

## **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 10:00 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

Councillor Jane Yates in the Chair

Councillor Rowan Clarke.

UNISON: Liz Robinson and Violet Parker.

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Ian Clay (Health and Safety Adviser), Ailsa Kipling (Corporate Property Manager), Bronwen MacArthur-Williams (Health & Safety Manager), Hannah Douthwaite (Governance & Civic Officer) and Matthew Kerry (Governance & Civic Officer).

### **SAF11-23/24      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Donna Hales and Chris McKinney (UNISON).

### **SAF12-23/24      URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to be considered.

### **SAF13-23/24      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

### **SAF14-23/24      MINUTES**

Moved by Councillor Rowan Clarke and seconded by Councillor Jane Yates  
**RESOLVED** that the minutes of a meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

### **SAF15-23/24      QUARTER 3 HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE (01.10.23-31.12.23)**

The Health and Safety Manager presented the Health and Safety Update for Q3 of 2023 and highlighted that for accidents there were no obvious trends to note.

For accidents reported involving Members of the Public was **36**. While this was a low number for the quarter, the Health and Safety Manager and Chair had corresponded and agreed before the meeting that there was a need to investigate these numbers.

It was noted that the total number of accidents reported involving employees was **6**

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(excluding Dragonfly Developments Ltd.). These had taken place in the following service areas:

- StreetScene - 5
- Housing - 1

The total number of near misses / hazards reported during this quarter was **2**.

The Health and Safety Manager referred to the table on Page 10 of the report which showed a brief description of the details of each accident, including the circumstances and the **4** lost days. This remained low.

The Health and Safety Manager drew attention to the graphs on Page 11 which showed the following:

- number of monthly accidents / incidents
- employee and member of the public accidents
- incident types for employees

There were **2** near misses and **1** trespassing incident reported by Dragonfly Developments Ltd. This information remained separate from BDC but would still be presented to Safety.

Training delivery continued through the following courses (excluding to Dragonfly Developments Ltd):

Fire Safety Awareness = 21  
Fire Procedures at The Arc = 11  
First Aid (full course) = 10

A total of **42** BDC employees were trained this quarter.

Training delivery to Dragonfly Developments Ltd. employees included the following courses:

- Asbestos Awareness = 25
- Fire Safety Awareness = 3
- Fire Procedures at The Arc = 5
- Scaffold Awareness = 9

A total of **42** Dragonfly Developments Ltd employees were trained during the quarter. Inspections were noted in full. **4** formal biannual BDC inspections had occurred (excluding Dragonfly Developments Ltd. sites). These were undertaken by a member of the Health & Safety Team, Facilities Management Team, a building representative and a Trade Union Representative (when available) – and occurred at:

- Creswell Heritage & Wellbeing Centre
- South Normanton Contact Centre
- Bolsover Contact Centre
- The Arc

Additionally, regular informal walk-arounds of Riverside Depot and The Arc continue between Health and Safety and Facilities Management.

**18** Dragonfly Developments Ltd. inspections occurred at:

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- Market Close, Shirebrook = 3
- Sunny Brook Close = 2
- Woburn Close = 1
- Moorfield Lane, Langwith = 3
- Bersahill, Haworth = 3
- Harlesthorne, Clowne = 2
- Crematorium = 3
- Sheltered Scheme (North) = 1 (Victoria House)

There would be added more meaningful recommendations, such as keeping halls of residence a priority and elaborating on incidents; the specifics of incidents in Leisure were unknown.

The Chair also mentioned the need to track footfall and that it may prove useful to compare with Q3 2022.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The Health & Safety Manager asked the committee to consider the report as a reflection on the corporate commitment to and continued awareness of the importance of good Health & Safety performance.

### **Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

None

Moved by Liz Robinson (UNISON) and seconded by Councillor Rowan Clarke

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **SAF16-23/24      SICKNESS ABSENCE - QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2023)**

The Chair motioned that the Sickness Absence – Quarter 3 Report would be the final item of the meeting as the required personnel for Item 7 was not present.

Figure 1 showed a summary of sickness absence levels within BDC for the months October – December 2023.

Absence for the Senior Managers Group was shown as 50% of the total absence for Joint Senior Managers as this was split with Bolsover/NE Derbyshire District Councils. For other employees the absences included were for the employing authority only.

The Chair noted that the average number of days lost per employee for Quarter 3 was 1.89 days, which was a drop from previous data. The 2023/24 projected outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee was 8.72 days; while a projection, this was good but in need of confirmation during Q1 of 2024/25.

The annual target for the Local Performance Indicator to the end of March 2024 was 8.5 days.

For the purposes of sickness reporting, Senior Management was accounted for as follows:

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- 1 Joint Assistant Director Post (0.5 FTE).
- 0 days sickness experienced during Quarter 3.

### Details of Proposal or Information

Tables 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix 1 detail the key patterns and trends being experienced corporately in relation to sickness absence.

### Key Trends

- The overall average days lost due to sickness in Quarter 3 was 1.89. This had decreased from Quarter 2 and was the lowest performance since Q4 of 20/21.
- There was a direct correlation between employees undertaking physically demanding work and high levels of sickness. This was reinforced by Muscular/Skeletal absences regularly being in the top three reasons for sickness absence.
- 4 Services experienced zero sickness in Quarter 3 and a further 6 Services experienced less than 1 day per FTE employee.
- Stress/Depression had remained in the top three reasons for absence since 2019/20.
- There were 8 cases of absence due to Stress/Depression during Quarter 3, two of which were work related, and 6 were none work related.
- Covid-19 accounted for 64 days lost due to sickness in Quarter 3 in comparison to 18 days lost in Quarter 2.
- There were 11 long term cases in this quarter, 8 were due to physical health ailments and 6 were related to stress/depression (one of which was work related). Appropriate support and assistance was being provided to facilitate support for those who had returned to work and those planning to do so. 3 had now returned to work, 8 remained absent (1 of which, the Council is pursuing the Ill Health Retirement route) and 1 had retired on Ill Health Grounds.

### Actions

Managers had support from the HR Advisor and were issued monthly sickness absence information. Managers were also able to access sickness information on their teams on a daily basis via HR21 Self Service.

Steps the Council had taken to support employees include:

- Mental Health awareness sessions were now available 'on demand' for all employees via Eric and had previously been delivered across the Council as part of the Council's quarterly corporate training programme.
- Awareness training explained that colleagues and managers were not specialists in mental health and their role was to listen to employees and signpost them to appropriate support.
- Mental Health awareness initiatives and possible support was continually publicised via Eric and the weekly bulletin. Recent examples of which included:
  - the Mental Health Map, which featured all the pathways and support options available in Derbyshire.
  - Mental Health Awareness week – promoting the available guidance and support available.
  - SHOUT – an organisation which provides 24/7 confidential support to anyone struggling to cope.
- Cycle to Work Scheme was also available to encourage health and wellbeing and

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to address carbon emissions. The number of employees who had subscribed during 2023/24 would be reported in the Quarter 4 report.

- The number of Employees subscribing to the Gym during 2023/24 would be reported in the Quarter 4 report.
- Managers and Employees had accessed Occupational Health, Counselling, Physiotherapy, the Council's Employee Assistance Programme and other support.
- Employees were signposted to incentives which were available via Leisure i.e.:
  - To encourage health and wellbeing staff could take up membership for Go! Active which included gym, swim and classes for only £15 per month.
  - There was a Health Referral Programme (Physical Activity & Lifestyle Support) which was available to Employees residing within the BDC Area – This was a programme aimed at changing behaviours and finding solutions to assist people facing daily challenges resulting in a concentrated approach regarding service users' health and wellbeing.

Operational concerns about the management of sickness absence cases that existed were being raised with the respective managers and dealt with as per standard practice and policy.

The Chair highlighted the mental health training available, as well as physical health schemes like Cycle2Work and the gym subsidy, and that more information on such schemes would follow in the next quarter.

Liz Robinson (UNISON) mentioned she would be leading mental health projects into 2024/25 and the Chair commented something was needed to support the staff.

The Chair also noted that it was reassuring Covid-19 was no longer present in the top three absences, though it remained lingering.

The Strategic Director of Services mentioned that short-term day absences were also substantially shorter and that BDC are affectively managing.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The report contained data relating to employees' absence levels.

### **Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

Not applicable – this report was for information.

Moved by Liz Robinson and seconded by Councillor Rowan Clarke  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**SAF17-23/24      SICKNESS ABSENCE - QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2023) - DRAGONFLY DEVELOPMENT LTD**

The item was withdrawn.

The meeting concluded at 10:14 hours.