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**REPORT AUTHOR: HEAD OF SAFETY AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS**

**SUBJECT: SERVICE GYMS AND EQUIPMENT**

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Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL			FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES			EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL			POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	✓	OTHER (please specify)	
	New			

*Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.*

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**PURPOSE:**

To provide Members with an overview of the provision and use of fire station gyms across the Service.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Members note the report.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following a recent station visit by Members, an enquiry was raised into the provision and use of Service gyms and the arrangements in place to provide such facilities. This paper, in response to the enquiry, provides Members with an overview of the arrangements in providing station gyms, including equipment and maintenance and the arrangements in place for operational staff to assist in maintaining their fitness and the use by support staff as part of working for the Service.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Firefighting is a physically demanding occupation that requires higher levels of fitness than most other occupations; as such the National Role Maps set out specific requirements for operational employees to maintain levels of personal fitness to carry out their tasks as safely and effectively as possible.
- 2.2 The Authority recognises the importance for operational employees to maintain their fitness in accordance with the National Occupational Standards and the important role fitness has in supporting wider well-being for all employees.
- 2.3 The support mechanisms provided by the Authority to assist operational staff in maintaining their fitness is afforded in a number of ways:
- Provision of Gyms on all Fire Stations across the Service;
  - Provision of appropriately trained staff to deliver and support fitness training;
  - Provision for fitness training for Wholetime, Day Crewing, Day Duty and Flexible Duty Staff and access to equipped gymnasiums on all stations for Retained Duty System Staff and for support staff;
  - Yearly fitness assessment and development to maintain the standards of personal fitness required for operational employees; and,
  - Processes and support for operational employees who have fallen below the required fitness standards including development and support available to regain the necessary levels of fitness.
- 2.4 The support arrangements as detailed in 2.3 above for operational staff to maintain their fitness is facilitated by the provision of an Occupational Health Unit and an Occupational Health Practitioner with access to a Service Doctor, a Service Physical Fitness Advisor and Watch Physical Training Instructors. The report focusses on fitness but there are other preventative and proactive support facilities in place such as 3 yearly medicals, asbestos screening, an Employee Assistance Programme, confidential advice and guidance, physiotherapy and soft tissue treatment.
- 2.5 Whilst all of these arrangements provide a holistic approach to supporting the physical wellbeing of operational staff, it is emphasised that the use of Service gym facilities, health and lifestyle advice and voluntary fitness assessments through the Service Physical Fitness Adviser equally apply to all employees.

## 3. Provision of Service Gyms, Equipment and Use

- 3.1 Finance, resources and policies are in place to provide appropriate gyms and gym facilities. These facilities include physical training equipment, suitable clothing and footwear for operational employees with recent completed refurbishments to Kempston and Bedford Fire Station gyms as part of the Authority's Capital Programme with a scheduled refurbishment to Luton Fire Station Gym in 2017/18. In addition to the scheduled refurbishments the

Property Team undertakes a 'Conditions Review' within a yearly maintenance budget to address issues across the whole of the Service's estate.

- 3.2 The Service Physical Fitness Advisor provides advice to management on policy matters concerning fitness related issues which is disseminated to Stations via normal management routes including the Physical Training Instructors attached to Stations who provide instruction on the safe and effective use of physical training equipment.
- 3.3 The Service Physical Fitness Advisor has a revenue budget that is used for the annual servicing of all station gym equipment and a capital budget that is used for the procurement of new equipment. Following the annual service a report is provided that is used as the basis for any equipment replacement that is coming to the end of its life. The basis of this decision is made in relation to maintenance and repair costs balanced against purchase of new equipment. As part of maximising financial resources the Service has previously accepted free gym equipment from gym equipment providers or training establishments. The decision to accept free gym equipment is based upon a number of factors that include the condition, the potential servicing costs to maintain it and its suitability. All such offers are investigated.
- 3.4 All new gym equipment is CE (European Conformity) marked and approved prior to procurement. Once procured or received as per all gym equipment, it is then maintained and inspected yearly including certification and risk assessed in line with the Service's health and safety obligations.
- 3.5 The Service has robust procedures for the reporting and removal of defective gym equipment with budgets for annual servicing, maintenance and equipment replacement when required.
- 3.6 The Service provides access for fitness training for employees that include:
  - Wholetime Shift System - One 60-minute period per 24hr shift cycle;
  - Day Crewing Shift System - Two 40-minute periods within the working week;
  - Day Duty and Flexible Shift Systems - Two 40-minute periods within the working week;
  - Retained Duty system - Access to equipped gymnasiums on all stations; and,
  - Green Book Employees - Access to Fitness facilities utilising the flexitime scheme.

#### 4 Station Gym Standards

- 4.1 Whilst there are no set mandatory standards for the provision of gyms, for example, the type of building construction; there are basic requirements that have been incorporated into service station gyms which include:
  - The layout of Station gyms are designed to allow safe use at all times;
  - Appropriate safety rules are prominently displayed along with the maximum occupancy numbers and the names and locations of the nearest First Aiders;

- All station gyms are provided with adequate lighting, ventilation, and means of heating and are cleaned at suitable intervals for the delivery of fitness training and regularly inspections; and,
- The implementation of local conditions, for example the pre-heating of gyms that are not attached to the Station's main heating system prior to scheduled use during cold periods.

## 5 Review of Station Gym Premises

- 5.1 A site survey of all Station Gyms was conducted in September 2015 by the Property Team which included the assessment of a range of factors encompassing gym location, heating, ventilation, flooring and lighting etc. .
- 5.2 The outcome of the review concluded that all station gyms were found to be in good condition. Where remedial works were required these have been actioned (See 6.1 below).

## 6 Actions Being Taken

- 6.1 The Property Team undertake an annual full 'Conditions Survey' for all station sites which include station gyms. Following the most recent survey in September 2015 the survey found *remedial works* required at Ampthill Fire Station gym which are being actioned. None of the remedial works found during the survey had been reported previously as defects to the Property Team. Within the 'Conditions Review' recommendations were made to check the flat roof areas for Luton and Toddington station gym areas as the roofs are projected to be approaching their end of life and may require works.

## 7 Conclusion

The provision of gyms across the Service assists operational staff in the maintenance of their fitness standards helping them undertake their role safely and effectively and provide support staff with access to fitness facilities.

The Property Team's Conditions Survey and the Property Defect Reporting process assists in identifying any actions or improvements required.

The focus for the Property Team for 2016/17 are gyms with flat roof areas that are scheduled for replacement as they come to the end of their projected life and will form part of any future capital works if required. The annual servicing of all station gym equipment is currently underway; following completion, any equipment that is no longer serviceable will be replaced or sourced following a cost benefit analysis by the Service Physical Fitness Advisor.

## 8 Implications

- 8.1 Corporate Risk: Known. The Service assists operational staff in maintaining their high levels of fitness through the provision of station gyms as well as providing access to facilities as part of the wider well-being agenda. However, maintenance of fitness is a personal obligation for all employees to remain fit for role.

**SERVICE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER TONY ROGERS  
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