

Report to:	QSMTM Q3
Report by:	Helen Gardner-Swift, Head of Corporate Services (HOCS) Liz Brown, Finance and Administration Manager (FAM)
Meeting Date:	14 February 2024
Subject/ Title:	Health and Safety Report – Q2 and Q3 2023-24 VC200899
Attached Papers	None

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this committee report (CR) is to provide to the Senior Management Team (SMT):
 - a six-monthly report on the health and safety work that has been carried out in Q2 and Q3 2023-24
 - assurance that the Commissioner is meeting statutory obligations in respect of employee health and safety, wellbeing and related training (where required).

Recommendation and actions

2. I recommend that the SMT:
 - (i) notes the CR
 - (ii) notes the assurance provided
 - (iii) agrees the publication recommendation set out in paragraph 34.

Executive summary

Reporting period

3. This CR covers the following periods:
 - 01 July 2023 – 30 September 2023 (Q2 2023-24) and
 - 01 October 2023 – 31 December 2023 (Q3 2023-24)

Risk assessment and safe system of work respiratory infections including coronavirus COVID-19 safer workplace

4. A review of the COVID-19 and office premises risk assessment was carried out, and staff were consulted on the proposed changes, in Q2 2023-24.
5. Staff feedback was received and the risk assessment was revised to include reference to common infectious illnesses, including respiratory infections.
6. The assessment was finalised in Q3 2023/24 and distributed to all staff.
7. The following guidance documents are now obsolete:

- COVID-19 Absences (ill health, staying at home, caring responsibilities, vaccinations, foreign travel)
 - Returning to and working in the office premises, remote working and hybrid working Handbook
8. Any guidance in these documents that remains relevant is being incorporated into the Health & Safety Handbook, the Employee Handbook or the Staff Manual.

Ongoing health and safety work relating to the office premises

9. The following health and safety works have been carried out in in Q2 2023-24 and Q3 2023-24:
- risk assessments were reviewed and distributed to the relevant staff to read:
 - violence in the workplace
 - manual handling
 - COSHH
 - 6 monthly fire evacuation drill carried out in October 2023.
 - 6-monthly inspection of fire alarm / smoke detectors, emergency lighting and security alarm carried out by contractor and regular internal fire alarm / emergency lighting / fire doors checks carried out by the CST.
 - annual fire door inspection carried out by contractor in September 2023.
 - annual gas boiler & gas soundness check carried out by qualified engineer in December 2023.
 - final gull abatement visit carried out in July 2023.
 - recommendations from the tree survey carried out in June were completed in December (after approval given by Fife Council). The trees in the car park are monitored by CST throughout the year, especially when/if high winds. Any remedial work is carried out by a qualified tree surgeon.
 - maintenance of the building to keep it secure, warm and safe.
 - regular flush of all outlets, cleaning shower heads and running of dishwasher.
10. DSE assessments – new members of staff completed DSE assessments for their set up in the office premises and adjustments made where required.
11. There have been no reported accidents in the office premises for the reporting period.

Ongoing health and safety work relating to working remotely

12. Each member of staff was asked to carry out a remote working DSE assessment in Q2 2023/24 and issues and requirements have been or are being addressed.
13. DSE assessments – new members of staff since Q2 2023/24 have completed DSE assessments for their set up at home and adjustments made where required.
14. Portable appliance checks for remote working equipment have been carried out by staff.

15. There have been no reported accidents when remote working for the reporting period.

Training

16. The following training took place in Q2 2023-24 and Q3 2023-24

- Life and Progress Employee Assistance Programme awareness session
- Data protection training
- Regular cyber awareness online training

Wellbeing

17. A wellbeing resources note is filed in VC140686 which can be viewed by all members of staff.

18. Line managers should also be discussing wellbeing with each of their team members in their regular monthly 1:1 catch ups.

Employee Assistance Programme

19. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides the following services to all members of staff:

- 24/7 access to counselling and information advice via a freephone number provided by accredited counsellors and trained advisors
- structured counselling sessions
- information services, including Citizens Advice based guidance, such as debt management, legal and tax consumer issues, dependent care
- wellbeing resources
- articles, tips and self-assessments.
- MyMindPal
- GP Helpline

20. Line managers should sign post their team members to the EAP where required and/or necessary.

21. As mentioned above, Life and Progress ran an awareness session at our All Staff Meeting on the EAP service and feedback from staff was very positive.

22. Monthly EAP updates containing advice on different subjects are circulated to all staff.

Assurance

23. Taking the above into account, I am of the view that the Commissioner is meeting the statutory obligations in respect of employee health and safety, wellbeing and related training (where required).

Risk impact

24. This report helps us to mitigate several operational risks and to confirm that there are effective policies and procedures in place to meet statutory health and safety duties.

25. As an employer, the Commissioner is responsible for the health and safety of employees when they are working on his behalf.
26. Employees also have health and safety responsibilities when they are working on behalf of the Commissioner.
27. Hybrid working arrangements enable us to undertake our mainstream work and help to mitigate a number of strategic and operational risks whilst also ensuring that we are safeguarding the health and safety of our staff.

Equalities impact

28. No equalities issues directly arise from this report.

Privacy impact

29. No privacy impacts directly arise from this report.

Resources impact

30. The work related to health and safety is normally recognised as falling within “business as usual” and the work required, generally, is undertaken from within current resources.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

31. Health and safety management (reporting and monitoring) is included in the Operational Plan 2023-24 and the Governance Reporting Arrangements 2023-24.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

32. None.

Consultation and Communication

33. None.

Publication

34. This CR is published in full.