

Health & Safety Annual Report 2011/12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. We have completed harmonisation of display screen equipment, legionellosis, manual handling, incident reporting and investigation, first aid and managing violence and aggression policies this year.
2. We now provide strategic directors and heads of service with quarterly reports from the health and safety adviser.
3. We reviewed documentation for the management of water systems at Cornerstone Arts Centre which was found to be in order.
4. We have completed legionella risk assessments for our main corporate properties and the actions arising have been collated into a corporate action plan, which the facilities team are systematically working through.
5. We have improved our first aid arrangements at Abbey House by increasing the number of first aiders, implementing an effective system for contacting them and training facilities employees to ensure cover at both ends of the day.
6. We have harmonised our tailored health and safety awareness and health and safety for manager's courses, training has commenced and will continue throughout the next financial year.
7. Teams have made significant progress on completion of display screen equipment (DSE) assessments with most service teams completing over 90 per cent.
8. Teams have also made good progress on reviewing and updating service team risk assessments.
9. It is important now to make sure that any outstanding risk and DSE assessments are completed.
10. It was reported in the last quarterly report that the shared technical and facilities manager would be responsible for monitoring that maintenance, inspection and testing requirements for all council properties was carried out. This is no longer the case he will be responsible for:
 - providing information and guidance to managers with responsibilities for the councils buildings on all aspects of fire safety and contractors

- providing support to managers to ensure consistency in terms of quality and frequency of work carried out to all council property and that it meets approved standards
- ensuring best use of resources across the two councils.

11. In 2012/13 the health and safety adviser will complete the work equipment policy, work with service managers to identify all work equipment that the councils are responsible for and check to ensure that we are complying with our legal requirements in terms of testing, maintenance, examinations and inspections.

AIM OF THIS REPORT

12. The aim of this report is to provide:

- an overview of health and safety management within the council by outlining our achievements to date and targets for the coming year; and
- details of where improvements could be made to our management of health and safety.

RISKS OUTSTANDING AS AT 1 APRIL 2011

13. The following risks were on the corporate risk register at 1 April 2011:

Risks Identified	Action Taken to Mitigate Risks
Vale employees had had very little health and safety training	The key health and safety policies have been harmonised which has enabled our tailored health and safety awareness and health and safety for managers training packages to be updated. Training commenced in quarter four and will continue throughout the next financial year.
Not all service teams had carried out risk assessments	Each head of service was sent the risk assessments that the health and safety adviser had on file for both South and Vale for their service team. They were asked to produce harmonised risk assessments by 31 March 2012 – a progress report is included later in this report.
Health and safety procedures were not up to date - refer to appendix one for further details	<p>Work to complete health and safety procedures is on-going. This year the following policies have been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • display screen equipment • legionellosis • manual handling • first aid • managing violence and aggression <p>Two more policies are scheduled for harmonisation in the work plan for 2012/13.</p>

Risks Identified	Action Taken to Mitigate Risks
Lack of first aid provision before 0900 and after 1700 and for evening meetings	<p>Due to reductions in staffing and staff relocations as part of team restructures this risk had increased, the following action has now been taken to reduce the risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of first aiders at Abbey House has been increased • two facilities employees at Vale are qualified in first aid to cover both ends of the day • two employees who attend evening committee meetings are now qualified in first aid.
Selection and monitoring of contractors is not managed consistently across both councils	<p>The selection and management of contractor's procedure has not been harmonised; at present Vale and South have separate systems, which is not ideal and could present risks to both councils. We have not produced a harmonised policy as we feel that it would be a much more sensible and less bureaucratic option to incorporate health and safety responsibilities relating to contractors into the existing procurement and performance management process. We are currently negotiating the extent to which this is possible with the procurement team.</p>
<p>Interview rooms/reception – if a member of facilities* was injured responding to an incident the council could be liable</p> <p>*now carried out by Capita and housing managers.</p>	<p>Levels of crime within our area and incidents of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour are low. Too low to warrant security guards. The facilities team were required to attend incidents involving aggressive customers in reception at South. The procedure for responding to incidents in reception (South) and customer services (Vale) has now been harmonised. The facilities team are no longer required to attend incidents in reception this will be carried out by Capita managers (South) and Capita and housing managers (Vale). Managers are required to try to defuse an incident without putting themselves at risk until the police arrive.</p>
Not fully compliant with Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards	<p>Workshops were organised for managers and employees on achieving work / life balance. However we do not have a harmonised policy on this, which could leave us open to challenge. Following transfer of the health and safety function to corporate strategy it has been agreed that corporate responsibility for compliance with the stress management standards will sit with HR, and the HR team will include this work in their workplan for 2012/13.</p>

HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTIONS 1 APRIL 2011 – 31 MARCH 2012

14. The following health and safety actions were considered high priority at the end of March 2011 and included in the corporate strategy 2011/2012 work plan:

- produce an annual health and safety report for management team and heads of service
- continue to produce harmonised health and safety policies, concentrating on the following:
 - first aid
 - display screen equipment
 - fire
 - manual handling
 - selection and management of contractors
 - violence and aggression.
- continue to harmonise the corporate health and safety training programme
- produce a plan for embedding health and safety policies into the existing corporate processes
- develop a five year health and safety audit plan.

PROGRESS TOWARDS 2011/12 ACTIONS

Health and Safety Policies

15. The following policies have been harmonised this year:

- first aid
- display screen equipment
- manual handling
- legionellosis
- violence and aggression

16. We are trying to get the selection and management of contractors policy incorporated into corporate procurement and performance management process.

17. The fire policy written attempted to cover all of our properties and was causing confusion. We will now be finalising the fire policy for Abbey House and Crowmarsh. A separate policy will be completed for our off-site properties.

18. The next policies to be harmonised are:

- work equipment
- hazardous substances.

Embedding Health and Safety

19. Managers need to act upon the health and safety policies issued and this is not always happening. We recognise that in the past managers have been overwhelmed with health and safety information and emails; this, together with employee changes and complexities around working across both sites meant that we needed to simplify the information to make it more easily accessible and to improve employee engagement in health and safety.

20. Actions in the embedding plan seek to achieve this and to ensure that health and safety policies are embedded in all corporate processes.

21. We have completed the following actions to date:

- published an excel spreadsheet on the intranet entitled 'health and safety service team information' containing the following details for each team so that managers can keep track of important actions required:
 - fire wardens
 - fire roll call officers
 - assembly point
 - DSE assessors
 - risk premises administrators
 - risk assessments completed
 - DSE assessments completed
 - actions outstanding
- we have published a health and safety short guide for managers on the intranet; containing the key management actions from each health and safety policy produced
- key actions for managers and employees from all health and safety policies are incorporated into the health and safety training packages.

22. In 2012/13 we will complete the following 'embedding' actions:

- publish a health and safety short guide for employees
- incorporate health and safety requirements relating to contractors into the corporate procurement and performance management processes
- in conjunction with producing the work equipment policy, work with the relevant service managers to identify all work equipment that we have responsibility for, ensure compliance with our legal requirements and recommended good practice and record on our corporate property system.

Health and Safety Training

23. The following training packages have now been harmonised:

- risk assessment

- health and safety for managers
- health and safety awareness for employees.

24. Training commenced in quarter four and further dates have been booked for quarter one.

25. Fire safety awareness training has been carried out this year.

26. Details of the number of employees trained this year:

Course	Number of employees trained	Number of employees that still need training
Risk assessment	15	34
Health and safety for managers	13	34
Health and safety awareness	55	60
DSE assessor	12	0
Fire safety	87	115

Health and Safety Monitoring

27. Proactive monitoring of health and safety has included:

Health and safety report

This annual health and safety report for management team and heads of service is produced in the first quarter of every year; this is considered by all heads of service at the Safety Action Group.

Quarterly Reports

28. Strategic directors and heads of service receive quarterly reports from the health and safety adviser. The aim is to improve and encourage closer working between strategic directors, heads of service and line managers to achieve and monitor health and safety requirements and targets within their own teams; so that it is not seen as solely the responsibility of the health and safety adviser.

Health and Safety Inspections and Audits

29. The health and safety adviser has developed a five year audit plan from 2012/13 onwards to ensure that the health and safety management system is monitored in a systematic manner. A copy of this audit plan is attached in appendix 2.

30. The HSE carried out an inspection of our waste contract 23 and 24 May 2012, they looked at our contractor selection, evaluation and monitoring processes. They looked at how both Biffa and the council monitor the contract in terms of health and safety..

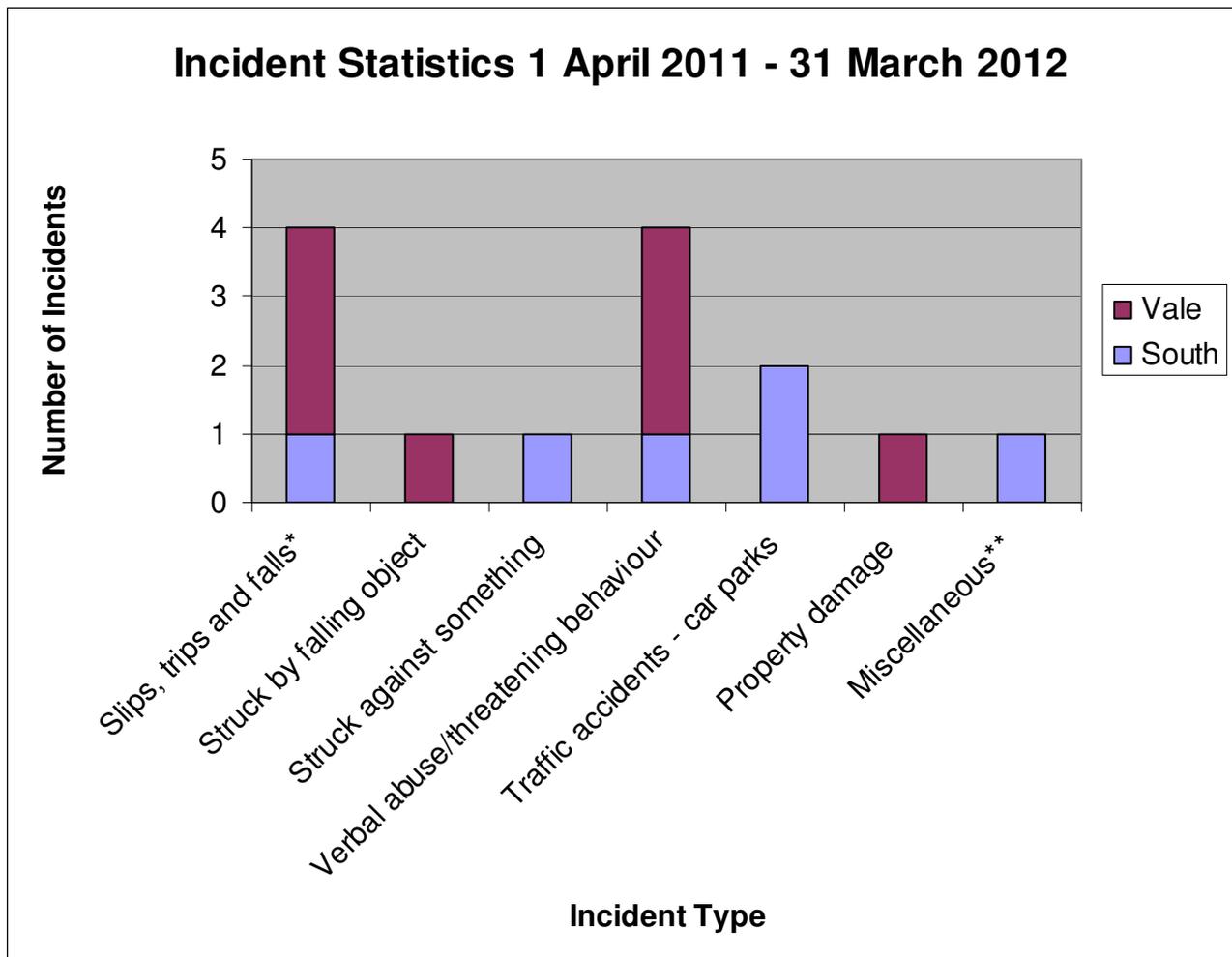
31. We have reviewed the system in place for the management of water systems at Cornerstone Arts Centre and found this to be in order.

32. We have reviewed the management of water systems at our main Vale properties; this identified that some properties had not had a legionella risk assessment and in several

cases the actions identified in risk assessments either had not been carried out, or it was not known if the work had been carried out.

- 33. Our main corporate properties have now had legionella risk assessments carried out and the actions identified have been collated into a corporate action plan which the facilities team are systematically working their way through.
- 34. A member of the facilities team and the health and safety advisor have been carrying out monthly health and safety and building inspections; however, as the management of health and safety has significantly improved and fewer problems were being identified these are now being carried out quarterly.
- 35. Any problems identified from these audits are raised with relevant managers and anything that can not be resolved at this level is escalated to the relevant head of service. Any problems that still remain outstanding and represent significant concerns for the health and safety advisor are raised in the quarterly report to management team.

Reactive monitoring - incident reporting and analysis



* 2 members of public (Vale Sites)

** heatstroke

36. The level of incidents within the councils remains low, with slips, trips and falls and violence/verbal abuse being the most common type. There was one incident reportable to the Health and Safety Executive - an employee hit her head on the open roof void hatch whilst trying to access the lift. This has been investigated and the risk assessment updated.

Risk and Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments

37. We have sent the harmonised display screen equipment policy to all employees and this has been publicised in Connect.

38. 12 additional DSE assessors have been trained this year.

39. Heads of service were given a deadline of 31 March 2012 to complete their DSE and risk assessments.

40. Each head of service has been provided with a copy of all the risk assessments that the health and safety adviser had on file for their service team for both Vale and South. Heads of service were asked to review these risk assessments for the work activities they are responsible for and where possible produce joint risk assessments. They also needed to ensure that all activities are covered by a current risk assessment.

Percentage of DSEs completed and risk assessments outstanding.

Service Team	DSE's completed	Risk Assessments Outstanding
Corporate Strategy	100%	None – completed
ELP	96%	Car Parks Corporate Properties Wantage Civic Hall risk assessments need finalising
Finance	94%	Fraud Office South Lone Working Fraud Team
Health and Housing	74%	Work at Height Contaminated Land Temporary Accommodation
HR, IT and customer services	90%	Office Vale IT Vale Reception Vale Reception South needs updating IT lone working Office South IT South Data Capture Street Names
Legal and Democratic Services	95%	None - completed
Planning	86%	None - completed

41. All service teams have made a real effort to complete their service team DSE and risk assessments this year with tremendous progress being made across all teams.
42. Heads of service must make sure that all outstanding DSE and risk assessments for their service team are completed by 30 September 2012.
43. Service managers must now make sure that any actions outstanding from risk assessments have been implemented and that all employees understand the risks involved in the work they carry out and the measures in place to prevent or reduce the risks identified.

Council Properties

44. Operational responsibility for council properties falls under several shared service managers. To ensure that the organisation is fully compliant with current legislation and meets approved standards in terms of testing, maintenance, examinations and inspections of work equipment and systems, management team agreed that we should take a more corporate approach on some aspects of property management.
45. The property team produced an excel spread sheet containing details of all council properties on which the shared facilities team leader can record details of statutory maintenance, inspection and testing required and assign responsibilities.
46. The shared facilities manager will be responsible for the following across all council properties:
 - providing information and guidance to managers with responsibilities for the councils' operational buildings on all aspects of fire safety and council contractors
 - ensuring consistency in terms of quality and frequency of work carried out and that it meets approved standards
 - ensuring best use of resources.

The relevant service manager will retain responsibility for ensuring that all health and safety responsibilities in relation to that property are satisfied.

47. This does mean that the councils are relying on individual service managers to ensure that any actions recommended as a result of any examination, inspection or test are acted upon. Compliance will be audited as part of the health and safety advisers five year audit plan. However the audit plan has been compiled on the basis of potential risk and not all services can be audited in any one year, this means that the council may carry a level of risk on some properties at any time.
48. There is not a robust system in place to monitor that property/land owned by the council remains in a safe condition. We have had claims arising from incidents on our land (damage to vehicles, slips, trips and falls) which may have been prevented if such a system was in place. The managers responsible for the properties/land, in conjunction with the health and safety adviser need to establish a monitoring system based on the risks associated with the site and within the resources available. Longer term the economic

development team will be developing a property inspection procedure using the corporate property system by the end of September 2013.

Lone Working

49. The Vale Personnel Committee requested that we obtain regular usage reports from Forestcare on who is and is not using the lone working system. The Head of HR, IT and customer services has investigated the possibility and costs of obtaining these reports, and we have decided not to pursue this further. Service managers can monitor usage by:

- monitoring mobile phone bills; or
- contacting HR to obtain a specific usage report for an individual employee from Forestcare.

Risk Premises Register

50. Vale now has a system of sharing information, relating to problem customers, between service teams. Vale were unable to adopt the South procedure because of the different IT systems in use so the register is in the form of an excel spreadsheet with access to the information restricted to those that need it. IT hope to have developed a combined risk premises register by the end of 2012/13.

Wantage Civic Hall

51. A health and safety audit of the Hall identified large gaps in the health and safety management system which needed to be addressed promptly. This was partly due to employees leaving and changes to the way that Vale properties were managed and maintained. The health and safety adviser has been working with the appropriate managers to resolve the risks identified.

52. All the managers with responsibility for the Civic Hall and the facilities team have worked hard to improve health and safety and significant progress has been achieved, including:

- fire policy written
- fire emergency plan implemented
- fire risk assessment carried out and recommendations being implemented
- four employees trained in use of evac chair
- draft risk assessments have been completed
- monitoring of water systems to be carried out by an external contractor
- electrical appliance testing carried out at the same time as Abbey House.

First Aid

53. Last years annual report identified that the first aid arrangements were inadequate, as many trained first aiders had left the organisation and others were now working across both sites. There was also no means of contacting first aiders at Vale when customer services were closed.

54. We have made the following improvements to our first aid arrangements:

- nine more fully qualified first aiders, mainly based at Abbey House to increase cover
- employees at Wantage Civic Hall trained in first aid
- trained two employees who attend evening committee meetings in emergency first aid
- introduced a means of contacting first aiders at Abbey House
- purchased a defibrillator for Abbey House
- facilities employees responsible for opening and closing Abbey house trained in emergency first aid to increase cover at both ends of the day.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OBJECTIVES 1 APRIL 2012 – 31 MARCH 2013

55. The following health and safety actions are considered high priority at the end of March 2012 and will be included in the corporate strategy 2012/2013 work plan:

- produce an annual health and safety report for management team and heads of service
- continue to produce harmonised health and safety policies, concentrating on the following:
 - work equipment
 - hazardous substances
- work with the relevant service managers to identify all work equipment that we have responsibility for and to ensure that we are complying with our legal requirements and recommended good practice, in particular in terms of maintenance, examinations, inspections and tests. Where possible records to be kept on our corporate property system.
- work with procurement to ensure that our legal responsibilities relating to the selection and management of contractors are being met and are incorporated into the existing procurement and performance management process.
- develop a register of hazardous and dangerous substances
- implement the health and safety audit plan (attached)
- monitor and report that all employees have received the corporate health and safety training they need
- work with HR to incorporate DSE assessments along with relevant workflows to ensure that DSE assessments and subsequent actions are completed
- develop a short health and safety guide for employees.

CONCLUSIONS

56. Good progress has been made towards harmonising health and safety across both councils and meeting the health and safety objectives identified for the year. Health and safety risks increased slightly as a result of joint working between South and Vale, in that all policies needed to be harmonised and health and safety training had been put on hold until this work had been completed. Harmonisation of the health and safety policies is well underway and this has allowed health and safety training to commence again.
57. Managers of off-site Vale properties are now receiving more support with maintenance, inspections and examinations and we are making good progress. More work needs to be carried out to ensure that we are meeting our legal requirements in our off site properties.
58. Most managers need to recognise health and safety as a core responsibility of their role. The health and safety adviser is spending an inappropriate amount of time chasing managers for information and chasing up on actions which have not been completed in teams. It is essential that managers are proactive in managing their health and safety responsibilities in relation to their own teams services, and we will continue to make clarity and understanding of roles and responsibilities a key focus of our work in 2012/13.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

- Heads of service to ensure that their service teams complete any risk assessments still outstanding by 30 September 2012. They also need to ensure that all activities are covered by a current risk assessment.
- Heads of service must ensure that all DSE assessments still outstanding for their service team have been completed at both sites by 30 September 2012, and that further assessments are carried out where required in accordance with our DSE policy and procedures.
- Heads of service to ensure that shared managers with responsibility for corporate properties liaise with the shared technical and facilities manager regarding maintenance, inspection and testing requirements for council properties and that they proactively manage health and safety risks related to those properties.
- Shared managers responsible for council properties/land must ensure that a monitoring regime is in place to ensure that these sites remain in a safe condition. The risk assessment will determine the degree of monitoring required.
- Heads of service to ensure that managers and employees attend relevant compulsory fire safety, health and safety for managers, risk assessment and health and safety awareness training.
- Service managers to read the health and safety short guide for managers (available on the intranet) and ensure that they are carrying out their key management actions identified from each health and safety policy, in relation to their service area.

APPENDIX ONE - CURRENT HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Title	Current status	Issued
Health and Safety Policy	Harmonised	August 2010
Fire	On hold pending clarification of roles and responsibilities with facilities	
First Aid	Harmonised	Mar 2012
Legionellosis	Harmonised	Jan 2012
Lone Working	Harmonised	May 2011
Risk Assessment	Harmonised	May 2011
Shared Premises	Harmonised	May 2011
Stress	Included in HR workplan for 2012/13	
Safe driving at work	Harmonised	
Personal Protective Equipment	Harmonised	Aug 2010
Display Screen Equipment	Harmonised	June 2011
Electricity	Harmonised	May 2011
Workplace	Harmonised	May 2011
Hazardous Substances	Included in corporate strategy workplan for 2012/13	
Incident Reporting	Harmonised	July 2011
Work at Height	Harmonised	Aug 2010
Liquid Petroleum Gas	Include in hazardous substances policy	
Manual Handling	Harmonised	Dec 2011
Noise	Workplan for 2013/2014	
Contractors (Selection and Management)	Included in corporate strategy workplan for 2012/13	
Pressure Vessels	Include in work equipment policy	
Training	Harmonised	
Violence and Aggression	Harmonised	April 2012
Work Equipment	Included in corporate strategy workplan for 2012/13	
Gas Safety	Include in work equipment policy	
Asbestos	Workplan for 2013/2014	

APPENDIX TWO - HEALTH & SAFETY ACTION PLAN 2012/2013

1	Health and safety annual report
2	Write work equipment and hazardous substances policies
3	Work with the relevant service managers to identify all work equipment that we have responsibility for and ensure that we are complying with our legal requirements and recommended good practice
4	Work with procurement to ensure that our legal responsibilities relating to the selection and management of contractors are being met and are incorporated into the existing procurement and performance management process
5	Develop a register of hazardous and dangerous substances
6	Implement the health and safety audit plan commencing with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• audit off site properties and car parks: and• waste contract
7	Monitor and report that all employees have received the corporate health and safety training they need
8	Work with HR to incorporate DSE assessments along with relevant workflows to ensure that DSE assessments and subsequent actions are completed
9	Develop a short health and safety guide for employees

APPENDIX THREE – AUDIT PROGRAMME 2012/13 - 2015/16

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Year 1 2011 - 2012				DSE & Risk Assessments
Year 2 2012 – 2013	Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q4	Off Site Properties & Car Parks	Waste Service Lone Working Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q2	Grounds maintenance DSE spot checks Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q3
Year 3 2013 – 2014	Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q4	Cornerstone	Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q2	Crowmarsh
Year 4 2014 - 2015	Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q4	Abbey House	Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q2	Wantage Civic Hall
Year 5 2015 -2016	Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q4	Leisure Services	Follow up and report on actions arising from the H&S audits carried out in Q2	CCTV

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May 2012