

Report to: Virtual Management Committee 9th July 2020

Prepared by: Marion Menabney, Chief Executive

Subject: Covid19 Business Continuity Update

1. Introduction and Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Management Committee with an updated summary of the organisation's business activities since the last update on 31st March.

As the lockdown restrictions begin to ease, plans are in place to increase service levels in accordance with appropriate guidance.

The office will remain closed to the public for the time being.

2. Covid 19 Risk Mitigation Strategies

2.1 Staffing Arrangements

Since 20th March, the risk of the virus entering the office has been mitigated by the closure of the premises to the public.

In accordance with EVH and NHS guidance, staff with vulnerable health issues have remained at home, while the others have been coming into the office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to undertake office based tasks. (mail, site safety inspections, payment processing etc)

Numbers of staff coming in have been limited to mitigate the risk of the virus spreading internally. The current rota runs from 6th July to 14th August and has increased the maximum numbers slightly. For the front office, there will be no more than four, including the reception area. For the back office, including CE's room, also a maximum of four. Where possible, no more than four in the board room.

There should be no more than seven in the office at any one time.

Until social distancing restrictions are lifted completely, a combination of home/office working is anticipated for the medium/longer term. Our experience so far gives us reason to believe that this can be achieved with ongoing monitoring and regular review.

We will continue to comply with EVH Guidance on staff protection. The latest Information Briefing has been circulated to all committee members for information.

2.2 Personal Protective Equipment

Gloves, wipes, masks and visors are available for all staff to reduce the risk of transmission.

2.3 Contractors

Property services staff have been communicating regularly with contractors to ensure compliance with the policies and practices of individual companies.

2.3 Office Premises

To further reduce the risk of transmission, a protective screen has been ordered for the reception area.

A table and screen has been ordered for interview room 1, to ensure appropriate distancing. Only one person will be allowed into the room with one YHA staff member.

Interview room 2 will not be used for more than one person for the time being.

As we progress from Phase 2 into Phase 3, staff will begin to arrange to see tenants/contractors/consultants in the office by appointment only.

Arrangements have been made to have a card payment facility in the office to allow small sums for keys, fobs etc to be processed thus reducing the risk of infection from handling coins.

3. Service Provision

3.1 Repairs and Maintenance

1. During June, we increased maintenance services from emergency/urgent only to include void and routine external repairs.

A total of 309 job lines were issued during Q1. These included:

18 emergency repairs

172 urgent repairs

27 pest control reports

28 void repairs (June only)

2. A significant number of reports of mice have been received from 46 Overnewton Street since the beginning of the year. We are arranging to have a comprehensive survey of the building undertaken to try and identify if there is a specific access source. This will involve internal inspections of all flats as well as common areas.
3. The Planned/Cyclical/Major/Investment Programmes have been reviewed and budget adjustments made accordingly. Details of specific contracts will be reported to the Property Services Sub-Committee.
4. Moving forward, external works will be increased to allow routine common repairs in bin stores, backcourts and roof spaces.
5. Estate management inspections will be resumed during July.

3.2 Housing Management

1. From July, if appropriate, the Housing Officers will see tenants or housing applicants by appointment only. Guidance on infection risk control will be provided prior to interviews and displayed in the public area.

A revised procedure for allocations has also been developed, and the team has been selecting applicants for available properties.

At the end of June there were six void properties. Two of these require major works.

Accompanied visits with prospective tenants to empty properties are suspended. New tenants will be signed up without physical contact.

2. The waiting list has been reviewed, applications cancelled where appropriate, all outstanding applications assessed and pointed. No pre-letting visits are being undertaken.

Waiting list at 30th June: 513

Cancelled since 1st April: 566

Under review: 70

3. Arrears management is continuing via phone, email and post. All visits suspended meantime.
4. Estate management inspections will resume in July.
5. Detailed performance audit reports for Q1 will be submitted to the Housing Management Sub-Committee.

3.3 Finance and Admin

1. The Finance Manager is currently working with the auditors to finalise the 2019-20 Accounts, following a virtual audit undertaken during May and June. Provisional dates have been arranged for the final accounts to be presented to the Management Committee, and for the Annual General Meeting.
2. He is also progressing the review of YHA's IT systems. A Zoom meeting has been arranged for 8th July with consultant Stephen Bromley to discuss his report and recommendations with the senior management team.

A report will be submitted to the Management Committee in due course.

3. The Finance Assistants have been processing payments to suppliers and contractors almost entirely remotely. The revised invoice authorisation procedure is working well and will be retained longer term.

Since 6th April, 493 invoices have been checked, authorised and approved remotely.

4. Bank payments (contractors, suppliers, salaries, subscriptions):
April £273,318
May £114,901
June £73.581

Bank payments continue to be authorised by two of three Senior Officers.

3.4 Governance and Legal Obligations

1. A virtual internal audit on Risk Management was undertaken during May by Alex Quinn of Quinn Audit Services. The final report has been distributed to committee members.

The next internal audit is scheduled for 24th and 25th August on Financial Reporting.

2. SHR Returns:

2020 ARC/EESH – will be presented for Committee approval on 9th July

2020 Loan Portfolio – will be presented for Committee approval on 9th July

June Covid 19 Monthly Return – submitted to SHR ; circulated to MC for information

2020 5 Year Financial Projection – will be presented for Committee approval on 20th August

4. Summary and Recommendations

Committee members are requested to note and approve the contents of this report.