

**Staffordshire County Council**  
**Annual Report on Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance 2019/20**

**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 2020/21 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. 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 2019/20 and identifies key priorities for 2020/21.

**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 2019/20 to improve Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements**

##### **Key Successes**

- 4..1 Embedded MindKind campaign to improve awareness and skills to support mental wellbeing. Created a network of over 150 Mental Health First Aiders across the council to support colleagues, improve mental health awareness and reduce stigma. Completed 2-year training programme of mental health awareness for managers and colleagues. Also launched a digital online e-learning package in March 2020 to ensure we could maintain impact during response to Covid-19 and lack of face to face delivery.
- 4..2 Launched Wellbeing Action Plans for use by colleagues to support them to develop their own wellbeing plan and take proactive steps towards managing their mental health. The Wellbeing Action Plan reminds colleagues what they need to do to stay well and what those around them can do to support them. It helps them to develop an awareness of the impact of situations they find difficult and how they respond to them. Colleagues can use the plan to help them talk to others about what they can do to support.
- 4..3 Designed menopause awareness training which was ready for launch digitally in 2020/21. The approach will see us raise awareness across managers and colleagues as well as build a network of colleagues that can deliver Peer to Peer workshops on menopause allowing us to maintain skill development and support colleagues.
- 4..4 Fire Officer has completed review of all Fire Safety systems and approaches and developed memorandum of understanding with the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. Fire Officer has completed review of all high risk and some medium risk premises to ensure suitable on-site arrangements are in place as well as completing a review of the existing Fire Risk Assessment. The site visits also involved coaching and support to Premises Managers, to enhance their skills and knowledge. We have also worked with Strategic Property to ensure the compartmentation in the premises

is to standard and has been reviewed. Fire Risk assessment reviews inform premise planned maintenance works to ensure any actions identified are completed in order of risk priority. Fire Safety Strategy meeting held to discuss findings and determine priority use of the resources. Second year programme of this temporary resource is expected to be impacted by Covid-19. Resource also used to support fire risk assessments needed as part of the councils Covid Response activities.

- 4..5 Launched ACT Terrorism e-learning training across core council premise managers and other staff with key roles to enhance knowledge and skills. This was also launched across the Staffordshire schools and early years settings. Briefings held for school leaders supported them to manage lockdown/security alert procedures and effectively test arrangements. SCC premise managers completed test of local arrangements.
- 4..6 Retendered ThinkWell Service and implemented new arrangements from the ThinkWell review with returning and new providers. Smooth transition completed and performance of the service has remained in line with previous years.
- 4..7 Reviewed with ICT their Construction Design and Management duties and supported improvements to activities to improve compliance.
- 4..8 Maintained and improved management arrangements, guidance and tools to support line managers. This included significant work on supporting managers on Covid 19 health and safety standards and guidance. Including template risk assessments and Infection control/social distancing guidance.
- 4..9 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service maintained its diverse training programme to meet the organisation's statutory training needs. Participant feedback remains very positive with 97% of attendees confirming that they found the content valuable and confirming that it will assist them to understand and fulfil their health and safety responsibilities. Worked with Learning and Development to improve the HSW materials available on the council's digital platform. Used a range of webinars to support briefing of Covid 19 management standards to premise managers and educational setting leaders.
- 4..10 Completed the research and soft market testing to implement a revised Lone Worker monitoring system. Implementation has been delayed due to the impact on resources to implement whilst responding to Covid-19.
- 4..11 Developed a business case on financial wellbeing which is being reviewed by finance colleagues to understand any potential risks or liabilities to the council. Looking for implementation once have sufficient HSW Service resource released from Covid-19 response.
- 4..12 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service continued to deliver valued, effective and respected wellbeing interventions. Feedback from employees accessing the services and referring line managers was that the services were valuable and beneficial in supporting employee health and wellbeing. Levels of referrals to wellbeing services have remained consistent with last year. Health, Safety and Wellbeing continues to work with providers to ensure value for money and an approach to delivery which incorporates organisational learning.

- 4..13 Completed 71 School and 5 Core Council audits of services to review their health and safety management arrangements and develop improvement plans. 26 school and 5 core council audits and had to be postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- 4..14 Completed 52 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. 31 postponed by settings due to Covid-19.
- 4..15 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service played a major role in the response and recovery arrangements undertaken by the Council to manage and recover from the impacts of Covid-19. From February Half Term 2020 dealing with the initial impacts of COVID-19 in schools and had key roles in the Incident Management Team that was set up on 3<sup>rd</sup> March to plan effectively for the impact of Covid-19 and to respond and manage the impacts on our business,, adult social care, vulnerable persons within the community, schools and wider community activities.
- 4..16 HSW Team set up and continue to manage the council's emergency PPE response ensuring that frontline roles across Staffordshire has access to the right PPE at the levels required in line with national guidance. This involved setting up with procurement colleagues a dedicated supply chain, ensuring the correct technical specification of PPE was ordered and distributed, and maintaining and gathering a significant supply of PPE to meet the demand through a period of national shortage.
- 4..17 Undertook the response and undertook the health and safety management planning to resolve the issues with mould within the ground floor of Castle House working with national experts and strategic property to manage the health and safety implications, specification for remedial actions and overseeing the monitoring arrangements.
- 4..18 Supported Civil Contingency situations which included; COVID Response and Recovery, Castle House, Burton Floods, Wild Fires and Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) sites within Staffordshire.
- 4..19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service has also responded to and managed several emergency situations and serious incidents during 2019/20.
- 4..20 The following projects have been delayed due to the impact on resource due to Covid -19.
- New Occupational Health System
  - Lone Worker Monitoring System
  - Financial Wellbeing
  - Thrive Accreditation

## **4.2 Service Level Agreements (SLA)**

- 4.2.1 99% of maintained schools purchased the health and safety service during 2019/20 with just 2 schools seeking alternative provision. 83 maintained schools purchased the enhanced service level agreement. The Headteacher briefings were well attended and feedback was excellent. 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.

### **4.3 Improving the Health of the Workforce**

- 4.3.1 Absence within core county council is now at 12.1 days per employee which is an increase of 1.3% from last year. Absence data no longer includes schools' data following SAP replacement. This level of absence is higher than the national average for local government which was benchmarked in 2019 at 9.8 days. The leading causes of absence remain psychological ill health and musculoskeletal conditions. We have seen a 10% increase in musculoskeletal conditions and a 7% increase in psychological ill health. These two absences reasons are the leading causes across local government and the national trend within both private and public sector shows an increasing psychological absence. Managers continue to use referrals to wellbeing service to assist in the prevention and management of absence.
- 4.3.2 Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, 472 employees had been referred to the physiotherapy service to prevent absence and where they are absent to support early return to work. This is a slight increase from the previous year.
- 4.3.3 Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, 389 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 remains extremely positive. This is a slight increase from the previous year,
- 4.3.4 Colleagues supported by ThinkWell showed after treatment a 96% improvement/recovery. 99% of colleagues accessing the service described the support as helpful or extremely helpful and would recommend it to other colleagues. 92% of colleagues accessing the service believed it assists them to remain in work/return to work. 73% received triage within 48 hours and 99% within a week. The average time to first session was 9 days. 48% of the referrals received were preventative (colleagues in work) and of these 89% remain in work during the support provided.
- 4.3.5 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. This includes a range of wellbeing apps and access to digital learning. 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.
- 4.3.6 Occupational Health received 951 referrals a decrease from 1156 in the previous year some of which will be due to the impact of Covid in March 2019 The HR Team continues to work with managers to ensure early referral to Occupational Health. Early advice and support can help maintain colleagues in work and support a quicker and more successful return to work.
- 4.3.7 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. 276 vouchers were supplied to frontline workers in core council and to over 900 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.
- 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 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 2019/20 76 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 Within core county management standards self assessments 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. This year these were not completed as they are sent out in March each year and in 2020 it was important that managers time and resources were directed at managing Covid-19 and implementing their Business Continuity Plans effectively.

### **6. Accident and Incident Data**

#### **6.1 Accidents and Violence Statistics**

- 6.1.1 This year's report shows the first review against our benchmark data due to the launch of the My Health and Safety Incident Reporting System in March 2018. Last year's data is the only comparison as previous years information does not always allow direct comparison.
- 6.1.2 This report shows second full year of data from incident reports into the new system. The system is in place across both council services and schools. The system improves reporting and data capture and allows managers/users to monitor trends and detail investigation findings.

6.1.3 Appendix 1 details our key performance data for incidents reported. Accident levels in SCC remain constant with last year whilst accidents in schools have decreased significantly. Violence towards SCC employees has also remained consistent whilst improved reporting of incidents between service users show a clear increase. Violence in schools has seen a small decrease. RIDDOR reportable incidents overall have decreased. Schools have found the system to be very effective way to record and manage incidents. There has been improved real time reporting of incidents. The ability to report by remote form into the system has been very useful to frontline services. The system has improved visibility of incidents and local management allowing better advice, guidance and governance by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.

6.1.4 As schools convert to academies the profile of incidents is 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. Which 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.

7.4 HSE in October 2019 commenced investigation into a finger trap accident at a maintained school which identified failings in their management arrangements. This resulted in an action plan being agreed for the school and the council received in March 2020 a notice of contravention letter due to the school's failure. A response was developed to the HSE outline as the employer how we would share learning from the incident and complete a governance review with all settings. This was accepted and the case was closed by the HSE.

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. This incident remains under investigation by the HSE and the council has co-operated fully with all requests for information, documentation and statements. Our own internal investigation is also ongoing working with all relevant stakeholders. An action plan based around the findings has been developed and work to implement improvements remains ongoing.

7.6 In April 2012 the HSE launched "Fee for Intervention". This year has seen the first fee for intervention costs received by the council in relation to the HSE investigation for the Isabel Trail investigation.

## 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 2019/20. Union and staff views are sought on management arrangements and health, safety and wellbeing initiatives. The Unions supported working groups on new initiatives held during 2019/20. From March 2020 regular Covid-19 briefings set up weekly to support consultation from as soon as response activities commenced.

## 9. Occupational Health Unit (OHU)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Ill Health Referrals	1239	1120	1156	951
Ill Health Retirement Requests	25	22	27	19
Ill Health Retirements Approved	10	20	13	12

- 9.1 Occupational Health management referrals have increased slightly compared to last year.
- 9.2 The number of ill-health retirements being granted (meeting the qualifying criteria) has remains consistent with previous years.

## 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
No. of Claims Occurred	55	37	31	24	9
Estimated Cost of payments	£773,377	£342,868	£182,851	£113,156	£64,905

### 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 2020/21

- 11.1 The Helping Great Britain Work Well initiative was drawn up in 2017, and its policies will really start to take effect of the coming years. While HSE will still enforce all current safety legislation, their onus will be on improving organisational responsibility.



11.2 HSE focus for 2020 changed based on the pandemic of Covid 19. HSE are helping ensure effective guidance and input into government Covid-19 response arrangements and PPE standards. RIDDOR regulations amended to incorporate Covid-19 into the dangerous occurrences and reportable diseases in certain circumstances. HSE inspection of Covid secure workplaces and responding to complaints and concerns will be come a key focus. Work around some impacts of Brexit on H&S legislation are also expected.

## **12. Key Actions for 2020/21**

12.1 Due to Covid-19 20/21 the activities of the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service will have a different focus.

### **Supporting the Leadership and Management of the Incident Management Team Response and Recovery**

- The Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing will continue to be one of the two IMT chairs managing and leading the response and supporting the Director of Public Health and SLT Gold.
- Managing advice and guidance to employees and all education and early year settings on effective Covid secure arrangements and implementation of infection prevention and control arrangements.
- Act as the organisations lead on PPE arrangements for COVID-19 for the county and our Local Resilience Forum accountabilities.
- Manage and oversee the effective provision of emergency PPE to all frontline services, adult and children social care, unpaid carers and education and early years settings.
- Complete and support the development of risk assessments, training and other health and safety activity to ensure health and safety of all response and recovery activities.
- Oversee effective implementation of Covid Secure arrangements to all SCC workplaces and support the wider and full opening of education and early years settings to Covid standards across Staffordshire.
- Work with project cells to support effective health and safety management.
- Maintain effective consultation with Trade Unions on the council's response and recovery arrangements and on guidance development and deployment.
- Support recovery activities and business areas to implement effective recovery plans that ensure effective health safety and wellbeing.

### **Local Outbreak Control Management**

- Take the Lead on the management of Local Outbreak Control for the council workplaces and for the Education and Early Year settings.
- Complete all local out break control arrangements within the above settings to ensure appropriate response and management to suspect, positive and outbreaks as needed.
- Complete risk assessments inline with Standard Operating Procedures on positive cases and outbreaks

- Lead local setting Incident Management Meetings as needed to ensure effective management of any outbreaks.
- Ensure effective guidance and support is provided to these settings.
- Complete Covid secure site inspections as needed and investigations as required.
- Maintain effective engagement and consultation with setting leadership and Trade Unions.

### **Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce**

- Promote effective access to the council's current wellbeing offer and amend materials to suit during Covid response and increased home working.
- Amend and develop statutory training to work via digital delivery arrangements.
- Update guidance on home working to support and protect the workforce.
- Flex face to face wellbeing support to work during the pandemic to continue to support health and wellbeing.
- Take the research on financial wellbeing and develop a business case for consideration.

### **Maintain Business as Usual Activities**

- Maintain as much business as usual support for the council and traded school customers possible given Covid priority activities.
- Take forward projects based on resource availability with Lone Worker Management and Financial Wellbeing being priority the key priority developments.
- Respond to and investigate accident and incidents to ensure effective learning taken forward.
- Complete and ensure effective implementation of actions for ongoing investigations.
- Maintain an effective health, safety and wellbeing training programme.

### **Stakeholder and Network Engagement**

- Building strong positive relationships with all health, safety and wellbeing stakeholders and maximising the benefits from our 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 public in delivery of our services.

## **13. Conclusion**

- 13.1 This report provides an indication that health and safety performance has continued to improve in the last twelve months. However there remains room for growth and the council still had to reactively manage several incidents. The pandemic impacted on the last month of the year and delayed resources to take some actions forward.
- 13.2 The work completed during 2020/21 will very much be dependent on the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the council and the council's delivery of effective response and recovery arrangements.

## **14. Contacts**

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## Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators

	Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1.	Number of Incidents by Type	<p><b>SCC</b> Accidents <b>333</b> of which <b>103</b> were accidents to employees  <b>Schools</b> Accidents <b>765</b> of which <b>156</b> were employee accidents</p> <p>Overall Total <b>1098</b></p>	<p><b>SCC</b> – Accidents <b>398</b> of which <b>120</b> were to employees  SCC - Near Miss <b>28</b>  SCC – Environmental <b>5</b>  SCC - Road Traffic <b>12</b></p> <p><b>Schools</b> - Accidents <b>1237</b> of which <b>347</b> were employees  School - Near Miss <b>4</b>  School – Environmental <b>10</b>  School Road Traffic <b>3</b></p>	<p><b>SCC</b> – Accidents <b>404</b> of which <b>116</b> were to employees  SCC - Near Miss <b>35</b>  SCC – Environmental <b>3</b>  SCC - Road Traffic <b>15</b></p> <p><b>Schools</b> - Accidents <b>762</b> of which <b>228</b> were employees  School - Near Miss <b>14</b>  School – Environmental <b>0</b>  School Road Traffic <b>3</b></p>
2.	Violence and Aggression	<p>SCC total violence <b>456</b> of which <b>341</b> were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence <b>49</b> of which <b>36</b> were towards employees.</p>	<p>SCC total violence <b>333</b> which <b>230</b> were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence <b>329</b> of which <b>243</b> were towards employees.</p>	<p>SCC total violence <b>500</b> which <b>243</b> were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence <b>268</b> of which <b>201</b> were towards employees.</p>
3.	Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents	<p>SCC <b>4</b>  Schools <b>30</b>  Total <b>34</b></p>	<p>SCC <b>5</b>  Schools <b>35</b>  Total <b>40</b></p>	<p>SCC <b>13</b>  Schools <b>25</b>  Total <b>38</b></p>
4.	Number of Civil Claims (excluding highways)	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>
5.	Cost of Liability Claims	<b>£182,851</b>	<b>£113,156</b>	£64,905
6.	% of Premises with a Fire Risk Assessment completed/reviewed within last 12 months.	Schools 98% Core Council 100%	Schools 96% Core Council 92%	Schools 78% Core Council 100%
7.	% of Management Standards surveys returned by corporate services and Self Audits completed by schools	Schools <b>83 %</b> Families & Communities <b>81%</b> Economy, Infrastructure & Skills <b>100%</b> Strategy, Governance & Change <b>100%</b> Finance and Resources <b>50%</b> Health & Care <b>80%</b>	Schools <b>90%</b> Families & Communities <b>70%</b> Economy, Infrastructure & Skills <b>100%</b> Corporate Services <b>74%</b> Health & Care <b>100%</b>	Schools <b>78%</b> Not completed due to COVID-19 Resources
8.	% of Internal Health and Safety Audits completed to programme	Schools 100% SCC 100%	Schools <b>96%</b> SCC 100%	Schools 74% SCC 50% Impacted by Covid -19

### Council Incidents by Service Area

	Accidents	Near Miss	Road Traffic	Environmental	Violence and Aggression
<b>Council Overall</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>500</b>
Families & Communities	210	22	9	2	340
Health & Care	166	7	4	0	158
Economy Infrastructure & Skills	16	6	2	0	0
Corporate Services	12	0	0	1	2

### Schools Overview

	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Special	PRU	Totals
Accident	500	35	159	19	49	762
Near miss	8	0	4	0	14	14
Environmental	0	0	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Collision	0	0	1	0	3	3
Violence and Aggression	120	2	21	40	85	268