

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Council
Date: 26 January 2022
Report for: Information
Report of: Executive Member for Finance and Governance

Report Title

**6-month Corporate Report on Health, Safety & Wellbeing
– 1 April to 30 September 2021**

Summary

1. To provide an overview of the ongoing work undertaken to protect and support our Services and Schools during the COVID Pandemic and other health and safety support
2. To provide an overview of accidents for the period 1 April 2021 – 30 September 2021

Recommendation(s)

1. That the report is noted.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Richard Fontana Strategic HR Lead – Health and Safety
Extension: 4919

Background Papers: None

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Council's approach to managing health and safety at work is set out in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy. This includes the arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of employees and reporting on performance.
Financial	There are no foreseeable financial implications arising out of this report.
Legal Implications:	The programme of proactive and reactive work carried out by the Health and Safety Unit to respond to the COVID Pandemic, and wider health and safety management are designed to continually meet compliance with health and safety legislation.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None
Sustainability Implications	None
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	None

Risk Management Implications	Management of COVID19 risks has continued to be a significant focus for Trafford Council
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The Employee Wellbeing Strategy provides a framework for focused interventions to support the health and wellbeing of our workforce
Health and Safety Implications	See Legal section above. The continuing health and safety arrangements combined with the mechanisms for the provision of advice and guidance are all focused on sensible and targeted risk management.

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Covid19 Pandemic has continued to bring significant challenges for the Council in effectively delivering our key services whilst ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce. The Health and Safety Unit (HSU), working closely with services and partners has maintained a key supportive role and provided competent advice to manage Covid19 risks.
- 1.2 Over the course of the pandemic we have continued to support staff to work from home where possible. Arrangements have remained in place to provide Covid Secure buildings for our front line staff and changes to working practices have allowed teams to deliver services safely in the community supported by appropriate PPE where required. During this reporting period, we needed to continue to protect our workforce as national restrictions were lifted in July 2021 and develop a safe reintegration process for staff to return to our offices. Covid Safe arrangements were still required even though prescriptive legal measures on social distancing and mandatory wearing of face coverings were removed and an advisory approach was adopted.
- 1.3 The content of this 6 month Corporate Health and Safety Report will provide:
- An updated review of the continuing health, safety and wellbeing work undertaken to protect and support our services and schools through the pandemic.
 - An overview of accidents during this period, giving details of the numbers and types of incidents that have occurred across directorates and schools
 - Details of delivery of other health and safety support and the HSU work programme.
- 1.4 Updates also continue to be provided to the relevant Corporate Directors and Joint Consultative Committees.

2. **Covid19 – Managing Pandemic Risks for our Services and Schools**

2.1 **Planning and Delivering our Covid Support**

- 2.1.1 HSU has continued to have representation on a number of coordinated strategic and operational working groups to prioritise our Covid support for Services and schools. Table 1 below highlights the overarching key groups:

Table 1 – Key Strategic and Operational Groups

Groups	Description
Trafford People, Digital and Modernisation Thematic Group (Silver)	Reports to RCG (Recovery Coordination Group) Ensures the co-ordination of the Council's Covid response, recovery and reintegration plans following efforts to manage the impact of Covid-19 since March 2020.
Reintegration Sub Group (Bronze)	Reports to Trafford People, Digital and Modernisation Thematic Group Includes estates, people, digital and health & safety issues which provides an overview of our operational delivery of Covid management and reintegration programme.
Health and Safety Operational Group	Reports to Reintegration Sub Group Chaired by HSU and working with key partners, it delivers operational risk management and monitoring processes in line with Covid arrangements.

2.1.2 HSU have also maintained representation on further groups to provide specific support e.g. in the provision of PPE, schools support (outbreak control meetings and head teachers update meetings) and elections planning meetings.

2.1.3 The communication of all our Covid guidance and information had been supported through the provision of our [#Stay EPIC COVID19 Support intranet pages](#), regular updates in the staff and manager briefings, senior manager communications, information on our '6 boxes', schools specific communications and bespoke videos and training outlining our Covid measures. These have also been shared with our partners working within our buildings.

2.2 Supporting our Workforce to Work from Home

2.2.1 Support has continued for staff working from home where they are able to do so. This greatly supports our Covid measures within our buildings by helping to manage occupancy levels, reduce the risk of transmission and support business continuity for our front line services. The support includes:

- Additional [health, safety and wellbeing guidance](#) for working from home safely
- Access to essential equipment to work from home e.g. laptop risers, keyboards, mice
- Additional more complex assessment support from HSU to identify any additional needs or equipment

2.2.2 The focus of the support has now shifted to reflect longer term Trafford Smart Working and new working styles, which will give a business focused approach to flexible working and provide a better work life balance for colleagues.

2.2.3 Two of the work styles, 'home worker' and 'hybrid worker', give staff the opportunity to work in a home environment for all or part of their working hours on a permanent arrangement. This move from temporary arrangements during the pandemic, requires the Council to ensure that we are continuing to robustly meet our duties under workstation and display screen equipment legislation. HSU are fully involved with the Trafford Smart Working Project Team to support this work which will include:

- Additional workstation and DSE assessments to continue to ensure a safe and healthy workstation and environment for staff
- Investment in suitable additional workstation equipment as determined through the risk assessment

2.3 Covid Safe Buildings and Services

General building arrangements

2.3.1 The provision of Covid safe buildings have remained an essential aspect of protecting staff and minimising the risk of transmission. Even following national restrictions lifting in July 2021, we still have duties to protect our workforce from Covid19. Continuing measures have included:

- Managing the occupancy of our buildings
- Space arrangements throughout our buildings, at desks, in communal areas and in meeting rooms
- Enhanced cleaning regimes and hand hygiene arrangements.
- Screens installed at public facing areas.
- Recommended wearing of face coverings
- Good ventilation in place

2.3.2 The arrangements at our main office buildings have continued to be reviewed by HSU in conjunction with our FM providers and partners on a monthly basis and issues are also addressed through the bi-weekly Health and Safety Operational Group. Covid 19 building risk assessment templates are also still available for premises managers to arrange and monitor measures at other buildings.

Covid Secure Elections

2.3.3 In May 2021, Covid secure elections were delivered. A range of measures were put into place for the nominations, postal votes, polling stations and count to ensure these complex arrangements could be delivered safely and the risk of Covid transmission was managed effectively.

Reintegration Support

2.3.4 As the national restrictions were eased and lifted, HSU supported safe arrangements for the reintegration of further staff to our workplaces in line with the Trafford Roadmap. This was to aid the delivery of services, assist with business continuity and support staff wellbeing. Examples of this work is shown in table 2:

Table 2: Activities to support Covid Safe Reintegration

Activity	Description
Occupancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupancy levels were increased to a maximum of 40% which could be accommodated within our existing Covid Safe arrangements. Staff were encouraged to return to the office in a managed way for part of the week. • Services managed the attendance of staff to the offices within this parameter. • This continued to be monitored through our signing in processes at our main buildings
Meeting Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting room occupancies were reviewed and increased following changes to self-isolation guidance • Covid safe arrangements remained in place for distancing, cleaning and ventilation to protect those using the meeting space • Committee rooms and the Council Chamber at Trafford Town Hall were included in the review to support the hosting of the majority of Council face to face meetings. Full Council is still currently held at external suitable venues but remains under review • Advice and support has been provided to services who require the use of meeting rooms for service delivery and mandatory events

CO2 Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE and government guidance identifies CO2 monitoring as a useful tool for assessing appropriate ventilation within workspaces. • CO2 monitors are now being used as an effective risk management tool within Council spaces to ensure adequate ventilation is available to reduce the transmission risk of Covid. Key examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within the Council Chamber for Council Meetings - Used by the Arts Centre for their performance and exhibition spaces that are open to the public - By Registrars within their venues for official services and duties - The TalkShop are using them to support meetings with service users - All of the above services have received direct support with the review of their Covid Safe risk assessments • CO2 monitors are also being rolled out for use in schools supported by DfE guidance and advice from HSU where needed
Welfare Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSU supported the completion of new shower facilities at Sale Waterside including an accessible shower to support active travel etc. The changing facilities and drying room are also available at Trafford Town Hall • The Terrace seating area was reopened with Covid Safe measures in place following the relocation of the Lateral Flow Testing Site
Information and Guidance for Staff and Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to our intranet guidance and communications, two bespoke videos were produced demonstrating from an individual perspective the Covid arrangements in place at Trafford Town Hall and Sale Waterside.

2.4 Service Risk Assessment Support

2.4.1 Service Leads and Managers continue to be responsible for making sure the risks associated with Covid19 have been assessed in relation to their work activities. Template support materials have been updated as the Government and HSE guidance has changed. Specific support has been provided across our range of services including Registrars Services, Libraries and the Arts Centre. Trafford Transport have received support in reviewing arrangements for their passenger assistants to operate safely. PPE remains available to services where required.

2.4.2 The Health and Safety Executive made an unannounced visit to Sale Library in April as part of their ongoing Covid Secure compliance inspection programme. The inspector observed the range of measures put into place to protect staff and visitors and were complimentary with the arrangements. A previous spot check had also taken place at Altrincham library in February, where again the inspector was happy with the measures in place.

2.5 Protecting our Staff at Greater Risk

2.5.1 Throughout the pandemic, Trafford guidance for services and schools has been provided for staff at greater risk from Covid19. This reflected government guidance for those who were 'clinically extremely vulnerable' and 'clinically vulnerable'.

2.5.2 The Trafford guidance has been continually reviewed and updated in line with any government changes, which have included the end of the requirement to shield, and categories for persons at greater risk. Trafford has maintained an individual risk assessment process to identify and consult with staff considered to be at greater risk and how they can be supported with any additional protective measures.

2.6 Reducing the risk of transmission from Covid19 confirmed or suspected cases

- 2.6.1 A Trafford test and trace process has remained in place to respond effectively to suspected and confirmed cases of Covid19 and minimise the risk of transmission within the work environment. This includes appropriate self-isolation and the obtaining of a test, assessment of any further potential contacts and further cleaning arrangements where required. There has been no significant outbreaks of Covid19 within our Council buildings. Although identified contacts no longer have to self-isolate if they are double vaccinated, it is still encouraged that home working will be undertaken for the isolation period where possible, combined with regular lateral flow testing.
- 2.6.2 Trafford Covid19 guidance requests that staff attending our workplaces undertake regular lateral flow testing. HSU supported the relocation of our in house lateral flow testing site managed by Public Health to the Trafford Town Hall library. This can be used both by staff and other cohorts to support regular testing.

2.7 Schools Support and SLA Delivery

- 2.7.1 Schools have continued to be aided during exceptionally challenging times. Supporting Public Health colleagues, HSU have assisted schools through:
 - Reviewing and updating the schools overarching Covid19 risk assessment template to implement and monitor arrangements for pupils and staff
 - Attend outbreak control meetings and provide advice to support the effective management of cases
 - Attendance at Head Teachers and Trade Union update meetings to answer any queries and provide any further advice and guidance
 - Direct support through the school SLA arrangements
- 2.7.2 To support schools during the pandemic through the SLA, HSU have been offering options to deliver ‘virtual/remote’ audit support for schools during the pandemic that assist with their ongoing compliance and management of health and safety issues whilst continuing to manage COVID related risks for pupils and staff. All schools under the SLA were supported with a monitoring toolkit to assist them in reviewing their health and safety performance.
- 2.7.3 Currently, 77 schools have purchased the Health and Safety SLA for 2021-22. The breakdown of schools is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Breakdown of school SLA buy-back

School Type	Number
Community	37
Voluntary Controlled	1
Voluntary Aided	20
Independent	2
Academy	17
Total	77

2.8 Health and Wellbeing Support During the Pandemic

2.8.1 The wider HR Service in conjunction with partners has continued to deliver a range of interventions for our workforce and provide, promote and signpost a wealth of support in line with our *EPIC You* Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This includes a focus on mental wellbeing and assisting colleagues in challenging times. Table 4 summaries the support from April 2021.

Table 4: EPIC You Health and Wellbeing Activities and Support

Activity	Details
Trafford Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trafford Council/CCG Mental Health First Aid Network: Promoting our trained volunteers who are a point of contact if colleagues are experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. • Trafford Employee Assistance Programme: 24/7, easy to access confidential support. Unlimited access to information and counselling
Tea and Talks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea and Talk sessions hosted monthly by our Mental Health First Aiders aimed at supporting staff to connect and take some time out from pressures of work and home life. This may be a conversation specifically around mental health or just a general chat.
Staff Support Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microlearn sessions: Delivered to staff included Digital Wellbeing to facilitate improved use and management of IT that supports wellbeing and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. • 'Let's Talk' Sessions: Included a wellbeing session 'Supporting through change to feel physiologically safe' • EPIC Manager Health and Wellbeing Module: Launch of this module as part of the EPIC Manager programme to ensure managers are able to support the wellbeing of their teams.
Wellbeing campaigns and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted and encouraged physical and mental wellbeing events to staff including '30 days Wild' and National Walking Month in May and Cycle to Work Day in August. • World Suicide Prevention Day was highlighted in September through our staff communication channels
Health and Wellbeing Guidance and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing staff pages: Have been refreshed and updated to provide more engaging advice and guidance with hints and tips for staff and managers on a range of wellbeing topics. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources under themes such as resilience, managing stress, returning to the office and financial wellbeing - 'Bites' learning series including bite size talks with reflective questions

3. Accident Statistics

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Accident statistics can provide an important aspect of monitoring health and safety performance and help identify areas where risk needs to be managed more effectively. As mentioned in the previous year's Corporate Health and Safety report, the Covid pandemic had a significant impact on our workforce delivery due to a number of factors including an increased number of staff working from home, temporary pauses or changes in the provision of some front line services, reduction in customers accessing our buildings and schools only open for key workers at periods of lockdown. This resulted in a substantial decrease in reported incidents.

3.1.2 During the six month period of this report, we have seen schools return to a period of full operation with Covid measures in place and other teams increasing the provision of their services again as restrictions were lifted. However, a substantial number of staff have also continued to work from home.

3.1.3 The changes have seen an increase in the number in the incidents reported. The total number of incidents for April-September reported to the HSU has risen from 20 incidents reported in 2020 to 63 in 2021. Tables 5 and 6 provide a breakdown of these incidents by service area, directorate and type of accident.

Table 5: Numbers of accidents by Directorate and Service Area

Directorate	Service Area	No of incidents
Adults Services	Adults Neighbourhood Teams	3
Total		3
Childrens Services	Education Standards, Quality and Assurance	9
	Residential & No Wrong Door	1
Total		10
Governance & Community	Customer Services	1
Total		1
Strategy and Resources	Cleaning Support Service	1
	Catering Support Service	7
Total		8
Place	Growth and Regulatory Services	2
	Housing Options	1
Total		3
Schools	Special Schools	33
	Community Schools	5
Total		38
Total Accidents		63

Table 6: Type of accident by Directorate

Type of accident	Directorates – See Key Below							Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
Cut by sharp object	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
Contact with hot surface/substance	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Fall from steps/down stairs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hit by a moving vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hit by moving, flying or falling object	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	4
Hit something fixed or stationary	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Injured while handling, lifting or carrying	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	4
Other kind of incident	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Physical Assault	0	4	0	0	0	1	23	28
Road Traffic Collision	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Slipped, tripped, fell on same level	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	5
Sports related	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Striking against object	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Verbal assault, threats or Intimidation	1	2	0	1	0	2	2	8
Totals	3	10	0	1	8	3	38	63

A - Adults

C - Finance and Systems

E - Strategy and Resources

G - Schools

B - Childrens

D - Governance & Community

F - Place

3.1.4 Comparing the accident statistics to the same period in 2020, the increase in accidents mainly relates to schools (in particular special schools) with an increase of 38 incidents reported compared to 5 in the previous reporting term when schools were operating at significantly reduced capacity under lockdown arrangements. Services that include support to schools have also seen an increase in incidents reported including Trafford Transport Provision (9 incidents from 1) and catering and cleaning services (8 from 3).

3.2 Types of Accidents

3.2.1 Violence and aggression accounted for the majority of incidents. Physical assault includes a wide range of physical incidents stemming from aggressive behaviour and accounted for 28 incidents. These occurred mainly within Special Schools and Trafford Transport Provision when dealing with challenging behaviour. This was comparable with pre-pandemic levels in 2019. One significant incident occurred within the housing options team and involved a highly volatile service user within Sale Waterside. The incident was reviewed to improve physical and procedural security measures within the building.

- 3.2.2 There were 8 reported incidents of verbal assault, threats or intimidation (compared to 3). These were reported from a range of services including schools, Transport Provision, Regulatory Services and Adult Social Care
- 3.2.3 Slips and trips accidents accounted for 5 incidents and mainly occurred within a school or school catering environment. The remaining incidents involved a variety of circumstances and were not related.

3.3 Rate of Reportable Injuries to Staff

- 3.3.1 There were three incidents that were reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) to the Health and Safety Executive during the period covered by this report. These incidents related to catering and cleaning services within schools requiring more than 7 days off work and included:
- A catering member of staff who was accidentally knocked into by a pupil
 - A catering member of staff who caught their foot on a pipe
 - A cleaning member of staff who suffered a moving and handling injury

4. Continued Delivery of Health and Safety Improvement Plan

- 4.1 The focus of the HSU's work programme has largely continued in supporting the Covid Pandemic, however this and additional work is highlighted

4.2 Key Work Programme Actions

The following actions detailed in Table 6 were completed

Table 7: Key work programme actions completed or being progressed by HSU

Area of development	Actions	Status
Corporate and schools guidance review	Covid19 Service Risk Assessment Templates Updated	Completed
	Covid19 Building Risk Assessment Templates Updated	Completed
	Persons at Greater Risk of COVID19 Guidance Updated	Completed
	Covid19 intranet guidance updates including Covid19 videos	Completed
	Display Screen Equipment Guidance to align with Smart Working Styles	In progress
Schools COVID Support	Schools Covid19 overarching risk assessment review	Completed
Fire Evacuation arrangements	Review of fire precautions and fire register arrangements for our Council buildings during Covid and evacuation drills undertaken	Completed

4.3 Training

The HSU has continued to work with the Learning and Development Team to provide essential training as detailed in table 8

Table 8: Training delivered April-September 2021

Course/Training	Number of Courses	Number Attended/Trained
Moving and Handling Induction (Adults)	2	7
Moving and Handling Hoist Training	3	10
Online General Manual Handling	-	60
Fire Evacuation Chair Training	2	4
Online Health & Safety Inductions	-	52

4.4 Requests for Service

HSU have continued to respond to a very high level of requests for advice and support in light of COVID and also other complaints or incidents relating to Health and Safety at Work issues.

4.5 Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments

A total of 17 DSE (computer) workstation assessments have been carried out by the HSU for employees. These included supporting colleagues working from home and those with more complex health needs.

4.6 Moving and Handling Support

- 4.6.1 The Moving and Handling Lead continues to support refresher training needs with the delivery of the online Moving and Handling Training and Support Package. The system is accessed by staff in Ascot House, Care at Home and Supported Living Services and provides effective additional training for existing and new staff. It includes online videos, safe systems of work and training tools. All staff receive tailored training records to monitor their competence in moving and handling tasks.
- 4.6.2 Bespoke hoist training was delivered to supported living staff as an outcome to a complex risk assessment from a hospital discharge.
- 4.6.3 The Moving and Handling induction training programme continues on a request basis from services as part of their training needs and this is expected to increase as teams continue to reintegrate.
- 4.6.4 The Council's Moving and Handling Lead and Consultant has also completed 'complex' moving and handling assessments as detailed in table 9, providing support for staff and service users. The consultant has also provided two vocational rehabilitation assessments to assist staff in returning to work safely.

Table 9: Complex Moving and Handling Referrals

Complex Moving and Handling referrals	Number of referrals
Complex Moving and Handling - Adults	5
Complex Moving and Handling - Children	2
Complex Display Screen Assessments	15

4.7 Fire Safety

- 4.7.1 The Health and Safety Advisor (Fire Lead) has continued to deliver a range of fire support to services to ensure we meet our duties under relevant fire legislation.
- 4.7.2 They have overseen the replacement of evacuation chairs at Trafford Town Hall and Sale to ensure the equipment is suitable and fit for purpose in assisting evacuation for persons who may require assistance.
- 4.7.3 The subsequent delivery of fire evacuation chair training has taken place at both sites with relevant staff. Colleagues who require Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) in the event of an emergency have been supported with arrangements when they are within our buildings.
- 4.7.4 Evacuation drills have been completed at Trafford Town Hall and Sale Waterside to test the fire arrangements in place

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The report has highlighted the continued work that has been delivered in response to the COVID Pandemic to protect our workforce whilst continuing to deliver our services. It has also highlighted the work underway in reintegrating our workforce and considerations to new ways of working.
- 5.2 This work will continue through 2021-22 through effective collaboration with partners and services and a comprehensive update on this work will be provided in the Corporate Health and Safety Year End Report.