

**To: Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy board**

**On: 15 June 2022**

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**Report by: Director of Finance and Resources**

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**Heading: FARS Health and Safety Report and Plan 2022/2024**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The council's health and safety policy places a responsibility on each service department to prepare an annual report evaluating the management of health and safety within the service.
  - 1.2 The Finance and Resource Service's Report is attached as Appendix 1. The report sets out the health and safety activity within the service in the year up to 31 March 2022 cognisant of the ongoing pandemic and demonstrates the service's commitment to continuous improvement in health and safety performance. The report summarises achievements to March 2022 and appended to the report is the service action plan for 2022/24, detailing the actions which the service aims to take to consolidate and improve health and safety practice.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:
    - i) notes the content of the report at Appendix 1; and
    - ii) approves the plan appended to the report
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### 3. **Background**

- 3.1 The service's health and safety governance arrangements were refreshed in 2019/20 and the health and safety policy revised. Opportunities identified then to strengthen the service department's health and safety arrangements have now had the time to bed in.
- 3.2 The service health and safety planning group continued to meet in line with its terms of reference throughout the year taking cognisance of the ongoing pandemic. The service continued to be represented at and contribute to meetings of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.
- 3.3 The attached report covers the period from April 2021 to March 2022 and the new plan proposed will cover the period from now to March 2024, based on the service department's current health and safety risk profile.

The key components of the attached are:

-  1. Management of health and safety within the service
-  2. Organisation for health and safety management
-  3. Training undertaken 2019/20
-  4. Annual statistics 2019/20
-  5. 'Plan - Do - Check – Act'
-  Appendix 1: Outturn - FAR Health and Safety Plan 2021/22
-  Appendix 2: FAR Health and Safety Plan 2022/24

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### **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** – not relevant to report recommendations
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – not relevant to report recommendations
3. **Community/Council Planning** – effective risk management supports the delivery of all community/ council plan outcomes
4. **Legal** – not relevant to report recommendations
5. **Property/Assets** – not relevant to report recommendations
6. **Information Technology** – not relevant to report recommendations
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – not relevant to report recommendations

8. **Health & Safety** – as per the subject matter of this report
  9. **Procurement** – not relevant to report recommendations
  10. **Risk** – as per the subject matter of this report
  11. **Privacy Impact** – not relevant to report recommendations
  12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not relevant to report recommendations
  13. **Climate Risk** – not relevant to report recommendations
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### **List of Background Papers**

- (a) Background Paper - none
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**Author:** Joe Lynch, Head of Property Services  
Tel: 0141 618 6159, Email: [joe.lynch@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:joe.lynch@renfrewshire.gov.uk)



## Health and Safety Report 2020/22

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### **Finance and Resources**

## Introduction

The FARS Health and Safety Report and Plan 2020/2022 was presented to Board on 11 November 2020.

This Update Report is prepared by Finance and Resources in line with the council's corporate health and safety policy and service health and safety policy. The report details the service's health and safety performance in 2021/22 and sets out the service's health and safety plan going forward, particularly in the context of the Covid-19 experience.

## 1. Management of health and safety within the service

1. The service continues to implement its approved health and safety policy. The Service Director is, so far as is reasonably practicable, responsible for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of employees and others who may be affected by the service's activities.
2. The Head of Property Services supports the Service Director by chairing the FAR Health and Safety Planning Group and the FAR Health and Safety Committee. The Head of Service provides health and safety updates to the Senior Management Team, ensures service areas are appropriately represented on the planning group and committee, prepares the service annual health and safety report and oversees the implementation of the service health and safety plan.
3. The Service Director has nominated Ryan Phillips (a Project Manager) to the role of service health and safety co-ordinator, to support the Head of Property Services in their role. The co-ordinator gathers information for health and safety reporting, preparing information (such as accident data and performance data), for meetings of the planning group and committee and representing the service on the corporate health and safety committee.
4. All Heads of Service fully support the implementation of the service health and safety policy across all their teams, and service department managers engage in any actions required to support the annual plan.

## 2. Organisation for health and safety management

1. The main 'groups' involved in organisation for health and safety matters are the FAR Health and Safety Committee and FAR Health and Safety Planning Group.
2. The Health and Safety Committee has representation from all areas of the service as well as staff side representatives appointed by the relevant Trade Unions. The committee monitors the implementation of good health and safety practice across the service and progress being made in relation to agreed priorities.
3. The Health and Safety Planning Group works to its established terms of reference, assists with development and implementation of the service health and safety policy and plan and provides a forum where members can review relevant statistics, identify trends, areas for improvement and potential solutions. The Group can take forward corporate initiatives and meets to share both good practice and lessons learned from across the service department. Current members of the Planning Group are:

Service Area	Representatives	
Digital, Customer and Transformation Services	Louise O'Connor	Service Delivery Officer
Digital, Customer and Transformation Services	Julie McBride	Senior Service Delivery Officer
Finance & Business Services	Rhona Barnes	Service Delivery Manager
Finance & Business Services	Mary Sweenie	Development Officer
Finance & Business Services	Craig McEwan	Team Leader
Digital, Customer and Transformation Services	Sylvia Easton	Service Delivery Manager
Finance & Business Services	Vicki Aitken	Finance Manager (Systems & Control)
Corporate Governance	Nairn Young	Assistant Managing Solicitor
Digital, Customer and Transformation Services	Gillian Dickie	Partnering & Commissioning Manager
Internal Audit Services	KellyAnne Moore	Insurance & Risk Management Co-ordinator
Property Services	Joe Lynch	Head of Service (Chair)
People and Organisational Development	Clare McGivern	Administrative Officer

4. The service's key health and safety risk profile was reported to Board (11 November 2020), as shown in the table below. The Health and Safety Planning Group reviewed the risk profile at its meeting on 11 June 2021 and agreed that the risk profile, notwithstanding the pandemic, remained accurate with one additional risk accepted within the ICT service area acknowledging how stress should be included within the health and safety risk profile. With the exception of the stress risk added to ICT, there had been no new incident trends that would lead to further changes in the health and safety risk profile for the service.

<b>Service area (Previous)</b>	<b>Key Service H&amp;S Risks</b>						
	<b>Musculo-skeletal</b>	<b>Stress</b>	<b>Work at Height</b>	<b>Lone Working</b>	<b>Occupational Driving</b>	<b>Violence &amp; Aggression</b>	<b>Slips, trips, falls</b>
DCT - Customer Services & Advice Works	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DCT - Outlying areas, adult servs and operations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
FBS - Revs & Financial Support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
DCT - RH Hub	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DCT - Schools Support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FBS - Corporate Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Corporate Governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Internal Audit Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Property Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
People and Organisational Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5. Further to the Covid-19 pandemic leading to national lockdowns, some employees have been involved in our efforts to support the Covid-19 response, these include:
- colleagues involved in new customer contact services (Local Assistance Team), supporting individuals shielding from the virus and others requiring support with access to food and medicines,
  - the corporate health and safety team being significantly involved in supporting services with covid-related risk assessments and supporting the safe return of schools and other services, and,
  - colleagues temporarily deployed to different roles to support the response to the crisis.

### 3. Training undertaken 2021/22

1. During 2021/22 a total number of 28 FARs employees undertook health and safety-related courses across the various courses outlined in the table to the right.
2. In addition to the above, 756 FARs staff undertook Display Screen Equipment awareness training via iLearn – the online learning platform used in the council.

<b>Course</b>	<b>Nos. 2021-2022</b>
Mental Health First Aid	18
General Fire Wardens	0
Fire Risk Assessment	9
3-Day First Aid at Work	0
2-Day First Aid at Work Refresher	1
<b>Total =</b>	<b>28</b>

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## 4. Annual statistics 2021/22

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### 1. Accidents and incidents

The table to the right shows the stats for 2021/22 across the different incident types reported. A total of 28 incidents have been reported in the year.

These 28 reported incidents represent an increase of 18, up from the 10 reported in 2020/21.

The numbers remain relatively low meaning that it is not possible to see trends in causal data however the incident reporting form is structured to encourage lessons to be learned from incidents on a case by case basis.

Accident / Incident Type	Nos. 2021-2022
Another kind of accident	4
Fall from height	1
Lifting and handling injury	1
Near miss	1
Road traffic accident	1
Slip trip fall at same level	12
Struck against	1
Struck by an object	2
Violence and aggression	5
Total	28

### 2. Employers liability claims for FARs employees





During 2021/22 there were no employer's liability claims received.

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## 5. Plan - Do - Check - Act

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1. Reviewing our health and safety objectives – in considering the service objectives and development of the health and safety plan, the service health and safety planning group has taken account of:

-  the key risk profile;
-  any trends around accidents and incidents;
-  any trends around employers liability claims; and,
-  any other priorities raised by individual members of the planning group.

2. The outturn report for the service health and safety plan 2021/22 is included in the Appendix.





3. The current 2020/22 service health and safety Action Plan is also included in the Appendix. While the plan would usually cover a single year, in the current pandemic circumstances the plan covers the period through to March 2022.

## Appendix 1: FAR Health and Safety Plan 2021/22

### Outturn at March 2022




1. The Finance and Resources service department is very diverse in terms of activities, with employees *usually* spread across many different sites. At the time of preparing this service health and safety plan however, the majority of Finance and Resources employees continue to work from home. In doing so, the service contributes to reducing the risk of transmission of the Covid-19 virus where possible, and in doing so contributes to the key national objectives to save lives, support the NHS, help schools to remain open and support livelihoods through as many businesses as possible remaining open.
2. In March 2020, working closely with our partners, Renfrewshire Council moved quickly to respond to the emerging coronavirus pandemic, protecting and supporting our employees and communities, particularly vulnerable people across the area. Finance & Resources teams have been responding to national developments in terms of coronavirus testing and Renfrewshire's mass vaccination centres whilst also ensuring that Council employees are kept safe and have access to information and support for their health and wellbeing.
3. As a service, Finance & Resources have provided regular health and safety direction and assistance to staff throughout the pandemic and regular wellbeing features have been communicated in staff newsletters. There is a dedicated Health, Safety and Wellbeing at Work section on the Council's website, it includes advice on PPE, carrying out a home visit, and a staff wellbeing guide. The guide contains practical guidance on working from home, with hints and tips on setting up a workstation, keeping fit and healthy, supporting mental health and a list of useful contacts of support available. The service will continue to review any new guidance and advice provided on Covid-19 precautions and where appropriate further liaise with HR and Corporate Health and Safety on its implementation.

4. The service health and safety risk profile *usually* highlights the following priorities:

-  11 of 11 service areas have identified **musculoskeletal disorders** as a relevant risk factor
-  10 of 11 service areas have identified **lone working** as a relevant risk factor
-  10 of 11 service areas have identified **stress** as a relevant risk factor
-  09 of 11 service areas have identified **violence and aggression** as a relevant risk factor

As a result of the pandemic however the fundamental health and safety priority for the service is the wellbeing of our employees while working from home, or in the case of many of our Digital, Customer and Transformation Services colleagues, working in schools and some customer-facing services.






5. Given the above, the plan going forward will:

-  include new actions that reflect the importance of managing **employee wellbeing** working in hybrid environments
-  include new actions that reflect the importance of managing **employee wellbeing** in relation to long covid symptoms
-  include changes to the **Lone Working Policy** which will include home working






6. Additionally in light of the present circumstances, where the Covid-19 risk is likely to be a concurrent risk, the plan will include the risk of potentially higher levels of staff absence and reflect the contingency arrangements the service has in place as well as any other relevant actions to be undertaken.



## Action plan for 2020/22

Risk statement	Risk controls expected to be implemented	Focused actions	Action status
If the potential for <b>musculoskeletal disorders</b> is not sufficiently addressed there is an increased risk to staff wellbeing and increasing absence levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSE assessments should be undertaken as a matter of course every 18 months</li> <li>▪ DSE assessments should be undertaken specifically and timely for any new starts, anyone moving desks or anyone with a material change of circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure DSE assessments are carried out online by staff using the new Business World assessment</li> </ul>	 Complete
If the risks associated with <b>lone working</b> are not sufficiently addressed there is an increased risk to staff safety and the potential for physical or psychological harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate and local procedures to be followed to ensure staff safety and to assist with early identification where staff make be exposed to harm or ill-health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify any lone workers (in the current Covid-19 context) and ensure risk assessments are updated</li> </ul>	 Complete
If potential exposure to <b>violence and aggression</b> is not sufficiently addressed there is an increased risk to staff safety and the potential for physical or psychological harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implementation of the corporate policy on violence and aggression</li> <li>▪ Implementation of corporate training (including for example breakaway techniques)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To promote awareness of this risk across all teams</li> <li>▪ To assess training requirements, linking in with corporate health and safety colleagues...</li> </ul>	 Complete
<b>COVID-19 and employee wellbeing</b> It is nationally accepted that essential measures to control transmission of the virus lead to other harms, such as an adverse impact on mental health and wellbeing and in some cases, this could be exacerbated through longer term homeworking by default.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to and uptake of a range of wellbeing services and guidance as set out online for employees, and regularly highlighted through corporate comms:  <a href="http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10541/Working-from-home#Health%20and%20wellbeing">http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10541/Working-from-home#Health and wellbeing</a> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote health, safety and wellbeing to all FARS employees</li> <li>▪ Ensure managers regularly communicate with staff to support mental and physical wellbeing, particularly throughout the winter season</li> </ul>	 Complete
<b>COVID-19 concurrent winter risk</b> With a second wave of the virus coinciding with the winter period and the potential also for season flu, there is an increased risk of <b>higher levels of staff absence</b> which could lead to impact on employee wellbeing and service disruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uptake of the flu vaccination will be an essential part of mitigating this concurrent risk and minimising higher levels of employee absence.</li> <li>▪ Service business continuity plans/ restoration plans are in place to minimise impact on service provision arising from higher levels of employee absence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure managers regularly communicate with staff to support mental wellbeing particularly throughout the winter season.</li> <li>▪ Promote uptake of the Councils flu vaccination programme to all staff through managers promote the uptake to remaining staff who qualify for the NHS Scheme</li> </ul>	 Complete

## Appendix 2: 2022/2024 Proposed Plan

Risk statement	Risk controls expected to be implemented	Focused actions	Action status
If the potential for <b>musculoskeletal disorders</b> is not sufficiently addressed there is an increased risk to staff wellbeing and increasing absence levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSE assessments should be undertaken as a matter of course every 18 months</li> <li>▪ DSE assessments should be undertaken specifically and timely for any new starts, anyone moving desks, working from home or anyone with a material change of circumstances</li> <li>▪ DSE assessments should be undertaken when hybrid working causes the need for a change in desk location within council buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure DSE assessments are carried out online by staff using the new Business World assessment</li> </ul>	 TBA
If the risks associated with <b>lone working</b> are not sufficiently addressed there is an increased risk to staff safety and the potential for physical or psychological harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate and local procedures to be followed to ensure staff safety and to assist with early identification where staff may be exposed to harm or ill-health</li> <li>▪ New lone working policy to be introduced that will include home working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify any lone workers (in the current Covid-19 context) and ensure risk assessments are updated</li> </ul>	 TBA
If potential exposure to <b>violence and aggression</b> is not sufficiently addressed there is an increased risk to staff safety and the potential for physical or psychological harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implementation of the corporate policy on violence and aggression</li> <li>▪ Implementation of corporate training (including for example breakaway techniques)</li> <li>▪ Implementation of V&amp;A Risk assessment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To promote awareness of this risk across all teams</li> <li>▪ To assess training requirements, linking in with corporate health and safety colleagues...</li> </ul>	 TBA
<b>Employee wellbeing</b> It is nationally accepted that essential measures to control transmission of the virus lead to other harms, such as an adverse impact on mental health and wellbeing and in some cases, this could be exacerbated through longer term homeworking by default.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to and uptake of a range of wellbeing services and guidance as set out online for employees, and regularly highlighted through corporate comms:  <a href="http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10541/Working-from-home#Health%20and%20wellbeing">http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10541/Working-from-home#Health and wellbeing</a>            How to promote health and wellbeing within the service – engagement strategy to be defined.            Long Covid – how will employees be integrated?            Returning to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote health, safety and wellbeing to all FARS employees</li> <li>▪ Ensure managers regularly communicate with staff to support mental and physical wellbeing, particularly throughout the winter season</li> </ul>	 TBA
<b>COVID-19 concurrent risk</b> With a second wave of the virus coinciding with the winter period and the potential also for season flu, there is an increased risk of <b>higher levels of staff absence</b> which could lead to impact on employee wellbeing and service disruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uptake of the flu vaccination will be an essential part of mitigating this concurrent risk and minimising higher levels of employee absence.</li> <li>▪ Service business continuity plans/ restoration plans are in place to minimise impact on service provision arising from higher levels of employee absence</li> <li>▪ Mitigate any impact that covid might have on our employees in response to changing threat levels as per Scottish Government framework - "living with covid".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure managers regularly communicate with staff to support mental wellbeing</li> <li>▪ Promote uptake of the Councils flu vaccination programme to all staff through managers promote the uptake to remaining staff who qualify for the NHS Scheme</li> </ul>	 TBA

