

ANNUAL CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

1st APRIL 2019 TO 31st MARCH 2020

Report of the Corporate Health and Safety Officer

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This report summarises significant Corporate Health and Safety Management activities over the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 covering key achievements, Council-wide incident figures and developments for the year ahead to continually improve Health and Safety. It is important to maintain focus on sensible risk management so that risks can be managed appropriately and proportionately.

2.0 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMPLIANCE

2.1 Policies and Procedures

The Health and Safety Policy remains on an annual review and is updated each year in January. In order to condense guidance and procedures for lone working a new policy was introduced as part of the corporate review on staff who work alone.

2.2 Inductions

Health and safety inductions continue when new employees join the Council. These consist of 1 or 2 new starters and is tailored around their job role. This continues to be a successful way of providing key information to staff. In 2021, certain aspects of the induction process will be reviewed as currently Managers, HR (Human Resources) and Health and Safety Officer (HSO) still complete a paper form as part of that induction process. With IT support this can become an online live document until all sections are completed and signed off by relevant managers.

2.3 Corporate Health and Safety Group

This has been successfully running for two years now. Those members who represent their Service remain committed to attending the quarterly meetings and it continues to provide a platform for sharing Health and Safety information, receiving updates from the HSO and ensuring a corporate approach where needed. Terms of Reference are to be reviewed later in 2020, to ensure that it reflects the roles more clearly of those attendees.

2.4 Fire

Fire drills are carried out twice a year at The Gibson buildings and Tonbridge Castle. In this reporting period all of the drills have been carried out successfully and reports have been shared with Management Team. All actions identified have been implemented.

Fire risk assessments are carried out annually. High and medium actions from previous assessments have been implemented and low-level risks prioritised. Review of these will take place in October/November by a fire competent person within Building Control.

New fire evacuation chairs were installed at Gibson and Tonbridge castle. Fire Wardens have been trained in their use by the HSO.

Fire extinguishers are serviced each year by an external contractor. Fire wardens continue to carry out monthly fire checks in their designated area and record this on a check sheet.

2.5 Corporate Lone Working Review

This review looked at all aspects of lone working across all Services. As a result one Corporate Lone Working Policy was produced which consolidated a number of previous documents.

Risk assessments when explored were not robust enough to ensure that risks had been minimised sufficiently for all our staff who carry out work alone. Each service with the support of the HSO reviewed their lone working assessments with various actions required.

One of the actions identified by some Services was to purchase lone working devices called Skyguard for those staff who regularly lone work. Training was provided by the Skyguard Company to staff who have access to a device. Nominated co-ordinators were also put in place to support the Skyguard management system online. The devices have a GPS tracker and direct access 24/7 to raise an alert and obtain help from the Skyguard incident centre with just one push of the device.

Those staff who have used the devices effectively have provided very positive feedback on them so far. Staff feel reassured that help can be obtained quickly day or night.

There are many other controls that needed to be considered when assessing lone working and the reviewed assessments now indicate a wide range of other measures that are in place which reflect the varying risk levels and work undertaken.

2.6 Health and Safety Training

At the end of 2019, all Fire Wardens were offered an opportunity to undertake a brief practical course on how to use the new fire evacuation chairs. In the event that there is a person who cannot get down the stairs when needing to evacuate the building, this chair can be used by two fire wardens to assist in helping them get out. A number of sessions were offered and resulted in a very successful outcome with those attendees feeling confident they could use the evacuation chair successfully in the future. Refresher training will be undertaken as necessary and new Fire Wardens will receive the training going forwards.

2.7 Lone Working/Conflict Training

The lone working review identified clear gaps with staff requiring additional training. A recommended external provider was brought in to carry a full day session twice covering many aspects of human behaviour, conflict management and the use of body language. Staff who through service risk assessments were identified as Lone Workers had the opportunity to attend. The feedback was extremely positive and most staff left feeling better equipped to deal with varying scenarios they may face in their job role.

2.8 Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Equipment requiring PAT testing has been carried in Gibson East (New). There are many items not requiring testing now due to amendments in the Regulations, for example, mobile phone chargers and camera chargers do not apply. Gibson West (Old) will have PAT testing completed later on in the year.

2.9 Health and Safety Training

Health and Safety Training is available to Council employees to ensure that they continue to attain knowledge, understanding and develop skills to enable them to plan, manage, supervise or undertake their work activities safely. This has been delivered in a variety of ways webinars, face-to-face tutorial style or accessing our online training facility. The online training facility is directly accessible to all employees via the intranet home page or the Ivysoft icon on the desktop.

Many new courses have been uploaded within the last year, but the current system we run on will become outdated and an upgrade to the system required. Once upgraded this will give the system a facelift on how it is navigated and how it looks. Managers will be able to have access to a system which provides them with relevant training data required for their staff and to help with appraisals.

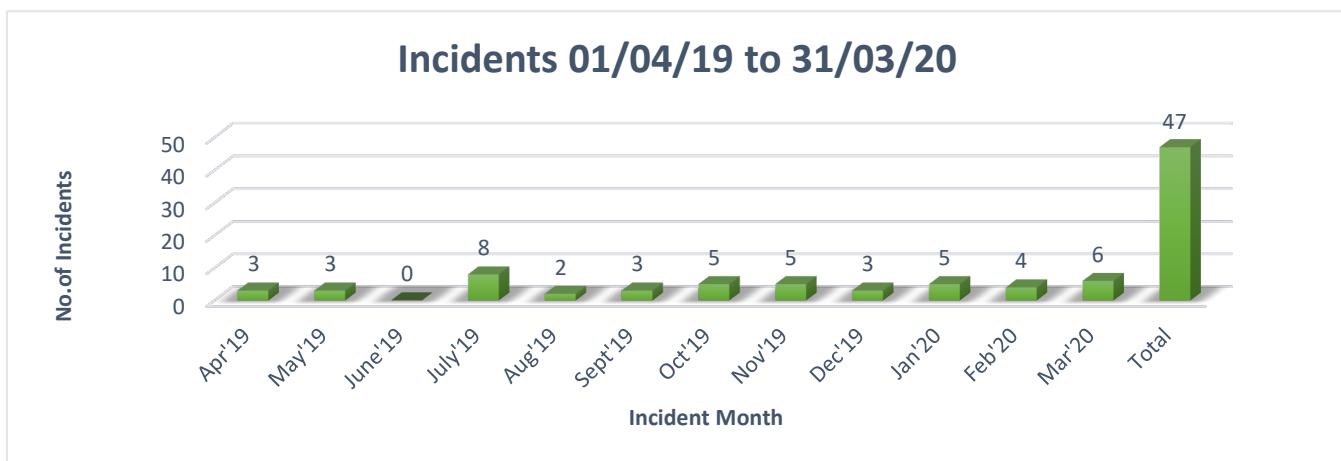
2.10 Incident Reporting (IR1)

The use of the IR1 incident form is continuing to be used well in most areas. An area to be improved is regarding near miss incidents and Managers and staff should ensure they use the online form for this purpose. Learning lessons and adjusting practices to ensure that it never becomes an incident resulting in harm is very important. The breadth of reporting remains wide as it forms part of the Risk Management process within the Council. Areas that don't seem to be reported are security (these could include IT breaches, alarm activation etc). All these should be recorded on one system which can then be reviewed by relevant Managers and monitored with advice when necessary given by the HSO.

Table 1 indicates an overall drop in incidents reported in 2019/2020. Although we don't want to see a huge rise in incidents these figures still appear to be low in comparison to our breadth of Council activities. No particular trends are present from the number of incidents. These figures include staff, contractors, members of the public and visitor incidents.

Table 2, page 4 shows that there are two incident types that continue to be our highest reported category of slip, trips and falls and violence, abuse and harassment.

Table 1



RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences.)

There was only 1 reported RIDDOR that occurred in one of our country parks and resulted in a member of the public obtaining a fracture due to climbing a tree near the lake. He was night-fishing and looking for fish from up high and ended up falling off. This is something that the Council does not endorse doing.

3.0 CONCLUSION AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2020/2021

Overall there has been much success in ensuring that all Services integrate Health and Safety as a regular part of their meetings and into every day service activities.

The next year ahead is already shaping up to be one of many new challenges, and there are a number of objectives to be achieved:

- [1] Review the online incident reporting form and procedure
- [2] Access to online training to be relevant and accessible for Managers to engage with their staff to ensure that key mandatory courses are completed.
- [3] To improve the induction process so that it can be easily obtained and followed by Managers and new starters electronically.
- [4] To provide Corporate Health and Safety support for the organisation to work through the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on both service and staff provision.

Table 2

Category of Incidents by Directorate

