

**NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES**

**THE BOARD  
10 JUNE 2010**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

**1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This is the company's annual health and safety report as required in the company's health and safety policy. It covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010.
- 1.2 The report is prepared in line with the Health and Safety Commission guidance "Revitalising Health & Safety; Health & Safety in Annual Report".
- 1.3 Nottingham City Homes' corporate governance arrangements have changed in 2009/10, and the health and safety governance arrangements have changed to reflect this.
- 1.4 There were no changes to the company's Health & Safety Policy in 2009/10, although recommendations to update the policy are expected in 2009/10
- 1.5 The company is continuing to work towards its strategic health and safety objectives. Although some planned work has had to be put back due to sickness within the Health & Safety Team and time lost due to managing the Swine Flu 'pandemic', significant progress was made in 2009/10.
- 1.6 Improvements were made in 2009/10 to the way incidents are recorded and managed. Incident data is provided at paragraph 3.5

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board notes the contents of this report.

**3 REPORT**

**3.1 H&S Governance**

- 3.1.1 Health and safety governance arrangements have changed to adapt to developments in the company's governance structure. Regular health and safety reports are now received by the Property Services and Housing Services committees so that operational health and safety issues are reported quickly to the most appropriate committee. All items in this annual report will previously been reported in this way.

3.1.2 A comprehensive review of the Health and Safety Committee structure and terms of reference was carried out in 2009/10 (the Health & Safety Committee is a group of company managers and employees who meet to consult on and manage health and safety issues). This resulted in the formation of Property Services and Housing Services Health & Safety committees. These frontline committees feed into a corporate committee, which addresses cross-cutting issues and reports directly into the company's Executive Management Team. This structure mirrors the way that health and safety is reported to Board.

3.1.3 Health and safety policy and strategy are consulted on and implemented at Health & Safety Committee, but the content of these documents is a matter reserved for Board.

### 3.2 Health and Safety Policy

3.2.1 We recognise in our health & safety policy that our health and safety responsibilities extend beyond our statutory duties to employees and visitors and embrace our duty of care towards the residents of the properties that we manage on behalf of the City Council, and to any other person affected by our activities.

3.2.2 No changes to the H&S policy were recommended in 2009 /10. However, because of ongoing changes to the company's structure, changing health and safety priorities and the introduction of a separate fire safety policy, significant amendments will be recommended in 2010/11.

### 3.3 Health & Safety Strategy

3.3.1 The company's health and safety strategy for 2008-2011 was approved by Board in September 2008.

3.3.2 Our strategic aims are to

- improve the health, safety and welfare of our employees and of other people who are, or may be, affected by our activities.
- reduce the risk of harm or ill health to our employees, tenants and other relevant persons, and reduce the risk of damage to assets and belongings.
- reduce the risk of fire in our workplaces and in tenanted and leasehold properties.
- ensure that we are prepared for and are resilient to emergencies.
- fully embed health and safety into the company's front line and support operations.
- Be recognised as a company that manages health and safety and fire safety well and to approved standards.
- deliver a world class service that we can all be proud of

3.3.3 Our strategic objectives are to:

- develop and implement a health and safety management system

- in line with accepted health and safety standards.
- improve the way we manage fire safety and plan for emergencies.
- increase employee and customer involvement in the way we fashion our services.
- actively promote health and safety initiatives and improve our health and safety culture.
- be in a position by early 2012 to confidently apply for accreditation to BS OHSAS [Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series] 18001 and for a ROSPA [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents] or equivalent award.

3.3.4 The Health and Safety Strategy has now been integrated into the Health & Safety Section's business plan and annual service improvement plan (SIP) as the Health and Safety Service has been included in the corporate business planning cycle from 2009.

3.3.5 Most items in the Health & Safety Strategy have been completed on programme or are ongoing. Unfortunately, some items were put back due to time constraints caused by the swine flu 'pandemic' in 2009 and the long term sickness of a member of the health and safety team. Two items were planned to have been completed by June 2010 but which are yet to be started are:

- a review of our stress management arrangements.
- a review of equipment procurement procedures.

These items will be re-programmed for 2010/11.

3.3.6 Measures that were implemented in 2009/10 to achieve strategic objectives included:

- a comprehensive review of our incident reporting processes and the implementation of a new procedure.
- a review of the way health and safety is reported within the organisation, and alignment with the new governance structure.
- the introduction of a new fire safety policy.
- Implementation of a health surveillance programme by the company's occupational health provider.
- a comprehensive review and re-organisation of the company's Health and Safety Committee, with increased opportunities for employee involvement in health and safety management
- involvement of tenant board members in the health and safety inspection programme.
- participation in various learning events to promote better health and risk assessments during European Health & Safety Week.

3.3.7 Measures planned to achieve strategic objectives in 2010/11 include:

- a comprehensive review of current policy and management processes against OHSAS 18001.
- development of a health and safety procedures manual.

- development of the corporate business continuity plan.
- review of all emergency plans for workplaces and high rise buildings.
- a review of the effectiveness of the health surveillance programme.
- full implementation of the fire safety policy across the organisation.
- a review of tenant and resident involvement opportunities in health and safety management.
- development of health and safety information fact sheets for new tenants.

### 3.4 Significant H&S Strategy developments in 2009/10

#### 3.4.1 Fire

- 3.4.1.1 There was a large fire at Lakenal House, a high rise building in London, in July 2009. This focussed national attention on fire safety in high rise buildings. Prior to this event, NCH had commissioned an external consultant to review the risk assessments of its high rise buildings, corridor sheltered schemes and larger blocks of flats. These assessments are now complete and remedial works identified in them are being carried out on a priority basis.
- 3.4.1.2 A fire safety strategy group was set up following the Lakenal fire, which is headed by the Director of Organisational Development and which oversees the implementation of fire safety policy, refurbishment and repairs works. This meeting is attended by a representative from Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- 3.4.1.3 A new fire safety policy was developed in 2009 and approved by Board in January 2010. An implementation plan has been developed to ensure that all parts of the policy are implemented or programmed across the company in 2010.
- 3.4.1.4 Remedial and improvement works have been carried out in the three of the high rise buildings managed by Nottingham City Homes, namely Highcross, Highurst and Clifford Courts, and has commenced at Kingston Court and in the Victoria Centre. The Fire and Rescue Service issued an enforcement notice relating to Highcross Court in August 2009, and all works within Nottingham City Homes' control have been carried out. Contact has been maintained with the Fire & Rescue Service throughout these works. A £4 million programme has been tendered for the remaining high rise blocks (including additional works at Victoria Centre) for 2010/11.
- 3.4.1.5 There was a series of arson attacks at flats on Belconnen Road in 2009 /10. Although these seem to have stopped, improvement works have been scoped from our fire risk assessment and taking into account additional guidance from the Fire & Rescue Service. This work, including work in similar neighbouring accommodation, will cost an

additional £1.5 million.

3.4.1.6 A new addressable, monitored alarm system has been installed and commissioned in Highurst and Clifford Courts. Individual visits to residents are being programmed to explain how these new systems will benefit them, and to ensure that everybody is clear about the action to take when the new alarm system sounds. A fire practice event was organised by NCH in May 2010 at Clifford Court and this included a large scale rescue demonstration by the Fire and Rescue Service, which was supported by the Police and St. John's Ambulance. A real fire occurred at Highurst Court, which is an identical building on the same day, and was attended by some of the same crews that attended the earlier drill. This demonstrated just how useful this practice was, and further practices with the Fire & Rescue Service will be planned in other locations over 2010/11.

#### 3.4.2 Legionnaire's disease

3.4.2.1 Although very few people become ill with legionnaire's disease (a form of pneumonia caused by breathing in bacteria found in water systems), the disease can be severe and NCH is therefore reviewing the way it manages this issue.

3.4.2.2 A water management contractor was appointed in 2008 to carry out risk assessments of the water storage and distribution systems in workplaces, communal areas and dwellings with shared stored water supplies. This process is ongoing and will be completed in 2010/11. The Health and Safety Team is collating the finished reports to prepare a schedule of remedial works identified by the assessments. Treatment of stored water is carried out by the contractor while the risk assessment process is being completed.

3.4.2.3 A consultant has been appointed to carry out generic risk assessments and to develop a strategy for managing legionella in individual dwellings with stand alone water storage and distribution systems, including those on the District Heating system. The draft report is expected in June 2010.

3.4.2.4 Works to insulate pipes and replace storage cisterns in sheltered schemes on the District Heating Scheme commenced in 2009/10. This programme will be extended in 2010/11 to complete the works in these schemes. This work will reduce the amount of heat lost from hot water pipes and reduce the amount of heat transfer to cold water supplies, reducing the possibility of legionella growth in these systems.

3.4.2.5 We have reviewed the lines of responsibility when reacting to notification of a case of legionnaire's disease with the City Council's Environmental Health Team. This clarifies lines of responsibility and the action to take, and should both provide a clearer and better response to residents who have become ill.

3.4.2.6 We are developing a series of health and safety fact sheets to be included in the tenant sign up pack. These will include a sheet about legionella, which will contain advice to tenants about cleaning showerheads, running off water after prolonged periods away from home and other tips to reduce the risk of legionnaires disease.

### 3.4.3 Asbestos

3.4.3.1 An asbestos management group was set up in Property Services in 2008/9. This group has continued to meet in 2009/10, and the group implements and monitors improvements to the way that we manage asbestos.

3.4.3.2 Health & Safety Executive guidance relating to asbestos surveys changed in 2010. The Senior Health & Safety Advisor and both members of the Asset Management Asbestos Team attended a 'master class' to learn about the new guidance and how to incorporate the changes into the current survey process.

3.4.3.3 Asbestos training has been reviewed in 2009/10. This review involved trade union appointed health and safety representatives. All asbestos training is up to date in Property Services, and an awareness course has also been developed and rolled out to appropriate officers in Housing Services, including caretakers and housing patch managers. Future training for sheltered scheme managers is being arranged for 2010/11.

### 3.4.4 Facilities management

3.4.4.1 Although work was carried out in 2008/9 as part of the Health & Safety Strategy to review the company's asset management arrangements, some areas were not looked at because they were managed by NCC. This included lift maintenance which was taken over by NCH in April 2009.

3.4.4.2 There was an incident in May 2010 in which a resident was injured in a lift at Victoria Centre. Nottingham City Homes has commissioned an independent expert to carry out an investigation into this incident, and we have received his draft report. A management group had been set up within Property Services, including the Health & Safety Team, to review this report and implement any recommendations that arise from it.

3.4.4.3 A facilities page will be developed on the company intranet in 2010/11 by the Fleet and Facilities Manager. This will be a useful asset for managers throughout the organisation to easily check that facilities inspections are up to date in their areas. This will initially be set up for workplaces, with the intention of extending to other buildings at a later date.

### 3.4.5 Work at height

3.4.5.1 Work at height risks have consistently been identified on planned health

and safety inspections.

3.4.5.2 A new ladder safety system has been procured in Property Services after trials involving employee representatives. This system secures ladders to eyebolt attachments drilled into property walls. The employee then uses a lanyard to attach to the ladder, and can work safely at height without the ladder slipping or falling away from the wall. This increases the range of work that can safely be carried out from a ladder and should therefore significantly reduce scaffolding costs and risk to residents arising from scaffolding around their homes.

#### 3.4.6 Business continuity

3.4.6.1 Major business interruption was predicted in 2009/10 as a result of the swine flu 'pandemic'. A working group was set up to manage the impact at Nottingham City Homes. Although there was no major impact of this pandemic, the Company is more prepared to respond to a future pandemic.

3.4.6.2 The company is reviewing its current business continuity arrangements and shall develop an up to date business continuity plan in 2010/11.

#### 3.4.7 Risk assessments

3.4.7.1 Working groups have been set up in Property and Housing Services to review their health and safety risk assessments. These groups includes managers, employee representatives and health and safety advisors. The groups have identified their priorities from the Health & Safety Strategy, incident reports and health and safety inspections.

#### 3.4.8 Training

3.4.8.1 A new training matrix has been developed for health and safety which lists all job titles within the organisation and the recommended health and safety training for each role. The purpose of this is to implement a planned programme of compulsory and recommended health and safety training across the company. This matrix has been prepared by the Health & Safety Team in consultation with the Learning and Development Team, and consultation with managers and employees will be carried out in early 2010/11.

3.4.8.2 The following in-house training courses were prioritised in 2009/10:

- asbestos awareness.
- manual handling
- violence awareness.
- lone working.
- legionella awareness.
- display screen assessment e-learning.

3.4.8.3 The asbestos awareness training course was reviewed and improved in consultation with employee safety representatives. This was delivered to

all Property Services trade employees who had not received training in the last two years. An asbestos awareness refresher course was also developed using desktop flip slides which can be delivered to existing employees in team briefs. All Maintenance Managers were trained how to use these slides. A more basic version of the asbestos awareness course has been developed for employees working in Housing Services who may come across asbestos or who may need to explain survey results to tenants. This has been delivered in all the area housing offices and is being rolled out to sheltered housing patch managers.

- 3.4.8.4 The manual handling course has been redeveloped in consultation with Learning and Development., and the new course is being delivered to Property Services trade employees. An adapted version will be developed in 2010/11 to suit Housing Services employees and will be delivered to caretakers and sheltered scheme managers. Volunteers are being sought through the Health & Safety Committee to take part in the development of an in-house manual handling training video.
- 3.4.8.5 The Nottingham City Council Violence Co-ordinator has visited all area housing offices and delivered a violence awareness training session through an SLA with Nottingham City Homes.
- 3.4.8.6 Lone working training has been provided to all housing offices and to all caretakers.
- 3.4.8.7 Legionella awareness training is provided by NCH's water management contractor, MITIE. This has been delivered in all housing offices and corporate buildings, and will be rolled out to sheltered scheme managers and block caretakers in 2010/11.
- 3.4.8.8 The display screen assessment e-learning package includes a self assessment of the user's computer workstation, which enables users to identify, record and solve issues themselves. items that cannot be resolved by the user are then fed to the manager, who will resolve the issues or contact the Health & Safety Team. This was rolled out to all computer users in 2009/10, but the exercise will be repeated in 2010/11 as most users have been issued with new pcs or laptops.
- 3.4.9 Arrangements for health & safety consultation
- 3.4.9.1 The company's Health and Safety Committee is the group set up to consult with employees on health and safety matters. This group consists of managers, ex officio officers (including members of the Health & Safety Team, Learning & Development and the NCC Violence Co-ordinator) and trade union appointed health and safety representatives.
- 3.4.9.2 The new H&S Committee terms of reference make employee representatives' role more explicit and gives them more involvement in the management of health & safety. They are actively invited to represent employees on working and task and finish groups, accompany

managers on inspections, become involved in risk assessments and investigate serious accidents.

### 3.5 Incident Reports

- 3.5.1 A new incident reporting procedure was developed in 2009/10 in consultation with the Health & Safety Committee. This has simplified the incident reporting forms and made the reporting process clearer. The new procedure incorporates improvements to lost time recording, manager feedback, reporting to Executive Management Team, employee representative involvement, incident investigations and ill health reporting. This process does not include violent incident reporting as the processes for managing these are different. This new process was implemented at the beginning of May 2010.
- 3.5.2 There were 138 injuries or cases of ill health reported by employees between 1st April 2009 and 31st May 2010, resulting in 391 days lost. However, the reported days lost figure will be significantly less than the actual figure because they are not reported unless the total number is known at the time that the incident was reported. The new incident reporting process should allow for more accurate days lost reporting.
- 3.5.3 37 injuries were reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Of these, 32 were 'over three day injuries' and 17 were caused by manual handling operations.
- 3.5.4 A further two incidents were reported under RIDDOR in addition to the 37 noted above. One was a gas escape at Lathkill Close in November 2009 and the other was an injury to a resident of the Victoria Centre. Full details of both incidents have been shared with the Health & Safety Executive.
- 3.5.5 27 dangerous occurrences were reported by employees between 1st April 2009 and 31st May 2010. Of these, 17 were about objects thrown from high rise windows. We have had some success tackling this issue over the last year using a mobile CCTV on loan from Nottingham City Council, which has resulted in successful action being taken against tenants at Pine View and an article in the Nottingham Evening Post and our tenant newsletter. This has in turn led to a marked reduction in the number of reports received from caretakers. One of the Monitoring Officers from our Estate and Caretaker Service has been invited to speak about this success at HouseMark events in London and Manchester.
- 3.5.6 21 incidents were reported to us by tenants and residents over this period. Eleven of these were reports about people tripping or slipping; of which 5 were slips on ice between December and February. Our gritting policies and facilities in common access areas are being reviewed to prevent a repeat of this in 2010/11

3.5.7 Further details about any of these statistics are available to Board members from Ian Rabett, Head of Health & Safety, Nottingham City Homes.

#### **4 OTHER OPTIONS**

4.1 None.

#### **5 FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report is for information only.

#### **6 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES**

6.1 Management of health & safety is essential to all of the Company's objectives as it will affect the health, safety and wellbeing of all the Company's stakeholders and customers.

#### **7 VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCY ISSUES**

7.1 This report is for information only.

#### **8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 This report is for information only.

#### **9 BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

9.1 Health and Safety Commission guidance "Revitalising Health & Safety; Health & Safety in Annual Report".

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