

Staffordshire County Council
Annual Report on Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance 2021/22

1. Action Required

1.1 The County Council's Senior Managers need to: -

- Review the findings and management information detailed in this report.
- Analyse this year's performance and identify action to ensure continuous improvement;
- Consider key actions identified for 2022/23 and decide if any further actions are required;
- Share and communicate the report to SLT, WLT and OMT; and
- Recognise the work that has been achieved to improve the council's management of health, safety, and wellbeing risks.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This report covers the period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. The aim is to provide the council's senior management, stakeholders, public of Staffordshire and others interested in health, safety, and wellbeing with information about what the county council is doing to protect its employees, volunteers, contractors, service users, pupils, and members of the public.
- 2.2 Health, safety and employee wellbeing in the county council is part of the overall risk management strategy, which aims to identify and manage risks to the county council and its services to the public. Health, safety, and employee wellbeing focuses on the risks of injury and ill health that can arise from the wide range of activities necessary to deliver the services to the people of Staffordshire.
- 2.3 This report identifies progress against the key action points outlined in the action plan for 2021/22 and identifies key priorities for 2022/23.

3. Background

3.1 The type of health and safety risks involved are varied, but include: -

- Work related ill health including stress at work
- Manual handling
- Lone working
- Violence and aggression
- Transport and road risks
- Slips, trips, and falls

- 3.2 An organisation with such a broad range of activities as Staffordshire County Council has a wide variety of risks to manage and the above list represents only some of the most common risks across the council. To ensure that all risks are identified, the council has a risk assessment process for use by managers and staff.
- 3.3 Our services are often delivered via partnership arrangements. These include a wide range of external organisations such as the NHS, charities, contractors, and volunteers. By focusing on co-operation, communication, and co-ordination with our partners, we aim to ensure that these operations are also effectively managed as safely as is reasonably practicable.
- 3.4 To support the management of health, safety, and employee wellbeing the council employs several specialists, including health and safety specialists; occupational health specialists who provide support for employees, property management specialists etc. In the workplace there are trained safety representatives nominated by trade unions who help to monitor health, safety and wellbeing as well as represent employees during consultation.

4. Action taken during 2021/22 to improve Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements

4.1 Key Successes

- 4.1.1 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service continue to support Covid 19 response during 2021/22 in terms of ensuring local outbreak advice for Council Services and education and early year settings. Emergency Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) services also continued throughout this period. Nearly 9 million items of emergency PPE had been distributed by the end March 2022. In addition to responding to Covid the HSW Service also developed plans and arrangements around lifting lockdown and returning to pre covid arrangements.
- 4.1.2 Implemented new Occupational Health Referral and Management System (MY OH) in December 2021. The system has been implemented across both Council business areas and external Occupational Health customers. The system provides digital platform that allows each referring manager access to own dashboard for their referrals and reports. Employees also provide consent and can view their reports within the system. The system also improves clinical time management.
- 4.1.3 Completed preparation works to safely return the Household Waste Recycling Centres to council management. Developed risk assessments and safe working practices along with implementation plan ready for end March 2022. Also supported return of Assets management activities within Highways.
- 4.1.4 Revised our Wellbeing Strategy now called WellMe to expand on and further develop our excellent wellbeing offer to colleagues. The new strategy has four pillars 1) Physical Health 2) Mental Health 3) Financial Wellbeing and 4) Social Wellbeing which builds on our existing work on Physical and Mental Health. The Strategy has an underpinning framework which ensures that prevention and early intervention is at the heart of all activity. Strategy aims to foster positive behaviours, improved access to advice and signposting, nudging employees towards behaviour change and new habits. The new strategy encourages a personalised journey, allowing colleagues to choose what is right for their wellbeing at the right time for them, promoting personal responsibility.



- 4.1.5 November and December 2021 launched Financial Wellbeing offer to employees. This consists of a new benefits and wellbeing platform “VIVUP” that holds in one place a wide range of lifestyle savings, our payroll offer and support and wellbeing content. The platform also holds a range of cost of living offers to support employees. By March 2021 over 50% of the workforce have accessed and used the support. In addition, we worked with Salary Finance to set up a financial education platform to help make money simple. Platform offered advice and support which has been used by 20% of the workforce. Regular topical guidance and webinars are held to support colleagues including a wealth of information to support cost of living impacts. In addition, this partnership allows our employees to access savings and loans through their pay to help them manage finances effectively.
- 4.1.6 Commenced work towards the end of the year on domestic abuse and loneliness experienced by our people in preparation for work in 2022/23 where we will have a focus on loneliness as part of Mental Health Week and will launch new Domestic Abuse Management Arrangements and supporting plans.
- 4.1.7 Created a series of Wellbeing Webinars which has been very popular. Programmed a wide range of health and wellbeing topics to assist individuals and nudge behaviour change. This will be enhanced further next year with a wider range of webinars, blogs (wellbeing words) and new Yammer groups. Also developed an annual health and wellbeing calendar so have targeted and planned approach to raising awareness and signposting on key topics each month. This proved popular and will be further enhanced next year.
- 4.1.8 New Lone Worker Management System business case was developed, and approach then launch in January 2022. This will see our 1000 plus lone workers have either an

app or device to help improve governance and management of lone working activities and improve our response in emergency situations. To support this, we also revised our Lone Worker Management Arrangements and supporting guidance.

- 4.1.9 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service maintained its diverse training programme to meet the organisation's statutory training needs. Implemented a Net Promoter Score (NPS) from training participant feedback and as of March 2022 achieved a NPS score of 74 which is excellent. 98% of participants also stated that they found the skills helpful in completion of their job role. Mixture of online and in person training was delivered.
- 4.1.10 Held regular meetings with Trade Unions to ensure effective communication and consultation whilst we lifted Covid restrictions and to support new wellbeing strategy development.
- 4.1.11 Maintained and improved management arrangements, guidance, and tools to support line managers.
- 4.1.12 Reviewed and retendered our Physiotherapy wellbeing support and our Occupational Health Doctor Services.
- 4.1.13 Revised all our fire safety training materials and completed an extended programme to refresh premises managers and fire wardens. Working on Fire Safety Awareness module for the Learning Hub to launch next year.
- 4.1.14 During this period 43 School and 4 Core Council audits were undertaken to review their health and safety management arrangements and develop improvement plans. Full audit programme will recommence in 22/23 now that Covid response activities have decreased significantly.
- 4.1.15 Completed 120 (62 in maintained schools) health and safety planning meetings with schools who purchased the Enhanced Service Level Agreement to allow them to identify key risk gaps and develop management plans to improve their health, safety, and wellbeing performance.
- 4.1.16 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service has also responded to and managed several emergency situations and serious incidents during 2020/21.

4.2 Service Level Agreements (SLA)

- 4.2.1 99% of maintained schools purchased the health and safety service during 2021/22 with just 2 schools seeking alternative provision. 62 maintained schools purchased the enhanced service level agreement. The Headteacher briefings have moved online, this has had a positive impact on attendance with between 100-150 delegates per session. Headteachers have indicated that these briefings help them to understand their accountabilities and develop further their learning and skills to manage health, safety, and wellbeing effectively in school environments. WellMe wellbeing approach is being rolled out as part of our SLA to Schools in 2022/23.

4.3 Improving the Health of the Workforce

- 4.3.1 Absences decreased significantly during 2020/21 as a result of ongoing impact of Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions. Therefore, a more accurate comparison of the impact of absence in 2021/22 is achieved by comparing to the levels in 2019/20.
- 4.3.2 Comparing 2019/20 to 2021/22 shows a 3% increase in overall sickness absence, from 11.80 to 12.14 days per person. If we excluding Covid-19 absences from this, we see a 10% reduction in absence levels.
- 4.3.3 Musculoskeletal skeletal absences are 5% higher than in 2019/20, and psychological absences are 14% higher, but given the reduction in absences logged as 'Other' or just left blank (2.89 days to 1.33 days) it is likely that these increases are a result of improved recording.
- 4.3.4 At 31st March 2022, absence within core county council is now at 12.13 days per employee which is an increase of 29% from last year. This level of absence is higher than the national average for local government which was benchmarked in 2020 at 8.0 days. Suspected/confirmed cases of Covid-19 accounted for 1.56 days, but the leading causes of absence remain psychological ill health and musculoskeletal conditions.



- 4.3.5 Between 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, 363 employees had been referred to the physiotherapy service to prevent absence and where they are absent to support early return to work. We improved the exercise treatment plans and introduced follow up telephone appointments to support employees. The service continued to receive excellent feedback from employees.

- 4.3.6 Between 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, 338 employees had been referred to ThinkWell. The clinical assessment scores clearly show that colleagues have benefited from the services they received. Manager and colleague feedback remain extremely positive.
- 4.3.7 Colleagues supported by ThinkWell showed after treatment a 94% improvement/recovery. 96% of colleagues accessing the service described the support as helpful or extremely helpful and would recommend it to other colleagues. 78% received triage within 48 hours and 97% within a week. The average time to first session was 8 days. 55% of the referrals received were preventative (colleagues in work) and of these 86% remain in work during the support.
- 4.3.8 MindKind self help support materials remain well used by colleagues and significant additional materials have been created and added to the offer to help support employees. Engagement levels have been very positive, and feedback received to date is that managers and colleagues are finding the training and MindKind information and toolkits extremely valuable.
- 4.3.9 Occupational Health received 1342 referrals showing an increase from previous year. 607 (increase from 553 in the previous year) of the referrals were from Core Council Services, 289 from maintained schools and remaining from other customers. The People Services continues to work with managers to ensure early referral to Occupational Health. New guidance and support materials to assist managers in getting the most from their referrals have been developed and launched. New clinical arrangements have been implemented to improve service delivery which includes case reviews and regular meetings with People Service colleagues.
- 4.3.10 Flu vaccination was offered to colleagues in line with the Public Health and NHS flu vaccination campaign. Vaccination is an essential part of the overall infection prevention and control arrangements. 765 vouchers were supplied to core council colleagues and over 1000 to school colleagues.

4.4 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

- 4.4.1 The council has agreed a range of key performance indicators for health and safety against which the council can monitor progress and performance. The outcomes of these are detailed in Appendix 1 and are benchmarked against previous years. These key performance indicators demonstrate that the council is maintaining performance and key actions are being undertaken by managers in the workplace. It is important that the council continues to monitor these indicators to identify further scope for improvement and to maintain the gains already made. The year 2020/21 must also be seen slightly separate from other years as Covid has impacted on performance indicators. Therefore, we will continue to monitor key performance indicators over a 4-year timeframe.
- 4.4.2 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service is contacting all maintained schools who have not confirmed that they have reviewed their fire risk assessment (82% confirmed reviewed Fire Risk Assessment) to ensure that they understand the importance of having an effective and adequate fire risk assessment in place and to offer support where required.

5. Health and Safety Audit and Evaluation Process

5.1 Outcomes of Internal Health and Safety Audits

5.1.1 During 2020/22 47 health and safety audits were completed by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.

5.1.2 The outcome of these audits identifies the operating maturity level of the service/establishment audited. The frequency at which the service/establishment will be re-audited is based on the level of maturity achieved. This allows investment of resources where most benefit may be achieved. The management information from these audits demonstrates high levels of schools and council service both maintaining and improving audit maturity scores.

5.1.3 Management standards surveys within core county and self-assessments in schools are part of the audit and evaluation process and provide management teams with an opportunity to reflect on their health and safety management against set standards. Good response levels were achieved from this year's assessments. 82% from maintained schools, 100% completion by EIS, Corporate Services and H&C and 67% completion by C&F. The C&F transformation impacted on managers ability to complete the assessments and the HSW Service will work with the business area to improve performance in 2022/23.

6. Accident and Incident Data

6.1 Accidents and Violence Statistics

6.1.1 Appendix 1 details our key performance data for incidents reported. Accidents and violent incident levels in SCC and schools have increased compared with last year but this must be seen in context of the impact of Covid-19 on ways of working both for council services and maintained schools' activities.

6.1.2 RIDDOR reportable incidents have also increased in line with total number of incidents. However, they remain inline with 2019/20 performance.

6.1.3 As schools convert to academies the profile of incidents will keep changing.

7. Health and Safety Investigations

7.1 The Health and Safety Advisors have continued to investigate the more serious accidents and encourage Operational Managers to investigate all accidents. This approach is monitored and chased within the My Health and Safety system. Managers have been encouraged to establish both the immediate and root cause of accidents to manage the potential for reoccurrence.

7.2 There have been several accidents and incidents in schools and core council activities which could have had more serious outcomes. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service has investigated these incidents and helped the services and schools implement improved control measures.

- 7.3 The HSE has requested information and investigation reports on some of the RIDDOR reportable accidents, and no further action has been taken as they have been satisfied with our investigations.
- 7.5 In October 2019 we had a significant incident in which a member of the public was fatally injured by a tree falling on the Isabel Trail. HSE prosecution action was taken against the council for failure under Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. A fine of £300,000 and £13,164 in legal costs was received following an early guilty plea. Learning from this incident has been taken forward by Highways Service. A working group has been established to consider the development of a Tree Strategy for the council and the HSW Service has taken the lead on development.
- 7.6 In April 2012 the HSE launched “Fee for Intervention”. 2021/22 has seen fee for intervention costs received by the council in relation to the HSE investigation for the Isabel Trail incident these concluded in Dec 2021.

8. Joint Consultation

- 8.1 The council has held health and safety committees and forums in accordance with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Consultation forum meetings are planned for 2022/23.

9. Occupational Health Unit (OHU)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Ill Health Referrals	1120	1156	951	898	1342
Ill Health Retirement Requests	22	27	19	18	17
Ill Health Retirements Approved	20	13	12	11	7

- 9.1 Occupational Health management referrals have increased significantly in line with increased absence levels compared to last year. Nearly half of the 607 referrals being from the Core Council and 289 from maintained schools the rest are from other customers.
- 9.2 The number of ill-health retirements being granted (meeting the qualifying criteria) is lower than average this year.

10. Liability Claims

- 10.1 There have been no significant developments in terms of claim numbers, although early indication is that claim frequency for policy year 2019 is declining. It should be noted that claimants have up to 3 years after the accident within which to claim.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
No. of Claims Occurred	55	37	31	24	9	16	11
Estimated Cost of payments	£773,377	£342,868	£182,851	£113,156	£64,905	£136,790	£86,159

10.2 Background Information on Claims / Legal Developments

Estimated Cost of Payments includes reserves. This represents insurers “best estimate” of final settlement.

10.3 While claimants generally have 3 years post incident to pursue a claim without an action becoming statute barred (3 years after 18th birthday in the case of minors). As a result of the Jackson reforms the indications are that claims are being submitted more quickly.

11. New Legislation & Key Topics for 2022/23

11.1 HSE will carry out a programme of inspections in schools from September 2022 onwards. These inspections will be assessing how schools are managing the risks from asbestos within the school estate and meeting the duty to manage requirements under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

11.2 HSE during 2023 will have a programme of inspection of waste and recycling sector sites and have provided guidance on the key areas of focus.

11.3 HSE will have a campaign during 2022/23 focussing on reducing work related ill health with a specific focus on mental health and stress. This is to help businesses learn to tackle and reverse the increasing trend of ill health related to stress, anxiety and depression.

11.4 In April 2022 government remove all Covid 19 restrictions and need for a dedicated risk assessment. However, the HSE ventilation guidance remains in place.

11.5 Fire Safety Regulations will be updated in 2022 to implement findings from Grenfell Tower investigations. This will place new duties under the Fire safety Order.

12. Key Actions for 2022/23

12.1 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service will have the following key priorities during this period.

Supporting Covid-19 - Living with Covid

- Implementation and embedding Living with Covid-19, ensuring all guidance and response and recovery activities completed in line with H&S legislation and best practice guidance.
- Support safe transition of Local Outbreak Education and Early Years Cell to Public Health for ongoing support.

- Provide technical support from HSW & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) perspective to Public Health.
- Support Premises Managers with Living with Lockdown response and recovery.
- Ongoing management of Emergency PPE until July 2022 and then implementation of 28-day stock and Emergency PPE close down.
- Support any public enquiry requests.
- Maintain effective consultation with Trade Unions on the council's response and recovery arrangements.
- Maintain Occupational Health knowledge on Long Covid and implementing effective management responses and support.

Business Change Support

- Ensure effective implementation of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing management arrangements across Waste Services and set up a programme of health surveillance for employees. Completing annual inspection programme and investigations.
- Support change in CDM Management for Highways with the return of asset management services.
- Support Families and Communities to maximise wellbeing support across transformation areas to improve outcomes.
- Work with other business areas on the significant levels of upcoming change and transformation activities.

Project Development Activities

- Manage the Entrust SDA changes and impact on HSW Service design and delivery. Developing contingency plans to minimise potential impact of any change in management of traded activities; whilst reviewing growth opportunities to offset any impact on traded services.
- Embed the new Lone Worker Management System to maximise support and engagement.
- Launch new domestic abuse management arrangements, network of champions, and implement support plan.
- Develop a Tree Management Strategy to support effective tree planting and ongoing tree management and maintenance.
- Research new digital approach to the management of DSE and ergonomic assessments to better support SMART Working.
- Complete procurement review of Display Screen Equipment eyesight voucher scheme.
- Launch WellMe, Financial Wellbeing and Vivup to Schools and Vivup elements to foster carers and Commissioned Services/volunteers.

- Occupational Health to support complex case review process with People Services in line with refreshed People Policy roll out.
- Work with Occupational Health to improve perception of service and look for improvement opportunities.
- Revised customer survey and service insight data collection to maximise outcomes and identify areas for improvement.
- Complete benchmarking data exercise for H&S Incident data national/regional.

Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce

- Embed and promote the WellMe strategy and build on current performance.
- Embed Financial Wellbeing engagement and learning
- Implement the 2022/23 health and wellbeing calendar supported by webinars and other engagement activities.
- Support the social care commissioned workforce health and wellbeing through the Workforce Capacity Grant funding.
- Enhance Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) skills through provision of refresher training and CPD.
- Work with Principal Social Worker to deliver Looking After Yourself in Professional Practice Resilience Training.
- Develop working with cancer wellbeing offering and support tools.
- Implement group bereavement sessions building on the pilot study.

Maintain Business as Usual Activities

- Maintain business as usual support for the council and traded school customers.
- Review and resume H&S Audit Program focusing on high-risk services following halt due to pandemic.
- Complete a campaign of getting back to the basics of H&S to ensure Managers and Employees following H&S standards, balancing the back from the Covid-19 response and recovery efforts.
- Respond to and investigate accident and incidents to ensure effective learning taken forward.
- Complete and ensure effective implementation of actions for ongoing investigations.
- Review HSW arrangements to ensure they support SMART working and new ways working across the business.
- Maintain an effective health, safety, and wellbeing training programme.

- Maintain health, safety and wellbeing Management Arrangements and Guidance Documents in line with best practice and legislation.

Stakeholder and Network Engagement

- Maintain strong positive relationships with all health, safety and wellbeing stakeholders and maximising the benefits from professional networks.
- Maintain effective relationships with enforcement bodies and demonstrate our organisational commitment to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce and protecting the public in the delivery of our services.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 This report provides an indication that health and safety performance was maintained and continued to be managed whilst also responding to the risks and challenges that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic presented. Good progress was made in development and projects whilst resources for activities such as audits remained impacted.
- 13.2 The work completed during 2022/23 will continue to focus on post Covid-19 recovery, and colleague wellbeing.
- 13.3 Learning from the serious incident at the Isabel Trail has been taken forward into Highway maintenance planning and practice. A wider council Tree Strategy is being developed.

14. Contacts

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Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators

	Indicator	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
1.	Number of Incidents by Type	<p>SCC – Accidents 398 of which 120 were to employees SCC - Near Miss 28 SCC – Environmental 5 SCC - Road Traffic 12</p> <p>Schools - Accidents 1237 of which 347 were employees School - Near Miss 4 School – Environmental 10 School Road Traffic 3</p>	<p>SCC – Accidents 404 of which 116 were to employees SCC - Near Miss 35 SCC – Environmental 3 SCC - Road Traffic 15</p> <p>Schools - Accidents 762 of which 228 were employees School - Near Miss 14 School – Environmental 0 School Road Traffic 3</p>	<p>SCC – Accidents 272 of which 57 were to employees SCC - Near Miss 5 SCC – Environmental 1 SCC - Road Traffic 2</p> <p>Schools - Accidents 448 of which 145 were employees School - Near Miss 8 School – Environmental 1 School Road Traffic 1</p>	<p>SCC – Accidents 300 of which 87 were to employees SCC - Near Miss 20 SCC Disease 3 SCC – Environmental 0 SCC - Road Traffic 9</p> <p>Schools - Accidents 857 of which 238 were employees School - Near Miss 22 School – Environmental 2 School Road Traffic 2</p>
2.	Violence and Aggression	<p>SCC total violence 333 which 230 were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence 329 of which 243 were towards employees.</p>	<p>SCC total violence 500 which 243 were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence 268 of which 201 were towards employees.</p>	<p>SCC total violence 329 which 172 were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence 73 of which 59 were towards employees.</p>	<p>SCC total violence 389 which 235 were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence 205 of which 167 were towards employees</p>
3.	Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents	<p>SCC 5 Schools 35 Total 40</p>	<p>SCC 13 Schools 25 Total 38</p>	<p>SCC 8 Schools 15 Total 23</p>	<p>SCC 15 Schools 19 Total 34</p>
4.	Number of Civil Claims (Excluding highways)	24	9	16	11
5.	Cost of Liability Claims	£113,156	£64,905	£136,790	£86,159
6.	% Of Management Standards surveys returned by corporate services and Self Audits completed by schools	<p>Schools 90% Families & Communities 70% Economy, Infrastructure & Skills 100% Corporate Services 74% Health & Care 100%</p>	<p>Schools 78% SCC Not completed due to COVID-19 Resources</p>	<p>Schools 79% SCC Not completed due to COVID-19 Resources</p>	<p>Schools 82% Families & Communities 67% Economy, Infrastructure & Skills 100% Corporate Services 100% Health & Care 100%</p>

7.	% Of Internal Health and Safety Audits completed to programme	Schools 96% SCC 100%	Schools 74% SCC 50% Impacted by Covid -19	Audit Programme Suspended due to Covid -19. 16 schools and 1 core council audit were completed provide support – remote auditing approach was designed towards the end of the year to assist continued auditing.	Reduced audit programme. 47 audits completed to plan with the resources available due to Covid support continuing during 2021/22. Over 20 schools cancelled their planned audit at short notice due to staffing issues. 13 cancelled in core council due to C&F Transformation and Covid impacts.
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Council Incidents by Service Area

	Accidents	Near Miss	Road Traffic	Environmental	Violence and Aggression	Disease
Council Overall	300	20	9	0	389	3
Families & Communities	145	12	7	0	319	2
Health & Care	132	4	1	0	68	1
Economy Infrastructure & Skills	15	1	1	0	0	0
Corporate Services	8	3	0	0	2	0

Schools Overview

	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Special	PRU	Totals
Accident	603	31	141	48	34	857
Near miss	9	1	6	0	6	22
Environmental	0	0	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Collision	0	0	2	0	0	2
Violence and Aggression	128	4	7	33	33	205