Staffordshire County Council

Annual Report on Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance 2020/21

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 2021/22 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 2020 to 31st March 2021. 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 2020/21 and identifies key priorities for 2021/22.

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 2020/21 to improve Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements

Key Successes

4..1   The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service took a lead role during Covid Response supporting core council services and commissioned services to continue to deliver for the residents of Staffordshire. Below is an overview of the key activities provided by the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service:

- Provided Covid IMT support in form of IMT Chair support during the planning and initial response stage.
- Set up the council's emergency PPE provision and arranged and managed the logistics and effective provision of over 6 million items being distributed by end March 2021. Worked with council services and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to set up network of locations for the collection of PPE. Worked with procurement colleagues to identify and purchase the correct standards of PPE which were in high demand.
- Managed the Local Resilience Forum PPE stock and managed all Central government PPE deliveries including distribution across multiagency partnership.
- Provided the technical advice and managed the numerous changes in PPE standards to ensure effective advice and guidance to frontline care services, council activities, businesses, and schools.
- Undertook instructor training to enable the Health and Safety Advisors to support the delivery of Face Fit Testing to care workers and NHS Staff that needed to wear specialist FFP3 masks to support aerosol generating procedures.
- Developed and maintained, inline with changing government advice, the council and school's health and safety management arrangements and supporting documents to ensure effective management of Covid risks. This included template risk assessment, advice on protecting colleagues that needed to shield and were at higher risk. Set up new Covid absence reporting arrangements.

- Delivered numerous webinars to Premises Managers, Care Sector & Headteachers around Covid management to support these key essential sectors.
- Maintained effective Duty officer coverage to support higher levels of requests for support to meet the need for health and safety advice and support across council businesses and schools.
- Designed our approach to Covid Secure Workplaces and worked with Premises Managers to develop a network of 152 Premises with Covid Secure Risk Assessments and Certification.
- Completed Covid Inspections of key workplace locations and schools to support Premise Managers and school leaders to improve standards of Covid compliance.
- Improved cleaning and infection control arrangements and supported Strategic Property with the new approaches to enhanced cleaning infection prevention standards.
- Designed and implemented lifting of lockdown arrangements and guidance to support recovery arrangements.
- HSW Service took accountability to support, operate and manage the Local Outbreak Cell for Education, Early Years and Childrens Residential Settings. This involved supporting over 2500 settings across Staffordshire from June 2020. This cell has managed significant numbers of outbreaks and helped to manage and reduce the impact of Covid on staff and pupils throughout pandemic. The cell has responded to the various waves and impacts of Variants of Concern. On average the cell had over 200 open incidents at any time often managing during the peak 400 plus open incidents. HSW service also completed this activity for SCC Local Outbreak Incidents.
- Provided input or chaired the Covid Trade Union meetings to ensure effective engagement and consultation throughout Covid Response and Recovery activities so that Green Book and Education Trade Unions were informed and engaged.
- Developed our management arrangements around the initial roll out of vaccinations in line with the government's delivery plan. Also developed the councils lateral flow testing management arrangements to support local testing and encourage our workforce's engagement in lateral flow testing. Maintained these documents and supporting FAQ as the approach and national advice changed.

4..2   Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service improved communication around the existing wellbeing offer to colleagues. Developed webinars on wellbeing and launched new products to support new ways of working during Covid, and to encourage colleagues to look after their physical and mental health. For example, launching free exercise online with Instructor Live.

4..3   Created digital delivery for all our mental health one day and half day courses to allow effective access to mental health training to continue. Worked with our Mental Health First Aiders to enable them to support colleagues in a digital manner from the first lockdown.

4..4   Continued to deliver current wellbeing offer adapting approach to ensure support through lockdown and reflect changes to working arrangements.

4..5   Delivered Menopause Awareness webinars for managers and colleagues improving awareness, building knowledge and reducing the taboo. Improved content on the Staffs Space pages on menopause awareness.

4..6   The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service maintained its diverse training programme to meet the organisation's statutory training needs. Converted all HSW training that could be delivered digitally into online training materials and upskilled H&S Advisor online training skills. Maintained 97% of delegates confirming that they found the content valuable and confirming that it will assist them to understand and fulfil their health and safety responsibilities. Face to face delivery was undertaken for essential training needs at reduced capacity and with additional control measures.

4..7   Implemented additional regular meetings with Trade Unions to ensure effective communication and consultation throughout impact of Covid-19 was maintained.

4..8   Maintained and improved management arrangements, guidance and tools to support line managers.

4..9   During Covid only limited Health and Safety Audits were completed whilst health and safety advisor resources were redirected toward Covid Response activities. However, some key audits continued and therefore 16 School and 1 Core Council audit were undertaken 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. These have been replanned.

4..10   Completed 173 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..11   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 2020/21 with just 2 schools seeking alternative provision. 69 maintained schools purchased the enhanced service level agreement. The Headteacher briefings have moved online and this has had a positive impact on attendance with between 100-150 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.

4.3   Improving the Health of the Workforce

4.3.1   At 31st March 2021, absence within core county council is now at 9.44 days per employee which is a reduction of 20% from last year. This level of absence is higher than the national average for local government which was benchmarked in 2019 at 8.4 days. Suspected/confirmed cases of Covid-19 accounted for 1.08 days, but the leading causes of absence remain psychological ill health and musculoskeletal

conditions. We have seen a 44% reduction in musculoskeletal conditions and a 13% reduction 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 increasing psychological absence. Managers continue to use referrals to wellbeing service to assist in the prevention and management of absence.

4.3.2 Between 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021, 253 employees had been referred to the physiotherapy service to prevent absence and where they are absent to support early return to work. This is reduced levels during Covid as for a short period face to face sessions could not be delivered. We improved the exercise treatment plans and introduced follow up telephone and remote appointments to support employees. The service continued to receive excellent feedback from employees during changes to normal operating arrangements.

4.3.3 Between 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021, 283 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. This is reduced engagement compared to the previous year mainly impacted by Covid lockdowns. It is expected that we will see increased referral levels within 2021/22.

4.3.4 Colleagues supported by ThinkWell showed after treatment a 95% improvement/recovery. 97% of colleagues accessing the service described the support as helpful or extremely helpful and would recommend it to other colleagues. 93% of colleagues accessing the service believed it assists them to remain in work/return to work. 77% received triage within 48 hours and 99% within a week. The average time to first session was 7 days. 52% of the referrals received were preventative (colleagues in work) and of these 86% remain in work during the support.

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. 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 898 referrals show a slight decrease from 951 in the previous year. Some of the reduction is due to the impact of Covid on maintained school-based referrals. 553 of the referrals were from Core Council Services. 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. 765 vouchers were supplied to SCC staff and over 1000 school colleagues. This was a large increase on previous years but expected as this level of engagement was seen nationally on flu vaccinations due to Covid-19.

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 and it will be important next year that we look at indicators over several years for trend analysis.

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 2020/21 17 health and safety audits were completed by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service. Audits were postponed due to the impact of Covid-19 and these have been reprogrammed

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 self audits were not completed as they are normally sent out in April/May 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   Appendix 1 details our key performance data for incidents reported. Accident and Violent incident levels in SCC and schools are significantly reduced compared with last year but this must be seen in context of the impact of Covid-19 on ways working both for council services and maintained schools activities.

6.1.2   RIDDOR reportable incidents have also decreased in line with total number of incidents.

6.1.3   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   The HSE completed a range of Covid unannounced inspection to both Council Services and Schools. The feedback from these was overall very positive in terms of actions taken and complementary of our Covid Secure arrangements. The issue of balancing ventilation and management of fire doors was raised in relation to a few schools and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service working to resolve these issues to the HSE satisfaction. A joint approach was completed in partnership with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to raise awareness across all educational settings and to assist settings to find effective solutions that balanced Covid-19 risks with Fire Safety compliance.

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 remained under investigation during 2020 and additional information has been provided to support the HSE investigation and coroner's inquest. An action plan based around the findings has continued to be developed and reviewed to ensure effective implementation of the learning outcomes.   It is expected to be end 2021 before this incident is concluded.

7.6   In April 2012 the HSE launched "Fee for Intervention". 2021/21 has seen 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. Additional meetings were held to support Covid-19 consultation. Consultation forum meetings are planned for 2020/21.

9. Occupational Health Unit (OHU)

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

9.1 Occupational Health management referrals have decreased slightly compared to last year with over half of the referrals being from the Core Council. Maintained school referral levels were down due to the impact of Covid and academy conversions.

9.2 The number of ill-health retirements being granted (meeting the qualifying criteria) has remains consistent.

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
No. of Claims Occurred	55	37	31	24	9	16
Estimated Cost of payments	£773,377	£342,868	£182,851	£113,156	£64,905	£136790

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 2021/22

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 2021/22 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. HSE inspection of Covid secure workplaces and responding to complaints and concerns will become a key focus.

2021/22 marks the fifth year of the HSE Health and Work strategy and they will be focused on tackling three major causes of work-related ill health musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), occupational lung disease (OLD) and work related stress (WRS).

12. Key Actions for 2021/22

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

Supporting Covid-19 Response and Recovery

- Design and support Lifting Lockdown Covid guidance and arrangements in line with prevalence and national guidance.
- Support Premises Managers with revised Covid secure arrangements and manage any incidents and outbreaks.
- 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.
- 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

- Continue to 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.
- Support effective testing plans across these settings including the management of any surge testing activities.
- Management of the impacts of any Covid Variants Under Investigation (VUI) and Variants Of Concern (VOC)as needed to limit impacts.
- 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.
- Maintain effective engagement and consultation with setting leadership and Trade Unions.
- Deliver regular webinars and other meetings of Headteachers, Premise Managers and other relevant bodies to support outbreak management activities.

Project Development Activities

- Implement a Lone Worker Management System and review supporting management Arrangements.
- Implement new Fire Safety Training to support improved skills of premises managers and school leadership teams .
- 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 hybrid working.
- Launch new digital Occupational Health Management system to modernise approach and improve referral management activities.

Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce

- Developed new Wellbeing Strategy to build on all current arrangements and which will support new ways of working following impact of Covid-19.
- Implement a Financial Wellbeing Offering to our employees.
- Research digital platforms that can host all health and wellbeing offerings in one place to make access to wellbeing digital and simple for employees.
- Launch a health and wellbeing calendar supported by webinars and other engagement activities.
- Review Domestic Abuse Management Arrangements and develop a new approach.
- Build on performance activities across existing wellbeing services.
- Complete re tender for the Occupational Health Physiotherapy Service and Occupational Health DR Service.

Maintain Business as Usual Activities

- Maintain business as usual support for the council and traded school customers.
- Complete a revised Audit plan
- 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.
- 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 Covid-19 pandemic presented not only to the delivery of council services but also to supporting critical commissioned services and supporting public health. The pandemic has delayed the availability of resources for some projects which will be taken forward as the earliest opportunities. Covid-19 will continue to impact and will need response and recovery activities during 2021/22.

13.2 The work completed during 2021/22 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	2020/21
1.	Number of Incidents by Type	**SCC** Accidents **333** of which **103** were accidents to employees **Schools** Accidents **765** of which **156** were employee accidents Overall Total **1098**	**SCC** – Accidents **398** of which **120** were to employees SCC - Near Miss **28** SCC – Environmental **5** SCC - Road Traffic **12** **Schools** - Accidents **1237** of which **347** were employees School - Near Miss **4** School – Environmental **10** School Road Traffic **3**	**SCC** – Accidents **404** of which **116** were to employees SCC - Near Miss **35** SCC – Environmental **3** SCC - Road Traffic **15** **Schools** - Accidents **762** of which **228** were employees School - Near Miss **14** School – Environmental **0** School Road Traffic **3**	**SCC** – Accidents **272** of which **57** were to employees SCC - Near Miss **5** SCC – Environmental **1** SCC - Road Traffic **2** **Schools** - Accidents **448** of which **145** were employees School - Near Miss **8** School – Environmental **1** School Road Traffic **1**
2.	Violence and Aggression	SCC total violence **456** of which **341** were towards employees. Schools total violence **49** of which **36** were towards employees.	SCC total violence **333** which **230** were towards employees. Schools total violence **329** of which **243** were towards employees.	SCC total violence **500** which **243** were towards employees. Schools total violence **268** of which **201** were towards employees.	SCC total violence **329** which **172** were towards employees. Schools total violence **73** of which **59** were towards employees.
3.	Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents	SCC **4** Schools **30** Total **34**	SCC **5** Schools **35** Total **40**	SCC **13** Schools **25** Total **38**	SCC **8** Schools **15** Total **23**
4.	Number of Civil Claims (excluding highways)	**31**	**24**	9	**16**
5.	Cost of Liability Claims	**£182,851**	**£113,156**	£64,905	£136,790
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%	Schools 79% Core Council 96%
7.	% of Management Standards surveys	Schools **83 %** Families & Communities **81%**	Schools **90%** Families & Communities **70%**	Schools **78%** Not completed due to COVID-	Schools 79% Not completed due to COVID-

		returned by corporate services and Self Audits completed by schools	Economy, Infrastructure & Skills **100%** Strategy, Governance & Change **100%** Finance and Resources **50%** Health & Care **80%**	Economy, Infrastructure & Skills 100% Corporate Services 74% Health & Care 100%	19 Resources	19 Resources
8.	% of Internal Health and Safety Audits completed to programme	Schools 100% SCC 100%	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.

Council Incidents by Service Area

	Accidents	Near Miss	Road Traffic	Environmental	Violence and Aggression	Disease
Council Overall	272	5	2	1	329	1
Families & Communities	134	3	2	0	252	0
Health & Care	129	1	0	1	76	1
Economy Infrastructure & Skills	6	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Services	3	1	0	0	1	0

Schools Overview

	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Special	PRU	Totals
Accident	318	13	89	17	11	448
Near miss	5	0	1	0	2	8
Environmental	1	0	0	0	0	1
Road Traffic Collision	0	0	0	0	1	1
Violence and Aggression	33	0	4	5	31	73