

This Report will be made public on 20 July 2022



Report Number **AuG/22/05**

To: Audit & Governance Committee
Date: 28 July 2022
Status: Information Report
Responsible Officer: Alastair Clifford, Chief Officer - Operations
Andy Blaszkowicz, Director, Housing and Operations
Cabinet Member: Councillor Stuart Peall

SUBJECT: CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY: This report details the performance of Corporate Health and Safety over the last calendar year and looks into future work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note Report AuG/22/05.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the District Council's health and safety performance to the end of the annual year 2021, and outlines its intentions for 2022 and beyond. Health and safety is monitored against an ongoing action plan devised by the Corporate Health & Safety officer in agreement with Director for Housing and Operations and the Chief Officer - Operations.

This annual review against the action plan reveals that significant work has been undertaken on the procedures to make the required improvements.

Procedures including abuse, aggression and violence; fire safety; direct labour organisation related safety have been refreshed and considerable proactive work has also been undertaken to ensure the safety of staff, visitors and members in relation to the ever changing requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A large consideration of the work this year was given to the Housing Service and ensuring policies and procedures are in place. This once again demonstrates that the District Council has a strong commitment to the health and safety of its workforce, and to others, such as tenants who may be affected by its activities.

Health and safety is provided by the Corporate Health & Safety Specialist in conjunction with managers and appropriate personnel. The Council employs 451 employees in various roles, including full, part-time and casual staff; equating to 405 FTE. This increase from 2020 year is for the former east Kent Housing coming back in house to Folkestone and Hythe. The Council has a broad range of activities with a wide variety of risks to manage. To ensure that all risks are identified, the Council has risk assessment processes for use by managers and staff. The most common risks identified include:

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

This report does not cover the activities of Oportunitas, the Otterpool LLP or contractors such as Veolia.

2. KEY ACTIVITIES

CODES OF PRACTICE

Corporate Health and Safety provides codes of practice (COP) and guidance to managers and employees to equip them with the necessary support to meet their

health and safety obligations. The Council has a rolling programme of COP review and implementation to support effective health and safety management. The following COP's were revised/implemented during the year;

- Abuse, Aggression and Violence
- Management of Contractors
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Health Surveillance

TRAINING

Training provision is an important part of mitigating risks to health and safety. To ensure there is relevant training and sufficient funding the corporate health and safety specialist work with Human Resource (HR) specialists, Organisational Development (OD) specialists and service area managers. The electronic package WorkRite has been replaced by Learning Pool during 2021 and is used to deliver the majority of employees statutory training, however many of the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) staff and specialists need further training as identified by individual job requirements.

It is understood that at present there is not a centralised database that identifies and records training requirements for individuals. The organisation and identification of training varies by service area and risk level. To address this issue the H&S officer, OD and HR teams will be working together over the next year to support service area managers to identify their statutory training requirements, fund and deliver these as necessary. This has been difficult to arrange training due to the pandemic during 2021 however a number of courses are being costed for 2022 i.e. IOSH managing safety for a number of managers and supervisors.

Table 1: Training delivered shows some of the critical training that was undertaken during the year. Training was predominantly delivered by external suppliers, except training for fire wardens which was internal, conducted by the corporate H&S officer.

It should be noted that in the DLO organisations of the council, such as that in Grounds Maintenance (GM), Engineering and Buildings (E&B) and the Hythe Pool teams, that practical sessions called toolbox talks and onsite job specific training for equipment are regularly delivered to new starters, seasonal staff and as reminders where near misses and incidents have occurred.

The training does not include the e-learning and is based on practical or external providers.

Table 1: Training delivered

Course Type	No.	Comment
Fire Warden / Refresher (including tenants in rented office space)	9	Fire precautions and methods for evacuating staff in the event of a fire.
Driving Assessments for new starters.	4	This works alongside the road risk procedures and helps towards preventing road traffic collisions.
Manual Handling Techniques	0	Training in correct lifting techniques & risks through incorrect lifting.
Handling difficult customers	0	Customers services dealing with members of public.
First Aid at Work (3 days)	12	Competence to become a qualified First Aider.
Safeguarding	0	Includes a few councillors, call centre / reception staff
Grounds Maintenance Safeguarding vulnerable people.	0	This is how to recognise the vulnerable that are in public places, and how to help.
Asbestos awareness.	0	Half day course directed at those that are most likely to come into contact.
Reactec HAVWEAR monitoring system for Hand Arm Vibration.	0	Training new line manager. Agency / New Starters
New staff inductions	36	The inductions have a section that includes Health and Safety Policy, procedures and the e-learning requirements.
Various training for Grounds Maintenance i.e Chainsaw, ride on mowers etc	43	6 trailer training 5 Tree Working at height 3 Tractor training 15 Wood Chipper 4 Chainsaw 10 Tree Inspections

FIRE SAFETY

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires employers to have a strategy to evacuate all occupants within a building. As part of the Council's fire safety arrangements nominated staff are trained as Fire Wardens. Additional refresher training has been conducted during 2021 to include tenants. They perform two roles; undertaking ongoing assessment of fire hazards and risks during their normal daily work tasks, and in the event of an evacuation conducting a sweep of their allocated fire zone to ensure all persons have safely evacuated.

To ensure compliance with the Fire Safety order a review is continuing by the Engineering & Buildings team. Work has been undertaken on high risk buildings, such as the Civic Centre. Work is now ongoing at our depots and will continue through all Council Operated Assets. In general only minor items have been raised which are being addressed predominantly within allocated budgets, but also utilising the capital enhancement funds. Some of these are suitable lighting for access / egress.

Any remedial works from the quarterly external Fire Alarm Checks / Services. Visual checks picked up a couple of concerns i.e. fire extinguishers on floor and not on brackets or items left in fire routes / corridors etc these are dealt with by either maintenance requests or moved to safer location.

Due to the lock down and the civic centre being closed since March 2020 no fire drills have been conducted. These will restart in April after expected end of Covid restrictions. This will be managed by H&S, Civic Wardens with support from Engineering & Buildings.

Fire safety for housing has not been included as part of this annual report. Data can be provided if required.

A more bespoke Fire Warden training is being prepared for Hythe Pool and will be delivered spring 2022 to all pool staff.

FIRE BRIGADE INSPECTION

In December 2021 Hythe Swimming Pool had a planned inspection by Kent Fire and Rescue Service. The inspection was compliant with only one minor issue relating to general housekeeping, where fire and Corona regulations contravened each other. New auto-release door holds have been ordered and installed by property to ensure this would then comply with Fire Regulations.

FIRST AID

The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

As part of this requirement, the Council provides two levels of first aid trained staff in its buildings. At Folkestone and Hythe Civic Centre there is a mixture of full First aid at Work and Appointed Persons (for the 24hr Lifeline call centre). Hythe

Swimming pool staff undergo further training superficially design for swimming pools. Requalification is in line with the HSE guidance and the level of first aid required is based upon specific job risk. DLO staff are also individually identified depending on work location and risk. Due to the pandemic it has been difficult to provide training to staff, a catch up programme is currently being overseen to ensure any gaps are identified and closed. It is expected that this will be complete by Q2.

A review of first aid requirements is scheduled for Q1/2 as training providers are starting to once again provide face to face training. This will include more of the grounds maintenance, property maintenance, Environmental Enforcement teams attending 1 day Appointed Person course due to lone working situations.

As many full first aiders work from home the Civic Wardens and other colleagues that work more regularly within the Civic i.e. Print Room, Customer Access Point colleagues are going to be asked to become First Aiders at Work (3 day course).

There are currently 51 colleagues that have received Mental Health First Aid Training of which 22 are dedicated First Aiders.

MEETINGS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY GROUPS

The Council has in place a number of health and safety groups to ensure that there is a corporate approach and understanding to all relevant issues. The Health and Safety Officer reports to the Staff Consultation Forum (SCF) on a six weekly basis. The SCF is chaired by the Chief Officer – Human Resources, and comprises the Health & Safety Specialist, 8 elected workplace SCF champions, and a UNISON Safety Representative. The Group discuss codes of practice, reports and supports the Corporate Health & Safety Officer in determining the Council's priorities in health and safety.

In addition to the SCF an Operations meeting is held typically held every 3 months, that gathers all the high risk service area managers within the Operations service areas. It is used as a forum to discuss and share best practice regarding any accidents, incidents, near misses and insurance claims in detail and looks at how these can be prevented or reduced.

In recent months these meetings have been broadened to include the Housing staff – bringing a wealth of experience and a greater diversity to the core group. This is expected to have a positive effect on the overall safety of all.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

In January 2022 Innovate became the external Occupational Health provider and have continued to meet the organisation's requirements for dealing with and promoting health at work issues. The core functions of Occupational Health are work-health assessment screening, sickness absence management and health promotion. Table 2: Health surveillance shows a breakdown of the teams that health surveillance is provided to.

The Health, Safety specialist works closely with HR who manages the Occupational Health Advisor to provide a proactive health surveillance programme to required staff following the risk assessment process. This is based on two yearly programme of health surveillance checks, consisting of hand-arm vibration, skin surveillance, respiratory and audiometry.

It should be noted that only limited health surveillance has been provided due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The corporate H&S specialist will need to work closely with the HR Lead Specialist and develop an appropriate catch up process. This is currently being dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Table 2: Health surveillance

Team	No.	Notes
Grounds Maintenance	2	Park Keepers, Sports Ground, Cemeteries, Highways.
Engineering & Buildings	0	
Other	0	

3. PERFORMANCE

The following section details accidents in relation to the years 2017, 2018, 2019 2020 & 2021. The Corporate H&S specialist ensures all accidents are recorded in one place. There is a potential of increase reported injuries as the housing team formally East Kent Housing have become part of the council.

The total number of accidents remains low, with an increase over the past year from 11 to a total of 12 accidents recorded (an incident rate of 0.12 per 100 FTE). As can be seen from: Table 3: Accident totals, shows there is no individual type of accident that is the most significant; however most of the accidents can be grouped into “slip trip and falls”, manual handling and struck by.

Table 4: Accidents by service area shows that there has been a decrease in the accidents incurred by “other council staff”.

Table 5: RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) shows there has been two reportable RIDDOR incident involving a council employee in the year 2021. Slip and fall on sloped ground and fractured ankle. This was a colleague from Hythe pool that was working on secondment in the coastal park (during lockdown) and slipped on the bank by the Wardens Hut when dropping keys back. The other was a slip and fall on a bank also in the coastal park straining their ankle.

Table 6: Work days lost due to accidents shows that 70 days have been lost due to accidents.

Table 7: Accidents involving members of the public have remained low over the past three years. There has however been 3 slip and fall accidents with the residents of the housing stock.

Accident statistics continue to remain low, however there has been a slight increase in the number of recorded accidents. This is believed to have incurred in line with a drive to report all accidents, no matter how small. As the largest service area within the Council, grounds maintenance remains as the department with highest related risks.

Training and other interventions remain in place to address the areas of highest injury. The wider H&S team continues to not only address the accident related incidents but also focus on areas which have potential to cause serious injury and must therefore not be overlooked. Such areas identified during the previous year include fire safety, contractor control and site security. These were achieved by either in house or external training. Most accidents related to Grounds Maintenance will have a Safety Notice completed and displayed at all the operational depots. Going into 2022 training again will be focused on DLO and the grounds maintenance teams - for example more task related manual handling, basic maintenance and servicing of tools.

Table 3: Accident totals

Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Contact with machinery or hand tool	0	1*	1	2	1
Struck by moving object	2	2	5*	2	3
Strike by moving vehicle	0	1	0	0	0
Strike against fixed object	2	1	4	0	2
Slip, trip, fall same level	1	3	7*	4	1
Lifting & handling injuries	0	3	1	2	1
Injured by an animal including insect stings	0	1	3	1	0
Fall from height	1*	0	0	0	2*
Physical Assault	0	0	0	0	0
Contact with electricity	0	0	0	0	0

Trapped by something collapsing	0	0	0	0	0
All other kinds & unspecified	2	2	5	0	2
Total	8	14	26	11	12
Incident Rate per 100 FTE employees	0.08	0.135	0.25	0.11	0.12

**RIDDORS (reportable injuries)*

Table 4: Accidents by service area

Service Area	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Grounds Maintenance	7	8	12	7	6
Engineering & Buildings	0	0	2	1	2
Other Council Staff	1	6	11	3	2
Environmental Health / Enforcement	0	0	1	0	2
Total	8	14	26	11	12

Table 5: RIDDOR

Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
RIDDOR Accidents	1	0	*2	2	2
RIDDOR Disease	0	1	0	0	0

Table 6: Work days lost due to accidents

Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of work - related days lost	0	0	30.5	61	70*

*The increase to lost time was due to the type of injury and recovery time i.e. the fractured ankle totalling 60 days.

Table 7: Accidents involving members of the public

Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Public	1	1	1	0	0

WORK RELATED ILL HEALTH DAYS LOST

Lost working time statistics through ill health e.g. stress, anxiety and depression are gathered and produced via the Human Resources team. An annual update on absence is included within the HR Annual Review which is presented to Personnel Committee in June. The most recent report (P/21/03) was presented at the meeting on 10th June 2021.

DANGEROUS OCCURENCES

In addition to the accidents in the table above last year there were 3 Dangerous Occurrence Reported.

- Colleague pulled into the road with a trailer and noticed he had not lifted and secured the tailgate on trailer. Colleagues reminded of check procedures for loading and maneuvering trailers.
- Colleague loading mower onto trailer and forward drive stuck and mower hit front plate on the trailer then mounted it. Mower checked and no fault found, colleague spoken to by their line manager.
- Linch Pin not fully secured on ride on mower causing the mowing deck to come off. Ride on mower drivers reminded to complete pre-use checks.

NEAR MISSES

In addition to accidents in the table above last year there was 1 near miss reported.

- Colleague attended property feeling unwell and tested positive following day with COVID. Procedures reviewed and amended and Housing team briefed with changes.

4. AUDIT

There are no outstanding action from the 2018 audit as shown in 2019 year's report.

5. LEGISLATION UPDATE

No HSE legislation changes have occurred that affected the Councils current policies and procedures. There have been some updates within the current legislation that has required the council to review some individual task procedures and update the relevant Risk Assessment and Safe Operating Procedure.

There has been a considerable review of many procedures due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, which has produced additional risk assessments and Safe Systems of Work in addition to the normal requirements. As new legislation is developed and released our processes will be updated. It is worth noting that our management of parks and open spaces during the pandemic was presented to other authorities as “best practice”.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTIONS FOR 2022/23 AND BEYOND

In 2022/23 the emphasis will be to support managers and staff to continue good standards of health and safety and continuous improvement. The action plan has been amended to also take consideration many colleagues work from home; a summary of key actions are provided below:

- a. Review the corporate health and safety procedures (2 year programme).
- b. Review corporate guidance on fire safety and fire wardens.
- c. Continue to deliver a health and safety training programme considering gaps that have developed during the pandemic.
- d. Undertake audits/inspections of individual services/teams/buildings.
- e. Undertake fire risk assessments across all council managed buildings and assets.
- f. Update and improve intranet based health and safety information for staff use.
- g. Undertake driving assessments on all outstanding fleet drivers.
- h. Support the new employees within the housing teams.
- i. Where required support colleagues with working from home, i.e. lone working.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE VISIT / CONTRAVENTIONS

- There has been no visits or requests from the HSE during 2021.

8. CLAIMS DUE TO ACCIDENTS / INCIDENTS /OTHER

Table 8: Claims details provide details on what is registered on the insurance database. This is a high level extract and is intended to be indicative only and further information can be requested. In 2021 there were a total of 89 claims. This is an increase of 13 claims across all claim types from previous years.

Road traffic collisions decreased from the previous year to 13 incidents down to 11.

Public liability claims have increased overall to 53 claims or incidents, from the previous year's 43. An increase in documentation within the Engineering and buildings team has successfully allowed claims to be defended against via a portfolio of evidence

Table 8: Claims

Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Road Traffic Collision. Council vehicles involved in accidental incident either with other vehicles or fixed objects.	14 incidents; 7 Hit third party vehicle 5 Hit stationary object 2 other type of incident	20 incidents; 6 Hit third party vehicle 6 Hit stationary object 8 other type of incident	11 incidents 7 own fault claims where our driver hit other third party vehicles or hit property 4 no fault claims where third parties hit our vehicles	13 incidents 10 own fault claims where our driver hit other third party vehicles or hit property 3 no fault claims where third parties hit our vehicles	11 Incidents 9 own fault claims our driver hit other third party vehicles or hit property 2 Non-fault claims
Members of public vehicles hit by flying debris from strimming etc	14 strimming incidents; 2 incidents involve injury to a person	16 strimming incidents; 0 incidents involve injury to a person	Nil	5 strimming plus 4 grass cutting mower incidents	9 strimming plus 2 grass cutting mower incidents
Liability claims from members of public from faulty equipment, i.e. play equipment, park benches, and uneven ground.	76 claim for public liability; 7 Play Area incidents 9 Slip incidents 6 Trip incidents 43 Other types of claim	66 claim for public liability; 2 Play Area incidents 2 Slip incidents 6 Trip incidents 56 Other types of claim	52 claim for public liability 12 Slip trip claims 10 pot hole claims 9 strimming claims 14 other type of incidents.	45 claim for public liability 14 Slip trip claims 26 other type of incidents including pot holes and highway issues.	53 public liability claims 11 slip trip claims 42 other types of incidents including 11 referred to KCC.

			7 tree root/subsidence claims.	0 tree root/subsidence claims. 1 Employers liability claim	2 subsidence claims, both repudiated.
Property claims across the Housing stock Commercial stock and General Fund.	Nil	Nil	12 Property claims 1 Commercial claim 6 HRA claims 5 General fund claims	17 Property claims 3 Commercial claims 9 HRA claims 2 General fund claims 3 claims where the council are seeking recovery from a third party for damage to council property	16 Property claims 1 Commercial claim 9 HRA claims 4 General Fund claims 2 claims where we are seeking recovery.
	Total: 104	Total: 102	Total: 75	Total: 76	Total: 89

Table 8 shows that there has been an increase in total claim costs. Some of this is older fleet and spares / parts have increased since lockdown and Brexit. However it should be stressed that as claims are ongoing and based upon financial years this data could alter significantly. Some of the cost increase is claims carried over from last year and slightly higher than estimated.

Table 9: Insurance Claim Costs

Type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/2020	2020/2021
Motor claims	£31,228	£3,845	£2,750	£11,148
Miscellaneous	£3,367	£2,699	£1,050	£0

Property	£2,970	£1,299	£1,700	£15,100
Public	£411,890*	£1,929	£1,252	£3,049

**This includes potential claim for Data Protection Breach for £323,500.*

INSURANCE CLAIMS

In 2021 we registered a total of 80 claims across all heads of loss. 75 Claims were reported in 2020 and the uplift in numbers is mainly due to an increase in public liability queries.

Public Liability - In total we received 53 notifications of incidents resulting in public liability claims which is slightly more than the previous year. 11 of those notifications involved incidents that occurred on the public highway which were repudiated and referred to Kent County Council.

Employers Liability - There were no notifications of Employers Liability claims during 2021.

Motor - We made 11 motor claims during 2021. This is a lower amount than 2020 and represents a good improvement generally since a poor year in 2018.

Property - 16 claims were made across our property portfolio including all housing stock, our commercial properties and our general properties. This is generally in line with previous years.

9. CONCLUSION

Accident levels have positively remained low for the environment and broad work being undertaken within the council. This is testament to the great work of all officers and especially within the DLO sections of the council. There have been 70 lost days caused by accidents for the year and only two RIDDOR for the year.

A substantial effort has been made by all staff to ensure we have been Covid compliant – and keeping up with all the changing legislation. No Covid outbreaks have been reported to be directly linked to work undertaken at the council. A visit by the HSE to enquire about what we were doing was met positively by the HSE and no concerns were raised.

10. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

10.1 Legal Officer's Comments (E)

There are no legal implications arising directly out of this report other than as already stated therein. It is the Council's duty under the Health and Safety at Work

etc. Act 1974 (as amended) to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees and other people who might be affected by its business, which includes making sure they are protected from anything that may cause harm and controlling any risks to injury or health that could arise in the workplace.

10.2 Finance Officer's Comments (RH)

There are no financial implications concerning this report.

11. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councilors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

(Alastair Clifford: Chief Officer - Operations)

Telephone: 01303853277

Email: alastair.clifford@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk