

BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**CORPORATE
HEALTH AND SAFETY
PERFORMANCE REPORT
2016 - 2017**

For consideration by the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee 20th June
2017

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INTRODUCTION

This performance report is a review of Brentwood Borough Council's health and safety progress on compliance over the past fiscal year covering the period from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. This is in conjunction with the continued work in progress to improve health and safety standards proactively, particularly within high-risk areas and reactively in a positive manner to learn from mistakes or incidents.

In general, there has been a very positive response to improving the Council's health and safety culture and systems during the past year. This has been demonstrated by the support and progress made by The Chief Executive, the Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) and the Senior Management Team (SMT) in engaging with health and safety along with the respective Departmental areas. This has involved much joint working between the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor and the service areas to review and develop their systems and initiate improvements to increase compliance. Putting health and safety onto a stronger footing and being able to demonstrate compliance provides significant benefits to the Council. In the main these include; reduced sickness absence, improved employee wellbeing and performance, reduced enforcement action as well as reduced insurance claims.

A risk based approach has been the driving force in improving the status and culture of health and safety across the Council. This has involved working with managers and supervisors, to identify the risks within their service and put appropriate controls in place. Considerable work has been undertaken at the Council's Depot with a review of their top-level risks and development of risk assessments and systems to manage the activities that they deliver. Services such as refuse collection, grounds maintenance, street scene, parks and open spaces, and the depot workshop have all seen improvements to their health and safety systems. Additional work with other department areas such as Housing, Planning, Parking Services, Council Tax and Revenues and Corporate Services have also taken place. This has involved reviews of existing health and safety systems to include; the Health and Safety Policy, lone working arrangements and risk assessments, Young Persons work experience with the Council, contractor management, Community Services events and external events within the Borough, fire procedures and First Aid arrangements together with support of the Town Hall remodelling proposals.

It remains the intention of this Council to improve its' health and safety compliance in all significant areas *'so far as is reasonably practicable'* within the personnel and pecuniary resources at its' disposal.

Mark Stanbury
Environmental Health Manager
Environmental Health Services

1.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

1.1 Health and Safety Policy

The health and safety policy is a legal requirement and is fundamental to the Council's health and safety management system. It has been reviewed and updated in the past year and the statement of intent signed by the Chief Executive. The review incorporated an update of the council's organisational structure and respective employee responsibilities. It also placed an emphasis on the Council's contractor, machinery and equipment procurement. An alignment with the HSE's new national strategy to help Great Britain (GB) work well was also incorporated. The revised policy was approved by the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 31st January 2017.

2.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY STRUCTURE AND REPORTING

2.1 Health and Safety Committee

The Health and Safety Committee continued to meet quarterly in 2016/17 and helps to provide focus and co-ordination to the overarching objectives for improving health and safety within the Council. The committee met on three occasions in the reporting period between July, September and January 2017 respectively. The minutes and actions from these meetings were distributed to committee members and all Health and Safety Co-ordinators in order to feedback key information and actions to employees in their respective service areas. The main principles applied to these meetings was to develop the Council's health and safety system, to enable a greater sharing of information such as policy developments, organisational arrangements and health and safety legislation with committee members, Union representatives and all employees. The Committee aims to understand and improve the organisational risks, and these are communicated through the risk register and through CLB reports periodically. In addition, it empowers the Health and Safety Co-ordinators to support their respective service area and to up skill them. Further training is planned for 2017 on Successful Health and Safety Management and control of substances and chemicals used by the Council. The objective is to assist them in proactively engaging with their service area and raise standards, as well as improving the health and safety culture and compliance.

2.2 Street Scene and Environment Health and Safety Meetings

The Council's Depot services are technical in nature and cover the whole of the Borough. They incorporate high-risk and profile activities such as waste collection services, grounds maintenance, parks and open spaces, burial services, street care operations, arboriculture and tree management, fly tipping, as well as the vehicle workshop. The risks involved with these activities requires significant support and advice to manage the risks and deliver a good quality service to the residents of Brentwood Borough. To enable a proactive approach to the risks, bi-monthly meetings take place, to address the inherent risks and manage the processes to enable good systems to be put in place and develop sustainable working practices. During the reporting year, many high risks have been discussed and taken forward to improve existing operational processes. Some of these discussions have covered working on the highway and litter picking, management and maintenance of our parks and play equipment. Also, working at height, use of substances and chemicals, fire management, traffic management, procurement of equipment and machinery, and contractor management to name a few. Work streams are developed from these meetings to manage the risks proportionately and effectively.

2.3 Safety Advisory Group (SAG)

The Brentwood SAG is co-ordinated by the Local Authority (LA) and made up of representatives from the Council departments, emergency services, other relevant bodies and the event organiser. The purpose of the SAG is to provide a forum for discussing and advising on public safety at an event. The aim is to help the organisers with the planning and management of an event, and to encourage cooperation and coordination between all relevant agencies. The outcome is that events that affect public safety can be well planned and managed for safe and successful activities.

During this reporting year, a significant amount of resource has been provided to enable high profile events in the Borough to be undertaken safely. These have included; the Strawberry Fair, the Brentwood Festival, the Mayor's Fireworks Extravaganza, Remembrance Day Parade, Freedom of the Borough March, Lighting Up Brentwood and Shenfield Christmas Fayre. Other events have also been evaluated to advise the organiser of safe operation and delivery of their events. The benefit of these meetings is to enable a proactive approach to be adopted towards risk management, signposting concerns and encouraging appropriate control measures to be implemented. It also enables the Council's reputational risk to be managed well and reduces the likelihood of civil or criminal prosecution. The economic benefits to the Borough and residents' enjoyment is also recognised.

3.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

3.1 Brentwood Council Standards

Brentwood Borough Council has a range of Health and Safety Standards to assist managers and employees to implement the legal requirements as defined by law. A review of the current standards on the Health and Safety Microsite has been undertaken to identify which need to be updated. This is usually prompted by one of the following; legislative changes, Health and Safety Executive reviews of Approved Codes of Practice or changes in practice. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Standard is currently being updated to improve better management of chemicals. This will also incorporate a revised risk assessment to simplify the recording of chemicals and substances. With the transformation and relocation from the Town Hall being undertaken, a review of the Lone Working standard is in progress. In addition, the Hand and Arm Vibration Standard is being revised to incorporate the latest best practice. The Managers' Health and Safety Handbook is also being updated to include Mental Health Awareness and Wellbeing. Other Standards have been identified for review during the current financial year.

4.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY MICROSITE

4.1 Improving Communication of Health and Safety Information

Several web pages of the Health and Safety Microsite have been updated and refreshed to improve engagement and communicate new information. These include:

- The front page has updated details of latest web pages to support managers and employees.

- The Health and Safety Policy webpage has been improved and updated, to help employees understand the importance of this policy and reflect the revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy 2017 as well as a link to this document.
- The Young Persons at Work webpage has been updated to facilitate the Council's initiative to support Young person through work experience and an apprenticeship scheme.
- The risk assessment webpage has been improved to simplify the information on method statements for more complex work activities with higher risk.
- The Annual Health and Safety Report webpage has also been updated following the approved report at committee from last year.
- The VDU (visual display unit) web page has also been updated to include additional information for portable computers and facilitate the Council's arrangements for better flexible working.
- The Safety in Working Alone web page has also been updated to incorporate people skills to assist staff to interact in a positive manner with customers and be aware of potential signs of escalation.
- The First Aid and Fire Marshal Information web page has been revised and updated to reflect the organisational arrangements.

5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK CONTROL

5.1 Health and Safety Risk Assessments

The approach adopted has been to focus on the high-risk activities within the Council in line with the Street Scene and Environment Services. Support has been given to refuse collection and disposal, grounds maintenance, street scene operations, parks and open spaces. Further work has also been undertaken with Housing, Planning, Electoral Services and Asset Management to ensure the significant risks of service delivery are being identified and controlled. Where an incident takes place and it is found that for significant risks there wasn't a risk assessment in place this has been prioritised as part of the investigation and remedial work undertaken to prevent recurrence. Furthermore, when a completed risk assessment has been signed off by the Head of Department, it is then added to the Council's Intranet Health and Safety Microsite Matrix. Following the production of the risk assessments all required controls to manage significant risks from the activity are put in place. In addition to this arrangement, further assessments to support Council activities such as Herbicide applications and tractor mounted operations, Installation and removal of hanging baskets on the highway, 'Litter Picking on Rural Roads', 'Litter Picking on Arterial Roads' including method statements, 'Pest Control on Hartswood Golf Course', revised Lone Working Risk assessment template, Young Persons Work placements, Strawberry Fair, the Mayor's Firework event, Remembrance Day Parade, Lighting up Brentwood, Shenfield Christmas Fayre and Pregnant employees risk assessments have been produced.

With the development of new ways of working and hot desking as a new concept for the Council, Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments have also been undertaken; and this work plan continues. As this style of working increases going forward additional assessments will be required to ensure we are managing the risk of mobile, home and hot desking work.

6.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

6.1 General Health and Safety Training

Investment in staff training over the past year has been given to support training of employees to manage the risks inherent within their service and to develop competency. This contributes to a positive health and safety culture, better efficient safe working practices, employee wellbeing, as well as reducing incidents.

Training by type undertaken during the year includes:

- Driver CPC training – 31 trained
- Signing, Lighting and Guarding on the Highway - 16 trained
- Safe use of Refuse Collection Vehicles – 3 trained
- Legionella Awareness training – 6 trained
- First Aid training – 6 trained
- Fire Marshal Training – 1 trained

The health and safety training matrix has seen a significant increase in the number of employees attending training. In the last year, a broad range of service areas have attended training, which includes: Street Scene and Community and Housing Services, as well as Environmental Health. All certificates from training are collated and have been put on the Health and Safety Training Matrix to demonstrate competency. This provides excellent evidence of compliance.

7.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

7.1 Employee Wellbeing

To help improve employee wellbeing a health promotion initiative has been agreed during the year to encourage employees to have healthier lifestyles; and to enable staff to participate in activities that supported these initiatives. These were developed and organised to give employees an opportunity to engage with physical, informative and/or relaxing activities to improve their wellbeing. A successful example of improving employee wellbeing involved undertaking blood pressure checks of staff at the Depot.

Following on from the success of these events, some of the activities are being organised to encourage more long-term health benefits from participation in these activities. A few examples of these include: badminton, Pilates sessions at lunchtime, healthy walking and rounders. This work will be built upon in the coming year through a Staff Health and Wellbeing Survey and identification of activities to support improving lifestyle.

In addition to supporting the healthier lifestyles the Council is developing sessions for Mental Health Awareness training for employees and to support managers, to raise awareness of the concerns that can develop in the workplace and through service delivery.

8.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS

8.1 Highway working Inspections

During the fiscal year 2016/17, a series of health and safety inspections took place around the Borough to monitor the effectiveness of existing systems for working on the highway, undertaking grounds maintenance work. Where issues were identified, staff would notify their line manager in order to reach a resolution. The inspections supported the overall aim to ensure that work being undertaken was managed and statutory duties fulfilled. Where a shortfall in arrangements occurred, these were resolved quickly and effectively. Further monitoring and inspections of highway working activities is being planned for this year to ensure this high-risk activity is managed safely and successfully.

9.0 HSE ENFORCEMENT AND NOTICES

There were no HSE prosecutions or notices issued to the Council in this reporting period.

10.ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORTING

Fig 1: Table of Accidents/Incidents reported by Service Area for 2016/17

This table shows accidents recorded by month and in what location.

Service Area		Corporate Services and Finance	Street Scene & Environment	Environmental Health	Planning & Development	Housing Services	Legal & Governance	Business Transformation	Council Tax & Revenues	TOTAL
Month	Person Type									
Apr 16	Employee	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 16	Employee	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
June 16	Employee	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
July 16	Employee	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aug 16	Employee	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Non-Employee	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Sept 16	Employee	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Oct 16	Employee	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Nov 16	Employee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Non-Employee	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dec 16	Employee	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Service Area		Corporate Services and Finance	Street Scene & Environment	Environmental Health	Planning & Development	Housing Services	Legal & Governance	Business Transformation	Council Tax & Revenues	TOTAL
Month	Person Type									
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan 17	Employee	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	6
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb 17	Employee	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 17	Employee	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Non-Employee	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total by Service Area	Employee	3	11	1	2	6	0	0	1	24
	Non-Employee	1	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	10
Total		4	14	1	2	12	0	0	1	34

Figure 2: Comparison of Incident data 2015-16 with 2016-17

This table shows the number of accidents/incidents in the previous year.

Service Area		Corporate Services and Finance	Street Scene & Environment	Environmental Health	Planning & Development	Housing Services	Legal & Governance	Business Transformation	Council Tax & Revenues	TOTAL
2015-16	Person Type									
Total by	Employee	1	15	0	3	8	0	2	0	30
Service Area	Non-Employee	0	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	8
Total		1	17	0	3	14	0	2	0	38

10.1 Incident statistics commentary

With reference to the 'Comparison of Incident data 2015-16 with 2016-17' (figure 2) it is clear that there has been a reduction in the number of reported incidents from 38 to 34 relating to both employees and non-employees. In the first instance, this may be perceived as a positive step forward; however, it is important to recognise that under reporting of incidents in any organisation will take place and that the Council is not immune to this situation. Furthermore, under reporting of incidents could be due to a perceived blame culture amongst employees, for example failure to report for fear of potential consequences. In addition, in some cases it may be considered that the incident was not important however, this could lead to potential issues with identifying trends and the importance of reporting near misses. Since 2014, improvements have been made to encourage reporting but there is still further work to be undertaken to improve this culture. This will be undertaken through the following measures:

- Revision of the Incident Report Form (IRF) to simplify the form to improve ease of reporting
- Raising awareness via the Health and Safety Committee
- Through greater interaction with departmental heads; as well as
- In collaboration with CLB in line with associated reports to encourage further compliance

It is envisaged that through the implementation of these measures that reporting will increase and that the perceived blame culture will be replaced with that of a positive learning environment to further promote and improve health and safety standards.

10.2 Incidents by causation

Comparison of Incident data 2015-16 with 2016-17

Fig 3: Table of causation of incidents

2015-16 Type of Incident	Struck by or Against	Verbal abuse and threatening behavior	Slip/Trip/Fall	Contact with sharp or hot object	Road Traffic Accident	Manual Handling	Spatial Awareness	Near Miss	No Injury Incident	Total
No. of incidents and accidents	4	12	11	3	1	3	1	2	1	38

2016-17 Type of Incident	Struck by or Against	Verbal abuse and threatening behavior	Slip/Trip/Fall	Contact with sharp or hot object	Road Traffic Accident	Manual Handling	Spatial Awareness	Near Miss	No Injury Incident	Total
No. of incidents and accidents	6	5	7	3	1	3	1	1	0	27 (34)*

In line with the 'Comparison of Incident data 2015-16 with 2016-17' (figure 3), it is evident that there has been an overall reduction in the total number of comparable sub-category incidences from 38 to 27. In particular, the figures have illustrated a reduction in the verbal abuse and threatening behaviour incidences in relation to employees. Furthermore, there is now an increase use of the Council's Cautionary Contact Register which records unacceptable behaviour towards employees from members of the public. In addition, there has been a marked reduction in the incident reporting of slip, trips and falls, which highlights the continued work effort to ensure that safety standards are maintained.

With reference to the total number of incidences occurring in 2016/17's data analysis (i.e. 34), it was noted that there were four sub-categories that were not captured as follows: -

- Damage to property (2 incidents)
- Equipment/ mechanical malfunction (2 incidents)
- Mental Ill Health (2 incidents)
- Ill Health (1 incident)

Finally, by including these sub-categories into subsequent data capture, it will enable more effective analysis of incident reporting.

10.3 Incidents by Types of Injury

Fig 3: Table of injury types

2016-17 Type of Injury	Cut/lacerations /puncture wounds	Stress/Anxiety	Muscular Sprain/Strain	Bruise/Graze	Burn/Scald	No Injury	Total
No. of injury and accidents	8	6	9	6	0	5	34

10.4 Incident Trends

Commentary: Corporate Health and Safety have reviewed all these incidents and discussed with the respective line managers where improvements can be made to prevent recurrence. Such improvements are recorded on the individual accident forms as a permanent record of the action taken. The number of accidents shown against Street Scene and Environment as well as Housing Services reflects a range of incidents that have been investigated and where controls have been improved.

More effective reporting of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour by Housing Services, Street Scene and Environment and the Customer Contact Centre is to be commended. This has led to improved analysis of incidents of this type as well as increased use of the Council's Cautionary Contacts Register.

Statistically, slips, trips and falls are historically known to account for a higher proportion of incidents within most organisations. On average, they cause 40 per cent of all reported major injuries (HSE). In this year's report, this incident type only occurs on seven occasions which statistically is only 25 per cent of total occurrences, which demonstrates a reduction in this type of incident. Most slips, trips and falls resulted in minor bruising and grazes.

Muscular sprains and strains are at a low level due to the significant investment in manual handling training across the organisation. This is to be commended as line managers have sought to proactively promote safe practice and encourage attendance for training.

Cuts are as a result of slips, trips and falls as well as human behaviour when using equipment or carrying out a task incorrectly. This is rectified through proportionate incident investigation.

11.0 RISK ASSESSMENTS ON THE HEALTH AND SAFETY MATRIX

Fig 4: Table of Risk Assessments and Safe System of Work (SSOW) produced by Service Area

Statistic/Name of Service	Corporate Services	Street Scene & Community	Planning & Environmental Health	Housing & Benefits Services	Finance	Customer Services
No. of Risk assessments on the Matrix	6	33	14	4	4	5
No. of additional assessments required	4	12	1	7	0	0
No. of Safe System of Works (SSOW) on the Matrix	0	8	2	1	0	2

11.1 Risk Assessment Development

Commentary: Further work is being undertaken with Street Scene and Community with three assessments out for consultation and a further two assessments currently in production. Housing and Benefits Service are needing at present to produce seven assessments and currently have one

produced which is out for consultation with staff. Other Service areas have been identified for support, such as Corporate Services, Election Services and Civil Enforcement. Included in the Matrix is the current assessment of the required additional assessments that need to be produced by the respective service areas. This will change as time progresses but may well increase to reflect risks from the introduction of new activities or via a review of risks in a service area.