

# LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

**Report to:** Audit Committee

**Date:** 22/06/2021

**Subject:** Annual health and safety at work report 2020/21

**Report of:** The Health and Safety Board

**Report author:** 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 for the financial year 2020/2021. It also recommends priorities for the forthcoming financial year.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the committee note the health and safety at work performance of the council during the financial year 2020 / 2021 (*pages 3 to 9*).
2. That the committee note the recommended priorities for the forthcoming financial year 2021 / 2022. (*page 10*)

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**Wards Affected:** All wards

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<b>Our Values</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the H&amp;F Values</b>
Building shared prosperity	Good health and safety performance has the goal of eliminating and reducing workplace accidents. Accidents come at a cost (human and financial) both to the council and to the injured person. A shared prosperity between the organisation, the employee and the residents is achieved by the elimination and reduction of accidents in the borough.
Creating a compassionate council	Good health and safety management has a moral objective. To learn of

	family, friends, colleagues or residents killed, or seriously injured, in a workplace accident is profoundly distressing. Therefore, a compassionate council must embrace the moral aspect of health and safety at work, not merely the economic and legal aspects of it.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Good health and safety at work performance includes the safety of the residents with whom we interact in the everyday aspects of our core business activities.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Good health and safety management is financially efficient because it prevents fines for breach of statutory duty or settlement of civil claims brought against the council.
Taking pride in H&F	We take pride in a good health and safety at work performance because it reflects the image of the borough as portrayed to our residents and to others.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Good health and safety management plays a part in tackling the climate emergency in many ways. For instance, the requirement to seek less hazardous workplace substances for employee health also has ecological benefits when, for example, replacing solvents with water-based products during COSHH assessment review.

## Financial Impact

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 induction training is funded for all employees and coordinated through the 'Be-online Awaken' software program. Specific health and safety training is identified through risk assessment, verified through audit and funded by the respective department.

In Hammersmith and Fulham Council health and safety at work is equal to all other business. Tier 2 and tier 3 officers 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.

## 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 by the leader and the head of paid service, is displayed in all LBHF workplaces. The statement is valid until 2023, unless a change in head of paid service / leadership occurs first, in which case the statement must be renewed sooner. The organisation and arrangements for health and safety at work in LBHF are found on the intranet.

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## 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. Five injuries have been reportable to HSE during this year. These are detailed below. No dangerous occurrences, occupational disease cases or gas safety incidents were reportable to HSE during this year.

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**

This financial year's health and safety report details the work and achievement across the council in personal protective equipment (PPE) fast-track response to essential service employees and other local needs early into the pandemic, with key safety aspects of a policy to back it up.

A risk assessment process for individual employees was formulated through partnership working with the NHS and our Wellness Centre. Risk management 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 circa 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.

From the end of the first lockdown through the subsequent stages of recovery and revision into further national lockdowns, corporate health and safety provided advice and recommendations for the safety of frontline work tasks and essential services workplaces in reduced numbers. Scrutiny of safety management within those services working in the borough remains a function of both the technical assurance group (TAG) and the Covid-19 board. TAG verifies risk assessments and confirms workplace Covid-19 safety arrangements as part of its urgent work programme during the pandemic.

Coupled with planned new ways of working post-pandemic during the forthcoming financial year and subject to the national situation, a fundamental policy change during the year was made to our 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 the talent, transformation and inclusion department and supported by the corporate health and safety team. 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.

In the last few months the introduction and training of mental health first aid representatives across all directorates has likewise boosted resource availability for the support of staff wellbeing.

A detailed report was presented at political cabinet by the talent, transformation and inclusion department on 6th July 2020.

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

Appendix A details accidents, injuries and near-miss incidents at the end of year 2020/2021. Five injuries 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.

Date	Category	Type	Department
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
31 <sup>st</sup> March	Fracture / Over 7-day injury	Fall from height	Libraries and archives

Table 1. Incidents reported to HSE in financial year 2020 / 2021

All incidents that are reportable to HSE are investigated by the corporate health and safety team, 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 during the year include:

- Review of driving at work policy, associated training, ‘driver checks’ and vehicle checks was completed in the early part of 2021, with a further recommendation to explore digital solutions to aid driver safety management across the authority. This is to be discussed at the health and safety board into next year;
- Review of policy on violence against staff: work in progress, with the outstanding recommendation for a ‘respect your local service providers’ campaign under discussion during the forthcoming financial year at the health and safety board. The assailant from the RIDDOR reported physical assault was identified and prosecution is in progress at the time of writing, with the court date recently postponed. CEOs are now equipped with body-cameras.
- Review of the libraries and archives risk assessment, with inclusion and training in safe working at height delivered to all staff.

Overall, 136 incidents were reported during this year. 53 of these were accident injuries, 41 were violence and intimidation incidents, 13 were near miss incidents, 3 were dangerous occurrences (non-HSE reportable) and 26 were 'other' types of incident.

There is a significant reduction in all incidents from last year's figures.

The Council's overall incidence rate this year is 4.7<sup>1</sup>, calculated on a full-time equivalent (FTE) establishment of 2,016 employees at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 for the year 2020 / 2021. This is a 55% decrease in accident rates from the previous year in overall incidents.

The HSE reportable incidence rate is 2.5<sup>2</sup> calculated on the same FTE establishment. This shows a decrease of 34% in rate from the previous year in HSE reportable incidents.

Violence and intimidation incidents are reduced by more than half of the previous year's incidents, which reflects there being less front facing customer services in operation during lockdown and post-lockdown. However, of those staff remaining in front facing customer roles, violence and intimidation incidents have actually increased in number. This mirrors a national trend in the service and retail sectors.

At Hammersmith and Fulham Council incidents of violence against staff are reported to the police. Crime numbers are recorded in the incident reports. Service managers are required to follow-up with the police and to progress prosecutions against perpetrators where evidence can be substantiated. The addition of body cameras to our higher risk employment groups during this year has assisted in the evidence gathering process, as well as acting as a deterrent and will continue to do so to protect staff.

Incidents of dysregulated behaviour within care settings (Children's Services and Social Care) that led to staff or care resident injuries, or care resident injuries that are spotted by staff, this year total 37. In such incidents care plans are reviewed and amended to reflect the investigation's findings. By way of example, one particular setting's progress is provided in appendix B.

In addition to the further risk control measures in progress to protect staff mentioned above, corporate health and safety has joined a working party coordinated by HSE and Manchester University in researching key deliverables to the service and retail sectors, to eliminate or reduce to the lowest level reasonably practicable third party violence and aggression against employees.

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 26 from last year's 67.

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<sup>1</sup> Calculated on all injury and violence or intimidating behaviour incidents (94No.)

<sup>2</sup> Calculated on HSE reportable incidents (5No.).

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

2020 / 2021		2019 / 2020	
Accidents resulting in injury	53	Accidents resulting in injury	88
Violence and intimidation	41	Violence and intimidation	105
Other	26	Other	67
Near miss	13	Near miss	16
Dangerous occurrence	3	Dangerous occurrence	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>201</b>

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

#### 4 Health and safety board. Summary of this financial year 2020 / 2021

The function of the health and safety board is twofold. Firstly, the board promulgates the recommendations from the previous year's annual report, driving consultation on policy review and change at strategic level through directorate senior management teams (SMTs) and trades unions (TU Forum). These can be interpreted as our leading indicators in safety performance. Secondly, the board examines and advises on matters reactive in nature that arise during the year, either through internal sources or external sources. For example, scrutiny of emerging trends in incidents (internal sources) to identify process or procedural changes via risk assessment review. This is done with a view to preventing recurrence, eliminating future risk or reducing risk to the lowest level so far as is reasonably practicable. These can be interpreted as our lagging indicators in safety performance.

This year the board has advised on and moved forward the following items in relation to the pandemic:

- ❖ **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. Many of those assigned to complete e-learning and self-assessment have yet to complete this. Therefore, e-learning and self-assessment will be a priority in the coming year;
- ❖ **Case monitoring.** Monitoring of confirmed cases and outbreaks in LBHF workplaces, with risk assessment and outbreak plan reviews in each case took place. Overall the total number cases in the non-school LBHF workplace since September 2020, of which seven became workplace outbreaks (i.e. more than one case in the same workplace at the same time) was thirty-nine. If the total number of employees in each case and outbreak as confirmed coronavirus positive is counted together, the total number of employees working in the borough during the pandemic that became symptomatic in the workplace, or had inadvertently been present in the workplace when they were infected with coronavirus during the previous 48 hours to becoming

symptomatic (then subsequently testing positive) is fifty-six. The figure reduced through early March and was tailing off towards the end of March, broadly following the national picture. LBHF school staff are not included in this figure.

This year the board has advised on and moved forward the following other items:

- ❖ **Personal safety policy, including lone working.** A revision of the policy to streamline corporate approaches to risk management in terms of personal protection GPS devices, a consolidated employee protection register controlled centrally through the corporate health and safety service, improved oversight and governance of the employee protection register through policy revision
- ❖ **Driving at work policy review.** Introducing further safety checks of our drivers and further work into next financial year towards an automated electronic solution for the monitoring of driver health and safety at work.
- ❖ **Operational risk register.** Amendment to the operational risk register to identify the assistant director or chief officer for each entry;
- ❖ **Safety responders.** Changes to policy regarding appointed first aid duties and fire evacuation coordination duties for managers to reflect forthcoming proposed new ways of working, as previously noted;
- ❖ **Ensuring we have the right policies and procedures in place.** In examining health and safety prosecutions of other local authorities during the year, we review our own relevant policies and procedures to ensure all is being done, so far as is reasonably practicable, to prevent employees, contractors and residents from harm. This year prosecutions led to examination and reviews of staff safety from violence in schools, inspection of trees, inspection of playground equipment and inspection of street furniture assets.

## **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.

The audit work programme during this year was delayed through reactive response to the pandemic, although the programme 'made ground' as the year progressed through virtual auditing. For schools this has been achieved by self-assessment questionnaires backed-up by returned photographic evidence. For all other council services that have operated in the borough during this year, risk profiling questionnaires were distributed, or in the case of higher hazard services contact visits were made by corporate health and safety under controlled conditions.

## **6 Operational performance overview**

The operational risk register (the register) covers both reactive and proactive monitoring. The register is distributed to the health and safety board every eight weeks through Microsoft Teams, from where it is taken by representatives to directorate management teams (DMTs) for updating.



## 7 Performance on priorities for 2020 / 2021

Health and safety at work priorities for the council were 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.

Completion or progress in other priorities for this year, established through active and reactive monitoring during the previous year and given in the annual report for that year (2019/2020), are reported as follows:

- ❖ **Improve transport safety management at Bagley's Lane depot.** New main gates were fitted, security was enhanced, vehicle segregation markings were improved, private cars removed from the site, use of the workshops has been given more clarity and direction to avoid ad-hoc uncontrolled usage.
- ❖ **Review of the driving at work policy.** Following a road traffic accident in June 2020, this review was completed in March 2021 after input from a services wide policy working group led by Public Realm. A remaining recommendation to the council is for the implementation of an electronic app (driver safety monitoring system) to consolidate a central approach to driver risk management in the council.
- ❖ **Asbestos management in schools.** Many school premises managers and business managers were trained in asbestos awareness to inform their inspection plans. The inception of a new service for education assets and operations has spearheaded the completion of this performance indicator and ensured the ongoing strategic monitoring. This asbestos management compliance criterion is audited by the corporate health and safety team.
- ❖ **Civic campus.** Continued 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 the project achieve the target completion date. Corporate health and safety continue to attend meetings, giving client-side input and advice.
- ❖ **Employee personal safety.** The employee personal safety policy, including lone working, has been completed. The employee protection register has been consolidated into a corporate register controlled centrally and governance has been improved through policy change.
- ❖ **Management system software.** An improved health and safety management system software program was introduced to replace the outmoded tri-borough system. At present the safety incident reporting module has been activated and it is anticipated other modules will be added in time.

## 8. Priorities for the coming year 2021/2022

8.1 **Fire safety management.** A review of the corporate fire safety management policy, with Housing Services, in respect of forthcoming significant amendment to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

8.2 **Coronavirus.** Ongoing monitoring of the situation locally, nationally and internationally to ensure health and safety at work aspects of preparedness are included in strategic business continuity.

8.3 **Training.** Review and substantial revision of the health and safety training policy, including revision of the health and safety training matrix. The aim is to achieve a consolidated corporate policy with clear guidelines on levels of training required across all employment groups in the council.

8.4 **Driver safety management.** Further consideration of software management systems available and modest administration resources to oversee the introduction and ongoing usage of such a system.

8.5 **Risk profiling.** The 2020 business continuity institute's horizon scanning report notes that benchmarking via longer term trend analysis ('internal risk assessment benchmarking') is a recommendation to assess risks regarding health and safety in an organisation. Realignment of health and safety risk profiling should be seen as part of our road to recovery. It informs our strategic key performance indicators in health and safety performance for the challenging future ahead. A risk profile of the organisation will be undertaken to inform improvement to the internal health and safety audit structure.

8.6 **Work-related stress.** Introduction of a work-related stress indicator tool module, for the improved monitoring and support of staff wellbeing and to inform policy in the ongoing management of work-related stress risk.

8.7 **Training and assessment for working in the home environment.** With up to 1,700 employees working at home, whether in small part, large part or fulltime, the target is to ensure all those assigned DSE training and assessment that work from home have completed it by end of the forthcoming financial year.

## 9. Equality, diversity and inclusivity implications

There are no equality, diversity and inclusivity implications in this report.

### LIST OF APPENDICES

- ❖ Appendix A. Safety incident reporting 2020 / 2021 by incident type and service location. Page 11
- ❖ Appendix B. An example of continued risk management in SEND and social care settings. Page 12

## Appendix A

Safety incident reporting: 2020 / 2021 (shown by incident type and by service location)

What has happened?	Number
Dangerous Occurrence	3
Injury Accident	53
Near Miss	13
Other Incident	26
Violence and Intimidation Incident	41
	136
What team are you part of?	Number
Administration and Premises Salaries	1
Assessment Teams	1
Building and Property Management	1
Careline Services	1
<i>Chelsea Library (+4) has been removed</i>	nil
Community Safety	2
Community Support Service	1
Contact and Assessment Team 3	2
Contact Service	5
Economy and Infrastructure	2
Estate Support and Security	8
Fulham Library	6
Governance and Scrutiny	1
Hammersmith Library	1
Head of Compliance and Health and Safety	8
Housing Advice	5
Housing Services North	1
LBHF Contracts and Enforcement	5
Leaseholder Services	1
Mental Health Team Eilerslie Road	1
Middle Base	1
Neighbourhood Wardens - HRA	4
North Base	3
Parking Enforcement	7
Parks and Open Spaces	1
Parks Police 3	1
Property Services Head of Operations	3
Rivercourt Respite Service	1
Sheltered Housing North	3
Shepherds Bush Library	2
South Base	14

## Appendix B

### An example of continued risk management in SEND and social care settings

The Haven now has access to a specialist behaviour support service, which is delivered by H&F CAMHS (joint funded LA and CCG). We have delivered extensive workforce development to improve quality of recording and learning from incidents. The implementation of new whole team behaviour and physical intervention training supports improved skills and development of a culture of prevention of escalation. This new approach includes a train the trainer model which supports ongoing development within the service.

The Haven continues to work closely with special schools to share behaviour support and communication training and support plans. We have trained two in-house 'Team Teach' trainers who delivery courses, advise and support staff around positive behaviour management. The number of incidents and physical interventions have reduced in the last 2 6-month periods (numbers below)

#### Incidents in total

<b>Month</b>	<b>Total per Month (with and without physical intervention)</b>	<b>Number with physical intervention</b>
<i>May 2020</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>June 2020</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>July 2020</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>August 2020</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>September 2020</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>October 2020</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>

<b>Month</b>	<b>Total per Month (with and without physical intervention)</b>	<b>Number with physical intervention</b>
<i>November 2020</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>December 2020</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>January 2021</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>February 2021</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>March 2021</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>April 2021</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>