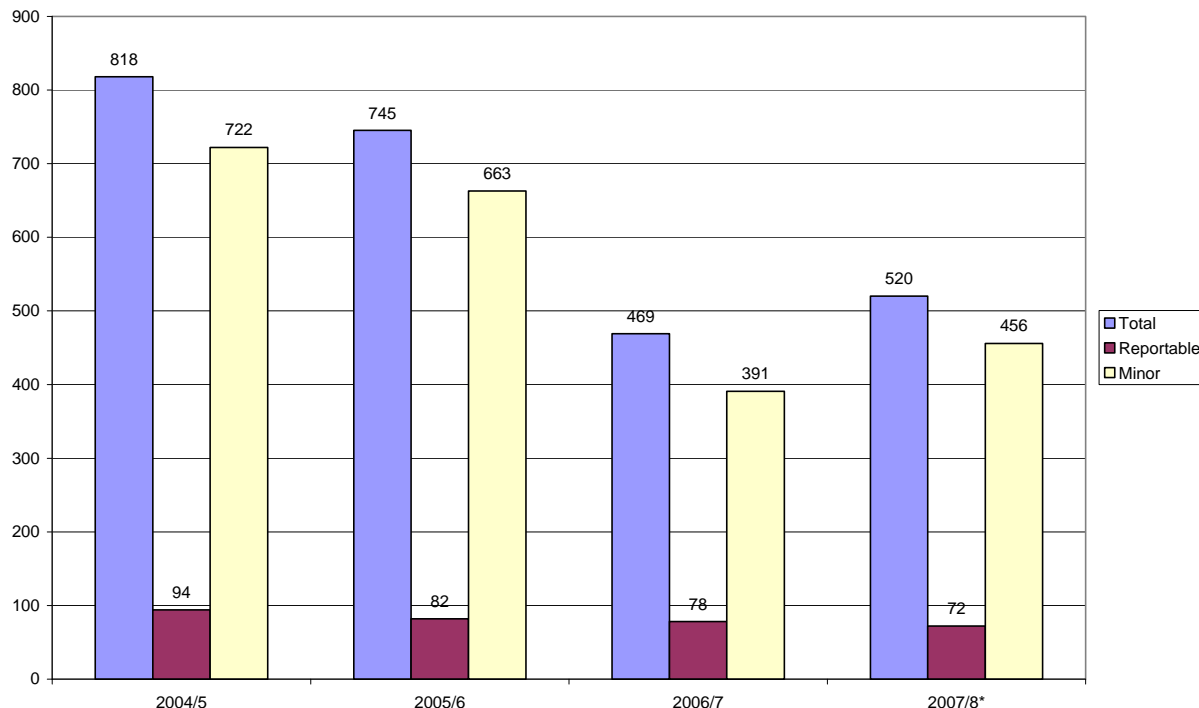
- Effective Health and Safety is an essential component of good management. The Turnbull report commented on corporate governance and the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) use the quality of the health and safety management in Councils as an indicator of the quality of their overall governance arrangements.
- The HSE look for commitment from the very top of organisations, in particular how Directors, Members and Senior Managers are involved in managing and improving health and safety in their departments.
- As a high profile, public sector employer, there is an increased expectation that the Council will set and maintain high standards of Health and Safety Management.

4. Statistical Information

Despite the ongoing training, support and validation of working methods and awareness, there are a number of accidents and injuries sustained each year. The attached bar charts and graphs show the accident figures for the last 3 years which show that:

- Positive progress is being made in the areas of incident rates, numbers of reportable incidents under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrence regulations (RIDDOR) to staff and physical attacks on staff.
- There are negative results on the number of reportable handling incidents and days lost due to incidents at work.

Number of accidents per year. *NB 2007/8 figures have been projected, based on the 1st quarter.



A “reportable” accident is one where death or serious injuries occur so the incident is required to be reported to the HSE who may decide to carry out a formal investigation. The definition includes incidents which result in a loss of more than 3 working days.

These have been analysed by departments as follows:

Reportable incidents by department

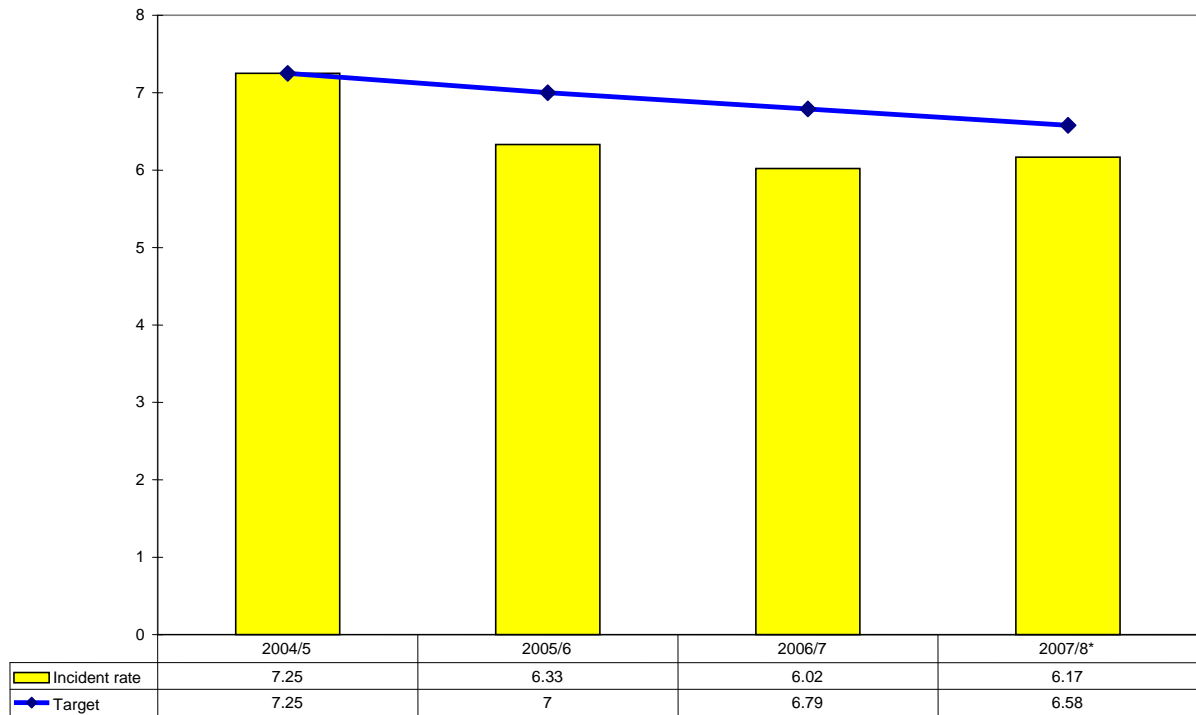
dept	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8 First quarter	2007/8 projected
Adult Services	39	34	41	7	28
Chief Exec		1		1	4
Community Protection	1		1		
CYPS	2	5	4	6	24
Engineers	42	30	21	3	12
Fin & IT		1			
Legal & Prop	1	1		1	4
MCCS	9	10	11		
total	94	82	78	18	72

Reportable incidents by cause

Cause	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8 first quarter	2007/8 projected
Falls from height/stairs	2	4	7	2	8
Slips/falls on level	29	25	22	5	20
Handling & lifting	26	28	29	7	28
Struck by moving object	11	12	4		
Striking against	9		1		
Struck by vehicle	4	5			
violence	6	5	8	1	4
other	7	3	7	3	12
total	94	82	78	18	72

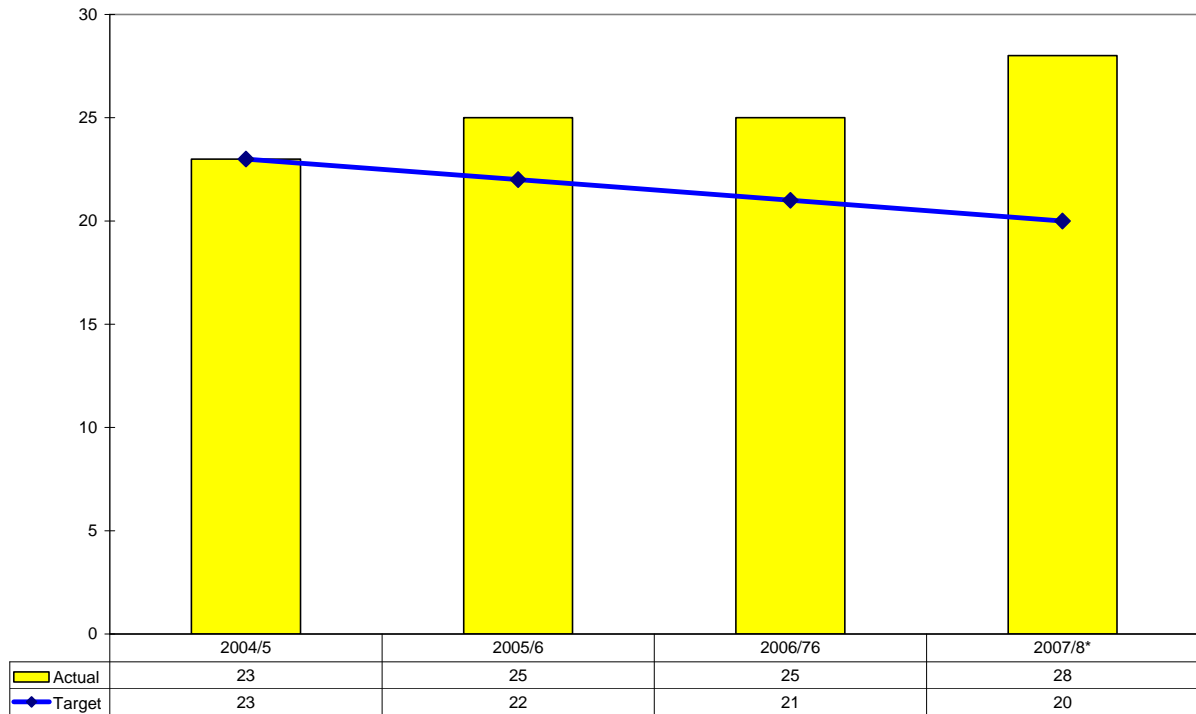
These figures are advised to the departmental Health and Safety groups so that investigations can be undertaken and specific attention can be given where necessary

Comparing the **incident rate of reportable accidents per 1000 staff**. In line with HSE guidance, the target is a 3% reduction per year with 2004/5 as the base line. *2007/8 figure projected from the 1st quarter.



Whilst results are better than target, it is acknowledged that most of these injuries are still avoidable so further work will be done through the departmental groups and the Councils Health and Safety Committee to target the high risk areas

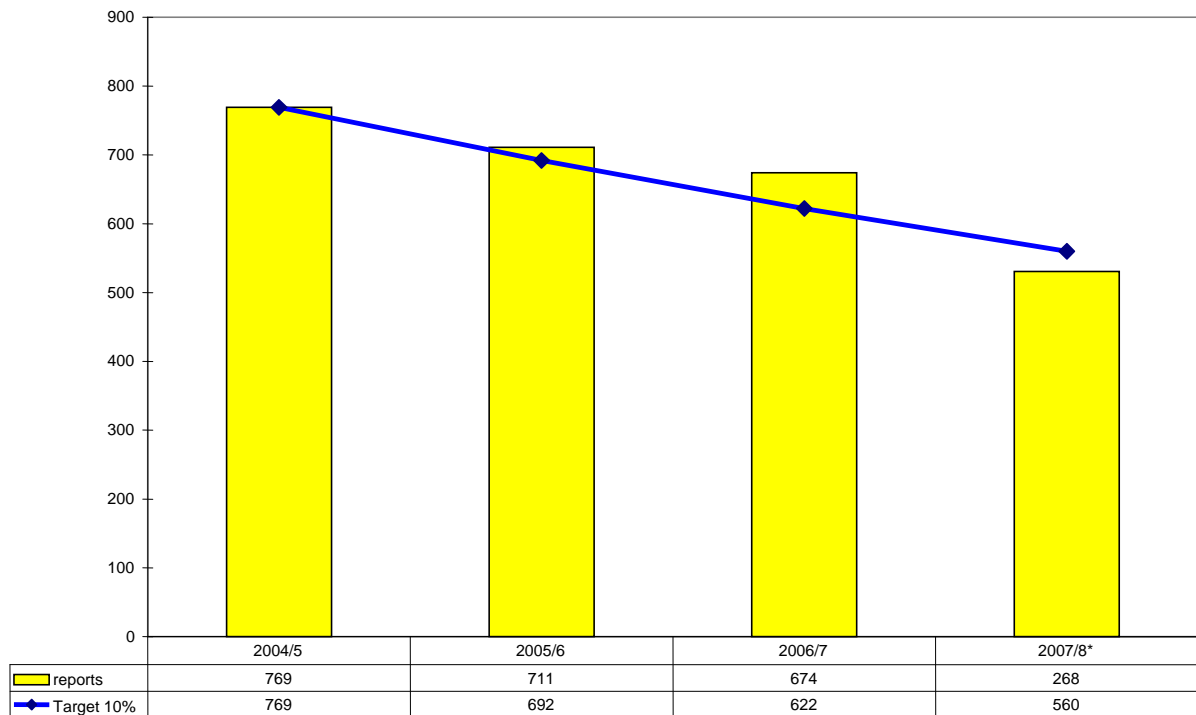
Number of handling accidents reportable to HSE. Target is a 3% reduction per year with 2004/5 as the base line. * 2007/8 figure projected from the 1st quarter.



Most of the injuries sustained are strains resulting in more than 3 days absence from work and are therefore classified as “reportable”. However, a further review of the figures, reported to the Council’s Safety Committee proved inconclusive and did not identify any specific reasons. It can simply be down to the severity of the injury, age of individual and the type of work they do.

Refresher training is arranged, and targeted where necessary, at employees who have been injured at work. Persistent absences will be addressed through the attendance management procedures .

Physical Attacks on staff. Target is a 10% reduction per year with 2004/5 as the base line. 2007/8* figure projected from the 1st quarter.



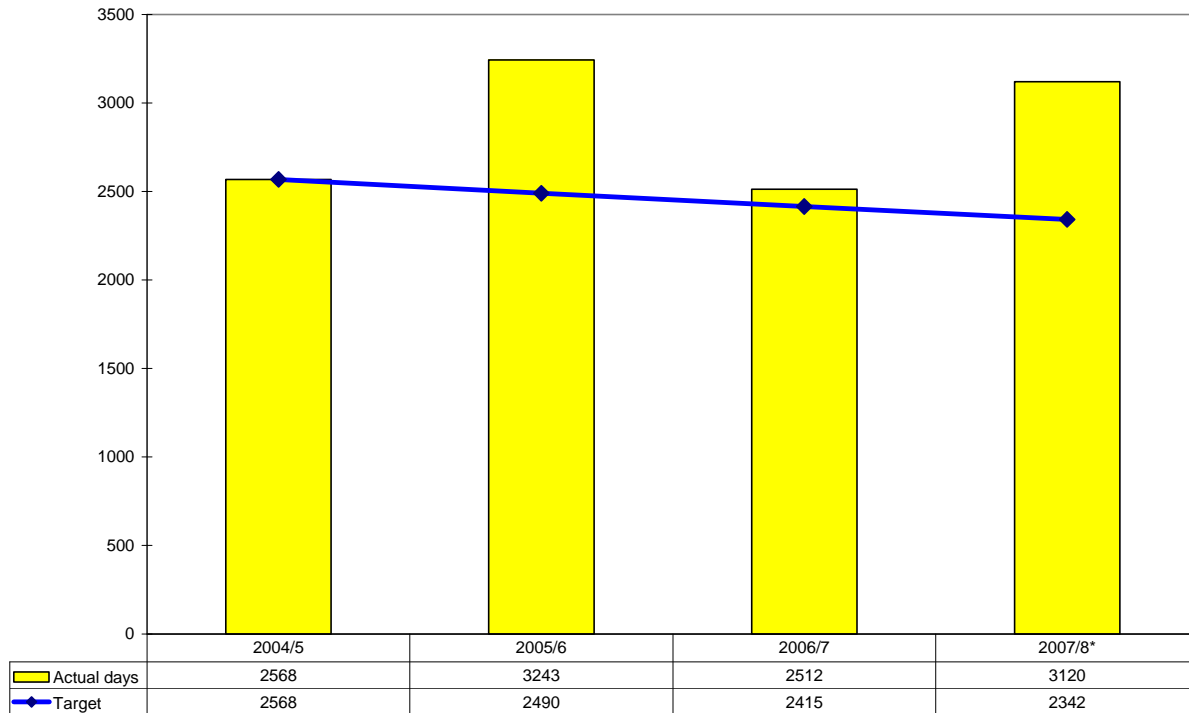
Physical attacks are primarily by service users on care workers.

The main problem area was in the previous Social Services department although the numbers for CYPS are now increasing and Adult Services are decreasing because of the move of children away from Adult Services dept.

The overall numbers of physical attacks appear to be decreasing which is partly due to training of staff in Adult Services by an outside agency who specialise in such issues as controlling service users.

Similar training is being arranged for CYPS employees.

Days Lost due to accidents at work. Target is a 3% reduction per year with 2004/5 as the base line. *2007/8 figure projected from the 1st quarter.



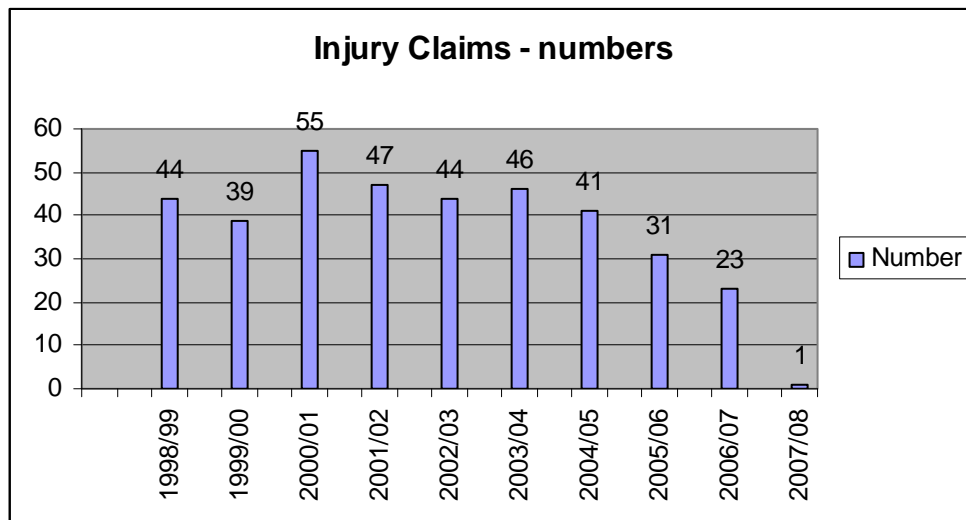
Using an average cost per day figure of £250 for each day lost gives an approximate cost of days lost as follows:

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8 (projected)
Number of days	2568	3243	2512	3120
Total estimated cost @ £250 per day	£642,000	£810,750	£628,000	£780,000

4.1. Litigation Costs

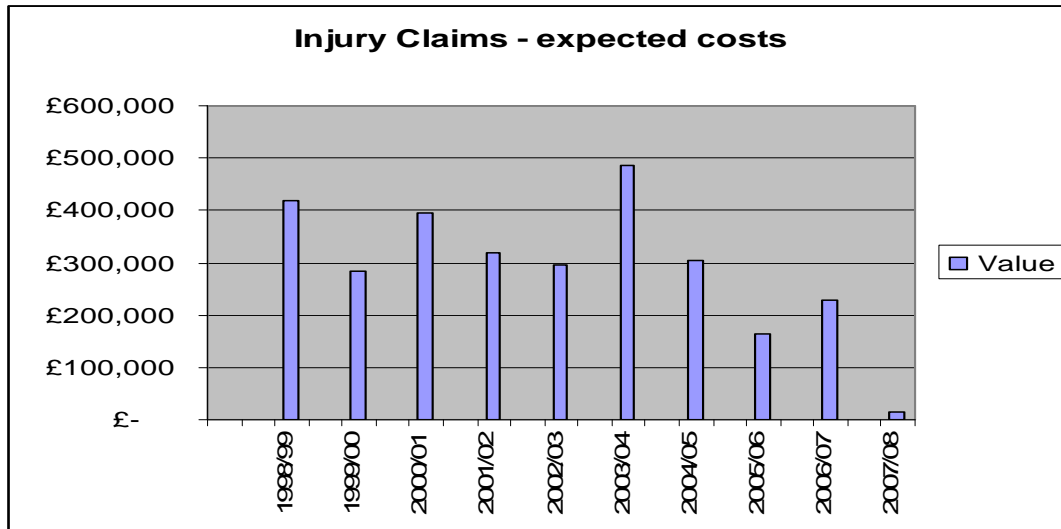
Whilst not all incidents result in a claim for compensation, the numbers of cases, compensation payments, investigation costs and managers' time in defending cases all present an additional strain on resources.

Whilst there are inevitably delays between the date of an incident and any compensation settlement being reached, (a claimant has 3 years from the date of injury in which to make a claim), the following figures provide an indication of the numbers of claims arising and the additional costs involved when a work related injury progresses through to become a compensation claim:



Bearing in mind the 3 year time limit for claims, the numbers for 2005/6 onwards are likely to be incomplete and subject to further increases.

In all cases where formal claims are made, the incident, records and processes are investigated to determine the extent of the Council's liability. A decision is then made, in consultation with the Insurers, Claims Handlers and Service Managers on whether to defend the case or to reach a settlement. It should be noted that even where only partial liability can be proven, the employer will be responsible for paying the claimant's legal costs.



The “expected costs” shown above include actual payments made or a reserve for those cases which have not yet reached a settlement. However, due to the 3 year time limit for claims, the numbers for 2005/6 onwards are likely to be incomplete and subject to further increases.

In most cases, the “hidden” costs of investigation and dealing with the whole incident will far exceed the actual amount of compensation paid. The HSE have estimated this can be between 5 to 35 times the actual amount, which emphasises the need for prevention.

5. Ongoing Developments-

5.1 Improving Staff Well Being.

‘Your Health – Working together for our future’

- Adult Services ran a Pilot targeting 150 Homecare and Transport staff with the aim of improving staff well-being and health awareness.
- These are seen as a holistic proactive approach and contribute to the management of stress.

5.2 Training

- Two new courses have been introduced.
- **Working Safely** aimed at all employees, concentrates on the responsibility of the individual to their own safety and that of those affected by their actions. It also shows individuals how to assess situations in a dynamic fashion. It combines the three half day Fire Safety (with practical), Manual Handling Awareness and H&S Legislation for Employees into a one day session.
- **Competent Safety Management**, a managers course, gives those in charge of staff the tools to ensure compliance with health and safety law and safe working by their staff. It has replaced four previous half day sessions, H&S Responsibilities, Risk Assessment, Managing H&S and

Accident Investigation. The intention is to raise the profile of H&S requirements along with manager's awareness of maintaining safe working practices.

- All schools in the Borough have been offered free courses for fire safety and working safely with computers. There has been a good response from the schools.

Elected members are invited to attend any of the course run by Central Safety to witness the learning process.

In 2006/7, Safety training has been provided for 1122 staff on the following subjects:

- Fire Safety; Handling and Lifting Awareness, Health & Safety Awareness for Employees, Working safety with computers, Safety Systems of Work, Step Ladder Safety, Ladder Safety, Hand Arm Vibration tool box talks, Fire Risk Assessment, Responsible Person, Management of Legionella, Flushing Control Measures for Legionella

6. Initiatives.

6.1 Council Wide

- The issuing of regular safety bulletins via the Corporate Delivery Team. Bulletins are then put on the internal health and safety web page for managers to use during team briefings.
- A proposal to set up joint training courses for managers and staff in agreement with the 5 Borough Partnership and PCT,

6.2 Departmental

(a) C&YPS aims for the following twelve months:

- Continue with the programme of Fire Risk Assessment of all new premises controlled by Social Care and Positive Futures branches.
- Continue with the programme of Portable Appliance Testing of equipment held by the two new branches (Two year programme).

(b) Adult Services

- A pro-active training initiative on the management of challenging behaviour has been developed with an outside agency.
- This is to address issues with challenging behaviour before they develop into an incident.
- A number of "E" learning packages are being run, a pilot on DSE along with a refresher on risk assessments.

7. Partnerships

- The Wigan Leisure & Cultural Trust and Wigan & Leigh Housing work closely with the Council in ensuring health and safety issues are managed.

- The Council has been working in close co-operation with the Principal HSE Inspector both directly and via the Manchester and NW Forum for Local Authority Health & Safety Managers.
- Adult Services and Children & Young Persons Services have developed a working relationship on health and safety with the local Primary Care Trust and their partners.

8. Benchmarking

- Benchmarking is carried out with the members of the Safety Managers' Forum mentioned in paragraph 7.

9. Joint Consultation

- The Council Safety Committee, chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, meet 4 times a year in compliance with the Council's safety policy statement.
- Elected member(s) attend the meeting
- Three union officers now serve on the Council's Safety Committee and there is an agreed protocol for raising items.
- All departmental safety committees have staff safety representatives attending.

There are a number of departmental committees as described below.

(a) Children's and Young People's Services

- A Central Safety Committee representing all branches of the service and attended by Safety Representatives from all of the major Unions.
- To disseminate the information and promote ownership Connections and Social Care have also retained their safety sub-committees who bring to the table specific concerns during this change/re-organisation period.

(b) Engineering Services have committees in the following services

- Leigh Building Services; Cleansing DSO; Highways DLO; Transport DSO; Office services

(c) Adult Services

- a three monthly safety meeting and a violence working group.

(d) Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

- a safety committee covering all sections of the Trust run on a six weekly cycle.

10. Monitoring Health & Safety Performance

- The Council Safety Committee monitors statistics at the three-monthly meetings.
- Good safety management systems used by managers who were visited recently by the HSE ensured the Council was not issued with any enforcement notices.

11. Occupational Health

- The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations health surveillance programme is now in operation with an agreed report back from the Occupational Health provider.

12. The Coming Year

- A new reporting system for challenging behaviour issues in Adult Services and C&YPS is being developed. The aim is to ensure knowledge gained in identifying trigger points and their subsequent preventative measures are not lost when an individual service user graduates from one service to the other.
- Single subject audits will continue including ladder management and work at height plus slips and trips on the level.
- The HSE will be visiting the Council after September with regard to a number of issues specifically how stress is managed within departments and adherence to the Approved Code of Practice L8 for Legionella plus other subjects in their current inspection programme.

13 Recommendation

- The Committee are requested to note the report

Assistant Chief Executive / Director of Finance & IT