

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

**On: 08 June 2023**

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

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**Heading: 2022/23 Annual Report on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing activities within Renfrewshire Council.**

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## **Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the health, safety and wellbeing arrangements and performance of Renfrewshire Council in effectively managing health, safety, and wellbeing for the period 1 April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
  - 1.2 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended) place duties on the Council to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health of their employees and others that could be affected by work activities.
  - 1.3 This report demonstrates the council's continued commitment to ensuring the health, safety, welfare, and wellbeing of our employees. It supports the aims of the "Our People, Our Future" strategy document and the councils' values.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The board notes the attached report on the health, safety and wellbeing arrangements and performance in the council.
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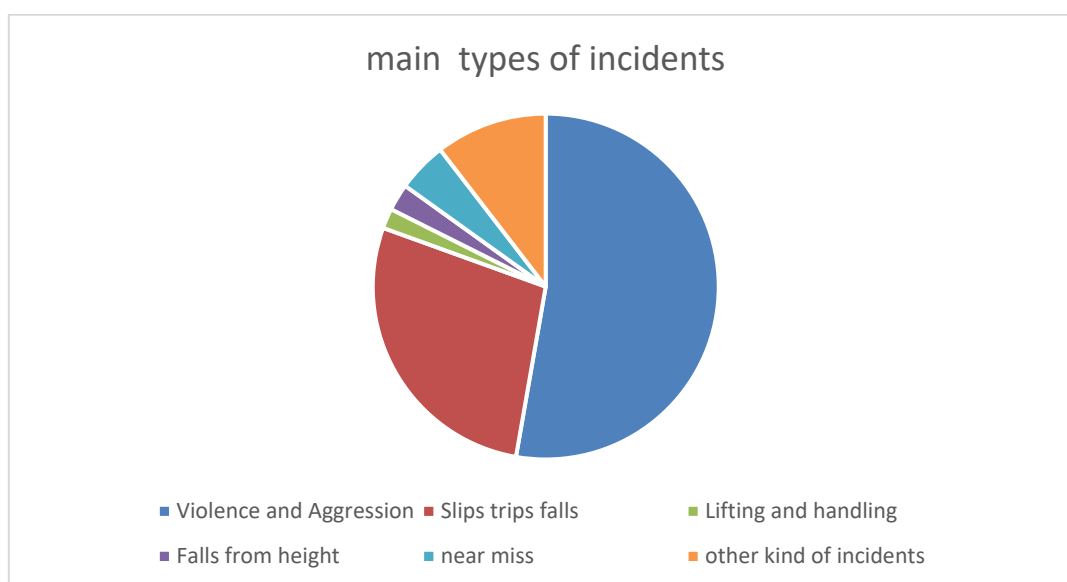
### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 A safe and healthy organisation is one that successfully balances the needs of individuals with the needs of the organisation. It is recognised that, over the past year, the council has been exploring different ways of working to reflect the financial position and the final elements of recovery from the pandemic. This, in turn, has driven considerable organisational change at pace and influenced the council's safety culture.
- 3.2 Health and safety at work is not only about health and safety management, occupational health and promoting healthier lifestyles; it is recognised that the way in which work is organised and how people behave, is significant to nurturing positive outcomes. To be truly effective, health and safety must be an everyday process and an integral part of the workforce culture at all levels across the council.

### **4.0 Key areas of activity**

- 4.1 Throughout the recovery from the pandemic, which has partially impacted over the year of this report, the Health and Safety team (part of HR and OD), continued to work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including Trades Unions, services, and external partners including the NHS. The Team was actively involved in the 3 vaccination centres based within One Ren as well as supporting the NHS mobile vaccination team.
- 4.2 Protecting mental health and wellbeing has been a key priority for the Health and Safety team. The Quality of Working Life (Stress) Risk Assessment (QWLRA) is an important tool to identify perceived workplace stressors and to generate an action plan that may remove or reduce the impacts of the perceived stressors. A review of our guidance has taken place and a revised document was issued in consultation with employee representatives and management.
- 4.3 The council has an ongoing commitment to eliminating incidents, so far as is reasonably practicable and encourage employees to play their part in achieving this important objective. Each Service health and safety committee/group involving employee representatives, are required to focus on the apparent causes of incidents. This will assist in the development of strategies and local accident reduction programmes. A new version of the accident/incident form was launched on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. This has been the culmination of a collaboration between the Health and Safety team, the Business world team, Trades Unions, and service representatives. The new form makes it easier for anyone to report an incident and allows for a greater collection of data.

- 4.4 Over the reporting period (2022/23) there were 1883 incidents reported in total, compared to 1322 reported the previous reporting period (2021/22). The incident total includes employees, service users, members of the public and contractors. It is envisaged the increase may be due to the council returning back to pre-pandemic activities, where there are more employees back in the workplace, as well as the new incident form making it easier to report incidents. The biggest presenting issue facing the council as a whole, is an increase in the violence and aggression incidents reported. The majority of these incidents are identified by the service users and/or pupils. Most incidents recorded against employees are non-injury and the behaviours displayed are mainly verbal abuse or physical posturing.
- The following chart below shows the main types of incidents that have occurred.



- 4.5 The council has a duty to report certain incidents to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). The table below is a summary of employee RIDDOR Notifications from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023:

Service	Number of reports
Chief Executives	0
Childrens Services	12
Community & Housing	1
Environment & Infrastructure	12
Finance and Resources	0
Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership	10
Total	35

A further 3 RIDDOR reports were submitted to the HSE in relation to accidents involving school pupils.

- 4.6 Health and safety training is vital to ensure everyone is familiar with their responsibilities. The provision of face-to-face health and safety training has been further complimented this reporting period by an enhanced digital programme, with a particular focus on the safe and correct use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE assessments) for those in the workforce who continue to work from home. A revised violence and aggression course has gone live, the course has greater focus on prevention on de-escalation.

H&S Course	Overall Completed
Waste Recycling in Schools & Nurseries	202
Infection Prevention and Control (SCIE)	79
Promoting Positive Behaviour Legislation and Guidance	86
Display Screen Awareness DSE	2032
Ladder Safety Awareness	99
Using the Lifepak Defibrillator	83
Remote Health and Safety Module	94
Manual Handling Module	144
Fire Module	218
Supporting Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse	81
Accident & Incident Reporting (RIDDOR)	143
Guidance on Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020	114
Promoting Positive Behaviour in the Workplace (module 1) - Risk; Right	88
Evacuation Process Renfrewshire House	521
Fire Warden Training	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>4010</b>

Throughout the reporting period, the health and safety team have also supported bespoke training on topics such as accident/incident reporting and lone working.

- 4.7 To support everyone to work safely, A risk-based review of all our policies and guidance documents is under way, we will prioritise a refresh of the documents in line with statutory compliance as well as business needs. Several health and safety documents have been revised and include:

- Display Screen Guidance
- Reporting of accidents and incidents
- Renfrewshire House Evacuation guidance

Other health and safety policies and guidance in the process of revision include; *hand arm vibration, fire, violence and aggression, risk assessment, manual handling and lone working.*

- 4.8 To ensure a collaborative approach to health and safety engagement with employees, the corporate health and safety committee (CHSC) continues to progress health and safety issues that cannot be resolved at Service level. The committee has representation from Services and Trade Unions. During this reporting period the CHSC met 4 times.
- 4.9 The health and safety team continue to provide data for insurance claims, subject access requests (SAR) and freedom of information (FOI) requests. During 2022/23 **50** SAR/FOI data requests were completed and most relate to generic incident/accidents at work.
- 4.10 The Health and Safety team continue to evaluate contractor's and supplier's health and safety documentation when they apply for contracts with Renfrewshire Council, during 2022/23 129 contractor evaluations were completed.
- 4.11 The council's occupational health provider, People Asset Management Ltd. have restarted the occupational health surveillance programme. This was paused during the pandemic but restarted mid-2022, targeting roads and Streetscene operatives first. The programme continues in 2023 and has moved on to building services, school technicians and music teachers. Types of health surveillance carried out includes:
- Audiometry
  - Spirometry
  - Vibration
  - Nightshift worker questionnaires
  - Preemployment medical screening
- 4.12 The Health and Safety Team have led the development of a revised sleeping risk, fire risk assessment document, Scottish Fire and Rescue, as well key officers and Trade Unions have been involved in the process. This been adopted by Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Childrens Services for their respective residential properties.
- 4.13 The Health and Safety Team have been supporting Building Services and Housing colleagues with needlestick injury training. This is linked to a council wide review of our blood borne virus risk assessment documentation and supporting inoculation programme. This initially started in the Housing teams, but we have expanded this project into a council wide working group to refresh the risk assessments where there may be occupational exposures generated though work-related activities

- 4.14 The Health and Safety team continue to produce health and wellbeing guidance and campaigns to support the workforce. Topics covered during the reporting period include mental health, anxiety, eyecare and allergies. A significant focus was working with One Ren on the joint staff well-being day held in November 2022. This provided information on mental and physical wellbeing, financial wellbeing, and staff benefits.
- 4.15 The Health and Safety team have supported the planning arrangements and the delivery of the Halloween event, Winterfest event in Paisley and the Christmas Lights Switch on events in Renfrew and Johnstone.
- 4.16 During the reporting period there have been **5** visits from the HSE, 1 in relation to the household waste intervention programme and 4 in relation to the management of asbestos in schools' intervention programme.
- 4.17 There have been a number of meetings with Scottish Fire and Rescue (SFR). The meetings are a result of SFR attending call outs to our premises. We discuss, where possible, improvements to the fire safety arrangements.
- 4.18 In preparation to the SFR planned change to their response to unwanted fire alarm signals, a corporate working group, led by the Health and Safety team and has representatives from services and trade unions, have been reviewing the arrangements and training needs.
- 4.19 The Health and Safety team continue to support the new ways of working arrangements being developed across the council. This includes reviewing floor plate designs and ventilation impacts.
- 4.20 The health and safety team continue to support the council's construction activities through scheduled monthly meetings with the property services team and others. The team continue to be involved in meetings/site visits for the Paisley Town Hall project and the Paisley Arts Centre project, the schools new build and refurbishment projects the WIFI extension project as well as other smaller projects.
- 4.21 The council offered the flu vaccine out to all staff not covered under the criteria for an inoculation from the NHS. We worked with our OH provider from October to December 2022 to deliver face to face inoculations for staff, and the last of the sessions were delivered in January 2023. We offered vouchers for those who could not attend in person. As part of this programme, we worked closely with our partner organisations (One Ren, RVJB and Scotland Excel) to offer to their staff too.

## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - Continuing to improve health and safety performance will reduce accidents/occupational ill health and associated costs.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - This report supports the council's commitment to the health, safety, and wellbeing of employees.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – This report and plan supports the objectives contained within the community and council plans.
4. **Legal** - The council will continue to comply with current health and safety legislation.
5. **Property/Assets** - Having a robust health and safety management system in place and an effective risk control system should reduce the risk of property damage and potential loss of premises which could be caused by fire for example.
6. **Information Technology** - Not applicable.
7. **Equality & Human Rights**  
  
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report as it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** - This report supports and demonstrates the council's commitment to ensuring effective health and safety management.
9. **Procurement** - Finance and Resources, HR, and Organisational Development (FAR, H.R. and O.D.) health and safety section has a valuable input to the Council's procurement system.
10. **Risk** - This report supports the overarching management of risk within Renfrewshire Council.
11. **Privacy Impact** - Not applicable.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** - Not applicable.

13. **Climate Risk** - none

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**List of Background Papers None**

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