

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Health & Safety Committee

Health & Safety Report 2020

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Prepared by James Leighton – Health and Safety Manager

Introduction

The Royal College of Music (RCM) is committed to health & safety. The Senior Leadership Team believes it is one mechanism to help us achieve our strategic objectives and to enhance the experience of RCM staff, students and visitors.

It is RCM's policy to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment, safe equipment and safe work systems for all our staff and students, and to provide such information, training and supervision as is required to attain this objective. We also accept our statutory responsibility for the health & safety of others, including visitors and contractors, who may be affected by our activities.

In undertaking activities, we will apply the underlying principle that management of health, safety and fire-related risks have equal importance to our other key strategic aims and we will allocate the resources required to carry-out our statutory duties. This will include prioritising and taking action, based on the application of risk assessments.

The RCM Health & Safety Policy applies to all activities and areas of RCM, including performance spaces, teaching and practice rooms, student halls of residence, office accommodation and communal areas.

In meeting our formal obligations, RCM requires its staff and students to take reasonable care of their own health & safety and that of their colleagues and to report any defects to the physical environment, or management arrangements, which may prejudice this.

The responsibilities and arrangements for implementing health & safety at RCM are set out within the policy and the policy statement is issued to all staff and students. The policy will be subject to regular review in the light of experience and developments in national health & safety legislation and good practice.

Summary

The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted the function of the RCM where adjustments to college life had to be made within a short if not sudden timeframe to ensure the safety of all staff, students and other associated persons.

The RCM was already prepared to deal with a situation of this scale and uniqueness being quick to adhere to Government; Public Health Guidelines in terms of response. The college ceased regular operations on 17 March, ceasing all teaching and classes reducing service to student practice only.

Preparing for and responding to change in government advice, a five-phase plan was drawn up that could flexibly and dynamically respond to the changing situation. Phase 1 begun on 23 May and allowed access to the buildings for facilities, maintenance, cleaning operatives, ICT and piano technicians to prepare the site for reopening. Phase 2 commenced on 15 June, permitting students onsite to practice individually in a limited number of practice rooms. Phase 3 is due to commence on 6 July which opens more practice rooms, and allows two person capacities in rooms which are deemed suitable, which differs depending on faculty and the risks involved.

Stringent risk controls have been established well in advance with completion of specialist risk assessments covering all activities to mitigate against risks associated with COVID 19. These assessments have been successfully

implemented and continue to be reviewed and updated as the college moves forward in preparing and implementing further phases which can facilitate more teaching, music making, and student activities onsite. The Estates Team have inputted collectively and consulted on development of the risk assessments from creation of these by the Facilities & Operations Manager.

The majority RCM staff have been working remotely since the start of the lockdown. This in itself presents added risks linked with work station and ergonomic arrangements for homeworking. Support has already been given to a number of staff requiring suitable adjustments for safe working at home. The Health and Safety Manager is working with different teams and departments to ensure assessment of risks for all staff working at home. A Policy on Homeworking is due to be issued.

Just a few days before the lockdown, practical completion and handover of the Courtyard from Gilbert Ash took place successfully on 20 March 2020 signalling the end of the works placing this area back into full ownership and control by the RCM.

Snagging, refurbishment, decoration and other specialist works are currently in progress within certain areas of the courtyard. These are being carried out by sub-contractors under contract with Gilbert Ash. Risk assessments and method statements of individual contractors are reviewed and approved by the Health and Safety Manager before they are authorised to work within the college. Work activities of contractors are continuously monitored where they are working in an RCM controlled zone. subject to continuous monitoring.

At the beginning of the year, the Estates and other teams assumed occupancy of RCM Jay Mews. This transition was smooth and handled well by staff relating to any health and safety issues due to change of work location and set up. These were identified and addressed as required by the Health and Safety Manager

Summary of Risks

Certain risks have been identified and profiled where associated with the function and operation of the Royal College of Music. In each case, suitable measures are in place to control these. Risks are accordingly.

Fire Safety

Fire can have very serious or fatal effects and can also cause extensive damage to buildings. Risk of this occurring inside old historic buildings like those of the RCM is even higher. Fire risk assessments are completed and reviewed to take account all changes to the RCM estate. Procedural controls for fire evacuation, training and use of fire safety equipment are followed according to best practice. The RCM Permit to Work procedure is adhered to when Contractors require access to RCM zones.

Asbestos

Asbestos materials are contained in some areas of the RCM estate. Risk of exposure is very low where these materials are suitably managed and monitored. A full asbestos management survey and register is kept and reviewed. Contractors and any other persons at risk of exposure are made aware of locations where asbestos is contained.

Security

The RCM operates on a twenty-four-hour basis with many events and activities taking place outside normal daytime periods. Likelihood of security related incidents occurring during these periods are higher. Control of access to college buildings is very important. Security operations are tightly controlled to cover all periods of occupancy.

COVID -19

The onset of the COVID -19 pandemic came fairly suddenly presenting immediate and longer-term challenges to the function of the college. Adjustments to college life have been unprecedented dealing with completely new and previously unknown risk elements. The Estates Team were well prepared with already robust disaster recovery

strategies in place enabling prompt and efficient response to manage this situation. The college closed in line with government guidelines in March. Staff and students coped well given the circumstances with a flexible approach towards changed work and study arrangements. Unique risk controls relating to COVID – 19 were established and implemented in a very short time frame to allow safe access back into the buildings for essential activities to continue. In turn, a five-phase remobilisation strategy was confirmed for the college to reopen on a gradual basis allowing increased access during ongoing relaxation of the lockdown. Already phases one, two and three have taken place very successfully with the next two phases planned to coincide with the new term and beginning of the new year. Timings of these may of course alter in light of any changes or developments to the national pandemic. Newly adopted work methods and risk controls will apply until further notice.

Fire Strategy/Upgrade of Systems

Individual fire risk assessments have been completed for different areas of the college to coincide with handover of the courtyard and due review of existing assessments in line with statutory requirements. This also included completion of a fire risk assessment for RCM Jay Mews upon occupancy of this building. Recommended improvement actions from the individual fire risk assessment completed for different areas of the college have been prioritised. Remedial works have already been completed to resolve some of these with further works scheduled. An ongoing programme of works is in place for phased upgrade and replacement of fire doors throughout the college buildings.

Throughout different phases of Courtyard handover, the fire plans have been updated to accurately reflect site developments and ownership of individual areas by the RCM as college fire zones rather than construction areas. Update of the plans has now ceased to reflect total ownership of all site areas by the RCM. Copies of the updated fire plans are made available in fire boxes within the main reception and rear entrance to the South Building.

Fire evacuation procedures have been reviewed. A new procedure is now in place across the whole RCM Estates including Jay Mews. Emergency Coordinator duties are now taken on by members of the Facilities team in the event of a fire alert; previously an Estates Managers led role. Full training in the Emergency Coordinator role has been given to Facilities staff for appropriate response either at main campus or Jay Mews. These duties accord to shift patterns over a twenty-four-hour period including Out of Hours and night cover by Security Staff.

Duties of fire marshals have also changed. Training sessions in the new procedure were delivered in January and February to ensure retraining of all existing fire marshals.

Additional review and adaptation to the new fire procedure has taken place to account for the sudden change of occupancy, shift patterns and other changes brought about as a result of the COVID 19 lockdown. These will be developed even further as levels of occupancy begin to rise again. Refresher training for Emergency Coordinator and Fire Marshal duties will be delivered again on new procedures once normal levels of occupancy are resumed.

Statutory Compliance

Planned maintenance of plant and equipment has been completed within set timescales since the beginning of the year and through the lockdown. This has been closely managed by the Maintenance with a daily presence on campus to complete these plus oversee the activities of visiting contractors carrying more specialist routine maintenance. A majority of the annual servicing for equipment will take place in August.

Training and Induction

A large number of Health and Safety Inductions for RCM staff have been completed since January within improved systems in place for these to coincide with Human Resources notification.

Refresher training in Manual handling is carried out internally. Training in first aid is scheduled with St John's Ambulance. An overall review of training in risk assessment practice across different college departments is currently being developed.

Training in use of the motorised EVAC chairs situated in basement areas around Performance Hall has been completed by some staff within the Estates/Facilities team. Additional staff were due to carry out the same training since cancelled due to the lockdown.

Health and Safety Policies/Procedures

Policy reviews have been taking place against the review schedule. Further review of these has also been necessary given additional risks and other aspects introduced with mobilisation of the new Courtyard Space. All policies are currently being consolidated for review and assessment by RCM external Insurers (Zurich Insurance)

Prince Consort Village

The Health and Safety Manager has already made contact with the new building's manager of Prince Consort Village and is due to schedule a visit as soon as possible when access is allowed once the COVID Lockdown has been eased.

Full review of policy and other Health and Safety documentation has been carried out. Stronger and more regular lines of communication exist between PCV and the Estates Team towards monitor and communication of health and safety issues and procedures.

Incidents or Accidents and Near Misses

Ten accidents/incidents have been reported for 2020 which are representative of the college being closed since March due to the COVID 19 lockdown. During this period of reduced occupancy, external contractors have attended to complete routine and reactive maintenance of plant and equipment. Several incidents occurred involving fault with plant and equipment.

A serious incident occurred resulting in a fall from heights injury to the external contractor carrying out repairs to a lift inside RCM Jay Mews. Full report of this was made to the Health & Safety Executive under RIDDOR (Reporting of Incidents, Diseases Dangerous Occurrence Regulations)

Incidents involving plant related to temporary failure of the piano lifted due to a faulty auto dialler together with minor issues associated with function of other plant and equipment. In each instance these cases were resolved after investigation without any resulting injury or damages.

Numbers of accident/incidents being reported will clearly begin to rise as the college steadily remobilises with significantly increased occupancy by staff and students. All reported incidents continue to be investigated in a timely and prompt manner.

The below table shows the overall numbers of incidents reported in a period together with the types of person affected by these. These should be taken as a fairly accurate representation, accounting for incidents that occurred, but were not reported.

| RCM | 2020 | 2019/202 | 2018/2019 | 2017/18 | 2016/17 | 2015/16 | 2014/15 | 2013/14 | 2012/1 |
|-----------------|------|----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| Students | 2 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 6 |
| Staff | 6 | 26 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Contractors | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Visitors | | 12 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Near Miss | | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Reported to HSE | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 57 | 34 | 10 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 17 | 15 |

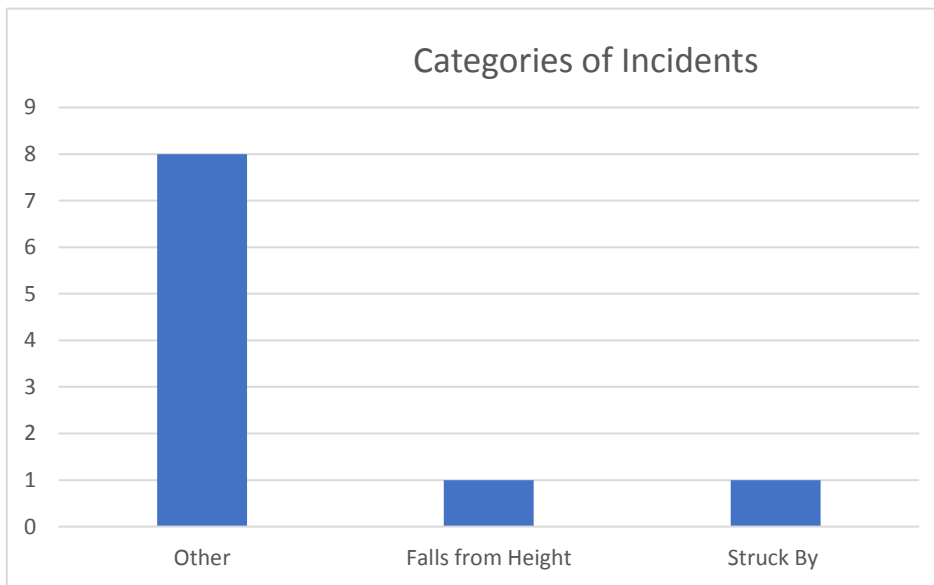
* *

Introduction of a specialised online reporting system in April 2018 gives explanation of the sharp rise in numbers of accidents/incidents logged in 2018/19 compared with those in 2017/2018. Staff and students were briefed and made aware when, why and how to use the system shortly after its launch. Uptake in use of this proved successful towards improving overall levels of reporting across the college. Use of the new system continues to provide a far more accurate and reliable picture of the actual number of accidents/incidents that are occurring.

Significant Incidents

The incident reported to the HSE involved a visiting contractor of Summit Elevators falling through a loft hatch during examination of lift motor equipment before repair of this. The fall resulted in significant bruising injury, not more serious fracture injury. This was reported to the HSE where the injured person was taken straight to hospital for treatment plus the time of his absence from work exceeding seven days. The potential seriousness of this prompted immediate review of internal processes for induction and monitoring of contractors. New induction procedures have already been implemented. Use of the main loft access to lift motor equipment inside RCM Jay Mews has been ceased with immediate effect to avoid repeat of a similar incident.

Categories of incidents: January 2020 – July 2020 (Total numbers of incidents – 10)



ISO 14001

A new certificate verifying the RCM becoming recertified after the January 2020 Reassessment Audit was issued by Certification Europe. The Estates Team worked collaboratively with other departments throughout the college to achieve this positive result.

The current level of certification is valid for the next three years. This will be reviewed regularly at nine monthly intervals by Certification Europe. Reviews to date have taken place on a six-monthly basis. Changing to the current timescales was decided as a better and more effective use of resourcing within the Estates Department

The minor non-conformances raised at the Reassessment Audit have been resolved.

- The Non-Conformance Register is now fully up to date, populated with the relevant information of previously flagged and closed non-conformances with corresponding sign off and approval dates. Retrospective evidence highlighting previously raised 'Opportunities for Improvement' has been added.
- Process for document control have been organised and unified. All policy and other documents within the RCM Environmental Management System show previous and scheduled dates of review
- The LUS Legal Register has been updated substantially to accurately list and reference specific legislation and how this applies to the RCM

Good progress has been made towards address and completion of set Environmental Targets and Objectives. The proportion of completed actions is significantly higher with just a minority of higher risk actions remaining live.

The Environmental Steering Group has focused on engagement with the Student Union President to help the college reach its environmental goals. More effective methods to present, interrogate and monitor energy usage data have been established.

The new Procurement Policy has been approved to align with Environmental initiatives. Longer term aspirations for reduced output of carbon emissions are realised towards eventual zero output.

Certain environmental and green focused incentives will be reviewed or retracted where could compromise newly introduced COVID 19 risk controls. This relates specifically to use of reusable cups and other containers in the event of potential cross contamination.

Everything will be done to make sure newly introduced controls are as combatable as possible to not unduly impact current incentives. This may be unavoidable in some cases. Control of cross contamination and infection control must take precedent.