

## **CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – 11TH AUGUST 2010**

**SUBJECT: RECENT HEAT STRESS COMPLAINT**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of a recent complaint received and the action taken with regards to the working temperature on floor 4 of Ty Penallta.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 An initial telephone complaint was received by Karen Rogers (Senior H&S Officer) on the morning of 18th June 2010. The initial complaint was from a Unision Representative and had originated from staff within the Housing Benefit Section.
- 2.2 Following the initial complaint an e-mail was received from one of the Housing Benefit Team Leaders further outlining the concerns of the team.
- 2.3 The issue was further investigated and a number of facts were established:
- The Ty Penallta building is not air-conditioned, however a pumped supply of fresh air is circulated through grills under the floors, which has a cooling effect.
  - The building management system monitors the air temperature, externally and at a minimum of three internal points on each floor (one on each elevation). The temperatures are automatically taken every 15 minutes and are monitored by facilities management staff to ensure that they are reasonable. An informal arrangement is in place that when the internal temperatures reach 28°C a review takes place to see what further actions can be taken to reduce the temperature. One of these options may be to issue fans, which will aid in increasing the air movement and have a local cooling effect.
  - On the day of the complaint the external temperature was 23°C, and the maximum internal temperature was observed on the south side of floor 4 at 3pm. This temperature was 26°C.
  - There is a process in place for individuals with health conditions to be issued with fans, where appropriate.
  - The windows and roof vents on floor 4/5 are, during periods of warm weather, left open overnight. This helps to disseminate any heat built up during the building.
- 2.4 Under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations there is no upper working temperature limit, however it does refer to a 'reasonable' working temperature. The interpretation of a reasonable working temperature will change depending on the ambient air temperature, and the activities going on within the building. The number of people and the use of lighting, computer equipment etc. will have an impact on the internal temperature of the building. A gain of 3 degrees from the outside temperature is likely to be considered reasonable, especially taking into account the size of the building.

- 2.5 Each individual's perception of a comfortable working temperature is different. Individuals with health conditions may feel 'warmer' before others and it is commonly known that men become 'warmer' sooner than women – usually at a temperature 2-3 degrees lower.
- 2.6 Following the receipt of the e-mail further advice was given/reiterated to enable the staff in this area to help themselves. Staff were asked to ensure that where possible the windows were open and that the blinds were closed. This will help with solar gain, especially on the south side of the building, which gets the afternoon sun. Staff were also reminded that they should dress appropriately for the weather and to ensure that they drink plenty of water.
- 2.7 The corporate heat stress guidance has been reviewed and re-issued and is available via H&S Officers and the Health and Safety Intranet site.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Committee are asked to note and discuss the report.

Author: Karen Rogers, Senior Health and Safety Officer  
Consultees: Nigel Barnett, Director of Corporate Services  
Gareth Hardacre, Head of People Management and Development  
Councillor Allan Pritchard, Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Constitutional Affairs  
Donna Jones, Acting Health and Safety Manager  
Mark Faulkner, Facilities Manager, Ty Penallta  
Adrian Crabb, Senior Facilities Manager