

To: **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

**COVID-19: Health & Safety Assessment Report
Executive Director: Delivery**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. As a result of COVID 19 and the changes with working arrangements, this report summarises the results of completions of the following eLearning package Display Screen Equipment, Home Working Assessments, Returning to the Office Assessment and BAME Vulnerable Assessments, which have been undertaken since January 2022.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Employment Committee to note the H&S report.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The council has a duty of care under the Health and Safety legislation for ensuring the wellbeing of staff. All staff have had to change their working environments and ways of working; therefore, the council are required to update everyone's risk assessments. For those who use computers as part of their work, these staff also had to undertake Display Screen Assessments (DSE).
- 3.2. According to the NHS' Equality and Health Inequality hub, the coronavirus pandemic has widened the health inequalities across the country, *"disproportionate[ly] impact on many who already face disadvantage and discrimination."* Evidence shows this has had a particularly negative effect on BAME communities. Therefore, it is important that the council is informed of how this may impact the workforce and puts in place actions to mitigate these impacts.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1. No alternative actions proposed.

5. Key Findings

- 5.1 The purpose of the report is to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002) when working at home and in the office.

This year the following have been undertaken:

- BAME/Vulnerable Assessment: 0 (no new ones)
- DSE e-learning: 38
- DSE Assessments 128
- New Working from Home Assessments: 17
- Returning to the Office Assessment: 207

More detail can be found within the report.

The assessments can be found at:

<https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Risk-assessment-guidance.aspx>

6. Proposed next Steps

- 6.1. The recommendations in Section 2 are intended to ensure that the Council has an effective framework for ensuring compliance with best practice in terms of work environment, in the interests of staff wellbeing.

7. Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 7.1. The recommendations in this report are underpinned by the Council's duties as an employer, both in common law and under statute to take reasonable care in ensuring a safe work environment (which extends to home working) and safe systems of work for its staff.

Financial Advice

- 7.2. There are no financial implications.

Assistant Director: HR and OD

- 7.3 HR is supportive of the recommendation for staff to complete the home working assessment and display screen equipment. Further discussion is required regarding the collation of risk assessments and whether the responsibility is held within HR or H&S.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.4 This paper is provided to summarise information related to health equalities and coronavirus. The proposed actions aim to encourage positive actions related to equalities.

Environment and Climate Implications

- 7.5 Not applicable.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.6 The council has reviewed its workplace risk assessment tool developed to assess working practice of all staff. The tool now enables a particular assessment of BAME staff as well as considering other protected characteristics which might put a member of staff at greater risk from COVID 19.

Background Papers

Appendix A – Health and Safety Report 2022.

Contact for further information

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