

# HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

April 2020 to end March 2021

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This annual report sets out the Council's occupational health and safety performance during the twelve month period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. As with previous reports it is split into a number of sections highlighting the key issues. It also sets out new policies which have been implemented as part of the control measures within the corporate health and safety framework.
- 1.2 Furthermore the update provides an indication of the effectiveness and success of the health and safety control measures the Council has in place with evidence showing training delivered, progress towards meeting health and safety aims and objectives and the number of accidents recorded.

## **2. COVID-19**

- 2.1 This twelve month period has been a huge challenge for health and safety across the authority. The response to COVID has resulted in a significant increase in support required by all service areas. Below is a summary of the action taken to ensure the safety of employees and the public using our facilities.

### **2.2 Covid Internal Response/Recovery Team**

Daily meetings were a necessity for the initial phase of the pandemic. This enabled the Council to agree on priority services and ensure a corporate response. Eventually, the meetings turned into a recovery phase and were able to reduce to weekly.

### **2.3 Remote working**

Although working from home wasn't new to the Authority, there were employees who had never worked from home prior to the pandemic. There was a need to ensure that all employees had the equipment required and competence to set up a compliant workstation within the home environment.

### **2.4 Maintaining delivery of key services**

Initially, wherever possible services were delivered remotely, but some key priority services such as refuse, and home alarms continued. This required redeployment of staff from low priority services to provide support to cover additional workload, and potential shortages in staffing levels due to the pandemic. Risk assessing staff's abilities and additional training was required to ensure safe re-deployment.

There was a need to maintain a working presence at the Arena, with minimal staff attending site.

### **2.5 Safe working practices and risk assessments**

New safe systems of work were required to record how services were being delivered in a COVID safe manner for both the employee and the public, in line with the government guidance in place at the time. This included new guidelines and ways of working for the Arena and Eastcroft Depot.

New COVID risk assessments were created. These demonstrate why services and access to facilities were suspended, what additional COVID controls were implemented to ensure safe delivery. There was a need for additional signage to be erected across all sites.

## 2.6 **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hygiene**

Ensuring staff had access to appropriate PPE became a priority. There was also a need to train staff in correct donning and doffing of PPE to ensure no cross contamination.

Additional cleaning chemicals and cleaning schedules were implemented both within the office accommodation but also within refuse vehicles and on parks and play equipment when they are able to re-open.

## 2.7 **Employee wellbeing and sickness monitoring**

There has been an increased need to ensure the wellbeing of our staff for a number of reasons including, general anxiety from the pandemic, higher demand in workload, working from home and the impact of not seeing colleagues face to face and additional pressures from home schooling. This has resulted in a significant increase in communications with employees and support through webinars.

Monitoring and recording of sickness and isolation data for staff was critical in ensuring we could carry out internal track and trace processes. Although staff have tested positive for COVID, there have been no known transmissions within the workplace. Even more encouraging is that general sickness absence levels have decreased this year.

## 3.0 **OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES**

### 3.1 **Policy Review**

The Council has a programme of policy review and implementation to support effective health and safety management. Due to the COVID pandemic the review programme was delayed whilst priority was given to developing new guidance documents, safe working procedures and risk assessments to ensure our staff were supported as they continued to provide Council services throughout the pandemic.

The following policies have been reviewed and updated in this twelve month period.

- Display Screen Equipment Policy December 2020
- Evacuation Chair policy December 2020
- Fire Policy January 2021
- Hepatitis A and B control January 2021
- COVID-19 guidance and procedural documents ongoing throughout the year

Policies that are overdue a review will be prioritised in the first quarter of 2021/22.

### 3.2 **Training**

Health and safety training needs are identified in a number of ways including Personal Development Reviews (PDRs), regular one to ones, team meetings and through the Executive Management Team. The Health and Safety Advisor also ensures that training is consistent with our duties and legal responsibilities.

- 3.3 Training provision has been difficult through the pandemic, with some being completed virtually where possible and other training delivered face to face in a COVID secure way. However, some none urgent training may have been postponed depending on training providers and individual team priorities.
- 3.4 The following health and safety training was organised through Human Resources in the last 12 months.

**Table of Staff Training**

<b>Course Subject</b>	<b>Number of Staff attended</b>	<b>% of those requiring training who have been trained</b>	<b>Outcome/impact</b>
Emergency First Aid	11	100%	Training to ensure first aid cover at sites
Routine and Operational Playground Inspection course	8	100%	Training course for employees who have involvement in parks and playground management/safety.
Fire safety Training e-learning	13* (51)	24%	Refresher training for staff on fire safety issues. There are 210 employees who have access to the e-learning. The current course is over 3 years old and a new course needs to be added to ensure people carry out a refresher.
Display Screen Equipment e-learning	67* (68)	32%	On-line training and assessment of computer workstations. 210 employees have been given access to the e-learning. A new course went live in March 2020 to tie in with staff changing to working from home
Legionella awareness e-learning	0* (36)	90%	This training is for all staff who need to be aware of the risks of Legionella within the workplace. The training was released in 2018. 40 staff require this training.
Asbestos awareness e-learning	1* (36)	88%	This training is for all staff who need to be aware of the risks of Asbestos within the workplace. The training was released in 2018. 41 staff require this training.
Manual handling e-learning	12* (184)	88%	Basic manual handling awareness for low risk staff. 210 employees have been given access to the e-learning package.
Working at Height e-learning	0* (33)	85%	39 employees have been requested to complete this training due to their job role

\* this figure shows the number trained in this 12 month period, the figure in brackets shows the cumulative total within the last three years.

- 3.5 The above training is also supported by significant on the job training within all Service Areas but in particular at the higher risk Depot site. Training at the Depot is delivered in a number of ways including tool box talks which are brief practical sessions for employees on site. Other types of training also include for example robust induction training specific to the job role, tasks and equipment used, and driver training. The ultimate aim of the training is to ensure that the job is carried out in the correct safe manner to reduce accident rate
- 3.6 You will see from the table in 2.4 that the completion of e-learning has not been very successful. There has been ongoing issues with chasing employees if they haven't completed mandatory training. In the past this has been a manual time consuming task. A recent upgrade to the e-learning system now enables automatic reminders to be sent to employees when training is due and also copies in their manager when training is overdue. It is hoped that this upgrade will improve completion figures moving forward.

**3.7 Meetings of Health and Safety Groups**

The Council has in place a number of health and safety groups to ensure that health and safety is discussed at relevant levels within the organisation.

Meeting	Frequency of meetings	attendees
Corporate Health and Safety Group	Six monthly	Executive Management Team
Employee Health and Safety Group	six monthly 13 May 2020 18 Nov 2020	Executive Manager Neighbourhoods, Health and Safety Advisor, 8 work place representatives
Legionella, Asbestos and Tree Management Group	6 monthly 19 May 2020 3 Dec 2020	Executive Manager Neighbourhoods Relevant managers Health and Safety Advisor
Depot	Monthly team meetings	All collection teams

- 3.8 Health and Safety is also an area of discussion in staff one to one's and performance development reviews.
- 3.9 In the last year the meetings detailed above have enabled consideration to be given to a number of issues including training, occupational health, accident statistics, legislation and policy update and service area feedback.

**3.10 Occupational Health**

The Council are supported by an external Occupational Health provider who are utilised to provide a host of occupational health packages. Within the last twelve months the services that they have provided specifically relating to health and safety issues have included:

	Attendance numbers	Apr	Comment

	2020 to end March 2021	
Pre-employment medicals	12	All new employees are assessed through a pre-employment questionnaire prior to commencing their role with the Council
HGV Driver medicals	1	

3.11 Provision of flu injections this year has proven difficult. Staff were asked to source their own flu injections where possible and to claim the cost back.

### 3.12 **Workplace Health**

Workplace Health Champions have been involved in a number of promotional activities for staff across the sites including:

- Cycle to Work
- Alzheimer's month
- Great British Spring Clean (in Sept 2020 when restrictions permitted)
- Around the World in 80 days walking challenge

There has been significant additional COVID related support provided to staff over the last 12 months focussing on mental wellbeing and the additional pressures and impacts of the pandemic. An external wellbeing provider Red Umbrella have provided regular webinars for employees including:

- Leading in a crisis
- Impact of social media in lockdown
- Coping strategies for working from home, boundaries and recognising negative behaviour
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Addictive behaviour during lockdown
- Mindfulness
- Relationships at work and home
- Returning to the Office

### 3.13 **Additional Activity Areas**

**Legionella** – significant work has been undertaken to identify and find solutions to resolve positive legionella test results from Gresham pavilion.

**Trees** – tree surveys have now been completed across the Borough by an external consultant. Tree reports are graded in priority based on risk.

## 4.0 **PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING HEALTH AND SAFETY GOALS**

4.1 At its meeting on 7 July 2020 the Corporate Overview Group supported the following health and safety goals. These were previously set by the Council's

Executive Health and Safety Group and are monitored and reviewed by them. Progress is set out below.

H&S Goal	Target date	Action to date	Target met?
Monitor and review the effectiveness of COVID-secure measures across the Council	End March 2021	COVID control measures have been regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they are in-line with current restrictions.  Although a number of staff have been diagnosed with COVID there have been no known workplace transmissions.	100%
Review and update all H&S policies that have not been reviewed in last 3 years	End March 2021	Of the 9 policies due to be reviewed only 4 were completed. These will be prioritised in Qtr 1	44%
Complete a health and safety audit of Fountain Court	End March 2021	A COVID health and safety inspection took place prior to the facilities re-opening. A full health and safety audit will be completed by end Sept 2021.	40%
Deliver workplace health initiatives in line with Workplace Health Gold award	End March 2021	The Nottinghamshire Workplace Health scheme ran by Notts Public Health has been put on hold due to the pandemic. Wellbeing work has continued to be a priority for RBC and the Wellbeing Champions have continued to deliver initiatives throughout the pandemic.	100%

## 5. PERFORMANCE

### 5.1 Accident report forms completed

Corporately the number of accident report forms completed by employees and agency staff within the six month period is set out in the following table:

#### Accident report forms completed

	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21
Establishment figure head count	358	340	338-303*	291	285	275	266	257	259
Depot	45	34	19	24	18	15	10	10	14
Arena (Civic)	5	5	4	2	2	3	2	2	0
Community Contact Centre	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0

Community Facilities	5	2	1	1	1	1	5	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Incidence rate</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>62</b>

\*The establishment figure dropped from 338 to 303 from 1<sup>st</sup> September with the move of Streetwise.

5.2 The table above shows that the number of accidents to employees/agency staff has increased slightly compared to last year but has remained consistent with the previous two years.

5.3 The Incidence Rate shows the number of accidents per 1000 employees. This is calculated by the number of accident forms completed, divided by number of employees, multiplied by 1000. The HSE use this formula to compare businesses accident rates, however they only look at number of reportable accidents under RIDDOR and not accident forms completed.

#### 5.4 *Accident reports by type*

The table below sets out the accident figures by type.

#### **Accident Report Forms by type**

	201 2/13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21
Struck by Moving Object	14	8	4	9	4	5	3	2	4
Strike against fixed object	6	5	1	5	6	2	1	4	0
Slip / Trip / Fall	26	9	11	4	5	9	5	4	5
Manual Handling	6	12	6	8	7	3	3	2	6
Animal attack (e.g. dog)	3	3	2	0	0	0	5	0	1
Other (Shock/Contact with liquids)	1	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>

5.5 Key points to consider from the figures presented in this table are:

- Slip/trip/fall accidents have remained at a stable low level for the last few years



- Manual handling accidents have increased this year when compared to the previous 3 years where they were at a very low level

5.6 *The number of employee days lost due to accidents*

	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21
Number of days lost	166	38	102	262.5	77	161	99	39	15

5.7 The number of days off as a result of an accident at work is the lowest recorded. The number of days absent has fluctuated significantly over the past few years. The average annual figure over the last nine years equates to 107 days. You will see from the table in 4.8 that there were only 3 accidents resulting in time off from work.

5.8 The following table shows the incident and injury type for those accidents which resulted in time lost.

Incident Type	Injury type	Location	Time lost in days
Manual Handling	Shoulder injury	R2Go	8
Manual handling	Strain arm/shoulder	R2Go	5
Struck by moving object	Pain	foot	2
<b>Total</b>			<b>15</b>

5.9 *The number of RIDDOR injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences involving Council employees*

In the 12 month period 1 accident was reported to the Health and Safety Executive as required by the RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) legislation. This compares to 3 in the previous year.

5.10 *The number of health and safety enforcement notices*

There have been no visits by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the Fire Service within this 12 month period. There have not been any enforcement notices served on the Council.

**6. THE COUNCIL'S WIDER ROLE IN HEALTH AND SAFETY**

6.1 The Council has health and safety duties to persons not in its employment, for example members of public visiting our sites. The risk assessment process

and management of the Council’s services ensures that risks to the public and contractors are assessed at the same time as the risk to our employees.

6.2 Actions we’ve taken as a Council to reduce risks to members of public when visiting our premises and also to those involved in activities with Council staff include:

- COVID control measures in place at all our sites in line with current government guidance
- Water risk assessments have been completed at sites across the Borough
- Fire risk assessments completed and in place for all Council occupied buildings
- Legionella risk assessments have been reviewed and updated for all appropriate sites
- Asbestos surveys completed and management plans in place
- The gritting of car parks during periods of inclement weather to ensure safe access to the public
- Scheduled inspections of play equipment at parks

6.3 The proactive actions outlined above help to reduce and manage risk at Council sites and venues. Furthermore they assist in maintaining low accident statistics for the public and contractors in comparison with the volume and numbers of people involved. The table below set out these figures and provides a previous year comparison.

	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21
Member of Public	10	10	15	25	10	2	7	16	1
Contractor	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

6.4 There has been a dramatic decrease in accidents involving members of the public when compared with previous years. COVID has resulted in our facilities being closed to the public for a significant length of time, however when government restrictions have permitted the outdoor facilities have been open to the public and have been extremely busy.

## 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The information reported in relation to the management of health and safety indicates that figures for number of accidents to employees/agency staff has increased slightly compared to last year but has remained consistent with the previous two years.

7.2 The figure for days absent from work as a result of an accident whilst at work is at its lowest level recorded. However this figure does fluctuate greatly from year to year. Within this 12 month period, only 3 of the accidents resulted in time off from work. As always, employees are encouraged to return to work and this can be helped by the use of the fit note process by the GP which allows employees to return to work earlier on phased return and/or with adaptations to duties.

7.3 Unfortunately due to the ongoing pressures of COVID pandemic and the resulting additional health and safety workload, not all of the health and safety objectives set at the beginning of the financial year have been met. Workload has been prioritised throughout the year, and outstanding actions have been rolled on to the work programme for 2021/22.

7.4 In order to ensure continuing development in health and safety policies and practice the following objectives have been determined for the forthcoming year. These objectives have been identified by giving due regard to the issues highlighted in the report.

- Continue to monitor and review the effectiveness of COVID-secure measures across the Council
- Review and update all health and safety policies that have not been reviewed in the last 3 years
- Complete a health and safety audit Fountain Court
- Deliver workplace health initiatives in line with Workplace Health Gold award