

Health and Safety Summary Report 2020-2021

Chair of Health and Safety Sub-Committee; Councillor Ian Houlder

Portfolio Holder; Councillor Carol Bull

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This is a summary report for the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, outlining the information that has been discussed and shared with the Health and Safety Sub Committee over the last year with regards to the work of the Health and Safety Team.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Health and Safety team works to ensure that our staff work in a safe and healthy environment supporting the delivery of the corporate priorities. This is extended to contractors and members of the public who visit or access our services by:
- Providing Health and safety advice and guidance both internally and to external third parties.
 - Audits/Inspections which includes the review of risk assessments, safe systems of work, use of equipment, to ensure we meet legal requirements as a minimum, although we aim to the highest best practice.
 - Undertaking Fire Risk assessment on corporate buildings.
 - Managing or arrange health and safety training, including first aid.
 - Managing the occupational health service.
 - Lead/organise wellbeing events.
 - Leading on drug and alcohol testing.
 - Recording accidents, incidents and near misses, including violence at work, and carry out subsequent investigations if necessary.
 - Ensuring that both internal and third-party events held on our land have suitable event safety plans.
 - This year has seen the additional significant demand to lead on COVID advice and action regarding work related and building issues.
- 1.2 We also work as an integral part of the organisation on all major projects.
- 1.3 This summary report has been produced to identify and document West Suffolk Council's health and safety performance over the last year.

2. Incidents and Near Misses Summary Analysis 2020/2021

- 2.1 Staff incidents have continued to remain in the low 100's (99) similar to the previous 2 years (115 in 2018/19 and the same in 2019/20), graphs are available on request.
- 2.2 Out of the 99 incidents, 3 were reportable under Reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).
- 2.3 We had a total of 115 days lost due to incidents this compares to 129 in 2018/19 and 66 2019/20
- 2.4 We had 14 "Near Miss/Non-Reportable Dangerous Occurrence's". Near miss incidents often precede loss-producing events but may be overlooked, as there was no harm (no injury, damage, or loss). Thus, many opportunities to prevent future incidents are lost. We encourage the reporting of near misses to gain an opportunity to help identify potential unplanned events preventing injuries and damage. History has shown repeatedly that most loss producing events (incidents), both serious and catastrophic, were preceded by warnings or near miss events.

3. Drugs and Alcohol

- 3.1 The Council has been testing employees for drugs and alcohol for several years, there are 4 occasions when we carry out testing:
 - Pre-employment testing
 - Post Incident/For Cause testing
 - Employee Compliance testing
 - Random testing
- 3.2 During the past twelve months, 24 random and pre-employment drug and alcohol tests have been carried out, all of which were found to be non-positive.

4. Occupational health

- 4.1 During the past 12 months, there have been:
 - 79 Occupational Health appointments (slightly less than the previous year)
 - 78 Annual health surveillance appointments where employees are checked for (similar to previous years):
 - Symptoms of Hand Arm Vibration (HAV)
 - Lung function
 - Hearing loss
 - Skin infection

5. Wellbeing

5.1 The welfare of our staff has been a priority during the response to COVID-19 especially as staff are working from home. This has been co-ordinated through HR business partners and Mental Health First-Aiders (MHFA's) who provided specific support for staff working in certain areas, such as "Home but not alone" support for vulnerable people.

5.2 Various wellbeing events have been delivered, including:

- Remote question and answer session with Occupational Health
- Mental Health awareness week 18-22 May
- Working from home guidance
- Walk and talk & Physical Health
- Coffee morning with wellbeing champions
- Support group – caring for others at a distance
- Staff support group – feeling isolated
- Lose weight and get healthier
- Flu Vaccination vouchers
- Virtual Coffee morning world mental health day
- Top tips for managing seasonal affective disorder
- Men's health- want to talk
- Webinar – coping with worry during coronavirus times
- Wellbeing coffee morning – mood is the food
- Wellbeing webinar – living through the lockdown, improving your sleep
- World cancer day – spot the signs
- Let's talk about women's health
- Domestic abuse awareness session
- Wellbeing in the workplace spring and autumn pulse surveys
- Home but not alone sessions on MS Teams
- Supporting parents and carers of children during covid 19 MS teams
- Exercises whilst at home (by Bury Physio) MS Teams
- Pilates (by Bury Physio) MS teams

Also, we have seen the introduction of the "Employee Assistance programme"

5.2 A number of staff were trained as joint pain advisors enabling them to discuss with staff joint pain issues and give advice on where they could seek further help.

6. Covid 19 - Overview

6.1 The team continued to provide health and safety support and advice across the Council during the pandemic prioritising workloads according to risk and demand. The response to COVID-19 necessitated a fast and dynamic response to changing guidance.

6.2 Generic risk assessments have been undertaken and distributed to staff regarding COVID – 19, each service has considered their own operational tasks and adapt their local risk assessments appropriately.

- 6.3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - In order to respond to the increased demand for PPE, the team has continued to work with the Operations team to centrally procure and store equipment at the WSoH, where a PPE cell has been established. Throughout the pandemic our PPE stocks of have remained good and met the necessary stator standards.
- 6.4 Supporting vulnerable staff - Throughout our response, we have worked with HR colleagues to support those staff identified as clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable or those living in households with people in these categories.
- 6.5 The approach to supporting vulnerable staff and considering what roles they can carry out in the organisation if they cannot work from home has remained under continual review in accordance with government guidance. We will continue to do so in the future.
- 6.6 Operations - Waste collection has continued throughout the pandemic and this has been carried out in accordance with health and safety advice and guidance, which has been adapted to respond to national and Waste industry guidance.
- 6.7 Buildings - Our buildings now look very different, having implemented changes to comply with COVID secure guidance and to ensure that staff who need to return to the offices are able to work abiding by social distancing rules. Changes include new signs, desks out of action, separate entrance and exit routes and a one-way system, at West Suffolk House and the West Suffolk Operational Hub. We have a joint plan with SCC for WSH and our tenants have all engaged with us around what is required from themselves in accordance with the building rules.
- 6.8 All staff have been asked to read and adhere to COVID safe working practices based on current governmental guidance. We worked with the communications team to provide information for staff around how the revised office layouts will work, with photos and videos to help them better visualise the changes. We continue to do some spot checks in the buildings to ensure compliance with current guidance.
- 6.9 Staff working in the community – Guidance for staff working in the community is constantly reviewed and passed to staff when changes occur.
- 6.10 Testing for staff - Regular lateral flow testing is currently provided for staff based at West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH). To help keep our operational staff and communities safe, it's essential that those employees continue to make use of this service.
- 6.11 The Government has now made lateral flow testing kits readily available to everyone. We encourage staff who do not have access to the regular testing at WSOH to apply for free home testing kits via the Government link or to book an appointment at the various rapid testing sites before working in the office.

7. Health and Safety Training (including E-Learning)

- 7.1 IOSH Managing Safely course – During the past 12 months there has been 1 in house face to face course for 12 candidates.
- 7.2 E- Learning – below is the data of Health and Safety E-Learning modules for 2020/21:
- Display screen Equipment learning 89% completed up by 7% compared to year 19/20
 - Display screen Equipment risk assessment 88% completed up by 6% compared to year 19/20
 - Manual handling 99% Completed up by 3% compared to year 19/20
 - General Health, Safety and Environmental Awareness 98% completed up by 2% compared to year 19/20
 - Fire Safety 85% Completed up by 1% compared to year 19/20
 - Driver safety awareness 99% completed up by 2% compared to year 19/20
 - Stress Management 86% completed up by 2% compared to year 19/20

8. Inspections, Audits and Fire Risk Assessments

- 8.1 The Health and Safety Team continuously undertake informal/formal inspections as well as formal audits and fire risk assessments. During the past 12 months 14 audits and 25 Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's) have been undertaken a detailed schedule of audits and fire risk assessments are available on request.
- 8.2 Having a structured audit and fire risk assessment process ensures a consistent approach is taken across both authorities. Once complete the Managers of the relevant areas receive a full and detailed report of the findings, along with an action plan, with a target time scale.

9. Projects/Events

- 9.1 We continue to give advice on various projects across the Council the significant ones being:
- Election health and safety plan for the running of a safe election during the pandemic
 - Mildenhall Hub, this includes leading on general H&S issues, the co-ordinating of the fire and emergency evacuation responses with stakeholders. Leading on COVID advice and action during the occupational and operation, now and in the future in line with the Government Road Map.

10. Support to third party clients

- 10.1 ARP - The Health and Safety team continue to support ARP by providing them with complete health and safety service including access to all the online health and safety learning modules. We attend meetings and liaise with key stakeholders of Breckland District Council

(BDC) and Public Sector Partnership Services Ltd who provide a health and safety service to BDC.

11. Re-active work/advice/support

- 11.1 This is the first year we have recorded data on the number of re-active work requests the Health and Safety team received during a 12-month period. Re-active work is work/advice that was not planned or foreseen.
- 11.2 Over the past 12 months there over was over 2900 request for re-active work/advice/support.

12. Forward Planning

- 12.1 The immediate priority will be focused on the safe occupation of Mildenhall Hub ensuring emergency procedures are suitable and sufficient and activities are undertaken in a safe manner.
- 12.2 As well as the reactive health and safety work we will be reviewing our policies and completing a full programme of FRA's and Audits (programme available on request).
- 12.3 Health and safety are part of the project team developing plans for the return to the offices in line with the government roadmap.