

To: Joint Consultative Board: Non-Teaching

On: 2nd September 2020

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.

It must be recognised that a number of workstreams were paused due to the pandemic and the report below focusses on the actions and activities 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.

Further to this, consultation and collaboration with our Trades Unions colleagues has been critical to ensuring the health safety and wellbeing of all those involved in the activities that have been undertaken during this pandemic so far.

3.1 Policies and Guidance

The following have been reviewed and issued:

- DSE guidance
- Homeworking guidance
- Guidance for First Aiders
- Working in Vehicles
- HAZID and workplace specific risk assessments
- Schools checklists
- Covid Age risk assessments.

3.2 Throughout this event the team has continued to support front line services in the delivery of emergency and prioritised work across the council area. The development of new guidance supplemented by risk assessments, standing operating procedures which relate to the specific service activity was crucial. This ranged from care homes, social work visits, emergency Hubs, domiciliary emergency visits, transportation of food and medical supplies are just some of the work undertaken.

3.3 This was supplemented with help from HR and Organisational Development and Communications team by setting up a Coronavirus web link detailing health, safety and wellbeing guidance as well as other essential communications to employees and managers.

3.4 Ongoing use of electronic meetings online with operational managers has been a crucial resource providing advice and guidance.

3.5 Site visits to assist managers has been an essential component of the workload for the Health and Safety Team and by the end of June 2020, all High Schools, Primary schools, Early Learning Centres and nurseries had been inspected. This exercise was repeated at the start of the new school term, and the team continue to support schools and other educational properties to remain Covid secure.

3.6 The health and safety team and the HR operations teams have been working closely to support those employees with underlying health conditions to return to work safely.

3.7 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. An example of such an intervention was the dedicated support for employees who were operating the shielding telephone line, some were volunteers and had never experienced such conversations and were left feeling traumatised at the end of the day by the stories they had heard. TimeforTalking provided the managers with guidance to assist the employees as well as specialist support to those affected.

- 3.8 The health and safety section have worked with services to review the arrangements within Renfrewshire House.
- 3.9 The formal Corporate Health and Safety Committee meetings planned for the year were suspended to the pandemic. However, weekly meetings with Trades Unions have and continue to take place.
- 3.10 As part of our corporate function in relation to the procurement process, the Health and Safety section, since March 2020, have undertaken 29 High risk and 15 Low risk evaluations of contractor's health and safety documentation when they apply for contracts with Renfrewshire Council. Priority was given to CoVID related activity.
- 3.11 The Health and Safety Section respond on a regular basis to requests for Freedom of Information as well as to claims. Since March 2020, over 13 have been processed.

Implications of the Report

- 1. **Financial** - Continuing to improve health and safety performance will reduce accidents/occupational ill health 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, including health surveillance, are being maintained.
11. **Privacy Impact** – not applicable to this report.
12. **Climate Risk** - none

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