

To: Joint Consultative Board: Non-Teaching

On: 31st March 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 to ensure that any activities (especially key workers) being undertaken, were risk assessed and more importantly the controls were being reviewed dynamically in line with any changes to the guidance or legislation as it emerged.

Working closely with the comms team, regular key messages to managers and employees were issued timely to reminded them of the requirements to keep them safe

3.1 Policies and Guidance

The following have been issued or 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 (latest 9 March 2021)
- Legionella
- 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.

3.3 The development of new guidance supplemented by risk assessments, 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.

3.4 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited 2 of our establishments as part of their spot check compliance. No adverse comments were made. In addition the Council received 3 specific enquiries from the HSE (2 COVID related) and no further issues are anticipated at this stage.

3.5 The Health and Safety team have worked with services in ensuring the safe working operation of the Johnstone Testing Centre for COVID-19. The Officers remained on site to provide advice and guidance as well as

supporting colleagues and volunteers at the test centre during its operation. This included cover prior to opening, after closing time and weekend working.

- 3.6 The introduction of the Vaccination Centres (Renfrew/Johnstone/ Paisley) involved the Health and Safety team providing not only advice and guidance but on-site support during their continued operation.
- 3.7 The forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary Election in May has resulted in additional work for the Health and Safety team. Since December Site visits and COVID compliance checks has been undertaken across Renfrewshire. The development of a COVID compliance checklist was developed considering the experience gained with school visits as well as other related work. This also included visits to private venues such as RL premises, church halls and such like.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 The Health and Safety team have worked with services to review the arrangements within Renfrewshire House. Recent COVID spot checks regarding compliance has taken place.
- 3.10 The formal Corporate Health and Safety Committee meetings planned for the year were suspended to the pandemic although virtual informal meetings did occur regularly. However, The Corporate Health and Safety Committee meetings have now been reinstated and meet quarterly. Dates are planned for the whole of 2021 with local informal meetings also to take place.
- 3.11 Since November 2020, Health and Safety team have undertaken 68 High risk and 8 Low risk evaluations of contractor's and suppliers 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. This activity was markedly higher than normal due to the review of child care premises such as nurseries
- 3.12 The Health and Safety team respond on a regular basis to requests for Freedom of Information as well as to insurance claims. Since November 2020, 21 have been processed. A proportion of the requests are COVID-19 oriented and can be complex.

- 3.13 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. Review of fire risk assessment training for Head Teachers is well advanced.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 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 staff.
- 3.16 Since November 2020 to February 2021 work has continued with the services to encourage home workers in particular to undertake Display Screen Equipment (DSE) I-learn training and to complete DSE Risk assessment online.
- 3.17 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. (Nov-Feb 531 Incidents including near misses, 6 RIDDOR's). COVID-19 RIDDOR reports are currently under review but are currently at 66.

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 Councils 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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