

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

21 JUNE 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING OPERATIONS

HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE – MARCH TO JUNE 2010

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Board about significant health and safety and fire safety developments within the Housing Services division over the previous two months.
- 1.2 This report covers 23 March 2010 to 10 June 2010.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Housing Management Services Committee note the contents of this report.

3 REPORT

3.1 Incident reports and outcomes

- 3.1.1 This report covers the incidents allocated to Housing Services between 23 March and 10 June 2010. Incidents are allocated to a service area either because the person making the report works in that service area, or they are reported by a member of the public and the cause of the incident falls within the service area's management remit.
- 3.1.2 There were 9 injuries allocated to Housing Services in this period. Seven were injuries to employees, and two were injuries reported by tenants / members of the public.
- 3.1.3 Most of the injuries were minor, and in total resulted in 1 lost day for staff. There were no identifiable trends, with incidents ranging from pulled muscles while opening a door, to falling over chair legs to a dog bite while posting leaflets. However, the dog bite has resulted in an employer's liability claim being made.
- 3.1.4 The two injuries to tenants included a tenant who collided with a gatepost on their electric scooter because of an uneven road - this has been reported to Highways. The other was an injury to a tenant in the Victoria Centre who was trapped in a lift and subsequently admitted to hospital. This incident is being investigated by the Health & Safety Executive. All lifts serving flats at the Victoria Centre have been stripped down and inspected, and are in good working order.

3.1.5 There were three reported “near miss” incidents. One involved glass falling from the back of an NCH open backed vehicle. The driver has been re-instructed about securing loads. The other two were about objects being thrown from high rise windows, although they were small objects and this issue is happening much less frequently than last year. A monitoring officer from the Estate and Caretaker Service has been invited to speak at Housemark events in London and Manchester about the measures taken at Nottingham City Homes to combat this problem.

3.1.6 There were 4 violent incidents reported by Housing Service employees in this period. All were cases of verbal abuse. Verbal abuse cases are followed up by a warning letter from the housing office if the perpetrator’s identity is known.

3.2 Fire Safety

3.2.1 The new Fire Safety and First Aid Officer started work in April 2010. She has developed a work plan to ensure that the Fire Safety Policy is implemented across all areas of the company in 2010/11, and has already forged excellent working relations with the Fire & Rescue Service.

3.2.2 The enforcement notice at Highcross Court will expire at the end of June 2010. We are working closely with the Fire and Rescue Service to make sure that all measures are in place and will carry out regular joint inspections over 2010/11 to ensure that they continue to be effective.

3.2.3 There was a serious fire in May at Highurst Court. One flat was completely gutted, but the fire was contained within the one flat. Fire crews responded quickly, and many of the crews had taken part in a practice event arranged by NCH at Clifford Court that morning, and were therefore familiar with the layout of the building. The fire is still being investigated by the Police, and we are awaiting their report.

3.2.4 We have received notification that the Fire & Rescue Service intend to inspect fire safety arrangements at five sheltered schemes as part of their planned inspection regime for 2010/11. Each scheme will be visited in advance by our Fire Safety & First Aid Officer.

3.3 H&S Inspection Programme

3.3.1 The health and safety inspection is ongoing. This programme refers to joint inspections by senior managers, health and safety advisors and trade union representatives and does not include estate inspections or scheduled visits by housing patch managers.

3.3.2 All housing offices and high rise buildings have been inspected in the last 12 months, and will in future be re-inspected annually.

3.3.3 Our target is to inspect 50% of sheltered schemes this year. We will visit the highest priority schemes first, including the 13 corridor schemes.

3.4 Health and Safety Committee

3.4.1 The Health and Safety Committee is the group set up by the company to involve employees in health and safety management. This group has recently been re-organised from one group to divisional groups for Housing and Property Services, which reports to a Corporate Committee.

3.4.2 The first meetings of the 'new look' committees have taken place and were well attended and appear to have been well received. One advantage of these new committees is that they will contribute to the management of health and safety, rather than just consulting on it.

3.4.3 A risk assessment group has been set up in Housing Services through the Health & Safety Committee, similar to one working in Property Services. The remit of this group is to review existing risk assessments and identify gaps in the risk assessment programme. This group is dealing with slips (gritting policy) and lone working as priority items.

3.5 Health & Safety Training

3.5.1 Key training identified in Housing Services for 2009/10 is nearing completion:

3.5.2 Caretakers have received asbestos awareness training. Courses for housing patch managers will be completed on 16th June 2010.

3.5.3 Caretakers have received manual handling training . A course for sheltered scheme managers is being developed for implementation this year.

3.5.4 Lone worker and break away training has been provided for caretakers. Violence awareness briefs at housing offices and Homelink are also complete.

3.5.5 Mop up sessions for the above courses are being arranged to include new caretakers and any other employee who may have missed training through illness or holidays.

3.5.6 A computer health and safety e-learning course had also been rolled out to computer users in Housing Services. This course is followed by a test and an employee assessment of their computer workstation, which is recorded and allows employees and their managers to record the actions taken to resolve any issues raised. All employees who use computers for work have been re-enrolled on this programme following the recent issue of new PCs.

3.6 Other items

3.6.1 A consultant has been appointed to report on strategies to control legionnaires disease in single dwellings (as opposed to communal areas

and workplaces which have already been assessed). Although the outcome of this exercise is likely to focus on engineering controls and voids processes, there may be implications for housing management. The first draft of the report is expected in June 2010.

- 3.6.2 A new public liability claim has been received relating to a case of legionnaire's disease last year. The claim is being dealt with by NCC's Insurance & Risk Management Service, who have already engaged solicitors to look at the extent of landlords' liabilities for legionnaires disease.

4 OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report is for information only

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 None

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Date: 10 June 2010