

Health & Safety: Annual review of performance in 2023 and the plans for 2024

SUMMARY

This report reviews the Authority's Health & Safety arrangements for the calendar year **2023**, and presents the Authority's Health & Safety Plan for **2024**

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Authority is asked to:-

- 1) Note the Annual Health & Safety Performance Review 2023 and Action Plan for 2024 (Appendix 1)
- 2) Note that the Authority's Health & Safety Policy (updated in September 2022) remains unchanged.

1. Introduction

The Authority has Health & Safety duties and responsibilities which are detailed in a range of Health and Safety legislative requirements. This includes the development and management of the Authority Health and Safety Policy, as well as supporting procedures and associated guidance documents. The documented system is subject to an annual review which last happened at the September 2022 Authority meeting in light of changes related to Young Persons working at Abbey Road.

This report:

- reviews the Health and Safety Policy,
- reviews the Authority's Health and Safety performance in 2023, including a review of the 2023 action plan and
- provides a new action plan for 2024.

The scope of this report is the Authority's direct operations, i.e. the Abbey Road site and the West Drayton office. WLWA is also providing operational support, including health and safety advice to Richmond Council's two waste sites. The reporting period is January to December.

2. Health and Safety Policy

The Health and Safety Policy (Appendix 2), last updated in September 2022, has been reviewed by WLWA Officers and its advisors. It has been confirmed as fit-for purpose and will be reviewed again in 2024 to ensure that any changes to the organisation, including staffing changes, and legislation are incorporated.

3. 2023 H&S performance review and action plan

Appendix 1 (Section 4) shows the Authority's H&S performance in 2023 compared to previous years.

Hazard reporting

There has been an increase in hazards reported at Abbey Road compared to previous years, following a strong push on site to strengthen the health and safety culture by increasing hazard awareness. This is a good sign of a robust health and safety culture.

Mitigations to some of the commonly occurring hazards are as follows:

Hazard	Mitigation delivered
Abusive behaviour	Customer service training to de-escalate abusive customers, improved signage about abuse behaviour and banning of abusive trade waste customers.
Driving related issues	Increased supervision on the HRRC and waste transfer station including the training up of a second Traffic Controller.
Not complying with site rules (no use of PPE, smoking, not using walkways etc)	Increased supervision on the HRRC and waste transfer station including the training up of a second Traffic Controller.
Unsafe condition	The increase relates to more non-conforming material in Brent Council's street cleansing waste, such as nitrous oxide cylinders. Brent and its contractor Veolia are informed whenever such incidents occur, and procedures have been put in place to safely separate and store such materials.

Work will be undertaken to increase hazard reporting at the West Drayton office and to create a digital system at Richmond's two operational sites.

Accidents/Incidents/Near misses

Incidents, accidents and near-miss events have increased over the previous year, partly as a result of a significant increase in waste throughput at the Abbey Road waste transfer station since April, following the acceptance of street cleansing waste and bulky waste collections from Brent Council, and increases in trade waste.

There have been three fires, compared to none in 2022, which matches the industry picture of a significant increase, i.e. at the Suez operated transfer stations, fires have tripled this year. Mitigations include changes to some processes including the management of waste electricals, and identifying flammable materials to customers that bring them in, to prevent re-occurrence. The Authority has limited control over the material that is brought to Abbey Road, and procedures are constantly being reviewed to manage the increasing risks.

Five minor injuries have been reported, all at Abbey Road, mainly on the HRRC part of the site. The 2023 and 2024 Action Plans include a focus on training to help prevent re-occurrence.

There were no RIDDOR reportable incidents in 2023.

H&S Audit Performance

Internal H&S audits have been delivered at Abbey Road and the two Richmond sites. Abbey Road's latest audit score was 95%, up from 92% the previous month. Richmond's HRRC (Townmead Road) scored 93%, up from 92.5%, and Richmond's transfer station (Central

Depot) has seen a significant improvement following WLWA's involvement, up to 90% from 70% with further improvements planned.

4. 2023 H&S action plan review

Progress against the 2023 H&S action plan is generally good, with a strengthening health and safety culture indicated by the increase in hazard reporting. A big push is being delivered on H&S training. The Operations team has dedicated much attention to identifying and addressing health and safety issues at Richmond Council's two waste sites and as a result, their internal audit scores are high, as described above. Support has also been given to WLWA project managers that plan and deliver operational projects, increasing the H&S knowledge of the wider team.

5. 2024 H&S action plan

The 2024 action plan is focused on upskilling the workforce through training, including a focus on project H&S training to reflect the increase in planned operational project work. The health and safety systems will also be reviewed and enhanced, and there will be a push to further develop the organisation's health and safety culture for all staff through a Behavioural Safety Framework. Further requests for advice are expected from Boroughs, and this has been included within the plan. The effectiveness of these improvements will be measured through participation in the hazard reporting process and numbers of incidents, accidents and near misses reported.

6. Financial Implications - The work delivered in 2023 is within the budgeted amount of £60,000. The 2024 budget is currently going through the budget approvals process.

7. Legal Implications – The Authority has Health & Safety duties and responsibilities which are detailed in a range of Health and Safety legislative requirements. The action plan for 2024 will review and check that the Authority's health and safety management system is fully optimised. The Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed and updated to ensure that any changes to the organisation, including staffing changes, and legislation are incorporated.

8. Staffing Implications – The Abbey Road staffing structure will be reviewed to ensure sufficient resourcing and supervision levels. This will be done in full consultation with staff.

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