

Report to Resources Committee

10 September 2013



Title: Health and Safety Update

Report of: Managing Director

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with a report on the company's health and safety activities for the period April to June 2013.

Background

2. The Safety, Health and Environmental Team ("SHE Team") are responsible for a number of activities designed to eliminate, reduce and mitigate accidents in the workplace and to ensure, safety of residents and members of the public who access our services and premises.
3. In addition to this the team act in an advisory role to ensure company wide compliance with a number of statutory and regulatory requirements including: -
 - Occupational Health and Safety
 - Health and Safety Training
 - Occupational Hygiene
 - Environmental Management
4. They also have responsibility for ensuring the company's compliance with statutory regulatory requirements as follows: -
 - Water Management - Risk assessments and water testing.
 - Electrical Safety - Cyclical electrical testing, fixed wire testing, portable appliance testing and emergency lighting testing.
 - Fire Safety - Risk assessment, maintenance, repair and testing of fire alarms and fire appliances.
 - Passengers Lifts Operations - Lift Repairs, maintenance, refurbishment and upgrade to DDA standard.
5. They are also responsible for the coordination and monitoring of health and safety on construction sites including:

- CDM Coordination (Construction, Design, Management) and Control of Contractors
- Site Waste Management Plans

Policy, Procedure and Safe Systems of Work Update

6. The Asbestos Management Plan and policy have been reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation and learning from reported incidents. Training has been provided to ensure compliance with changes.

Partners Activity Update

- 7 In the period April to June 2013, we have reviewed the asbestos policy and delivered awareness training to Mears operatives. We continue to monitor and review all asbestos incidents and work closely with Mears Safety Advisors for continued compliance and safe systems of working.

- 8 During the period April to June 2013 the following joint Health and Safety site visits have taken place with Mears:

- Voids and Major Voids
- Painting Programme
- Fire Damaged Properties

9. No significant areas of weakness were identified on the site visits. A number of minor recommendations and areas of improvement have been agreed for implementation.

Accident Reporting

10. We have updated our system for recording of accidents and incidents to an on line system which has been launched to all employees. Accidents reported in the period April to June 2013 show an increase and this may be attributed to awareness raising of the reporting system. -

Accidents / Incidents Near Misses TGHC Employees

11. In the period April to June 2013 there has been three minor accidents and two near misses reported as follows:-
- 1 employee was cut on the hand by the fall of an unsafely stacked fire door at Regent Court
 - 1 employee was bruised on the chest when they stretched over a garden fence
 - 1 employee suffered injuries to the lower back as a result of a trip and fall in a tenant's garden
 - 1 employee suffered a near miss from falling concrete debris at Abbott Court
 - 1 employee suffered a near miss from a falling glass bottle in the bin chute room

Accidents / Incidents Near Misses to 3rd Party / Subcontractors

12. In the period April to June 2013 eleven minor incidents, one near miss and one reportable accident have been reported as follows:

- Former tenant had a near miss by falling concrete debris
- Plumber suffered minor back injuries from lowering a soil pipe
- Roofer fell from a garage roof and fractured his wrist
- Plasterer slipped and suffered contusions to his nose
- Labourer suffered minor cuts to head while loading old fence timbers onto a vehicle
- Glazier suffered a minor injury to the eyes when removing the eye protection
- Gas Engineer slipped and suffered a sprained ankle
- Electrician suffered a minor cut to his head from a kitchen unit coming off the wall
- Joiner suffered a cut on his finger from a rough edge of a plinth
- Resident Liaison Officer suffered a dog bite
- A contractor suffered a cut from a knife when laying the flooring
- A plumber suffered a cut from a sharp edge on a pipe when stripping redundant copper piping.
- A property inspector slipped and fell onto a handrail and fractured his right shoulder (RIDDOR)

13. All accidents and reported violent incidents have been investigated and follow up action taken to include a review of safe systems of work.

Violence and Aggression to TGHC Employees

- 9 Cases of Verbal Abuse
- 7 Cases of Threatening Behaviour

Violence and Aggression to 3rd Party / Subcontractors

- 1 Case of Verbal Abuse

Asbestos Management

14. During the period April to June 2013, Gateshead Council has carried out an internal audit of the Asbestos Management process. The final audit report and recommendations will be released in quarter two.

15. During the period April to June 2013 asbestos surveys has been requested on the following areas of activity: voids, and gas servicing, maintaining decency, painting programme, repairs, adaptations and maintenance and fire improvement works.

16. The following asbestos surveys have taken place for refurbishment and demolition surveys (R&D):

- 363 Maintaining decency
- 3 gas servicing
- 70 repairs and maintenance
- 38 major works

- 20 voids
17. We are developing an inspection regime for Multi-storey buildings to regularly monitor the condition of known Asbestos Containing Materials.
 18. During the period April to June 2013 there were four reported incidents of accidental disturbance of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's). Action has been taken with our partners to mitigate further risk and prevent reoccurrence.

Fire Safety Management

19. The Housing Fire Safety strategy continues to be monitored with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).
20. During the reporting period we have reviewed the working protocols between TWFRS and TGHC.
21. In the period April to June 2013 Sheltered housing joint visits (TGHC and TWFRS) has commenced. Findings and recommendations from fire safety audits will be monitored through action plans developed to rectify deficiencies
22. The work programme for the Sheltered Housing buildings has been shared with TWFRS and a formal request to extend the deadline for completion of fire safety works to April 2014 has been accepted.
23. Fire safety improvement works to 19 Multi Storey Blocks have now been completed. Fire Risk Assessments for these locations will be updated and a copy of the risk assessments issued to TWFRS.
24. The Fire Safety improvements works in Sheltered Housing has commenced. McErlane Square, Harrison Court and Birtley Villas are the first schemes benefiting from the improvement works.
25. A bespoke sprinkler solution is currently being tested at Regent Court. The commissioning of a system for the multi storey is linked to fire safety works improvements.

Legionella Control

26. Monthly meetings with our maintenance contractor are ongoing and no significant risks have been identified.
27. In the period April to June 2013 no positive tests were reported.
28. 49 premises have had a Water Hygiene Risk Assessment. The remaining 25 premises will be completed in quarter 2.
29. Routine water sampling of 74 premises will commence in quarter two to verify the effectiveness of the water hygiene monitoring.

Cyclical Repair and Maintenance Update

30. The periodical meetings with Gateshead Council Local Environmental Services and the Gateshead Housing Company are progressing with the monitoring of the delivery of the cyclical maintenance program for 2013-14.
31. No immediate actions have been identified during this reporting period.

Lift Maintenance

32. No relevant immediate actions reported during the period April to June 2013.
33. There were 12 reported lift entrapments in the period April to June 2013. Passengers were released to our agreed service standard response time.

Update on the Company Construction Related Activities

34. There are twelve construction related projects ongoing with notifications to the HSE.
35. Works are on going on twelve sites as follows: -
 - Sprinkler installation to Regent Court,
 - Insulation works to non traditional properties in Springwell (2 sites)
 - Maintaining decency works covering various estates across the Borough (2 sites)
 - Planned painting works across various sites
 - Fire safety improvement works to Sheltered Housing
 - Tunstall Telecare upgrades across the Borough
 - Lifts Replacement at Pleasant Place unit C
 - Barnes close electrical upgrade works
 - McErlane square electrical upgrade
 - Stoneygate conversion works
36. During this reporting period all working sites have been visited and were found to be working to agreed site rules and regulations.
37. During this period we had a number of asbestos related incidents and we assisting the HSE in the investigation of the Dangerous Occurrences.

Update on Health and Safety Legislation Changes

38. There are no legislative changes to report

Links to Values

39. This report links to the following company values: -
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being motivated, trained and committed across the company
 - Being caring and respecting
 - A commitment to all our employees
 - Embracing equality.

Impact on Customers

40. The improvements identified and actions carried out will help us to provide healthy and safe environments for employees, residents, members of the public and partners.

Risk Management Implications

41. Not meeting the requirement of current and new Health and Safety legislation has been identified as an operational risk for the company.

Financial Implications

42. The Head of Corporate Services confirms that a budget is available to support the activities mentioned in this report through revenue or capital budgets.

Equality and Diversity Implications

43. Detailed Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on all Health & Safety policies and procedures to ensure that they do not adversely impact on any customers.

Value for Money Implications

44. Value for money principles are followed in all health and safety activity.

Health Implications

45. The company's approach to Health and Safety, embedded within everything that we do and the actions specifically mentioned within this report, ultimately will have a positive impact on people's health and overall wellbeing. By working to ensure that any services we provide meet the needs of the customers, partners and of employees and do not cause undue stress to either party.

Environmental Implications

46. The work detailed in this report will be carried out to ensure we meet our ISO 14001 standards and principles. We will make choices that reflect our social responsibility to improve the environment in which we work and live.

Recommendation

47. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the update on health and safety activities and developments.