23rd March 2017

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| **Paper Title** | Wellbeing, Health and Safety Update |
| **Paper Reference:** | NRW B B 14.17 |
| **Paper Sponsored By:** | Ashleigh Dunn |
| **Paper Presented By:** | Emyr Roberts |

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| **Purpose of Paper:** | Scrutiny |
| **Recommendation:** | To note issues and progress made to date |

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| **Impact:** To note – all headings might not be applicable to the topic | How do the proposals in this paper help NRW achieve the Well-Being of Future Generations Act principles in terms of:  **Looking at the long term:**  **Taking an integrated approach:**  **Involving a diversity of the population:**  **Working in a collaborative way:**  **Preventing issues from occurring:**  The NRW Roadmap describes how our success depends on the way we work together to create a better Wales. The roadmap sets out our vision and what we will do to deliver it. Through the work that we do and the way that we do it, NRW will make a positive contribution to improving the wellbeing, health and safety of our staff and customers across Wales. Our values mean that we will be both responsible and accountable for our actions and we will act to keep ourselves and others safe and well. |

**Issue**

1. Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WHS) update for the NRW Board.

**Background**

2. This briefing paper describes the headline issues and recent developments in relation to wellbeing, health and safety, providing an update, key headline statistics and interpretation plus a brief summary of progress made on specific issues.

**Assessment**

**Wellbeing & health**

**Sickness absence statistics for 2016/17**

3. From April 2016 to January 2017, the rolling year sickness absence rate is 5.9 days lost per employee per annum equating to 2.7%. The NRW benchmark is no more than 7 days lost per employee equating to 3.1%. In comparison, 2016 data from NHS Wales indicate that our absence rate is lower than NHS Wales at 5.1% and lower that the best performing NHS Trust (Public Health Wales) at 3.4%. Previous comparison has shown NRW absence rates to be comparable or less than other public sector organisations. The table below shows the trend in absence reported by days per month since January 2016.

4. Our data continues to confirm that MyNRW is now being used more frequently to record sickness absence and we are working to continue this development. As an example, in December 2016 reporting had increased by 51% when compared against the same period in 2015.

5. Mental health was the top sickness absence reason in December, with respiratory system and digestive system were second and third respectively.

6. The number of absences entered where the reason is left blank has decreased this month to 4% of all reported absences. We will continue to work to reduce these occurrences further and improve our data quality. To further improve our performance we are actively encouraging line managers to ensure they have no incomplete sickness absence entries and that all sickness absence information has been entered correctly with the correct absence category for the reported illness.

7. Our occupational health data is provided to us on a quarterly basis by our occupational health provider as specified within the terms of the contract. In the most recent quarter, our occupational health data indicates that 55% of our management referrals are related to mental health issues, up from 40% in the previous quarter. 37% of those mental health related referrals are workplace stress related, similar percentage to the previous quarter. Work related stressors are reported to be workload, change of role and lack of leadership. Further detail for October to December inclusive is provided in the table below. Note that the data is indicative as mental health causes are not always the result of single stressors and that a combination of issues e.g. workplace and personal may be at play.

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| **Month** | **Referrals** | **Mental health** | **Personal stress** | **Anxiety** | **Workplace stress** | **Causes** |
| Oct 2016 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | Workload, role change |
| Nov 2016 | 13 | 7 | 0 | 4 | 3 | Workload, lack of support/leadership |
| Dec 2016 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | Structural change |
| **Total** | 29 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 6 |  |

**Wellbeing initiatives & developments**

8. We have developed a clearer picture of where we are in relation to absence and mental health, and are very much conscious of the need to manage these issues effectively. Leaders and managers are actively working on measures to prevent and deal with mental health issues, recognising the potential impact on staff from issues such as job evaluation, business area reviews, organisational design and VES. We are also re-enforcing the need for line managers to use the available tools to prevent and manage absence due to mental health e.g. Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme and use of Stress Risk Assessment.

9. Analysis of mental health absence and management referrals for mental health to our occupational health provider indicates that staff showing signs of stress or actually suffering from stress are being referred for assessment and support. From October 2016 to December inclusive, some 71 incidences of recorded absence due to mental health issues, a similar number to the previous quarter. 16 referrals were made for mental health issues in the same period, again similar in number to the previous quarter. We continue to raise awareness of the availability of the referral process as part of the stress risk assessment procedure through engagement with leadership groups and through regular reminders of the policies and procedures that we have in place to help prevent and manage these issues.

10. We have instigated and raised awareness on a number of initiatives to support our health and wellbeing commitment in NRW including:

* World Cancer Day – 4 February
* Sexual abuse and sexual violence awareness week – 6-12 February
* Eating orders awareness week – 27 Feb – 5 March
* Care First monthly newsletters – Get Active in 2017; Tips for cutting down alcohol
* Articles on Yammer about physical activity can make you happier; ACAS Mental Health at Work;

11. We are reviewing potential providers for an employee wellbeing programme to reduce both absenteeism and presenteeism which in turn can improve productivity, the working environment and ultimately the efficiency of budgets and net profit. The provider will help us develop and deliver workplace wellbeing campaigns that will make our workplace 'Health Promoting'. Such campaigns would include health screening events such as ‘Know Your Numbers’ sessions and wellbeing awareness days. We are looking to deliver this programme in 2017/18 financial year.

12. All of these initiatives reminded and encouraged staff of how to look after themselves and their colleagues at work and outside of work. These initiatives have been brought to the attention of staff through our Intranet, Managers Monthly updates, Yammer pages and through engagement at local WHS Forums and team meetings.

**Health & Safety**

**Headline accident and near miss statistics for 2016-17 as of 31st January 2017 with 2014-15 and 2015-16 full year figures for comparison.**

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|  | **Incidents since last update** | **Incidents (2016-17 Year to date)** | **2015-16 Full Year** | **2014-15 Full year** |
| RIDDOR – staff | 0 | 9 | 12 | 0 |
| Lost time incidents – staff | 1 | 4 | 8 | 2 |
| Incidents, no lost time - staff | 9 | 80 | 96 | 55 |
| Near miss – staff | 32 | 204 | 304 | 131 |
| Serious incident reviews | 1 | 9 | 3 | 4 |
| Incidents - contractors | 0 | 5 | 6 | 60 |
| Incidents – public | 11 | 61 | 60 |
| Near misses – contractors | 3 | 55 | 88 | 98 |
| Near misses – public | 3 | 22 | 76 |

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| * Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) incident is a particular type of incident that is required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) * A lost time incident (LTI) is where a member of staff is injured during the course of their work and they have subsequently had time off or been on light duties as a result of their injuries (reportable under RIDDOR if over 7 days).  Lost Time starts the first day after the person was injured. * An incident with no lost time (Non-LTI) is where a member of staff is injured during the course of their work but only needed minor 1st aid treatment and subsequently have not had any time off work. Non-LTI’s include property damage to NRW vehicles and equipment. * A Near Miss is an unplanned or uncontrolled event that does not cause injury, ill health or damage, but could do so. * Member of public injuries relate predominantly to mountain bike accidents on our purpose built trails, and slips, trips and falls on walking trails. Trails are risk assessed and routinely inspected periodically and are also inspected following an accident. * Public near misses are predominately public incursions on to live harvesting sites. |

**Latest health & safety updates**

**RIDDOR & Lost time incident updates**

13. There have been no RIDDOR reportable incidents since the last update.

14. One lost time incident has been reported involving a road traffic incident caused by a third party driver in North Wales. Two NRW staff suffered aches, pains and bruises but were not seriously hurt.

**Near miss updates**

15. Near Miss reports for the period of this report continue to be low in comparison to previous years and in relation to the total number of incidents this year to date. However we are continuing to deliver the actions identified in the previous update e.g. training for all line managers on reporting and investigating incidents and managing health and safety risks, supporting the business through campaigns and engagement, providing near miss reporting pads for field staff and have re-issued quick guides on how to use AssessNET. We have inserted the AssessNET reporting tool icon on all NRW desktop screens as a means to further improve access to the tool. Further improvements to accessibility to wellbeing, health and safety information will be implemented by 1st April.

**Serious Incident Reviews**

16. One new serious incident review (no. 9 below) has been commissioned since the last update. Further information and updates on all live serious incident reviews are provided in the table below.

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| **No** | **Date** | **Description** | **Location** | **Status** | **Lessons learned** |
| 8 | 31 October 2016 | Harvester machine overturned | Bronwinion, Artists Valley, Aberystwyth | Investigation complete. Final report awaiting sign off. | The review is in the final stages and has concluded that the incident was caused by a collision with an obscured tree stump and driver distraction. Recommendations also focus on some non-contributory issues relating to provision of site specific risk assessment and method statements. |
| 9 | 4th January 2017 | Whilst weed cutting excavator slid into watercourse | River Gele, Clwyd – NE Wales | Investigation complete along with supplementary review. Final report signed off. | Recommendations to review the organisation of this type of work and to evaluate and recommend the optimal working practices for the recovery of machines from water. |

**Current reviews**

17. **(New) Serious Incident Review (9) of an excavator slipping into watercourse –**

During weed clearance an excavator slipped from the bank into the watercourse at the River Gele. The operator was not injured however self-rescue of the machine failed as that section of the Gele is susceptible to tidal influence and due to an incoming tide arrangements were made for a third party to recover the machine the following day. Whilst a Construction Phase Plan and Toolbox talk was provided on the scope of works, it did not specify areas of weeds to be cut and the plant operator wanted to remove as much of the weeds as possible. Whilst ground conditions were not considered a contributory factor the machine was either positioned too close to the water’s edge or the boom extended towards its maximum limit, thereby altering the centre of gravity of the machine causing it to slide into the water. The review has been completed with actions proposed which are currently being reviewed.

18. **(Update) Serious Incident Review (8) of a Harvester Overturn at Bronwinion, Aberystwyth –** A harvester overturned onto its side on a direct production harvesting site on 31st October. The harvester was owned and operated by a contractor, and there were no injuries or damage to the machine. The machine had gone into a low powered ‘limp mode’ state and the operator was trying to reverse to the forest road when the machine slipped off the brash mat causing a loss of balance which tipped the machine onto its side. The review is in the final stages and has concluded that the incident was caused by the combination of an obscured high stump and the operator being distracted by warning alarms/indicators going off in the cab. Recommendations have also focussed on some non-contributory issues that were highlighted relating to provision of site specific risk assessment and method statement.

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| **Other updates**  19. **Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome** – work to complete our action plan, which is attached at Annexe 1 is ongoing with progress being made by Managers who manage staff using vibrating tools updating the plan with actions taken to manage the risk. The occupational monitoring programme is also ongoing on a routine basis with no further incidences of HAVs related symptoms being identified. We have also sourced a vibration monitoring system to improve the way in which we measure exposure to vibration. This will involve staff using a wearable wrist device which measures vibration directly negating the need to manually record working periods and equipment type. This is a significant step forward in improving our risk management system for reducing the risk of exposure to vibration. The new system is programmed for delivery in financial year 17/18. |
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20. **Driving incidents** – following queries raised at the previous Board meeting we have commissioned a review of driving incidents reported in 2016. The review is attached at Annexe 2. In summary the review recommended that a clear occupational road risk policy is required, along with a review of the NRW fleet and systems and behavioural development in terms of reporting and resolving incidents with our vehicles. Fleet are two years into an asset replacement process to ensure that no NRW vehicle will be greater than 5 years old in future, have reviewed budgetary ownership of fleet vehicles across the business, have implemented telematics across the whole fleet to track usage and performance and to continue to raise awareness of NRWs travel hierarchy and driving related policies.

21. **Working In or Near Water – Internal Audit** - we have delivered a health and safety review on one of our riskiest operational activities – working in or near water. A moderate assurance rating was given with a few areas that we need to improve on to bring this risk to an acceptable level. An action plan has been agreed to deliver the identified improvements which includes managers undertaking active monitoring, ensuring training of staff and managers making staff aware of the relevant risk assessments.

**Recommendations**

22. Note issues and progress made to date.

**Key risks**

23. Ongoing WHS risks identified and monitored through updated WHS risk register. No additional risks foreseen.

**Financial Implications**

24. None foreseen. Investment in learning and development requirements for NRW included within 16/17 training budget. Possible future employer liability claims in relation to HAVS disease.

**Equality impact assessment (EqIA)**

25. Not undertaken for this briefing paper.

Annex 1- Control of Hand Arm Vibration Action Plan

Annex 2 – NRW Occupational Road Risk Incidents Summary 2016