

13. NOTICE OF MOTION - ASTHMA INHALERS - ADOPTING "LAURENS LAW" - SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR HARRY CARTMILL

The Council considered a motion (copies of which had been circulated) submitted by Councillor Harry Cartmill in the following terms :-

“Every day asthma inhalers are for some in our communities a deceptively simple but absolutely vital medical device making the literal difference of life and death to those who have asthma and who can suffer debilitating attacks

One such person was 19 year old kitchen worker Lauren Reid who suffered a severe asthma attack at work in a commercial kitchen in Glasgow City Centre back in February 2019 – tragically Lauren had left her inhaler at home on this fateful day and with no inhalers required in first aid kits used by the commercial kitchen sector trained first aiders on the scene could do nothing whatsoever to help Lauren – by the time Paramedics arrived Lauren had gone into cardiac arrest and never regained consciousness dying four days later.

Lauren Reid’s heartbroken Mother Elaine Cunningham has started a campaign to honour the memory of her daughter and to make sure no other family loses a loved one in this way by promoting “Lauren’s Law” – a campaign to have every commercial kitchen throughout the UK carry an asthma inhaler as part of their first aid kit by law

I was contacted by Elaine and I must say as a father of a daughter around the same age as Lauren Reid I was close to tears reading of this tragedy but equally motivated to doing what I could to make sure we here in West Lothian Council take steps to adopt “Lauren’s Law” in both council run commercial kitchens such as Howden Park Centre and to the many we issue Licences and Permits to also.

The cost of incorporating an asthma inhaler in commercial kitchens first aid kits is miniscule – already (rightly) our schools and colleges have these inhalers as part of every first aid Kit available – so to I understand do the offshore industries and sectors of the construction industries – commercial kitchens should be next in line with the hope that soon every first aid Kit has an inhaler within.

Council therefore agrees to have officers draft a paper to present at their earliest convenience to the Health and Care PDSP outlining proposals to incorporate “Lauren’s Law” with an aim of making it mandatory for every commercial kitchen in West Lothian under council ownership or jurisdiction to have an asthma inhaler as part of their first aid kit.”

- Moved by Councillor Harry Cartmill and seconded by Councillor George Paul

Amendment

The SNP group agree wholeheartedly with the reasoning and sentiment

behind this motion. We must all strive to prevent such a tragic outcome happening again. With this amendment we propose a robust solution that places responsibility with employers whilst supporting an employee's knowledge of their condition and control over their medication.

The contents of a work place first aid kit are not legally stipulated, rather there is a requirement to assess the needs of that workplace and to provide equipment such as to deal with emergency situations as they arise. Whilst it is reasonable to include a blue 'reliever' inhaler, 'spacer' and a supply of individual hygienic barriers in a first aid kit the same case could be made for inclusion of anti-anaphylaxis epi-pens, diabetes support medication and many other potentially life-saving items.

A first aid kit needs to be regularly checked to ensure all contents are complete, in-date and appropriate for individual needs. Often the responsibility for maintaining these kits lies with undertrained and unremunerated volunteers within the workplace. This task becomes more onerous with an ever-increasing size of first aid kit.

We propose that West Lothian Council stipulates that it is the responsibility of employers to provide safe storage for individuals' medication within the premises (securely held but easily accessible in an emergency situation) and a mechanism to support individuals to maintain the contents and efficacy of these supplies. This approach will provide the opportunity for some individuals to keep specific medication where a 'blue' might not be effective for them in relieving symptoms.

Asthma UK support the use of personalised Asthma Action Plans to help manage the condition and any emergency action to take for the individual. This information could be kept in a medication file alongside the medication store.

This regulation should apply to higher risk workplaces such as kitchens but could easily cover a range of occupational venues in which asthma sufferers might experience an attack. This proposal seeks to provide access to medication in the workplace to potentially save lives of those with asthma whilst supporting other significant health emergencies faced by employees.

Councillor Tom Ullathorne, upon moving his amendment, advised that he would consider a composite motion. Following a short adjournment the following composite motion was agreed :-

Composite Motion

"Every day asthma inhalers are for some in our communities a deceptively simple but absolutely vital medical device making the literal difference of life and death to those who have asthma and who can suffer debilitating attacks

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Council therefore agrees to have officers draft a paper to present at their earliest convenience to the Health and Care PDSP outlining proposals to incorporate "Lauren's Law" with an aim of making it mandatory for every commercial kitchen in West Lothian under council ownership or jurisdiction to have an asthma inhaler as part of their first aid kit, and to make it the responsibility of employers to provide safe storage for individuals' medication within the premises."

- Moved by Councillor Harry Cartmill and seconded by Councillor Tom Ullathorne

Decision

To unanimously approve the terms of the composite motion.