

## **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Virtual Meeting and Meeting Room TBC, The Arc, Clowne on Thursday, 17 September 2020 at 11:30 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

Councillor David Dixon in the Chair

Councillors Allan Bailey, Nick Clarke, Tricia Clough, and Andrew Joesbury

UNISON:- Chris McKinney, Kevin Shillitto and Liz Robinson

UNITE:- None present.

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Joint Head of Streetscene), Sarah Gordon (Human Resources and OD Manager), Mark Dungworth (Strategic Repairs Manager), Bronwen MacArthur – Williams (Health & Safety Manger), Rebecca Hutchinson (Health & Safety Coordinator), Ian Clay (Health and Safety Advisor (Housing)), Matt Cooper (Corporate Property Manager), Jayne Stokes (Health and Safety Apprentice), Tom Scott (Governance Officer) and Alison Bluff (Governance Officer).

### **SAF1-20/21          APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Wayne Carter (Leisure Operations Manager)

### **SAF2-20/21          URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

### **SAF3-20/21          DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **SAF4-20/21          MINUTES - 18TH DECEMBER 2019**

Moved by Councillor Andrew Joesbury and seconded by Councillor Nick Clarke  
**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of a Safety Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 be approved as a correct record.

### **SAF5-20/21          SICKNESS ABSENCE QUARTER 1 (APRIL - JUNE 2020).**

The Human Resources and OD Manager presented to members of the Safety Committee a report on Sickness Absence for Quarter 1. The average number of days lost for April to June was 1.5 days which over the course of the year would equate to approximately 6 days per employee.

Table one of the report detailed a comparison of days lost over the past three years with this quarter being lower than it had previously been. The figures showed that there had been a reduction in short term absence but a slight increase for long term absence. A

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breakdown for departments experiencing the highest level of absence was shown in table 4 of the report with table five showing the departments that had experienced the lowest levels of absence over quarter 1.

A further table in the report showed a breakdown of the most common reasons for sickness absence with stress and depression being the main factor followed by headaches and migraines, this followed a similar pattern to reports from previous quarters. Appendix 1 to the report also detailed a breakdown of where services were split between the two Authorities such as Environmental Health and Service Desk and the days lost in those areas.

At the time of the meeting collation of data specifically regarding Covid-19 and the impact on individual service areas was still ongoing. Prior to this meeting a request had been made at the Union / Employee Consultation Committee (UECC) regarding individual employees had tested positive for Covid-19 and if there was any concerns that there had been transmission within the workplace. The Human Resources and OD Manager advised that the requested information had already been provided informally to the Senior Management Team for monitoring purposes. Currently a majority of those displaying symptoms had not returned a negative test and it had been a seasonal cold / allergy but it was an ever changing situation with such a close overlap of symptoms.

A question arose from Members requiring clarity on the breakdown of service areas as to whether or not Councillors fell under the category of Leaders and Executive as in table 4 this showed the highest area of absence for the quarter. The Human Resources and OD Manager confirmed that Councillors sickness absence wasn't recorded under that heading and it was based just on the department employees. It was noted that areas such as Customer Services had gone from being in the highest three for absence to one of the lowest three departments in the last quarter and members queried the reasons behind this. Further discussions outlined various different factors for the change in figures with the most likely being that a large percentage of staff were able to work from home where they previously hadn't been. Specifically relating to Customer Services the ability to work from home hadn't been available due to the nature of their roles and being customer facing however, ways to access the systems from home had started to be implemented prior to the lockdown.

A representative of Unison questioned how assessments of things such as lighting could be assessed for those working from home that would normally be carried out in the workplace as headaches and migraines were a common cause of absence. Senior Managers had been requested to regularly make contact with employees working from home to assess any areas of concern with working from home setups. At the next service managers meeting the Human Resources and OD Manager advised that she would be reminding managers to take appropriate action and follow up any observations and concerns. Guidance would also be circulated to employees working from home reminding them of best practice and also actions they could take to work from home comfortably and efficiently.

Members also questioned whether or not people who had been instructed by the Government to shield had had a significant impact on the figures detailed in the report and how much it had effected each department. In response to the query the Human Resources and OD Manager advised that a large percentage had been able to work from home and continue to carry out their normal role and all those that had been long term shielding had remained on full pay so there had been no financial implication for them. If

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employees were shielding and working from home they had been classed as fit for work so hadn't been counted in the figures detailed in the report.

Moved by Councillor Trisha Clough and seconded by Councillor Nick Clarke

**RESOLVED** that the Quarter 1 Sickness Absence report be noted with all members voting in favour.

### **SAF6-20/21           HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE QUARTER 1 (APRIL 2020 - JUNE 2020).**

The Health and Safety Coordinator presented the report on Health & Safety for Quarter 1 (April 2020 - June 2020). In terms of accidents, very few had been recorded which was largely down to Covid-19 and the Country being in lockdown. Out of the five accidents reported three of them had resulted in lost time and two had resulted in absences of over 7 days which had been reported to the HSE under RIDDOR. Two accidents were slips, trips or falls, one was a manual handling incident and one was struck by a moving object with the final being a medical incident. In the quarter the total number of days lost had been 51. From the two reported to the HSE one was for Streetscene and the other was Housing repairs, both of which were essential services and continued to work throughout the lockdown. A further more detailed breakdown was given for the two accidents that were reported under RIDDOR. The first incurred 30 days absence after the employee was struck with a moving bin. The medical incident incurred 18 lost days for the Housing Repairs team.

Due to the lockdown and Covid-19 restrictions no Health and Safety training could be undertaken in this quarter, the programme was due to resume shortly and alternate ways to carry out the required training was being considered. A Member questioned whether the use of podcasts had been considered to deliver the training so they could be undertaken at a convenient time and report back to the Health and Safety team once completed. In response the Committee was advised that a lot of training was carried out by external providers and it would depend if that was something they could provide.

A representative from Unison referenced how effective the Risk Assessment, guidance and measures put in place for working at The Arc had been as there had been no mention within the Quarter 1 report. It was noted that the Health and Safety team should be commended for the work they had done in altering the layout of officers to ensure there was sufficient distance between desks etc. for people who still needed access to the building. Covid secure inspections had been carried out to identify any areas of concern and where amendments needed to be made, the team were happy to add an extra part into future reports to discuss this area further as it was still early to assess its effectiveness. It still remained a personal responsibility to follow the guidance and was very hard to fully enforce but any concerns should be reported to Health and Safety.

Moved by Councillor David Dixon and seconded by Kevin Shillitto (Unison)

**RESOLVED** that the Quarter 1 Health and Safety report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11:45 hours.