

Report to Resources Committee

4 November 2014



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 April to September 2014.

Background

2. The Safety, Health and Environmental Team ("SHE Team") are responsible for a number of activities designed to reduce and mitigate accidents in the workplace and to ensure the 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 ongoing 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 upgrades to DDA standard.
5. The team 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

- Refurbishment and New Build Works.

Partners Activity Update

6. In the period July to September 2014, we have monitored our partner's activities and reviewed all asbestos related incidents and working practices. Repairs works are visited weekly to ensure compliance with policy and procedures and good working practices. We continue to work closely with Mears Safety Advisors for compliance and safe systems of working.
7. During the period July to September 2014 monthly joint Health and Safety site inspections visits have taken place with Mears. The works visited have covered void property refurbishments, gas boiler installations, bathroom adaptations and general repairs.
8. Inspections include a check of operatives understanding of asbestos information, that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn and that dust sheets are used to prevent damage to flooring.
9. There were no significant areas of weakness identified on the site visits. A number of minor recommendations and areas for improvement were identified including the issue of identification badges for new contractors and replacement of a damaged saw horse.

Accident Reporting

Accidents / Incidents near misses TGHC Employees

10. In the period July to September 2014, six non reportable Accidents / Near Misses were reported. There were no reportable accidents under RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Accidents / Incidents near misses to 3rd Party / Subcontractors

11. In the period July to September 2014, there was one non-reportable Accidents / Near Misses reported. There were no reportable accidents under RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Violent Incidents and Warning Alerts

12. In the reporting period July to September 2014, there have been 14 violent incidents as follows:
 - 6 incidents of threatening behaviour
 - 8 incidents of verbal abuse
13. 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

14. Newcastle City Council has a framework in place for asbestos which is currently being used by Gateshead Council for their analytical and consultancy needs in relation to asbestos management. Legal advice confirms that the OJEU notice is

suitable to cover the Gateshead Housing Company.

15. Three companies have been selected to provide a service they include: MIS in Durham, Pattison Scientific Service in Newcastle and OHS in Leeds.
16. We are assessing the scope of work and fees for each company to determine the best fit for the delivery of asbestos management within Gateshead Housing.
17. The following asbestos surveys have taken place for Refurbishment and Demolition (R&D):
 - 16 surveys for maintaining decency investment works
 - 27 surveys for repairs and maintenance, including gas servicing
 - 27 surveys to void properties and for aids and adaptations.
 - 13 air tests
 - 7 re-inspections of known asbestos containing materials (ACM) in high rise buildings
18. During the period July to September 2014, there were no reported incidents by a third party.

Fire Safety Management

19. Proactive monitoring of our Fire Safety strategy continues to take place through joint working and regular meetings with the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).
20. The work programme for the Sheltered Housing buildings is progressing with several schemes completed during the reporting period.
21. We continue to review and update fire safety arrangements for the Multi and Sheltered Housing Schemes through fire audits and inspection of all buildings.
22. During this reporting period there were no major incidents to report.

Legionella Control

23. The company has adopted Gateshead Council's Legionella Management Plan, and Legionella Policy Issue 3 (August 2014) for the control of legionella bacteria in water systems.
24. In the period July to September 2014, 11 water hygiene audits have been completed in sheltered housing accommodation. This equates to 16 completed audits out of 67 to be completed annually.
25. 123 of 129 (90%) of water hygiene inspection treatments have been completed by Local Environmental services (LES).
26. Risk assessments have been completed and orders have been raised with LES to clean CWS tanks to 3 multi-storey blocks and 2 sheltered housing schemes and to relocate bin chute drench system control taps to 19 multi storey blocks.

27. Works have been completed by LES on Sydney Court tanks. Hollow uncapped pipes that are designed to support tank lids have been replaced at Barnes Close multi-storey blocks.
28. A revised code of practice (ACOP L8) came into operation in April 2014. ACOP L8 applies to water hygiene risk assessments in multi-storey blocks, APU's and communal rooms. The code of practice removes the requirement for a 2 year renewal of risk assessments and replaces it with a requirement to review risk assessments if the water system is altered.
29. ACOP L8 places additional responsibilities on building owners as follows:-
 - Water hygiene risk assessments are now a requirement for all dwellings. In the period July to September 2014 trial surveys were completed by Gateshead Council Property Services. The estimated cost is £60 per dwelling assuming paper based survey followed by manually collating the data gathered.
 - We are currently assessing the resource required for weekly flushing of water systems in void properties.

Fire Alarm Systems and Sprinkler System

30. 23 of 25 (92%) quarterly inspections have been carried out to multi storey blocks and sheltered housing communal areas. 2 inspections were cancelled.
31. 479 of 520 (92%) of weekly fire alarm tests have been carried out to multi storey blocks and sheltered housing communal areas.

Emergency Lighting

32. 166 (100%) inspections have been carried out to emergency lighting systems. This includes inspections carried out at various intervals in accordance with statutory requirements and the agreed delivery programme with Local Environmental Services, to ensure compliance.
33. 12 (100%) of quarterly emergency light invertors (battery checks) have been inspected in the period.

Non domestic gas boilers

34. 6 out of 7 (86%) non- domestic boiler services have been carried out. A report has been provided to the asset team highlighting the age and condition of boilers in multi storey blocks and sheltered housing schemes with contingency planning proposals.

Wet and Dry Riser Tests and inspections

35. Repairs have been carried out to wet riser pumps. Annual pressure tests for dry risers are due in the period October to December 2014.

Bin Chute Fire Shut Off Tests and Inspections

36. 25 Certificates of Compliance have been issued which are valid until May 2015. There were no activations or repairs required in the period July to September 2014.

Lightning protection inspection

37. Lightning protection tests were carried out at 25 multi-storey blocks. 16 blocks failed the test. Remedial works are planned in the period October to December 2014.

Ventilation

38. A feasibility study by Gateshead Council's Design Team is being carried out in multi storey blocks extract ventilation to replace ageing roof mounted extractor fans with modern energy efficient alternatives.

Cyclical Repair and Maintenance Update

39. Bi-monthly meetings with Gateshead Council Local Environmental Services and the Gateshead Housing Company are continuing along with the monitoring of the delivery of the cyclical maintenance programme.
40. Cyclical Maintenance records are now automatically uploaded into the Northgate system weekly.

Lift Maintenance

41. In the period April to September 2014 the following works have been progressed:-
- Park, Peareth & Priory Courts – installation of a new lift
 - St Cuthberts Court - DDA upgrade and new control panel
 - Lift consultant appointed following contract tender.
42. The Eslington Court lift replacement is planned to commence in September 2014.
43. In the period April to September 2014 there were 50 lift breakdowns, no relevant immediate actions in relation to breakdowns, maintenance or repairs reported. There were 2 entrapments in the North lift at Adelaide Court which were attributed to fluctuations in the power supply to this building. Investigations into the power supply problems are ongoing.

Update on the Company Construction Related Activities

44. There are eight construction related projects ongoing with notifications to the HSE.
45. Works are ongoing on seven projects. Planning of a lift refurbishment in Eslington Court is ongoing.
46. Works are ongoing on eight construction related projects involving multiple sites as follows: -
- Insulation works to non-traditional properties in Leam Lane

- 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
 - Barnes Close electrical upgrade works
 - Accessibly improvement works on Multi Storey properties across various sites
 - New Build development of 20 homes
47. 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

48. The following codes of practice have been reviewed during this reporting period as follows:-
- Revision of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and Approved Code of Practice. This is subject to ratification in April 2015
49. Three employees have attended a CDM coordinators course to assist the company in the management of CDM activity. They are at present completing the relevant registration documentation following successfully completing the course

Review of Health and Safety Function Future Delivery

50. At the July Board Meeting, the Board approved a number of proposals relating to the future delivery of the Health and Safety function.
51. Following the departure of the H&S Manager in June 2014, the company has relied on the H&S Adviser to fill the gap and to cover both fire and health and safety advice. This means there is limited resilience in the team in the event of the H&S Adviser being off work for any reason.
52. There are also aspects of H&S that go beyond the advisory role and require expertise to deliver a corporate approach. For example, policy development, review of management information systems and fire safety.
53. To address these issues we are working with Gateshead Council on detailed proposals to include;
- Placement of the company's H&S Advisor to work alongside Gateshead Council's H&S team in the Civic Centre, to share knowledge and build resilience
 - Gateshead Council providing dedicated H&S support through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to focus on policy development, review of management information systems, training, audit programmes and inspection regimes
 - The appointment of a part time fire safety specialist (to be recruited externally) for a temporary period of 12 months or until such time as it can be verified that all fire risk assessments are completed, suitable and sufficient and an action plan has been agreed which can be monitored as part of an SLA with Gateshead Council. The fire safety specialist will also sit within Gateshead Council's H&S team.

54. H&S activity is being reviewed as part of a Corporate Services Shared Services Review to see if there are efficiencies, financial savings and other benefits to be gained from working jointly on health and safety management.

Links to Values

55. 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

56. 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

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

Financial Implications

58. 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

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

Value for Money Implications

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

Health Implications

61. 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

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

Recommendation

63. 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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