Public Document Pack

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

To: Councillor Allan, <u>Convener</u>; Councillor Houghton, <u>Vice Convener</u>; and Councillors Cameron, Copland, Delaney, Graham, Hutchison, Macdonald and Reynolds.

<u>Trade Union Advisers</u>: Ron Constable and Carole Thorpe (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); Thomas Whyte and 1 vacancy (SSTA); George Ferguson and Leslie Tarr (UNISON); Joe Craig and Mishelle Gray (UNITE); and Rob Stephen and 1 vacancy (VOICE).

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 21 September 2020

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Members of the **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Council Chamber - Town House on <u>TUESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 2.00 pm</u>.**

Please note that due to COVID-19 restrictions, no press and public will be admitted to the meeting. The meeting will be webcast and can be viewed here

FRASER BELL
CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

B U S I N E S S

NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1.1 <u>There are no items at this time</u>

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2.1 <u>There are no items of exempt business</u>

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 <u>Members are requested to declare any interests</u> (Pages 3 - 4)

DEPUTATIONS

4.1 <u>None at this time</u>

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

COMMITTEE PLANNER

NOTICES OF MOTION

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

GENERAL BUSINESS

Website Address: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Stephanie Dunsmuir, tel 01224 522503 or email sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

You must consider at the earliest stage possible whether you have an interest to declare in relation to any matter which is to be considered. You should consider whether reports for meetings raise any issue of declaration of interest. Your declaration of interest must be made under the standing item on the agenda, however if you do identify the need for a declaration of interest only when a particular matter is being discussed then you must declare the interest as soon as you realise it is necessary. The following wording may be helpful for you in making your declaration.

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons ……………

For example, I know the applicant / I am a member of the Board of X / I am employed by…
and I will therefore withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion and voting on that item.

OR

I have considered whether I require to declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons …………… however, having applied the objective test, I consider that my interest is so remote / insignificant that it does not require me to remove myself from consideration of the item.

OR

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons …………… however I consider that a specific exclusion applies as my interest is as a member of xxxx, which is

- (a) a devolved public body as defined in Schedule 3 to the Act;
- (b) a public body established by enactment or in pursuance of statutory powers or by the authority of statute or a statutory scheme;
- (c) a body with whom there is in force an agreement which has been made in pursuance of Section 19 of the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act 1990 by Scottish Enterprise or Highlands and Islands Enterprise for the discharge by that body of any of the functions of Scottish Enterprise or, as the case may be, Highlands and Islands Enterprise; or
- (d) a body being a company:-
  i. established wholly or mainly for the purpose of providing services to the Councillor's local authority; and
  ii. which has entered into a contractual arrangement with that local authority for the supply of goods and/or services to that local authority.

OR

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons……and although the body is covered by a specific exclusion, the matter before the Committee is one that is quasi-judicial / regulatory in nature where the body I am a member of:

- is applying for a licence, a consent or an approval
- is making an objection or representation
- has a material interest concerning a licence consent or approval
- is the subject of a statutory order of a regulatory nature made or proposed to be made by the local authority…. and I will therefore withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion and voting on that item.

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 3 February 2020. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allan, Convener; Councillor Houghton, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Cameron, Copland, Delaney, Graham, Hutchison, Macdonald and Reynolds.

Trade Union Advisers present:- Ron Constable and Carole Thorpe (EIS); Brenda Murdoch and David Willis (GMB); Kenny Luke (UNISON); Joe Craig and Liam Knox (UNITE).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be viewed here

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.   There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 10 DECEMBER 2019

2.   The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 10 December 2019 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3.   The Committee had before it the committee business planner prepared by the Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   in respect of the six monthly health and safety/sickness absence update report which was due before Committee in June 2020, (a) to note that any incidents against Council staff and mitigating actions required would be picked up in this report, (b) that a report was due to the Education Operational Delivery Committee in March 2020 which would make reference to the recent EIS survey which had been undertaken; (c) to request that this report be circulated as a service update to Members of the Staff Governance Committee and Trade Union Advisers following consideration at the Education Operational Delivery Committee; and (d) to note that if Trade Union Advisers had any further concerns following that report,

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
3 February 2020

they could raise this with the Chief Officer – Organisational Development under the Committee Terms of Reference 1.3; and
(ii)   to otherwise note the planner.

ASBESTOS POLICY - GOV/20/016

4.   The Committee had before it a report which sought approval of the revised Asbestos Policy for all asbestos work in Aberdeen City Council, in order to achieve corporate compliance in the area of asbestos management.

The report recommended:-
that Committee approve the Asbestos Policy.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

CLUSTER RISK REGISTER - PEOPLE & ORGANISATION - RES/20/030

5.   With reference to article 8 of the minute of its meeting of 31 January 2019, the Committee had before it the cluster risk register and assurance maps for People and Organisation, in accordance with the Committee Terms of Reference and to provide assurance on the Council's system of risk management.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee note the cluster risk register and assurance maps set out in Appendix A to the report.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN - ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE - RES/20/031

6.   With reference to article 9 of the minute of its meeting of 31 January 2019, the Committee had before it an update in respect of the employee mental health action plan which had been approved by the Staff Governance Committee in January 2019. The report set out the actions that had been undertaken since the action plan was last presented to Committee.

The report recommended:-
that Committee –

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
3 February 2020

(a)   note the actions carried out so far to address and support positive employee mental health; and

(b)   approve the continuing work outlined in the report to address and improve the same.

<u>**The Committee resolved**</u>**:-**

(i)   to thank staff for all the work that had been undertaken in respect of the mental health action plan, and the mental health first aiders; and

(ii)   to approve the recommendations.

-   **COUNCILLOR YVONNE ALLAN, <u>Convener</u>**

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STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER
The Business Planner details the reports which have been instructed by the Committee as well as reports which the Functions expect to be submitting for the calendar year.

Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
				29 September 2020				
Asbestos Incidents	SGC 01/10/19 - To request that Asbestos Incidents be added as a standing item for three committee cycles, noting that if there were no incidents of this nature, a report would not be required	Originally due March 2020	Stephen Booth	Corporate Landlord	Resources	3.3	R	There have been no incidents to report in the time period. As the three committee cycles have now passed, this item is recommended for removal
Appeals Sub Committee	To approve the membership number, set a composition and appoint a Convener	Originally due March 2020	Stephanie Dunsmuir	Governance	Commissioning		R	Was approved at UBC on 20/03/20
Policy Review - Special Leave Policy	A standing item to enable presentation of any policies that require to be reviewed and approved by Committee, as a result of the review of policies to ensure that they meet the Guiding Principles - There is a report on the agenda in respect of amendments to the Special Leave Policy	Originally due March 2020	Keith Tennant	People & Organisational Development	Resources	3.1	R	Was approved at UBC on 20/03/20
Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	To present the quarterly update (comprises longer reporting period due to COVID-19 meeting cancellations)		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.3		
Terms and Conditions	Council Budget 05/03/2019 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Organisational Development to begin negotiations with the Trade Unions relating to locally agreed changes to terms and conditions of employment and to review related policies and procedures and report the proposed changes to the Staff Governance Committee	Originally due June 2020	Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Resources	1.1	R	This report had initially been delayed until after the Council Budget meeting to take account of any decisions made there. Officers did not propose changes to terms and conditions as part of this year's budget setting process and nor did Group Leaders. It is therefore recommended that this item is removed from the planner.

	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
9	Guaranteed Interview Scheme	Council Budget 03/03/20 - To instruct the Chief Officer People and Organisation to report to the Staff Governance Committee on 9 June 2020 with a guaranteed interview scheme for any care experienced young person seeking to gain employment with this Council	Originally due June 2020	Lesley Strachan	People & Organisational Development	Resources	2.2		
10	Employee Assistance Scheme Annual Report	To present the annual Employee Assistance Programme Annual report. This report will incorporate the OH/sickness absence six monthly report	Originally due June 2020	Neil Yacamini	People & Organisational Development	Resources	2.7		
11	Annual Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual committee effectiveness report	Originally due June 2020	Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Resources	GD 8.5		
12	Mental Health and Wellbeing	To provide an update on the work that has been undertaken during lockdown during the period March – August 2020 in respect of mental health and wellbeing, in line with the role of the Committee to monitor the wellbeing of employees		Neil Yacamini	People & Organisational Development	Resources	2.7		
13	**24 November 2020**								
14	Policy Review	A standing item to enable presentation of any policies that require to be reviewed and approved by Committee, as a result of the review of policies to ensure that they meet the Guiding Principles	Standing item	Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Resources	3.1		
15	Internal Recruitment and Internal Movement of Staff	SGC 01/10/19 - To instruct the Chief Officer - Organisational Development to submit an update report on the new approach to internal recruitment and internal movement of staff in one year's time		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Resources	2.2		
16	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	To present the quarterly update for July to September 2020		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.3		
17	**01 February 2021**								
18	Risk Register - People and Organisation	To report annually on the cluster risk register		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Resources	GD 8.4		
19	**12 April 2021**								
20	Corporate Health & Safety Policy	To present the revised policy for approval		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	GD 8.1		

	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
21	07 June 2021								
22	Annual Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual committee effectiveness report		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Resources	GD 8.5		
23	Employee Assistance Scheme Annual Report	To present the annual Employee Assistance Programme Annual report.		TBC	People & Organisational Development	Resources	2.7		
24	28 September 2021								
25									
26									
27	23 November 2021								
28									
29									

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	29 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Staff Governance Committee Annual Effectiveness Report
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/141
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Stephanie Dunsmuir
TERMS OF REFERENCE	GD 8.5

1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1   The purpose of this report is to present the annual report of the Staff Governance Committee to enable Members to provide comment on the data contained within.

2.   **RECOMMENDATION**

That Committee:-

2.1   provide comments and observations on the data contained within the annual report; and

2.2   note the annual report of the Staff Governance Committee.

3.   **BACKGROUND**

Annual Reports on Committee Terms of Reference

3.1   The annual committee effectiveness reports were introduced in 2018/19 following a recommendation from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as part of the Council's work towards securing that organisation's accreditation in governance excellence.   The Terms of Reference set out that each Committee will review its own effectiveness against its Terms of Reference through the mechanism of the annual report.

3.2   The annual effectiveness reports were mentioned by CIPFA in their recent report which awarded the Mark of Excellence in Governance accreditation to Aberdeen City Council. CIPFA highlighted the implementation of the annual effectiveness reports as a matter of good practice in governance and were encouraged that, during consideration of the reports at Committee and Council,

Members had made suggestions for improvements to the reports in future years.

3.3   As well as the CIPFA Accreditation, Committee Services also recently won SOLAR Administration Team of the Year 2020 in March 2020 in recognition of the introduction of the annual committee effectiveness reports and the process which allows Committees to examine how they can improve the way they do business, while providing assurance that they are undertaking their role effectively.

3.4   Data from the annual effectiveness reports was used to inform the review of the Scheme of Governance, ensuring that Committee Terms of Reference were correctly aligned, and identifying any areas of the Terms of Reference which had not been used throughout the year in order that they could be reviewed and revised if necessary. The information from the effectiveness reports will also be used to feed into the Annual Governance Statement.

3.5   The reports provide a mechanism for each committee to annually review its effectiveness, including data on attendance, any late reports, referrals to Council and the number of times officer recommendations were amended, and to ensure that it is following its Terms of Reference.

3.6   Similarly, recording the sections of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which apply to each report allows Members to be aware of the direct impact of any proposals before them on the LOIP, and gives a general overview at the end of each year of the number of reports which have had an impact on the LOIP outcomes. Officers also actively review the data gathered to ensure that it aligns to the Council's operating model and decisions taken by the Council throughout the year. This part of the annual report will be expanded for the next year of reporting to incorporate the changes to the outcomes section of the committee report template. That section now asks report authors to consider the implications of their report for the Council Delivery Plan, which incorporates the LOIP outcomes.

3.7   While the above is one section of the annual effectiveness report template which officers aim to amend for future reporting, any comments from Members on additional areas of data that should be considered would be welcomed to ensure that Members are presented with meaningful data.

3.8   The annual report for 2019/2020 is therefore appended for the Committee's consideration. Following consideration by the Committee, the report will be submitted to Council in December for noting.

4.   **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1   There are no direct financial consequences from the recommendations of this report.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6.   MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A		
Compliance	Failure to submit this report means that the committee would not be complying with the instruction from Council that all committees receive such a report each year.	L	Committee is given the opportunity to consider the report and provide feedback on any amendments Members would wish to see in the content so that this can be taken on board for next year's Scheme of Governance review
Operational	N/A		
Financial	N/A		
Reputational	N/A		
Environment / Climate	N/A		

7.   OUTCOMES

There are no links to the Council Delivery Plan, however the committee effectiveness annual reports link to the Scheme of Governance, by ensuring that each committee is fulfilling its Terms of Reference.

8.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

10.   APPENDICES

10.1   Staff Governance Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 2019/20

11.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Committee Services Officer
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Staff Governance Committee

Annual Effectiveness Report

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 I am pleased to present the second annual effectiveness report for the Staff Governance Committee. As Members will be aware, as part of their interim assessment of the Council's governance arrangements in 2016, CIPFA recommended that Committees review the extent to which they had operated within their Terms of Reference, through an annual report. This year, the Council was the first in Scotland to be awarded the CIPFA Mark of Excellence in Governance, and the annual effectiveness report was again highlighted by CIPFA as one of the examples of good governance implemented by the Council. The annual effectiveness report also informs the annual review of the Council's Scheme of Governance and enables officers to identify if any changes are required, for example, to the Committee Terms of Reference.

1.2 As part of the 2020 review, changes were made to the Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference to provide greater clarity and those will be monitored throughout the year and taken into consideration during next year's review and the preparation of the third annual committee effectiveness report.

1.3 The annual report is a good mechanism for the Committee to support the Council's improvement journey by demonstrating the ways that the business of the Committee contributes to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. It provides Members with the opportunity to reflect on the business over the past year and to look to the Committee's focus for the year ahead.

1.4 As we are all aware this has been a very difficult time for all. The Committee as such has not been meeting since the original lockdown which was put in place for the COVID-19 virus. However this has meant that it has been a very busy time for both staff and the trade unions. They have been working well together to keep each other informed and up to date with the actions the Council has been taking to see us through the situation we find ourselves. I give my sincere thanks to all who have been working so hard to keep our staff and citizens safe at this very trying time.


Councillor Yvonne Allan
Convener, Staff Governance Committee

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2. THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

2.1 The Staff Governance Committee was established to incorporate the roles of the Joint Consultative Committee, the Corporate Health and Safety Committee and the Appeals Committee. The role of the Committee is to build on the cultural aim previously established to secure equal attention on staff; to integrate all matters affecting staff within a single committee; to include local trade union representatives as advisers, with provision for substitutes, to enable joint working; to approve staff policies; and to provide a forum to develop the existing partnership between the Council and all Trade Unions to support the Council becoming an employer of choice.

2.2 The previous Terms of Reference for the Committee as approved by Council in March 2019 are appended to the report.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE DURING 2019/2020

3.1 The Staff Governance Committee has nine members and the composition is presented below. The Committee also has Trade Union Advisers – two from each recognised Trade Union, who sit on the Committee but are not voting members.

Committee political balance (seats)
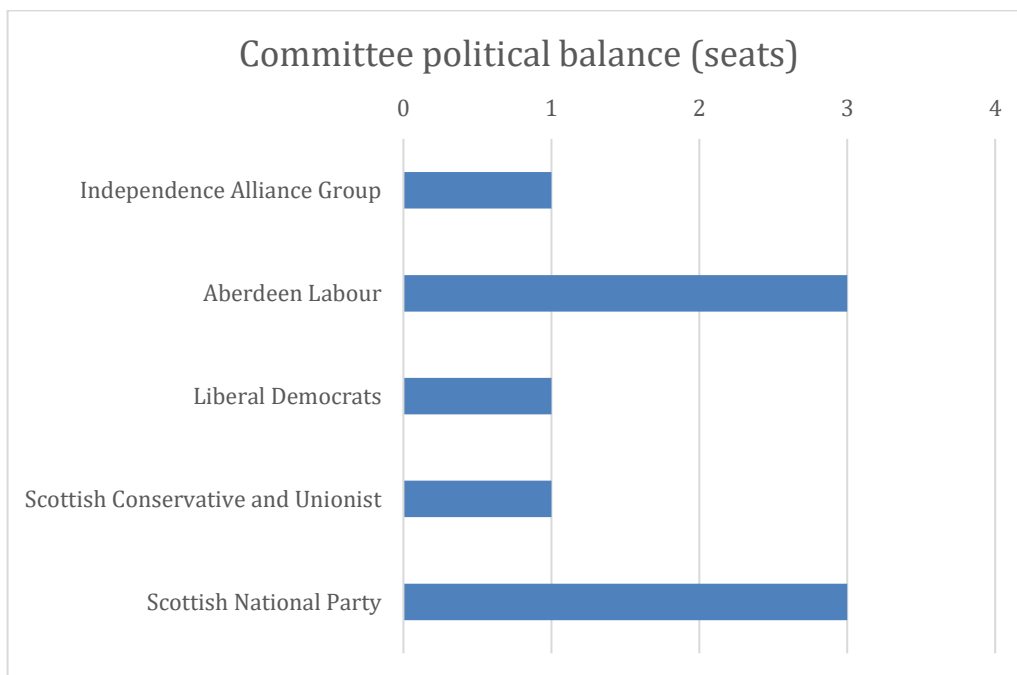
4. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

4.1 There were no changes to the Committee membership throughout the reporting period.

5. MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substituted
Councillor Allan	4	4	
Councillor Cameron	4	4	
Councillor Copland	4	4	
Councillor Delaney	4	3	1
Councillor Graham	4	3	1
Councillor Houghton	4	3	1
Councillor Hutchison	4	4	
Councillor Macdonald	4	4	
Councillor Reynolds	4	2	2

6. MEETING CONTENT

6.1 During the 2019/2020 reporting period (29 April 2019 to 30 April 2020), the Committee had 4 meetings and considered a total of 16 reports. The March 2020 meeting of the Committee was cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the decision of Council to cancel all committee meetings until August 2020 with business critical reports being considered by the Urgent Business Committee. As a result, the amendments to the Special Leave Policy and the appointment of members to the Appeals Sub Committee reports were considered at the Urgent Business Committee.

6.2 **Terms of Reference**

Of the 16 reports received the following table details how the reports aligned to the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

| Terms of Reference	Count of Terms of Reference
General Delegations To Committees 7.4	1
General Delegations To Committees 7.5	1
Purpose of Committee 4	3
Purpose of Committee 5	1
Purpose of Committee 8	2
Remit of Committee 1.3	1
Remit of Committee 2.1	3
Remit of Committee 3.1	2
Remit of Committee 4.1	4
Remit of Committee 4.2	4
Remit of Committee 4.3	4
Remit of Committee 4.4	2
Remit of Committee 4.5	3
Remit of Committee 4.6	1

6.3 During the course of 2019/2020 the Staff Governance Committee received reports under the majority of its Terms of Reference. This would indicate that the Committee has discharged its role throughout the course of the reporting period.

6.4 There have been no reports under Remit 1.1 and 1.2 specifically (develop the partnership approach between the Council and Trade Unions / provide a forum, where appropriate, for discussion on and resolution of matters of common interest and/or concern) however the operation of this Committee enables all reports to be considered via a partnership approach and allows for the resolution of matters of common interest through debate and discussion at meetings. Therefore while those Terms of Reference have not specifically been listed on reports, most reports to the Staff Governance Committee could be said to fall into the categories.

6.5 There was also no report under Remit 6.1 as there was no requirement to review the Appeals Sub Committee Procedure during this year.

6.6 Local Outcome Improvement Plan

The following table details of the 16 reports how many had a link to the themes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
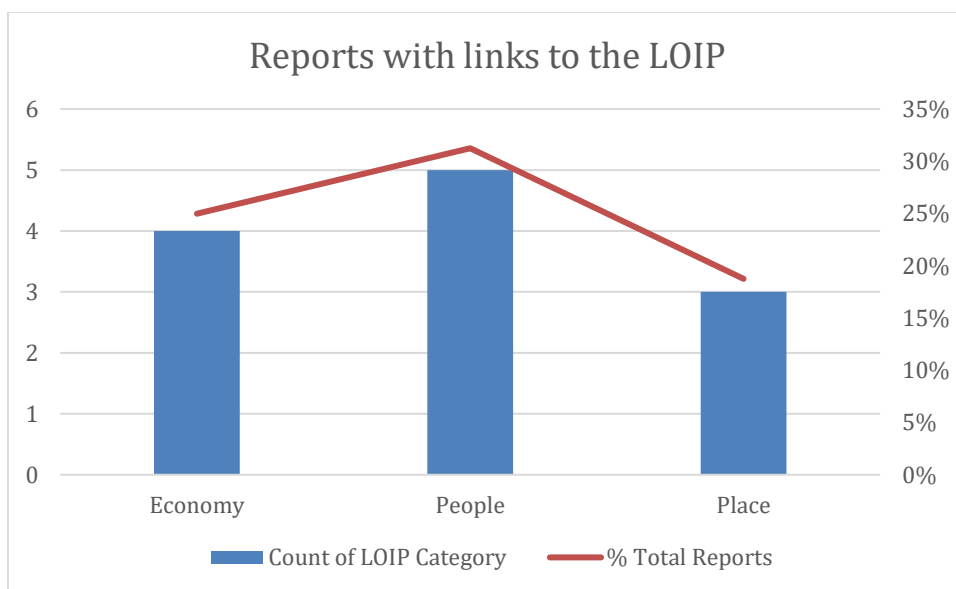
6.7 Reports and Committee Decisions

The following table details the outcome of the Committee's consideration of the 16 reports presented to it throughout the year.

	Total	% Total Reports
Confidential	0	0%
Exempt	0	0%

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Number of reports where the Committee has amended officer recommendations	0	0%
Number and percentage of reports approved unanimously	16	100%
Number of reports or service updates requested by members during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in forward planner	1	6%
Service update requested	1	6%
Number of decisions delayed for further information	0	0%
Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour and the ethical values of Public Life	0	0%
Number of late reports received by the Committee (i.e. reports not available for inspection by members of the public at least three clear days before a meeting)	0	0%
Number of referrals to Council, or other Committees in terms of Standing Order 33.1	0	0%

6.8 Notices of Motion, Suspension of Standing Orders, Interface with the Public

Number of notices of motion	0
Number of times Standing Orders were suspended and the specific Standing Orders suspended	0
Standing order number (ref)	N/A
Number of deputations or other indicators of interface with the public, i.e. engagement and social media.	0
Number of petitions considered	0
Number of Members attending meetings of the committee as observers	2
Number of Meetings held by the Convener with other Conveners, relevant parties, to discuss joint working and key issues being raised at other Committee meetings	Fortnightly meetings held

7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

7.1 No training was identified as being required in the 2019/20 reporting period. This will however be monitored throughout 2020/21 and developed if requested by Members and Trade Union Advisers.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

8.1 No declarations of interest were made by Councillors during the reporting period. Information in respect of declarations of interest is measured to evidence awareness of the requirements to adhere to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the responsibility to ensure fair decision-making.

9. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

9.1 Due to the nature of the Staff Governance Committee business, there are fewer opportunities for civic engagement, however if appropriate, elements of civic engagement would be introduced.

10. OFFICER SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE

Officer	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitute Attendances
Director of Resources	4	3	1
Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development	4	4	
Team Leader - Governance	4	4	

11. EXECUTIVE LEAD'S COMMENTS

11.1 The Committee continues to work effectively and collaboratively, and I am pleased to note that all business was approved or noted unanimously. This is in line with the aim that there be consensus in relation to the Committee's business, and much effort has been undertaken to ensure that there is proper consultation with Trade Unions and consideration given to their views prior to items being discussed at the Committee.

11.2 Although the business of the Committee was somewhat curtailed by the cancellation of meetings due to COVID-19, prior to that Members had received reports on some important areas of Council business including the workforce development plan and capability framework; the revised Performance Review and Development scheme, Continuous Review and Development; and the new initiative in respect of the internal movement and recruitment of staff. Members considered reports on the successful efforts to improve the situation in respect of LGV Driver retention and recruitment, and continue to receive reports on policies which have been reviewed and updated to bring them into line with the Council's Guiding Principles. The Committee also receives regular reports on health and safety statistics to allow Members to discharge their role in relation to keeping under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of employees.

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11.3   In order to maintain transparency and openness, particularly as the Committee business often relates to matters which may be relevant and of interest to employees, there is a focus on ensuring that the number of exempt reports is kept to a minimum and all business this year was considered in public session.

11.4   The Trade Union Advisers were again asked for feedback this year on how they felt the Committee had operated:-

EIS comments - I think the Committee has been run very effectively and chaired very efficiently by Councillor Allan. Very happy with the contribution that the Trade Unions have on the Committee as I think that it is important that they have a voice on the issues that have been raised. I think that this is fairly reflected in how the Convener chairs the Committee meetings. A very positive experience.

12.   NEXT YEAR'S FOCUS

12.1   New Terms of Reference for the Staff Governance Committee were approved at Council in March 2020 as part of the annual Scheme of Governance review. There will be a further review of the Scheme in March 2021. Throughout the next reporting year, we will review the Terms of Reference in line with the business submitted to the Committee and reflect on whether any areas require further refinement moving forward to ensure the efficient operation of the Committee.

12.2   Areas of focus from the Business Planner – The Committee will continue to receive any policies which are due for update or which require to be refreshed to bring them into line with the Guiding Principles, including a future report on the revised Corporate Health & Safety Policy.

Previous Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference
Approved by Council on 4 March 2019

PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE

1. To further develop the existing partnership approach between the Council and all trade unions in order to support the Council becoming an employer of choice.
2. To approve and monitor the Framework Agreement for Industrial Relations ("the FAIR agreement").
3. To act as a consultative body between management, elected members and trade unions, and act as a forum for discussion, on matters affecting conditions of service. This will be one of the ways in which the Council meets consultation requirements.
4. To approve and monitor workforce strategies which ensure the Council has a workforce fit for the capabilities required to be a 21st century council.
5. To approve all staff policies.
6. To provide a channel of communication, co-operation and involvement between the Council and trade union representatives on all relevant health and safety matters.
7. To act as a safety committee within section 2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and to keep under review measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of employees.
8. To monitor the Council's compliance with its policies and procedures and ensure that it takes such action to ensure it complies with all health and safety legislation.
9. To take the lead in establishing and promoting a positive culture, ways of working and values for the organisation and its staff which will reflect public expectation about the conduct and behaviour of public officials.

REMIT OF COMMITTEE

1. Partnership approach arrangements

The Committee will:
1.1   develop the partnership approach between the Council and trade unions; and
1.2   provide a forum, where appropriate, for discussion on and resolution of matters of common interest and/or concern, including but not restricted to:-
1.2.1   conditions of service, or reorganisation/restructure affecting conditions of service (except teachers); and
1.2.2   arrangements for the strategic training and welfare of all staff; and
1.3   consider reports by the Chief Officer – Organisational Development on matters following a request by a trade union advisor provided always that the Chief Officer – Organisational Development is satisfied that the matter is appropriate and relevant to the remit of the Committee and that it raises no question of individual employee issues.

2. Workforce Strategies

The Committee will:
2.1   determine and monitor the compliance with workforce related strategies which reflect the requirements of a 21st century Council in terms of staff and skills and attributes; and
2.2   approve an annual strategic training and development plan for the whole organisation.

3. Council Policies Affecting Staff

The Committee will:
3.1   develop, approve and monitor the implementation of all staff policies; and

3.2   monitor equality in employment and ensure that the Council, as an employer, complies with its statutory equal pay and other equality responsibilities.

4. Health, Safety & Wellbeing of Staff

The Committee will:
4.1   actively reinforce health, safety and wellbeing roles and responsibilities amongst staff;
4.2   receive appropriate levels of assurance to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation;
4.3   scrutinise and review health, safety and wellbeing policy, performance, trends and improvements;
4.4   approve and keep under review the Corporate Health and Safety Annual Audit Plan;
4.5   consider reports on health, safety and wellbeing from all services of the Council to help ensure that services are complying with relevant policies; and
4.6   monitor compliance with health and safety recommendations.

5. Establishing and Promoting Values for the Organisation

The Committee will:
5.1   approve and promote a Behavioural Framework for the Council.

6. Employment Appeals and Disputes

The Committee will:
6.1   be responsible for approving and keeping under review the procedure for the Appeals Sub Committee.

JOINT WORKING WITH OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

The Committee will maintain an awareness of key issues arising through the work of other committees of the Council, through lead officers, conveners and vice conveners working together and attending other committees as observers. This will help to ensure that relevant information is shared to aid understanding of workforce performance matters. A key relationship will be required with committees in order to be assured that staff are being properly engaged and consulted with on specific transformation proposals.

JOINT WORKING WITH NON COUNCIL BODIES

The Committee, through its lead officers, will work jointly with external bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive to ensure that Council benefits from external review and assurance.

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	29 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Employment Support for Care Experienced Young People including a Guaranteed Interview Scheme
REPORT NUMBER	RES/20/103
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte, Director of Resources
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer People & Organisational Development
REPORT AUTHOR	Lesley Strachan, Talent Acquisition Lead
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To provide an update to Committee on progress made on all the initiatives ongoing to support young people both working for the Council and in the community to consider the Council as an employer of choice, including the extension of the Council's Guaranteed Interview scheme to care experienced young people, in line with the Council Budget instruction from 3 March 2020.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee :-

2.1 notes the introduction of a guaranteed interview scheme for care experienced young people applying for apprenticeship roles across the Council since July 2019;

2.2 approves the continuation of the further extension of the scheme to all Council roles on a permanent basis; and

2.3 notes the additional developments being undertaken to support young people, including care experienced young people, already part of our workforce or when considering the Council as a potential employer.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council is committed to supporting our young workforce (defined as aged 16-24 by Investors in Young People, with a Council commitment to support care experienced young people up to the age of 29 in relation to employment opportunities) and to encouraging young people to consider the Council as prospective future employer. This is set out in our Workforce Plan approved by Committee in June 2019.

At September 2020, 3.8% of our workforce are employees aged between 16 and 24 (13.8% if we consider up to age 29) compared to 38.7% in the over 50 age bracket (which represents our largest group of staff). As a result, and in addition to our commitments set out in the Local Outcome agreement and our Workforce Plan, it is vital to invest and focus on young people to develop our workforce for the future.

3.1.1 In recognition of the work which has been developed and implemented, the Council was awarded the Investors in Young People Gold Standard Award in March 2020.

3.1.2 Evidence, research and feedback from professional bodies such as the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) and Who Cares? Scotland have shown that care experienced young people achieve poorer outcomes in terms of educational attainment, qualifications and unemployment in comparison to their peers. The Council as a corporate parent, has a duty to provide opportunities to its Looked After Children and care experienced young people like any other parent would.

3.1.3 Across Scotland, 71% of looked after school leavers were in positive follow up destinations in 2018/19 as compared to 93% of all pupils. [source: Scottish Government report: Looked After Children: education outcomes 2018/19]. In terms of an Aberdeen City context, the specialist support service within Integrated Children and Family Services, the Youth Team, support 120 care experienced young people and have shared the economic activity status of this group. This profile information indicates the potential benefits of this scheme to a group whose earlier disadvantage continues to impact on their ability to access opportunities which could lead to positive change.

3.1.4 To support these young people, and as part of our commitments set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) as corporate parents (Prosperous People section), there are a number of initiatives in place or being developed. Some of these initiatives previously reported as a service update to the Audit Risk and Scrutiny Committee in November 2019 are outlined below.

3.2   Guaranteed Interview Scheme

3.2.1 The Council has had a guaranteed interview scheme since 1997 which entitles applicants who consider themselves to have a disability and meet the minimum criteria set out in the job profile to receive an interview for that role. (The Disability Confident Scheme formerly known as Positive about Disability, and also known as the two ticks scheme).

3.2.2 In 2019, as part of our commitment to developing our young workforce within the Council's workforce plan, the guaranteed interview scheme was extended to our apprenticeship roles, to include applicants who:

- are care-experienced and aged 16-29;

- are aged 16-24, live in Aberdeen City or attended an Aberdeen City Council school and are applying for a Modern Apprenticeship (except Trades apprenticeships);

- have completed a Foundation Apprenticeship placement with the council and are applying for any apprenticeships relevant to the area in which they did their Foundation Apprenticeship;

- are New Scots aged 16-24 and are applying for any apprenticeships. [For the purposes of this proposal, only those eligible to work e.g. those with refugee status or who have approval from the Home Office to work in the UK (either in all roles, or in shortage occupations), will be able to apply for jobs via the guaranteed interview scheme (dependent on their rights and the role they are applying for)].

3.2.3 In February 2020, the Corporate Management Team approved in principle the extension of the scheme to offer a guaranteed interview to those young people that are in continuing care or are a care leaver up to the age of 29, applying for *all* council vacancies, (who meet the minimum criteria set out in the job profile), rather than just apprenticeships.

3.2.4 In March 2020, a budget instruction came from Council for the Chief Officer – Organisational Development to report to the Staff Governance Committee with a guaranteed interview scheme for any care experienced young person seeking to gain employment with this Council. This report sets out the work to date on the scheme and seeks approval to extend the guaranteed interview scheme to all vacancies on a permanent basis whilst noting that this is not the only support mechanism in place for care experienced young people seeking employment with Aberdeen City Council.

3.2.5 This report provides the Committee with information on the usage of the scheme to date, the further areas of work being done to support care experienced young people in terms of employment opportunities with the Council, and seeks approval to extend the scheme to all council roles on a permanent basis.

3.2.6 The first opportunity to test the uptake of the guaranteed interview scheme was during our advertising campaign for our 2019 Modern Apprenticeship intake. Overall, 104 applications were submitted and 13 of these applicants declared that they were care experienced. Of those 13 applications, 3 were successful in securing an apprenticeship and remain in our employment. Of the remaining 10, 6 either withdrew or did not engage with the recruitment process and 4 were unsuccessful following the selection process.

3.2.7 CMT approval in principle to extend the scheme to include all council roles in February and the budget instruction on the same, came just prior to the covid-19 pandemic and lockdown situation. As a result, only a very small number of vacancies have progressed to external advert, other than those for critical roles such as Teachers and Social Workers. Whilst our application portal through My Job Scotland (COSLA) does not currently offer the ability to report on the number of applicants who indicate that the guaranteed interview scheme

applies, we are developing an internal process which will enable reporting on numbers applying for vacancies under the revised guaranteed interview scheme. This will further support our ability to analyse the success or otherwise of the extension of the scheme.

3.2.8 The data above at 3.2.6, whilst representing just one specific campaign indicates that almost half of applicants who were from a care experienced background withdrew from the selection process prior to interview. Whilst the guaranteed interview scheme is a positive initiative, it may indicate that other supportive measures and initiatives need to be in place to support care experienced young people as they consider employment opportunities and selection processes and that without these, the guaranteed interview scheme alone will not be successful. To address this, a number of steps have been taken to provide support to our care experienced young people within our workforce and within the community.

3.3 Supportive Initiatives for Care Experienced Young People

3.3.1 In addition to the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, there are a number of additional initiatives which have been, or are currently being developed, to support care experienced young employees or prospective employees choosing to work for the Council. These are set out below:

3.3.2 **Information Hub/ Portal**. In February 2020, the Aberdeen City Champions Board, (a multi-agency board, including senior officers of LOIP partners, together with some care experienced young people) requested that an information hub / digital portal be developed with partners to enable care experienced young people across the city to access information in one place about the range of options and support available to them as they transition from school.

3.3.3 This will include information from each of the employing partner organisations within the Aberdeen City Champions Board about how to access internships, apprenticeships, jobs and careers advice, education, volunteering, wellbeing and support to complete job applications or CVs as well as interview skills and mentoring support including the MCR pathways programme (school based mentoring and talent taster programme for disadvantaged and care experienced young people).

3.3.4 The information hub/ portal will be user friendly, interactive, and will be co-designed with young people. It is intended that the hub will be hosted on the Aberdeen City Council website with links to partner websites and shared widely on social media platforms to ensure it is easily accessible for young people.

3.3.5 A consultation session was held in August 2020 with a group of young people to share an early draft of the information hub and to see their views and ideas about what this will include. These young people will continue to be involved in the co-design of the hub going forward, ensuring that the content and messaging of the hub has a young people's voice. It is anticipated that the information hub will launch in early 2021.

3.3.6 **Support with cv writing / applications and interview skills** – working together with colleagues in Children and Family Services, the Talent Team within People & Organisational Development have been supporting care experienced young people with a series of drop-in sessions to provide information about employment opportunities within the Council, career advice, our apprenticeship programme and the 'No One Left Behind employability programme, with our employability colleagues in City Growth.

3.3.7 This work will continue, and in collaboration with our partners at Skills Development Scotland, with the intention of providing support, guidance and advice to young people in developing CVS and completing application forms as well as interview skills to improve confidence and emphasise transferable skills.

3.3.8 Work is progressing to establish an **internship programme** to provide ring-fenced opportunities for Care Experienced Young People to undertake periods of work experience within identified areas across the Council. As well as offering an internship that will provide a paid work experience placement, the programme will also provide a range of support to each young person to help ensure that the internship is successful. Evidence indicates that some of our care experienced young people will come from a range of backgrounds, traumas and experiences and may need significant support to be successful within the workplace and in many cases, this will be their first introduction into the world of work.

3.3.9 In advance of the internship commencing, young people will undertake the 'No One Left Behind' employability programme to provide wraparound support before starting in the workplace.

3.3.10 This aligns with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan's commitments as corporate parents as set out in the Prosperous People section. On completion of their internship, candidates can apply for Modern Apprenticeships or entry level council vacancies under a guaranteed interview scheme as set out at section 3.1 of this report.

3.3.11 These internships are being developed by a cross functional working group with representatives from Integrated Children and Family Services, City Growth and People & Organisational Development. The employability and skills support initiatives outlined in the Scottish Government's 'Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland' report such as the new Youth Guarantee, together with the UK Government's 'Kickstart' scheme are being investigated to support the development of our internships and other support for care experienced young people.

3.3.12 The internship programme will be a key step for care experienced young people to enter a working environment, in a supported way, and will provide an opportunity to develop skills and experience throughout the duration of the internship, so that on successful completion, there are a range of options available to interns to progress within the organisation to entry level roles or apprenticeships for examples. It is anticipated that the internship programme will be available in early 2021. There may also be opportunities for the interns to gain qualifications through participating in this scheme.

3.3.13 In addition, Integrated Children's and Family Services are currently working with MCR Pathways, a national charity, to provide a school-based Mentoring and Talent Taster programme to support care-experienced young people, with the intention that this programme will link with our Internship and Apprenticeship programme.

3.4 **Supportive Initiatives for Young People across the City**

3.4.1 An **apprenticeship programme** has been established within the Council which provides opportunities for young people to 'learn as they earn' by gaining skills, experience and knowledge as well as a formal qualification. Modern Apprenticeships attract funding for the learning element for applicants aged 16-24 (depending on the framework) and for disabled and care-experienced applicants aged 20-29. Young people must meet one of these criteria to apply.

3.4.2 The apprenticeship programme represents a positive opportunity for young people, including care experienced young people, to access a supported and structured programme with opportunities to develop employment experience, skills as well as to gain a recognised qualification. In 2019, these opportunities were promoted widely through our social media channels and via schools and colleges, as well as to care experienced young people across the City via the Children & Families Services team and drop-in sessions were held to provide information about the opportunities. Going forward a targeted approach will be improved by promoting this on the information hub (see section 3.3.2) and directly via colleagues in Children and Family Services working with care experience young people.

3.4.3 Our new programme since 2019 has included Modern Apprenticeships in business administration, customer service, early years childcare, housing and social care. This has been combined with our existing modern apprenticeship offering in the more traditional Modern Apprenticeships in craft roles such as joiners, painters, blacksmiths, electricians and plumbers.

3.4.4 In 2019, 29 new apprenticeships commenced (and an additional 16 apprenticeships are continuing) and are continuing to be supported. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a delay to our 2020 programme both in terms of the difficulties learning providers face in providing the learning element of the MA programme, and in terms of managers providing the practical on the job experience for apprentices including support now that in many cases we are working in a digital / virtual environment. It is anticipated that we will be able to offer some Modern Apprenticeship opportunities in 2021.

3.4.5 **Mentoring, Coaching and Buddying scheme** – This is already in place for our apprentices, with our 45 current Modern Apprentices each having a mentor and/or buddy as part of their apprenticeship support. The scheme will be extended to include all our young employees, who will have access to a mentor, coach or buddy, where appropriate. Training is currently being developed to support employees and managers to take on these roles. As part of this programme, young employees themselves will be given the opportunity in turn,

to mentor other young employees joining the Council, providing the benefit of their experience to our new young workforce.

3.4.6 We have established a **Young Employee Network** comprising employees from across the Council aged between 16-24 (and includes employees from a care experienced background). The purpose of the network is to gather views from young employees on their employment experience and to involve them in the creation and development of key initiatives.

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   In the vast majority of cases, there will be no, or negligible costs, associated with these initiatives as they are targeted towards young people within the Aberdeen City boundary. Any costs associated with recruitment and selection processes would be accommodated within service budgets.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   None.

6.   MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	None	L	n/a
Compliance	None	L	n/a
Operational	None	L	n/a
Financial	None	L	n/a
Reputational	Reputational risk about not supporting care experienced young people in moving to a positive destination in terms of the Council's role as a corporate parent	L	n/a
Environment / Climate	None	L	n/a

7.   OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The proposals within this report support the delivery of: Policy Statement 2 – UNICEF Child Friendly City accreditation;

	Policy Statement 4 - Implementation of Developing Young Workforce programme; and

Policy Statement 7 – Commitment to closing the attainment gap – in qualifications and employment levels between care experienced young people and their peers. |

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan

Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 2. 90% of working people in Living Wage employment by 2026.

The report outlines plans and initiatives to increase the number of young people working for Aberdeen City Council, a Living Wage employer. |
| Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes | The proposals within this report support the delivery of:

LOIP Stretch Outcome 4 – 90% of children and young people will report feeling mentally well;

Outcome 5 – 95% of care experienced young people in positive destinations;

Outcome 7 – UNICEF Child Friendly City; and

Outcome 8 – 25% fewer young people charged with an offence. |
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 1 - No one in Aberdeen will go without food due to poverty by 2026. The employment of care experienced young people by the Council, a Living Wage employer can help address food poverty for young people, coupled with ongoing throughcare and aftercare support which is a statutory requirement.
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals within this report support Theme 4: School to Work Transition within the Regional Skills Strategy.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The report outlines proposals to support the Council to meet the requirements of Section 66 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Guaranteed Interview commitment, Developing the Young Workforce programme and Hub initiatives

	supplement this aspect of corporate parenting as care experienced young people remain eligible to receive throughcare and aftercare support up to the age of 26.
	The proposals also align with the Independent Care Review and particularly help the Council to meet the Care Review's foundations of:
	Voice – as young people are involved in the co-design and co-development of the Information Hub/Portal; and
	People – this focuses on the importance of relationships between adults and young people and the provision of mentorships, internships, coaching and apprenticeships supports this.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

None

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	29 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Corporate Health and Safety January - June 2020
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/092
CHIEF OFFICER	Fraser Bell
REPORT AUTHOR	Colin Leaver
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.3

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   The report summarises statistical health and safety performance information for the six-month reporting period January to June 2020 to provide the Committee with the opportunity to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

2.1   Note the report and provide comment on the health, safety and wellbeing policy, performance, trends and improvements.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   This report contains statistical information on the six-month reporting period 1 January to 30 June 2020 and a review of health and safety activities for the same period. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences 2013 (RIDDOR) puts duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses) to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This reporting duty includes incidents which result in an employee being absent from work for 7 days or longer.

This report addresses the following matters:

1.   Process for making Aberdeen City Council Covid-secure
2.   All incidents involving employees and members of the public (serious and minor)
3.   HSE Reportable Incidents
4.   Reportable Diseases
5.   Near Miss Information
6.   Enforcement Interventions
7.   Fire Risk Assessment
8.   Health and Safety Audits

9. Compliance Monitoring
10. Health and Safety Policies and Guidance

Covid-Secure

3.2 From the start of the current Coronavirus epidemic Aberdeen City Council has developed a process to manage the associated risks. This was developed firstly to allow those critical Services, which required to be available throughout the pandemic, to continue and later enabled Services to restart as the Scottish Government routemap has allowed. This process has evolved as new and reviewed guidance has emerged with daily checks of the Scottish Government and other public body websites to ensure that ACC guidance was always current. Where guidance has changed then Service managers have been contacted to ensure that their processes and risk assessments were also updated to ensure that ACC remained compliant with all current requirements.

3.3 All of the relevant guidance from Scottish government has been interpreted, documented and made available on the intranet on the Staying Safe Whilst Working pages within People Anytime, which allows managers to have an up to date source of information readily available.

3.4 Template risk assessments were developed initially and have been available for Service managers to use to develop their own specific assessments with both guidance and advice available from the corporate health and safety team (CHST). These Service risk assessments have all been reviewed by the CHST throughout the entire process to ensure that they were all suitable and sufficient. This review has also included the identification of requirements for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure that all employees who require this have had it made available to them and that no PPE was included as a requirement where there was no need, which follows a recommendation from the Health and Safety Executive.

3.5 Groups were established across several levels of the organisation to ensure that there was oversight in key areas all under the umbrella of the Incident Management Team. These included groups for PPE, Homeworking and one for Service Reinstatement. The terms of reference of all included the need for scrutiny and approval of anything which fed into the group and to allow early identification of any potential issues.

3.6 A workplace planning and protection workstream has recently been established to bring all of the work completed by other groups together in one place. This group will consider and discuss how to effectively implement any changes to Scottish Government guidance. Its membership will include service representation together with representation from multiple corporate disciplines to ensure that all affected areas of Aberdeen City Council's undertakings are identified and steps taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff and service users.

3.7 During the pandemic the default position has been for staff to work from home remotely where possible. This has resulted in a large number of staff now home working with varying work station set ups. ACC has instigated a process where

staff have been able to identify any issues they are having which has reslted in managers being able to identify what equipment is required to improve the health and safety of those employees. This approach meets with the guidance available from the Health and safety Executive.

3.8 Individual risk assessments have been required for staff who were identified as being vulnerable to the virus where they have not been working remotely. This process has evolved following recent Scottish government guidance to require all staff to complete a Covid-19 age risk assessment which looks to identify those who sit within the high and very high risk groups. This identification will still require line managers to prepare individual risk assessments in consultation with these employees and requires both parties to sign off and agree the controls put in place to ensure their safety.

3.9 The corporate health and safety team are carrying out a series of pre-arranged site visits to operational buildings. These visits are aimed to review the controls within the risk assessments and guidance are in place and being followed. Where any non-compliance is observed then the CHST is working in support of the line managers to agree and implement any required actions.

3.10 Trade Union colleagues have been involved in consultation during the processes especially during the reinstatement of services. This has allowed a collaborative approach to be established which both ensures the health and safety of employees but to give reassurance that what is being implemented is being carried out with that as its main goal.

3.11 The Health and Safety Executive recently carried out telephone interventions with schools. 12 Aberdeen City Council schools were contacted as part of this process with no issues being raised or further action being required.

Incidents (Jan– June 2020)

3.12 All incident and near miss information in this report has been provided to Service Area level.

3.13 **Incident information:**

The following table gives a breakdown of all incidents across all Functions and Clusters in Aberdeen City Council. In this reporting period there was a total of 189 incidents reported, this shows a decrease from the 391 incidents reported in the corresponding period in 2019. The figures in brackets show the figures reported for the period 1 Jan – 20 June 2019 as a comparison.

Function Cluster Service	1. RIDDOR Reportable employee (including absences over 7 days)	2. Non-RIDDOR reportable employee (absences of 4 to 7 days)	3. Non-RIDDOR reportable employee (absences of 0 to 3 days)	4. RIDDOR Reportable Non-employee	5. Non-RIDDOR reportable Non-employee	Total
AHSCP	**0(1)**	**0(1)**	**5(3)**	**0(0)**	**10(6)**	**15(11)**
Older Adult Services	0(1)	0(1)	4(3)	0(0)	4(5)	8(10)
Young Adult Services	0(0)	0(0)	1(0)	0(0)	6(1)	7(1)
Commissioning	**0(0)**	**0(1)**	**0(4)**	**0(0)**	**1(1)**	**1(6)**
Commercial & Procurement	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)
Governance	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)
Strategic Place Planning	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(1)	1(1)
City Growth	0(0)	0(1)	0(2)	0(0)	0(0)	0(3)
Customer	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**2(7)**	**0(0)**	**0(3)**	**2(10)**
Customer Experience	0(0)	0(0)	1(1)	0(0)	0(3)	1(4)
Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	0(0)	0(0)	1(6)	0(0)	0(0)	1(6)
Operations	**8(18)**	**0(6)**	**13(230)**	**0(0)**	**150(109)**	**171(363)**
Operations and Protective Services	5(12)	0(6)	11(40)	0(0)	1(0)	17(58)
Operations (Building Services)	1(4)	0(0)	5(18)	0(0)	1(0)	7(22)
Environmental	0(3)	0(3)	2(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(6)
Facilities	0(0)	0(2)	0(8)	0(0)	0(0)	0(10)
Fleet	0(0)	0(0)	0(2)	0(0)	0(0)	0(2)
Protective Services	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Roads	2(5)	0(0)	2(2)	0(0)	0(0)	4(7)
Waste	2(0)	0(1)	2(10)	0(0)	0(0)	4(11)
Integrated Children and Family Services	3(6)	0(0)	2(190)	0(0)	149(109)	154(305)
ASN – Target Provision	0(0)	0(0)	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	1(1)
Residential and Youth Services	0(1)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(2)
Schools	3(5)	0(0)	0(186)	0(0)	149(107)	152(298)
Quality Improvement	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(2)	0(2)
Early Years	0(0)	0(0)	1(2)	0(0)	0(0)	1(2)
Resources	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(1)**	**0(0)**	**0(1)**
Corporate Landlord	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(1)

Function Cluster Service	1. RIDDOR Reportable employee (including absences over 7 days)	2. Non-RIDDOR reportable employee (absences of 4 to 7 days)	3. Non-RIDDOR reportable employee (absences of 0 to 3 days)	4. RIDDOR Reportable Non-employee	5. Non-RIDDOR reportable Non-employee	Total
Total Jan- Jun	**8(19)**	**0(8)**	**20(244)**	**0(1)**	**161(119)**	**189(391)**

3.14 The figures in columns are compared to the () figures in corresponding period in 2019.

3.15 The figures have decreased across all Functions, which is possibly as a result of working restrictions imposed by Covid19.

3.16 During the period there was a restructure that seen Governance, City Growth and Strategic Place Planning move to the Commissioning Function.

3.17 Incident causation is detailed in the table below.

Function/Cluster	Slip, trip, fall	Exposure to substances	Contact with Machinery	Manual handling	Struck against	Falls from Height	Struck by Object	Another type of accident	Injured by Animal	Unacceptable behaviour	Contact with Electricity	Struck by Moving Vehicle	Total
AHSCP	**6(7)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**4(2)**	**0(0)**	**5(1)**	**0(1)**	**0(0)**	**15(11)**
Older Adult Services	4(6)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(2)	0(0)	4(1)	0(1)	0(0)	8(10)
Young Adult Services	2(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4(0)	0(0)	1(0)	0(0)	0(0)	7(1)
Customer	**1(1)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(1)**	**0(1)**	**0(0)**	**1(2)**	**0(2)**	**0(0)**	**0(2)**	**0(0)**	**0(1)**	**2(10)**
Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(2)	0(1)	0(0)	0(2)	0(0)	0(1)	1(8)
Customer Experience	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	1(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(2)
Operations	**25(54)**	**1(0)**	**2(5)**	**4(14)**	**4(10)**	**5(10)**	**28(31)**	**18(36)**	**1(0)**	**83(200)**	**0(1)**	**0(2)**	**171(363)**
Integrated Children's and Family Services	24(44)	1(0)	0(0)	3(2)	3(8)	4(9)	23(19)	15(27)	0(0)	82(200)	0(0)	0(0)	155(311)
Operations and Protective Services	1(10)	0(0)	2(5)	1(12)	1(2)	1(1)	5(12)	3(9)	1(0)	1(0)	0(1)	0(2)	16(54)
Commissioning	**0(1)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(2)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(1)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(1)**	**1(6)**
Commercial and Procurement	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)
Governance	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)
City Growth	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(2)
Strategic Place Planning	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	1(2)
Total Numbers	**33(63)**	**1(0)**	**2(5)**	**4(18)**	**4(11)**	**5(10)**	**28(33)**	**22(40)**	**1(1)**	**88(205)**	**0(2)**	**0(4)**	**189(391)**

3.18 The largest percentage of incidents reported is related to unacceptable behaviour followed by, slips, trips and falls.

3.19 When an incident is reported the corporate system generates an investigation report which the reporting officer is required to complete. This report highlights categories of criteria which require to be considered including root cause, actions identified and completion dates. These investigation reports are reviewed and

where non-compliant the reporting manager is contacted to advise on the need to complete and to be offered assistance with their investigation. For incidents where there is a requirement to RIDDOR report to HSE then the reporting manager is assisted in completing their investigation.

3.20 A report was presented to the Educational Operational Delivery Committee (EODC) on 12th March 2020 by the Programme Manager (Supporting Learners), which comprehensively outlined the various workstreams that are ongoing to develop an action plan that addresses the issues highlighted with the quarterly reports in relation to unacceptable behaviour. EODC is due to receive a follow-up report on these workstreams at its meeting on 26 November 2020. A working group, with Trade Union representation, meets to identify shared learning from previous Incident/Near Miss H&S data submitted by schools. This will form a standing agenda item for the Working Group.

HSE Reportable incidents (Jan – June 2020)

3.21 During this combined reporting period 8 employees were injured in incidents, which required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive, all incidents occurred between January and March 2020.

3.22 All RIDDOR incidents are followed up by the Corporate Health and Safety Team to get assurance that the correct causation and remedial actions been identified; also, that any remedial actions have been implemented.

Incident (reportable employee) frequency rates

Period – Quarterly	Reportable Incidence rate	Reporting period
January – June 2020	1	2020/21

3.23 The above figures are calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Incidence rate} = \frac{\text{RIDDOR injuries per period}}{\text{Number of employees}} \times 1000$$

3.24 The figure for the corresponding period last year (Jan-Jun 2019) was 19 RIDDOR reportable incidents.

Reportable Diseases

3.25 There were no reportable diseases reported under RIDDOR; which was also the case in the corresponding reporting period last year.

Near Miss Information

3.26 Many safety activities are reactive, that is, they occur after an injury incident. By reporting near-miss incidents this promotes proactive safety, thereby raising awareness of potential hazards and mitigation strategies before an injury occurs. Recognising and reporting near-miss incidents can significantly improve employee safety and enhance the safety culture.

3.27 The table below shows relevant near miss information for January– June 2020. Due to continued development of Power BI we are able to provide more detailed information within this report.

Function	Cluster	Service Area	Near Misses Jan - Jun 2020	Near Misses Jan – Jun 2019
AHSCP			**26**	**24**
	Older Adult Services		26	24
		Care Management	0	0
		Senior Management Learning Disabilities	0	23
		Service Management Criminal Justice	0	0
		Service Manager Mental health	0	1
		Unspecified Service	0	0
Commissioning			**5**	**3**
	Business Intelligence & Performance Management		0	0
	Commercial & Procurement		0	0
	Governance		0	0
	Strategic Place Planning		0	0
	City Growth		5	3
Customer			**52**	**50**
	Customer Experience		**15**	**15**
		Customer Services Operations	15	13
		Revenues & Benefits	0	0
		Transformation & Business Support	0	2
	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment		**37**	**35**
		Community Safety and ASBIT	13	13
		Housing Access and Support	0	2
		Housing Management	13	9
		Libraries	10	10
		Local Plan	1	1

	Data and Technology		0	0
		Core Data Technology	0	0
Operations			292	306
	Integrated Children's and Family Services		*278*	*279*
		Children's social work -residential and youth services	0	0
		ASN- Target Provision	0	0
		Education-Schools	278	60
		Education-Quality Improvement	0	0
	Operations and Protective Services		*14*	*27*
		Building Services	9	0
		Environmental Services	0	1
		Facilities Management	2	0
		Fleet Services	0	0
		Protective Services	0	0
		R & I – Road Operations	1	0
		Waste Services	2	0
Resources			**0**	**0**
		Corporate Landlord	0	0
Total			**375**	**383**

3.28 The table below shows the causation for the numbers of near misses in the table. The figures in brackets (where recorded) are for the corresponding period in 2019.

Function/Cluster/service area	Vandalism	Security	Other	Unacceptable behaviour	Total
AHSCP	**1(1)**	**0(0)**	**14(13)**	**11(10)**	**26(24)**
Older Adult Services	1(0)	0(0)	14(1)	11(1)	26(1)
Care Management	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Senior Manager Learning Disabilities	0(1)	0(0)	0(13)	0(9)	0(21)
Senior Manager Criminal Justice	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Senior Manager Mental Health	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(1)
Unspecified Service	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(1)
Commissioning	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**5(2)**	**0(1)**	**5(3)**
City Growth	0(0)	0(0)	5(2)	0(1)	5(3)
Strategic Place Planning	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Customer	**2(2)**	**5(5)**	**5(7)**	**40(36)**	**52(50)**
Customer Experience	**0(0)**	**3(3)**	**1(3)**	**11(8)**	**15(14)**
Customer Services	0(0)	3(3)	1(3)	11(8)	15(14)
Revenues and Benefits	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	**2(2)**	**2(2)**	**4(4)**	**29(28)**	**37(36)**
Community Safety and ASBIT	0(0)	0(0)	1(1)	12(12)	13(13)
Housing Access and Support	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)
Housing Management	0(0)	2(0)	1(1)	10(10)	13(11)
Libraries	2(2)	0(0)	2(2)	6(6)	10(10)
Local Plan	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	1(0)	1(1)
Data and Technology	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**
Core Data Network	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

Operations	5(5)	40(41)	35(38)	212(222)	292(306)
Integrated Children's and Family Services	*5(5)*	*40(40)*	*24(24)*	*209(210)*	*278(279)*
Education-Schools	5(1)	40(10)	24(8)	209(86)	278(93)
ASN Target Provision	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Children's Social Work-Residential and Youth	0(4)	0(30)	0(16)	0(0)	0(0)
Education-Quality Improvement	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Operations and Protective Services	*0(0)*	*0(1)*	*11(14)*	*3(5)*	*14(13)*
Building Services	0(0)	0(0)	8(6)	1(0)	9(6)
Environmental Services	0(0)	0(0)	0(1)	0(0)	0(1)
Facilities Management	0(0)	0(1)	1(1)	1(0)	2(6)
Protective Services	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
R & I Roads Operations	0(0)	0(0)	1(3)	0(0)	1(0)
Waste Services	0(0)	0(0)	1(3)	1(0)	2(0)
Resources	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**	**0(0)**
Corporate Landlord	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Total Numbers	**8(7)**	**45(47)**	**59(65)**	**263(248)**	**375(383)**

3.29 The overall number of near misses has decreased from 383 during the corresponding reporting period in 2019/20, to 375. This is a reduction of 9.8%. The highest number of incidents were recorded in the category 'Unacceptable behaviour' within the ICFS Function. This increase was not reflected across other Functions, where a reduction can be seen in most categories.

Regulator interventions (HSE / SFRS)

3.30 There are occasions where HSE and Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) contact Aberdeen City Council to request further information or ask for action to be taken with regard to the way Aberdeen City Council undertake their legal duties.

3.31 There were no interventions with HSE or SFRS in this reporting period.

Fire risk assessments

3.32 Fire risk assessments are completed on a rolling 5-year programme. A total of 34 fire risk assessments were completed during this reporting period. The average compliance score was 89%.

3.33 Multi-storey tenanted properties are assessed on a 3-year rolling programme. Two fire risk assessments were completed during this reporting with an average compliance score of 72%. Each multi-storey block has an action plan in place, these plans have a risk rating against them detailing the agreed timescales for the actions to be completed. There are 4 categories are for works to be completed within 4 hours, 24 days, 90 days and finally where there is a recommendation for work to be competed, where legal compliance is already achieved but to encourage best practice.

3.34 In the 2 multi-storey action plans 37 actions were identified across the risk ratings. There were no actions identified in the 4-hour action period. The 33 identified actions are included within a programmed plan of work, which ensures they are completed within the required timescales. This essential work has continued during the current pandemic and is due to be completed by mid-October as planned. An identified Officer within Corporate Landlord manages a database of required actions. It is their role to monitor progress of action and report compliance issues. The Corporate Health and Safety Team also audit this process to ensure actions are closed out in future in time.

Health and Safety Audits

3.35 There were no audits within the programme completed this quarter. The priority was assisting and advising Services on the completion of risk assessments and reinstatement questionnaire and risk assessments in response to COVID19.

Health and safety policies and guidance

3.36 No policies or procedures were reviewed during this quarter.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Health and safety legislation requires that an organisation has a suitably robust safety management system to ensure the health safety and welfare of their employees. Where any incident is of sufficient seriousness there is the potential that the Enforcing Authorities will become involved and carry out their own investigation into the circumstances of the incident. Any investigation could result in prosecution of the organisation and in some cases prosecution of managers and/or employees.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	There is the risk that any injury or serious health and safety incident could result in focus from the Health and Safety Executive which could result in enforcement action in the form of notices or prosecution.	M	All tasks are risk assessed and the controls implemented and supervised by line managers. All employees are trained to a level where they are competent to carry out the work. Analysis of the causes of the incidents, near misses and work-related absences and resultant improvements to prevent, where possible, reoccurrences, can reduce the financial exposure to the Council. An effective health and safety management system in which risks are identified and either eliminated or reduced will result in a reduction of costs to the organisation. If the Enforcing Authorities take a case to court against Aberdeen City Council for breaches of legislation then it could leave the Council liable to pay any fine or damages imposed and also for the expenses of any subsequent civil claim, which follows where an individual has suffered personal injury.
Operational	The risk is that any health and safety incident can lead to an injury to an employee which could have the potential to	M	If the task has been risk assessed; employees are trained, competent and supervised then there should be less likelihood of incidents.

	temporarily or permanently affect either or both their employment or their life. The risk to our citizens is that we are unable to provide the same level of service delivery due to staff absences from illness and injury sustained during their work. Also, there is the possibility of a reduced budget due to the associated financial costs.	M	Reducing the number of incidents will reduce the number of absences and the subsequent costs to the Council.
Financial	The risk is that any incident has the potential to bring a reduction in the overall budget in place to provide service delivery.	M	As per Compliance above
Reputational	Local and National press coverage of any incident can present reputational damage to the organisation.	M	Should be provided by each Function having a robust safety management system in place. There are many facets to this which are important starting from ensuring employees are trained and competent, every hazard is risk assessed and up to carrying out investigation of near misses to ensure controls are reviewed to consider whether remedial actions are required.
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	N/A

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	A healthy and safe workplace assists the overarching principles of the stretch outcomes within the LOIP by ensuring that resource is directed at the services required by the city. Removing the level of lost resource to the financial penalties incurred through the Civil and Law Courts and from the Regulators will allow the available resource to be best used to ensure funding of the growth sectors of the local economy.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The areas reported on within this report allow Clusters a further opportunity to recognise areas which when acted upon can assist with engagement of staff and service users to support the meaningful educational progress of children and young people.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	N/A
Regional and City Strategies	N/A
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

10. APPENDICES

N/A

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	29 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	EAS Annual Report April 2019 – March 2020, EAS, Occupational Health and Absence update Jan 20 – June 20
REPORT NUMBER	RES/20/128
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte, Director of Resources
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe, Organisational Development
REPORT AUTHOR	Neil Yacamini, Team Lead, Employee Transition
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.7

1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1   This report updates the Committee on utilisation of the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) provided by Time for Talking during the last 12 month period April 2019 – March 2020 and provides a 6 monthly update (January 2020 – June 2020) on the EAS, Occupational Health and Absence

2.   **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee:-

2.1   considers the contents of the report; and

2.2   agrees to 6 monthly reports to cover Occupational Health, Absence and the Employee Assistance Service which cover the periods January to June and July to December, always with reference and comparison to the previous reporting period, reported to appropriate committee dates thereafter.

3.   **BACKGROUND**

3.1   Following a joint tender evaluation process with Aberdeenshire Council, Therapeutic Counselling Services Ltd. (Time for Talking) were awarded the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) contract. The contract commenced on 01 January 2017 and is for the duration of 3 years and with the option of a one-year extension which was taken up in January this year. Iqarus were awarded the Occupational Health Contract which commenced in August 2018 for a period of 3 years with the option of a further two years.

3.2   This report contains Employee Assistance Service utilisation information on the 12-month reporting period (April 2019 – March 2020) and information relating to the EAS, Absence and Occupational Health from January 20 to July 20. This is in order to account for interruptions in the reporting cycles of committee this year.

3.3 An effective EAS service supports individuals with difficulties in their lives; sometimes these problems can affect an individual's ability to function fully at work or at home. This in turn may impact on their mental health and wellbeing, which may also impact on their productivity, attendance and associated costs. Both direct and indirect costs require to be considered.

3.4 The longer an employee is off work the more challenging it becomes to manage their health problems and less likely that they will return to work. Long-term absence is costly. There is mutual benefit if we can proactively support employees in the workplace and help employees avoid long waiting times for, e.g. counselling or psychological therapy.

Employee Assistance Service Utilisation (Annual Reporting Period April 2019 – March 2020)

3.5 A total of 144 referrals were made during the 12-month period comprising of employees (141) and family members (3). The overall figure is higher than the last annual reporting period (April 2018 – March 2019) of 140 referrals (employees 137; family members 3).

There were a higher number of referrals relating to Personal Issues (83) compared to Work Related Issues (61) a similar trend as the last reporting period and account for 42% of the use of the Service. 58% of the Service use is for non-work related issues.

The two main reasons for non-work related use of the EAS are personal stress (32% of referrals) and family reasons (15% of referrals) The greatest number of referrals was from Operations (62.5%), this includes Integrated Children's and Family Services and Protective Services and accounts for 68% of all employees in the workplace. The greatest percentage of staff usage came from Governance.

3.5.1 Overall the provided utilisation information has increased compared to last annual reporting period. Work Related Issues as a % of the usage have reduced since the last period, and of those work related issues Demands (Workload/ Stress/Anxiety) remained the most common reason for utilisation (48 out of 61, 79%). These figures show a reduction compared to last reporting period (where previously work related issues demands accounted for 43 out of 46, 93%). Of the Personal Issues 46 out of 83, 55% relates to Personal stress/Depression/Anxiety/Anger which again shows a reduction from the last reporting period (62 out of 94) 66%.

3.5.2 The breakdown of figures by Function and issue for the period April 2019 to March 2020 is shown in the table below: -

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Functions	Number of Staff within Service	% of Staff usage	Number of referrals	Personal Issues	Health/Bereavment	Addiction/Abuse	Relationship/Family Issues	Personal Stress/Depression/Anxiety/Anger	Traumatic Incident	Work Related Issues	Change (Organisational/redundancy)	Demands (Workload/Stress/Anxiety)	Relationships (with colleagues)	Relationships with manager (Bullying Harassment)	Role (Understanding of)	Support (discipline & grievance)	Control
Commissioning	101	1.98	<5		0	0	<5	<5	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer	1189	1.43	17		<5	0	<5	<5	0		<5	8	0	0	0	<5	0
Operations	5151	1.75	90		13	0	16	24	0		<5	28	<5	<5	<5	0	0
AHSCP	607	1.15	7		0	0	<5	<5	0		0	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	327	3.36	11		<5	0	0	5	0		0	<5	0	<5	0	0	0
Governance	81	8.64	7		0	0	0	<5	0		0	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Place	156	4.49	7		0	0	0	<5	0		0	<5	0	0	<5	0	0
Foster Carers	0		0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elected Members	0		0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Member	0		<5		<5	0	<5	<5	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Number of Referrals/C'ling	7612	1.89	144		16	0	21	46	0		<5	48	<5	<5	5	<5	0

3.5.3 A further breakdown of figures by cluster for the period April 2019 to March 2020 is shown in the table below: -

	Ccommercial and Procurement	Bus Intelligence & Perf Manage	ALEO's	Customer Experience	Early Interven and Comm Emp	Digital and technology	External Communications	Integrated Childrens and Fam Serv	Operations and Protective Services	AHSCP	Finance	Capital	People and Organisation	Corporate Landlord	Governance	Strategic Place Planning	City Growth	Foster Carers	Elected Members	Family Member
Commissioning	<5	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer	0	0	0	<5	12	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AHSCP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5	<5	5	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Governance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Place	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5	<5	0	0	0
Foster Carers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elected Members	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Member	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5
	<5	<5	0	<5	12	<5	0	67	23	7	<5	<5	5	<5	7	<5	<5	0	0	<5

3.6 As shown below, the number of referrals for the same reporting period (April 2019 to March 2020) are slightly higher than the last 3 years. However more has been done to increase awareness of the service for example posters have been displayed in all workplaces, new information leaflets have been produced and more information has been made available on People Anytime with the different

ways to contact Time for Talking. The increase in the number of people accessing this service should be seen positively as we seek to reduce the stigma around mental health and encourage staff to access all available support mechanisms.

Period		Numbers Accessing Service
From	To	
April 2016	March 2017	136
April 2017	March 2018	125
April 2018	March 2019	140
April 2019	March 2020	144

3.7 The percentage of the Council's workforce that used the service is detailed below, along with similar sized local authorities' industry averages for comparison for the annual reporting period:

Comparison of Service Usage Against Other Councils	
Aberdeen City Council	**1.49%**
Council B	1.09%
Council C	1.41%
Council D	2.61%

3.8 Both full-time (136) and part-time (8) employees are using the service (31% male; 69% females). There has been an increase in full-time (135) and an increase in part-time (2) using the service from the last annual reporting period. The majority of employees have been at work (97) compared to those absent from work (47) when receiving support.

This is a decrease in employees from the last reporting period of those who were absent from work (55). Three family members have used the service.

A project to promote the Employee Assistance Service amongst other support available is being undertaken jointly with the Trade Unions to ensure frontline employees have access to information about accessing this vital service. This will include our predominantly male workforce in our Operations Service.

Full details are shown in the table below:

	Demographics	Male	Female	Full Time	Part Time		Currently at work	Absent from work
Commissioning		0	<5	<5	0		<5	0
Customer		7	10	17	0		11	6
Operations		23	67	84	6		60	30
AHSCP		<5	<5	7	0		<5	<5
Resources		<5	7	10	<5		8	<5
Governance		<5	5	6	<5		6	<5
Place		5	<5	7	0		6	<5
Foster Carers		0	0	0	0		0	0
Elected Members		0	0	0	0		0	0
Family Member		<5	<5	<5	0		0	<5
		45	99	136	8		97	47

***Family member not included in Full / Part Time or at Work / Absent at work categories

3.9 In the reporting period there were both self-referrals (133) and management referrals (11). Self-referrals (126) have increased from the last annual reporting period and management-referrals (14) have decreased. The assistance provided was mainly via face to face counselling (94) along with telephone counselling (37), helpline advice and support (11), CBT Counselling Sessions (1) and Live Zilla Counselling Sessions (1) which allows face to face counselling to be done through a video call.

Face to face counselling has decreased (94 compared to 96) and telephone counselling has increased (37 compared to 22) on the last annual reporting period. Employees were made aware of the service via a range of means as detailed in the table below.

	Assistance Provided	Helpline/Advice Support	Telephone Counselling	Face to face counselling	CBT Counselling Sessions	Live Zilla Counselling sessions	Type of Referral	Management Referral	Self Referral	How Employees heard about Service	Website/Posters/Leaflets	Managers	Colleagues	HR	Wallet Cards
Commissioning		0	<5	<5	0	0		0	<5		24	60	18	40	<5
Customer		<5	<5	13	0	0		0	17						
Operations		8	24	58	0	0		9	81						
AHSCP		0	<5	5	0	0		0	7						
Resources		<5	<5	6	<5	<5		<5	10						
Governance		0	<5	<5	0	0		0	7						
Place		0	0	7	0	0		0	7						
Foster Carers		0	0	0	0	0		0	0						
Elected Members		0	0	0	0	0		0	0						
Family Member		<5	<5	0	0	0		<5	<5						
		11	37	94	<5	<5		11	133						

3.10 Service users are offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the service via a short questionnaire. A total of 17 anonymous questionnaires have been completed by service users in the last reporting period. Feedback on the service delivered by the provider was positive.

Employee Assistance Service Utilisation (covering the period January 2020 – June 2020)

3.11 A total of 58 referrals were made during the 6-month period comprising of employees only. The greatest number of referrals was from Operations (63.7%), this includes Integrated Children's and Family Services and Protective Services and accounts for 68% of all employees in the workplace. The greatest percentage of staff usage came from Governance. This is comparable to the Annual Report figures from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

3.11.1 The breakdown of figures by Function and issue for the period January 2020 to June 2020 is shown in the table below: -

Functions	Number of Staff within Service	% of Staff usage	Number of referrals	Personal Issues	Health/Bereavement	Addiction/Abuse	Relationship/Family Issues	Personal Stress/Depression/Anxiety/Anger	Traumatic Incident	Work Related Issues	Change (Organisational/redundancy)	Demands (Workload/Stress/Anxiety)	Relationships (with colleagues)	Relationships with manager (Bullying Harassment)	Role (Understanding of)	Support (discipline & grievance)	Control
Commissioning	101	0.99	<5		0	0	<5	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer	1189	0.84	10		0	0	<5	6	0		0	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Operations	5151	0.72	37		6	0	6	8	<5		<5	11	<5	0	<5	0	0
AHSCP	607	0.16	<5		<5	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	327	1.22	<5		0	0	0	<5	0		0	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Governance	81	3.70	<5		0	0	0	<5	0		0	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Place	156	1.28	<5		0	0	0	<5	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foster Carers	0		0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elected Members	0		0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Member	0		0		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Number of Referrals/C'ling	7612	0.76	58		7	0	8	20	<5		<5	17	<5	0	<5	0	0

3.11.2 A further breakdown of figures by cluster for the period January 2020 to June 2020 is shown in the table below: -

	Commercial and Procurement	Bus Intelligence & Perf Manage	ALEO's	Customer Experience	Early Interven and Comm Emp	Digital and technology	External Communications	Integrated Childrens and Fam Serv	Operations and Protective Services	Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership	Finance	Capital	People and Organisation	Corporate Landlord	Governance	Strategic Place Planning	City Growth	Foster Carers	Elected Members	Family Member
Commissioning	0	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer	0	0	0	<5	5	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AHSCP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Governance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	<5	0	0	0	0	0
Place	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5	<5	0	0	0
Foster Carers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elected Members	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Member	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	<5	0	<5	5	<5	0	29	8	<5	<5	0	<5	0	<5	<5	<5	0	0	0

3.11.3 Both full-time (51) and part-time (7) employees are using the service (32% male; 68% females). This is comparable with the annual report's figures. The majority of employees have been at work (40) compared to those absent from work (18) when receiving support. Full details are shown in the table on the next page:

	Demographics	Male	Female	Full Time	Part Time		Currently at work	Absent from work
Commissioning		0	<5	<5	0		<5	0
Customer		5	5	8	<5		6	<5
Operations		6	31	33	<5		24	13
AHSCP		0	<5	0	<5		<5	0
Resources		<5	<5	<5	0		<5	<5
Governance		0	<5	<5	0		<5	0
Place		<5	<5	<5	0		<5	0
Foster Carers		0	0	0	0		0	0
Elected Members		0	0	0	0		0	0
Family Member		0	0	0	0		0	0
		14	44	51	7		40	18

3.11.4 In the six-month reporting period January 2020 to June 2020 there were both self-referrals (54) and management referrals (<5). The assistance provided was mainly via telephone counselling (36) along with face to face counselling (21), helpline advice and support (10) and Lilve Zilla Counselling Sessions (<5).

Face to face counselling has decreased and telephone counselling has increased significantly on the annual reporting period. This is mainly due to the restrictions around Covid-19. Employees were made aware of the service via a range of means as detailed in the table below. During the period March – August this year particular focus in communications with staff and managers has been on this support service available to them.

	Assistance Provided	Helpline/Advice Only	No contact from client	Telephone Counselling	Face to face counselling	CBT Counselling Sessions	Live Zilla Counselling sessions	Type of Referral	Management Referral	Self Referral	How Employees heard about Service	Website/Posters/Leaflets	Managers	Colleagues	HR	Wallet Cards
Commissioning		0	0	<5	0	0	0		0	<5		15	26	6	11	0
Customer		<5	0	6	4	0	0		0	10						
Operations		5	0	23	14	0	0		<5	33						
AHSCP		<5	0	<5	0	0	0		0	<5						
Resources		<5	0	<5	<5	0	0		0	<5						
Governance		0	0	<5	0	0	<5		0	<5						
Place		0	0	0	<5	0	0		0	<5						
Foster Carers		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0						
Elected Members		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0						
Family Member		<5	0	0	0	0	0		0	0						
		10	0	36	21	0	<5		<5	54						

Occupational Health and Absence

3.12   Absence

3.12.1 The number of days lost to absence over the period of January 20 – June 20 is shown below: -

Month	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	April 20	May 20	June 20
Days lost	6403	6288	7481	5650	4990	5410
Days lost due to Covid-19	0	0	123	183	80	50

3.12.2 The number of days lost show an increase in absence at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Absence levels in March are at their highest and the table below shows a marked increase in respiratory absences between February and March. Respiratory illness drops in April however, at this point more information was available on Covid-19 and a separate absence category was introduced to capture Covid-19 absences.

3.12.3 The chart below shows absence days lost per month over the last 12 months.

Absence days lost per month

Month	Value
Jul-19	5915.1
Aug-19	5984.8
Sep-19	7299.3
Oct-19	5835.6
Nov-19	5745
Dec-19	5589
Jan-20	6403
Feb-20	6288
Mar-20	7481
Apr-20	5650
May-20	4990
Jun-20	5410
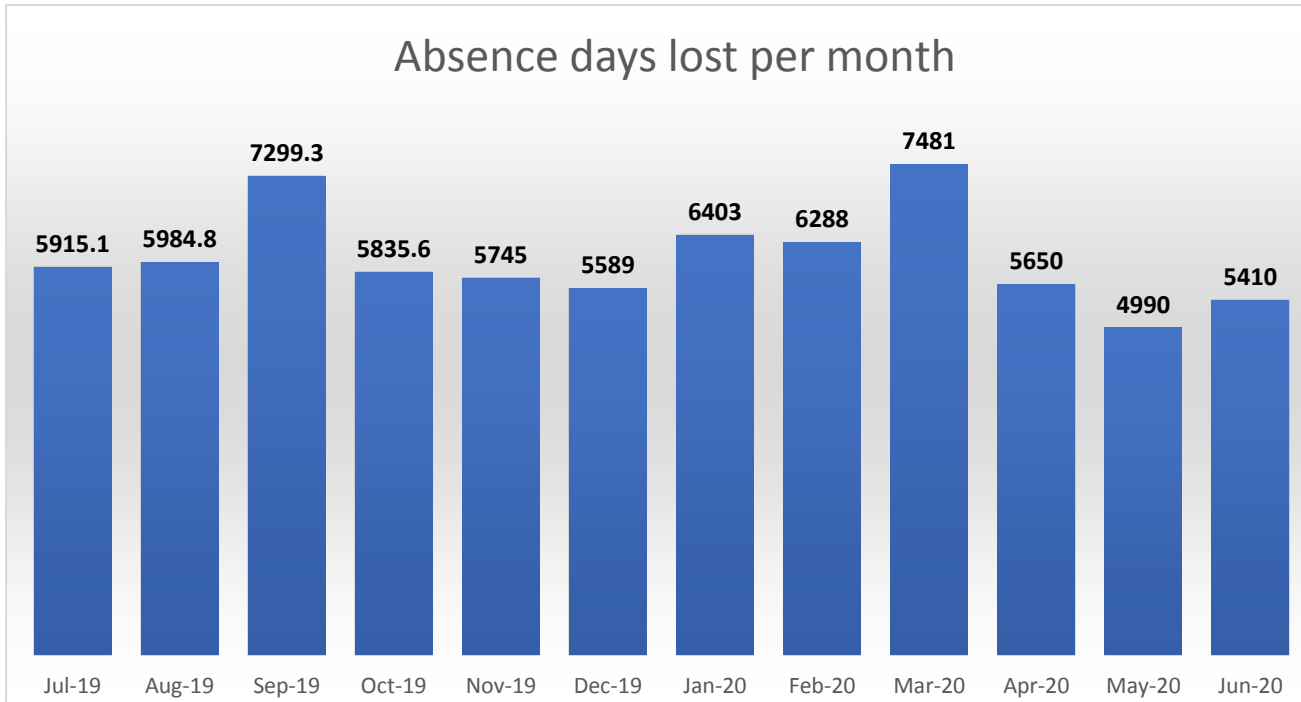
3.12.4   The Aberdeen City Council rolling rate for the period June 2019 to June 2020 is 10.8 absence days lost per employee which is above the target rolling rate over the 12 month period of 10 absence days lost per employee but is favourable compared to rolling rate from June 2018 to June 2019 of 11.19 absence days lost per employee in June 2019. While there has been a decline in absence it is important that all Managers continue to be pro-active in trying to reduce absence levels. It is important that all absences are closed off timeously by Managers. Figures continue to be scrutinised on a regular basis to identify patterns for targeted support and intervention and any inconsistencies in the information.

3.12.5   The table below shows the main sickness absence categories over the last 6-month period. Psychological and musculoskeletal absence remain the most common reasons for absence as compared with the last reporting period. Mitigating actions for both of these absence reasons have been a high priority throughout the period. These actions are outlined in report RES/20/154 which is also being presented to this Committee.

SICKNESS_CATEGORY	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020
Psychological	24.16%	23.11%	23.78%	23.85%	25.71%	26.03%
Musculoskeletal	23.80%	25.73%	24.00%	23.87%	24.64%	24.03%
Hospitalisation	8.11%	7.81%	7.22%	8.00%	7.43%	7.98%
Malignancy	7.68%	7.61%	7.34%	9.17%	8.25%	7.72%
Other	7.61%	9.28%	8.19%	7.97%	8.34%	8.44%
Gastro-intestinal	7.25%	8.37%	7.60%	6.45%	6.59%	6.74%
Respiratory	7.12%	6.05%	7.38%	5.44%	5.16%	5.48%
Neurological	4.88%	4.49%	5.79%	4.83%	4.93%	4.53%
Urological	3.07%	2.51%	2.46%	2.38%	2.40%	3.33%
Gynaecological	3.00%	1.07%	1.13%	1.16%	1.08%	1.20%
Cardiovascular	1.80%	1.58%	1.64%	2.11%	2.04%	1.93%
Dermatalogical	0.85%	1.08%	0.80%	0.81%	0.91%	0.88%
Viral	0.47%	0.89%	0.66%	0.32%	0.24%	0.34%
Opthalmic	0.14%	0.15%	0.23%	0.29%	0.27%	0.29%
Unauthorised Absence	0.04%	0.08%	0.03%	0.01%	0.04%	0.07%
Bacterial	0.02%	0.17%	0.02%	0.05%	0.35%	0.07%
Covid-19 Related			1.65%	3.24%	1.61%	0.93%
Endocrine		0.01%	0.09%	0.05%		
Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

3.12.6 The two main reasons for absence over the first six months of 2020 were psychological and musculoskeletal.

The table below shows the gender and age pattern of musculoskeletal and psychological absences:

	Musculoskeletal	Psychological	Total
Female	13	284	297
16-24	0	8	8
25-34	1	71	72
25-44	3	69	72
45-54	7	74	81
55 – 64	2	56	58
65+	0	6	6
Male	10	93	103
16 -24	0	4	4
25-34	2	17	19
35 -44	1	23	24
45-54	5	24	29
55-64	2	20	22
65+	0	5	5
Total	23	377	400

3.12.7 Psychological absence initially reduced over the period but is beginning to show an increase towards at the end of the period. We recognised that it is a particularly anxious time for employees in the current circumstances and have sought to provide additional support to them which are identified in Committee Report RES/20/154.

3.12.8 These actions include over the telephone and online counselling sessions, online eLearning courses to raise awareness and provide tools for self-improvement, online webinars to upskill leaders to provide additional information on how to support and have effective conversations to support employees.

3.12.9 Musculoskeletal absence also remains one of the highest reasons for sickness absence although over the six month period there were a number of fluctuations but it is now at a similar level in June 2020 as it was at the start of the year. Comparisons with previous report show that there has been a decrease from 27% of absence being musculoskeletal in August 19 to its current rate of 24.3% of absence.

3.12.10 Support is provided to Managers in relation to musculoskeletal absence through utilisation of physiotherapy which is available with the Occupational Health contract, the promotion and use of manual handling risk assessments and information will be shared with the Corporate Health and Safety team to provide targeted interventions.

3.12.11 Information received from our OH provider showed the most common reasons for OH referrals for employees also related to Psychological and musculoskeletal absence. There were 197 referrals during the six-month period which is a decrease on the number of referrals which would normally be expected. There were 289 referrals between January 2019 and June 2019. The highest number of referrals in the period between Jan 2020 and June 2020 was for mental health reasons.

3.12.12 The numbers of referrals for psychological accounted for 40% of all OH referrals. It accounted for 34% of referrals in the previous reporting period. There have been a number of campaigns through our Employee Assistance programme and also internally which have raised the awareness of mental health in the workplace.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct financial consequences resulting from this report. The award price for the current EAS contract has been calculated on the expected usage. If usage climbs above the expected level, there will be a cost implication and a sharp increase in usage should be investigated and considered.

4.2 There is also the potential for employment tribunal associated costs if an employee was to make an employment related claim against the Council.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Failure to comply with legislation in ensuring a safe and healthy workplace has the potential to result in enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Such intervention can result in potential prosecution (criminal) equally, employees (civil claims) are more likely to succeed following a successful HSE prosecution. Changes in the Sentencing and Fines Guidance for health and

safety non-compliances are resulting in increased financial penalties. Fine starting points are based on an organisation's turnover. As Local Authorities do not have turnover; Annual Revenue Budget is deemed to be the equivalent. This amount is then altered depending on the culpability of the organisation and harm factors to employees and members of the public.

5.2 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 there is a legal requirement to ensure the health safety and welfare at work of our employees. This includes minimising the risk of stress-related illness or injury to employees.

5.3 The provision of an EAS is in line with guidance produced by the HSE as one of the measures to control that risk. One person in four in the UK will experience a mental health problem in their lives.

5.4 HSE potential prosecution (criminal) can attract fines, imprisonment and remedial orders. There is also the possibility of employee claims (civil). Provision of an EAS can be used as mitigation against potential claims from employees exposed to work related stress.

6.   MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 The risks with the potential to impact the decision being sought from the Committee are categorised as:

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	Compliance with legal requirements ensures the health and safety of employees. Poor management of the risks and lack of support has the potential to attract enforcement action (criminal and civil).	M	Assessment of risk via stress and QWL's risk assessments with identification and implementation of safe working arrangements. Functions acting on utilisation, trend and root cause information to develop and implement controls to prevent a reoccurrence. Completion of Line Manager Competency Indicator Tool (HSE) by line managers acting on feedback. Provision of specialist support / advice.
Operational		M	As above. Provision of information, instruction and training as

			identified in Job Profiles, skills and training matrices and in risk assessment. Open and clear two-way communication at all levels within the organisation. Non-judgmental and proactive support provided to employees who experience mental health problems. Good self-management of personal wellbeing and resilience.
Financial	If no action is taken to support individuals and address trends, then the organisation will incur both direct and indirect costs.	M	Implementation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy and supporting Stress Procedure. Effective management and maintenance of a mentally healthy workplace and provision of appropriate support. Review and identification of EAS use and related absence to act on lessons learned. Corporate and individual awareness of mental health in the workplace. Active monitoring of workloads.
Reputational	Without ensuring suitable employee support there is a risk of the organisation not being seen as an employer of choice and having recruitment and retention issues.	L	As above.
Environmental / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The Prosperous People theme in the LOIP indicates that all people in the City are entitled to feel safe, protected from harm and supported where necessary, which would include employees of the Council. Adopting the approach outlined int the report will support the workforce.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Employee Assistance Service – Time for Talking Annual review 01 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

10. APPENDICES

None

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	29 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Mental Health and Wellbeing Report
REPORT NUMBER	RES/20/154
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte, Director of Resources
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe, Organisational Development
REPORT AUTHOR	Neil Yacamini, Team Lead – Employee Transition
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.7

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the work that has been undertaken during lockdown during the period March – August 2020 in respect of mental health and wellbeing, in line with the role of the Committee to monitor the wellbeing of employees

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Committee considers the content of the report and notes the actions carried out so far to address and support positive employee mental health.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 Since the start of the pandemic, the People and Organisational Development Cluster, in partnership with Health and Safety and other colleagues, have undertaken mitigating actions recognising the potential for increased mental health concerns amongst employees during a period of increased stress and anxiety. We continue to work closely with trade union colleagues to support employees and to deliver a range of support which is related to mental health and wellbeing.

3.2 Details of these supportive measures put in place are contained within Appendix A.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There is a financial cost resulting from some of the areas highlighted in the appendix to the report. These costs have been funded through the Council's Flexible Working Development Fund application and through the corporate training budget, in line with our priorities set out the approved Workforce Plan seen at Staff Governance Committee in June 2019.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Failure to comply with legislation in ensuring a safe and healthy workplace has the potential to result in enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Such intervention can result in potential prosecution (criminal) and employees (civil claims) are more likely to succeed following a successful HSE prosecution. Changes in the Sentencing and Fines Guidance for health and safety non-compliances are resulting in increased financial penalties. Fine starting points are based on an organisation's turnover. As Local Authorities do not have turnover; their Annual Revenue Budget is deemed to be the equivalent. This amount is then altered depending on the culpability of the organisation and harm factors to employees and members of the public.

5.2 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, there is a legal requirement to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of our employees. This includes minimising the risk of stress-related illness or injury to employees.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 The risks with the potential to impact the decision being sought from the Committee are categorised as:

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	Compliance with legal requirements ensures the health and safety of employees).	M	Actions outlined in the appendix provide additional support for employees.
Operational	N/A	N/A	N/A
Financial	If no action is taken to support individuals and address trends, then the organisation will incur both direct and indirect costs.	M	Implementation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy and supporting Stress Procedure. Effective management and maintenance of a mentally healthy workplace and provision of appropriate support.
Reputational	Without ensuring suitable employee support there is a risk of the organisation not being seen as an employer of choice and having	L	As above.

	recruitment and retention issues.		
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A

7.   OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The Prosperous People theme in the LOIP indicates that all people in the City are entitled to feel safe, protected from harm and supported where necessary, which would include employees of the Council. Adopting the approach outlined in the report will support the workforce.

8.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	**Outcome**
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10.   APPENDICES

Appendix A - ACC Employees Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives in response to Covid-19 Outbreak 2020

11.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix A

People and Organisational Development – ACC Employees Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

Contents

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Appendix A

1. Introduction

During the Coronavirus outbreak, the People and Organisational Development Cluster in partnership with teams across the Council including Health and Safety, responded in a rapidly changing environment to put in place measures to support the workforce. A considerable quantity of information has been published on our People Anytime site and shared in regular communications targeting all employees or managers specifically, to keep the workforce as informed as possible during this time. Initiatives and temporary changes to practices, where required to respond to government guidance or to support the workforce, were rapidly put in place and benchmarking activity was conducted with other Local Authorities throughout the period.

Taking Mental Health as a particular area of focus during this turbulent time for our workforce; whilst face to face employee health and wellbeing initiatives were put on hold due to the Government's advice, alternative methods of delivery were sought and shared to ensure employees had access to all relevant information to help keep them safe and connected.

This paper outlines the range of workforce initiatives and actions taken over the period March 2020 to August 2020 to support mental health and wellbeing, or where there would be a positive or supportive impact on mental health and wellbeing indirectly.

2. Communications

To ensure that employees remained connected and informed during this potentially increasingly stressful time, online support, information and national campaigns were posted and included on our internal communications systems. This included a host of dedicated pages on our People Anytime site which is kept up to date with relevant information relating to the pandemic and on our intranet.

Along with this, regular updates including those from our Chief Executive are published on the Intranet and direct updates are sent to managers through the Leadership Forum and by email. This is to help disseminate the information across the organisation to <u>all</u> employees to ensure they are fully informed with timely information and thereby reduce uncertainty and anxiety.

Regular video messages and webinars have also been organised, on topics relevant to the emergency response or as a support to working in a different way, providing updates or training in a more personable way to staff. These messages are recorded so that they can be watched by anyone unable to attend the live session.

A text messaging service was utilised in April to Council mobile numbers to highlight the link to the People Anytime pages, which are accessible on any device including personal devices. A **payslip alert** was also sent out to all employees who receive paper pay slips in the month of May to ensure that <u>all</u> of our employees had the opportunity to know where to go to find this regularly updated information relating to

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all matters relating to the Covid-19 pandemic including support for mental health and wellbeing and information relating to their employment.

A multi-faceted communications campaign is also planned in the coming weeks to ensure we reach all our employees, especially those on the frontline who may not necessarily have ready access to online resources and who have been crucial to the continuation of public services during this period.

2.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing Blogs

Regular mental health and wellbeing blogs based on the "5 ways to wellbeing" theme have been communicated to the organisation throughout the pandemic via the new Intranet. Emails have also been sent directly to Managers where employees don't readily have access to the intranet to help with disseminating this information and messages.

2.2 Online Staff Magazine - 'The Blether'

The Blether was launched in early April 2020. While not in direct response to the pandemic, the launch was brought forward because of a desire to connect members of staff who were working from home. The magazine is entirely employee-led. It supports positive mental health and wellbeing by valuing people, celebrating success and driving a positive and supportive culture across the organisation. This is in line with the first of the "five ways to wellbeing" themes, *Connect.*

The format of the magazine is informal and inclusive. Anyone can submit a story on a subject of their choice. As well as feature articles, the magazine is home to a weekly quiz, "Desk Jams" music section, Pet's Corner and Cooking Club. These aim to encourage a sense of community and mutual support within the organisation. The magazine also promotes wider initiatives like Mental Health Week, The Star Awards and Aberdeen City in Bloom.

The Blether is found on the Intranet home page and uses Microsoft Teams where colleagues can get involved in informal conversations and online support. This enables colleagues to stay connected and included in the ACC community. The informal nature of *The Blether* has proven popular with readers and each news post

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is typically read by 300 – 400 unique viewers. To date, the magazine home page has had over 7,000 views since launch and there are 239 users registered with *The Blether* community on Microsoft Teams.

2.3 Operational Updates

Regular operational updates have been included on our People Anytime site to help keep the organisation abreast of changes in service delivery across the organisation. This ensures employees are kept up to date with any changes as quickly as they happen, and especially when some of these changes have been featured in external press reports, including when services were stood down at the start of lockdown and updates as services are reinstated.

2.4 Employee Frequently Asked Questions

There is a section for employees frequently asked questions that have been collated from various sources published on People Anytime including information about pay and leave. These are added to on the basis of feedback from staff.

2.5 Manager's Guidance

There's a full page dedicated to advice for managers including useful checklists and information on recording absence on CoreHR, advice from COSLA, symptoms and protecting vulnerable people, working from home and alternative arrangements, pay and leave, annual leave, temporary movement of employees, childcare, teachers information, agency workers and a vast list of frequently asked questions.

2.6 Supporting Your Teams - 1-2-1's and Regular Contact

Communications from the Chief Executive, People Anytime pages and Mental Health and Wellbeing blogs have been disseminated regularly to give managers the appropriate tools to support their teams' mental wellbeing during this time. The information includes good practices on having successful 1-2-1s, compassionate conversations and building open relationships within your teams. There's also various links to council policies to help managers support their employees during this time.

3   Staying Safe and Well

Reading credible sources of information can help to avoid the fear and anxiety that misinformation can cause. It is therefore very important for all our employees to be able find trustworthy information quickly and easily. To ensure they have the correct public health and Scottish Government information, we have created pages on our website with the most up to date information for example on how to identify

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coronavirus symptoms, what to do if you or a household member has symptoms, how to stay safe at work through to how to get tested, and all of our online pages are referred to in regular communications bulletins.

3.1 Symptoms and How to Stay Healthy

We have information available for employees with symptoms of coronavirus including what to do when it is suspected that a household member has symptoms. There is also information on the People Anytime site regarding how to stay healthy and links to the latest government advice on avoiding transmission.

3.2 Underlying Medical Conditions

For those who are at an increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus we have flagged and updated the Scottish Government guidance regarding physical distancing and shielding measures and ensured that there has been clarity around the leave arrangements allocated to the employees within these categories. We have ensured that there are links to the official guidance as well as links to specific advice for those required to take special leave during this time.

In line with this we made a temporary extension to our special leave policy to cover those with caring pressures during the Covid-19 pandemic and the school closures. This meant that employees who were struggling with the conflicting demands of caring/home schooling and work could make use of up to 14 days of paid special leave. The use of special leave in a flexible way can help to reduce stress and anxiety with having to juggle work and the role of carer during the pandemic.

3.3 Covid-19 Age Risk Assessment

We have also implemented the Scottish government process where employees are required to complete a Covid-19 age risk assessment which identifies the actual risk for every employee. Where the resultant age assessment lies within the high or very high category it requires a line manager to work with an employee to create an individual risk assessment which looks at the role and required controls. This requires sign off by both parties and is seen as a vital process to give these higher risk employees a heightened level of reassurance that they will be safe.

3.4 Self-Isolation

Employees may be required to self-isolate for several reasons which include: having symptoms themselves, living with someone with symptoms or being contacted by a contact tracer because they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus. This information is available for all employees on the People Anytime pages.

Additional categories have been added to our HR/Payroll system, CoreHR, to allow for the recording of employees who are either absent due to Covid-19 or working from home with Covid-19 symptoms or as an alternative to normal working arrangements. In line with COSLA guidance on the reporting of Covid-19 those who

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are sick and unable to work are recorded as absent. Weekly returns on the impact on Covid-19 are shared with COSLA. Regular communications to managers providing advice and guidance has been shared regarding staying in regular contact with their employees. The list of categories can be seen below: -

Sick Leave - Symptoms
Special Leave (Paid) - Self-Isolation/ Symptoms
Special Leave (Paid) - Underlying Medical Condition
Special Leave (Paid) - Caring Responsibilities
Special Leave (Paid) - Service Closure
Special Leave (Paid) - Shielding
Covid Working from Home – Covid – Alternative to Normal Work

Sickness absence is recorded as a separate category where it is related to coronavirus. This ensures that the absence does not impact on an individual's overall absence record, as it is treated separately.

3.5   Test and Protect – Covid-19 Testing

We have worked with colleagues in NHS Grampian to ensure that we have a system in place to make testing of employees or their household members who require access to a Covid-19 test and a system in place to be notified of the outcome of testing. Information on Covid-19 testing for employees is on our People Anytime site and is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that any changes to Scottish Government policy are implemented. Employees who have identified that they are self-isolating in CoreHR are contacted and advised about the process for testing. In addition to this we have registered for the Employers Portal which is utilised for the test of asymptomatic teachers. Currently 167 employees have been referred to NHS Grampian for testing and 2 asymptomatic teachers have been referred through the Employers Portal.

3.6 Home Working and Staying Healthy

As many employees are working from home and using temporary display screen equipment set ups in their homes, information relating to setting up your equipment safely and how to stretch and exercise throughout the day was shared with staff and included the guidance on workstation exercises and how to work from home and stay physically well.

There is further information and best practices on our People Anytime pages too to help employees get the most out of working from home during this time.

3.7 Staying Safe at Work

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There are many employees working in frontline services who have had to remain onsite during the coronavirus outbreak. Having to continue to go into the workplace during the pandemic could lead to employees feeling worried about their safety.

Risk assessments have been completed by all critical services since the outset of the pandemic. These have been completed with the advice and guidance of the Corporate Health and Safety Team (CHST) who have also been reviewing every completed risk assessment to ensure that they are suitable and sufficient and meet the requirements outlined within Scottish government guidance. Where guidance has changed managers have been identified, contacted to allow risk assessments and work processes to be changed to ensure that employees remain safe.

All of these risk assessments are available to be viewed by all ACC employees and managers requested to share them and the outcomes of them with impacted employees directly and this and all other relevant information has been shared in the regular communications programme which has been established and followed throughout the whole period.

Proactive support is also being delivered by our People and Organisational Development Advisors who have been contacting managers directly around risk assessments as well as assessing if they have all the guidance they need generally to support their team and themselves.

Where the Scottish government route map phases have allowed, Services have been reinstated and to support this a step by step risk assessment process has been required to be followed by managers with these again being reviewed by the CHST. Each reinstatement was/is required to be reviewed by the Service Reinstatement Working Group and to receive approval, they have to evidence that they have taken all the steps to comply with the route map and relevant guidance.

A major part of this whole process has been engagement and communication with Trade Unions. During reinstatement of any Service there is a requirement that Service managers engage with all Trade Unions including the sharing of all risk assessments and Gateway questionnaires. This collaborative process has assisted in giving assurance that all of ACC employees will be safe when carrying out any work required within their roles.

3.8 Domestic Abuse Guidance

In line with Scottish Government Guidance, all those who can work from home are continuing to do so. We currently have a high number of employees working from home. This does however create specific challenges and potential risks for any members of employees who are experiencing domestic abuse in the home setting not only for themselves but also for their children and young people.

We have introduced new guidance to help support employees during this time which includes creating a safe phrase to use with your managers and colleagues should they be in imminent danger and need support to leave the home and have communicated and advertised this information directly to employees and managers

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and on our People Anytime site. This is particularly important when there are restrictions on travel either nationally or locally, as there are exemptions in place in these scenarios.

3.9 Annual Leave

It's important for employees to take annual leave during this time to help maintain good resilience and improve mental wellbeing and work-life balance. We have issued information to encourage and remind employees to do this and asked managers to be proactively encouraging employees to take a break. The government has announced a temporary amendment to
the Working Time Directive in relation to COVID-19, to give employees an entitlement to carry over up to 20 days of annual leave into the next 2 years where it has not been possible to take leave as a result of COVID-19.

This is accompanied by the current scenario of staff unable to travel for booked or planned holidays as well as largely working from home and an
increased potential therefore of annual leave not
being utilised. This compounds risks to the health and wellbeing of staff as well as the potential operational issue to the organisation later in the year, or during 2021, due to the building up of annual leave.

Additional information about the changes to legislation regarding the carry forward of annual leave due to the Covid-19 outbreak has also been communicated to managers and guidance covering Annual Leave during Covid has been published to help managers and employees plan out their leave across the year as well as highlighting the importance of using leave for mental health and general wellbeing. The document also lays out the implications of the change in legislation in terms of those who qualify and how this will be applied.

3.10 Financial Support

It is important for our overall mental wellbeing to have as much support available to employees during this time on financial matters. We have created a page signposting employees to relevant sites for anyone who might find themselves or their families struggling with financial hardship.

On 17th April COSLA Leaders signed off circular SJC-62, Guidance for Covid-19 Casual Worker Compensation for Lost Pay Guidance for Covid-19 Casual Worker Compensation for Lost Pay. This circular sets out the pay arrangements for Casual workers (also referred to as Relief or Supply workers) who undertook casual work for the Council in the period January – March 2020 and remain available for work.

Arrangements were established to ensure that the necessary payments were made for casual worker payments for those who would otherwise have expected to have been providing casual cover had the pandemic not occurred

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4. Mental Health Support for Employees

As well as the usual forms of health and wellbeing support being in place, additional initiatives have been added to support employee's overall wellbeing during this time. These have included:

4.1 Mental Health Awareness Webinars and Training

Our partnership with SAMH will help us to deliver 4 online interactive sessions on raising Mental Health awareness with employees and managers. The 4 webinar style sessions commenced on 19 August and will run through to 9 September to complement and promote World Suicide Prevention Day on Thursday 10 September 2020. The sessions will cover:

Session 1 – Mental Health Awareness
19 August 2020 - 206 attended live event with 55 watching recorded session so far
Session 2 – An introduction to Suicide Prevention
26 August 2020 – 154 attended live event with 13 watching recorded session so far
Session 3 – Having Effective Conversations
2 September 2020 – 135 attended live event – recorded session to be posted

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Session 4 – **Mentally Health Workplaces with practical tools**
9 September 2020

Furthermore, in depth online training courses will be delivered to small groups of employees to support their own mental health and wellbeing. These two courses will both be run as pilots with full evaluation of the benefits of undertaking before considering rolling out further to the organisation. The subject of these two training courses are:

Course 1 – Maintaining Wellbeing
Course 2 – Building Resilience

4.2   Time for Talking – Employee Assistance Service

Online and Telephone Counselling Sessions were introduced due to the coronavirus lockdown which meant face to face sessions had to be suspended. These online and over the phone consultations are open to all employees and their families within the household to access, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

4.3 Mental Health First Aid Network

We currently have 64 Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation providing a support service to employees who may be struggling during the lockdown. Contact details were updated on the People Anytime site so that employees could continue to use this service via Teams/Email or telephone.

Our Mental Health First Aiders have been taking a proactive role to keep in touch with their colleagues and have been sharing information regarding staying well during the pandemic outbreak.

Face to face training commenced at Aberdeen College in September 2020. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, a reduced number of 5 attendees were allowed to attend this first training at the beginning of September. A further course is scheduled to take place in October during Mental Health Awareness Week and this will allow a further 8 MHFA's to join, growing the network to 77 across the organisation. We will continue to grow this service across the organisation over the coming year.

4.4 Mental Health Specialists

Links for employees to easily find professional advice and support services are available on People Anytime and includes the following:

Breathing Space - is a free, confidential phone and web-based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.
Psychological Resilience Hub - offers a support mechanism for any member of employees or the public who may feel overwhelmed, upset or personally affected by the current situation.

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Ready Scotland - has lots of sources of useful information to help you stay safe and well during the outbreak.
Samaritans – created a coronavirus hub with practical information and advice on how people can look after their wellbeing and support one another during this time.
SamH - created additional pages on their website dedicated to COVID-19 and mental wellbeing.
NHS Inform – mental wellbeing top tips to keep you well.

4.5 Campaign Alerts

The team has kept abreast on all the various campaigns that have been coming out during the pandemic to ensure employees are aware of these. They have been communicated across the organisation using regular blog updates, adverts on the People Anytime site and direct emails. The campaigns included are:

https://clearyourhead.scot/

Scottish Governments Mental Health Campaign - https://clearyourhead.scot/

Gov.UK – mental health and wellbeing advice during coronavirus outbreak

Grampian Coronavirus Assistance Hub - https://gcah.org.uk/

Mental Health Awareness Week Campaign –18 – 24 May 2020 – Theme: *Kindness Matters*

https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week

4.6 Online Apps to Help Reduce Anxiety

We realise that it's not a "one size fits all" when it comes to looking after your wellbeing so we've sourced several free useful apps to help employees relax and stay calm during the pandemic and these can be found advertised on our People Anytime pages.

4.7 Suicide Prevention

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World Suicide Prevention day is on Thursday 10 September 2020 and the theme this year is "Working together to Prevent Suicide". The statistics tell us that at any time 1 in 20 people could be having suicidal thoughts. We've therefore partnered with SAMH to deliver an awareness raising campaign on this subject.

A webinar session took place on Wednesday 26 August 2020 with over 150 attendees and staff continuing to watch the webinar after the event. The focus of the session was the signs to look out for and how to have open conversations with employees who might be displaying signs of suicidal thoughts.

The webinar and a series of short videos provided by the NHS (**Ask, Tell, Save a Life**) are hosted on our People Anytime Mental Health Skills and Training page for employees to undertake to gain an understanding of the signs to look out for and how to have courageous conversations on the subject of suicide prevention.

We also have further information on our People Anytime Mental Health pages on this subject as well as signposting to the Preventing Suicide North East Scotland app which can be accessed by clicking on the icon.
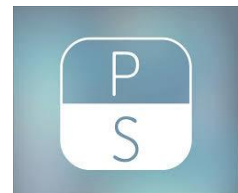
We're also currently working on making the App accessible on all Council devices to provide a tool for anyone supporting someone who may struggling.

5. Additional Employee Wellbeing Support

5.1 Alcohol and Substance Advice

Information campaigns and services to educate employees to stay aware of moderation and abstinence during the lockdown.

Alcohol Advice
Drug Advice
Tobacco Advice
One Year No Beer – access to free introductory offer to use full resources for a limited time

ADVICE DURING COVID-19

SCOTTISH FAMILIES AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Offers support for anyone concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use

- You can chat to someone at **08080 101 011**
- Monday-Friday 9am-11pm
- Visit **sfad.org.uk** for more information

5.2 NHS Online Exercise Tutorials

Exercise sessions sourced from NHS Inform which included, Yoga and Pilates were posted on People Anytime to encourage employees to try out these gentle forms of stretching exercises to keep fit at home during the lockdown:
NHS Inform – advice on keeping active

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5.3 Pilates – Tutor led sessions

Our onsite Pilates instructor has continued to run her classes online during lockdown with many of its regular attendees signing up and continuing to attend. Details about the online classes and how to get access to these sessions can be found on our People Anytime pages.

5.4 Online Learning – Personal Development

Many of our colleagues had been sent home due to their service not being able to perform their regular duties during the lockdown in line with Scottish Government Guidance and this presented a great opportunity for employees to do a little self-development during this time. Several online courses were sourced to specifically help employees adjust to the new ways of working from home as well as to help raise awareness of mental health issues, reduce anxiety and build personal resilience.

5.5 Virtual Internal Training Courses

The People Development Team have delivered online virtual training to employees during Covid-19 on the following subjects:

Personal Impact with Confidence (Jigsaw) - 25 people trained
Dealing with Difficult Situations Training - 29 people trained
The Coach Approach to Managing - 19 people trained

5.6 eLearning From North East Scotland College:

Part I – Awareness
- What is mental health?
- Causes, effects and impact
- What is stress?
- Resilience
- Understanding anxiety and depression

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Part II – Proactive Approach
- Listening Skills
- Resources

Part III – Self-Help
- Help to deal with stress, anxiety and depression

5.7 eLearning Modules provided by SamH:

Adapt and Evolve eLearning Module
Coronavirus and Your Mental Wellbeing (SAMH)

5.8 Online Learning From Other Sources:

the **skills** network	Online Learning	Future Learn
Free online courses available	A range of professional learning resources you can access from home – most are free and some come with certification	Is coronavirus affecting your education or work? Explore online courses to continue studying, build professional skills, and connect with experts.

There are also other online learning materials around mental health awareness available on our People Anytime pages covering the following subjects:

- Mental Health eLearning for Teachers – developed by SamH
- See Me in Work eLearning training – developed by See Me Scotland
- Understanding Sleep eLearning Training developed by the Royal Society of Public Health

And further courses hosted on our Learning Management System covering the following subjects:

- Mentally Healthy Workplaces eLearning
- Ask, Tell, Save a Life – online learning clips on Suicide Prevention
- Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace eLearning
- Stress Awareness for Managers eLearning

A full range of other training is also available on our People Development pages on People Anytime.

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5.9 Financial Support

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6. What's Next

6.1 Frontline Workers Awareness and Support Campaign

We're working to come up with some key messaging for our frontline employees (waste, grounds, roads, cleaning/catering etc.) who don't normally have access to online communications to ensure that the information and vital support available reaches this crucial sector of the workforce. This will take the form of a physical campaign and will include information relating to financial wellbeing and where to find the right support if you are struggling.

6.2 Mental Health First Aid Training

Our face to face training programme for Mental Health First Aiders resumed in September 2020 with a further 5 employees being trained to join the network to build on the numbers we currently have and to ensure there is adequate cover of this service in all areas across the organisation.

6.3 Mental Health Champions Network

We're looking into rolling out a network of mental health champions across the organisation to take forward and promote good mental health practices across the organisation. The champions will be key to disseminating and displaying relevant information about initiatives and support that is available to employees across the organisation. Champions will receive appropriate specific training on the subject and will form a branch of the Mental Health Action Group.

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6.4 World Mental Health Day 2020

World Mental Health Day 2020 is our most important one yet. This year has been tough on us all and the months of lockdown and loss have had a huge impact on our mental health. The World Health Organisation recognises World Mental Health Day on 10 October every year and this year's theme set by the World Federation for Mental Health is **Mental Health for All - Greater Investment – Greater Access**.

We'll be running events during the week commencing 5 October 2020 to raise awareness including Scottish Mental Health First Aider, Maintaining Wellbeing and Building Resilience training, online campaigns and signposting to key services.

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