

ECF Committee
Civic Centre

10th October 2003

RE: Housing Void Reading Report

Unison finally received the final report from Reading. Unfortunately the report has not answered or sort to answer Unisons concerns.

Unison feel that this argument could go on indefinitely and meantime everyday the L.B. Harrow is breaking it's own Health & Safety Policies and Procedures. Employees are expected to deliver a high quality service, which forces them at times to take short cuts in their own Health & Safety which put themselves and others at risk. Managers are failing in their **Duty of Care** under the **Management of Health & Safety at Work Act** 1992 revised 1999 by not risk assessing and not reporting incidents and not enforcing and encouraging Health & Safety in the workplace. It appears to be everyone else's duty but theirs.

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations state quite clearly that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of

- a) **The risks to the Health & Safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst at work.**
- b) **The risks to the Health & Safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking.**

Unison would like to bring before the ECF just a small example of some of the issues that have been brought to our attention over the last few months.

- 1) Parking Attendant knocked off her bike by a contractor on the CA Site who was reversing without a trained Banks man and without a driving licence.
- 2) The kicking over of a bucket of hydrochloric acid in the plant room at the Leisure Centre.
- 3) Two Escorts who have fallen from the back of the transport buses one resulted in a broken ankle.
- 4) House fire, which spread to a neighbouring house being investigated at present. (Contractor working on the premises)
- 5) The death by electrocution of a contractor being investigated by the HSE
- 6) West lodge still not resolved at the time of writing this report.

This is just a small amount of what passes through the Unison office. Unison's concerns are not new ones; they have been brought before safety committees and the ECF before by Devlin Boyle. The time has come now for Council Leaders to act and for these Health & Safety issues to be taken seriously or

the London Borough of Harrow must face the consequence of another tragic and senseless death.

Unison feel and have spoken with the Chief Executive Office of the ways in which we think the Borough can effect positive change.

- 1) The re-structure of the Health & Safety Department. They should be an autonomous and arms length department only answerable to the Chief Executives Offices.
- 2) The Health & Safety Department needs to be properly resourced and able to be pro-active this means sufficient funding and staffing.
- 3) Management at all levels leading by example and setting the pace for health & Safety.
- 4) Managers to receive the appropriate Health & Safety training.
- 5) Occupational Health to also be an autonomous department, which should be promoting the good physical and mental well being of employees.
- 6) To manage the Health & Safety effectively of any contractors.

To finish Unison feels that the implementation of the above recommendations would be a major start at addressing these serious concerns. Should these concerns not be addressed then Unison feel that they will have no other choice but to follow the reporting procedure through to the ECF and then to pass onto the HSE to investigate and bring to a conclusion.

Debbie Prasad
Health & Safety Officer