

Public Document Pack



To: Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; Councillor Steve Delaney, the Depute Provost; and Councillors Crockett, Davidson, Fairfull, Graham, Macdonald, MacGregor, Massey, McLeod and Thomson.

Trade Union Advisers: Ron Constable and Carole Thorpe (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); Jason Currie and 1 vacancy (SSTA); Mark Musk and Alison Robertson (UNISON); Joe Craig and Mishelle Gray (UNITE); Fiona Sales (UCATT) and Rob Stephen and 1 vacancy (VOICE).

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 25 August 2023

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Members of the **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Council Chamber - Town House on MONDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 10.00am**. This is a hybrid meeting and Members may also attend remotely.

The meeting will be webcast and a live stream can be viewed on the Council's website. <https://aberdeen.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

JENNI LAWSON
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER – GOVERNANCE (LEGAL)

B U S I N E S S

NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1.1. There are no items at this time

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2.1. There are no items of exempt business

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

3.1. Members are requested to declare any interests

DEPUTATIONS

4.1. None at this time

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1. Minute of Previous Meeting of 26 June 2023 - for approval (Pages 3 - 8)

COMMITTEE PLANNER

6.1. Committee Business Planner (Pages 9 - 12)

NOTICES OF MOTION

7.1. None at this time

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

8.1. None at this time

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING OF STAFF

9.1. Corporate Health and Safety – April – June 2023 - COM/23/259 (Pages 13 - 34)

COUNCIL POLICIES AFFECTING STAFF

10.1. Family Friendly Policies Project Update - CUS/23/244 (Pages 35 - 48)

Integrated Impact Assessments related to reports on this agenda can be viewed [here](#)

To access the Service Updates for this Committee please click [here](#)

Website Address: aberdeencity.gov.uk

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

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 26 June 2023. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; Councillor Steve Delaney, the Depute Provost; and Councillors Boulton, Davidson, Fairfull, Graham, Macdonald, MacGregor, Massey, McLeod and Thomson.

Trade Union Advisers:- Carole Thorpe and Ron Constable (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); Mark Musk and Alison Robertson (UNISON); Joe Craig (UNITE); and Fiona Sales (UCATT).

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 AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. There were no declarations of interest nor transparency statements made.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 13 MARCH 2023

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 13 March 2023 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the planner of committee business as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal).

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the reasons outlined in the planner for the delay to items 14 (Equality and Diversity Policy) and 18 (Staff Governance Committee Annual Effectiveness Report); and
- (ii) to otherwise note the planner.

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CLUSTER RISK REGISTER AND ASSURANCE MAP - CUS/23/185

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer which presented the Cluster Risk Register and Assurance Map in accordance with Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference to provide assurance that risks were being managed effectively within the People and Organisational Development Cluster.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the Cluster Risk Register and Assurance Map set out in Appendices A and B.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers had advised that the risk register would be updated depending on the outcome of the UNITE/GMB ballot of school staff; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the risk register and assurance map.

ABERDEEN SCIENTIFIC SERVICES LAB MOVE - RES/23/184

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which provided a high level summary of Aberdeen Scientific Services Labs' (ASSL) move to the James Hutton Institute and the benefits to staff and the service.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the progress and achievement of Aberdeen Scientific Services Labs' (ASSL) move to James Hutton Institute, the engagement with team members throughout this change and the benefits and opportunities realised for staff through this.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE APPRENTICESHIP / INTERNSHIP UPDATE - CUS/23/153

6. With reference to article 4 of the minute of its meeting of 21 November 2022, the Committee had before it a report which provided an update on activity to develop the young workforce, namely:-

- the Apprenticeship programme;
- internships for Care Experienced Young People; and
- ABZ Campus – Employability Pathway Programme.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

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- (a) note that the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development had advised that officers could investigate how Elected Members might be able to become involved with mentoring young people in future; and
- (b) note the progress of the continuing work to develop the young workforce, to do this in line with the Council’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan commitments, and to shape the workforce for the future.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would circulate the gender breakdown of the pupils involved in the ABZ Campus Employability Pathway Programme to Members and Trade Union Advisers outwith the meeting; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365- PEOPLE AND CHANGE JOURNEY - CUS/23/182

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer which set out the change journey to date for staff through the introduction of Dynamics 365 as the Client Relationship Management tool across Social Care. The report also set out the next steps for the project.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the change journey and the adoption and change management tools and methods used within that in embedding Dynamics 365;
- (b) note the engagement techniques, including end-user co-design, which had fed into the development of the tool and its roll-out as part of the overall approach to workforce engagement as the Council moved through transformation, and to include these approaches in the implementation of the Workforce Delivery Plan;
- (c) note the meeting of the Council’s commitments within that plan, specifically around ensuring the right skills were in place, with the right support and that empowered people would take effective decisions to meet the needs of customers and, with the effective use of data and digital, allow limited public resources to be targeted; and
- (d) note that the innovative use of Dynamics 365 for Social Work had resulted in the project being a finalist at this year’s Local Government Chronicle awards.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers could circulate information to Members and Trade Union Advisers outwith the meeting as to how Dynamics 365 operated, and that the presentation which had been given to other local authorities could be arranged for Members if required; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

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POLICIES FOR PEOPLE UPDATE - CUS/23/186

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer which provided an update on the application to date of the revised Managing Discipline, Managing Grievances and Dignity and Respect at Work policies.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the data provided regarding the usage and application of the policies;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to undertake a deep dive of the data to identify areas, managers and employees who would benefit from additional support and early intervention to prevent escalation of issues;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to take action to reduce the length of time currently being taken at each stage of the policies as set out in paragraph 3.16 in the report; and
- (d) to instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report disciplinary, grievance and dignity and respect at work data to the Staff Governance Committee on an annual basis.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers were looking into designing refresher training for Investigating Officers, but that meantime, they could retake the online course or book into face to face training;
- (ii) in relation to mediation, to note that officers would circulate information to Members and Trade Union Advisers outwith the meeting in relation to how many meetings had been held in person or online; and
- (iii) to approve the recommendations.

CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY QUARTERLY UPDATE JANUARY TO MARCH 2023 - COM/23/173

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which presented statistical health and safety performance information for the three month reporting period January to March 2023 to provide Members with the opportunity to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to the report, particularly in relation to how data was presented in respect of incidents within the Operations cluster.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and provide comment on the health, safety policy, performance, trends, and improvements.

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The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would look to break down the Operations incidents data further in future reports;
- (ii) to note that officers would alter the cover report for future meetings to reflect that reporting near miss incidents also prevented escalation; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the report.

EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE - CUS/23/187

10. With reference to article 7 of the minute of its meeting of 21 February 2022, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer which set out the review of the impact of the Employee Mental Health Action Plan and proposed further amendments following that review, as well as including an update on the action taken to support employee mental health over the past 12 months.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the Mental Health Action Plan and support the work outlined to address and improve employee mental health and wellbeing; and
- (b) note the proactive actions carried out so far to address and support positive employee mental health; and note the variety of initiatives, activities, training and support made available to employees during the last 12 months.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would invite Trade Union representatives to the training provided to managers; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN - CUS/23/163

11. With reference to article 7 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer which set out an update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, and provided assurance that work was progressing to meet the Council's Equality Outcomes and was continuously adapted and improved.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made as part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan;

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- (b) approve the approach to further reviewing the data from the aforementioned Progress Report and placing a focus of equality, diversity and inclusion work on the areas outlined in section 4.3.3 of the report;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee on progress to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan on an annual basis which will either be as part of Mainstreaming or Progress Report updates or as an independent report in years where there is not a Mainstreaming or Progress Report;
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee in advance of the next Mainstreaming Report being presented to Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in March 2025 (dates to be confirmed) with an update on proposed staffing-related content and Outcomes. This will include the annual update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan; and
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisation Development to report to Staff Governance Committee on any future changes of approach towards the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan or any additional equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and actions that require elected member approval.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would endeavour to include numbers alongside percentages in future reports to assist in providing clarity; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR NEIL COPLAND, Convener**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	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.								
2	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
3	4 September 2023								
4	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 30 June 2023		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
5	Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure	To seek approval of the policy		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5	D	Delayed to November meeting to allow further consultation with Trade Unions and to afford more time to the Risk Board to consider the policy
6	Family Friendly Policies Project Update	To give an update on progress		Darren Buck	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
7	Special Leave Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Lindsay MacInnes	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5	D	The planner lists as separate a review of our special leave policy for September. The reason for the timing of this was due to the Family Friendly Policy report coming to September and in recognition that the FF provisions are all covered in the Special Leave policy; thus, any changes to provisions will need to mirror within Special Leave as well. Our intention is therefore to present these in alignment within the overall report on Family Friendly policies to avoid duplication of information for Elected Members and to keep the links here as clear as possible.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	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
2									
8	13 November 2023								
9	Employee Assistance Scheme/Occupational Health/Sickness Absence Six Monthly Report	To present the six monthly report for the EAS/OH & Sickness Absence figures		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.7		
10	Leadership and Management Development Update	SGC 03/10/22 - to agree that an annual update on the refreshed approach to leadership and management development be presented to Committee		Sandie Scott	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.4		
11	Managing Substance Misuse Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
12	Staff Governance Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual effectiveness report		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	8.5		
13	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 30 September 2023		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
14	Corporate Health & Safety Policy	To present the revised Health & Safety Policy, subject to approval being required		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	2.5		
15	2024								
16	Zero tolerance pledge	To update Committee on the work in relation to the zero tolerance pledge, including an action plan for approval	January / February 2024	Lindsay MacInnes	People & Organisational Development	Customer	TBC		
17	EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update January 2021 – December 2021	To present an annual report for the EAS/OH & Sickness Absence figures	March 2024	Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.7		
18	Equality and Diversity Policy	To report back on the revised policy	March 2024	Darren Buck	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.6		
19	Employee Code of Conduct	To present an update on the Employee Code of Conduct		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
20	Managing Performance Policy and Procedure	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
21	People development policy / guidance	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
22	Family Friendly Policies	To seek approval of the policies		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	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
2									
23	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
24	Cluster Risk Register	To present the annual risk register update	June 2024	Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	GD 8.4		
25	People Policy Data	SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report disciplinary, grievance and dignity and respect at work data to the Staff Governance Committee on an annual basis	June 2024	Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.2		
26	Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update	To provide an update in relation to the employee mental health action plan	June 2024	Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	3.2 iii		
27	Early Intervention and Prevention Training	Council Budget 01/03/23 - instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development in consultation with the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community and Empowerment and Chief Officer - Finance to develop a training programme for staff and elected members on early intervention and prevention and report on delivery progress to the Staff Governance Committee		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer			
28	Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity & Respect at Work Data	SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report disciplinary, grievance and dignity and respect at work data to the Staff Governance Committee on an annual basis.		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer			
29	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	SGC 13/03/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to provide an update to Staff Governance Committee at a future meeting of the Committee on any impact this report has on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan as well as any changes, updates or new areas of focus based on the data and analysis SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee on progress to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan on an annual basis which will either be as part of Mainstreaming or Progress Report updates or as an independent report in years where there is not a Mainstreaming or Progress Report		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer			
30	2025								

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	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
2									
31	Equality and Diversity Staffing Outcomes / 2025 Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee in advance of the next Mainstreaming Report being presented to Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in March 2025 (dates to be confirmed) with an update on proposed staffing-related content and Outcomes. This will include the annual update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan		Darren Buck	People & Organisational Development	Customer			

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	4 September 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Corporate Health and Safety – April – June 2023
REPORT NUMBER	COM/23/259
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	Vikki Cuthbert (Interim)
REPORT AUTHOR	Colin Leaver
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The appendix to this report summarises statistical health and safety performance information for the 3-month reporting period April to June 2023 to provide the Committee with the opportunity to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the report and provide comment on the health, safety policy, performance, trends, and improvements. [OBJ]

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The appendix to the report contains a dashboard of the statistical information in relation to health and safety activities for the three-month reporting period April – June 2023. The statistical information also contains an analysis of the key figures in each of the incident and near miss sections.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences 2013 (RIDDOR) places 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 as a result of an injury, which have historically been the main reason for Aberdeen City Council's reports to HSE.

This report addresses the following matters:

- All incidents involving employees and members of the public (serious and minor)
- HSE Reportable Incidents

- Reportable Diseases
- Near Miss Information
- Enforcement Interventions
- Fire Risk Assessment
- Health and Safety Audits
- Compliance Monitoring
- Health and Safety Policies, Procedures and Guidance

3.2 Incidents (Apr-June 2023)

All incident and near miss information in the appendix to this report has been provided to Cluster level in the appendix. However, within the Operations Function these have been reported to Service area level.

Incident information

- 3.3** The figures are reported to Cluster level for both employee and third-party incidents. Causation figures are also included within the appendix. There is also now a comparison for each of the three years prior to this reporting period so the Committee has sight of the last reporting year prior to the pandemic. The comparative figures for this year are in a separate chart due to the change of system.
- 3.4** When an incident is reported, the manager is required to complete an investigation report, and this should be shared with the employee and signed off by both. This investigation report highlights categories of criteria which require to be considered including root cause, actions identified and completion dates.
- 3.5** Page five of the appendix details the breakdown of incident causation within the Education Service, where the largest number of incidents occur.

These incidents continue to often involve children/young people where a social, emotional, mental health need (SEMHN) has been identified.

Figures show that children in Aberdeen City are doing better than the national mean across mental health measures. However, it is seen that there can be no complacency, and that changes are being seen in the needs of children and young people.

The lack of socialisation and lack of structure from school during the periods of lockdown appears to have impacted some children more than others and vulnerability has undoubtedly increased. This is often heavily impacted by parental mental health. We also know that vulnerability is often directly linked to levels of child poverty, and the current cost of living crisis will be a significant factor too. In many cases, dysregulation is a sign that children do not feel safe and secure.

We are seeing a changing picture in attitudes, behaviours and engagement from some children and young people both in their social and school lives and this is mirrored nationally. Some children and young people are reaching

increasing levels of dysregulation and struggle to maintain positive relationships or make positive choices which can impact on others.

Schools continue to follow the staged intervention procedure, whereby support is accessed using school-based, community, and city-wide supports.

The Health and Safety Sub-Group, which was formed, with a membership of Education staff, Trade Unions and Corporate health and safety, to undertake analysis of health and safety data generated by schools, informs the direction of the overall workstream. This also ensures that appropriate support is made available to schools if required.

HSE Reportable incidents (Apr – June 2023)

- 3.6** The table in the Appendix also shows the number of RIDDOR reportable incidents. During the reporting period between April and June 2023 4 incidents involving an employee required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive. Every reportable incident was for an injury which resulted in a 7-day absence.
- 3.7** All RIDDOR incidents reported to HSE by the corporate health and safety team are also followed up with by the relevant manager to get assurance that the correct causation and remedial actions have been identified and that any identified remedial actions have been implemented.

Incident (reportable employee) frequency rates

Period – Quarterly	Reportable Incidence rate	Reporting period
Apr-June 2023	0.7	2023/24

- 3.8** The above figures are calculated using the formula:

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

- 3.9** The figure for the corresponding period last year (April to June 2022) was 8 RIDDOR reportable incidents and a reportable incident rate of 1.0.

Reportable Diseases

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

Near Miss Information

- 3.11** 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 by allowing processes and systems to be altered before an incident occurs.

- 3.12** Reporting managers are required to investigate the near miss to identify the root cause and implement any new identified controls, where possible, to reduce the likelihood of any reoccurrence or for any future incident to result in injury.
- 3.13** The appendix shows information on the number of near miss figures for this reporting period and again a comparison with the three previous reporting years.
- 3.14** Page eight of the appendix gives a breakdown of near misses within the Operations function. As with incidents, the majority are within the Education services. Like incident figures, these are mainly because of distressed behaviours evident in some children with additional support needs. Risk assessments are reviewed after every near miss to consider any actions which can be taken to prevent or reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

Four-year comparison

- 3.15** The annual comparative figures are displayed to show a comparison across the period which also included those years through the Covid pandemic. The figures are increased as the figures are representative of a return to full face to face interactions with service users post pandemic; but could also be because of work done by senior managers and Trade Unions to encourage staff to report all issues. Work continues to be undertaken in consultation with Clusters to reduce these incidents where trends are identified.

Regulator interventions (HSE / SFRS)

- 3.16** 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 regarding the way Aberdeen City Council undertake their legal duties.
- 3.17** There were no HSE visits during this reporting period.
- 3.18** SFRS carried out 1 site visit as part of their annual audit of ACC (Aberdeen City Council) care properties, homelessness accommodation and educational establishments and provided letters of their recommendations.
- 3.19** The identified actions from these audit visits have been added to the fire risk actions database and allocated to the responsible manager. These will be followed through the fire action dashboard to close out. Any actions which pass their compliance date are raised with the relevant Chief Officer and reported to the Risk Board.

Fire risk assessments

- 3.20** Fire risk assessments are completed on a rolling 5-year programme. A total of 23 fire risk assessments, including 3 Bon Accord Care managed sites, were completed during this reporting period. The overall average compliance score was 85%. The issues identified are across the range of topics considered in the assessment process. These issues are given a priority level dependent on the resultant risk which requires an action by a specified date. No building is left at risk during this process.
- 3.21** Any identified actions are included into the fire risk actions database and monitored to a close. This database is available to all Chief Officers on the managers' portal, which shows live data on open, closed, and non-complied with actions. Should an action pass the compliance date these are escalated in writing to the Chief Officer.

Health and Safety Audits

- 3.22** Compliance visits have been undertaken on several topics / premises within the ACC estate. Topics included Asbestos Management (100% compliant); Lone Working (90%), Manual Handling (99%); Noise at work (100%); Lone Working (83%); Security (92%) and, Line Manager Responsibilities (67%). Again, all action points raised are included in an action log, which is reviewed weekly and reported to the relevant Chief Officer. Managers who have had actions allocated to them are given access to the action log to record the action taken to remove the risk and to record the date completed. Follow up visits are also carried out to ensure actions have been completed and that controls continue to be suitable and sufficient and are being followed. Again, the actions are given a compliance date based on the level of risk which ensures that the risk is removed before it places anyone in greater danger.
- 3.23** Line Manager responsibility is one strand of the review of the health and safety policy. Compliance monitoring continues to be undertaken to understand the level of line managers' understanding of the health and safety responsibilities placed on them by the Council. The overall score on average is 67% across this quarter. The results of these compliance visits identify areas where managers may require additional support, explanation, or training to close that knowledge gap. Several areas have been identified as requiring action including risk assessment training, completion of a first aid needs assessment and understanding and complying with the workplace inspection procedure. Having identified the areas requiring further improvement and those managers who require that additional support the Corporate Health and Safety Team (CHST) are currently providing training to all management levels, and where required specific 1-2-1 training on manager responsibilities, risk assessment and reporting/investigating incidents.
- 3.24** The actions identified as requiring action are recorded in the compliance action log sheets and each is given a compliance date. Where actions in any audit or compliance process are not closed out on time these are initially raised with the relevant Chief Officer and reported through the relevant Risk and Performance Boards.

Health and safety policies, procedures, and guidance

3.25 There are no health and safety procedures requiring approval during this reporting period. Health and safety procedures are scheduled for review across the year. Corporate procedures are reviewed by the CHST whilst local procedures, specific to a service, are reviewed by the service with advice and input from the CHST.

3.26 When procedures are completed, they require to be approved by the relevant Chief Officer. Where the procedure is corporate these are communicated with the relevant services and step by step guidance is developed and made available to inform managers of what is required to be compliant.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 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 a requirement to report these under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 which provides a potential for the Enforcing Authorities to 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 employee.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications because of this report.

7. RISK

Risk Appetite

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *Taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A		

Compliance	<p>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.</p>	<p>Corporate Procedures require all tasks to be risk assessed and the controls implemented and supervised by line managers.</p> <p>All employees are trained to a level where they are competent to carry out the work.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This 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.</p>	L	Yes
Operational	<p>The risk is that any health and safety incident can lead to an injury to an employee which could have the potential to temporarily or permanently affect either or both their employment and/or their life.</p> <p>The risk to our citizens is</p>	<p>The task has been risk assessed; employees are trained, competent and supervised then there should be less likelihood of incidents.</p>	L	Yes

	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.			
Financial	The risk is that any incident has the potential to bring a reduction in the overall budget in place to provide service delivery.	As per compliance above	L	Yes
Reputational	Local and National press coverage of any incident can present reputational damage to the organisation.	Each Function should have 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 employees are up to carrying out investigation of near misses to ensure controls are reviewed to consider whether remedial actions are required.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A	

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	A healthy and safe workplace assists the overarching principles of the stretch outcomes within the LOIP (Local Outcome Improvement Plan) 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 Criminal 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.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	It is confirmed by Chief Officer Vikki Cuthbert that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Quarterly staff governance Health and safety dashboard April to June 2023

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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SG_H&S_Report_Visuals_V4

[View in Power BI](#) ↗

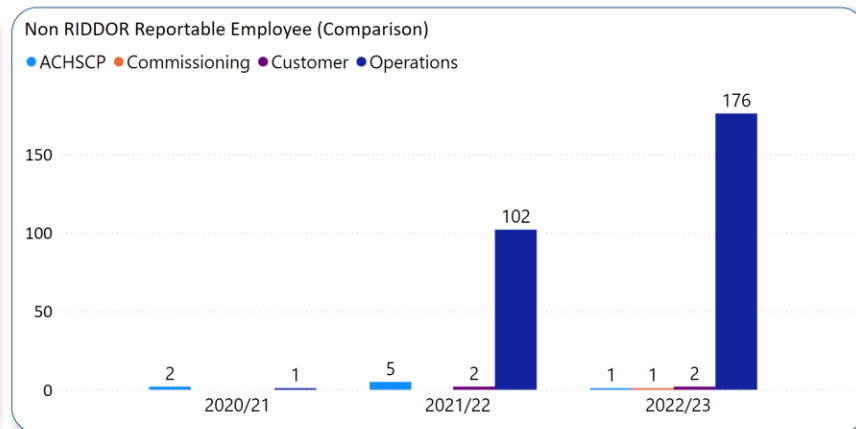
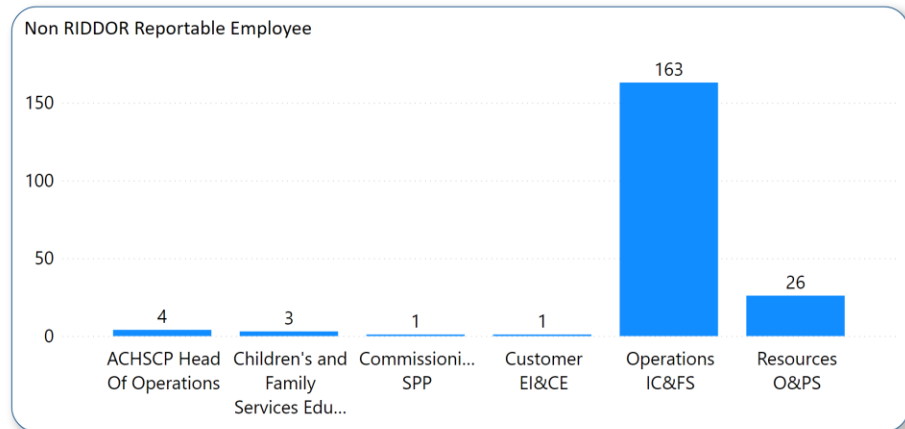
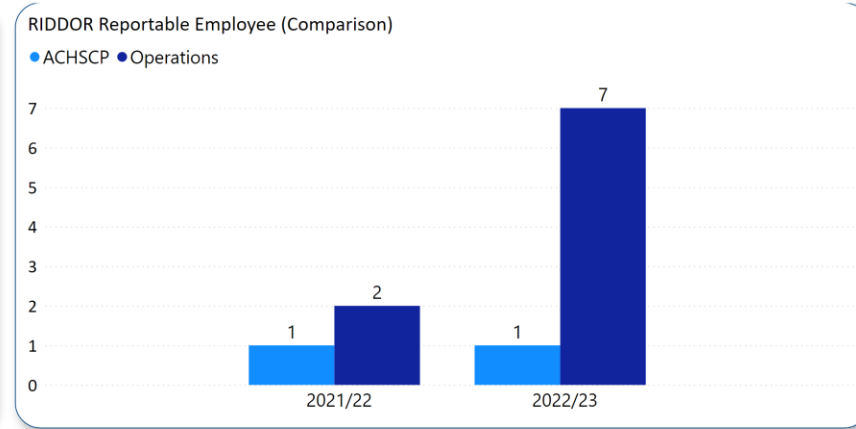
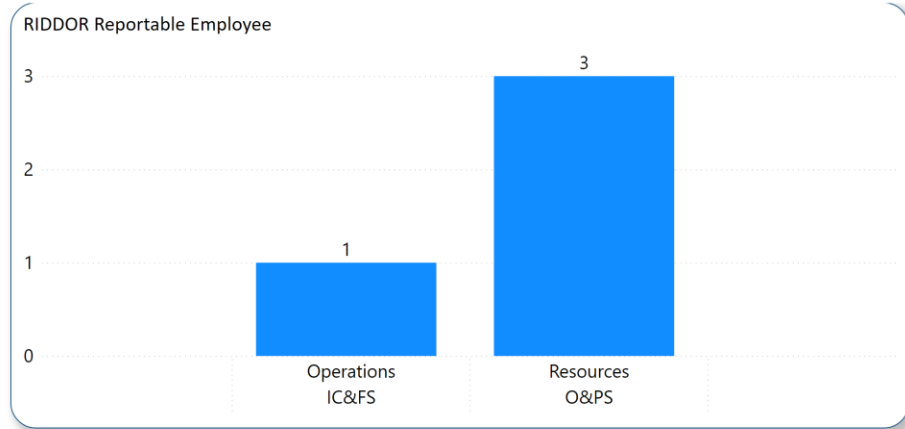
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Staff Governance Health & Safety Report Quarter 1 2023/2024 (Apr 23 to Jun 23)

Reported H&S Incidents (Employee) Between Apr to Jun 2023

The following tables give breakdown of all employee incidents across all Functions and Clusters in Aberdeen City Council. The tables on the left initially show the number of incidents for each Cluster this reporting period with those on the right giving a quarter 1 comparison for each Function from 2020/21 to 2022/23 where applicable.



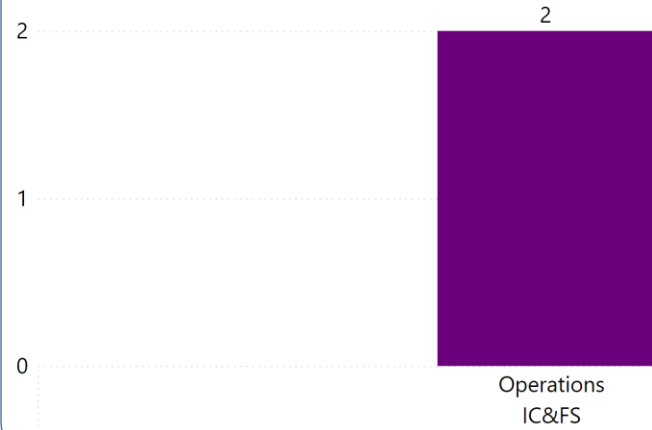
Employee Incident Information

RIDDOR reportable incidents are 4 for this quarter, a reduction from 8 last quarter and also a reduction from 8 for corresponding quarter last year. Incident reports show a 10% increase (198) from 2022/23 (180) with the largest number still within Education. The increase could be attributable to a drive by Education and Trade Unions for all incidents to be reported but also could be representative of national increases across Scotland post-pandemic.

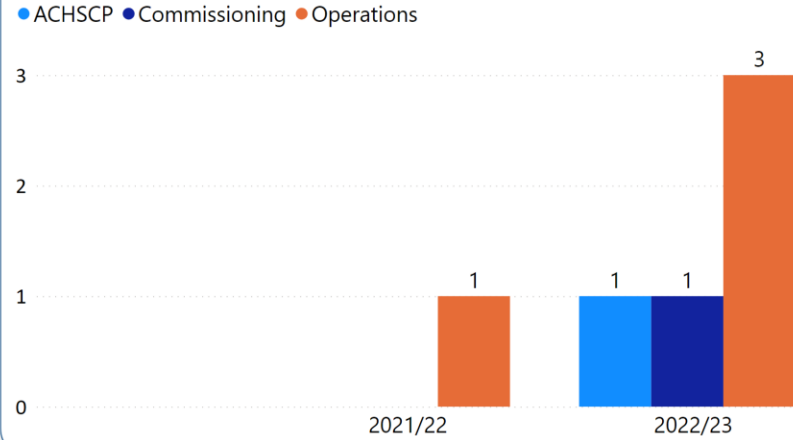
Reported H&S Incidents (Third Party) Between Apr to Jun 2023

The tables below give information on those non-employee incidents which happened across all Functions and Clusters. Again the tables on the left show the current period for each Cluster, with those on the right giving a quarter 1 comparison for each function from 2020/21 to 2022/23 where applicable.

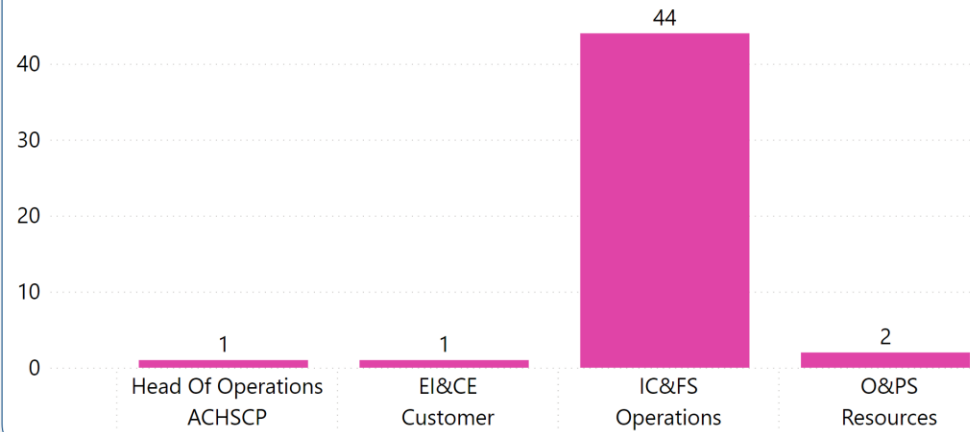
RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee



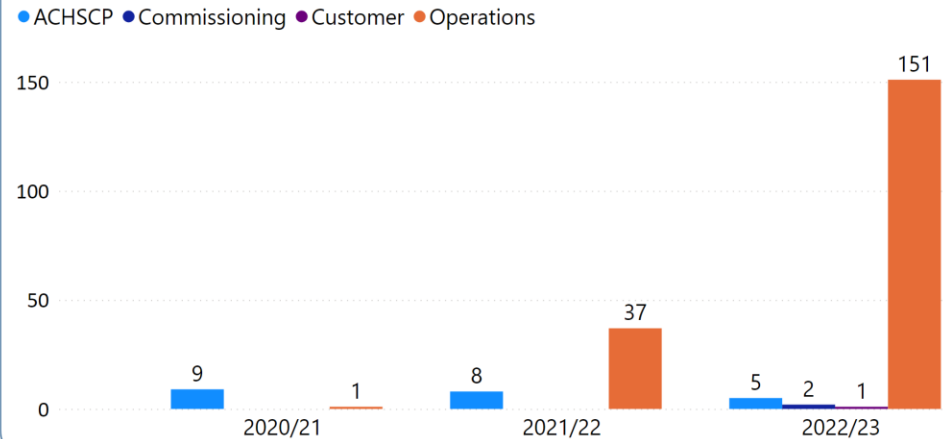
RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee (Comparison)



Non RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee

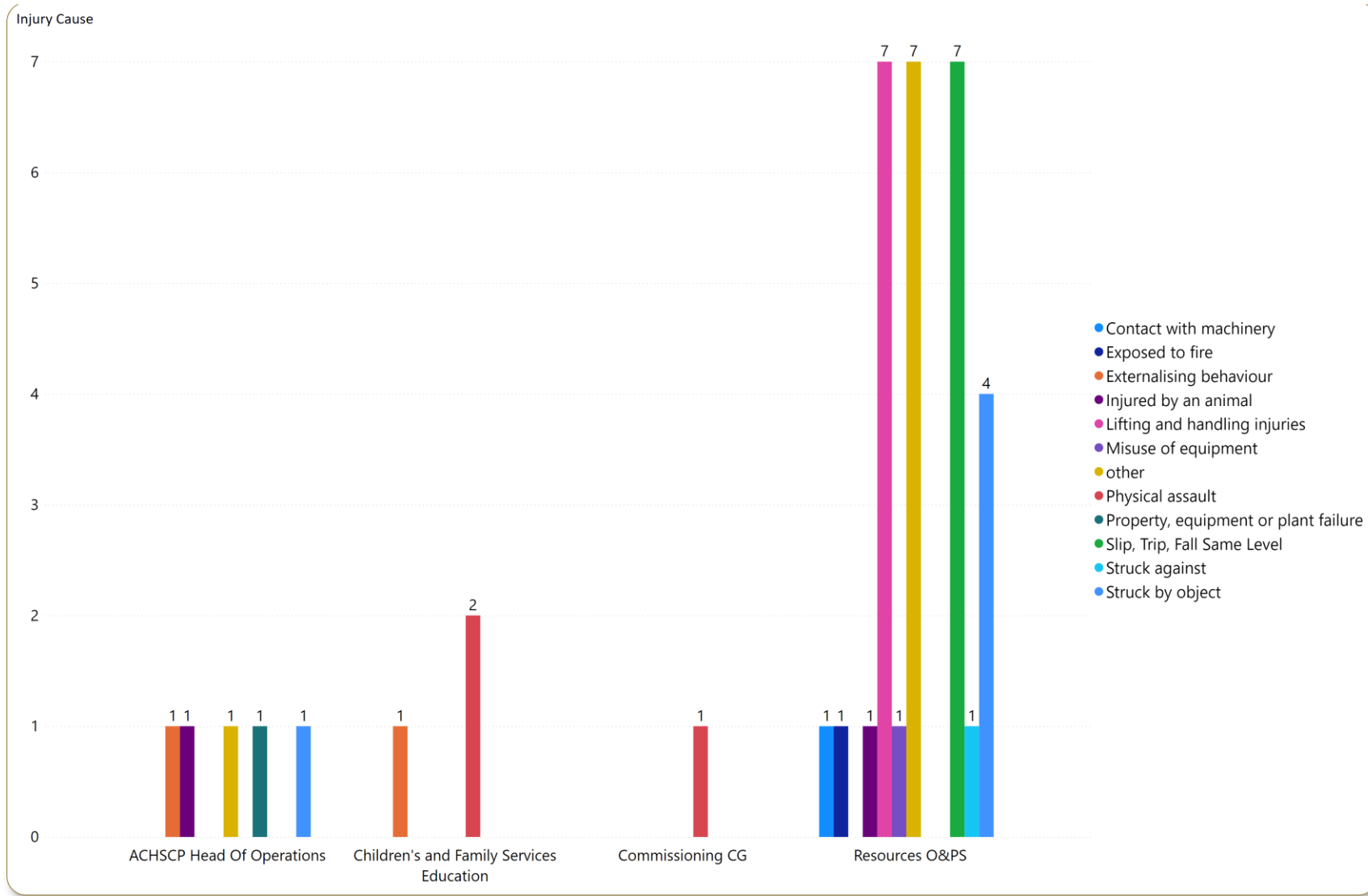


Non RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee (Comparison)

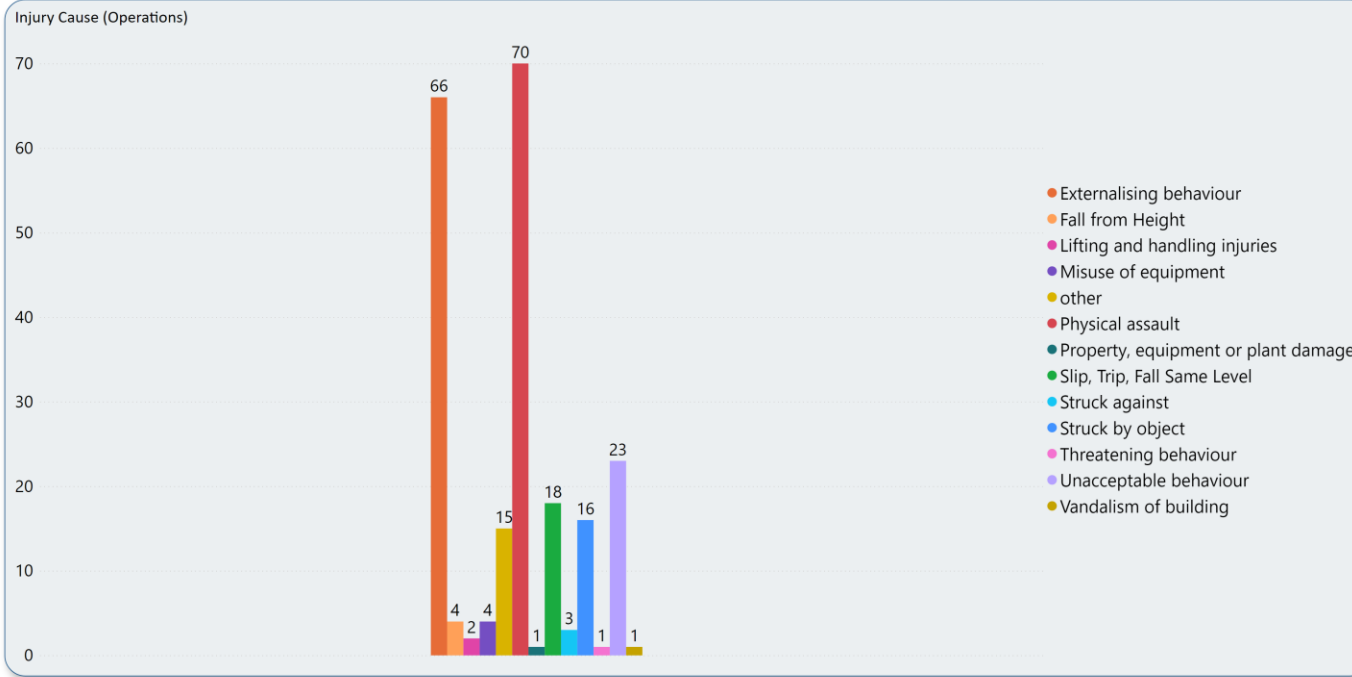


H&S Incident Causation Reported between Apr to Jun 2023

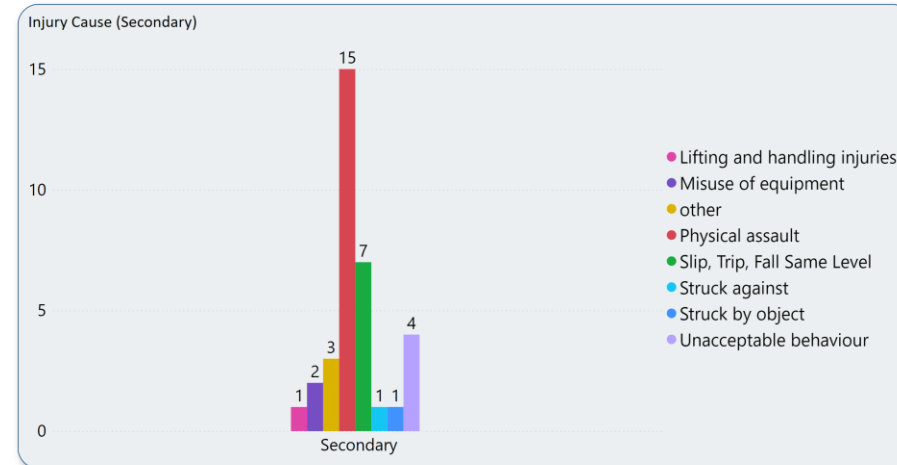
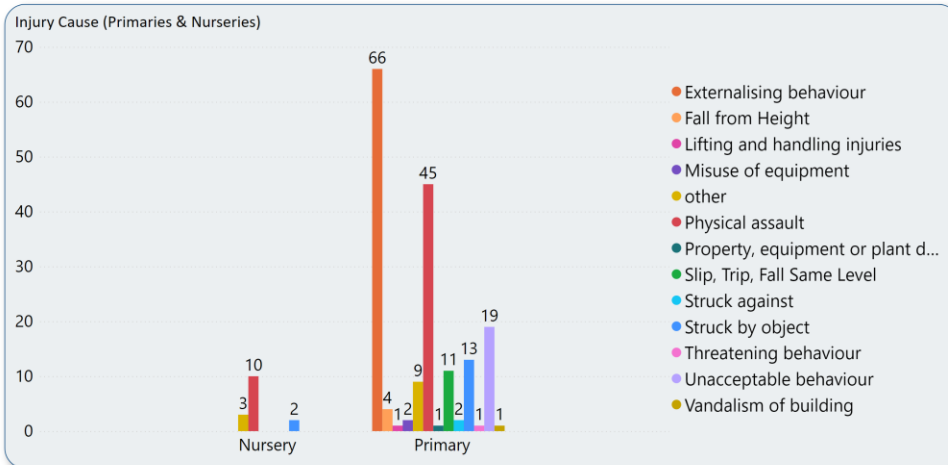
The table shows incident causation for each Cluster colour-coded against the key for this reporting period apart from Operations, which is covered in the next page.



The following tables give a breakdown of **Operations** Incidents.



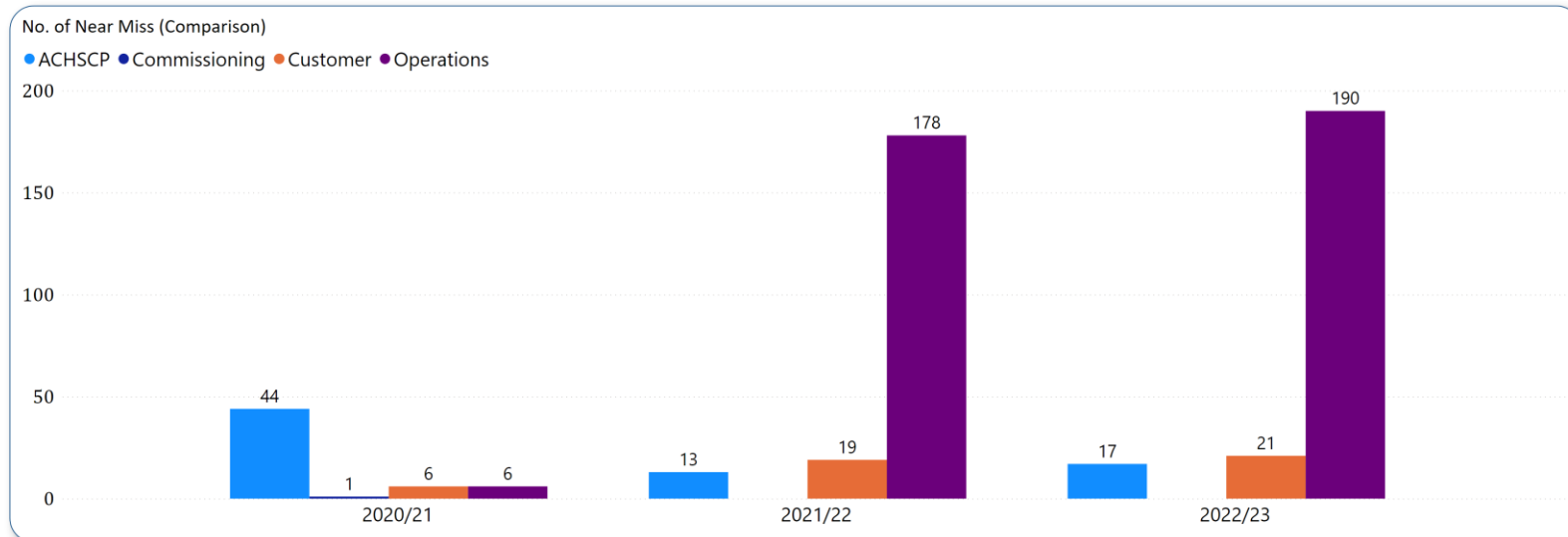
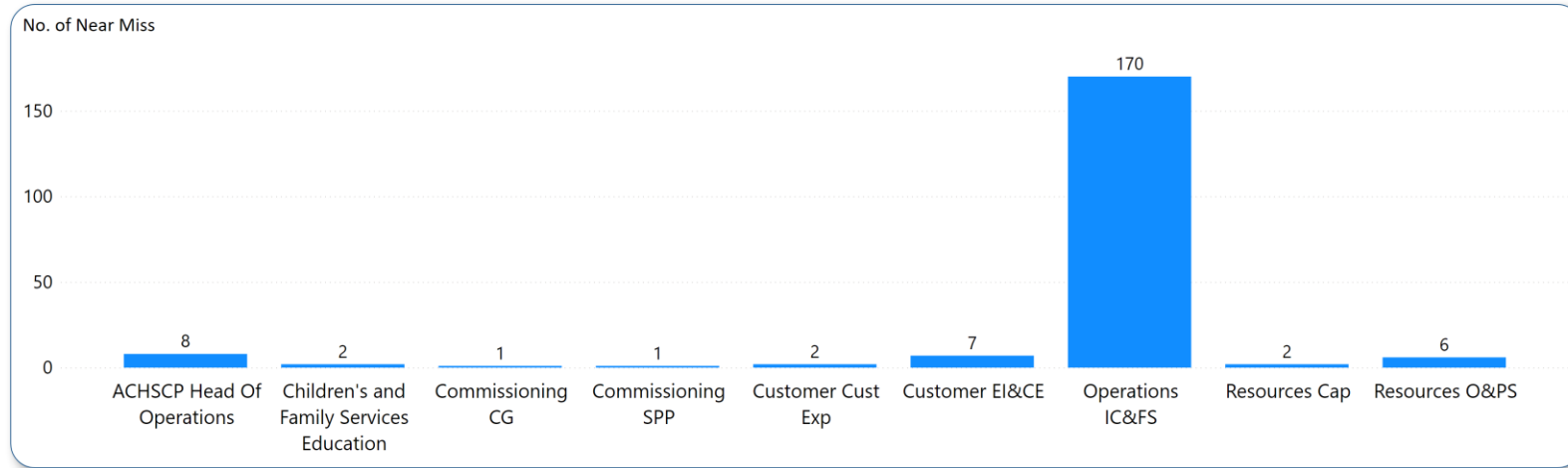
Injury Cause	
Cause	Number
Physical assault	70
Externalising behaviour	66
Unacceptable behaviour	23
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	18
Struck by object	16
other	15
Fall from Height	4
Misuse of equipment	4
Struck against	3
Lifting and handling injuries	2
Property, equipment or plant damage	1
Threatening behaviour	1
Vandalism of building	1



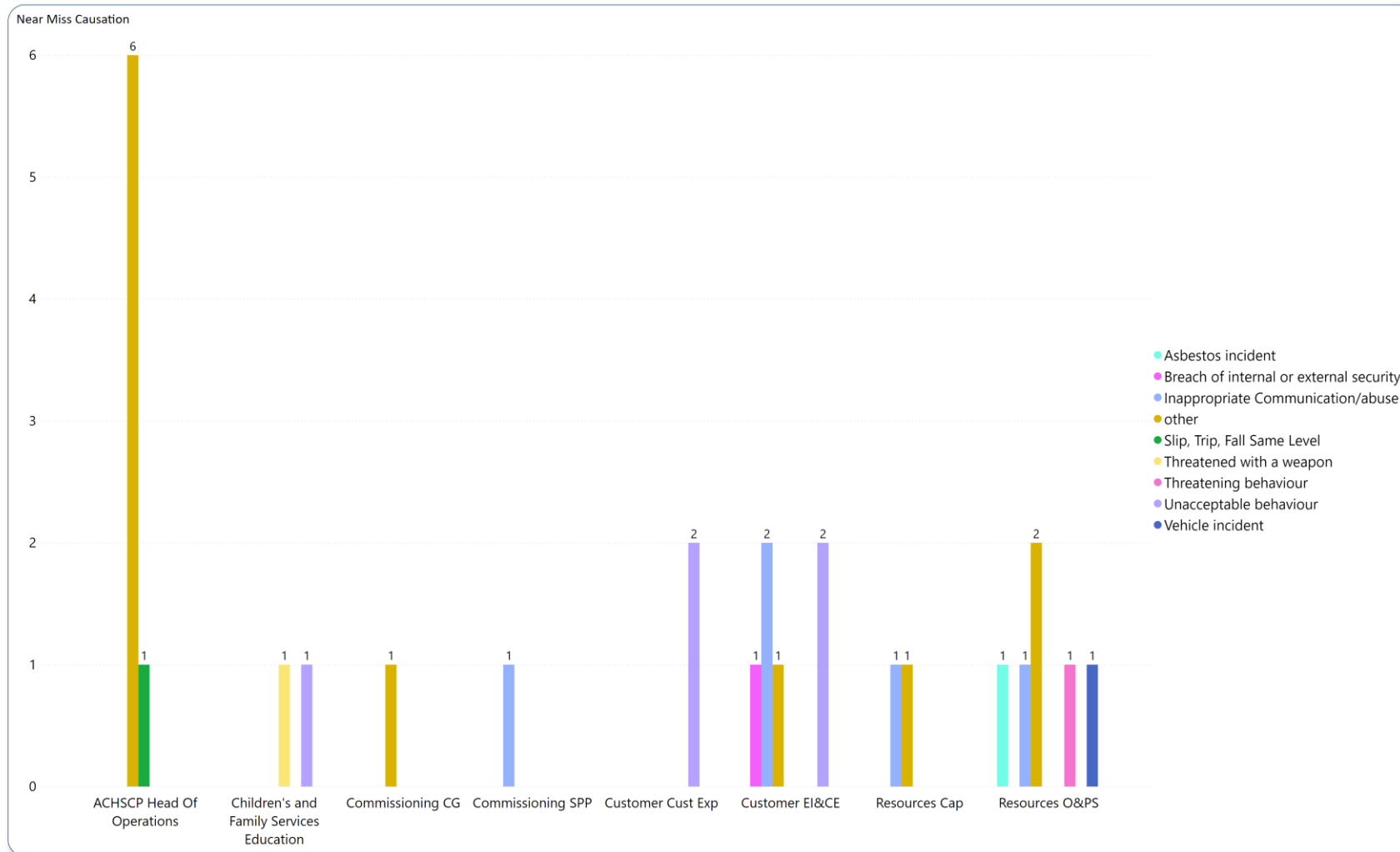
Reported H&S Near Miss Between Apr to Jun 2023

The tables below show information in relation to employee and non-employee Near Misses.

Top table: Total Near Misses for this reporting period for each Cluster. Bottom table: quarter 1 comparison of Near Misses for each Function from 2020/21 to 2022/23.



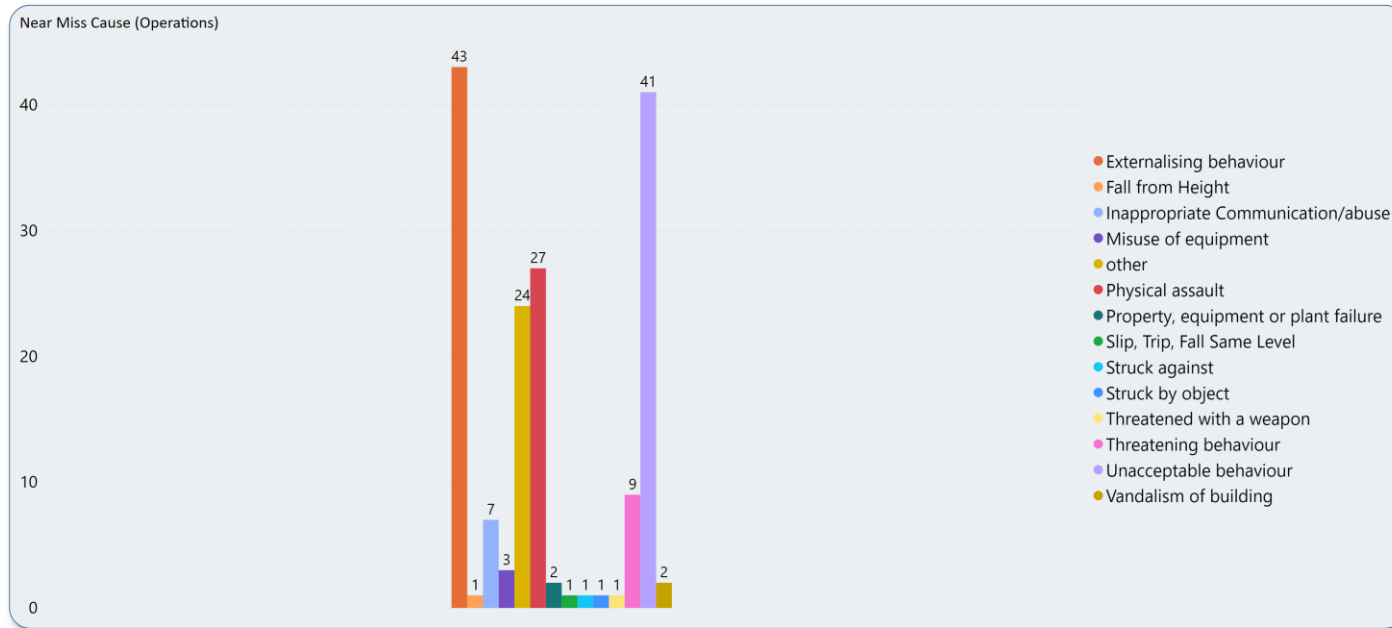
The table below shows information to a Function and Cluster level for employee and non-employee Near Misses apart from Operations, which is covered in the next page.



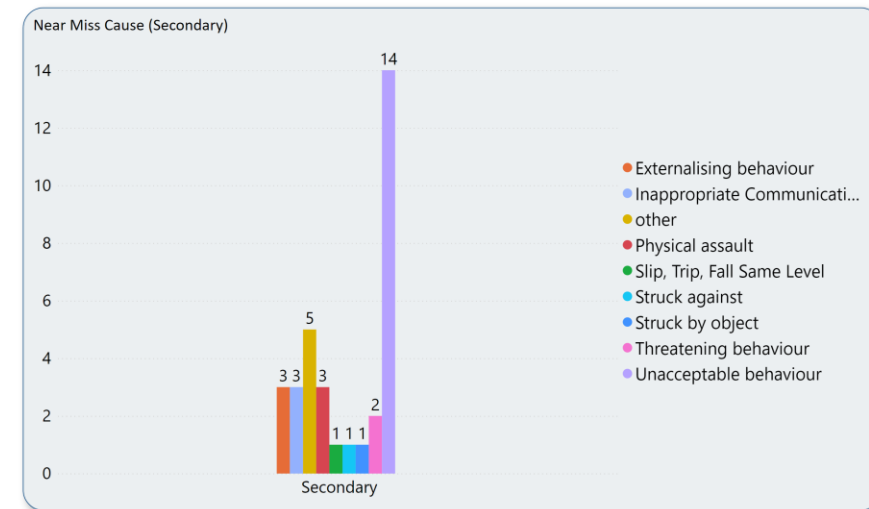
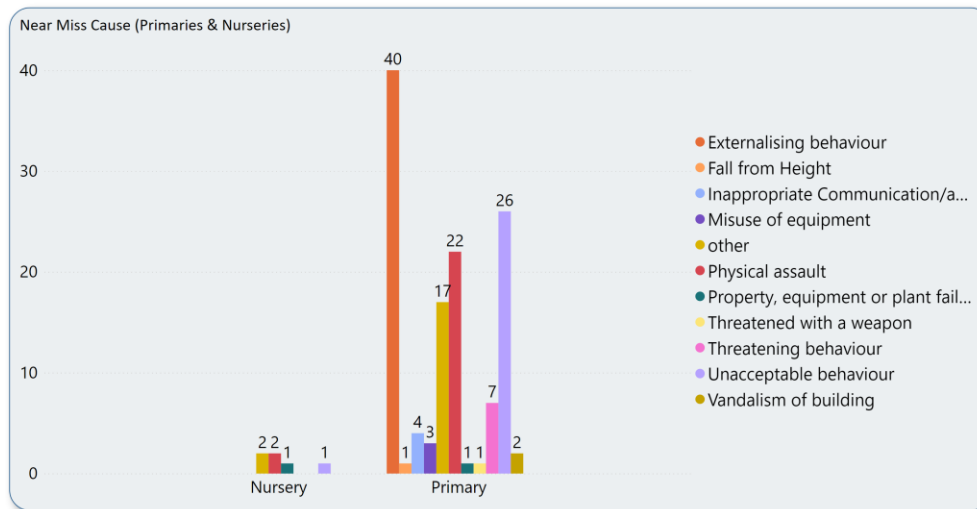
Near Miss

There is a reduction in the number of near misses from those reported last year (228/206) and as with incidents the largest number sit within Education for pupil behavioural issues.

The following tables give a breakdown of **Operations** Near Miss.

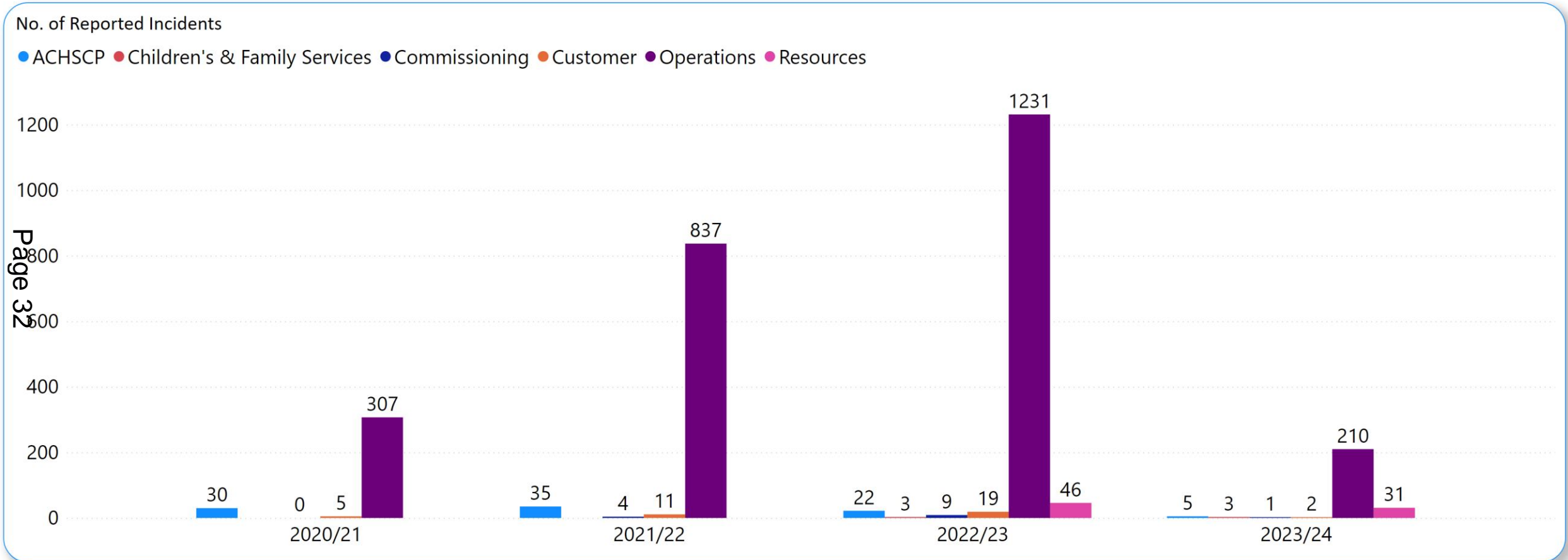


Near Miss Cause	
Cause	Number
Externalising behaviour	43
Unacceptable behaviour	41
Physical assault	27
other	24
Threatening behaviour	9
Inappropriate Communication/abuse	7
Misuse of equipment	3
Property, equipment or plant failure	2
Vandalism of building	2
Fall from Height	1
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	1
Struck against	1
Struck by object	1
Threatened with a weapon	1



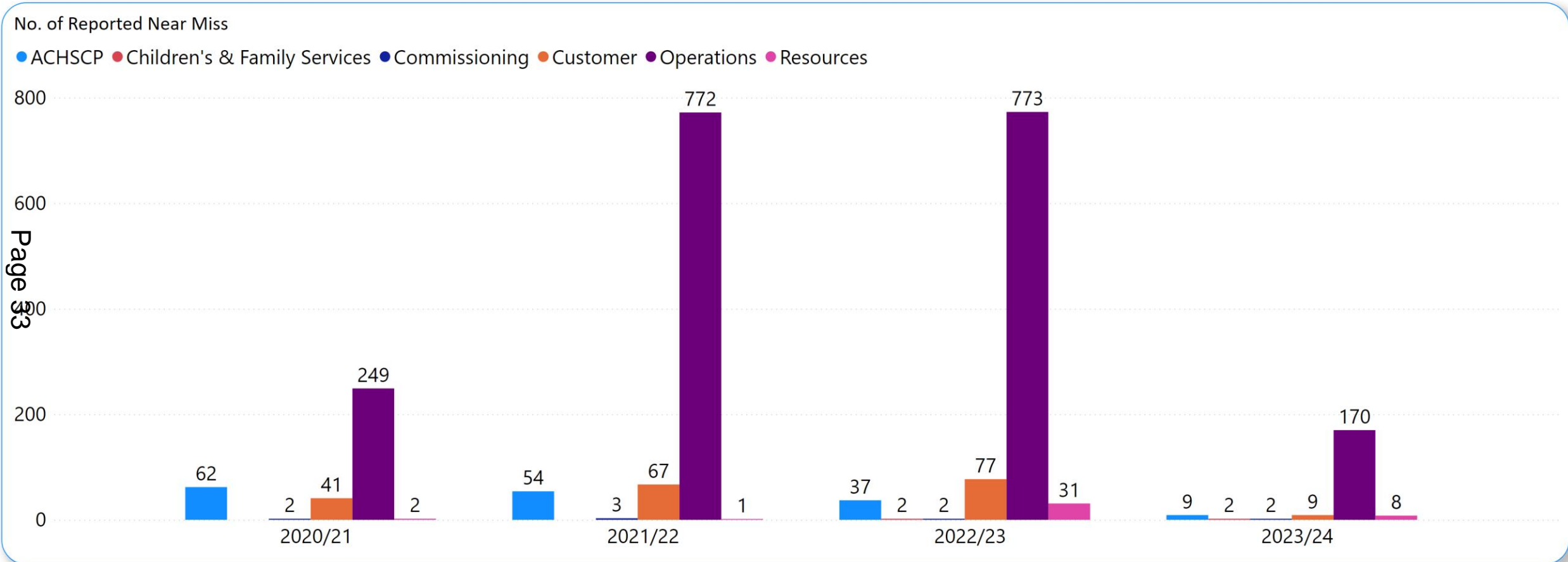
Reported Incidents From 2020/21 to 2023/24

The table provides information on the **total number** of incidents for the last four reporting years (including current year to date) to Function level.



Reported Near Miss From 2020/21 to 2023/24

The table provides information on the **total number** of near miss for the last four reporting years (including current year to date) to Function level.



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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	4 September 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Family Friendly Policies Project Update
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/23/244
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald, Director - Customer
CHIEF OFFICER	Lindsay MacInnes, Interim Chief Officer – People and OD and Customer Experience
REPORT AUTHOR	Darren Buck, People & OD Advisor
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the progress made towards the Family Friendly Policies Project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the progress made towards the Family Friendly Policies Project;
- 2.2 Approves the project next steps as outlined in section 3.8;
- 2.3 Instructs Chief Officer – People and OD and Customer Experience to report back to Staff Governance Committee in summer 2024 with updated policies and documentation for approval;
- 2.4 Approves interim changes to the Supporting Carers in the Workplace Guidance and Special Leave Policy to ensure early compliance with the Carer’s Leave Act as outlined in section 3.9.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Current Offering for Staff

- 3.1.1 Currently, the Council’s family friendly policies & guidance documents include:

- Family Friendly Policy
- Maternity Leave Guidance
- Paternity Leave Guidance
- Shared Parental Leave Guidance
- Adoption Leave Guidance
- Managing Employees Undergoing IVF Treatment Guidance
- Supporting Carers in the Workplace Guidance

3.1.2 In addition, the Council also has a Special Leave Policy which includes special leave and flexible working provisions that employees can use which includes:

- Parental Leave
- Time Off for Dependant / Family Emergencies
- Parental Bereavement Leave
- Time Off for IVF Treatment

3.1.3 The Council's Guidance for Situations of Adverse Weather also covers time off for primary care givers in situations where there are school closures due to adverse weather.

3.1.4 There are also a number of Flexible and Smarter Working options that employees may benefit from such as flexi-time, term-time working, part-time working, amongst others.

3.1.5 It is worth noting that those on Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) terms and conditions, [under Part 2 Section 7 of the SNCT Handbook](#), have separate provisions for:

- Maternity Leave and Pay
- Adoption Leave and Pay
- Shared Parental Leave and Pay
- Surrogacy Leave
- Maternity and Adoption Support Leave and Pay (including Ordinary Paternity Leave and Pay)
- Parental Leave
- Leave of Absence
- Time Off for IVF Treatment
- Compassionate Leave

3.1.6 Currently, the entitlements that employees have are:

Entitlement	Leave	Pay
Maternity	52 weeks	Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP) and Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for a maximum period of 39 weeks as follows:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first 6 weeks 90% of average weekly earnings. • For the following 12 weeks a sum equal to 50% of normal pay. • In addition, employees get the flat rate of SMP or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than the flat rate of SMP.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the following 21 weeks flat rate of SMP (or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than the flat rate of SMP). • The remaining 13 weeks of maternity leave, if taken, is without pay. <p>Eligibility criteria applies.</p>
Maternity (SNCT)	52 weeks	<p>Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP) and Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for a maximum period of 39 weeks as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first 13 weeks OMP and SMP to equal normal salary. • For the following 26 weeks the flat rate of SMP. • The remaining 13 weeks of maternity leave, if taken, would be without pay. <p>Eligibility criteria applies.</p>
Paternity	2 weeks	<p>Full pay</p> <p>Eligibility criteria applies.</p>
Maternity and Adoption Support Leave incl. Paternity (SNCT)	2 weeks	<p>One week full pay, one week at the Statutory Paternity Pay rate.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria applies.</p>
Adoption	52 weeks	<p>Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP) and Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) for a maximum period of 39 weeks as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first 6 weeks 90% of average weekly earnings. • For the following 12 weeks a sum equal to 50% of normal pay. • In addition, employees get the flat rate of SAP or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than the flat rate of SAP. • For the following 21 weeks flat rate of SAP (or 90% of average weekly

		<p>earnings if this is less than the flat rate of SAP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The remaining 13 weeks of adoption leave, if taken, is without pay. <p>Eligibility criteria applies.</p>
Adoption (SNCT)	52 weeks	<p>Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP) and Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) for a maximum period of 39 weeks as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the first 13 weeks Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP) and Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) to equal normal salary. For the following 26 weeks flat rate of SAP. The remaining 13 weeks of adoption leave, if taken, is without pay. <p>Eligibility criteria applies.</p>
Shared Parental Leave and Shared Parental Leave (SNCT)	50 weeks	<p>As per Government guidance. Up to 37 weeks of pay between parents.</p> <p>The actual amount depends on how much maternity or adoption leave and pay (or Maternity Allowance) the employee and their partner take. If eligible can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take less than the 52 weeks of maternity or adoption leave and use the rest as Shared Parental Leave (SPL) take less than the 39 weeks of maternity or adoption pay (or Maternity Allowance) and use the rest as Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) <p>Eligibility criteria applies.</p>
Parental Leave and Parental Leave (SNCT)	Up to 18 weeks' leave for each child and adopted child up to their 18th birthday.	<p>Unpaid</p> <p>Eligibility criteria applies.</p>

Time Off for Dependant / Family Emergencies	Reasonable time off granted.	Unpaid however can be discussed with management to make the time back or use of annual leave, flexi time.
Leave of Absence (SNCT)	Up to 2 days	Paid This may be used for a number of situations but for family purposes, this relates to illness of a child, attending family events, being a birthing partner, supporting dependents at national or international sporting events, as well as anything under discretion of a Head Teacher.
Surrogacy Leave (SNCT)	52 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 weeks at normal salary • 26 weeks at a sum equivalent to Statutory Adoption Pay. • The remaining 13 weeks of leave, if taken, is without pay.
Parental Bereavement Leave and Parental Bereavement Leave (SNCT)	2 weeks	Paid
Time Off for IVF Treatment	Reasonable time off granted.	Unpaid, however can be discussed with management to make the time back or use of annual leave, flexi time.
Time Off for IVF Treatment (SNCT)	Reasonable time off granted.	Paid leave will be granted for related absences during one cycle of treatment.
Adverse Weather	Up to 1 days' leave per weather situation.	Paid.
Compassionate Leave	Reasonable time off up to 10 days' (pro-rata)	Paid. Note that this is not normally intended to be used for childcare purposes but is specified as an option within our Supporting Carers in the Workplace Guidance.

3.2 Data

3.2.1 According to our latest [Progress Report](#) in March 2023, the make-up of our workforce is 69.9% female and 30.1% male.

- 3.2.2 Part-time working is undertaken by 41.8% of the workforce. 88.53% of these are female, 11.47% are male. Of all the female employees in the organisation, 52.87% work part-time hours.
- 3.2.3 As of 31st March 2023, the gender pay gap in the organisation is 6.17% in favour of female employees. The top 5% of earners in the organisation are 54% female and 46% male.
- 3.2.4 Maternity leave has been used 707 times in the last 5 years with an average of 299 days being taken. In addition, we have 82 employees currently on maternity leave.
- 3.2.5 Ordinary paternity leave has been used 192 times in the last 5 years with an average of 13 days being taken. Additional unpaid paternity leave has been used 6 times with an average of 8 days taken.
- 3.2.6 Adoption leave has been used 7 times in the last 5 years with a small number of employees using it with an approximate even split between male and female. The male employees took an average of 14 days' leave, while the female employees, on average, took 329 days. In addition, a small number of female employees are currently on adoption leave.
- 3.2.7 Shared Parental Leave has been used 12 times in the last 4 years¹ with 6 male and 6 female employees using it. On average, male employees took 122 days' leave whilst female employees on average took 113 days' leave.
- 3.2.8 Paid special leave provisions in scope for this project were used 2342 times in the last 4 years² with an average of 1.8 days being taken. Of those who took these provisions, 1973 were female (84%) and 369 were male (16%).
- 3.2.9 Unpaid special leave provisions in scope for this project were used 1472 times in the last 4 years³ with an average of 2.6 days being taken. Of those who took these provisions, 1321 were female (90%) and 151 were male (10%).

3.3 Research

- 3.3.1 The Equalities Office commissioned [academic research](#) as part of a Workplace and Gender Equality (WAGE) Research Programme, looking at the theme of Family Friendly policies. Through their research, the Equalities Office states that one of the biggest drivers of the gender pay gap is that women tend to spend more time out of the labour market or work part time, often due to caring responsibilities. They argue that family-friendly policies, provisions and guidance including flexible working, enhanced parental leave and additional childcare provision are the key tools to enable more equal sharing of work and childcare responsibilities between men and women.

¹ Please note that available data covers 4 years, as Shared Parental Leave was not its own category in our previous HR and Payroll System, PSe

² Please note that available data covers 4 years, as Special Leave categories were not specifically separated out in our previous HR and Payroll System, PSe

³ As above

3.3.2 The Equalities Office [guidance](#) suggests that employers focus on improving their offering of family friendly provisions, supporting employees and their managers to get the most out of them, promoting the offering in the workplace and integrating it throughout the organisation.

3.3.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commission conducted [research](#) to determine the prevalence of pregnancy discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace. One of its key findings was that one in five mothers said they had experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer and /or colleagues.

3.3.4 The Equality and Human Rights Commission produced a [toolkit](#) to help inform employers of their responsibilities and guide them to achieve best practice during their employees pregnancy, maternity leave and upon their return to work.

3.4 Legislative Changes

3.4.1 New family friendly legislation is due to be introduced following their receipt of Royal Assent in 2023. These are:

- **The Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act.** This will allow eligible employed parents whose new-born baby is admitted to neonatal care to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave to spend with their baby. This will be in addition to other leave entitlements, such as maternity and paternity leave. This is expected for implementation in April 2025.
- **The Carer's Leave Act.** This will create a new statutory unpaid leave entitlement (a week of flexible leave a year) for employees who are caring for a dependant with a long-term care need. This is expected for implementation in May 2024.
- **The Employee Relations (Flexible Working) Act.** This will create new statutory entitlements which allow two flexible working requests in any 12-month period from day one of employment. It also covers other changes to make it easier for employees to request flexible working, as well as increase responsibilities on employers around consultation and decision-making. This is expected for implementation in 2024.
- **The Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy and Family Leave) Act.** This will extend existing protections for new parents, protecting them from redundancy from the moment they inform their employer to six months following return from maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

3.5 Engagement to Date

3.5.1 Our employee network for sex as a protected characteristic identified the below key points:

- Various family circumstances and situations should be taken into consideration, particularly around single parent families and same-sex relationships;
- Normalising more men taking flexible and smarter working options, as well as promoting equal sharing of childcare responsibilities, is important;

- Manager buy-in is important to allow for equality, and particularly to reduce barriers to career progression of taking family leave;
- It is important for employees to be made aware of their entitlements and to feel supported in taking their full entitlements should they wish to.

3.5.2 Our LGBTQIA+ employee network identified the below key points:

- It is perceived that those going through adoption, kinship caring processes or IVF processes do not receive as much support flexibility as those who are pregnant;
- Options, entitlements and provisions around flexible working and special leave for family circumstances should be made clearer, for both employees and managers;
- There is a perceived lack of consistency in the application of flexible working and special leave provisions and entitlements;
- Language in policies, guidance documents and procedures needs to reflect the trans community.

3.6 Links to Other Outcomes, Agreements and Pledges

3.6.1 The Council currently has two equality outcomes as an employer. These are:

- Improve the diversity of our workforce and address any areas of underrepresentation, ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all protected groups (with consideration for both internal employees and external applicants), with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Race and Sex.
- Ensure that all of our employees who have protected characteristics feel fully valued, safe and included at work, with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Race, Sex and Sexual orientation.

3.6.2 Within the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Joint Statement, there is a commitment to doubling paternity leave for employees of Aberdeen City Council. It is worth noting that SNCT employees have their entitlements for paternity leave, and other family friendly provisions, agreed at a national level and will be reviewed separately.

3.6.3 In November 2022, Aberdeen City Council committed to sign the [Pregnancy Loss Pledge](#) which was subsequently done in 2023. This committed Aberdeen City Council to:

- Encourage a supportive work environment where people feel able to discuss and disclose pregnancy and/or loss without fear of being disadvantaged or discriminated against
- Understand and implement the rules around pregnancy-related leave, ensuring staff feel able to take the time off they need
- Show empathy and understanding towards people and their partners experiencing pregnancy loss

- Implement a pregnancy loss policy or guidance, or ensure it is included in sickness, bereavement or other workplace policies – being mindful of the needs of partners, too
- Encourage line managers to access in-house or external guidance on how to support someone experiencing pregnancy loss
- Support people back to work by being responsive to their needs and showing flexibility wherever possible

3.6.4 Aberdeen City Council joined the [Equally Safe at Work Accreditation Programme](#) in January 2021. Equally Safe at Work is run by Close the Gap and is intended to provide a framework for employers to create an inclusive workplace culture for women which also prevents violence against women.

3.7 Outcomes

3.7.1 Based on the data trends, research, benchmarking and current engagement, a number of key outcomes have been identified as part of this project as follows:

- i. All of our in scope and available policies, provisions and guidance documents are consolidated, streamlined, readily available, easy to understand and clear for those who need it at point of need, packaged within a family friendly 'suite';
- ii. The documents within the family friendly 'suite' are updated so that the language is inclusive and contemporary, reflecting the organisation's Guiding Principles as well as all family types and circumstances, such as LGBTQ+ couples and kinship carers;
- iii. In line with the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Joint Agreement, occupational paternity leave provisions will be doubled to increase to four weeks' leave for eligible employees;
- iv. Employee entitlements will be easily understood so that employees make the most informed choices and managers are able to provide consistent and appropriate support and decisions;
- v. Job Families are considered so that information is accessible in a way that suits the needs of different employee groups;
- vi. The family friendly 'suite' is well-connected to, and makes the most of, government websites and toolkits that are available for employees;
- vii. A communications and engagement plan will be developed to encourage more male employees to make use of family leave provisions;
- viii. Support provisions, such as entitlements around pregnancy loss and counselling services, will be readily available at point of need so that employees will be have easy access to support;
- ix. The organisation will maintain its compliance with the Equality Act (2010) and any other legislative updates.

3.7.2 In addition to the above, the family friendly 'suite' will link with updates relating to flexible and smarter working across the organisation which are currently being reviewed in line with the [Workforce Delivery Plan](#), and will take into consideration the legislative updates associated with the Employee Relations (Flexible Working) Act.

3.7.3 Further recommendations and proposals may be brought into scope following ongoing engagement and as the project develops. These proposals will be reported back to Staff Governance Committee in line with section 3.7.

3.8 Approach and Next Steps

3.8.1 Further benchmarking and research has begun and will continue with other local authorities, partner organisations as well as with other private and third-sector organisations to identify further best-practice examples of family friendly policies and provisions.

3.8.2 Eligibility for and application of the doubling of paternity leave will be scoped out with relevant negotiating bodies to ensure that the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Joint Agreement is applied fairly and consistently for employees.

3.8.3 An employee survey has been created and will be launched to get views of employees who have used any provisions in scope for this project to embed this into the review.

3.8.4 Employee equality networks and working groups will continue to be engaged throughout so that they are co-designing improvements to our family friendly policy, guidance documents and provisions.

3.8.5 The Chief Officer – People and OD and Customer Experience will return to Staff Governance Committee in summer 2024 with the revised family friendly policy, procedures and guidance documentation along with an update on any other changes and improvements.

3.8.6 Any additional changes to provisions or documentation required prior to summer 2024, will be brought to Staff Governance Committee within appropriate timescales and cycles.

3.8.7 Ongoing feedback and data analysis will be taken to measure impact of any improvements.

3.9 Carer's Leave Act Interim Changes

3.9.1 As the Carer's Leave Act, outlined in section 3.4.1, is due for implementation prior to Summer 2024, interim changes should be made to the existing Supporting Carers in the Workplace Guidance and Special Leave Policy.

3.9.2 This will ensure that Aberdeen City Council is compliant with the legislation in advance of the planned implementation date.

3.9.3 Currently, the Special Leave Policy has no specific mention of carer's leave and our Supporting Carers in the Workplace Guidance states:

"In cases where the employee cannot attend work due to their caring responsibilities, managers can consider, where appropriate, granting special leave such as 'compassionate leave' or agreeing with the employee that any

time off required is taken as annual, flexi or unpaid leave or that hours lost are made up at a later point.”

3.9.4 It is proposed to change wording in both documents with immediate effect to:

“Employees who are caring for a dependent with a long-term care need are entitled to a week of unpaid flexible leave per year. Managers can also consider, where appropriate, granting special leave such as ‘compassionate leave’ or agreeing with the employee that any time off required is taken as annual or flexi leave or that hours lost are made up at a later point.”

3.9.5 Both documents as final versions will be included within the family friendly ‘suite’ brought back to Staff Governance Committee in Summer 2024.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Increasing the offering of paternity leave for the ‘second parent’ does not directly alter the cost to the Council for employing any member of staff as it will not alter the pay received by the employee. However, this would create additional absence within services, and there could be additional cost incurred if it was determined that absence had to be covered through overtime or relief worker / agency fees. It would be a decision for individual services how to manage this additional cost pressure within existing budgets and within the confines of the Establishment Control Board.

4.2 Any other identified financial implications will accompany the Staff Governance Committee paper in summer 2024 alongside policy updates and any further proposals.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Family Friendly Policies Project will bear in mind all employment regulations associated with maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave as well as entitlements to parental leave.

5.2 The Family Friendly Policies Project will ensure compliance with the Council’s duties under the Equality Act (2010).

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Inability to deliver on Working in Partnership Agreement.	Ensuring that the doubling of paternity pay is captured within the review.	L	Yes
Compliance	Ability to meet our obligations under the Equality Act (2010) as well as legislative updates around carers leave and neonatal care leave.	Ensuring that the legislative requirements are captured within the review and implemented within relevant timescales.	L	Yes
Operational	Ability to provide support for employees or not competing with other organisations and industries could result in poor staff morale or higher turnover.	Ensuring that benchmarking and research is undertaken so that what Aberdeen City Council is offering is best-practice and progressive.	L	Yes
Financial	<p>Not complying with legislation may leave the Council open to claims.</p> <p>Many services will need to manage to redistribute work as required for the short-term period of paternity leave without backfill. In the instances where services will need a role fully covered during paternity leave then People and Organisational Development will</p>	<p>Ensuring that the legislative requirements are captured within the review and implemented within relevant timescales.</p> <p>Guidance for managers on how to accommodate leave will be available. In addition, recruitment approval governance and</p>	L	Yes

	work together with them to find flexible options within the confines of our Establishment Control Board	support remains in place.		
Reputational	Risks of not providing an inclusive environment could impact on Council reputation and employer brand.	Ensuring that benchmarking and research is undertaken so that what Aberdeen City Council is offering is best-practice and progressive.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The proposals in this report support the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Joint Agreement, namely to double the paternity leave provision for Aberdeen City Council employees.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	This report supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	This report supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups
Regional and City Strategies	This report links directly with the Council's Workforce Delivery Plan in ensuring that employees have the right support. This also supports the Council's Equality Outcomes and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan .

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.

Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
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10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Aberdeen City Council's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report 2021-2023](#)
- 10.2 [Equalities Office, Family Friendly Policies: Actions for Employers Guidance, 1 March 2019](#)
- 10.3 [Equalities Office, Women's Progression in the Workplace: Actions for Employers, 22 March 2019](#)
- 10.4 [Equalities Office, Women's Progression in the Workplace: Actions for Employers Guidance, 22 March 2019](#)
- 10.5 [Equality and Human Rights Commission, Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Research Findings, 25 May 2018](#)
- 10.6 [Pregnancy Loss Support, Staff Governance Committee, 21 November 2022, CUS/22/264](#)
- 10.7 [Equally Safe at Work Employer Accreditation Programme, Staff Governance Committee, 12 April 2021, RES/21/092](#)
- 10.8 [Workforce Delivery, Staff Governance Committee, 30 January 2023, CUS/23/035](#)
- 10.9 [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, Staff Governance Committee, 12 April 2021, RES/21/077](#)
- 10.10 [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update Report, Staff Governance Committee, 26 June 2023, CUS/23/163](#)

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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