

## London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

**Report to:** Audit and Pensions Committee

**Date:** 01/12/2020

**Subject:** Mid-year health and safety at work report 2020 / 2021

**Report of:** Paul Barton, Head of Corporate Safety

**Responsible Director:** Strategic Director for Economy

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### Summary

This report highlights the Council's activities and performance in health and safety at work at the half-year stage in financial year 2020 / 2021. It also recommends priorities for the remainder of the financial year.

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### Recommendation

For the Committee to note and comment on the report.

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**Wards Affected:** None

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### Legal implications

'Except in such cases as may be prescribed, it shall be the duty of every employer to prepare and as often as may be appropriate revise a written statement of [the] general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of [the] employees and the organisation and arrangements for the time being in force for carrying out that policy, and to bring the statement and any revision of it to the notice of all of [the] employees'. (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. section 2(3).

The policy statement, signed the leader and the chief executive, is displayed in all LBHF workplaces. The organisation and arrangements for health and safety at work in LBHF are found on the intranet and available in paper copy on request.

### Financial implications

No change. A budget is allocated for training of safety responders (Nominated First Aiders, Fire Evacuation Officers, Evacuation Chair Operators) as identified in policy, which is coordinated by corporate health and safety.

Health and safety at work is equal to all other business LBHF. Tier 2 and tier 3 managers are required under policy to budget for health and safety at work accordingly. Similarly, under policy, the council must ensure that the decisions they make take account of health and safety and that resources are allocated for this purpose.

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**DETAILED ANALYSIS****Key points of note**

The corporate health and safety team, like many services in Hammersmith and Fulham Council, has mostly been working in a reactive mode during the pandemic.

There was no enforcement action taken against the Council by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in this period. Three injuries have been reportable to HSE during this year so far. These are detailed below. No dangerous occurrences, occupational disease cases or gas safety incidents were reportable to HSE during this year so far.

Ongoing operational support is given to the pandemic by the corporate health and safety team. Advice is provided on personal protective equipment for frontline services and for display screen equipment safety when working at home.

Changes to the provision and duties of safety responders was necessitated by the pandemic, with additional management roles identified in policy. These were for appointed first aid duties and duties for fire evacuation coordination. This was done to support existing nominated first aiders and fire evacuation officers

**1. Coronavirus response from the corporate health and safety team**

Personal protective equipment (PPE) was immediately in demand at the start of the pandemic. With the council's fast-track response to local needs, corporate health and safety undertook a verification process for PPE procurement, with key safety aspects of a policy to back it up. As well as certificate of conformity checking on numerous items of newly imported PPE, the team were also overseeing assurance that demand was being met in accordance with the respective settings' risk assessments.

PPE for in-house essential frontline services was also verified by the team to ensure the correct equipment was provided to colleagues in relevant employment groups. Over 5 million items of PPE were procured and distributed across the borough to care homes, registered disabled children, carers and our vulnerable and shielding residents

Training, advice and support was expanded to include voluntary and certain charity sectors -for example, Mencap (Hammersmith) and the food bank projects in the borough.

A risk assessment process for individual employees was formulated through partnership working with the NHS and our Wellness Centre. Modifications were made to nearly every employment group within the council. The largest of these by far was the relocation of office duties to the home environment, which involved 1,700 workers. This was made possible through the council's foresight of agile working, manifest in the provision of laptops to the majority of staff during 2019. In early summer corporate health and safety then commenced verification of all display screen equipment risk assessment reviews, ensuring equipment provided to home workers during the pandemic was reasonably practicable while the national situation continued.

As preparations began for the end of lockdown [the first lockdown], corporate health and safety provided advice and recommendations for the safe reoccupation workplaces in reduced numbers. The fundamental change here was to our policy on safety responders: first aiders and fire evacuation officers. Policy now requires all management grade officers to undertake basic response duties for both first aid and fire evacuation, to supplement our fully trained complement. To this end, basic training is provided to management grade officers through the IBC Learning Zone.

## **2 Staff wellbeing during the pandemic**

Wellbeing is spearheaded by People & Talent. Diverse and wide-ranging wellbeing initiatives have been developed to support the personal resilience of our workforce during the pandemic and recovery.

The success of these initiatives is demonstrated through extremely positive outcomes evidenced from the 'outstanding' employee attendance statistics and survey results, which have been gathered during the pandemic. The datasets demonstrate significant employee engagement which has had a direct positive impact on the resilience of H&F to support the delivery of critical key services throughout an extremely challenging and difficult period.

Of particular note is the success of the Wellbeing Wednesday sessions, the launch of the 'supporting your personal resilience' intranet pages and the regularity and tone of the communications which have been published throughout the lockdown period.

A detailed report was presented at Political Cabinet by People and Talent on 6th July 2020.

## **3 Accidents, injuries and near-miss incidents**

Appendix 1 details accidents, injuries and near-miss incidents at the mid-year point 2020/2021. Four injuries so far have been reportable to the health and safety executive (HSE), all being injuries to employees.

Table 1 provides an overview of incidents reported to HSE.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Department</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> May	Over 7-day injury	Slip, trip or fall	Corp. Property & FM
8 <sup>th</sup> June	Over 7-day injury	Another type of accident (road traffic collision. Employee 1)	Environmental enforcement team
8 <sup>th</sup> June	Over 7-day injury	Another type of accident (road traffic collision. Employee 2)	Environmental enforcement team
2 <sup>nd</sup> July	Fracture / Over 7-day injury	Physical assault	Civil enforcement team

Table 1. Incidents reported to HSE at mid-year financial year 2020 / 2021

All incidents that are reportable to HSE are investigated by Corporate Health and Safety, seeking to make recommendations to prevent recurrence and requiring services to review risk assessments.

Additional control measures implemented directly from recommendations arising from such investigations include

- Review of driving at work policy, associated training, driver checks and vehicle checks to be completed in the early part of 2021;
- Review of zero tolerance policy on violence against staff: work in progress, with outstanding recommendation for a 'zero tolerance' poster campaign by the early part of 2021.

Overall, 67 incidents were reported in the first half of this year. 31 of these were accident injuries, 24 were violence and intimidation incidents, 3 were near miss incidents, 0 were dangerous occurrences (non-HSE reportable) and 9 were 'other' types of incident.

A reduction in all incidents from last year's midyear report is noted, with the exception of incidents resulting in injuries, which has risen slightly. It is noteworthy that violence and intimidation incidents have reduced by nearly half, which is perhaps a reflection of there being less front facing customer services in operation during lockdown and post-lockdown.

Last year's promulgation of correctly coding safety incidents appears to have the positive result of less being entered in the category of 'other', a reduction to 9 from last year's 35 at this point.

Table 2 shows comparison between the safety incident reporting figures for this financial mid-year and this period in the previous year.

2020 / 2021		2019 / 2020	
Accidents resulting in injury	31	Accidents resulting in injury	25
Violence and intimidation	24	Violence and intimidation	44
Other	9	Other	35
Near miss	3	Near miss	11
Dangerous occurrence	0	Dangerous occurrence	5

Table 2. Safety incident reporting. Comparison 2020/2021 midyear with 2019/2020

#### 4 Health and safety board. Summary of this period

During the first half of this financial year, the health and safety board has advised and moved forward the following items:

- ❖ Personal protective equipment policy. A revised policy for the pandemic to cover the new demands from commissioned services, partner agencies and charities in time of local and national urgency;
- ❖ Risk assessments during COVID-19. Agreement on processes for corporate approach in the risk management of essential services remaining in the borough during lockdown and, later on, a corporate approach to post-lockdown risk assessment and safe return to work approaches, including safe return to council buildings that are places of work;
- ❖ Display screen equipment (DSE) at home. Advice on a holding position during lockdown and further advice and procedure for provision of DSE during ongoing working from home during post-lockdown, inputting into guidance on new ways of working agenda;
- ❖ Personal safety policy, including lone working. Discussion and recommendation to SLT of ratification of revised policy document.
- ❖ Driving at work policy. Recommendation from the board to convene a policy review group for driving at work;
- ❖ Amendment to the operational risk register to identify the assistant director or chief officer for each entry;
- ❖ Changes to policy regarding appointed first aid duties and fire evacuation coordination duties for managers

#### 5 Health and Safety Audit Programme

Audits across all main areas of the Council that were carried over from the previous financial year were completed by lockdown in March 2020. A plan of works schedule is available from Corporate Health and Safety. Audits are delayed through reactive response to the pandemic, although programme was on track at lockdown and will return to programme to straddle financial years.

Risk profiling of all council services has commenced to review the organisational health and safety risk profile. This will be completed by the end of the financial year and seeks to inform improvement to the internal health and safety audit structure.

## 6 Performance

The operational risk register covers both reactive and proactive monitoring and is now distributed to the health and safety board every eight weeks through Microsoft Teams.

## 7 Update on priorities for 2020 / 2021

Health and safety at work priorities for the council are currently determined and dictated by the coronavirus pandemic. Health and safety is a key component in all levels of the response.

COVID-19 risk assessments are regularly under review, with the corporate health and safety service reporting into the technical assurance group on review compliance.

If and where there is scope to do so, other priorities for 2020 and 2021, established through active and reactive monitoring during the year, are recommended as follows:

- ❖ Improve transport safety management at Bagley's Lane depot. New gates have been fitted and vehicle segregations markings improved. Usage of the workshops has been given more clarity and direction to avoid ad-hoc uncontrolled usage.
- ❖ Improve asbestos management plan knowledge within schools. Many school premises managers and business managers have been trained in asbestos awareness so far this year. Ongoing meetings with our competent asbestos adviser for schools are exploring ways to improve local asbestos management records. This compliance criterion is also audited by the corporate health and safety team.
- ❖ Continue ongoing client-side health and safety scrutiny overview of the West King Street Renewal (WKSr) project, particularly the refurbishment of Hammersmith Town Hall to help achieve the target completion date. Corporate health and safety continue to attend meetings, giving client-side input and advice.
- ❖ The employee personal safety policy, including lone working, has been completed.
- ❖ Review is taking place of the work-related stress policy and procedure, including the procedure for risk assessment and analysis of data from work-related stress risk assessment. The work is ongoing to the end of the financial year.
- ❖ An improved health and safety management system software program is at the tendering stage of procurement. The tri-borough systems becomes increasingly outmoded and a replacement system is sought by the end of this financial year.

- ❖ An improved corporate employee protection register, to allow confidence in ease of use and to discontinue all local and departmental registers, is being developed with help from Digital Services.

## **8 Equality implications**

There are no equality implications in this report.

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## Appendix A - Safety incidents during first half of financial year 2020-21

Safety incidents during first half of financial year 2020 / 2021

What has happened?	Number
Injury Accident	31
Near Miss	3
Other Incident	9
Violence and Intimidation Incident	24

What team are you part of?	how many
Community Safety	1
Community Support Service	1
Economy and Infrastructure	1
Estate Support and Security	3
Housing Advice	2
LBHF Contracts and Enforcement	2
Mental Health Team Ellerslie Road	1
Neighbourhood Wardens - HRA	1
North Base	2
Parking Enforcement	6
Parks and Open Spaces	1
Parks Police 3	1
Property Services Head of Operations	1
Sheltered Housing North	3
South Base	7
The Haven Centre	30
Youth Offending Team LBHF	1