

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Council  
**Date:** 27 January 2021  
**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 2020**

### Summary

1. To provide an overview of the 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 to 30 September 2020

### 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, Safety and Wellbeing  
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 been the 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 brought significant challenges for the Council in protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce and the continuing delivery of front line services. Over the six months covered by the report, the Health and Safety Unit (HSU) have played a key role with other services to support the Council in effectively managing the risks associated with COVID19.
- 1.2** The pandemic has hugely impacted on how and where staff work and provide vital services, arrangements required for our buildings to make them COVID Secure, changes in working practices, the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) where needed and ensuring our staff at greater risk from COVID19 are protected.
- 1.3** The content of the this 6 month report will differ from the usual Corporate Health and Safety Report and provide:
- A detailed overview of the work undertaken to protect and support our Services and Schools during the Pandemic including wellbeing support during this challenging time
  - A brief overview of accidents during this period. However due to the significant changes in workforce delivery during the pandemic, these will not be analysed in relation to the trends for previous years data.
  - Ongoing 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, Joint Consultative Committees and update meeting with Union Colleagues.

## **2. COVID19 – Responding to the Pandemic and Protecting our Services and Schools**

### **2.1 Planning and Delivering our COVID Support**

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

**Table 1 – Key Strategic and Operational Groups**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Trafford Staffing, Digital and Modernisation Thematic Group</b>	<b>Reports to RCG (Recovery Coordination Group)</b> Ensures the co-ordination of the council's response, recovery and reintegration plans following efforts to manage the impact of Covid-19 since March 2020.
<b>Reintegration Sub Group</b>	<b>Reports to Trafford Staffing, Digital and Modernisation Thematic Group</b> Comprises three work streams; Estates, People and Health & Safety along with a Steering Board. Purpose is to develop and outline options for returning to work at our office locations using our agile capabilities, if lockdown restrictions are eased and/or lifted.
<b>Health and Safety Operational Group</b>	<b>Reports to Reintegration Steering Group</b> Ensure that effective risk management and monitoring processes are in place for services and for return to the office environment in the short, medium and long term linking with key service and partner leads

2.1.2 HSU have also had representation on further working groups as detailed in the relevant sections of this report to provide specific support e.g. in the provision of PPE, direct support to schools and supporting the Trafford Test and Trace process.

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, information on our '6 boxes', schools specific communications and also Senior Manager communications.

## **2.2 Supporting our Workforce to Work from Home**

2.2.1 To protect staff from the risks of COVID, arrangements were put into place to allow our workforce to work from home where possible to do so. Many colleagues had to adapt very quickly to a new of working and this brought a number of considerations to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.

2.2.2 Homeworking support for our staff has been delivered through three key themes:

- **Workstation equipment**

Working with our IT Service, additional workstation equipment was made available to all colleagues through a central ordering system. This included access to laptop risers, keyboards and mice to enable staff to work from laptops safely. Over 700 pieces of kit were ordered. These can continue to be ordered from the IT service.

- **Workstation Assessment Guidance and Support**

Additional health & safety workstation guidance and support for working from home was developed and communicated which included a 'self-assessment' and advice on setting up your workstation correctly, taking regular breaks and stretching exercises. Where further support was required, details were referred to HSU to provide a more detailed assessment and provide advice on the workstation set up and any further equipment required. Colleagues also have had the opportunity to borrow office furniture on a temporary basis where a need was highlighted.

- ***Health and Wellbeing Support when Working from Home***

Guidance was also produced to support the mental wellbeing of colleagues working from home which included advice on:

- Staying connected to colleagues
- Creating home/work boundaries
- Setting work hours
- Looking after you mental and physical health

## **2.3 COVID Secure Buildings and Services**

2.3.1 In line with Government Guidance, we have ensured that those colleagues who can work from home continue to do so. However key services still needed to operate from our buildings. We therefore, adopted a number of practical measures to ensure our buildings are COVID secure.

2.3.2 The reintegration sub group and health and safety operational group provides a cross functional team to develop a safe process for return of staff. In line with Government Guidance our main administrative buildings have been subject to a COVID19 Buildings Risk Assessment to minimise the risk of infection and transmission of COVID 19. Practical measures have included:

- Managing the occupancy of our main buildings to 20% of our normal capacity.
- Social distancing arrangements in place through clearly signed one way systems, restrictions on desk use and managing occupancy in kitchens, toilets and meeting rooms.
- Increased cleaning regimes and hand hygiene arrangements.
- Screens installed at public facing areas.

2.3.3 Guidance has been produced for managers and staff to inform of these arrangements. The arrangements are monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis by HSU in conjunction with the Building FM Teams. Any issues of concern are reviewed and where necessary escalated to RCG.

2.3.4 A template COVID19 Building Risk Assessment has also been developed for Premises Managers to put into place arrangements at other buildings. The Health and Safety Team has supported managers in completing the assessments at Ascot House, Registrars Service, Libraries, Music Service, Flixton House and Arts Centre. Specific 'COVID19 House Risk Assessments' have been developed for our Supported Living Services and Children's Homes to suit their particular working arrangements. Where staff are based in Health owned buildings, HSU have liaised with the TLCO Health and Safety Adviser who has completed the COVID19 Risk Assessment for those buildings.

## **2.4 Service Risk Assessment Support**

2.4.1 Service Leads and Managers are responsible for making sure the risks associated with COVID19 have been assessed in relation to their work activities. To assist with this process HSU provided a risk assessment template to guide colleagues through the key areas to consider as part of the risk assessment process. Specific support has been provided across our range of services as required.

## **2.5 Protecting our Staff at Greater Risk**

- 2.5.1 Throughout the pandemic, government guidance has been issued to provide further protection for persons at greater risk from COVID19 including those who are 'Clinically Extremely Vulnerable' and 'Clinically Vulnerable'.
- 2.5.2 In line with this guidance and other evidence based data, Trafford guidance for services and for schools was produced, which has been revised as the government guidance changes. It takes Service Leads and Head Teachers through an individual risk assessment process to identify and consult with staff at greater risk and how they should be supported with any additional protective measures
- 2.5.3 The guidance has been widely communicated through our intranet pages and staff and manager briefings. Managers were also requested to incorporate this process as part of their team 'Check In's'

## **2.6 Supporting our Trafford Test and Trace Process**

- 2.6.1 HSU play a role in supporting the local test and trace arrangements to respond effectively to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID19 and minimise the risk of transmission within the work environment.
- 2.6.2 Led by the Public Health COVID Trace team, the process responds to notified cases and triggers the following actions:
- Self-isolation of affected staff and ensuring a test is obtained
  - An assessment of the working arrangements and any further potential contacts
  - Communication to contacts to ensure strict social distancing and hygiene arrangements are adhered to.
  - HSU support in identifying any further steps to minimise the risk of transmission within the workplace setting including reviewing the COVID Secure arrangements

## **2.7 Schools Support and SLA Delivery**

- 2.7.1 School settings including our community schools were supported in putting into place the arrangements for the safe return of staff and children to the classroom. The measures to assist schools through this six months of the pandemic included:
- The provision of a Schools overarching COVID19 risk assessment template for schools to identify and put into place the arrangements to protect staff and pupils from COVID19 related risks.
  - HSU participation in a multi-disciplinary Schools Panel consisting of representatives from HR, Health and Safety, Education, Public Health and cleaning services to have oversight of the risk assessments being produced by Trafford Schools and offer any further support or guidance.
  - Attendance at school and union update meetings to answer any queries and provide any further advice and guidance
- 2.7.2 The schools SLA has focused on providing COVID health and safety support in addition to any other general enquiries and incident advice. Currently, 78 schools have purchased the Health and Safety SLA for 2020-21, compared to 75 in the previous year. The breakdown of schools is shown in table 2.

**Table 2: Breakdown of school SLA buy-back**

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Number</b>
Community	39
Voluntary Controlled	1
Voluntary Aided	19
Independent	2
Academy	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>

2.7.3 HSU are currently finalising options to deliver further ‘virtual’ 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.

## **2.8 Provision of PPE to Key Services**

2.8.1 The Trafford and Manchester Mutual Aid Hub provides a contingency supply of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to ensure teams and providers have the protection they need to deliver essential services and includes our Trafford Core and Commissioned Services.

2.8.2 The Trafford and Manchester Hub Project Team including colleagues from Transformation, Public Health, CCG, and Health and Safety have defined systems in place to:

- Analyse and track demand for PPE
- Procure mutual aid stock levels.
- Manage the ordering and distribution of required PPE
- Provide guidance on the process and appropriate use of PPE
- Quality assure items of PPE

HSU have representation on the weekly PPE Group meeting to support the mutual aid hub.

2.8.3 HSU have worked closely with our Trafford core services to identify the PPE need for those teams, assess and order the PPE required and make arrangements for it to be distributed to those teams via Service Leads. This is continually reviewed as the restrictions and demands on services alter.

## **2.9 Health and Wellbeing Support During the Pandemic**

2.9.1 The impact of the COVID Pandemic has significant implications for the mental wellbeing of our colleagues through issues including increased anxiety regarding the situation, demands and changes to our work environment in continuing to deliver key services in challenging times, feelings of loneliness and isolation through the restrictions and the general impact upon the balance of our home and working lives.

2.9.2 We have continued to provide, promote and signpost staff to a range of support to in line with our ongoing *EPIC You* Health and Wellbeing Strategy and this is summarised in in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: EPIC You Health and Wellbeing Activities and Support**

Activity	Details
<b>Trafford Support Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trafford Council/CCG Mental Health First Aid Network:</b> Promoting our trained volunteers who are a point of contact if colleagues are experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress.</li> <li>• <b>Trafford Employee Assistance Programme:</b> 24/7, easy to access confidential support. Unlimited access to information and counselling</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health Awareness Week (May 2020)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A week of promotional communications and support               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signposting to internal and external support services</li> <li>- Promoting taking time to talk and check in on each other</li> <li>- Promoting our 'Cheers for Peers' and 'EPIC Star Awards'</li> <li>- Being kind and random acts of kindness</li> <li>- Being kind to yourself and self-care</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>COVID Pulse Survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to staff and acting on their feedback in line</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Wellbeing Guidance and Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Working from Home Support:</b> Support tools and guides to embrace working from home</li> <li>• <b>Stay EPIC Manager Resources:</b> guidance needed to support their teams, so they can have sensitive conversations with individuals and signpost them to help where needed.</li> <li>• <b>EPIC Manager Health and Wellbeing Module:</b> Launch of this module as part of the EPIC Manager programme to ensure managers are able to support the wellbeing of their teams.</li> <li>• <b>EPIC You Intranet Pages:</b> Continuing to signpost colleagues to a wide variety of mental wellbeing resources</li> </ul>

### **3. Accident Statistics**

**3.1** 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. However, the COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on our workforce delivery in terms of:

- A substantial proportion of our workforce working from home
- Temporary pausing of the delivery of some services in line with the restrictions or delivering them in a reduced way
- Changes in the way some of our front line services have delivered support to service users
- Reduction in the provision of 'walk in' customer access to some of our buildings
- Schools initially only open to key worker pupils and the reopening on a phased basis ahead of full reopening in September 2020

**3.2** We have therefore seen a dramatic decrease in the reports of incidents for April-September 2020. Accordingly, the report will not fully analyse the trends of these incidents to previous years, as is usually detailed in this report, but instead will provide a brief overview of the incidents received.

**3.3** The total number of incidents for April-September reported to the HSU has reduced from 70 incidents reported in 2019 to 20 in 2020. Tables 4 and 5 provide a breakdown of these incidents by service area, directorate and type of accident.

**Table 4: Numbers of accidents by Directorate and Service Area**

Directorate	Service Area	No of incidents
<b>Adults Services</b>	Adults Neighbourhood Teams	8
Total		<b>8</b>
<b>Childrens Services</b>	Education Standards, Quality and Assurance	1
Total		<b>1</b>
<b>Governance &amp; Community Strategy</b>	Customer Services	2
Total		<b>2</b>
<b>Transformation and Resources</b>	Cleaning Support Service	2
	Catering Support Service	1
Total		<b>3</b>
<b>Place</b>	Regulatory Services	1
Total		<b>1</b>
<b>Schools</b>	Special Schools	3
	Community Schools	2
Total		<b>5</b>
<b>Total Accidents</b>		<b>20</b>

**Table 5: Type of accident by Directorate**

Type of accident	Directorates – See Key Below							Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
Animal/Insect	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Verbal assault, threats or Intimidation	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Contact with a chemical agent	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Contact with hot surface/substance	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other kind of incident	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Physical Assault	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
Road Traffic Collision	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Slipped, tripped, fell on same level	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	5
Striking against object	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>

A - Adults  
 C - Finance and Systems  
 E - Transformation and Resources  
 G - Schools

B - Childrens  
 D - Governance & Community Strategy  
 F - Place



### 3.4 Types of Accidents

- 3.4.1 Slips and trips accounted for the most incidents, with 5 taking place during this period. These occurred within catering and cleaning services, adult services and schools. These were isolated incidents with no trends evident.
- 3.4.2 Four incidents related to physical assault. Two of these took place within Supported Living and two within Special Schools and related to managing adults and children with challenging behaviour. There were 3 incidents of verbal assault, threats or intimidation. Two of these related to services users displaying volatile behaviour at Sale Waterside reception when trying to access homelessness support with the commissioned service HOST. The other incident was in relation to adult services with a support worker receiving verbal aggression from the relatives of a service user.
- 3.4.3 The remaining incidents involved a variety of circumstances and were not related.

### 3.5 Rate of Reportable Injuries to Staff

There were no 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

## 4. Continued Delivery of Health and Safety Improvement Plan

The focus of the HSU's work programme was reprioritised to deal with the COVID Pandemic, however the following wider work including COVID related work streams continued to be delivered

### 4.1 Key Work Programme Actions

The following actions detailed in Table 3 were completed

**Table 6: Key work programme actions completed or being progressed by HSU**

Area of development	Actions	Status
<b>Corporate and schools guidance review</b>	Refreshed Corporate Health and Safety Policy	Completed
	COVID19 Building Risk Assessment Templates	Completed
	COVID19 Service Risk Assessment Templates	Completed
	Persons at Greater Risk of COVID19 Guidance	Completed
	Working from Home Guidance	Completed
<b>Corporate COVID Support</b>	COVID Secure arrangements for our main buildings	Completed
	COVID Secure arrangements for services	Completed
<b>Schools COVID Support</b>	Schools Risk assessment reviews	Completed
<b>Fire Evacuation arrangements</b>	Review of fire precautions and fire register arrangements for our Council buildings and schools during COVID	Ongoing

## 4.2 Training

The HSU has continued to work with the Learning and Development Team to provide essential training as detailed in table 7

**Table 7: Training delivered April-September 2020**

Course/Training	Number of Courses	Number Attended/Trained
First Aid at Work refresher (2 day)	2	6
Moving and Handling (Adults) Update	11	50
Online Moving and Handling (People) Transport	1	20
Online Health & Safety Induction	-	162
Online General Manual Handling	-	50

## 4.3 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.

## 4.4 Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments

A total of 37 DSE (computer) workstation assessments have been carried out by the HSU for employees. 29 cases were to support staff who were adapting to working from home and 8 cases involved more complex assessment support to provide a safe workstation and environment.

## 4.5 Moving and Handling Support

- 4.5.1 Moving and Handling training is an essential part of induction and mandatory training requirements within some of our Health and Social Care Services. There was an increased demand for support as staff were recruited or redeployed to support these services during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 4.5.2 The Health and Safety Team continue to support this increased training need with the delivery of the online Moving and Handling Training and Support Package. The system is now being used by staff in Ascot House, Care at Home and Supported Living Services providing 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.
- 4.5.3 Socially distanced face to face moving and handling training was delivered for new staff at Ascot House and Care at Home. A total of 50 new staff were trained to provide them with the additional support they require in their new roles.

4.5.4 The Council's Moving and Handling Lead and Consultant have also completed the following 'complex' moving and handling assessments, providing support for staff and service users.

<b>Complex Moving and Handling referrals</b>	<b>Number of referrals</b>
Complex M&H - Adults	3
Complex M&H - Children	4
Complex DSE	4

#### **4.6 Fire Safety**

The Health and Safety Advisor (Fire Lead) has continued to deliver a range of fire support to services and schools including:

- Revising our fire management and evacuation processes at the our main administrative buildings due to the impact of our COVID Secure and occupancy arrangements
- Providing fire advice to schools to ensure fire compliance whilst managing COVID related risks
- Completing fire risk assessments where required at our schools

#### **5. Conclusion**

The report has highlighted the significant work that has been delivered in response to the COVID Pandemic to protect our workforce whilst continuing to deliver our services. This has been hugely challenging but also rewarding and has been achieved through effective coordinated and collaborative work with services and partners.

This work will continue and we will be prepared to face further challenges during the recovery phase and ensure that we are able to continue to deliver support to our services and schools into 2021. This performance will be detailed further in the year-end report.