

To: Joint Consultative Board: Non-Teaching

On: 1st September 2021

Report by Alan Russell, Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Developments in Health, Safety and Wellbeing

1. **Summary**

This report outlines the developments which have taken place since the last meeting of the Joint Consultative Board: Non-Teaching.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 This report is for information only and to note that this is a retrospective record of health, safety and well being activities undertaken by Finance and Resources, HR, Health and Safety section and other council services.
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3. **Background**

This section of the report details the activities undertaken since the last JCB.

The report below focusses on the actions and activities to continue to support the council's response and recovery plans. The Health and Safety team have been an integral part of the council's emergency management team, providing clear guidance as documents have been released from the UK and Scottish Governments, The NHS, and Health Protection Scotland. The team links with fellow colleagues in other local authorities to share knowledge and introduce any new learning to our guidance and procedures.

The Health and Safety team, as part of the wider HR and OD team, have been working collaboratively with all key stakeholders, including the Trades Unions, across the council and external partners such as the NHS to ensure that any activities being undertaken, were risk assessed. More importantly the controls being reviewed in line with any changes to the guidance including COVID Levels as they emerged to ensure employees and clients health, safety, and wellbeing.

With the move to beyond National strategic level 0 the Team have been actively involved in work with services to assist in a planned and managed response to work in accordance with guidance. Working from home is still the preferred option for some employees wherever possible.

We continue to work closely with the communications team to ensure key messages to managers and employees are issued timeously to remind them of the requirements to keep safe.

3.1 Policies and Guidance

The following have been issued or are under review in part due to COVID impact:

- DSE guidance updated
- Homeworking guidance (under review)
- Guidance for First Aiders updated
- Working in Vehicles updated
- HAZID and workplace specific risk assessments
- Schools' checklists (reviewed and updated)
- Legionella
- Guidance on the use of drones
- RIDDOR reporting

3.2 The Health and Safety team has continued to support front line services in the delivery of emergency and prioritised work across the council area. Other business as usual tasks such as accident investigation and fire safety continue albeit, in some cases, using electronic computer applications, such as Microsoft teams, rather than face to face. More recent activity has included site visits to Early Learning and Childcare Centres. Visits to the ELCC's has been undertaken jointly with colleagues from Children Services. An appropriate action plan has been developed to ensure that any of the issues found are dealt with timeously and appropriately.

3.3 The development of new guidance supplemented by risk assessments and standing operating procedures which relate to the specific service activity continues to be an important aspect of the teams' work. The specialised

knowledge required has covered care at home, residential care homes, schools and early learning and childcare centres.

- 3.4 To continue the support of Vaccination Centres (Renfrew/Johnstone/ Paisley) the Health and Safety team provide not only advice and guidance but undertake spot-checks and provide regular updates with staff representatives.
- 3.5 The Health and Safety team have worked closely with Occupational Health and Timefortalking (the employee counselling service) to ensure the council are supporting employees throughout the different phases of the pandemic.
- 3.6 The Health and Safety team have worked with services to assist in local arrangements within Renfrewshire House. This has included the review of fire and first aid arrangements during the current transition, enabling the removal of personal belongings from the building and the planned return for certain key employees to the building.
- 3.7 The Corporate Health and Safety Committee meetings have now been reinstated and meet quarterly. Dates are planned throughout 2021 with the next one due in September 2021
- 3.8 Since the last JCB meeting, the Health and Safety team have undertaken **33** High risk and **5** Low risk evaluations of contractor's and supplier's health and safety documentation when they apply for contracts with Renfrewshire Council. Priority was given to Covid related activity. All applicants are required to provide evidence of COVID-19 Risk assessment and mitigation measures.
- 3.9 The Health and Safety team respond on a regular basis to requests for Freedom of Information as well as to Insurance claims. Since the last JCB meeting, **10** have been processed. A proportion of the requests are COVID-19 related and can be complex.
- 3.10 Online training has been undertaken on a case-by-case basis as well as Toolbox talks on-site, especially where additional controls have been introduced in relation to Covid. A review of fire risk assessment training for all employees has been undertaken. Other topics are being reviewed.
- 3.11 The Corporate Personal Protective Equipment Group continues to support services to ensure that stocks are maintained at a reasonable level and monitors forthcoming guidance to ascertain the impact.
- 3.12 The Health and Safety team continue to produce health and wellbeing guidance and campaigns to support the workforce. Further discussions are ongoing as how best to provide information, guidance, and support to employees.

- 3.13 Since the last JCB, work has continued with the services to further encourage home workers in particular to undertake Display Screen Equipment (DSE), I-learn training and to complete their DSE Risk assessment online.
- 3.14 The Health and Safety Team continue to review all injury accidents occurring within the Council activity. If required (for more serious type incidents) we report the incident to the HSE as required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations. For the time period concerned there were **6** RIDDOR reports submitted including **1** dangerous occurrence).

COVID-19 RIDDOR reports submitted since the start of the pandemic began sits at 141 for all of the council services. This is for employees only.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - Continuing to improve health and safety performance will reduce accidents/occupational ill health, claims and the costs associated with this.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - This report supports the Council's commitment to the health, safety and well being of Renfrewshire Council employees.
3. **Community Planning –**
 - Community Care, Health & Well-being** - We will improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of staff across services through the Healthy Working Lives programme.
 - Empowering our Communities** - We will promote learning and encourage employees to fulfil their individual potential and ensure that the council delivers high-quality services in the most effective and efficient way to meet the needs of local people.
 - Greener** - The E-management system will reduce the amount of paper used for risk assessment and accident forms.
 - Safer and Stronger** - Facilitating the health, safety, and wellbeing of our employees by ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are developed and adhered to, and that all legal requirements for health and safety are fulfilled.
4. **Legal** - This report will support the Council's continued compliance with current health and safety legislation.
5. **Property/Assets** – None

6. **Information Technology** - The E-management systems require to be facilitated through the Council's email server system.
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website. (Report author will arrange this).
 8. **Health & Safety** - This document supports and demonstrates the council's commitment to ensuring effective health, safety and well being management.
 9. **Procurement** – low impact as still at post tender negotiations.
 10. **Risk** – low impact as legal and statutory requirements are being maintained.
 11. **Privacy Impact** – not applicable to this report.
 12. **Climate Risk** - none
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