



Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report

2019-20

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Introduction

1. This report summarises Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC) corporate health and safety performance during the year (1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020). The aim of the report is to provide relevant information on the Council's organisational arrangements for health, safety and welfare to protect its employees, volunteers, contractors, service users, pupils and members of the public.
2. It should be noted that this report **does not cover the period of the Coronavirus pandemic outbreak** therefore it does not include specific details of Solihull Council's response arrangements that relate to health and safety. However, the corporate health and safety action plan has taken the pandemic into account as part of forward planning arrangements.
3. The report provides an **overview of performance**, including the number of reported accidents/incidents, **commentary on key aspects of health and safety including legislative updates** and looks forward into the next reporting year.
4. The Chief Executive has **overall responsibility** for health and safety within the Council, and leads in setting corporate policy and direction. Directors support the Chief Executive, however they are also responsible for ensuring that robust health and safety management systems exist in their respective directorates.
5. The success of the health and safety management system in place within the Council relies on the commitment, engagement and support from the Corporate Leadership team (CLT) and Directorate Management teams.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that **CLT and the Cabinet Member for Resources note the information** contained within the report, **endorse the recommendations** contained within, and **ensure appropriate actions are assigned** to Directorate Management teams or key responsible persons.

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Management Summary

7. This report highlights the current health and safety management systems that are in place, as well as identify recommendations for improvement in order to comply with legislation and industry best practice.

The key areas of note are:

- That health and safety arrangements are in place within SMBC, but with areas of improvement required as identified in the corporate health and safety action plan.
- There have been no regulatory interventions or enforcement action taken against the Council during the reported period; however there has been some involvement and advice given by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- Following further government reviews of building regulations and fire safety in the last year, changes to the industry are taking place which will affect both the Council and Solihull Community Housing (SCH) in the future.
- A new Corporate Health and Safety Board formed to consult on the strategic management of health and safety.
- The Council has procured a new online health and safety management system to make improvements to the management of reported accidents and incidents at work, risk assessment and audit.
- The number of employee reported accidents has increased to 392 in 2019/20 as a result of capturing behavioural-type incidents in schools and better awareness reporting throughout the organisation (see Appendix 1).
- A corporate health and safety action plan continues to be maintained to help make improvements to the management of health and safety in the organisation (see Appendix 2).

Solihull Council's approach to managing health and safety risks

8. To manage the health and safety risks it faces, the Council:
- **has documented health and safety management arrangements**, including a Corporate Health and Safety Policy and a range of supporting policies and guidance (*see the 'Health and Safety Management Arrangements' section of this report for further details*);
 - **has a nominated Director of Health and Safety** (Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive) **and a Health and Safety Support Team** (HSST) to provide competent advice, guidance and support to the workforce;
 - has a system in place to **consult and communicate** with employees and trade union representatives and a **Corporate Health and Safety Board** in place chaired and lead by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive;
 - has **documented accident reporting and recording arrangements** with a new online Health and Safety Management System now in place (*see the 'Accident/Incident Reporting Analysis' section*);
 - **strives for continuous improvement** in health and safety standards and sets itself targets for improvement for the coming year with a corporate health and safety action plan in place (*see the 'Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan' section*).

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- has systems in place to **monitor the performance** of their Arms-Length Management Organisation (SCH) who manage and deliver the housing service on behalf of SMBC. This takes into account the joint risks that both SMBC and SCH have for ensuring that building safety standards are in place.

Health and Safety management arrangements

9. The Council recognises that the successful implementation of its health and safety objectives is dependent on the commitment and involvement of Members, senior management and officers. As such, the **Cabinet Member for Resources is the Member lead** and the **Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive is the nominated Director of Health and Safety**.
10. The Chief Executive and Directors (meeting together as the Corporate Leadership Team) **provide strategic leadership** in terms of setting the health and safety management arrangements and the operational direction for effective implementation of these arrangements.
11. The Council has established an **internal Health and Safety Support Team (HSST)** within Audit Services in the Resources Directorate to assist in maintaining the Council's health and safety management system and to provide advice, support and guidance on all aspects of occupational health and safety in the workplace. The team are lead by the Health and Safety Service Team Manager who is the lead professional advisor on health and safety legislation compliance within SMBC.

Regulatory interventions/involvement

12. To the best of the HSST's knowledge, **there were no formal prosecutions or enforcement** notices issued by the HSE or Fire Service in respect of any health and safety or fire safety management failures within Solihull Council during 2019/20.
13. In July 2019 there was a **minor asbestos related incident** at a Solihull maintained primary school which occurred during refurbishment work where contactors had been commissioned to overclad the soffits on the external elevation of the school building. The contractors were commissioned directly by the school and not through SMBC.
14. As per SMBC's procedures on identifying suspected material the area was taken out of use immediately and cordoned off and a restriction notice displayed to prevent access until further checks had taken place. An environmental clean of the area was made which included the removal of small pieces of debris by specialist contractors. **The HSE were satisfied with the processes** that were followed and no further action was taken.

Key legislative / industry guidance updates

Leaving the EU

15. The HSE published advice on its website in relation to health and safety for when the UK left the EU. The key message was that businesses should continue to manage their work operations in a proportionate way, to reduce risk and protect the environment.

HSE – Health and Safety Business Plan 2019/20

16. The HSE continued to promote their **National Health and Safety Business Plan** with businesses and organisations; the key points:

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- Supporting the governments **fundamental reform of the building safety system** following the Grenfell Tower disaster
- Secure improvements in the effective management of network gas assets **including gas risers in high-rise homes**
- Target inspections on specific issues and activities, including a sustained focus on **work-related ill health** as part of their health and well-being programme
- Investigate to swiftly tackle and reduce risks, securing **accountability for victims and their families**
- Raise operators' focus on cyber security to ensure **appropriate protection against major incidents**

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry, The Moore-Bick Report – Phase 1

17. Phase 1 of the report of the public inquiry into the fire at Grenfell Tower was published in October 2019 by The Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick. The report had **many recommendations for Fire Services, Local Authorities and Arms-Length Management Organisations (ALMO's)**. It contained recommendations that affect high-rise blocks, with some also applying to **residential buildings containing separate dwellings** (whether or not it is a high-rise building).
18. In January 2020 **the Government response to the public inquiry was released**. The report set out the steps that government would be taking to implement the report's recommendations as well as the wider work that will be done to make buildings safer. This included **a new proposed Building Safety Bill and Fire Safety Bill** which will create a firm foundation to enable the Government to lay regulations needed to deliver the legislative recommendations in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report.
19. Both SMBC and SCH worked together to consider the implications of the public inquiry and the proposed changes to building safety in the future. A plan of action would be formed once further detail has been published as part of the government's implementation plan.

Covid-19

20. Towards the end of this year's reporting period, **lockdown measures on social distancing and self-isolation were being introduced** as part of the coronavirus pandemic, creating a challenging environment for the Council to operate and work in. Many working practices were adapted to ensure that employees and customers remained safe.
21. As well as following government guidance and public health guidance, the Council noted specific guidance published by the HSE to minimise the risk of Covid-19 transmission. **Council workplaces were made Covid-19 secure** and in line with government guidance employees were asked to work from home where they can.
22. **A comprehensive risk assessment framework was produced** to ensure that employees and customers were kept safe; this included carrying out assessments at a building, service and individual level and putting in place measures to help protect those in the organisation.

Audit and inspection programme

23. During 2019/20 the HSST has:

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- Continued to **provide health and safety support to Council services and maintained schools** (as well as academy schools that purchase the service). Audits and inspections undertaken include a report with recommendations for improvement for managers/school leadership teams to consider and take relevant action on.
 - Carried out some audits in Council services/teams to ensure they are meeting the requirements of the SMBC Health and Safety Management System.
24. Audits have identified that there is **good health and safety practice in place in a number of areas**, and evidence that there is good awareness of health and safety issues in teams.
25. The findings have identified **improvement areas for managers** to ensure that health and safety is included in service plans or other alternative plans, ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place for work activities under their control and checking that employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities for health and safety. Completing training and refresher training in services and school settings has also been advised in areas such as risk assessment, the management of contractors, asbestos and legionella awareness.
26. These areas have been considered when developing the corporate health and safety action plan.

Corporate health and safety training

27. The delivery of a **structured training programme** helps employees to gain the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities to perform their job roles safely and without risk to health. The current programme covers Core Council, maintained schools (and academy schools that purchase the service). Training is organised by the HSST and the Learning and Development team.
28. **Training** requirements for individuals and teams **is identified through the risk assessment process** based on the risks that employees are exposed to in their job role. This is a responsibility of managers. Health and safety refresher training is generally recommended every 3 years.
29. The e-learning package through Learning Pool and the ATF Schools web portal continues to deliver a range of introductory health and safety training programmes; these include general health and safety awareness, fire safety awareness, display screen equipment, manual handling, slips, trips and falls and the management of stress. Specialist training such as first aid at work and fire warden training is also delivered for designated staff. In areas where there is a greater element of risk more comprehensive health and safety training is organised by managers.
30. Further corporate health and safety training sessions which have been identified is being developed; this includes line manager health and safety responsibilities, risk assessment and the management of contractors.

Accident/incident reporting analysis

31. There were a total of **586 reported accidents/incidents** between the period April 2019 and March 2020. There were no recorded fatalities. This number covers all Council services and schools where SMBC is the employer (community and voluntary controlled schools, community special schools and pupil referral units). It does not include data for SCH or other schools such as voluntary aided and foundation schools or academies.
32. There has been an **increase in the total number of accidents/incidents** compared to last year where 381 incidents were reported (2018/19). This is as a result of increased awareness reporting and the capturing of pupil-behavioural type incidents in special school settings and pupil referral units.

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33. **Appendix 1 details the total number and types of all reported accidents/incidents in 2019/20** (irrespective of whether an injury was sustained) compared to the previous year, together with the number of reportable accidents to the HSE.
34. The total number of **employee reported accidents/incidents has increased** to 392 compared to 220 last year. This change reflects the increased awareness reporting in schools and the capturing of pupil-behavioural incidents as referred to paragraph 32. Reporting in the Economy and Infrastructure Directorate has increased in the last year mainly as a result of further reports being received from Library Services, and a general increase in the reporting of slips, trips and fall incidents within the Directorate.
35. Table 1 shows a breakdown of employee accidents/incidents reported across each directorate, including schools where SMBC is the employer.

Table 1: Employee accidents / incidents across Directorates

Directorate	Number of accidents/incidents April 19 – March 20	Number of accidents/incidents April 18 – March 19
Adult Care & Support	40	31
Children Services & Skills	11	10
Economy and Infrastructure	33	10
Public Health	0	0
Resources	24	17
Schools (where SMBC is the employer*)	284	152
Totals	392	220

**Community & voluntary controlled schools, community special schools and pupil referral units*

36. The number of **pupil reported accidents/incidents** in 2019/20 (as referred to in Appendix 1) have increased to 147 compared to 117 last year.
37. The number of reported accidents/incidents involving members of the public (including service users) has slightly increased during 2019/20 (47 this year compared with 44 the previous year).

Reportable accidents / incidents

38. The HSST has continued to support managers to investigate reportable accidents/incidents that fall under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).
39. Under RIDDOR there is a legal requirement for work-related fatalities, certain types of work-related injuries/incidents, some cases of occupational disease and specified dangerous occurrences to be reported to the HSE within prescriptive timescales.
40. Table 2 shows comparative data for reportable accidents/incidents over the last 5 years. See overleaf.

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Table 2: HSE Reportable incidents (RIDDOR)

HSE Reportable	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Employees	17	4	9	7	10
Pupils	19	1	1	0	5
Public	2	3	0	0	1
Totals	38	8	10	7	16

41. The overall number of accidents/incidents involving SMBC employees requiring a report to the HSE decreased year on year until 2017/18. However this increased during 2019/20 as a result of more slips, trips and fall incidents being reported, particularly in schools.
42. Table 3 below shows detail on the 17 employee accidents/incidents that were reported to the HSE under RIDDOR during 2019/20.

Table 3: Details of RIDDORs reported for SMBC employees

Type	Injury	Month	Directorate/ School	Details of accident/incident (what happened) IP = Injured Person	Reason for reporting as RIDDOR
Slip, Trip & Fall	Broken Fibular in ankle	April 2019	Schools	IP fell over in a small hole on the edge of a grass verge	Specified Injury
Fall from Height	Fractured arm	May 2019	Schools	IP fell from standing on a chair	Specified Injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Fractured foot and soft tissue damage	May 2019	Schools	IP was standing on some steps became distracted and fell	Specified Injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Fractured wrist	May 2019	Schools	IP was taking a games class and slipped over	Specified Injury
Manual Handling	Torn muscle	May 2019	Resources	IP twisted whilst moving equipment	Over 7 day absence injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Fractured fingers and bruising	June 2019	Schools	IP tripped outside in the games area	Specified Injury
Manual Handling	Muscular pain	August 2019	Adult Care & Support	IP became injured whilst cleaning under furniture	Over 7 day absence injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Contusions and bruising	September 2019	Schools	IP slipped on food debris in the kitchen area	Over 7 day absence injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Injury to base of spine	October 2019	Schools	IP slipped during a PE activity	Over 7 day absence injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Cracked bone in wrist	October 2019	Resources	IP tripped on step	Specified Injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Sprain to leg/ ankle	November 2019	Adult Care & Support	IP slipped in corridor	Over 7 day absence injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Fractured elbow	December 2019	Schools	IP slipped on wet surface	Specified Injury
Manual Handling	Strained shoulder	December 2019	Schools	IP sustained a strain whilst moving equipment from a vehicle	Over 7 day absence injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Cut fingers and grazed knee	January 2020	Adult Care & Support	IP tripped in the kitchen area	Over 7 day absence injury

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Slip, Trip & Fall	Fractured tibia and fibula	February 2020	Economy and Infrastructure	IP carrying out work overbalanced falling onto their ankle	Specified Injury
Other	Ripped tendon in leg	February 2020	Schools	IP sustained a strain whilst running to stop a pupil from opening a gate	Over 7 day absence injury
Slip, Trip & Fall	Fractured ribs and bruising to wrist	March 2020	Adult Care & Support	IP tripped over outside	Over 7 day absence injury

Types of accident/incident – employees

43. As in previous years, the most common types of employee reported accident/incident (and where the most significant incidents have occurred) includes slips, trips and falls and violent-related/behavioural type incidents.

Violent/behavioural type incidents

44. Violent/behavioural type incidents remain the highest type of employee accident/incident reported (245 incidents in 2019/20). **This is a result of increased awareness reporting of incidents and the capturing of pupil-behavioural incidents** in special schools.
45. Some of the incidents that are reported in this category are as a result of managing adult service users in care settings who have a range of disabilities and other needs, as well as children in schools who have specific behavioural conditions, learning difficulties or other specialist needs that require additional support.
46. As well as incidents being investigated to seek ways to prevent a recurrence, management teams are advised that as part of their risk assessment to ensure that appropriate support is provided, including training and refresher training for employees, such as personal safety, conflict resolution, physical intervention training etc.

Slips, trips and falls

47. Slips, trips and falls remain the second highest type of employee accident/incident reported. 45 incidents were reported in 2019/20 which has increased slightly from 43 incidents the previous year.
48. **The importance of good housekeeping is promoted across all workplaces;** regular checks and inspections are carried out by facilities teams and site managers in main Council buildings and in schools. There is also health and safety awareness training provided through e-learning relating specifically to slips and trips in the workplace.
49. In addition to current checks taking place, it has highlighted the importance of carrying out appropriate building checks and inspections of the workplace.
50. Slips, trips and falls remain the highest type of reported incident/accident for pupils in schools, increasing slightly from the previous year. 58 incidents were reported in 2019/20 in comparison to 46 incidents in 2018/19.

Online Health and Safety Management System – Incident Reporting

51. In order to make improvements to the management of reported accidents, incidents and near miss events at work, the Council has procured a new online health and safety management

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system. The system is accessible on a number of different devices, including a desktop pc, laptop, tablet or smartphone.

52. As well as incident reporting, managers will also be able to use online modules to carry out risk assessments and complete self-auditing as part of managing health and safety within their service/school. The system will be able to generate reports for managers and monitor/track actions which have been assigned to employees.
53. The new online health and safety management system is being launched to all directorates from July 2020 and to maintained schools in autumn term 2020/21.

Summary of Reported Accidents/Incidents (2019/20 and 2018/19 period)

Appendix 1

		SMBC employees (Council Services & Schools where SMBC is the employer)				Pupils (Schools where SMBC is the employer)				Public & Service Users (No's in brackets refer to service users/customers)			
Type of Accident/Incident		Total Incidents		HSE Reportable		Total Incidents		HSE Reportable		Total Incidents		HSE Reportable	
		Apr 19– Mar 20	Apr 18– Mar 19	Apr 19– Mar 20	Apr 18– Mar 19	Apr 19– Mar 20	Apr 18– Mar 19	Apr 19– Mar 20	Apr 18– Mar 19	Apr 19– Mar 20	Apr 18– Mar 19	Apr 19– Mar 20	Apr 18– Mar 19
Contact with	Electricity	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Haz substance	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sharp Object	11	8	0	0	2	3	0	0	(3)	(2)	0	0
	Hot substance	7	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1(2)	0	0
	Machinery	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1)	0
Fall from Height		1	0	1	0	6	9	3	0	1(1)	0	0	0
Hit by Moving Object		27	26	0	0	14	17	2	0	(1)	4 (2)	0	1
Hit Fixed Object		21	11	0	0	15	16	3	1	1(2)	3 (2)	0	0
Manual Handling		12	11	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Accident		6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slip/Trip/Fall		45	43	12	3	58	46	10	0	5(19)	10 (12)	(1)	(2)
Violent / behavioural type incidents		245	95	0	1	21	5	0	0	2	(0)	0	0
Other		10	13	1	0	13	4	1	0	(10)	3 (1)	0	0
Sports Accidents/Incidents		2	4	0	0	14	14	0	0	1	2	0	0
Near Misses		3	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Totals		392	220	17	4	147	117	19	1	47	44	2	3