

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	21 JULY 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	3
TITLE:	HEALTH & SAFETY - ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDS EMPLOYED FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT AT THE WILLOWS AND REVISED HEALTH, SAFETY & STAFF WELLBEING STRATEGY 2016 - 2019		
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SERVICE:	Corporate Health and Safety	WARDS:	All
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines what actions have been taken and additional safeguards put in place reflecting the learning points from the Willows case to reduce the risks of any such incident from recurring. This report also appends an updated Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the actions taken and additional safeguards put in place in relation to the Willows case;
- 2.2 To note the revised Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Strategy covering the period 2016 - 2019.

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1 Following the identification of Legionella bacteria in the water system at the Willows Care Home, a range of further safeguards were put in place across all buildings within the Council's portfolio. These include:
- 3.2 Local managers and staff were retrained to ensure that they were fully aware of their responsibilities. That retraining was rolled out to any manager, school and staff member who has to manage the risks of Legionella.
- 3.3 Extra resources were put in place within Property Services to support managers who have responsibility for Legionella control and to provide a greater level of monitoring, ensuring that essential tasks are completed on time.
- 3.4 Additional resources were allocated to the Facilities Team to enable them to carry out building management duties across a wider range of Council premises. This has

enabled services to concentrate on their service provision and created a consistent approach to the statutory checks that are needed.

- 3.5 All building managers (including schools) are now required to submit a checklist demonstrating that they have completed essential safety-related checks. Progress with the checklists is monitored by the Directorate and Corporate Health & Safety Committees. The Corporate Health & Safety team carry out spot audits on high risk buildings. (FLASH spreadsheet Appendix 1.)
- 3.6 The Hierarchy of Legionella controls is shown in the document Appendix 2.
- 3.7 A compliance audit was undertaken of all the directly-managed buildings within the Council's portfolio. The results of that audit have led to a comprehensive condition and compliance action plan that is managed through the Corporate Risk Group.
- 3.8 As part of the ongoing improvements, a building compliance guide was developed and circulated to all building managers and school leadership teams. This guide details what actions must be taken to ensure that all building safety-related items are addressed. (Appendix 3)
- 3.9 A new process is being developed for managers to proactively establish the health and safety competency of their staff by identifying and recording the essential health & safety training for each job role. Health and Safety Training is already managed via staff development plans and monitored through appraisals and 1:1's (Appendix 4). Confirmation that staff have understood the training and are following the necessary precautions is carried out through the normal supervision activities that managers undertake.
- 3.10 Building on the work that has been carried out over the last three years, a new Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan has been developed to focus on a number of objectives to further imbed health & safety risk management into performance management (Appendix 5). Key aims include:
 - Increasing monitoring, especially health & Safety targets in appraisals;
 - Ensuring that health & safety is embedded in team meetings, 1:1's appraisals and planning;
 - Building a risk assessment register within the existing self-audit process;
 - Developing a project to match essential health & safety training to each job role on iTrent;

Directorate Health & Safety Committees and Directorate Management Teams monitor the progress of the actions that contribute towards the achievement of these aims. Overall progress with the Action Plan is monitored by the Corporate Health & Safety Committee which in turn reports its progress to the Corporate Management Team.

- 3.11 To give further assurance that these control measures are embed, the internal Audit Team are undertaking a review of:
 - The current Health & Safety Strategy and Action Plan to ensure these are up to date, approved, publicised and accessible.
 - The health and safety systems and structure(s)
 - The health and safety training plan
 - Health and safety audits to ensure that are carried out by directorates
 - Local Safety Practices (LSPs) and that they are up to date and appropriately authorised.
 - The processes used for the reporting, reviewing and monitoring of incidents
 - The systems, procedures and resources in place in the Health & Safety Team to provide adequate scrutiny of building compliance matters (FLASH).

The intention is to report findings of this audit as part of the Head of Audits regular progress updates to this Committee.

A further audit of safety-related building compliance will be carried out during Q3

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 The health and safety of everyone who is either a member of staff providing, or a recipient of, any of the Council's services is an underlying principle of the Corporate Plan priorities, and in particular:

Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living;
Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active;
Providing infrastructure to support the economy;

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this report or decision.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and associated regulations require the Council to have suitable health & safety systems and process to identify and control risks.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Improving health and safety systems and processes will enable the council to be in a better position to defend claims for compensation arising from incidents affecting both employees and members of the public, and reduce the likelihood of fines imposed for breach of legislation.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Appendix 1 FLASH spreadsheet
Appendix 2 Legionella Control Flowchart
Appendix 3 Property Management and Compliance Guide
Appendix 4 Health & Safety Competency Flow Chart
Appendix 5 Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan