

Registers of Scotland

RoS Board

14 June 2022

Annual Health and Safety Report

Purpose

1. This is the annual Health and Safety report for Registers of Scotland (RoS). The report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Where possible, comparisons have been made to previous health and safety data gathered.

2. The overall purpose of the annual health and safety report is to give colleagues and stakeholders an understanding of health and safety arrangements at RoS and provide assurances on the adequacy of health and safety measures in place.

Recommendation

3. The Executive Management Team have reviewed this annual report and all changes have been implemented to the annual report and Policy and have recommended that it is accepted as written.

4. The Board are invited to note this paper.

Executive Summary

5. RoS employs more than 1,300 colleagues and contingent workers across its 2 buildings, Meadowbank House (MBH), and St Vincent's Plaza (SVP), and we place great importance on pursuing standards that effectively promote health and safety and support colleagues and visitors whilst minimising risks.

5. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a major shift in RoS working practices. The shift to exclusively remote working for the vast majority of RoS colleagues has had a dramatic impact on aspects of this annual report with new challenges emerging. However, Colleagues have started to gradually return to both MBH and SVP embracing the hybrid approach, with colleagues choosing to enjoy the benefits of a flexible work life balance.

6. The provision of health and safety training has continued, with a continuing focus on hybrid working. The Home Working e-learning training module continues to be fully utilised and now with the gradual return of colleagues to the office space, this is used in conjunction with our DSE office-based e-learning, providing guidance on obtaining the best possible working environment whilst working within both office and home environments.

7. To fully support colleagues, efforts to replicate the office environment within colleagues' homes was undertaken wherever possible. This consisted of the provision of desks, office chairs, monitors, laptop risers, support cushions amongst

other items, supported by a safe and secure logistical exercise to manage the shipping of items. Emerging risks to colleagues through remote working have been addressed and a support network of Mental Health First Aiders has been implemented. This network of Mental Health First Aiders is also supported by a range of 3rd party resources available through RoS.

8 MBH remains partially opened with a view to reopen to all colleagues fully in 2022. SVP will follow the same opening procedures. It is viewed that the new ways of hybrid working and colleagues adapting hybrid working practices that suit them will shape the role of MBH and SVP physical buildings.

Health and Safety Management System

9. The Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) continues to be the cornerstone of all processes relating to health and safety within RoS. The HSMS details the correct processes and procedures and what is expected from all colleagues, contactors, and visitors to RoS when undertaking aspects of work that are contained within the HSMS.

Health and Safety Analysis

10. At the beginning of 2022, following guidance and Scottish and UK Government health advice, the decision to gradually reopen both MBH and SVP was undertaken. Accidents within MBH and SVP during the period of this report were zero. There were no reported cases of Covid-19 being contracted by colleagues whilst in MBH or SVP and no positive cases have been recorded as RoS being the transmission point since the partial reopen on 3rd June 2020.

Remote/Hybrid Working

11. During the year, RoS has continued to enable colleagues to be able to work remotely and support them. The current number of remotely enabled laptop users is 1334 (98%). This is a year-on-year increase of connectivity.

This increase also captured all new colleagues joining through the AO campaign.

12. RoS continues to support remote/hybrid working for colleagues, ensuring that they are fully supported and the continuation of the provision of peripherals available to colleagues.

13. These items included:

- Laptop Risers
- Monitors
- Keyboards
- Mouse and Lumber support Cushions

All colleagues from the AO campaign were provided with a keyboard, mouse, laptop riser and 4-way USB hub to ensure that they had a set up which would enable an ergonomic set up within their home.

14. A full range of desks including an option of height adjustable, are available to order as well as the availability of fully adjustable Herman Miller Mirra 2 chairs.

Remote/Hybrid Working support

16. To support colleagues as they adjust to their new remote/hybrid working environment, the Health and Safety Adviser is fully trained in virtual DSE assessments and accredited Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors (CIEHF). All the main Estates team are also trained in virtual assessments and can provide further support if required.

Remote/Hybrid Working Training

17. As part of RoS commitment to continuous learning, the e-learning capability of Ros is ongoing. The Homeworkers e-learning module is mandatory, and all colleagues are expected to complete and review their own home set ups on a regular basis.

The increase in Hybrid working also required colleagues who have started to return in a hybrid work pattern to also complete the Assessrite 3.0 e-learning which is the mandatory DSE office-based training.

Mental Health Support

18. Remote working poses a mental health risk. To help address this, a MBH specific Mental Health network has been set up on the RoSnow platform with a wide range of links to access help.

19. A network of fully accredited Mental Health First Aiders has been implemented to enable colleagues to seek support, guidance, and information on how to access professional help if so required.

The Mental Health First Aiders are available to contact every working day through the RoSnow platform.

Making RoS safe and secure

20. Although the vast majority of RoS colleagues are now enabled to work remotely, one team within RoS, Chancery and Judicial Registers (CAJR) are still based fully in RoS as this process is not yet digital and still largely paper based, although the process is changing

21. During 2021-22 restrictions were evolving and towards the end of 2021, plans were made to start to reopen the building to a wider section of RoS colleagues.

Scottish Government protocols

22. RoS continued to follow Scottish Government guidance on the reopening of buildings by adhering to the strict protocols that were in place. This included

- the implementation of the onsite track and trace system,
- workspaces and breakout areas with new layouts to allow for 2 metre social distancing between colleagues,
- the availability of sanitiser stations throughout operation areas of the building,
- and COVID age assessments.
- There was also a restriction on colleagues returning to the building if they were deemed a higher risk.

- The 'work from home' message was continuous throughout the COVID pandemic by the Executive Management Team (EMT).

Organisational Risk Assessment

23. Before the MBH building was reopened, a full operational risk assessment was undertaken, with all known risks identified and emerging risks considered. This process followed the usual 5 steps of risk assessment:

1. Identify the risk
2. See who might be at risk
3. Evaluate the risk
4. Record the risk
5. Review the risk

24. This undertaking was a crucial part of allowing RoS to reopen the building and continue to serve the wider economy with a core part of the services that RoS provides.

Essential workers/early returners

25. To allow colleagues to return to work within primarily MBH, a process was created to ensure that colleagues returning were themselves not at risk from COVID and thus mitigate the risks to other returning colleagues.

26. Colleagues were identified who were crucial to the work process that they were being brought in to undertake. In most cases this was for CAJR, due to the physical nature of this work although other colleagues were brought in for short periods to identify and sort live case bags in various locations throughout MBH and SVP.

Early returners or colleagues who had been identified as having requirement to return to MBH/SVP due to non-suitable home environments started to return to work from the buildings during this period.

27. A process was developed in 2020-21 and continued into 2021-22 where all prospective colleagues would submit a personal assessment, a COVID age assessment and also an application to receive an essential worker's letter from the Keeper after they had met all the criteria and eligibility for returning to MBH.

This process was eliminated in early 2022 and as the SG restrictions were updated and eased in many sectors

28. All colleagues up until early 2022, still required permission to attend MBH/SVP. This was in form of a letter from the Keeper which was introduced in 2020-21. This also applied to all contractors who wished to visit both MBH and SVP and a full Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) was and is required before approval is granted.

29. A full Track and Trace protocol continued to be in place for all colleagues and contractors arriving on site. This allowed for a rapid identification of any positive COVID cases from colleagues or contractors on site so that all possible infections could be traced.

This process was stood down in March 2022 in line with SG guidance.

Re-exit plan for MBH

30. Along with establishing a process for colleagues to return to MBH/SVP, a plan was also created for the event of a re exit. This re-exit plan details the actions, resources and procedures required to ensure that, in the event of further local or national COVID-19 related restrictions instructed by UK or Scottish Government, MBH/SVP can remain open and operate at the most acceptable level possible. This plan is live and is continually reviewed and updated.

Reorganisation of the interior of RoS buildings

31. To comply with the social distancing measures and to recreate a work environment that was compliant with ongoing restrictions, RoS took radical steps to completely change the interior of MBH/SVP. This included the removal of all personal cabinets (PEDs) from the wing floors and creating a logistics solution to transporting colleagues personal items to their homes or storing them in another unused area of MBH. Lockers, where applicable were also cleared in both MBH and SVP. 95% of RoS colleagues have now had their PED items shipped to their homes or given a notice to dispose of them.

32. Desk layouts were also reorganised with all desks now at 2m distance between each other and all spare desks have been removed from operational wings. This reorganisation also allowed for a deep clean to commence of utilised wings and for occupied work areas to be cleaned more efficiently.

33. The support team have maintained the increased cleaning in all occupied areas that was introduced during the COVID pandemic and identified high area touch points. This process continues and a high level of cleaning remains in place. This will ensure that both MBH/SVP operate at the highest levels of a clean facility and help control and reduce the spread of any

34. This reorganisation has also changed the dynamic of the building and presented opportunities to allow outside SG agencies to utilise the new space within MBH/SVP. This has seen other agencies occupy areas within MBH/SVP and RoS will continue to present these opportunities to the wider SG

Healthy Working Lives

35. RoS is a gold award holder of Healthy Working Lives. This was retained for 2021/21, which is the 5th consecutive year. This award recognises the commitment of RoS to improve health, safety, and wellbeing for all colleagues.

Consultation

36. Consultation between Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) and RoS management continues to provide an effective relationship on health and safety matters. The Health and Safety Committee is active in driving forward health and safety policy and for addressing the concerns of either party. During the enforced period of absence from MBH and SVP, the committee has continued to meet to discuss any concerns or issues that may arise for colleagues working remotely or at MBH.

Regulator Inspections and Visits

37. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has increased inspections on buildings that have been open during the lockdown periods, however neither of our offices has been visited by an enforcement agency during 2021-22. This is a continuing trend from previous years.

Accidents/Incidents

38. During this reporting period there have been one reported near miss. This is more than likely due to our buildings having minimal staff members with the vast majority of colleagues working remotely. However, colleagues are still advised to report any accidents or incidents within their homes if they happen during working hours and are directly attributed to a task that is connected to RoS work.

As colleagues start to return and the buildings reopen, maintaining the high standards currently in place and the high level of engagement from senior management and down, will ensure that these incidents and accidents remain at a low level.

Fire/Emergency Alarm System

39. During 2021-22 there were 3 unplanned fire alarm activations and 1 planned evacuation in MBH. During the same period there was 1 unplanned evacuation within SVP. The alarm system continues to be tested on a weekly basis in both buildings.

First Aid

40. MBH/SVP continues to be adequately covered with fully trained first aiders. There were no reported incidents during 2021-22.

Conclusion

41. The COVID pandemic has witnessed a shift in the way that people work and created a conversation on how we want to work going forward. The connectivity of the vast majority of RoS colleagues and the digitisation of many of the RoS registers, has allowed colleagues to continue to provide a high standard of work whilst not physically being in an office environment.

The gradual return to an office environment will continue into 2022-23 and this will drive the concept of RoS hybrid approach to working and all the benefits that it can bring, with Health and Safety at the very centre of this approach

42. The overall safety culture within RoS is a positive one. This is driven by a senior management team who are focused on maintaining and developing health and safety within RoS and see health and safety as a central core of good management rather than a stand-alone system.

43. The commitment of senior management to providing the best possible working environment whether remotely or within MBH/SVP, can be witnessed by the efforts made to ensure that all colleagues have the equipment, training and support they need. Their commitment can also be witnessed with the willingness to lead and remain visible throughout and with continued monthly visits, along with PCS to MBH/SVP.

44. New technologies and working practises continue to be adopted by RoS and this has seen an increase in more ergonomic focused workstations, with the introduction of height adjustable desks and a focus on raising awareness of the importance of posture. Working practises continue to evolve and consultation is underway on how RoS can best support colleagues as the traditional Mon-Fri 9-5 work mentality changes and colleagues refocus their work/life balance.

45. RoS continues to champion equalities and diversity, maintaining a focus on such matters will enhance the working environment for all colleagues whether remotely or within MBH or SVP.

46. Mental Health support is a primary focus and RoS continues to help and support all colleagues and provide access to internal and external support networks.

Head of Procurement & Estates
May 2022

Annex 1

Registers of Scotland Health and Safety Policy

At the time of writing this report, the Policy was under review with various stakeholders with a view to being published at the earliest opportunity.

The Policy shown here is the version that is currently under consultation.

Health and Safety Policy

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|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Author | Health and Safety Adviser | | |
| Reviewed | Head of Procurement and Estates | | |
| Cleared | Corporate Director | | |
| Approval | Executive Management Team | Approval Date | March 2022 |
| Policy Version | V2.0 | | |
| Review Responsibility | Executive Management Team | Review Date | March 2023 |
| Suitable for Publication | Yes | | |
| Contact: | Head of Procurement & Estates | | |

1 Purpose and Scope

1.1 This policy sets out RoS commitment to create a positive and inclusive working environment and culture, providing the conditions for individuals and teams to thrive and achieve the highest standard of performance and service, where contributions are fully recognised and valued by all. We are committed to supporting colleagues, be this via learning and development or through more informal mechanisms such as the development of a productive and positive workplace culture.

1.2 RoS believes that all colleagues should have rewarding and worthwhile jobs, with the freedom and confidence to be empowered to raise health and safety concerns where appropriate. To do this, colleagues need to be trusted, empowered and actively listened to by those with whom they work and interact. Colleagues must be treated with respect at work, and be given the tools, training and support to work safely with opportunities to develop and progress.

1.3 This policy applies to all RoS colleagues.

2 Guiding Principles

2.1 Our goal is to be an exemplar employer in the delivery of health and safety. To achieve that we need to be all inclusive and seek the involvement and commitment of everyone in RoS. We also need to recognise the physical, psychological and social factors that impact on health, safety and wellbeing.

2.2 We will maintain and continuously improve our Health and Safety Management System to help prevent, remove, or reduce the workplace factors that cause ill health and injury. All activities shall be carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of colleagues, visitors and other people who may be affected by our undertakings. We will act positively to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other associated legislation, approved Codes of Practice (ACoP), and any other relevant guidance or standards.

3 The Policy

3.1 Registers of Scotland (RoS) is committed to safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of all its employees, contingent workers, customers, and others who have contact with RoS by providing healthy and safe working environments.

3.2 Our Objectives

- to promote standards of health, safety and welfare that comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other relevant statutory provisions and codes of practice.
- to provide and maintain safe and healthy working environments, equipment and systems of work for RoS colleagues and others, and to provide such information, training, and supervision as they need for this purpose.
- to provide opportunities for safety representatives to contribute to the promotion of a healthy and safe working environment.
- to provide a safe means of access and egress to all places of work; and
- to provide an effective basis for monitoring the health and safety arrangements in RoS.
- In the pursuit of these objectives RoS expects all colleagues to co-operate and give support in creating and maintaining safe and healthy working conditions.

3.3 Our Organisation

Overall responsibility for Health and Safety at RoS rests with the Keeper. The Corporate Director is responsible for the effective implementation of the policy.

Health and Safety is a responsibility for everyone at all levels. An appointed and competent member of the Estates team provides help to senior management, line managers and colleagues by providing information and guidance in applying the provisions of Health and Safety Law.

To achieve a good standard of Health and Safety in the workplace all colleagues must take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of themselves and of colleagues or others who may be affected by their actions. They should co-operate with management in all matters relating to their health, safety and welfare and develop a personal concern for accident prevention.

3.4 Our Arrangements

RoS will provide training for managers and colleagues appropriate to their responsibilities and the work that they do.

Significant hazards and risks which might affect the Health and Safety of RoS colleagues and others will be assessed and recorded, and appropriate action will be taken to control, eliminate or reduce any risks. Day to day monitoring is carried out by line managers assessing risks to colleagues in their own areas of responsibility. In addition, the Estates team carry out regular checks in common areas of the buildings and technical advisers check periodically the general condition of premises, equipment, plant, and other parts of the work environment. An appointed and competent member of the Estates team will conduct safety audits from time to time to monitor the effectiveness of RoS policy and procedures.

3.5 Remote/Hybrid Working

RoS has the same duty of care towards remote workers as those who work from RoS buildings, and the relevant Health and Safety Policies still apply. All colleagues, regardless of working location, have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Line managers will be responsible for ensuring appropriate risk assessments are undertaken. HROD and Estates hold details of the safety checks to be carried out.

It is important that managers provide support to colleagues, ensuring that their health and wellbeing is paramount, liaising when required with the HROD team for advice.

All colleagues should:

- be aware of the need to take appropriate breaks from work
- not exceed the maximum working hours
- have access to the IT systems needed to undertake work and have been provided with the necessary equipment/adjustments to be able to carry out their role
- contact their manager or the relevant support contact if they encounter any work-related problems relating to RoS hardware, software or supporting equipment
- familiarise themselves with the RoS services provided for health and mental wellbeing, which are there to support all colleagues.

Managers should also make sure that team meetings and contact with individual team members are happening on a regular basis.

3.6 Conclusion

A 'safety culture' in RoS can be promoted most effectively if the pursuit of Health and Safety is accepted as an objective shared by us all. The provision of quality services to our customers should be linked to the safety process so the two go together as a positive 'quality and safety culture'.

We must take a positive interest in our Health and Safety and exercise a common duty of care to others. We must be alert to draw attention to anything we encounter at work which could be a threat to the Health and Safety of ourselves, our colleagues or our customers and others. We also have a special duty of care to those who may have particular requirements through for example disability or inexperience.

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Executive Management Team is responsible for the content of this policy, its approval and review. They are responsible for ensuring its implementation in practice and for monitoring this over time. They are responsible for ensuring that appropriate procedures, guidelines, or standards as are required to support this are maintained and ownership for these assigned appropriately.

4.2 Primary responsibility for sensible and practical risk management of any activity rests with those who arrange and direct the work. Meeting legal requirements is a substantial undertaking, and this demands the proportionate integration of health and safety management into all business planning activities. Visible commitment from senior management and within individual Directorates is of paramount importance and specific duties are delegated to them accordingly. However, the support and active co-operation of all colleagues is essential if safety is to be ensured.

4.3 Every employee of Registers of Scotland has a legal obligation to co-operate in the day-to-day implementation of the policy. We are committed to making available adequate resources to ensure its delivery and that colleagues and the recognised RoS Trade Union (PCS) is consulted and involved.

5 Approval and review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the RoS Board unless earlier review is appropriate and approved by the Executive Management Team.

5.2 This policy will be reviewed regularly to reflect changes in legislation, relevant guidance and standards, changing business needs and operating structures.