

Report to Resources Committee

5 November 2013



Title: Health and Safety Update

Report of: Support Services Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with a report on the company's health and safety activities for the period July to September 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. In the period July to September 2013, we have started a review of the corporate risk assessment to develop a simplified user friendly process. The review will be in stages commencing with housing offices .Lessons learned will inform the final risk management model for the organisation.
7. We are developing employee awareness of sharepoint sites to report and monitor health and safety activity. Services included in the Health and Safety monitoring systems are:
 - Sheltered Housing
 - Caretaking Services
 - Housing Offices

Increased use and awareness of the sharepoint systems will:

- Provide a central point for records storage and retrieval
 - Managers and users will have an increased awareness of workplace issues
 - Transparent process with clear roles and responsibilities
 - Real time information
 - Simplified compliance monitoring
8. Our planned activity in quarter three is to develop audit programmes for compliance as follows:
 - Health, Safety and Environmental compliance across the offices network.
 - Contractors Management.
 - Partnering Asbestos Management delivery.
 - Legionella Management.

Partners Activity Update

9. In the period July to September 2013, we have continued to monitor and review all asbestos incidents and work closely with Mears Safety Advisors for continued compliance and safe systems of working.
10. During the period July to September 2013 the following joint Health and Safety site visits have taken place with Mears;
 - Two spot inspections on void properties
 - Four visits inspecting repairs and maintenance.
 - Two visits inspecting maintenance and gas installations.
11. 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

12. Accidents reported in the period July to September 2013 shows an increase in the reporting from Contractors working on our construction sites.

Accidents / Incidents Near Misses TGHC Employees

13. In the period July to September 2013 there have been seven minor accidents and no major accidents were reported as follows:-
- one employee suffered minor cuts when slipped on a broken pavement.
 - two employee's suffered back injuries by slipping on a wet floor
 - one employee suffered minor back injury by overexerting
 - one employee suffered minor cuts whilst opening a defective fire door
 - one employee suffered minor bruising to the foot whilst going through a door
 - one employee suffered minor dislocation to a lower limb as result of trip and fall by stepping on an uneven floor.

Our reporting system ensures prompt support to employees from health and safety and human resources which may include an appointment with occupational health or adaptations to the working environment. In all cases we review safe systems of working and risk assessments.

Accidents / Incidents near Misses to 3rd Party / Subcontractors

14. In the period July to September 2013 there have been eleven minor accidents and one major accident reported as follows:-
- one operative suffered minor cuts whilst carrying out maintenance work on pipe work.
 - one operative suffered minor back injuries in lifting and handling a door.
 - one operative suffered minor grazing from pulling an electrical cable.
 - one operative removing ladders from roof rack suffered minor cut to his forehead.
 - one operative carrying out maintenance to a sink, slipped and fell suffering minor muscular strains
 - one operative removing wall tiles suffered minor cuts to his hand.
 - one operative removing wall covering suffered minor cut to his hand.
 - one operative in removing a wall unit suffered minor head injury
 - one operative suffered minor injuries from a dog bite.
 - one operative suffered minor cut to his hand whilst fitting flooring in a property.
 - one operative whilst carrying a survey to a property tripped and fell suffering fracture to his right shoulder.
15. In the period July to September 2013 there have been three near misses reported where operatives have encountered suspicious material, later identified to contain asbestos.

Violence and Aggression to TGHC Employees

- one case of intimidation
- twelve cases of verbal abuse

- three cases of threatening behaviour

Violence and Aggression to 3rd Party / Subcontractors

- two cases of verbal abuse
16. All accidents and reported violent incidents have been investigated and follow up action taken to include a review of safe systems of work.

Asbestos Management

17. During the period July to September 2013, Gateshead Council has carried out an internal audit of the Asbestos Management process.
18. The internal audit has identified three minor priority actions, as follows:-
- Market testing on the provision of Asbestos Survey to Gateshead Housing
 - Review and reporting of contractor performance indicators
 - Update procedures on the Gateshead Housing Website relating to information to tenants.
19. We are developing our actions to comply with the recommendations.
20. During the period July to September 2013 asbestos surveys have been requested on the following areas of activity: voids, gas servicing, maintaining decency, maintenance fire improvement works, lifts refurbishment and buildings electrical rewiring.
21. The following asbestos surveys have taken place for refurbishment and demolition surveys (R&D):
- 159 Surveys relating to maintaining decency investment work
 - 61 Survey relating to repairs and maintenance including gas servicing
 - 10 Surveys relating to major works projects, such as fire or electrical improvement works.
 - 73 Surveys relating to void properties and aids and adaptations.
22. During the period July to September 2013, there were four reported incidents of accidental disturbance of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's). Incident reviews have taken place with our partners to mitigate further risk and prevent reoccurrence.

Fire Safety Management

23. During this reporting period proactive monitoring of Gateshead Housing Fire Safety strategy continues to take place by joint working and regular meeting with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).
24. Fire Safety Management policy document has been developed setting out the Company approach to fire safety management in compliance with the Fire Safety Order 2005.
25. In the period July to September 2013 there has been joint visits of the company and TWFRS in Sheltered Housing. Findings and recommendations from fire

safety audits will be monitored through action plans developed to rectify deficiencies.

26. The work programme for the Sheltered Housing buildings is progressing with several schemes completed during this reporting period. A review and update of fire risk assessments and evacuation strategies is ongoing. On completion of the procedural review, employees and residents will receive training with information on action to take in event of a fire in the building.
27. Fire safety improvement works to 19 Multi Storey Blocks are now complete with the handover of Regent Court sprinkler system. A review and update of fire risk assessments and evacuation strategies are ongoing. On completion of the procedural review, employees and residents will receive training with information on action to take in event of fire in the building.
28. During this reporting period, our state of readiness in event of minor and major incident has been tested by the industrial action taken by TWFRS. We have worked with Gateshead Council Resilience Planning Section and reviewed and updated our contingency planning across all services.
29. During the industrial action, no incidents took place that required the response by TWFRS.

Legionella Control

30. Monthly meetings with our maintenance contractor are ongoing and no significant risks have been identified.
31. In the period July to September 2013 no positive tests were reported.
32. To date, 13 out of 25 water hygiene risk assessments have been completed in High Rise Buildings and 17 out of 42 low medium rise and Sheltered Housing have been completed. Schedule of proposed recommendations from findings are currently being considered and remedial works planned.

Cyclical Repair and Maintenance Update

33. 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.
34. No immediate actions have been identified during this reporting period.

Lift Maintenance

35. No relevant immediate actions reported during the period July to September 2013.
36. There were 7 reported lift entrapments in the period July to September 2013. Passengers were released to our agreed service standard response time.

Update on the Company Construction Related Activities

37. There are ten construction related projects ongoing with notifications to the HSE.

- Insulation works to non traditional properties in Springwell
 - Maintaining decency works covering various estates across the Borough
 - Planned painting works across various sites
 - Fire safety improvement works to Sheltered Housing across various sites.
 - Tunstall Telecare upgrades across the Borough
 - Lift replacement at Pleasant Place unit D
 - Lifts replacement at Priory, Park and Peareth
 - Barnes close electrical upgrade works
 - Accessibly improvement works in Sheltered Housing across various sites.
 - Stoneygate conversion works
38. During this reporting period, joint visits to working sites have taken place and found to be working to agreed site rules and regulations.
39. Minor non-compliances identified during the site visits have been discussed with the Principal Contractors and remedial actions agreed to mitigate the risk from construction related activities.

Update on Health and Safety Legislation Changes

40. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has formally implemented changes to simplify the mandatory reporting of workplace injuries for businesses. Changes to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995 clarify and simplify the reporting requirements, while ensuring that the data collected gives an accurate and useful picture of workplace incidents. The change affects all employers - including the self-employed. New web-based information and guidance is now available on the HSE website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>
41. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has formally implemented changes to simplify First Aid Regulations. Employers now have more flexibility in how they manage their provision of first aid in the workplace following a change in health and safety regulations. As per 1 October 2013, the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 have been amended, removing the requirement for HSE to approve first aid training and qualifications. Information, including the regulations document and a guidance documents are available on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/>.

Links to Values

42. 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

43. 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

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

Financial Implications

45. 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

46. 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

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

Health Implications

48. 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

49. The work detailed in this report will be carried out to ensure we meet our ISO 4001 standards and principles. We will make choices that reflect our social responsibility to improve the environment in which we work and live.

Recommendation

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

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