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

Trade Union Advisers: Zemeta Chefeke 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, 3 November 2023

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Members of the **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Committee Room 2 - Town House on MONDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 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 & 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 4 September 2023 (Pages 5 - 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

PERFORMANCE AND RISK

9.1. Staff Governance Committee Effectiveness Report - COM/23/338 (Pages 13 - 32)

WORKFORCE STRATEGIES

10.1. Leadership and Management Development Update - CUS/23/344 (Pages 33 - 50)

COUNCIL POLICIES AFFECTING STAFF

11.1. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure - CUS/23/250 (Pages 51 - 74)

11.2. Managing Substance Misuse Policy - CUS/23/349 (Pages 75 - 94)

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING OF STAFF

12.1. Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update - COM/23/346 (Pages 95 - 116)

12.2. Employee Assistance Scheme/Occupational Health/Sickness Absence Six Monthly Report - CUS/23/347 (Pages 117 - 140)

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
Steph Dunsmuir, email sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 4 September 2023. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Ali, Davidson, Fairfull, Hutchison (as substitute for Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost), Macdonald, Massey, McLeod, Radley (as substitute for Councillor MacGregor), Thomson and Yuill (as substitute for Councillor Steve Delaney, the Depute Provost).

Trade Union Advisers:- Carole Thorpe and Ron Constable (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); Brenda Massie and Mark Musk (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

WELCOME

1. The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Councillor Ali who was attending his first meeting of the Committee, in place of Councillor Graham. He advised that Councillor Crockett had also joined the Committee, although he was not present for today's meeting, in place of Councillor Boulton.

The Convener further advised that Mr Ron Constable would no longer be attending meetings of the Committee on behalf of the EIS, and would be replaced by Ms Zem Chefeke at future meetings. He thanked Mr Constable for his contributions during his time on the Committee.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements made.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 26 JUNE 2023

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 26 June 2023 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

Staff GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

4 September 2023

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

4. 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 delays to items 5 (Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure) and 7 (Special Leave Policy); and
- (ii) to otherwise note the business planner.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY – APRIL – JUNE 2023 - COM/23/259

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which provided a summary of statistical health and safety performance information for the three-month reporting period April to June 2023 to provide Members with the opportunity to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation.

The report recommended:-

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to the concerns about reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in schools and other buildings, to note that the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord would circulate a written update to the Committee outlining the latest position with the situation;
- (ii) to note that officers would discuss the Health and Safety Sub Group with EIS colleagues outwith the meeting, in relation to how it could operate more proactively; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the report.

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES PROJECT UPDATE - CUS/23/244

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer Services which provided an updated on progress made towards the Family Friendly Policies Project.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made towards the Family Friendly Policies Project;
- (b) approve the project next steps as outlined in section 3.8 of the report;
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Officers – People and Organisational Development and Customer Experience to report back to Staff Governance Committee in summer 2024 with updated policies and documentation for approval; and

Staff GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

4 September 2023

- (d) approve 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.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would include the LNCT flexible working policy which had just been approved in the list of policies mentioned;
 - (ii) to amend recommendation (c) to 'report back to Staff Governance Committee in June 2024'; and
 - (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.
- **COUNCILLOR NEIL COPLAND, Convener**

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	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	13 November 2023								
4	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		
5	Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure	To seek approval of the policy		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
6	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		
7	Managing Substance Misuse Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
8	Staff Governance Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual effectiveness report		Steph Dunsmuir	Governance	Commissioning	8.5		
9	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 30 September 2023		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
10	Corporate Health & Safety Policy	To present the revised Health & Safety Policy, subject to approval being required		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	2.5	R	There are no changes to be made to the policy at this time, therefore no report to committee is required this year
11	24 January 2024								
12	Managing Performance Policy and Procedure	To seek approval of the policy		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
13	Corporate Communications and Employee Engagement Update	For noting and assurance		Sandie Scott	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.4		
14	Mental Health and Wellbeing Update	To provide an update on recent work which has been undertaken		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.7		
15	22 April 2024								
16	EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update	To present an annual report for the EAS/OH & Sickness Absence figures		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.7		

	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									
17	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 31 December 2023		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
18	Zero tolerance pledge	To update Committee on the work in relation to the zero tolerance pledge, including an action plan for approval		Lindsay MacInnes	People & Organisational Development	Customer	TBC		
19	Equality and Diversity Policy	To report back on the revised policy		Darren Buck	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.6		
20	24 June 2024								
21	Family Friendly Policies	SGC 04/09/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development and Customer Experience to report back to Staff Governance Committee in June 2024 with updated policies and documentation for approval		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
22	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 31 March 2024		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
23	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			
24	Special Leave Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Lindsay MacInnes	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
25	Cluster Risk Register	To present the annual risk register update		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	GD 8.4		
26	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		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.2		
27	Developing the Young Workforce Apprenticeship / Internship Update	To present an update	June 2024 (based on reporting date in 2023)	Lesley Strachan	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.2		
28	Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update	To provide an update in relation to the employee mental health action plan		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	3.2 iii		
29	9 September 2024								

	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									
30	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 30 June 2024		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
31	18 November 2024								
32	Staff Governance Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual effectiveness report		Lindsay MacInnes	People & Organisational Development	Customer	8.5		
33	Corporate Health & Safety Policy	To present the revised Health & Safety Policy, subject to approval being required		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	2.5		
34	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 30 September 2024		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
35	2024 - Reporting dates to be confirmed								
36	Employee Code of Conduct	To present an update on the Employee Code of Conduct		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
37	Staff Travel Plan & Policy	For noting		Sandie Scott	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
38	People development policy / guidance	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
39	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
40	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			

	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	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	<p>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</p> <p>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</p>		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer			
41									
42	2025								
43	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	13 November 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Committee Annual Effectiveness Report
REPORT NUMBER	COM/23/338
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	Vikki Cuthbert
REPORT AUTHOR	Steph 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. RECOMMENDATIONS

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. CURRENT SITUATION

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 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 Data from the annual effectiveness reports is used to inform the review of the Scheme of Governance, ensuring that Committee Terms of Reference are

correctly aligned, and identifying any areas of the Terms of Reference which had not been used throughout the year in order that they can be reviewed and revised if necessary. The information from the effectiveness reports has also been used in the past to feed into the Annual Governance Statement.

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 Similarly, recording the sections or stretch outcomes 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 stretch outcomes.
- 3.6 The annual effectiveness reports for committees retained from the previous structure were delayed to allow the newly established Committees to have a full year of data to report.
- 3.7 Any comments from Members on 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 2022/2023 is therefore appended for the Committee's consideration. Following consideration by the Committee, the report will be submitted to Full Council in December for noting.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications 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. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	N/A			Yes
Compliance	Failure to submit this report would mean that the Council would not be complying with its instruction that all committees and Full Council receive such a report each year.	L	Council is given the opportunity to consider the reports 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.	Yes
Operational	N/A			Yes
Financial	N/A			Yes
Reputational	N/A			Yes
Environment / Climate	N/A			Yes

8. 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.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	It is confirmed by Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Assurance), Vikki Cuthbert, that no impact assessment is required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Staff Governance Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 14 October 2022 to 14 October 2023

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Steph Dunsmuir
Committee Services Officer
sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Staff Governance Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 2022/2023



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1. Introduction from Convener

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the annual effectiveness report for the Staff Governance Committee (SGC). The annual effectiveness reports have been in place since 2018/19, following a recommendation made by CIPFA in their review of the Council's governance arrangements, namely that Committees review the extent to which they had operated within their Terms of Reference, through an annual report. The annual effectiveness report represents good practice in governance and also informs the annual review of the Council's Scheme of Governance, enabling officers to identify if any changes are required, for example, to the Committee Terms of Reference. The presentation of the annual reports was temporarily paused due to the disruption to committee meetings as a result of the pandemic, and then to allow time for the new committee structure to bed in following the local government elections in May 2022.
- 1.2 During the reporting period, the Committee has approved some particularly important pieces of work, two such examples being the agreement to sign up to the Menopause Workplace Pledge and the Pregnancy Loss Pledge, ensuring that the Council continues to be a supportive and understanding place for employees going through the menopause or suffering the heartbreak of pregnancy loss.
- 1.3 2024 will be a busy year for the Committee, with a number of key staffing policies due to be presented for consideration, as well as an update on the Zero Tolerance work, and I look forward to working with Members, Trade Union colleagues and officers to ensure that we continue to deliver the best outcomes for our staff.
- 1.4 I am also pleased to note from this year's effectiveness report that the Committee has been unanimous in approving all the reports presented, as it demonstrates the ongoing positive working relationships between Members, Trade Union Advisers and officers which ensure that the Committee continues to operate effectively.



Councillor Neil Copland
Convener – Staff Governance Committee

2. The Role of the Committee

PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE

To act as a consultative forum for discussion between management, elected members and trade unions, on matters relating to staff in the pursuit of a workplace culture that reflect the requirements of a 21st Century public sector organisation.

Through partnership working, the committee will support the Council becoming an employer of choice by promoting positive values, behaviours, training and recruitment and ways of working.

The Committee also acts as safety committee within s2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and keeps under review measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of employees. The committee provides a channel of communication, co-operation and involvement between the Council and trade union representatives on all relevant health and safety matters.

REMIT OF COMMITTEE

1. Partnership approach arrangements

The Committee will:

- 1.1 seek to maintain good relationships and model a partnership approach between the Council and trade unions;
- 1.2 provide a decision making forum, for the resolution of staffing matters that cannot be resolved through normal processes including but not restricted to conditions of service (except teachers¹); and
- 1.3 consider reports by the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development on matters following a request by a trade union advisor provided always that the Chief Officer – People and 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. Strategic Workforce Plans and Policies

The Committee will:

- 2.1 approve the Framework Agreement for Industrial Relations (the FAIR agreement);
- 2.2 approve strategic workforce plans which reflect the requirements of a 21st Century Council in terms of staff, skills and attributes;
- 2.3 approve framework documentation in relation to workforce culture;
- 2.4 approve strategic training and development plans for the whole organisation;
- 2.5 approve all staff policies, these being policies where the predominant factor affects the expected behaviour and actions of staff;

- 2.6 monitor equality in employment and ensure that the Council, as an employer, complies with its statutory equal pay and other equality responsibilities; and
- 2.7 receive people performance data to enable the monitoring of the wellbeing of our staff including but not limited to absence data.

3. Health, Safety & Wellbeing of Staff

The Committee will:

- 3.1 approve health, safety and wellbeing policies
- 3.2 monitor performance and compliance across all functions of the Council in respect of
 - i. Health and safety legislation
 - ii. Health, safety and wellbeing policies
 - iii. Health and safety recommendations, including those from external inspection bodies

4. Employment Appeals and Disputes

The Committee will:

- 4.1 approve the procedure for the Appeals Sub Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

Elected members

Local trades union representatives as advisers – two named advisers from each of the following trades unions:

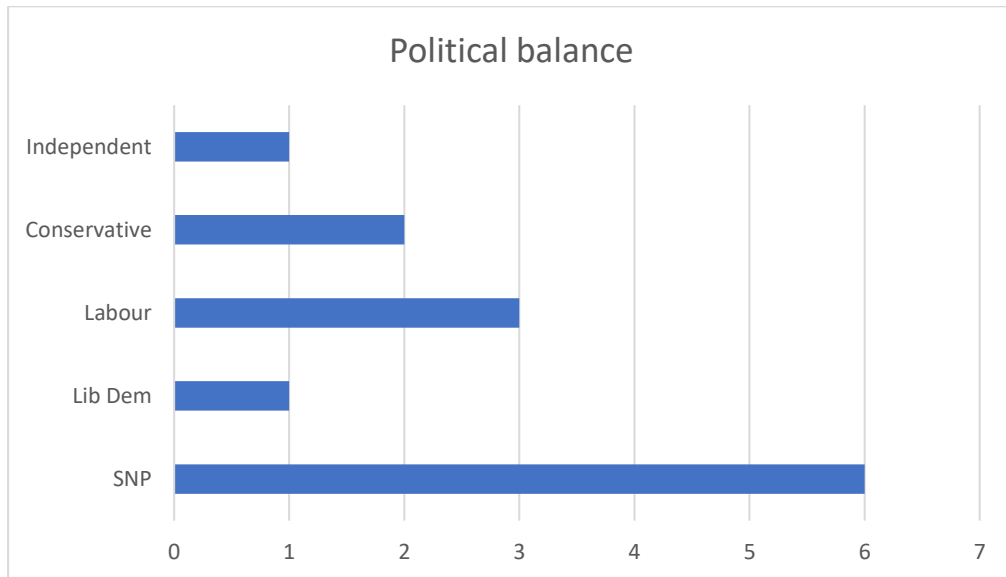
- Unison
- Unite
- GMB
- Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
- Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (SSTA); and
- VOICE

Executive Lead: Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development

3. Membership of the Committee during 2022/2023

3.1 The Staff Governance Committee has 13 members.

3.2 The Committee composition is presented below:-



3.3 The Committee also has Trade Union Advisers who attend the meeting, but are not members of the Committee. The Advisers can however ask questions and participate in any debate, but do not have the ability to move or second motions or amendments, nor to vote.

4. Membership Changes

- 4.1 Former Councillor Avril MacKenzie was in attendance at the November 2022 Committee meeting, however sadly passed away in December 2022. Councillor Massey joined the Committee from the meeting of 13 March 2023.
- 4.2 Councillors Boulton and Graham were members of the Committee to the meeting of 26 June 2023 and were then replaced by Councillors Crockett and Ali respectively.

5. Member Attendance

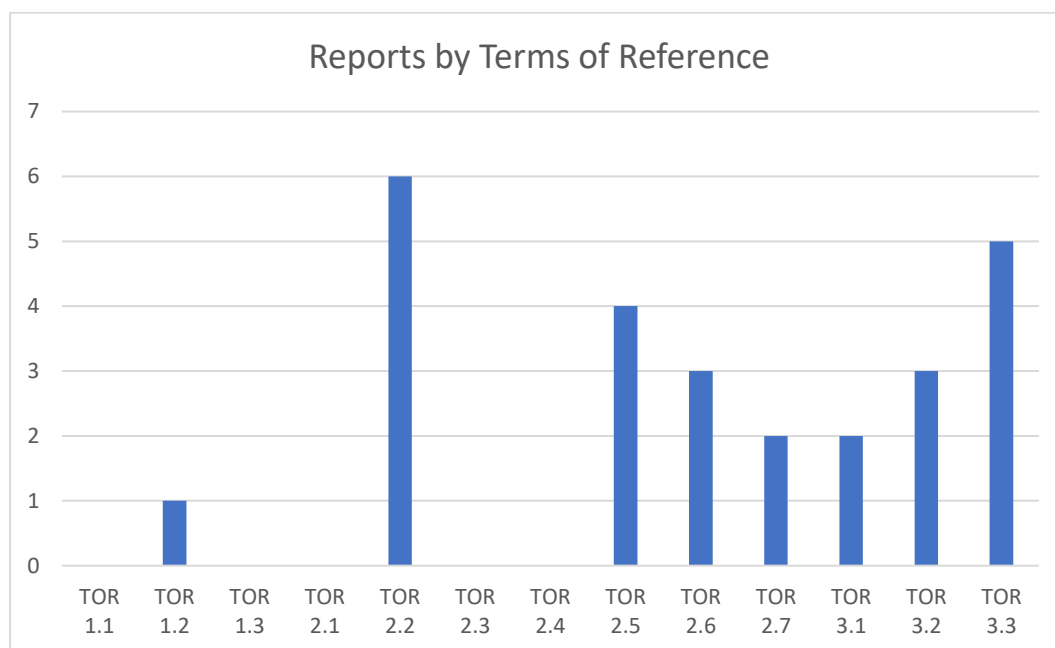
Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitutions
Councillor Neil Copland	5	5	
Councillor Gill Al-Samarai	5	5	
Councillor Nurul Hoque Ali	1	1	
Councillor Marie Boulton	4	4	
Councillor David Cameron	5	3	Councillor Kairin van Sweeden Councillor Michael Hutchison
Councillor Barney Crockett	1	0	
Councillor Derek Davidson	5	5	
Councillor Steve Delaney	5	3	Councillor Miranda Radley Councillor Ian Yuill
Councillor Lee Fairfull	5	5	
Councillor Gordon Graham	4	4	
Councillor Sandra Macdonald	5	4	Councillor Kate Blake
Councillor Neil MacGregor	5	4	Councillor Miranda Radley
Councillor Avril MacKenzie	1	1	
Councillor Duncan Massey	3	3	
Councillor Ken McLeod	5	5	
Councillor Lynn Thomson	5	5	

6. Meeting Content

6.1 During the 2022/2023 reporting period (14 October 2022 to 14 October 2023), the Committee had five meetings and considered a total of 21 reports.

6.2 Terms of Reference

6.2.1 The following chart details how reports aligned to the Terms of Reference (set out at section 2 above) for the Committee.



6.2.2 During the course of 2022/2023 the Committee received reports under the majority of its main Terms of Reference.

6.2.3 As the committee structure was reviewed in late 2022, very few changes to the Terms of Reference were made following the June 2023 Scheme of Governance review. Any changes made were generally to provide clarity where required and ensure consistency between committees. The new Terms of Reference will continue to be monitored throughout the year, in preparation for the 2024 Scheme of Governance review.

6.2.4 The Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference were slightly amended in 2023, and so the figures in the table above reflect a mixture of the current and previous Terms of Reference. For example, the reports listed under TOR 3.3 reflect the quarterly corporate health and safety reports which previously fell under TOR 3.3, but now sit under TOR 3.2 in the new Terms of Reference.

6.2.5 The majority of reports fell under Terms of Reference 2.2, namely “approve strategic workforce plans which reflect the requirements of a 21st Century Council in terms of

staff, skills and attributes” and Terms of Reference 3.2 / 3.3, which relate to the monitoring of performance and compliance in respect of health and safety.

- 6.2.6 There were no reports under TOR 1.3 “consider reports by the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development on matters following a request by a trade union advisor provided always that the Chief Officer – People and 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” which suggests that the ongoing close working between officers and Trade Union colleagues outwith the committee meetings is helping to resolve any matters raised.
- 6.2.7 Similarly, there has been no requirement during the reporting period to approve the Framework Agreement for Industrial Relations (the FAIR agreement); nor approve framework documentation in relation to workforce culture; (Terms of Reference 2.1 and 2.3 respectively) but both remain relevant Terms of Reference to be retained as they will likely be reported to future meetings. While TOR 2.3 “approve strategic training and development plans for the whole organisation” has not specifically been used for any of the reports to Committee, many of the reports have referenced existing training which is being provided to officers.

7. Reports and Decisions

7.1 The following information relates to the committee reports and Notices of Motion presented to Committee throughout the reporting period, as well as the use of Standing Orders and engagement with members of the public.

	Total	Total Percentage of Reports
Confidential Reports	0	0
Exempt Reports	0	0
Number of reports where the Committee amended officer recommendations	0*	0
Number of reports approved unanimously	21**	100%
Number of reports or service updates requested during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in business planner	0***	0
Number of reports delayed for further information	0	0
Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour in terms of the Code of Conduct	0	0
Late reports received (i.e. reports not available for inspection at least 3 clear days before the meeting)	0	0
Number of referrals to Council under SO 34.1	0	0

*Officer recommendations were accepted, however the Committee asked for the report recommendation to read that a report was due back by June 2024, instead of Summer 2024 as listed in the report.

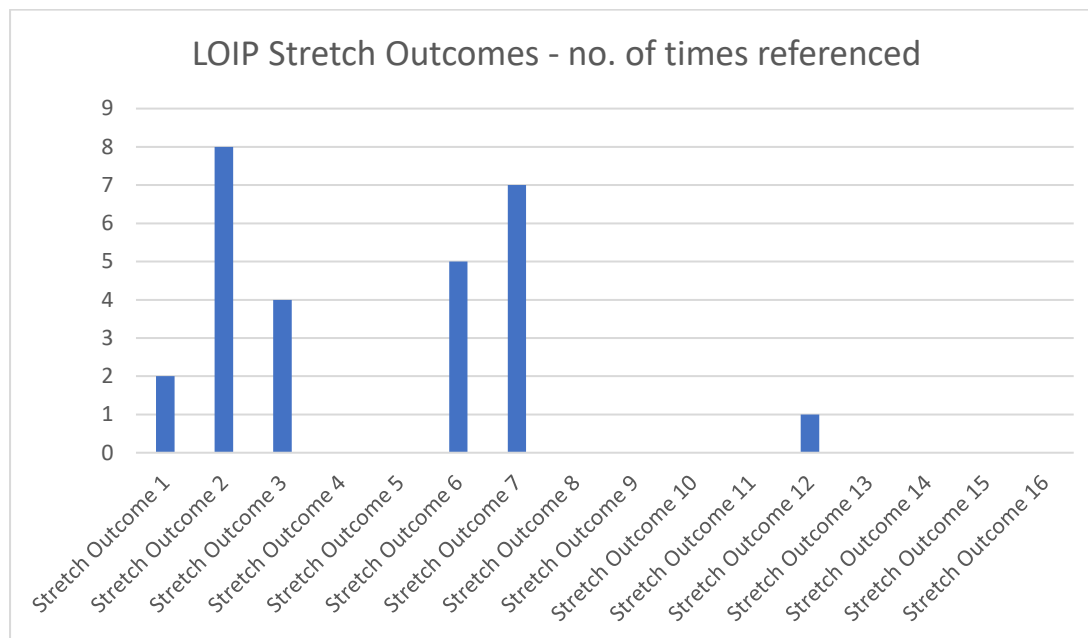
**There was one vote during the reporting period, in relation to a Notice of Motion, however there was no report relating to this motion, and all reports presented by officers were approved unanimously

***Several pieces of data were requested in relation to a few of the reports, however these were simply provided by email following the meeting, and no service update was required.

Notices of Motion, Suspension of Standing Orders, Interface with the Public	
Number of Notices of Motion to Committee	One from Councillor Tissera, referred to the Committee
Number of times Standing Orders suspended	None
Specific Standing Orders suspended	Not applicable
Number of deputations requested	None
Number of deputations heard	Not applicable
Number of petitions considered	None

8. Reports with links to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan

8.1 The following table details of the 21 reports how each report linked to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP Stretch Outcomes are appended to this report for reference at Appendix 1).



8.2 Reports to the Staff Governance Committee had links to a number of the stretch outcomes, particularly those relating to economy and care experienced young people.

8.3 Many of the reports relate to initiatives which impact on the stretch outcomes which look to improve opportunities for supporting people into work, skilling and reskilling, and helping children and young people to reach their developmental milestones and have positive destinations. These include the Developing the Young Workforce and Employability Programmes reports.

8.4 Some reports considered by Committee this year have had no direct connection with specific LOIP stretch outcomes; these tend to be items such as the regular corporate health and safety report. Such reports do however have a general impact on the outcomes of the LOIP, for example, 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. Mitigating the risk of financial penalties incurred through the Civil and Criminal Courts and from the Regulators allows available resource to be best used to ensure funding of the growth sectors of the local economy.

9. Training and Development

9.1 Training opportunities for Members relating to the Committee during the reporting period were as follows:-

- Training for Appeals Sub Committee members ahead of any employee appeals to be considered. Trade Unions were also invited to attend this training to enable them to have an understanding of the role of the Sub Committee.
- Recruitment: training for appointment chairs and panel members
- Health and Safety: lone working, personal safety, trade unions - An informal session of around 30 minutes to 1 hour covering the following: risk management, safety procedures, lone working and personal safety
- Integrated Impact Assessment - a session to provide an overview on the purpose of an Integrated Impact Assessment and how Elected Members can use this for the decision making and gauging the impact of policies and proposals.

9.2 Further development opportunities will be considered for next year based on Committee business throughout the year, Executive Lead proposals, Member feedback, Elected members Personal Development plans and any training highlighted by Subject Matter experts on what may be required to assist them in performing their roles.

10. Code of Conduct Declarations and Transparency Statements

- 10.1 There were no declarations of interest nor transparency statements made by Members during the reporting period. Information in respect of declarations of interest and transparency statements is measured to evidence awareness of the requirements to adhere to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the responsibility to ensure fair decision-making.

11. Civic Engagement

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 The Consultation Protocol allows for a minimum period of 2 weeks for Trade Union consultation. Throughout the reporting period this 2 week period has been applied as the formal consultation period, however informal consultation and engagement with the Unions has proved to be extremely advantageous in terms of early interventions and formulating policy. There are weekly Director / Union Engagement meetings, allowing Trade Union colleagues to raise issues with Directors and the Chief Officer People and Organisational Development as well as regular weekly meetings with Trade Unions and the Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager.
- 11.3 Extensive consultation has been undertaken throughout the year in preparation for a number of reports to the Committee. For example, in the development of job families and refreshed capability framework; the development of Dynamics365, including end-user co-design, and the engagement with team members prior to the move of Aberdeen Scientific Services Labs' (ASSL) to the James Hutton Institute.

12. Executive Lead to the Committee - Commentary

- 12.1 The Committee continues to work effectively and collaboratively, and I am pleased to note that all reports were 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.
- 12.2 A key piece of work presented to Committee this year was the workforce delivery plan, which was built with consideration of the external environment and the need to continue to adapt over the next 5 years in response to the changing external and internal environment and any key government policy drivers and upcoming legislative changes. Members heard about the extensive engagement with staff, through methods such as staff working groups, surveys and face to face discussions.

- 12.3 Members have also heard about the progress made with developing our young workforce, specifically around initiatives in place to support care experienced young people in the city, including an apprenticeship programme, Young Employee Network modern apprenticeships, foundation apprenticeships, guaranteed interview schemes internships such as Kickstart, traineeships and the ABZ Campus – Employment Pathways Work Experience Programme.
- 12.4 Given the nature of the Committee business will often be of interest to employees, it is vital that reports are open and transparent and I am pleased to note that all business this year was considered in public session, with no exempt reports presented.

13. Trade Union Comments

- 13.1 **EIS** - The EIS is Aberdeen City's largest teacher trade union with a membership of around 80% of all teachers employed by the City.

The EIS places great value in representing the voices of its members at this valuable forum particularly issues relating to Health and Safety.

The inclusion of TU representatives in the Staff Governance Committee underlines the successful partnership that the EIS has enjoyed with officers and elected members at this level.

It is noted that the Convener underlines this importance by always including the TU voice in policies and reports that are presented to the Staff Governance Committee.

I have represented the EIS since the committee was formed and while I will continue in my role as Joint EIS LA Secretary, I have now stood down from the committee but would like it to be noted that it has been a pleasure to serve on this forum, which I am sure my successor, Ms Zem Chefeke will find to be a similar experience.

Ron Constable
Joint EIS LA Secretary

14. The Year Ahead

- 14.1 Although there were small changes made to the SGC Terms of Reference in 2023, in accordance with the usual practice of an annual review of the Scheme of Governance, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed and officers will reflect on whether any areas require further refinement moving forward to ensure the continued efficient operation of the Committee.
- 14.2 The Committee will continue to receive any policies which are due for update or which require to be refreshed. Some of the policies due to Committee over 2024 include the Equality and Diversity Policy; Managing Performance Policy; People Development

Policy; Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy; and the suite of Family Friendly Policies.

- 14.3 The Committee will also receive its regular reports on corporate health and safety data, as well as employee assistance, occupational health and sickness absence information. There will be an update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and the Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update. Another important report will be the work in relation to the Zero Tolerance Pledge, ensuring there is support for our staff and elected members.

Appendix 1. Local Outcome Improvement Plan Stretch Outcomes

Economy	
1.	No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026
2.	400 unemployed people supported into fair work by 2026
3.	500 people skilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026
People (Children & Young People)	
4.	95% of children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026
5.	90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026
6.	By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026
7.	95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026
8.	83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026
9.	100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination
People (Adults)	
10.	25% fewer people receiving a first ever Court conviction and 2% fewer people reconvicted within one year by 2026
11.	Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026
12.	Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026
Place	
13.	Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate
14.	Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026
15.	Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/ managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026
Community Empowerment	
16.	100% increase in the proportion of citizens who feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	13 November 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Leadership & Management Development Programme – Update
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/23/344
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Lindsay MacInnes
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandie Scott
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.4

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To update Committee on progress and activity on our approach to leadership and management development, approved November 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1. notes the continuing progress made on developing our leaders and managers and the assurance provided within the report that this programme equips our managers to deal with the challenges ahead; and
- 2.2. notes that a coaching approach to managing and leading is now a core foundation within all our management development programmes.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1. In November 2022, the Committee approved our approach to Leadership and Management Development in supporting delivery of the Target Operating Model 1.2.
- 3.2. In January 2023, the Committee approved the Workforce Delivery Plan, and our approach to the Job Family Capability Framework. This set our intention to map all job roles in Aberdeen City Council’s workforce to one of seven key job families (see appendix A) – each with its own corresponding capability framework, with the detail of the indicators in each capability framework to be developed through further engagement with employees and subject matter experts.
- 3.3. This report also proposed that each job family would have its own development framework and that people managers would have a Leadership & Management Development programme. To deliver this aim, four core programmes have been built to support and develop people at all stages in their leadership and management careers:



3.4. These are now well underway, and this report provides an update on the ongoing progress made since approval in November 2022.

Progress Update

3.5. People Managers at Aberdeen City Council play a crucial role in our cultural transformation: in aligning their teams with the strategic aims; supporting them through challenges; and ensuring they have the right skills and working environment to thrive.

3.6. We have a duty to ensure our People Managers are equipped with the skills, confidence and resources to deliver this role.

3.7. The purpose of our Leadership & Management Development programme is to deliver on this duty.

3.8. For a development programme to develop leaders so that they can collectively create the desired organisational culture, it needs to be tethered to a capability framework that is:

- Strategic – it must be aligned to organisational goals and outcomes.
- Future focussed – not just focussed on what we need people to be now, but to provide aspiration and stretch towards where we need them to be.
- Relatable – people must be able to understand what is being asked of them.
- Owned – by senior leadership and internal subject matter experts.
- Relevant – to the local context.
- National context – cognisant of the wider national and global picture, including legislative.

3.9. Therefore, the first step in building our Leadership & Management Development programme was finalising the indicators for the People Manager Capability Framework (see appendix B).

3.10. Alongside our other job families, the indicators for the People Manager Capability Framework were developed through intensive engagement at all levels throughout the organisation. Firstly, with subject matter experts to ensure strategic priorities such as digital transformation, financial accountability, climate change, and equality, diversity and inclusion were reflected in the framework. Then through focus groups with managers at all different levels – from Chief Officers to supervisors and chargehands, to ensure it was written in straight-forward plain English. The possibility to create a separate Capability Framework for Service Managers was considered, but when we explored this as an option through employee

engagement we consistently found, with different groups managers, a desire for a single capability framework for people managers.

- 3.11. From this, a People Manager capability framework has been built that is relevant to managers at all levels – from supervisors to Service Managers – and is intended now to be embedded into performance expectations and conversations via our appraisal process, Continuous Review and Development.
- 3.12. Chief Officers have their own Capability Framework (see appendix C), which was finalised in late 2021 and designed using Solace’s Executive Leader framework as a starting point and then adapted to meet our own local needs.
- 3.13. The subsequent development programmes have been built by mapping the required capabilities against learning outcomes of all learning interventions.
- 3.14. Five core capabilities run throughout the capability and development frameworks for all People Managers and Chief Officers. These capabilities have been shaped around our Guiding Principles, which were created by employees and for employees. So, in addition to aligning employees to our strategic goals, the Capability Framework seeks to reinforce the culture needed from and desired by our workforce.



Chief Officer Development Programme

- 3.15. The purpose of this aspect of the programme is to enable our Corporate Management Team to collectively decide what they need from their organisational leaders – the Chief Officers - then for People Development to put a programme of development in place that enables them to learn in an environment that encourages self-reflection, a growth mindset, peer learning and challenge. Key organisational initiatives that require cultural change need our organisational leaders to own their position as role models and collective leaders. Therefore, throughout the Leadership & Management Development programme development interventions can be noted as starting at the top, then repeated and reinforced through the Aspiring Senior Leaders, Inspiring Leaders, and People Management programme, with the expectation that each level of management is contributing to the culture through their own behaviour change and sharing their learning with others.
- 3.16. Using their Capability Framework, Chief Officers undertook a self-assessment to identify their own priority development needs. The collective results of this enabled People Development to build a development programme to meet the identified skill gaps and organisational priorities.

Each Chief Officer was assigned a coach from the People Development team who discussed the results of their self-assessment with them, invited them to bring feedback from their director, and completed a Personal Development Plan which each Chief Officer is working towards.

CHIEF OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2022 - 2024

	Delivering outcomes for our customers	Change and Improvement	Working with others	Accountability	Care
Delivered	Understanding Service Review Techniques	Becoming data led: Evaluation Approach	<p>Working with others: collaborative and partnership working</p> <p>Difficult Conversations, Feedback and Radical Candour</p> <p>Creating a Coaching Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mindset and Skills of a Coach - Leader and Manager as Coach <p>Mentoring Skills</p>	<p>Commissioning cycle and balancing the budget: finance for chief officers</p> <p>Emergency Planning and Response</p> <p>Achieving Net Zero</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Literacy • Carbon Budgeting 	<p>Focusing on Resilience and Wellbeing (for self and others)</p> <p>Self-Development for Leaders</p> <p>Role Modelling an ED&I Culture: Integrated Impact Assessments</p> <p>Role Modelling an ED&I Culture: Black History Month</p>
Upcoming		Early Intervention and Prevention	Succession Planning		

Aspiring Senior Leaders

- 3.17. The purpose of this aspect of the programme is to create pathways and opportunities that empower and enable our leaders of the future, so that we retain high potential employees and create resilience in our organisational leadership by creating succession plans that motivate people to progress to senior roles.
- 3.18. To date, one cohort has been selected and developed as part of the Aspiring Leaders Programme. It was identified that the priority area for succession planning was at Chief Officer level, so the Chief Officer Capability Framework was used as the basis for an 'Aspiring Senior Leaders' Capability Framework (see appendix D) which was then used for recruitment, selection and development of candidates for the programme.
- 3.19. In line with our Equality Outcomes, one of which is to improve the diversity of our workforce and address any areas of underrepresentation, with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Race and Sex; we promoted and encouraged applications from these groups. We promoted the programme through the Equality Ambassadors Network and through our staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working groups. Within our internal communications and application form, we emphasised the encouragement of people from these groups to apply. We have not captured the number of applications from these different groups as it did not form part of the decision-making process, indeed applications were scored anonymously to ensure that there was no unconscious bias when scoring applications. Further monitoring and reporting of this will form part of our usual diversity data reporting in line with our Equality Outcomes and Statutory Performance Indicators, where we collate and analyse data around occupational segregation, pay gaps and workforce diversity.
- 3.20. We initially received 51 expressions of interest in the programme, we then received 30 full applications and from this, 14 candidates were selected for the programme. They are now 10 months into a 12-month intensive development programme, delivered by members of our Corporate and Extended Corporate Management Teams, in-house subject matter experts, and commissioned specialists.

ASPIRING SENIOR LEADERS' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2023					
	Delivering outcomes for our customers	Change and Improvement	Working with others	Accountability	Care
Delivered	Leading people through change and service design Life Events – Project	Transformation & projects Council's approach to digital projects	Working with others: collaborative and partnership working Giving and Receiving Feedback Leader and Manager as Coach Mentoring Session	Finance for Chief Officers Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning – the role of a Duty Emergency Response Coordinator Working in a political Environment	Reflective Practice
Upcoming	Media Induction	Becoming research active: Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Centre		Climate Change Plan	

- 3.21. Three candidates have – within their tenure on the scheme- already secured senior leadership positions within Aberdeen City Council / Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership.
- 3.22. The Aspiring Senior Leaders are currently taking the learning from the above and applying it to real challenges facing Aberdeen City Council. This enables them to work collaboratively on a cross-council project, where they are actively working out with their substantive area and contributing towards finding solutions to complex organisation-wide problems.
- 3.23. In addition to running our own internal Aspiring Senior Leaders programme, People Development also promote, support and sponsor employees to take part in local and national executive leadership programmes, such as Northeast Learning Collaborative's Mentoring Programme, ACOSVO Leadership Exchange, and Solace Springboard programme. For the third year running, one of our candidates has been successfully selected for Solace Springboard programme.

People Management Development Programme

3.24. The purpose of this programme is to provide a foundation for new and existing managers to ensure good management basics are in place. It contains a variety of modules, designed to provide managers with the knowledge and skills set out under the revised Capability Framework, and includes facilitated (tutor-led) workshops and self-led (for example eLearning) resources organised into three main modules designed to build their skills in self-leadership, team leadership and organisational leadership.

Self-Leadership	Team Leadership	Organisational Leadership
<i>Start with raising your self-awareness and building your personal productivity.</i>	<i>Develop your interpersonal skills with the people you lead.</i>	<i>Develop your skills as an Aberdeen City Council leader</i>
<p>Facilitated Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers' Induction – Introduction to People Management at Aberdeen City Council <p>Self-led learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being an Empathetic Leader Communication and Presentation skills Decision Making Digital Leadership 	<p>Facilitated Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous Review & Development (CR&D) – how to do one-to-ones and annual appraisals Leader and Manager as Coach Motivating Others Performance Conversations Recruitment & Selection <p>Self-led learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having an effective conversation Managing a positive working environment Managing a team Mentoring Supporting others to be resilient 	<p>Facilitated Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective partnership working with Trade Unions Leading Change Mental Health Awareness for Managers <p>Self-led learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality and Diversity for managers Gender equity Introduction to Frontline Complaints Managing Change Meeting our Climate Change Duties Trauma Informed Unconscious bias

You can view the full detail of this programme, with course descriptors, on our intranet: [People Management Development Programme](#)

3.25. We are due to formally launch the People Management Development Programme in the coming weeks, to coincide with the launch of the finalised Capability Frameworks as part of our appraisal process, Continuous Review & Development (CR&D). Some of the courses within this have already launched individually

Course	Number of managers attended
Leading Change	11
Mental Health Awareness for Managers	84
Continuous Review & Development (CR&D) – how to do one-to-ones and annual appraisals	134
Leader and Manager as a Coach	73

Inspiring Leaders

3.26. The purpose of this programme is to inspire experienced managers to put skills into practice along with intense masterclasses. This will be essential for and targeted towards our 100 senior managers (e.g., Service Managers, Middle Managers), as well as being open to all leaders.

Self-Leadership	Team Leadership	Organisational Leadership
<i>Start with raising your self-awareness and building your personal productivity.</i>	<i>Develop your interpersonal skills with the people you lead.</i>	<i>Develop your skills as an Aberdeen City Council leader</i>
<p>Facilitated Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Leadership How to deliver engaging presentations <p>Self-led learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a Digital Culture Emotional Intelligence 	<p>Facilitated Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict Management Facilitation Skills Giving and Receiving Feedback <p>Self-led learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Resilience Flexible working Generational Diversity Managing Teams at Home Negotiating Smarter Working 	<p>Facilitated Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial Intelligence (AI) Commercial Awareness Committee Report Writing Early Intervention and Prevention Improvement Methodology Integrated Impact Assessments Introduction to Systems Leadership for Senior Managers Net Zero: Carbon Literacy and Carbon Budgeting Project Management Training Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Strategic Thinking Understanding your data and PowerBI Working Collaboratively <p>Self-led learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon and the Environment Design Thinking // Service Design Feedback and Improvement Data Procurement Modules Project Management Toolkit

3.27. Some learning sessions are to be shared between the Inspiring Leaders programme and Chief Officer Development programme, to facilitate networking, relationship building, silo-breaking, peer-learning at a senior level. This enables Chief Officers to be visible role models for holding a growth mindset and supporting time for their development. It also enables senior leadership to develop a shared language and understanding of key

organisational priorities, and to hold each other accountable for the investment in training.

3.28. We are due to formally launch the Inspiring Leaders Programme in the coming weeks, to coincide with the launch of the finalised Capability Frameworks as part of CR&D. You can view the early draft of this programme, with course descriptors, on our intranet: [Inspiring Leaders \(sharepoint.com\)](#). The content of this programme will evolve so that it remains contemporary with the evolving needs of the organisation and of our senior leaders. Some of the courses within this programme have already launched individually:

Course	Number of managers attended
How to deliver engaging presentations	65
Conflict Management	47

Coaching

3.29. A coaching approach is critical to our programme and organisation because it fosters high performance work culture through motivation and supportive leadership. Coaching engages employees to reflect, raise their self-awareness, and take responsibility for the actions that will enable them to thrive. For managers, it provides good, structured conversations, builds trust and distributes leadership and ownership. To ensure that coaching is a core foundation within all our management development programmes, it is embedded into our Capability Frameworks, and it is interwoven throughout and supports each of the four programmes above. In addition, to fully create a coaching culture we have delivered as follows:

- Six members of People & Organisational Development nearing completion of ILM level 5 in Coaching to become highly qualified experts able to lead our coaching culture.
- 73 employees have already attended 'Leader and Manager as Coach' since it was launched in 2022.
- Chief Officers and Aspiring Senior Leaders have all undertaken 'Leader and Manager as Coach'. All Aspiring Senior Leaders have been offered or assigned coaches.
- To ensure People and Organisational Development is leading by example and can embed coaching in HR and performance processes, all are now enrolled on 'HR as a Coach'.
- A coaching approach to management has been woven throughout People Management training, development and processes delivered since approval in November 2022. Examples of this include sessions such as Undertaking Effective CR&Ds, The ACC Approach to Leading People through Change and other service specific interventions.
- An Internal Coaching Service has been created with 20 trained and qualified coaches to further embed our coaching culture. They are available to be matched to employees within the organisation seeking to develop themselves and are available to support people anywhere throughout the organisation. This service will be available to the full organisation by the end of October.

Mentoring

- 3.30. Complementing our Coaching Network, we are launching a Mentoring Service as part of our Leadership & Management Development Programme. A Mentoring Network is beneficial for Aberdeen City Council culturally as it encourages learning and growth in all areas of professional and personal development, it enables employees to become better leaders and professionals, and develops the habit of learning from and sharing with others, which reduces single points of failure. We have developed a pool of trained mentors who are able to offer support to other members of the organisation around areas such as career and role. A mentoring process has been developed and tested with the Aspiring Senior Leaders cohort as part of their programme. They have each been matched with member of ECMT or CMT within the organisation.
- 3.31. The Mentoring Service will be launched at the end of October alongside Coaching.
- 3.32. Mentoring typically involves a more experienced colleague sharing their greater knowledge to support the development of a less experienced one. To engage and connect our young workforce, and as part of our commitment to keep 'The Promise' for care-experienced young people, we will also introduce Reverse Mentoring – where we will pair staff across generational divides and encourage a bottom-up flow of information. As well as the development this provides to our more experienced staff members, it also has a significant impact on culture and can redress power biases.

The Leadership Forum

- 3.33. Supporting, connecting, informing and developing leaders and managers at all levels in our organisation is our Leadership Forum. All Leadership and Management Development opportunities are promoted to our thriving network of over 600 leaders from across the organisation. In addition to the rolling programme of development highlighted in our People Management Development Programme and our Inspiring Leaders programme, the Leadership Forum also serves to develop our leadership community by providing a digital platform for them to share news, opportunities, questions and ideas; and connect them via face-to-face development and engagement on organisational priorities. Over the past 12 months, the Leadership Forum has run events on the following topics:
- Organisational change and design
 - ACC financial position
 - Climate change, net zero and carbon budgeting
 - City Centre and Beach Masterplan
 - National planning framework - changes in legislation
 - Equalities and inclusion
 - Data protection and security
 - Changes to staff procedures and guidance
 - Smarter working

Accelerator Scheme

3.34. Gaps have been identified at all leadership levels in the following protected characteristics: women, young people, disabled people and ethnically diverse people. As part of tackling this, we are targeting under-represented groups when promoting Leadership & Management Development opportunities. We are also launching an 'accelerator scheme' which will offer spaces on Leadership & Management Development courses to those who are currently underrepresented and provide additional support and adaptations for them. The first one of these will be our initial People Management programme, which is aimed primarily at those who are currently people managers and spaces will also be opened to some others who are underrepresented and who aspire to progress vertically in the organisation, with offerings of additional coaching, one-to-one support and alternative learning formats.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This will be funded by the Corporate Training budget held within People and Organisational Development.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No known legal implications arising from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No known environmental implications arising from 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	None		L	Yes
Compliance	None		L	Yes
Operational	None		L	Yes
Financial	None		L	Yes
Reputational	None		L	Yes
Environment / Climate	None		L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>Valuing our Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise that the Council depends upon its staff to deliver the services it provides and believe the Council must properly reward, train and support its staff. • Engage regularly with staff and trade union representatives. <p>These proposals take forward the enabling strategies and transformation programme articulated within the TOM 1.2, and form part of the Page 23 next steps for delivery of the outcomes and commitments.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>6. By Meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	<u>Stage 1 Integrated Impact Assessment completed.</u>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Completed (for coaching and mentoring)

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Leadership and Management Development](#)
- 10.2 [Workforce Delivery Plan](#)
- 10.3 [Job Family Capability Framework](#)
- 10.4 [The Promise – Independent Care Review Scotland](#)

11. APPENDICES

- A Our Job Families
- B People Manager Capability Framework
- C Chief Officer Capability Framework
- D Aspiring Senior Leaders Capability Framework

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Tel	Find me on Microsoft Teams 😊

Appendix A: Our Job Families



Frontline Operational Services

We provide frontline operational services for the public, which generally involves practical duties and activities being undertaken.



Frontline Customer Services

We provide frontline customer service for the public. Often a first point of contact for customers dealing directly with their enquiries to provide support and advice.



Social & Community Services

We provide essential support every day, working directly with children and/or adults with differing levels of need.



Information Services

We provide business and specialist services.



People Managers

We coach and support employees all across the organisation to enable them to thrive in a positive environment.



Teachers (SNCT)






We teach children within a school setting and are under Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) terms and conditions.



Chief Officers

We are strategic leaders responsible for setting the vision and direction of the organisation and place.

Appendix B: People Manager Capability Framework

People Manager				
 Purpose	 Pride	 Team	 Trust	 Value
Delivering for our customers	Change and Improvement	Working with others	Accountability	Care
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I ensure my team understands our purpose as a Council and our purpose as a team and how they each contribute. 2. I empower my team members to improve customer experience and make decisions at the point of need. 3. I deal effectively and promptly with escalated issues/matters and use learning to improve the customer experience. 4. I monitor the performance of my team and use it to prioritise tasks and manage expectations. 5. I encourage my team to actively engage and co-create with customers to meet, enhance and improve the Services Standards 6. I communicate and present key information and news with others in a clear and concise manner. 7. I know how to spot the signs and respond to people who are affected by trauma 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I effectively identify, plan, lead and support change. 2. I listen to feedback and use it to support my development. 3. I create an improvement culture where others are encouraged to experiment, test and learn, and make best use of resources. 4. I analyse and critique data to inform meaningful decisions, I encourage my team to make research led decisions. 5. I foster a culture of learning and encourage knowledge sharing and feedback across teams/services. 6. I look for opportunities to exploit existing and emerging digital technology to improve services. I am confident in the use of digital tools 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I communicate, collaborate, and consult effectively with partners, stakeholders, colleagues, Trade Unions and Elected members as required. 2. I facilitate discussions for people with a range of views, helping everyone to see each other's perspectives. 3. I encourage everyone to have a voice and create opportunities for others to input into decisions. 4. I negotiate effectively with others to achieve successful outcomes. 5. I am approachable, accessible and available to my team members and conduct regular one-to-ones. 6. I motivate, encourage and empower others. 7. I coach and manage my team to build capability and enable a high performance culture. 8. I recognise training needs for my team and can deliver or direct my team to additional resources for learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I manage and mitigate risk in accordance with the Council's risk management framework. 2. I take responsibility for the health, safety, and wellbeing of my team and others. 3. I take responsibility for ensuring that my team have completed all relevant mandatory and statutory training. 4. I undertake CR&D (continuous review and development) for all my team members – this includes completing their annual review on CoreHR as well as undertaking regular one-to-ones. 5. I consistently and accurately follow policies, processes and guidance and ensure that my team do the same. 6. I understand and follow the Council's governance arrangements for making decisions. 7. Where relevant, I manage budgets, assets and resources effectively. 8. I demonstrate responsibility as a leader to endorse and role model corporate initiatives. 9. Where relevant, I work with Elected Members in line with the Members Officer Relations Protocol 10. I understand the council's climate and environment plans and strategies, and I take action to promote, influence and address these. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thank you goes a long way –I appreciate others, recognise and celebrate good work. 2. I take responsibility for embedding equality and diversity across my service and foster an inclusive environment for my team and others. 3. I self-reflect and take care of own wellbeing and others by actively promoting health and wellbeing initiatives. 4. I display empathy and genuine concern by taking time to find out how challenges and pressures feel from the perspective of others. 5. I support and encourage others to empower them and help build their confidence through coaching conversations. 6. I understand my duty of care for my employees – to support them to stay healthy and well at work, both mentally and physically.

Appendix C: Chief Officer Capability Framework

Core Capabilities: Chief Officers

1. Delivering outcomes for our customers	2. Change & Improvement	3. Working with Others	4. Accountability	5. Care
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates involvement in setting the strategic vision and outcomes for the organisation Effectively involves appropriate stakeholders internally and externally (multi-agency) when developing strategic programmes Demonstrates personal commitment to agreed organisational outcomes and role models this for others Communicates clearly and in a structured way, persuading others effectively Leads through active communication, motivates and inspires people to achieve shared outcomes for the organisation Reviews services, undertaking radical transformation when needed, applying the principles of Design Thinking to service redesign. Considers the wider context and the long term impact of a decision Consistently demonstrates exemplary standards of integrity, honesty and fairness, acts with moral courage and ensures the decent thing is done. Uses an understanding of the volume, nature and costs of demand on services, the council and its partners to manage demand and reduce costs. Operates with a strategic purpose, clearly linking personal and team activity to the agreed strategic aims and outcomes of the organisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Leads and supports a culture of data driven decision making throughout the council and with partners Uses Improvement techniques to build a culture of continuous and sustained service delivery improvement Proactively leads transformation within the organisation, acting as an effective project sponsor when needed. Adopts and champions the latest technology to allow the organisation to move forward Actively engages with the market within which our council services operate, to develop its capability Harnesses a culture of innovation and positive disruption by encouraging original thought, radical solutions to break new ground in striving for opportunities to improve council performance. Sets the culture for risk appetite in which I and those I lead analyse and mitigate against risk when exploring opportunities and making decisions. Offers a leadership view on any topic that comes before ECMT, in service of shared agreed outcomes, regardless of professional background. Makes time to engage in activities which relate to their personal growth and resilience as a leader, encouraging constructive feedback from others. Works as a preventor of demand 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates system-wide collaboration to achieve improved outcomes for the people, place and economy Motivates and successfully manages multi-functional programme teams Takes a team-orientated approach to problem-solving and decision making - drawing internal and external stakeholders together to agree how they can most usefully contribute to achieving important goals Deals with the complexities, challenges and tensions that emerge in shared leadership - not shying away from tough conversations Works proactively and effectively across all elected members to support, challenge, advise and drive towards our LOIP outcomes Actively identifies "political issues" which Elected Members will wish to know about and to have input into, and facilitates effective engagement of Elected Members at all levels. Leads and facilitates effective negotiation with a diverse range of partners across private, public and third sectors Works effectively in partnership with Trade Unions and resolves conflict effectively Provides constructive feedback and uses radical candour to challenge and support others in service of agreed organisational outcomes Puts the needs of the organisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Takes an active role in the commissioning cycle and the balancing of the budget including identifying budget balancing initiatives Demonstrates mutual accountability with partners for shared outcomes - holding others to task and demonstrating personal delivery shared outcomes Ensures the services for which I have responsibility are complying with data protection and information governance requirements Creates clear, comprehensive and outcomes-focused delivery plans Understands all elements of ACCs financial regulations and leads sound financial management My emergency planning responsibilities Reacts to issues as they arise and decisively deals with crisis situations Ensures clarity of expectation and holds to task individuals who are not delivering agreed outcomes, tackling poor performance and inappropriate or unproductive behaviours when needed. Makes environmental sustainability 'business as usual' Demonstrates accountability to Elected Members through effective use of governance structures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently acts and speaks in a way that is positive, motivating and encouraging. Takes time to notice, recognise and celebrate the good work of others - both in one-to-one chats and on an open forum, for own area and across the wider organisation Values people voices which is demonstrated by engaging, encouraging them to share their perspectives, listens and takes action . Understands the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion agenda and current best practice and actively champions this across the organisation and with partners Takes care of their people - takes active steps to promote health and wellbeing initiatives. Self-reflects and takes care of own wellbeing, so that they can take care of others. Displays empathy and genuine concern - takes time to find out how challenges and pressures feel from the perspective of others Empowers others, uses coaching techniques to increase the capability and confidence of team members Invests and cares about the individuals, development, work and collective leadership aims of ECMT Promotes successes across the organisation and regularly communicates the successes and

What are the capabilities of a potential Chief Officer?

1. Delivering outcomes for our customers	2. Change & Improvement	3. Working with Others	4. Accountability	5. Care
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates visionary and strategic thinking 2. Engages and influences stakeholders 3. Considers the wider context and the long term impact of a decision 4. Communicates clearly and in a structured way, persuading others effectively 5. Consistently demonstrates exemplary standards of integrity, honesty and fairness, acts with moral courage and ensures the decent thing is done. 6. Connects and inspires others behind shared strategic outcomes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shows personal initiative in transformation and digital leadership 2. Makes confident evidenced based decisions on data 3. Analyses and mitigates against risk when exploring opportunities and making decisions. 4. Demonstrates original thought, seeks and identifies opportunities for creative solutions, is willing to consider radical solutions to break new ground in striving for opportunities to improve council performance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands and adapts to the political environment in which they work 2. Builds effective relationships with partners to achieve shared outcomes 3. Takes a collaborative approach to problemsolving and decision making 4. Provides constructive feedback and uses radical candour to challenge and support others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensures compliance with governance 2. Demonstrates sound financial management of balancing the budget 3. Reacts to issues as they arise and decisively deals with crisis situations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empowers and encourages others to increase their capability and confidence 2. Notices, recognises and celebrates the good work of the council and colleagues 3. Displays empathy and genuine concern - takes time to find out how challenges and pressures feel from the perspective of others 4. Shows self-awareness, is committed to their own personal development 5. Sets high personal goals and is ambitious for progression 6. Able to be resilient e.g. understanding and acceptance when things go against you

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	13 November 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Whistleblowing Policy
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/23/250
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Lindsay MacInnes (Interim)
REPORT AUTHOR	Kirsten Foley
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the revised Whistleblowing Policy to Committee for approval.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Committee approves the revised policy.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background

- 3.1 The Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 gives legal protection to individuals against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns.
- 3.2 Aberdeen City Council has a Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure in place to set out how these protections will be applied within the Council and the process that should be followed to raise any such concerns.
- 3.3 The existing policy has been in place since 2016, with revisions made to reflect updates in the legal position since that date.
- 3.4 In 2020, City of Edinburgh Council commissioned an independent inquiry and cultural review, the recommendations of which included improvements to the way in which whistleblowing cases were handled by the Council.
- 3.5 The report arising from the Edinburgh inquiry and review contained learning that is applicable across all public sector bodies, and these findings were taken into consideration when undertaking the review of the Aberdeen City Council policy.

3.6 A recent criminal trial highlighted issues regarding whistleblowing procedures within the NHS. Learning from this case was also taken into consideration during the review of the policy.

How the review was undertaken

3.7 Benchmarking was undertaken with other local authorities and public sector bodies

3.8 A working group was set up, comprising staff from People and Organisational Development, Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer

3.9 Engagement was undertaken with managers and Trade Unions

3.10 Feedback from the working group and engagement was considered alongside the benchmarking information gathered and the City of Edinburgh Council report

3.11 The draft policy was shared with the Trade Unions and taken to both the Policy Group and the Risk Board for discussion and approval.

Main Changes to the Policy

3.12 The main changes made to the policy are set out below.

Change Made	Benefit of change	Source	Link to ACC Strategy
An alternative, external route has been identified, allowing workers the option of raising their concern with an appropriate independent person or body	Offering an independent route for reporting concerns will empower workers who may feel concerned regarding the implications of raising matters internally	Contained within City of Edinburgh report Offers an escalation route – lesson learned from recent NHS case Request from Trade Unions	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023
Provides greater clarity regarding the definition of the term “worker” in the context of the policy	Clear for all workers in the Council that they are protected by the provisions of the Policy	Request from Policy Group	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023

			Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023
Clarifies links to Guiding Principles	Underlines cultural expectations regarding the way in which all workers are valued and the commitment of the Council that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.	Feedback from managers	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023 Aberdeen City Council Guiding Principles. Our Guiding Principles (sharepoint.com)
Provides links to other Council policies and processes and clarifies the circumstances in which these would be the more appropriate route to address concerns.	Gives clarity to workers on how to appropriately raise their concerns and the link to the appropriate process to avoid the worker having to search for this	Trade Union request	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023 Adoption and Change Management Pillar – Communications Adoption and Change Management Plan (8 Pillars) (sharepoint.com)
Provides greater clarity on where responsibility sits for different aspects of the policy	Ensures that everyone is clear regarding their responsibility. Gives transparency and makes the policy	Feedback from managers Lessons learned from recent NHS case	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in

	easier to apply effectively.		<p>January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023</p> <p>Adoption and Change Management Pillar – Communications Adoption and Change Management Plan (8 Pillars) (sharepoint.com)</p>
Provides a route for workers who choose to remain anonymous to access feedback relating to their concern	<p>Openness and transparency relating to the application of the policy.</p> <p>Offer opportunity for complainant to escalate concerns if they feel it is necessary.</p>	<p>Contained within City of Edinburgh report</p> <p>Lessons learned from recent NHS case</p>	<p>Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023</p> <p>Adoption and Change Management Pillar – Communications Adoption and Change Management Plan (8 Pillars) (sharepoint.com)</p>
Sets out the risks that the policy mitigates against	Reduces risks to the Council	Requirement from Risk Board relating to all policies	Risk Appetite Statement Risk Appetite Statement - 2022 update (sharepoint.com)
Sets out the ways in which the effectiveness of the policy will be measured	Allows a data informed approach to improvement	Standard requirement in policy template	Adoption and Change Management Pillar – measurement Adoption and Change Management Plan

			(8 Pillars) (sharepoint.com)
Provides links to external sources of guidance	Ensures that workers have access to all possible sources of advice and support	Contained within City of Edinburgh report	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023

Aims of the Revised Policy

- 3.13 Through the Workforce Design principle of the Target Operating Model, the Council aims to apply high standards of integrity, openness and honesty with a culture that promotes accountability and supports the wellbeing of all workers.
- 3.14 The Local Outcome and Improvement Plan commits to ensuring that Aberdeen is a city in which everyone can prosper and in which citizens feel safe, protected from harm and supported.
- 3.15 The revised Whistleblowing Policy provides a route by which behaviours and practice which contravene the outcomes and principles set out in the Local Outcome and Improvement Plan and the Target Operating Model can be identified, challenged and addressed.
- 3.16 The Workforce Strategy is built around key pillars which include having the right people with the right skills and the ability to access the right support to undertake their jobs effectively.
- 3.17 A key aim of the revised Whistleblowing Policy is to provide the right support to allow workers to feel empowered and trusted to highlight areas of concern whilst providing them with the reassurance that they will be protected whilst raising such issues.
- 3.18 Workers who have confidence that the policy is robust and offers them their statutory rights to make a protected disclosure are more likely to raise concerns about behaviours or omissions that potentially carry financial, reputational or service delivery risks to the Council.
- 3.19 The opportunity to challenge and address such risks not only provides mitigation, but also ensures that workers, citizens and service users are protected from the effects of any malpractice or wrongdoing.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct costs associated with the implementation of the revised policy.
- 4.2 The application of the policy could lead to financial malpractice or practices which are wasteful of Council resources being identified and addressed, thus protecting finite resources.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The policy provides assurance that the Council is meeting its obligations under the Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.
- 5.2 The policy further provides a route through which illegal practices may be identified and addressed.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The policy provides a route through which any issues relating to damage to the environment may be identified and addressed, thus helping to ensure that Council activities are carried out in a way that ensures environmental protection.

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?
Compliance	Risk of legislative non compliance	The policy allows for the identification of any malpractice or wrongdoing, including illegal activity, and ensures that workers are protected against any detriment for raising legitimate concerns, thus ensuring that the Council is compliant with the relevant legislation.	L	Yes
Operational	Workers do not feel empowered and	The Whistleblowing Policy provides a mechanism for legitimate	L	Yes

	supported to raise legitimate concerns they may have.	concerns to be raised without fear of reprisal		
Financial	There is a risk of malpractice or wrongdoing giving rise to claims against the Council or resulting in financial loss to the Council	The Policy allows for such risks to be mitigated through the identification of legitimate concerns which may lead to the Council incurring financial costs	L	Yes
Reputational	There is a risk of reputational damage to the Council as a result of malpractice or wrongdoing	The policy allows for concerns to be identified and addressed timeously thus reducing the risk of reputational damage to the Council. Additionally, taking a supportive approach to workers who raise legitimate concerns should help to enhance the Council's reputation as a good employer.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The Prosperous Place stretch outcome indicates that all citizens are entitled to live in a manner in which they feel safe, protected from harm and supported. The Whistleblowing Policy provides a mechanism for identifying and addressing any malpractice, wrongdoing or illegal activity, helping to ensure that citizens, service users and workers are protected from the effects of any such activity.
Regional and City Strategies	The Policy contributes to the right people and right support elements of the Workforce Strategy by

Workforce Strategy	providing mechanisms for supporting workers who identify and raise legitimate concerns.
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not Required. DPA Checklist completed.
Other	N/A

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Whistleblowing Policy

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Kirsten Foley
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Whistleblowing Policy

Approved by Committee on
20xx with an implementation date
of 20xx

Document Control

Approval Date Calibri bold 12pt	- Calibri Regular12pt
Implementation Date	
Policy Number	POL-C-0014
Policy Author(s) and Owner	
Approval Authority	Staff Governance Committee
Scheduled Review	Biennial
Date and Changes: November 2023: This is a replacement for the existing policy	

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1 Why does the Council need this Policy?

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide workers who have serious concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing in the Council with a route to raise such issues within the organisation at an early stage and in an appropriate way, rather than overlooking them or raising them with an outside body. Making such a disclosure is commonly known as 'whistleblowing'. For the definition of "worker" in this context please see paragraph 2.1 below.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to applying high standards of integrity, openness and accountability and seeks to conduct its activities and functions in a responsible manner. In support of that commitment, the Council encourages workers to come forward and voice their concerns where they become aware of a whistleblowing issue, raising it in accordance with this policy and accompanying procedure.
- 1.3 The policy allows for the information to be disclosed without fear of reprisal and independent of line management, where appropriate.
- 1.4 There is legal protection for workers against being penalised or dismissed by their employer because of raising certain serious concerns, known as 'qualifying disclosures', details of which are shown under 13.3 and appendix 1 below.
- 1.5 Whilst there is no specific legal requirement for an organisation to have a specific Whistleblowing Policy, best practice would be for such a policy to be in place.
- 1.6 This policy and accompanying procedure will help ensure that the Council is legally compliant in respect of whistleblowing and will mitigate the risk of any legislative breach. It should also reassure workers that it is safe and acceptable to speak up, enabling concerns to be raised at an early stage.
- 1.7 It is anticipated that any 'qualifying disclosure' will be made directly to the Council in the first instance. However, if an individual feels unable to use the Council's policy and accompanying procedure, the disclosure can be made to a relevant outside body. A list of prescribed outside bodies can be found on the Gov.uk website under the link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>

2 Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 This policy applies to workers of Aberdeen City Council. For the purposes of this policy, “worker” is defined as individuals who have entered into or works under (or, where the employment has ceased, worked under)
- a. a contract of employment; or
 - b. any other contract, whether express or implied and (if it is express) whether oral or in writing, whereby the individual undertakes to do or perform personally any work or services for another party to the contract whose status is not by virtue of the contract that of a client or customer of any profession or business undertaking carried on by the individual; and
 - c. agency workers and individuals supplied via an intermediary.
- 2.2 It provides workers with a mechanism for raising their concerns in relation to information they believe shows malpractice or wrongdoing in the Council, allowing for this to be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal and independently of their line manager, if appropriate.
- 2.3 It aligns with the Council’s Guiding Principle of ‘valuing each other’, confirming a commitment to ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect and supported by the organisation.
- 2.4 The policy does not apply to workers who wish to raise concerns about a service they have received from the Council. Such concerns should be raised via the corporate Complaints Handling Procedure [Complaints handling procedure | Aberdeen City Council](#)
- 2.5 In addition, the policy does not apply to those who wish to raise concerns relating to their own employment. Such concerns should be raised under the Managing Grievances policy and accompanying procedure [PeopleAnytime - Managing-Grievances.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#) and/or the Dignity and Respect at Work policy and accompanying procedure [Dignity-and-Respect-at-Work-Policy.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#).
- 2.6 Job applicants, and workers who carry out work or services for another party who is their customer or client are excluded from the legal protections for whistleblowers.
- 2.7 It should be noted that Settlement Agreements between the Council and a worker cannot be used to prevent a worker from making a Whistleblowing disclosure.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Chief Officers are responsible for the application of the policy and accompanying procedure within their service delivery remit, ensuring that a supportive culture exists in which whistleblowing concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal.

3.2 Chief Officer – P&OD is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is in place.

3.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer is responsible for:

- Deciding if a disclosure is 'qualifying' in accordance with the legislation and whether it can be considered under the policy and accompanying procedure and notifying the complainant
- Identifying an officer to investigate the issue(s)
- Discussing and agreeing the scope of an investigation with the investigating officer and ensuring that a thorough investigation is undertaken
- Meeting with the complainant to explain the outcome of an investigation, following its completion
- Communicating any action points arising from the whistleblowing concern to the relevant Chief Officer for implementation
- Reporting to committee, as appropriate, on the number and type of whistleblowing cases
- Signposting complainant to Scottish Public Services Ombudsman in the event the decision is not 'qualifying' or to the grievance process
- Where it is more appropriate for a complaint to be handled under a different policy or process, for example Complaint Handling Protocol or Managing Grievances, the matter will be referred to the appropriate Service of the Council

3.4 Line managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that workers are aware of this policy and accompanying procedure
- Ensuring that whistleblowing concerns raised with them are channeled through the accompanying procedure
- Ensuring that workers are appropriately supported following their raising a whistleblowing concern
- Ensuring that no worker is subjected to victimization or any unfair treatment because of raising a whistleblowing concern.

3.5 Employees and workers are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the content of this policy and accompanying procedure
- Being vigilant in respect of illegal or unethical conduct in the organisation and to immediately report issues of that nature that they become aware of
- Submitting any 'qualifying disclosures' in accordance with this policy and

accompanying procedure

- Co-operating with management during any investigation and throughout the whistleblowing process
- Not victimizing or mistreating colleagues who submit a whistleblowing concern.

3.6 A breach or misuse of this policy may result in the potential use of other corporate procedures e.g. disciplinary procedure.

3.7 Non-compliance with the policy should be reported to the employee's line manager.

3.8 Any feedback on the policy or suggestions for improvement can be communicated to the Chief Officer – P&OD or Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager and this will be taken into account as part of the regular review of this policy.

4 Supporting Procedures & Documentation

4.1 An accompanying Whistleblowing procedure has been put in place to support adherence to this policy which can be found on the intranet.

4.2 The policy also links to:

- The Council's Guiding Principles
- The Managing Discipline policy and accompanying procedure and guidance
- Managing Grievances policy and accompanying procedure and guidance
- Dignity and Respect at Work policy and accompanying procedure and guidance
- Managing substance Misuse Policy and guidance
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Council's Financial Regulations
- Fraud, Bribery and Corruption policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Corporate Complaints procedure

5 About this Policy

5.1 The policy is not creating any specific regulations or requirements other than what is stated under Core Principles below.

Policy Core Principles

- 5.2 Only a 'qualifying disclosure' in accordance with the legislative provisions will be considered under the policy and accompanying procedure, with the person raising the issue(s) requiring to believe it to be in the public interest (see appendix 1 below).
- 5.3 Disclosures regarded as 'non-qualifying', such as where the law is broken when making a disclosure, or where the information is protected under legal professional privilege, are not protected by the legislation and will not be covered by the policy and accompanying procedure.
- 5.4 The Council's Monitoring Officer will make the determination on whether the disclosure is 'qualifying' in accordance with the legislation and hence whether it can be considered under the policy and accompanying procedure.
- 5.5 Employees and workers are encouraged to raise any concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing, regardless of the level of seniority of a person(s) who may have been involved in the alleged act(s).
- 5.6 All concerns raised under the policy and accompanying procedure will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal an individual's identity if they so wish. However, an employee or worker may need to be identified and/or called as a witness in connection with an investigation at a later point. On these occasions prior consent will be sought, and further support and assistance given to the individual concerned.
- 5.7 Victimization or any unfair treatment of a worker for raising a 'qualifying disclosure' will be regarded as a disciplinary issue.
- 5.8 Any matters raised under the policy will be investigated thoroughly and as promptly as possible and the outcome reported back to the individual who raised the issue.
- 5.9 The policy and accompanying procedure will not be used to reconsider matters which have already been addressed through other policies and procedures.
- 5.10 Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the Council. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be considered would include the seriousness of the issue(s) raised; the credibility of the concerns; and the

likelihood of confirming the allegations from alternative sources. Due to the anonymity of these type of concerns, whistleblowers in these instances will not ordinarily be able to receive feedback and that any action taken to look into a disclosure could be limited. Feedback to anonymous whistleblowers may be provided via a scheduled telephone appointment or to an anonymized email address.

5.11 If an individual makes a 'qualifying disclosure' in the public interest but it is not confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken against the employee or worker who raised the matter.

5.12 Where following investigation an allegation(s) raised is found to be false or malicious the Council will seek to take disciplinary action against the individual(s) concerned and will aim to minimise any potential negative impact the false or malicious allegation(s) may have had.

5.13 Disclosure to the media or social media is not permitted before, during and after the completion of a whistleblowing investigation either conducted internally or via a regulatory body. An individual making a disclosure to the media in these circumstances may face disciplinary action.

6 Risk

6.1 The following identified risks will be mitigated against through having this policy in place.

- Compliance - having a whistleblowing policy and supporting guidance in place will reduce the risk of legislative non-compliance with the purpose of the policy being to identify and address any malpractice or wrongdoing, including illegal activity, and ensuring that workers are protected against any detriment for raising legitimate concerns.
- Operational – The biggest operational risk is that workers do not feel empowered and protected to “whistleblow” where they see potential cases of serious malpractice or wrong doing. Having this policy in place will give workers the confidence to raise such issues, thus enabling the organisation to address matters appropriately and contain any potential negative impacts that could affect business efficiency.
- Financial – these risks will be mitigated by the policy as it should contribute to avoiding claims against the Council relating to malpractice or wrongdoing. Such claims, as well as any losses incurred, could otherwise be very costly.
- Reputational - the policy should also contribute towards reducing reputational risk, as if any malpractice or wrongdoing is identified and

addressed timeously this will help to avoid adverse publicity and demonstrate that the Council has in place robust processes for dealing with such events. In addition, being supportive towards employees and workers who raise whistleblowing issues should help to enhance the Council's reputation as a good employer.

6.2 There have been no unintended effects and consequences identified resulting from the introduction of the policy.

6.3 The risks identified will be managed and mitigated through application of the policy across the Council. This will be undertaken by ensuring the policy and accompanying procedure are readily available to all and that support is provided from People and Organisational Development and Governance in the interpretation of the policy, where required.

6.4 Monitoring will be undertaken of any feedback from stakeholders or others in relation to the identified risks and appropriate action taken if any concerns arise.

6.5 The policy should support the organisation's 'PREVENT' obligations as part of the 'CONTEST' framework by helping to ensure that workers' concerns about any malpractice or wrongdoing in the organisation are listened to and addressed as appropriate, with them being afforded the protection against any detriment for raising a legitimate issue as well as support from management. This should help to maintain employees' and workers' health and wellbeing, reduce their vulnerability and in turn make them less susceptible to radicalization and being drawn into terrorist organisations. Further information on this subject is available on this link [Prevent Awareness \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

7 Environmental Considerations

7.1 Whistleblowing can cover a variety of disclosures, including where a worker reasonably believes that damage to the environment is occurring, has taken place, or is likely to happen in future. Having this policy in place will provide employees and workers with a means to raise such issues, helping to ensure environmental protection in relation to Council activities; with the legal safeguards also available to workers against any disadvantage through raising legitimate concerns.

8 Policy Performance

8.1 The main factors determining the effectiveness of the policy and whether it adds

the value intended is the usage of the policy by employees and workers who wish to raise concerns about any malpractice or wrongdoing in the Council and the consistency in its application by managers and the Monitoring Officer. It is not expected that it will be used extensively, with malpractice or wrongdoing likely to be issues that arise only occasionally, but it is important that the Council has in place a robust policy and accompanying procedure which is available for when the need arises.

8.2 The effectiveness of the policy will be measured through gathering data on the number and type of whistleblowing cases being raised through the policy and accompanying procedure, making annual comparisons, and through collecting any feedback from users of the policy and accompanying procedure, including in relation to organisational culture around encouragement to raise concerns.

8.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer will report to committee, as appropriate, on the number and type of whistleblowing cases, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained.

9 Design and Delivery

9.1 The policy links to the 'Workforce Design' principle of the Target Operating Model (TOM) in that it is concerned with organisational culture. The Council aims to apply high standards of integrity, openness and accountability and seeks to conduct its activities and functions in a responsible manner. Having a whistleblowing policy and accompanying procedure in place where employees and workers are encouraged to come forward and raise their concerns if they become aware of issues relating to malpractice or wrongdoing, and supported in doing so, will contribute to a positive culture in the organisation. It also accords with the Council's Guiding Principles, particularly in relation to the commitment to valuing and supporting staff.

9.2 The policy also links to the 'Prosperous Place' theme in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which indicates that all people in the City are entitled to live in a manner in which they feel safe and protected from harm and supported where necessary. All citizens are equally entitled to enjoy these aspirations, including service users and Council employees and workers. Having a whistleblowing policy and accompanying procedure in place which can help to identify and address any malpractice or wrongdoing in the organisation, including illegal practices, will help ensure citizens, service users, employees and workers are all protected from the effects of any such activity.

10 Housekeeping and Maintenance

10.1 The Policy replaces the existing Whistleblowing policy and will be reviewed biennially with any necessary updates made to it and the accompanying procedural document.

11 Communication and Distribution

11.1 This policy and accompanying procedure will be shared directly with the Extended Corporate Management Team to enable their communication and distribution in accordance with responsibilities set out in section 3.

11.2 The policy and accompanying procedure will be available to view on the organisation's shared areas on the intranet.

12 Information Management

12.1 Information generated by the application of this policy and accompanying procedure will be managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and Supporting Procedures.

13 Definitions and Understanding this Policy

13.1 Whistleblowing – is making a disclosure in the public interest. It means that if an individual believes there is malpractice or wrongdoing in the organisation this can be reported by following the correct process, and by doing this the legal protections will apply to the whistleblower from suffering detriment as result of raising such concerns.

13.2 Public interest – a disclosure in the public interest is one about malpractice or wrongdoing in the public sector that serves the public interest. For an allegation to be considered a public interest disclosure under the legislation it must be made to the employer as a whistleblowing concern (or to a proper authority – see 1.6 above for list of prescribed authorities for making complaints to).

13.3 Qualifying disclosure - are disclosures of information where the employee or worker reasonably believes (and it is in the public interest) that one or more of the following matters is either happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future.

- A criminal offence
- The breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment

- Deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above.

13.4 Worker – the definition of worker for whistleblowing purposes includes

1. individuals who have entered into or works under (or, where the employment has ceased, worked under)
 - d. a contract of employment; or
 - e. any other contract, whether express or implied and (if it is express) whether oral or in writing, whereby the individual undertakes to do or perform personally any work or services for another party to the contract whose status is not by virtue of the contract that of a client or customer of any profession or business undertaking carried on by the individual; and
2. agency workers and individuals supplied via an intermediary.

14 External Sources of Guidance

The following are external sources of Whistleblowing guidance

- UK Government - [Whistleblowing: Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- ACAS - [The law on whistleblowing at work: Whistleblowing at work - Acas](https://www.acas.org.uk)
- Protect - [Protect - Speak up stop harm - Protect - Speak up stop harm \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](https://www.protect-advice.org.uk)

Appendix 1

Summary of Legislative Provisions

- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013) gives legal protection to workers against being penalised or dismissed by their employer because of raising certain serious concerns, known as 'qualifying disclosures'.
- A 'qualifying disclosure' is any disclosure of information that in the reasonable belief of the individual, is made in the public interest.
- The list of 'qualifying disclosures' in the legislation is where one or more of the following has been, is being, or is likely to be committed: - A criminal offence; a failure or likely failure to comply with any legal obligation; a miscarriage of justice; putting health and safety of any individual in danger; damage to the environment; deliberate concealment relating to any of the foregoing.
- It is not necessary for the individual to have proof of the above, a reasonable belief is sufficient.
- The legislative provisions ensure that no one is disadvantaged in raising legitimate concerns.
- The legislation protects a 'worker' who makes a whistleblowing complaint from suffering detriment as result of raising concerns. The term 'worker' is given a wide definition in the legislation covering those mentioned in 2.1 above.
- It should be noted that whistleblowers are protected whilst they are in employment and after employment has ended.

- If an employee is dismissed because they were a whistleblower, the dismissal will be automatically unfair. An employee will also be unfairly dismissed if they are selected for redundancy because they were a whistleblower.
- Some disclosures are regarded as 'non-qualifying disclosures', such as where the law is broken when making a disclosure, or where the information is protected under legal professional privilege. The worker is not protected by the legislation for whistleblowing in respect of a 'non-qualifying disclosure'.

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	13 November 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Managing Substance Misuse Policy
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/23/349
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Lindsay MacInnes
REPORT AUTHOR	Kirsten Foley
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the revised Managing Substance Misuse Policy to the Committee for consideration and approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 approves the revised Managing Substance Misuse Policy; and
- 2.2 instructs the Interim Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to ensure that managers have access to the required guidance, training and support to allow them to support employees through the process with confidence.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background

- 3.1 The current Managing Substance Misuse Policy and Procedure was approved by Staff Governance Committee in June 2018. [Managing Substance Misuse Policy and Procedure SGC June 2018](#)
- 3.2 Throughout 2022 and into early 2023 a short life working group met to consider how substance misuse issues within the workplace could be better addressed, and the support that is offered to employees who are experiencing issues around substance misuse.
- 3.3 Benchmarking was undertaken with other Local Authorities and public and private sector employers.
- 3.4 A key issue which was explored at length by the working group was the issue of random testing. Whilst the potential deterrent impact was recognised, legal advice and advice taken from the Information Commissioners Office was clear

that random testing would not be appropriate in the Council setting. [What if we use medical examinations and drugs and alcohol testing? | ICO](#)

- 3.5 It was identified that, rather than introducing random testing, the more appropriate route would be to ensure that the current “with cause” testing is robustly applied and followed up. In order to support this, an online course on Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace, which includes the signs that supervisors and managers should look out for, has been added to ACC Learn. [ADW \(aberdeencity.gov.uk\)](#)
- 3.6 The focus groups included representatives from services across the Council, People and Organisational Development Advisors, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser and Trade Union colleagues and their feedback was used to inform the review of the Managing Substance Misuse Policy, as well as the associated guidance documents.
- 3.7 The policy has been revised into the new corporate policy format with the procedural elements having been removed and incorporated within the associated guidance document.
- 3.8 The policy has been to both the Policy Group and the Risk Board for discussion and approval.

Main Changes to the Policy

3.9 The key changes that have been made are set out in the table below:

Change Made	Benefit of change	Source	Link to ACC Strategy
Emphasis on awareness raising around the risks associated with substance misuse, both to the individual and the organisation.	Positive impact on organisational culture and health and wellbeing of individuals. Employees have the knowledge they need to empower them to make good decisions in relation to substance misuse, either their own or that of colleagues. Improved risk management across the Council.	Feedback from focus groups of both managers and trade unions.	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023
Greater emphasis on support for supervisors and managers to	Managers and supervisors are confident to discuss issues relating to substance misuse	Feedback from managers and trade unions.	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved

empower them to support employees	with employees and are aware of when it is appropriate for a with-cause test to be undertaken.		by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023
Sets out escalation routes for employees who have concerns regarding customers or service users presenting under the influence of any type of substance.	Employees feel supported and are confident of the routes they can follow in potentially difficult or dangerous situations.	Feedback from focus groups.	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023
Clarifies links to Guiding Principles	Underlines cultural expectations regarding the way in which all workers are valued and the commitment of the Council that everyone is valued and treated with dignity and respect.	Feedback from managers and trade unions.	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023 Aberdeen City Council Guiding Principles. Our Guiding Principles (sharepoint.com)
Clarifies the dual nature of the responsibilities contained within the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, with accountability applying to both the employer and the employee	Openness and transparency regarding the shared legal duties	Feedback from colleagues in Governance	Aberdeen City Council Scheme of Governance Committee Services - Scheme of Governance 2022 - Introduction.pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)
Sets out escalation routes for non-compliance with the policy by either an employee or a manager	Reflects the guiding Principles of the organisation and the commitment to support the wellbeing of staff.	Feedback from Trade Unions	Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance

			<p>Committee in January 2023 Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023</p> <p>Aberdeen City Council Guiding Principles. Our Guiding Principles (sharepoint.com)</p>
<p>Sets out the potential risks to the Council associated with substance misuse and how the policy assists in mitigating these.</p>	<p>Openness and transparency regarding risk management gives a greater level of confidence and security for the whole workforce, employees and managers alike.</p>	<p>Requirement from Risk Board relating to all policies</p>	<p>Risk Appetite Statement Risk Appetite Statement - 2022 update (sharepoint.com)</p>
<p>Sets out the ways in which the effectiveness of the policy will be measured</p>	<p>Allows a data informed approach to improvement</p>	<p>Standard requirement in policy template</p>	<p>Adoption and Change Management Pillar – Measurement Adoption and Change Management Plan (8 Pillars) (sharepoint.com)</p>
<p>Places a responsibility on People and Organisational Development to report data relating to the application and effectiveness of the Policy to Staff Governance Committee</p>	<p>Regular interrogation and analysis of the data allows for ongoing improvements to be made</p>	<p>Feedback from focus groups. Brings the policy inline with other performance policies in terms of openness and transparency of data.</p>	<p>Model for Improvement Improvement Resources - Community Planning Aberdeen</p>
<p>Update Guidance and training for managers around with cause testing</p>	<p>Empowers managers to make appropriate decisions re the application of with cause tests</p>	<p>Feedback from managers</p>	<p>Aligns with Right Support objective in Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan approved by Staff Governance Committee in January 2023</p>

			Workforce Delivery Plan SGC Jan 2023
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Aims of the Revised Policy

- 3.10 The key aim of the policy is to ensure that all Aberdeen City Council business is carried out in a safe manner, without anyone being put at risk as a result of an employee of the Council being impaired by any substance.
- 3.11 The ethos of the policy is supportive to both employees experiencing the effects of substance misuse in their lives and supervisors and managers who are responsible for the work of these employees.
- 3.12 Notwithstanding 3.10 above, the nature of the risk involved with substance misuse requires that in some cases sanctions may need to be applied. The policy sets out the action that may be appropriate in such cases.
- 3.13 The policy aims to influence a culture change, developing a culture in which employees feel confident that they will be supported and not judged should they disclose an issue relating to substance misuse.
- 3.14 By ensuring that the culture within the workplace is one of support, and that such issues can be discussed openly and honestly, employees will feel more empowered to raise any concerns they may have relating to colleagues.
- 3.15 Employees are also encouraged to make use of the Whistleblowing Policy to raise concerns in cases where the matter would fall within the remit of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of this policy.
- 4.2 Appropriate application of the policy could see a reduction in the number of absences and suspensions associated with substance misuse, thus reducing the financial impact of such absences on the Council.
- 4.3 Failure to appropriately respond to substance misuse issues in the workplace could give rise to claims against the Council arising from incidents taking place whilst an employee is under the influence of a substance. This policy will mitigate against these risks.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This policy will support the Council in meeting its legal responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from the application of this policy.

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	The Council does not meet all of its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974	The Managing Substance Misuse Policy sets out the ways in which the Council will mitigate against the risks of having employees working whilst under the influence of a substance, thus supporting the Council to meet its legal obligations.	L	Yes
Compliance	Accidents or inappropriate actions may result from an employee attending work whilst under the influence of substances.	The policy provides a route for employees to access support to address any substance misuse issues, and routes for supervisors and managers to follow should they suspect that an employee is under the influence of substances.	L	Yes
Operational	Costs of employees being absent from work due to the impact of substance misuse. Potential claims against the Council arising from employees	The Managing Substance Misuse Policy sets out the ways in which the Council will mitigate against the risks of having employees working whilst under the influence of a substance and provides a route for employees to access	L	Yes

	attending work whilst under the influence of substances.	support thus reducing time away from the workplace.		
Financial	Reputational damage may arise from employees acting inappropriately or dangerously due to being under the influence of substances.	The policy allows for concerns to be identified and addressed timeously thus reducing the risk of reputational damage to the Council. Additionally, taking a supportive approach to workers who are experiencing issues related to substance misuse should help to enhance the Council's reputation as a good employer.	L	Yes
Reputational	The Council does not meet all of its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974	The Managing Substance Misuse Policy sets out the ways in which the Council will mitigate against the risks of having employees working whilst under the influence of a substance, thus supporting the Council to meet its legal obligations.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Accidents or inappropriate actions may result from an employee attending work whilst under the influence of substances.	The policy provides a route for employees to access support to address any substance misuse issues, and routes for supervisors and managers to follow should they suspect that an employee is under the influence of substances.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The policy puts in place provisions for employees of Aberdeen City Council which will assist in the achievement of stretch outcome 11, increased health/life expectancy and stretch outcome 12, reduction of harmful levels of alcohol consumption and reduced drug related deaths.
Regional and City Strategies	
Target Operating Model	The policy links to the Workforce Design principle of the Target Operating Model by setting out routes by which the council will achieve high levels of integrity, openness and accountability. It further supports the Council in conducting its activities and functions in a responsible manner.
Guiding Principles	The Policy links to the Guiding Principles in relation to Trust and Value.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required. DPA checklist completed.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Managing Substance Misuse Policy

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Kirsten Foley
Title	Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager
Email Address	KFoley@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Managing Substance Misuse Policy

**Approved by Committee on
20xx with an implementation date of 20xx**

Document Control

Approval Date	
Implementation Date	TBC
Policy Number	POL-C-0015
Policy Author(s) and Owner	Chief Officer – People & Organisational Development
Approval Authority	Staff Governance Committee
Scheduled Review	Annual
Date and Changes: Update of existing policy.	

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1 Why does the Council need this Policy?

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a route to protect the health and safety of employees, service users and members of the public through supporting and managing employees who are experiencing issues with substance misuse, thus mitigating against the risks that may be associated with employees attending work under the influence of such substances.
- 1.2 The policy seeks to raise awareness of the risks associated with substance misuse and sets out the supports and sanctions that are available.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to meeting its legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure the health and safety of employees, service users and members of the public by providing a work environment in which the safety and optimum performance of employees is not adversely affected by the misuse of substances.
- 1.4 The policy provides support both to employees experiencing substance misuse issues and to managers, assisting them to recognise and effectively support and manage employees displaying symptoms of substance misuse.
- 1.5 The policy and accompanying procedure and guidance sets out the support available to employees and the escalation routes should these be required.

2 Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 This policy and the guidance applies to all employees of Aberdeen City Council.
- 2.2 The policy guidelines also apply to any worker undertaking work for or on behalf of the Council but not employed by the Council e.g agency workers; relief workers and contractors, although the procedural details will not apply in these cases. In such cases responsibility for applying the policy guidelines will sit with the manager who has commissioned the services of the worker.
- 2.3 Where an employee in a customer facing role has concerns regarding a customer presenting under the influence of any type of substance, they should seek support from their line manager who will ensure that the appropriate agencies are contacted.
- 2.4 The policy is concerned with the effects of substance misuse in the workplace, and the impact of prescribed medication which may impair the fitness of the employee to carry out their role in a safe manner.
- 2.5 The policy aligns with the Council's Guiding Principle of Trust, which sets out the expectation

that all business is carried out in a culture of mutual trust and accountability.

2.6 The policy also aligns with both the corporate and individual responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which requires the employer to provide a safe working environment and the employee to take responsibility for their own health and safety in the workplace.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Chief Officers are responsible for the application of the policy and accompanying procedure within their service delivery remit, ensuring that a supportive culture exists in which employees can disclose substance misuse issues without fear of judgement.

3.2 The Chief Officer People and Organisational Development is responsible for ensuring that appropriate support is in place for both employees and managers.

3.3 Line Managers/supervisors are responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of all direct reports in their respective service. What might be reasonably practicable will vary according to the individual circumstances, and guidance is available from the Employee Relations and Wellbeing Team via AskHR

AskHR@aberdeencity.gov.uk In relation to substance misuse these responsibilities include:

- Actively seeking to maintain regular communication with all employees
- Taking an empathetic, supportive and non-judgmental approach to any employee who may be experiencing a substance misuse issue
- Maintaining strict confidentiality around all and any information relating to employee's substance misuse and the application of this policy and the accompanying procedure
- Encouraging employees to seek counselling/appropriate treatment and support, and supporting employees to attend such counselling/treatment by granting appropriate time off
- Being aware of the signs of substance misuse as set out in the accompanying guidance notes to this policy, addressing this with the employee and ensuring the support routes are available to employees
- Referring an employee for substance testing in situations where
 - 1) there is cause to believe the employee has presented at work under the influence of a substance
AND
 - 2) where there is a potential risk to health and safety to themselves and others or there is a potential risk to service delivery.

3.4 Employees are responsible for:

- Not attending work whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol that may impact

on their ability to perform their role and put the health and safety of themselves and others at risk. It is unacceptable for any employee to attend for work whilst unfit through substance misuse

- Cooperating with managers and other employees in dealing with substance misuse issues
- Declaring at an early stage any substance misuse problem and seeking support. It is important for all employees to recognise that such support is available at any time, not just to those who are being managed under a Council policy.
- Cooperating with any support and assistance provided by the organisation to address substance misuse
- Informing a manager/supervisor, as soon as possible, in confidence, if they have been prescribed medication or are taking “over the counter” medication which may impact on their ability to carry out their duties in a safe manner
- Being aware of the symptoms of substance misuse and raising any concerns that they may have in relation to colleagues with their line manager
- Attending the occupational health service for a “with cause” drugs test or to access support as required
- Not possessing, storing, buying or selling controlled substances in any Aberdeen City Council building or vehicle.
- Familiarising themselves with this policy through reading the policy and complying with its provisions

3.5 Failure to comply with this policy or to engage with support offered under the policy and procedure may result in the invoking of other corporate policies e.g. Managing Discipline or Managing Performance.

3.6 Non-compliance with the policy should be reported to the employee’s line manager or to the Employee Relations and Wellbeing Team.

3.7 Any feedback on the policy or suggestions for improvement can be communicated to the Chief Officer –People and Organisational Development or the Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager and this will be taken into consideration as part of the regular review of this policy.

4 Supporting Procedures and Documentation

4.1 An accompanying Managing Substance Misuse Procedure and Guidance have been put in place to support the application of and adherence to this policy and these are available on People Anytime on the Council intranet.

4.2 This policy also links to:

- The Council’s Guiding Principles [Our Guiding Principles \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

- The Managing Discipline Policy [Microsoft Word - Final Version - ACC Policy - Managing Discipline 2021 \(sharepoint.com\)](#) and accompanying guidance [Guidance - Managing Discipline Guidance 2021.pdf](#)
- The Managing Performance Policy and Procedure [Managing Performance | Aberdeen City Council: People Anytime](#)
- The Health and Safety Policy [Health and Safety Policy \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Supporting Attendance Policy and Procedure [Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing – Policy | Aberdeen City Council: People Anytime](#)
- The Employee Code of Conduct [Code of conduct | Search Results | Aberdeen City Council: People Anytime](#)
- [The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing Support Mental Health and Wellbeing \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
[accmybenefits: Welcome \(vivup.co.uk\)](#)

5 About this Policy

5.1 This policy is not creating any specific regulations or requirements other than what is stated under Core Principles below

Policy Core Principles

- 5.2 Every reasonable effort will be made to minimise problems arising from the impact of substance misuse at work
- 5.3 It is unacceptable for any employee to attend work whilst unfit through substance misuse
- 5.4 A supportive and constructive approach to managing substance misuse issues will be adopted by the Council
- 5.5 All reasonable efforts will be made to support and assist an employee to overcome a substance misuse problem where the employee acknowledges the problem and commits to address it
- 5.6 Notwithstanding 5.4 and 5.5 above, there may be some circumstances in which it is appropriate to apply the provisions of the Managing Discipline Policy and procedure, and in some cases misuse of substances may constitute gross misconduct
- 5.7 The confidential nature of an employee's information related to a substance misuse issue will be maintained and will only be disclosed where there is a need to know for the purposes of providing support to the employee or in the context of any performance, disciplinary or attendance process which may be required
- 5.8 Throughout the application of this policy and accompanying procedure special allowance should be made for those employees who may require alternative access and communication support.

6 Risk

6.1 This policy will mitigate against the following identified risks:

- Compliance Risks – having a Managing Substance Misuse Policy/Procedure and Guidance in place will support the Council in meeting its legal responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Operational Risks – given the wide range of services delivered by the Council and the Council's responsibilities to the citizens and communities of Aberdeen, the application of this policy will mitigate against the risks of accidents or inappropriate incidents which may result from an employee attending work and performing their role whilst under the influence of substances
- Financial Risks – the application of this Policy/Procedure and Guidance will assist in preventing claims against the Council in relation to incidents arising from employees attending work and performing their role under the influence of substances
- Reputational Risks - the policy reduces reputational risk to ACC by demonstrating our commitment to addressing issues of substance misuse in the workplace and to supporting our employees who are experiencing substance misuse problems
- There have been no unintended effects or consequences identified from the update of this policy

6.2 The risks identified will be managed and mitigated through application of the policy across

the Council. This will be undertaken by ensuring the policy and accompanying procedure are readily available to all and that support is provided from People and Organisational Development and Governance in the interpretation of the policy, where required.

6.3 Monitoring will be undertaken of any feedback from stakeholders or others in relation to the identified risks and appropriate action taken if any concerns arise.

6.4 The policy should support the organisation's 'PREVENT' obligations as part of the 'CONTEST' framework by helping to ensure that any issues arising from substance misuse are addressed as appropriate, with employees being provided with the appropriate support to overcome any issues they might be experiencing. This will help to maintain employees' and workers' health and wellbeing, reduce their vulnerability and in turn make them less susceptible to radicalization and being drawn into terrorist organisations. Further information on this subject is available on this link [Prevent Awareness \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

7 Environmental Implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this policy

8 Policy Performance

8.1 The main factors determining the effectiveness of the policy are the usage of the policy by employees and workers who disclose that they are experiencing substance misuse issues and seek support from the organization to overcome these, and the consistency in its application by managers. Whilst the majority of Council employees will not require to seek the support offered by the policy, it is important that the Council has in place a robust policy and accompanying procedure which is available for when the need arises.

8.2 The effectiveness of the policy will be measured through gathering data on the number of self referrals under the support provisions of the policy and accompanying procedure alongside the number of with cause test referrals being made to occupational health. In addition, sickness absence data and case work data will provide information regarding the effectiveness of the policy. Feedback will be collected from users of the policy (employees and managers) and accompanying procedure, including in relation to organisational culture around encouragement to raise concerns regarding substance misuse issues.

8.3 The Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager will report to Staff Governance Committee data relating to the application and effectiveness of the policy as part of the regular reports on staff absence, health and wellbeing, occupational health and case work. In all such reports confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

9 Design and Delivery

9.1 The policy links to the 'Workforce Design' principle of the Target Operating Model (TOM) in that it is concerned with organisational culture. The Council aims to apply high standards of integrity, openness and accountability and seeks to conduct its activities and functions in a responsible manner.

Having a Managing Substance Misuse policy and accompanying procedure in place where employees and workers are encouraged to come forward and raise their concerns if they become aware of issues relating to the misuse of substances, and where those employees who are experiencing such issues themselves are supported and given access to services to aid their recovery, will contribute to a positive culture in the organisation.

This also accords with the Council's Guiding Principles, particularly in relation to the commitment to valuing and supporting staff.

9.2 The policy links to the Prosperous People (Adults) theme in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan by putting in place provisions for employees of Aberdeen City Council which will assist in the achievement of stretch outcome 11, increased health life expectancy and stretch outcome 12, reduction in harmful levels of alcohol consumption and reduced drug related deaths.

10 Housekeeping and Maintenance

10.1 The Policy replaces the existing Managing Substance Misuse Policy and will be reviewed every 2 years with any necessary updates made to it and the accompanying procedural documentation.

11 Communication and Distribution

11.1 This policy and accompanying procedure will be shared directly with the Extended Corporate Management Team to enable their communication and distribution in accordance with responsibilities set out in section 3.

11.2 The policy and accompanying procedure will be available to view on the organisation's shared areas on the intranet.

12 Information Management

12.1 Information generated by the application of this policy and accompanying procedure will be managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and Supporting Procedures.

13 Definitions and Understanding this Policy

13.1 Substance Misuse is defined for the purposes of this policy as the intermittent or continual use of substances, legal or otherwise, which

impairs the employees health, cognitive abilities, social functioning or work performance and which affects efficiency, safety, attendance, timekeeping or conduct in the workplace.

13.2 The term substance includes

- Any illegal substances (as defined in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 or the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016)
- Alcohol
- Prescribed medication
- Over the counter medication
- Solvents ie lighter gas refills, glues, paint thinners etc
- Any plants, chemicals or substances that have not been defined as illegal and which are used for the purpose of seeking intoxication.

13.3 A with cause test is a test undertaken by occupational health to determine whether an employee is under the influence or impaired as the result of taking a substance in cases where a manager, supervisor or colleague has reason to believe from the way in which the employee presents that a substance has been taken.

It is important to recognise that no employee can be required to take such a test, however if they refuse when the employer has reasonable grounds for testing this may result in disciplinary action being taken.

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	13 November 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Corporate Health and Safety – July– September 2023
REPORT NUMBER	COM/23/346
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	Vikki Cuthbert (Interim)
REPORT AUTHOR	Colin Leaver
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The appendix to this report summarises statistical health and safety performance information for the 3-month reporting period July to September 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 July to September 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 Regulations 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 (Jul-Sept 2023)

All incident and near miss information in the appendix to this report has been provided to Cluster level in the appendix. However, within Education incidents have been reported to nursery, primary and secondary school 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 Covid pandemic. The comparative figures for this year are in a separate chart due to the change of reporting 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 six 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.

Available national 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 (July – September 2023)

- 3.6** The Appendix also shows the number of RIDDOR reportable incidents. During the reporting period between July and September 2023 six 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
Jul-Sept 2023	0.75	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 (July to September 2022) was 1 RIDDOR reportable incidents and a reportable incident rate of 0.15.

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 nine 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 0 site visits as part of their annual audit of ACC (Aberdeen City Council) care properties, homelessness accommodation and educational establishments

Fire risk assessments

- 3.19** Fire risk assessments are completed on a rolling 5-year programme. A total of 25 fire risk assessments, including 9 Bon Accord Care managed sites, were completed during this reporting period. The overall average compliance score was 84%. 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.

- 3.20** 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

- 3.21** Compliance visits have been undertaken on several topics / premises within the ACC estate. Topics included Waste Operations (100% compliant); Manual Handling (99%); Noise at work (100%); Lone Working (83%); Security (86%) and Workplace Inspections (100%).

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.

- 3.22** 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 84% 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.

- 3.23** 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

- 3.24** The Corporate Health and Safety Policy was reviewed this quarter. There were no changes, substantive or otherwise, to this policy for the Committee to approve.

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 Corporate Health and Safety Team (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

Management Of Risk

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*Taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*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</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

	<p>and/or their life.</p> <p>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.</p>			
Financial	<p>The risk is that any incident has the potential to bring a reduction in the overall budget in place to provide service delivery.</p>	<p>As per compliance above</p>	L	Yes
Reputational	<p>Local and National press coverage of any incident can present reputational damage to the organisation.</p>	<p>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</p>	L	Yes

		investigation of near misses to ensure controls are reviewed to consider whether remedial actions are required.		
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 July to September 2023

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Colin Leaver
Title	Corporate Health and Safety Lead

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Tel	01224 523092

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[View in Power BI](#) ↗

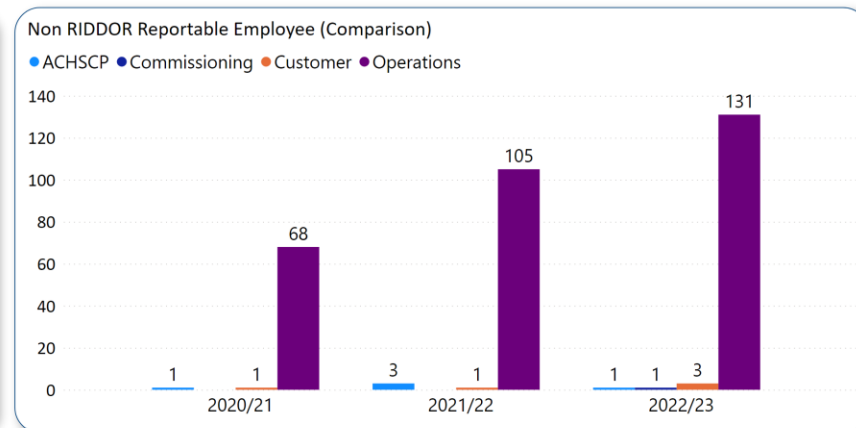
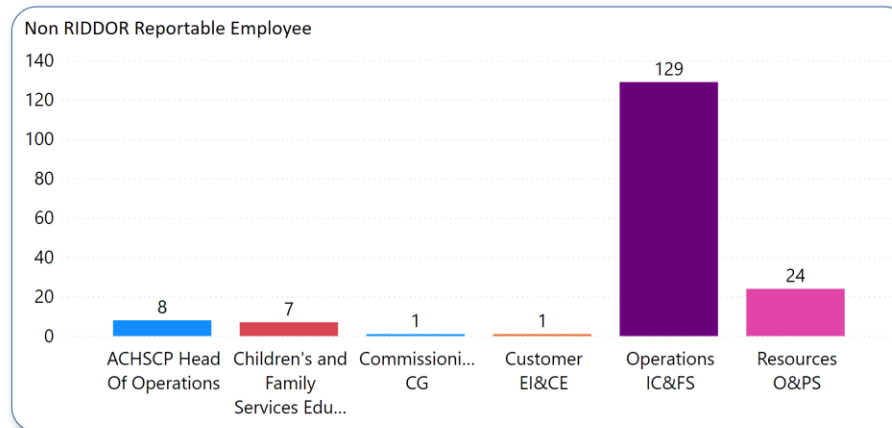
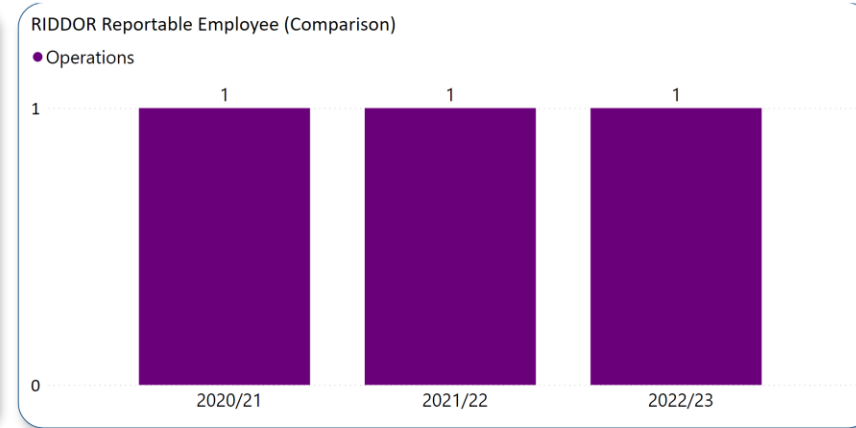
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Staff Governance Health & Safety Report Quarter 2 2023/2024 (Jul 23 to Sep 23)

Reported H&S Incidents (Employee) Between Jul to Sep 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 2 comparison for each Function from 2020/21 to 2022/23 where applicable.



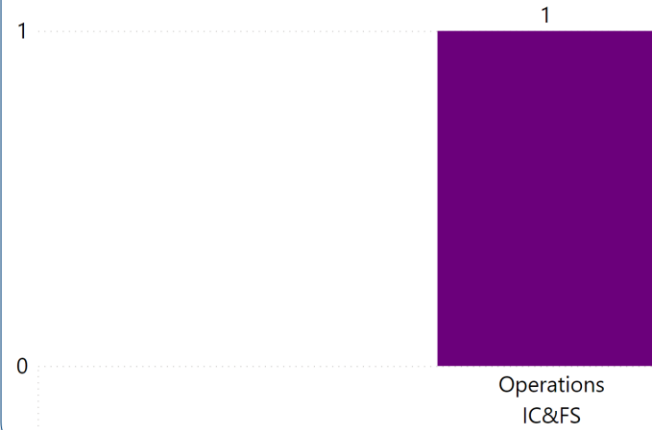
Employee Incident Information

There were 6 RIDDOR reportable incidents this quarter; all for over 7 day absences. This is an increase from the 4 for last quarter and 1 for the corresponding quarter last year. Incident reports show an increase of 23% (168/136) for the same period last year with the largest number still within Education. This does represent a decrease from last quarter's figures of 198. The increase in numbers could be due to the encouragement for incidents to be reported but also on the national increase in reporting across Scotland.

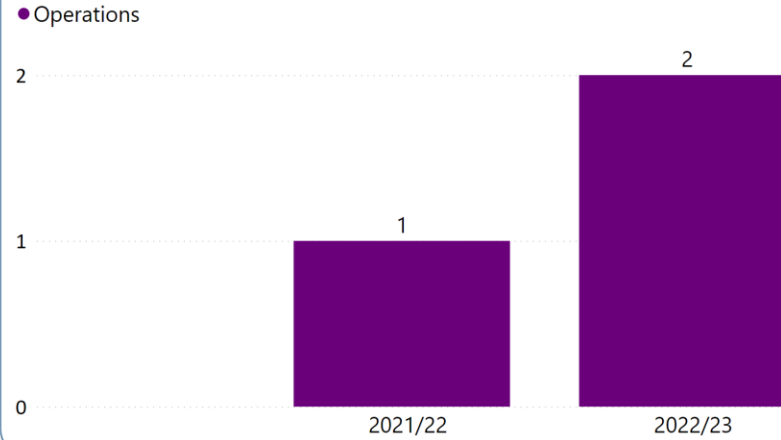
Reported H&S Incidents (Third Party) Between Jul to Sep 2023

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 2 comparison for each function from 2020/21 to 2022/23 where applicable.

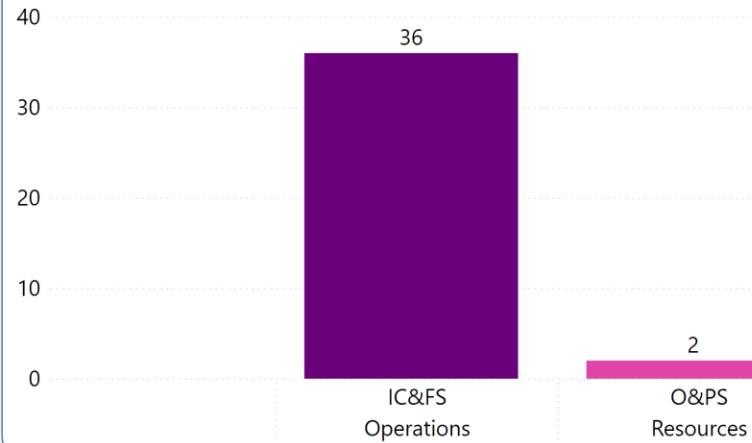
RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee



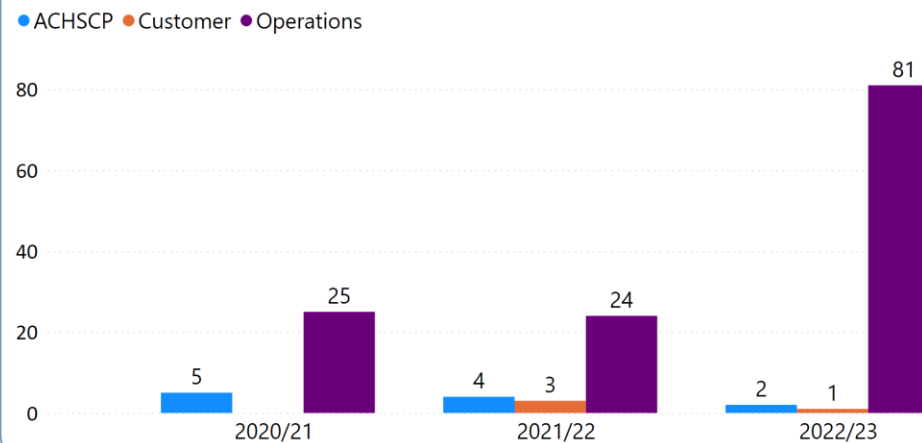
RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee (Comparison)



Non RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee

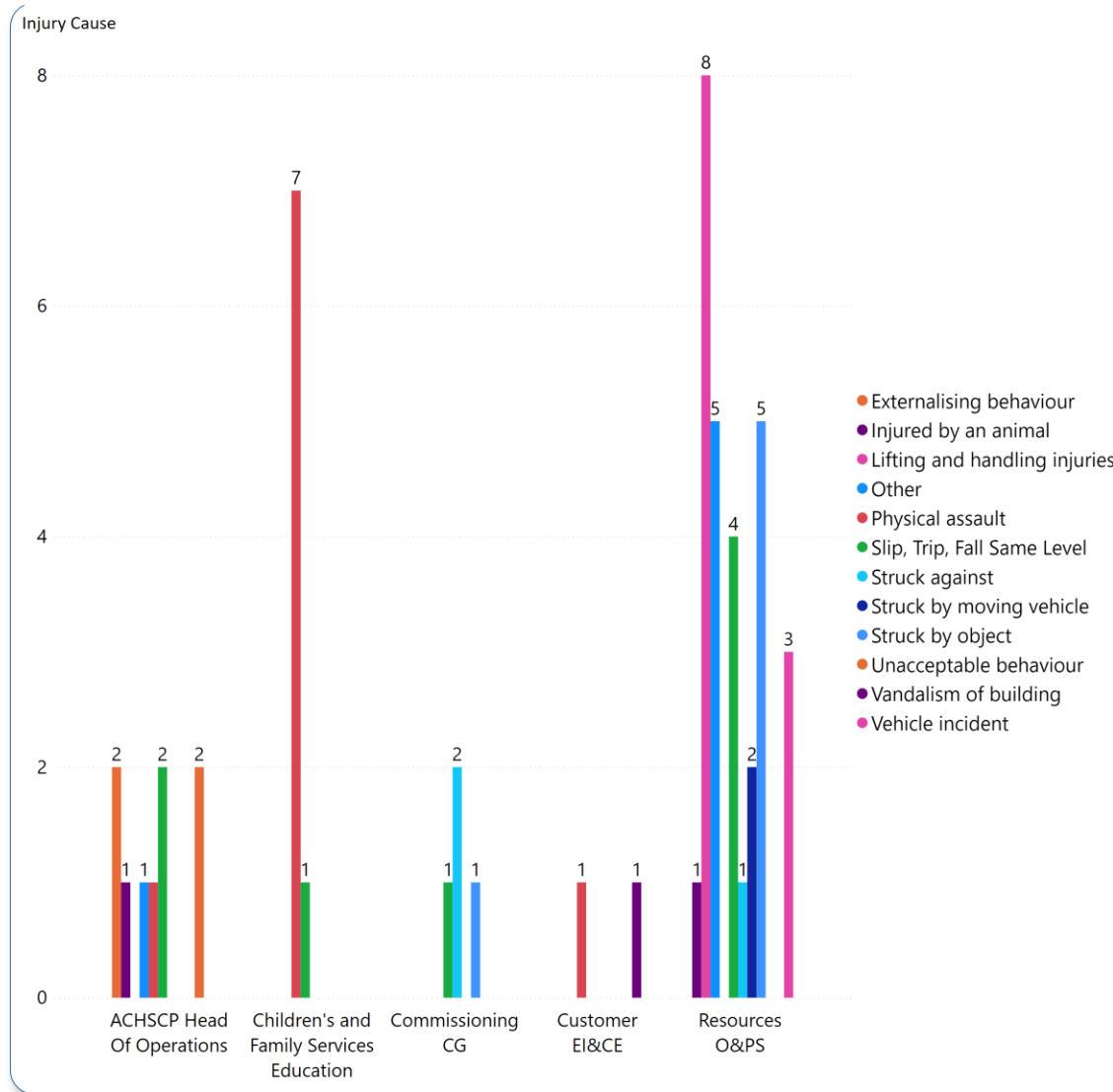


Non RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee (Comparison)



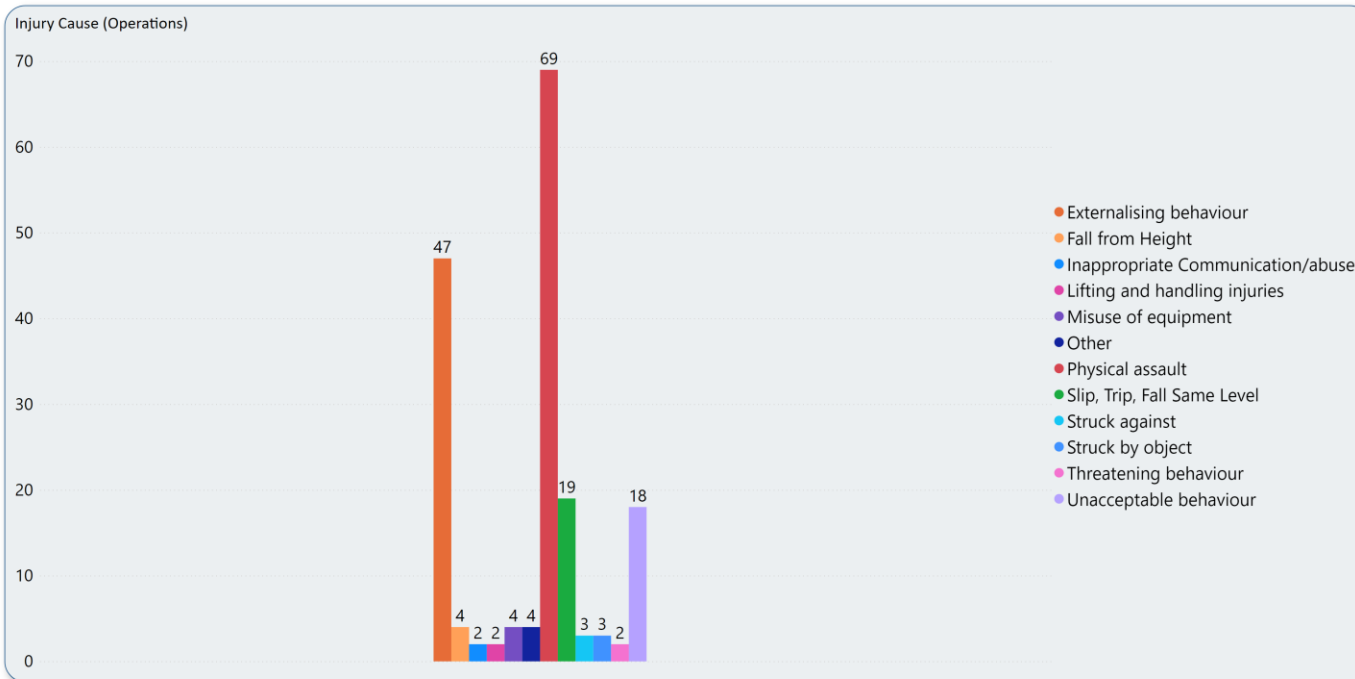
H&S Incident Causation Reported between Jul to Sep 2023

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.

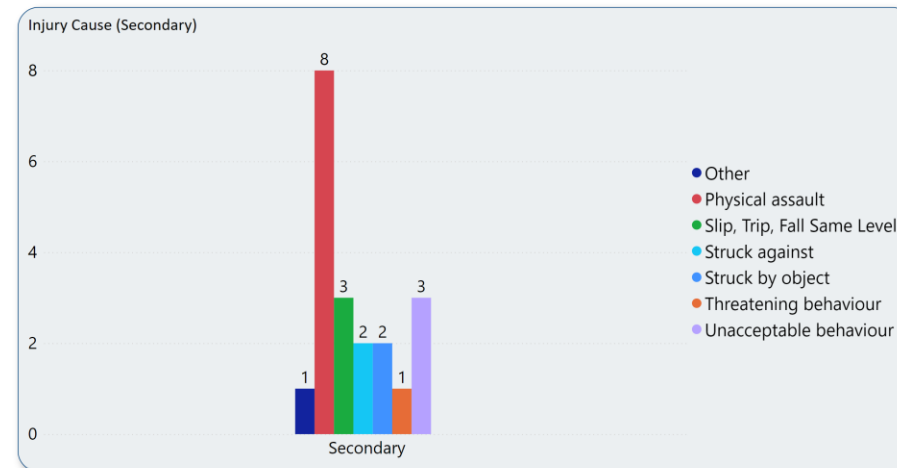
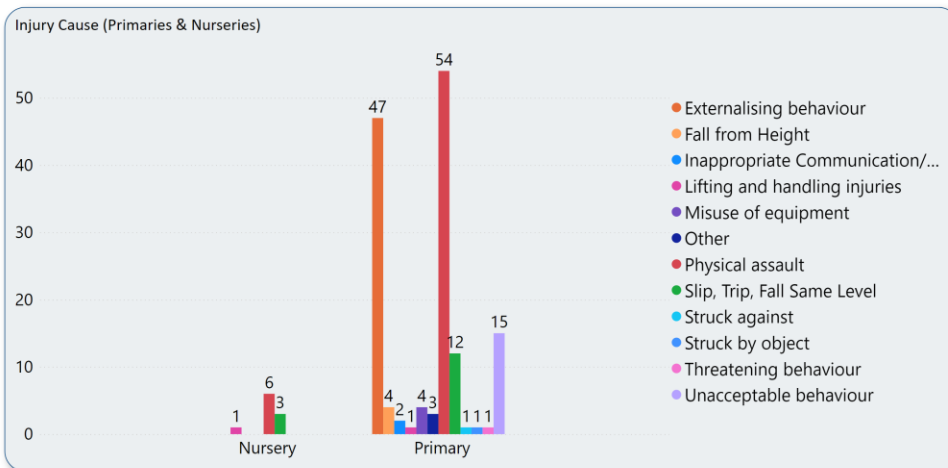


Injury Cause	
Cause	Number
Physical assault	9
Lifting and handling injuries	8
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	8
Other	6
Struck by object	6
Struck against	3
Vehicle incident	3
Externalising behaviour	2
Injured by an animal	2
Struck by moving vehicle	2
Unacceptable behaviour	2
Vandalism of building	1

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



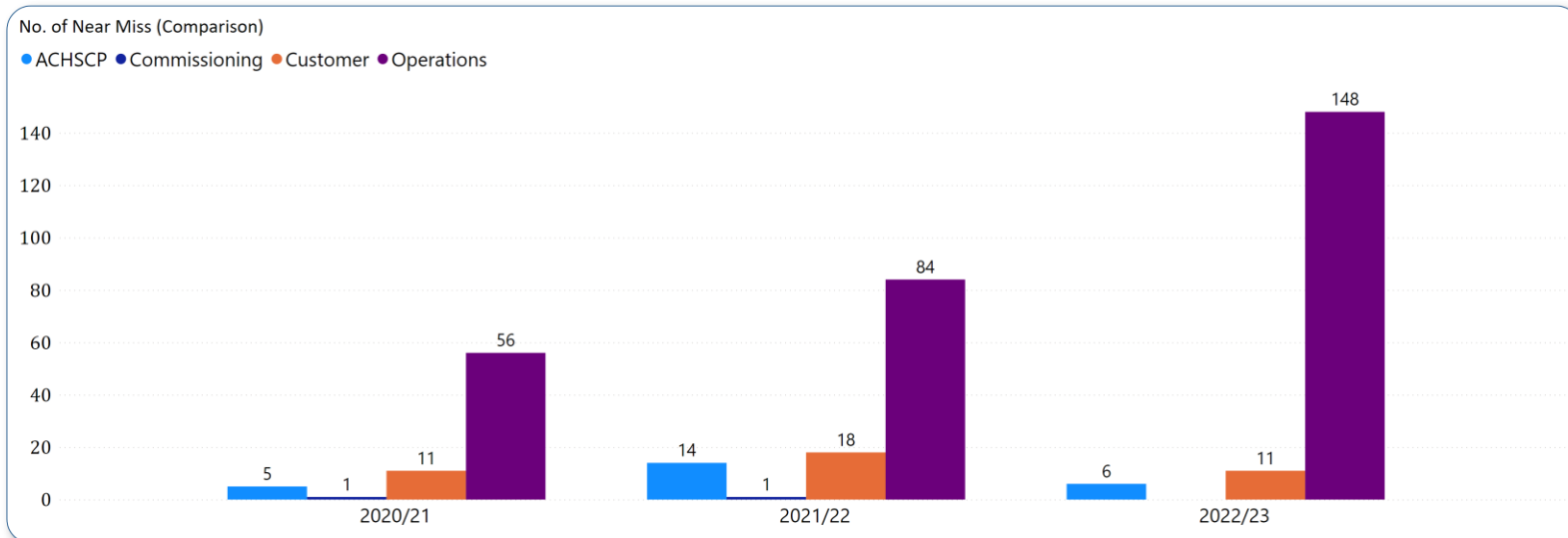
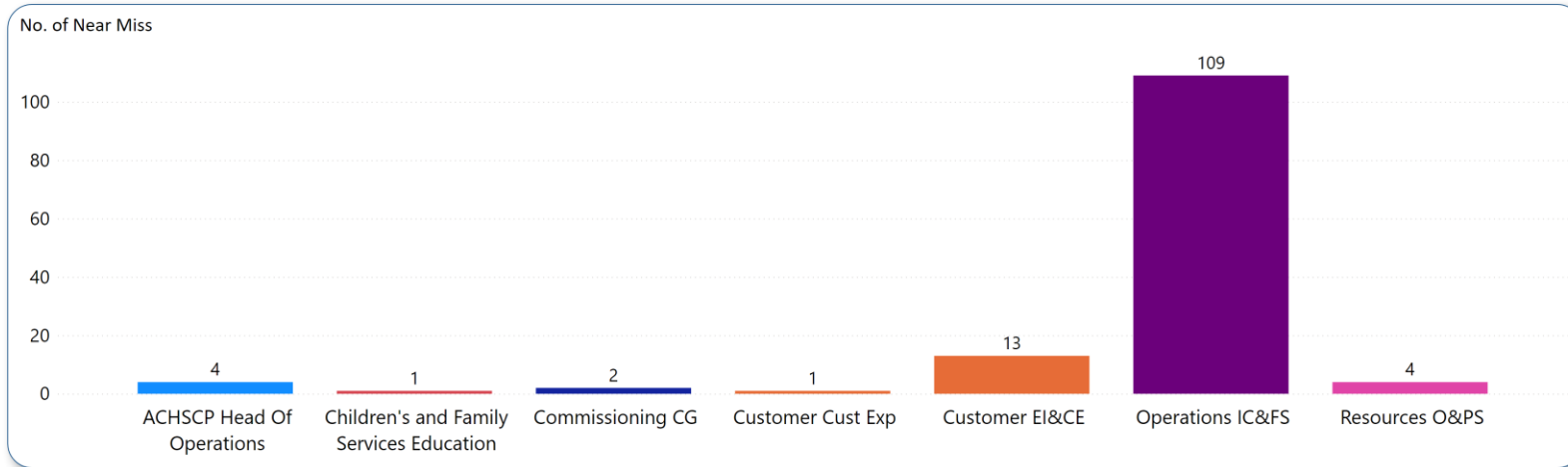
Injury Cause	
Cause	Number
Physical assault	69
Externalising behaviour	47
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	19
Unacceptable behaviour	18
Fall from Height	4
Misuse of equipment	4
Other	4
Struck against	3
Struck by object	3
Inappropriate Communication/abuse	2
Lifting and handling injuries	2
Threatening behaviour	2



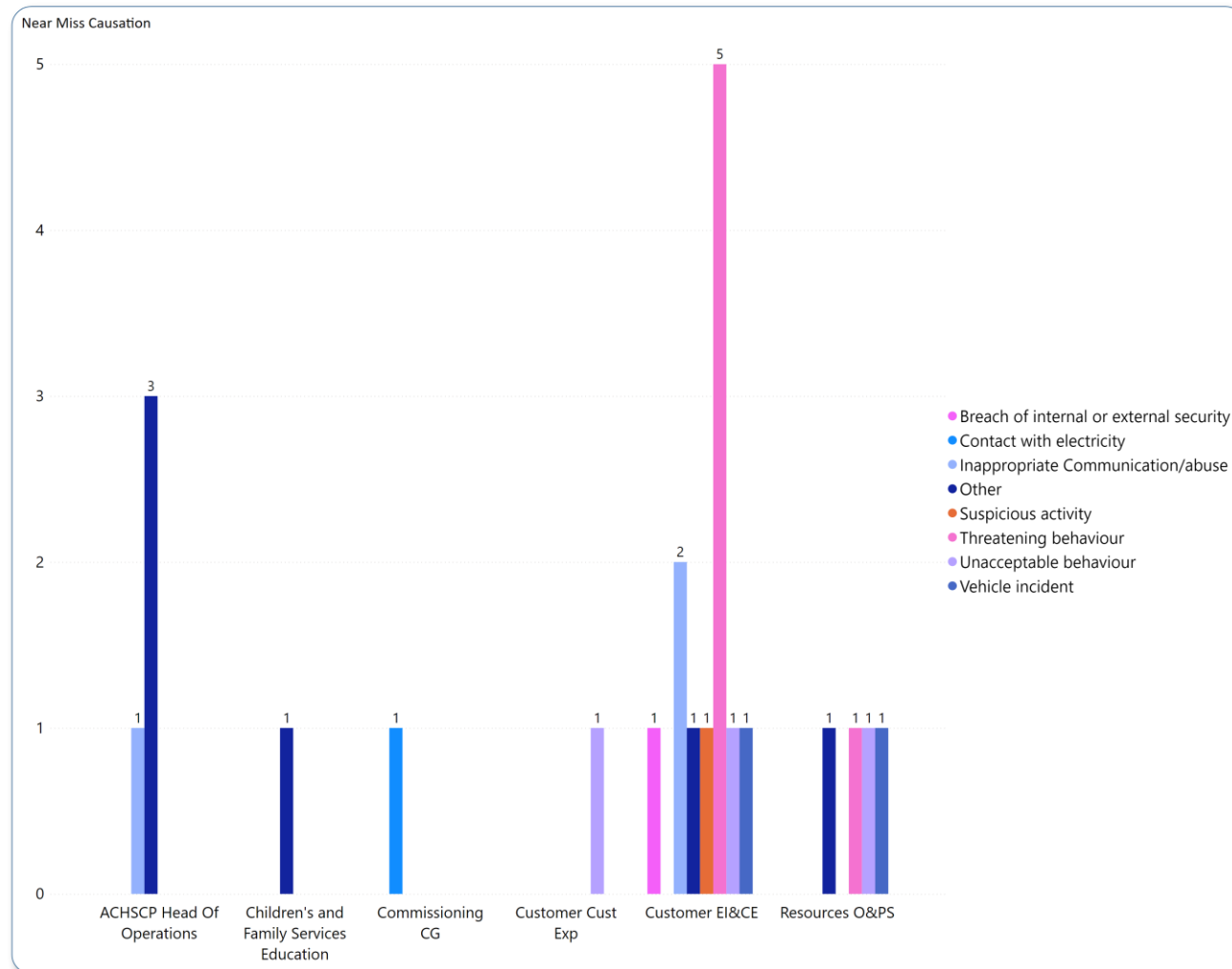
Reported H&S Near Miss Between Jul to Sep 2023

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 2 comparison of Near Misses for each Function from 2020/21 to 2022/23.



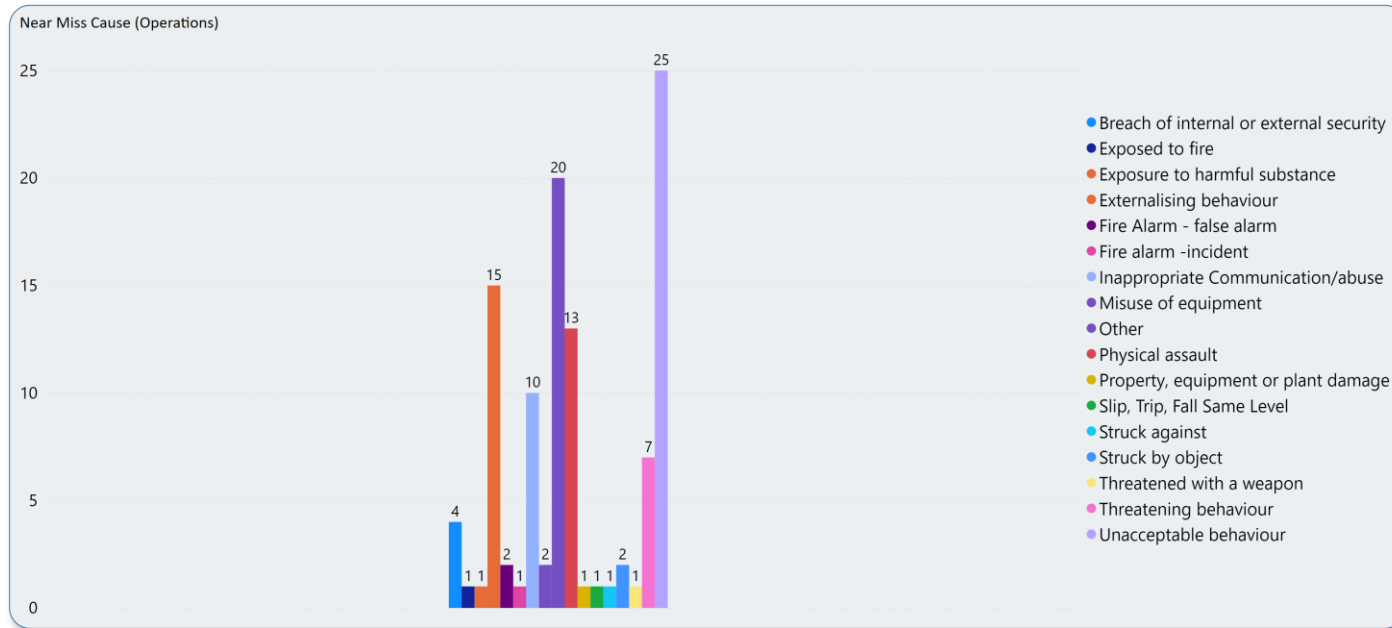
The table below shows information to a Function and Cluster level for employee and non-employee Near Misses apart from Operations, which is covered in the next page.



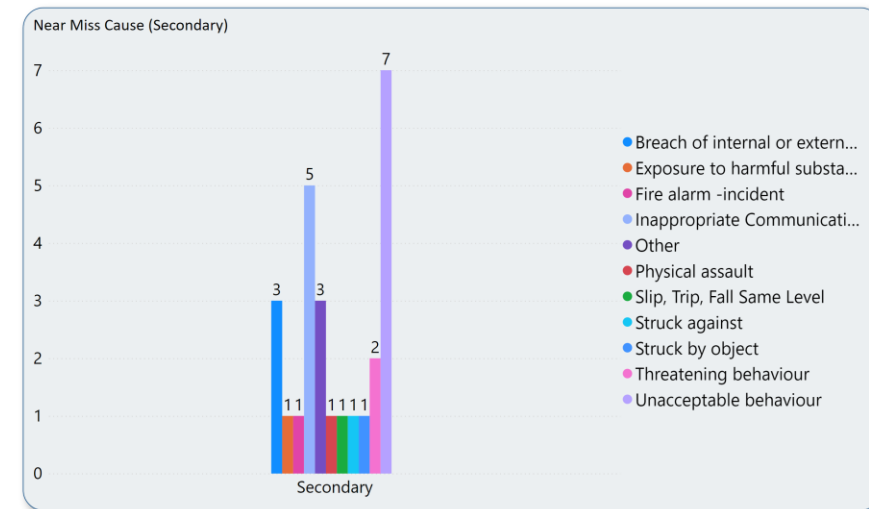
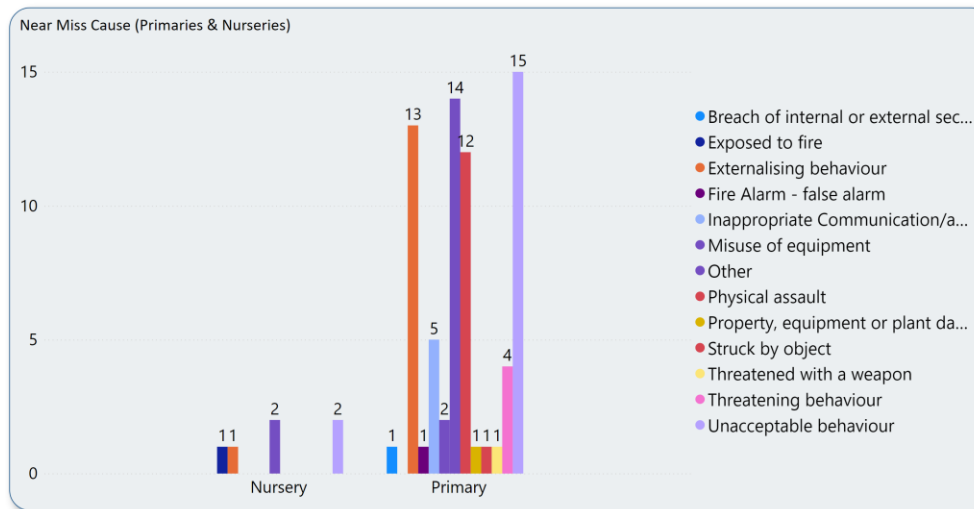
Near Miss Cause	
Cause	Number
Other	6
Threatening behaviour	6
Inappropriate Communication/abuse	3
Unacceptable behaviour	3
Vehicle incident	2
Breach of internal or external security	1
Contact with electricity	1
Suspicious activity	1

Near Miss
There is a decrease of near misses (133/165) across the corresponding reporting period last year and as with incidents the largest number is within Education.

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

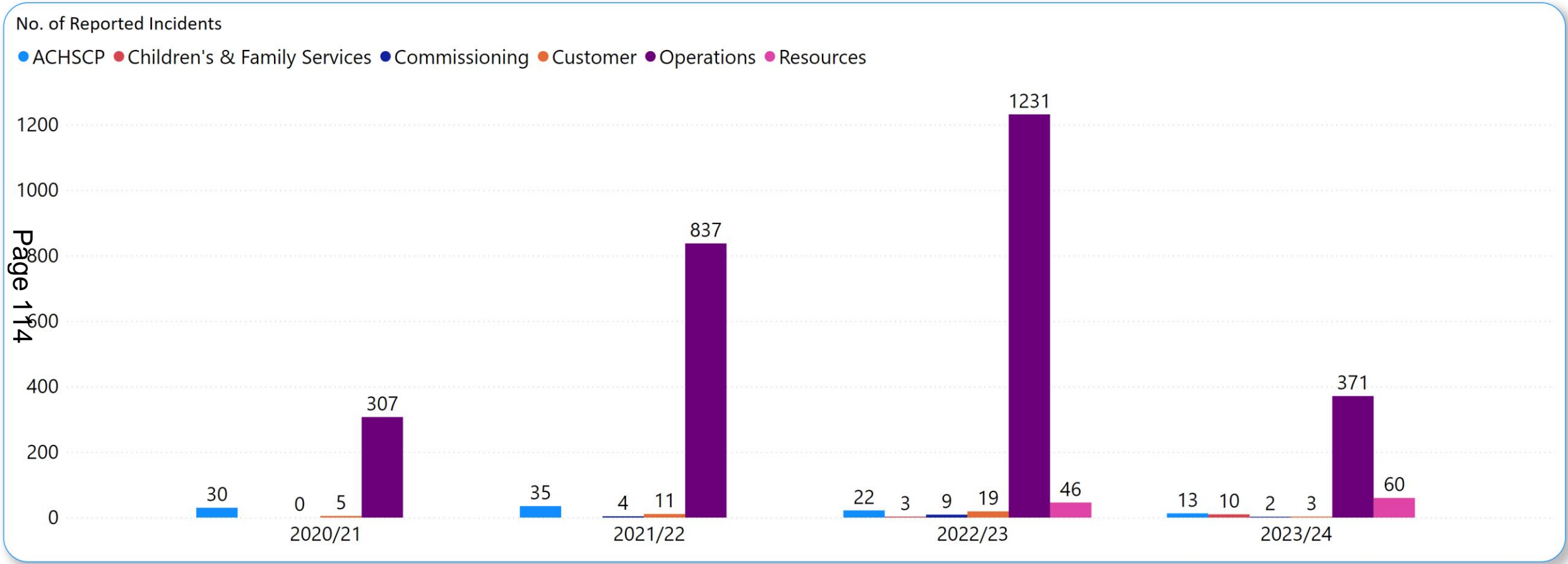


Near Miss Cause	
Cause	Number
Unacceptable behaviour	25
Other	20
Externalising behaviour	15
Physical assault	13
Inappropriate Communication/abuse	10
Threatening behaviour	7
Breach of internal or external security	4
Fire Alarm - false alarm	2
Misuse of equipment	2
Struck by object	2
Exposed to fire	1
Exposure to harmful substance	1
Fire alarm -incident	1
Property, equipment or plant damage	1
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	1
Struck against	1
Threatened with a weapon	1



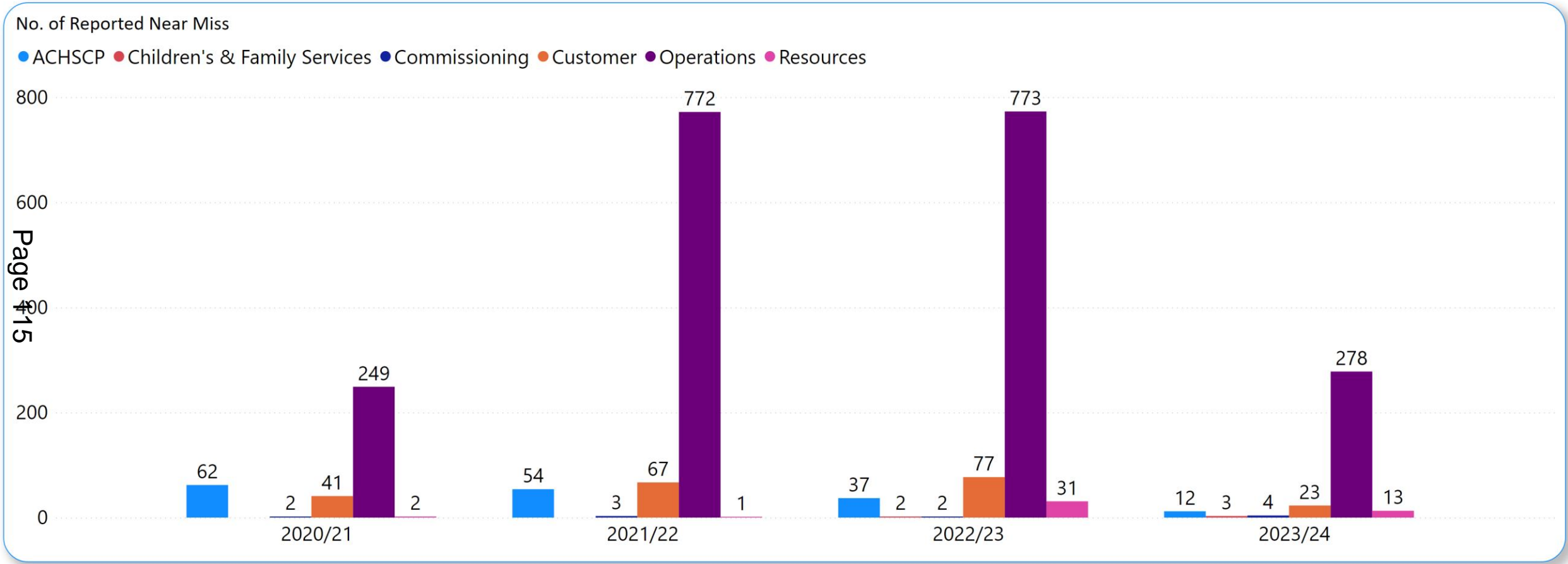
Reported Incidents From 2020/21 to 2023/24

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
DATE	13 November 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	EAS Six Monthly Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update January 2023 – June 2023
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/23/347
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Lindsay MacInnes (Interim)
REPORT AUTHOR	Kirsten Foley
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 VIVUP during the last 6 month period 1 January 2023 – 30 June 2023 and provides a 6 monthly update on the Occupational Health and Absence period 1 January 2023 – 30 June 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

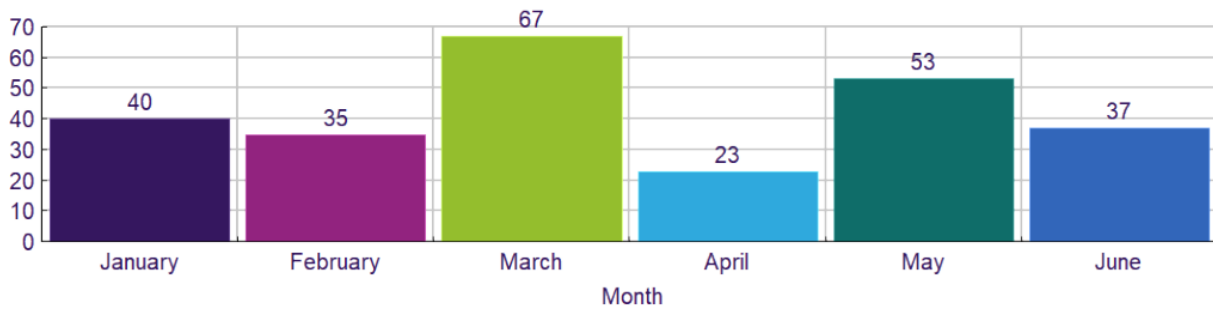
- 2.1 considers the contents of the report; and
- 2.2 Notes that the data included within the report evidences progress made to date against the specific aims of the Absence Improvement Project as detailed in section 3.4 of the report.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Employee Assistance Programme

- 3.1.1 For the period January 2023 – June 2023 the Employee Assistance Programme was provided by VIVUP, who also provide our Employee Benefits service.
- 3.1.2 The table below shows a breakdown of the usage of the Employee Assistance Portal access across the organisation during the period 1 January 2023 – 30 June 2023.

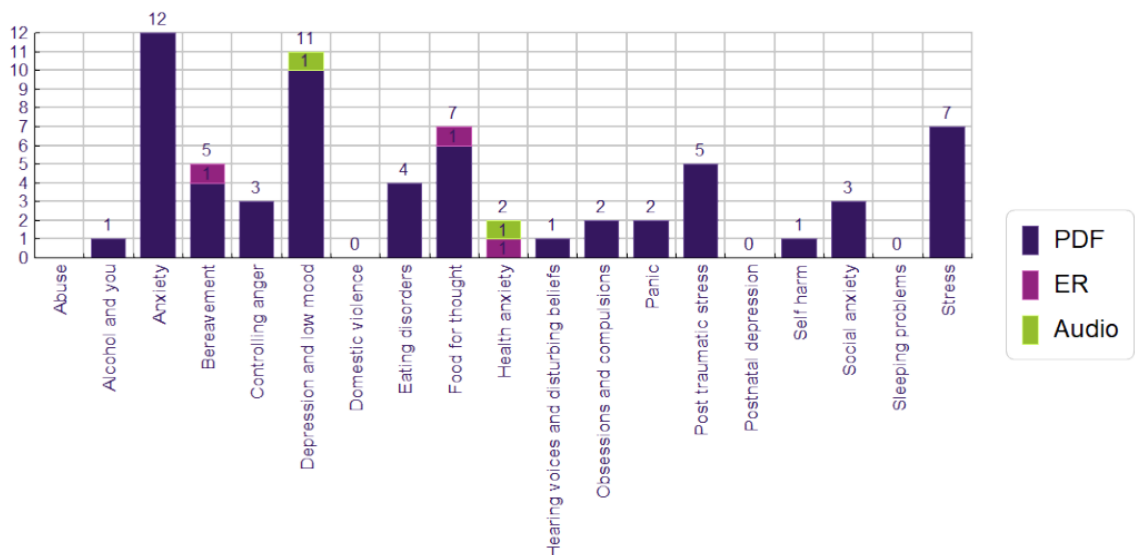
Aberdeen City Council Portal Access by Month



3.1.3 In total, 255 employees accessed the Vivup Employee Assistance Programme portal over this period.

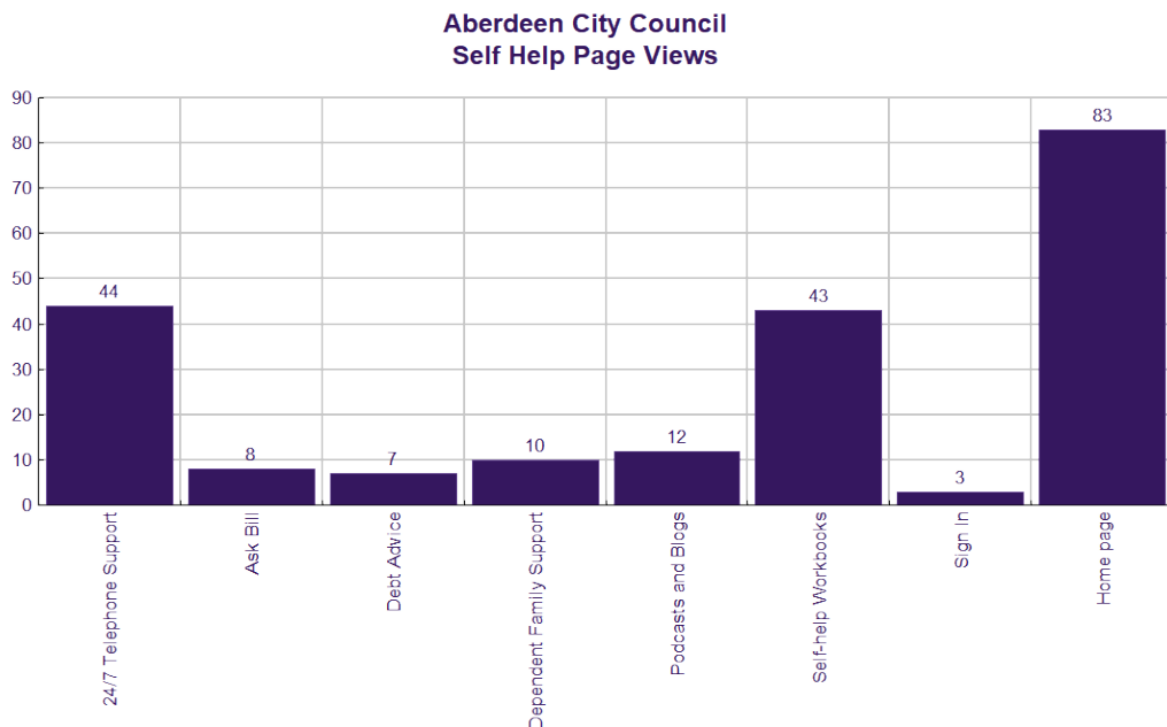
3.1.4 In addition to those who accessed the programme, a total of 66 employees across the organisation accessed our library of Self-help Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbooks to gain advice and guidance on a range of mental wellbeing topics.

Aberdeen City Council Self Help Downloads

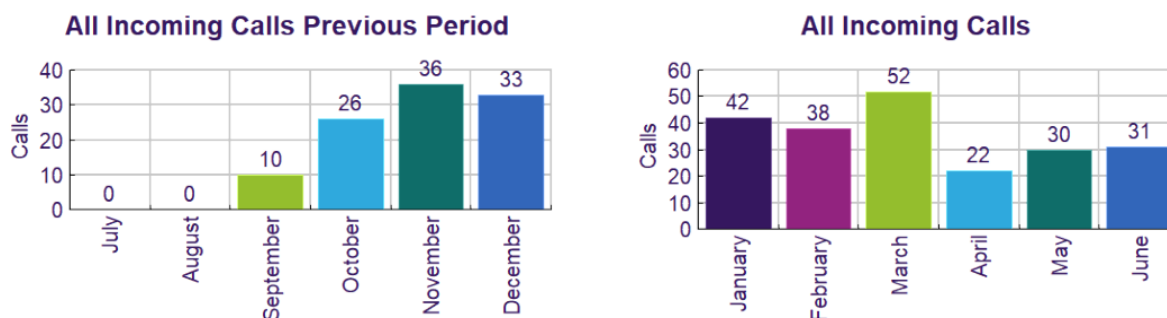


3.1.5 Furthermore, 210 employees accessed our self-help pages through the portal which includes information and advice on the following subjects. 8 employees accessed our Ask Bill pages which provides information on financial wellbeing

and 10 employees accessed information relating to dependant family support.



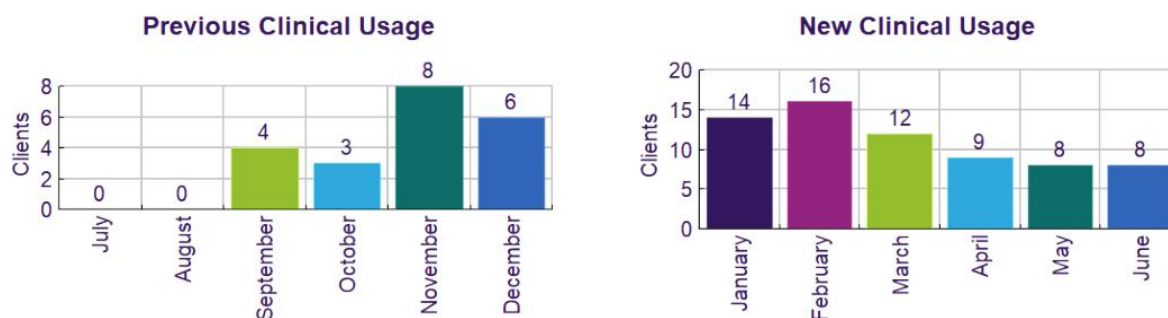
3.1.6 215 new clients accessed the 24/7 helpline during the period January 2023 to June 2023.



3.1.7 Vivup Employee Assistance Programme provides an initial telephone assessment and triage process for every new client. All new clients are required to undertake an initial risk assessment and are provided with access to in-the-moment telephone support where required. Clients requiring access to telephone or face to face counselling are booked in for a telephone assessment with a counsellor. This includes assessment of risk, medication and presenting issues. Clients who presented with risk were triaged appropriately within the service and signposted/managed to ensure they received appropriate case management.

3.1.8 67 new clients accessed the Counselling service in this period January 2023 to June 2023. These figures can be seen below month by month. They show an increase in usage during the initial quarter of the year with a steady number of employees continuing to access the service thereafter. This could be due to the initial increased communication campaigns around the start of the new contract and as these filtered across the organisation. New awareness

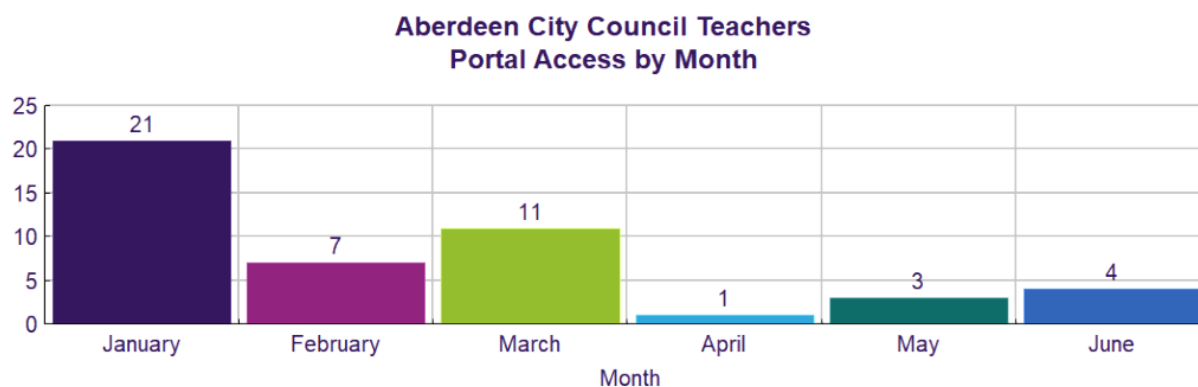
campaigns including physical face to face wellbeing roadshows are being undertaken to increase awareness and knowledge of the services available to staff.



3.1.9 At the request of the Education Service we report numbers of Teachers accessing the Vivup Employee Assistance Programme and its various resources and services available to staff separately.

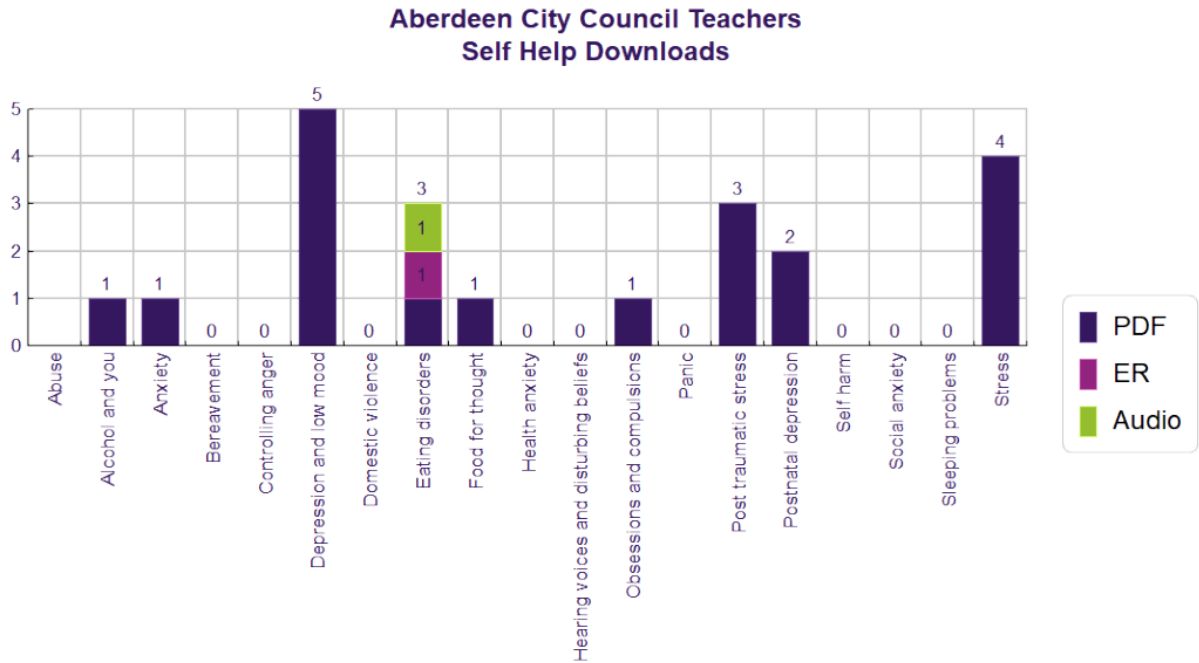
3.1.10 The table below shows a breakdown of the usage of the Employee Assistance Portal access among Teachers during the period 1 January 2023 – 30 June 2023.

3.1.11 In total, 47 teachers (compared to 255 non-teaching staff (18.43%)) accessed the Vivup Employee Assistance Programme portal over this period.



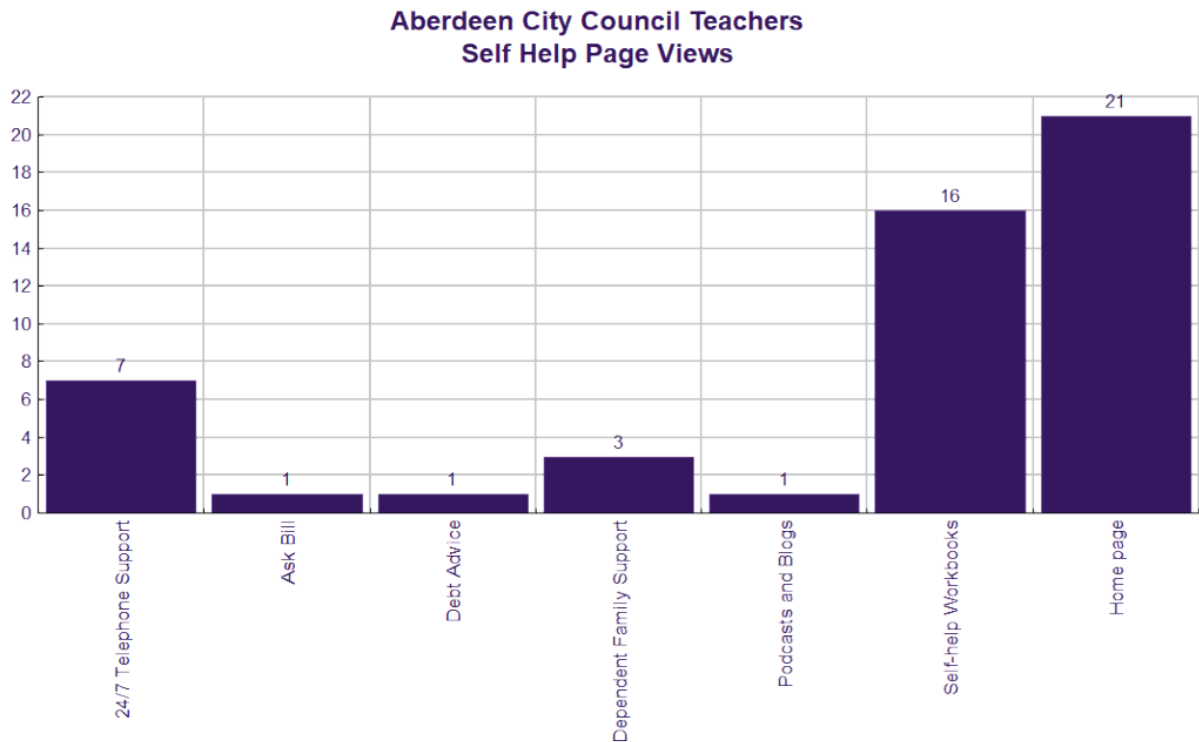
3.1.12 In addition, a total of 21 teachers (compared to 66 non-teaching staff) accessed our library of Self-help CBT Workbooks to gain advice and guidance on a range

of mental wellbeing topics.

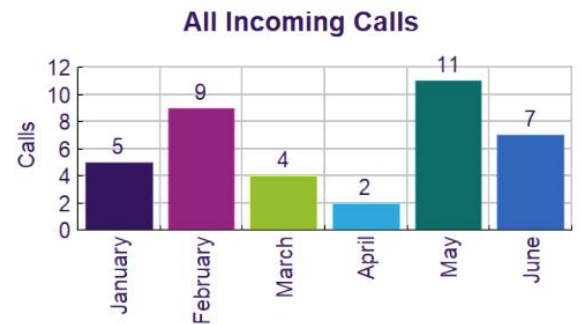
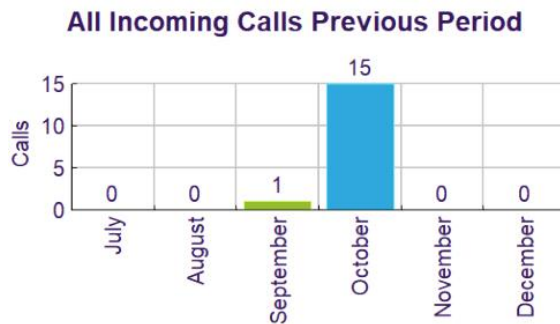


3.1.13As can be seen from the table below, which details the downloads of self help resources across all employers using the VIVUP EAP, the pattern of access by ACC employees largely mirrors that across all organisations.

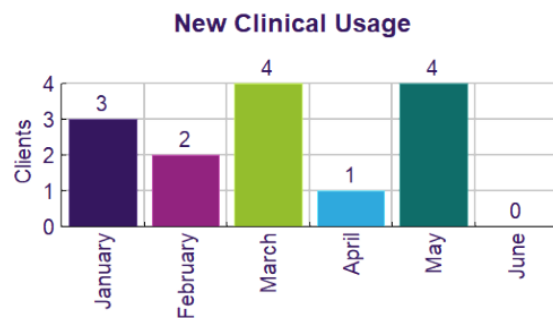
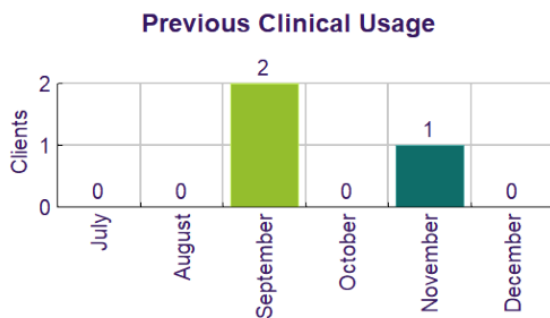
3.1.14Furthermore, 50 teachers (compared to 210 non teaching employees) accessed our self-help pages through the portal which includes information and advice on the following subjects. 8 employees accessed our Ask Bill pages which provides information on financial wellbeing and 10 employees accessed information relating to dependant family support.



3.1.1538 new teacher clients (215 employees) accessed the 24/7 helpline during the period January 2023 to June 2023.



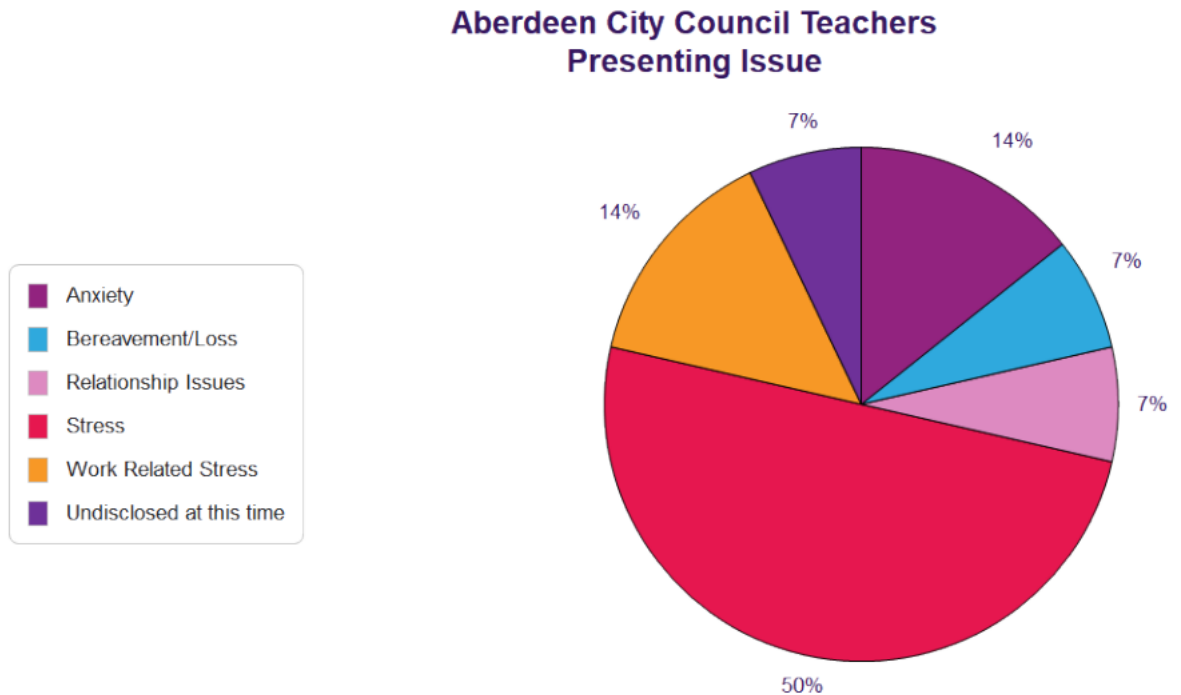
3.1.16 14 new teacher clients accessed the Counselling service in during the reporting period January 2023 to June 2023. These figures can be seen below month by month. They show a steady increase in usage during the reporting period with a steady number of employees continuing to access the service thereafter. 1 new client teacher accessed the Counselling service in April and 0 new teacher clients accessed the Counselling service in June. These dips could be due to the School Holiday periods.



3.1.17 The patterns of usage of the EAP service within Aberdeen City council reflects the national pattern reported in the EAP Statistics Report by Spill [EAP statistics for 2023 \(spill.chat\)](#). This is true both for the takeup rates, and the demographics of the staff who access the programme.

3.1.18 50% of the issues presented during the period January 2023 – June 2023 were stress, with Anxiety and Work Related Stress coming second both at 14%.

Other issues referred for include bereavement/loss and relationship issues.



3.1.19 Aberdeen City Council’s Teachers’ data is in line with the top 5 issues presented across all other organisations.



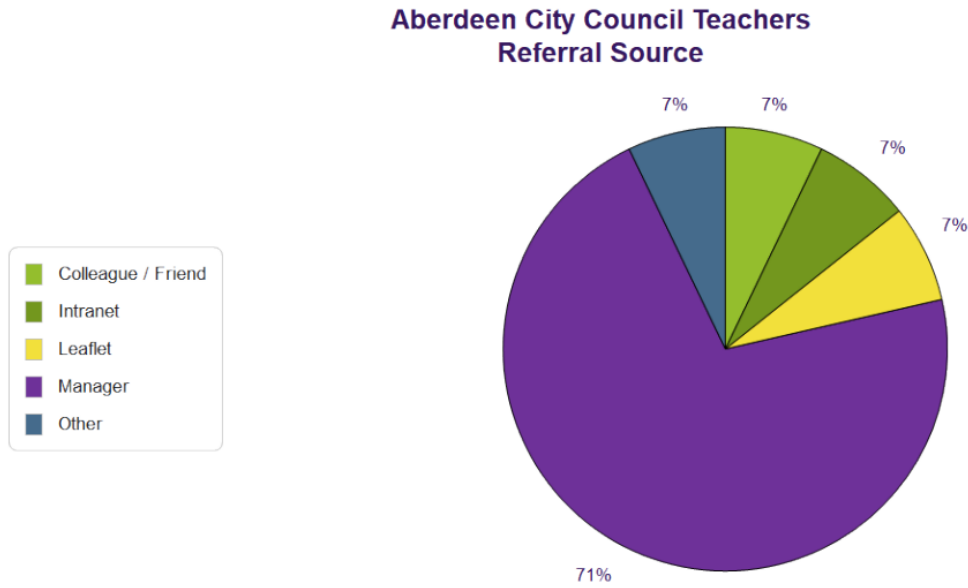
3.1.20 The majority of referrals were received from the age bands of 25 – 29 and 50 – 54, with an even spread across other age groups presenting. There were no referrals from any teachers under the age of 25.

Demographics Aberdeen City Council Teachers

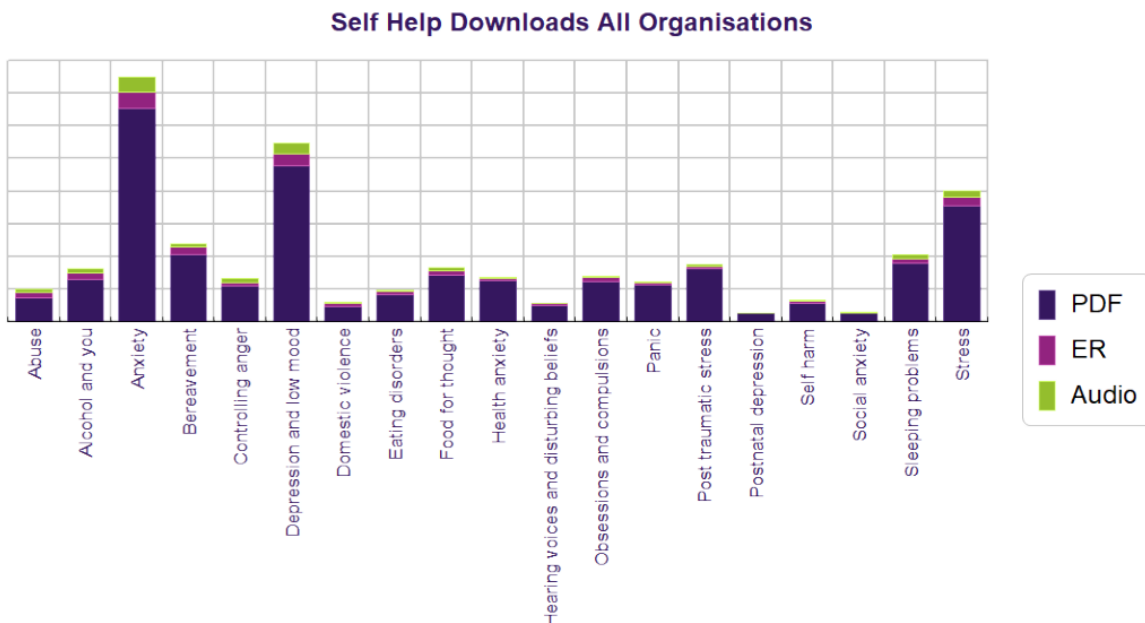


3.1.21 The majority of referrals among teachers were from female employees. This is in line with other referrals across the organisation and with our workforce demographic.

3.1.22 The majority of referrals coming in to the service are predominantly being made by managers, which is a shift from the last period where the majority of referrals were coming from employees accessing marketing materials. E.g. leaflets.

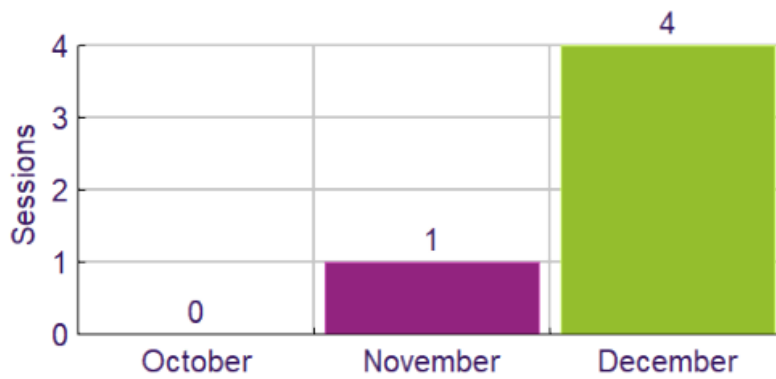


3.1.23 As can be seen from the table below, which details the downloads of self-help resources across all employers using the VIVUP EAP, the pattern of access by ACC employees largely mirrors that across all organisations.

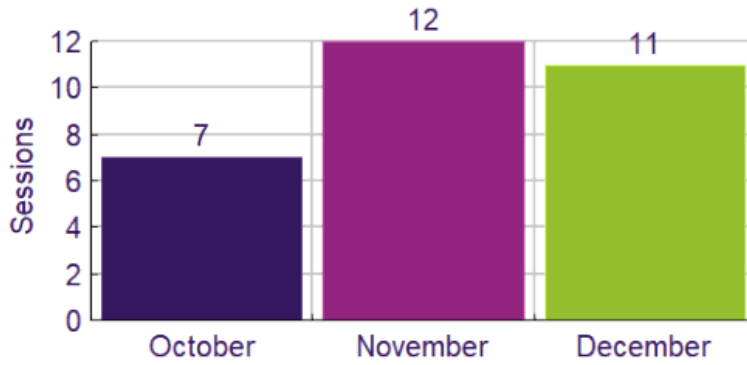


3.1.24 In total, 35 employees accessed telephone counselling support through the portal over the period October – December 2022, as detailed in the graphs below.

Telephone Counselling



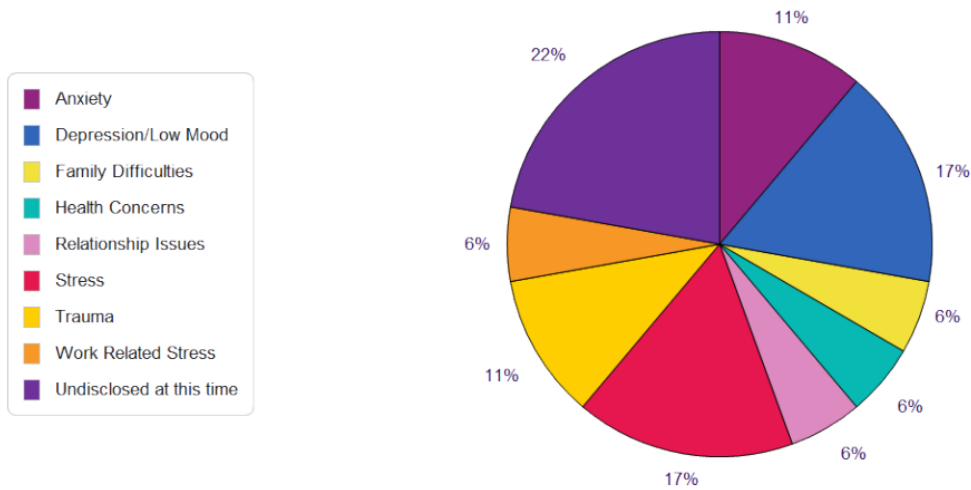
Enhanced Tel Counselling



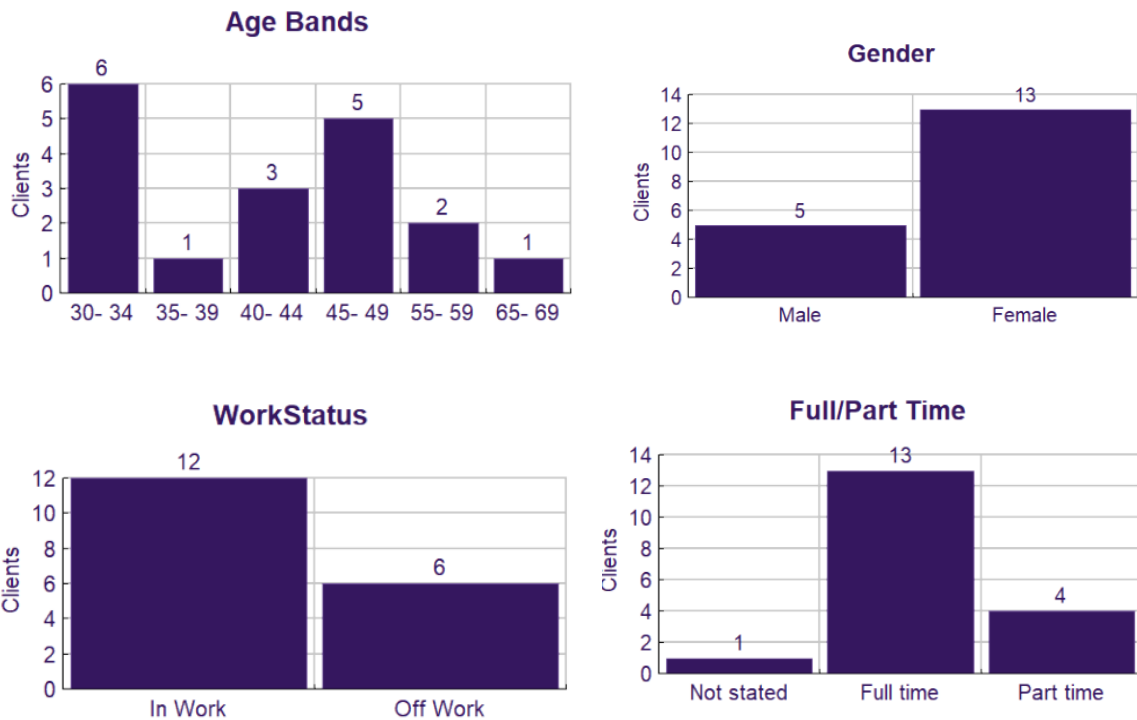
Enhanced telephone counselling relates to ongoing counselling that is extended beyond the initial triage counselling call.

- 3.1.25 The chart below illustrates the issues raised by employees contacting the EAP. The most prevalent issues (where the issue was identified by the employee) were depression and stress, which mirrors the pattern of those accessing the self-help resources.

Aberdeen City Council Presenting Issue



3.1.26 The demographics of those accessing the employee assistance programme are set out in the graphs below. These demographics concur with those accessing the Time for Talking service, with more female, full time and in work employees accessing the support. We have requested that, in future, reports featuring gender also include non-binary.

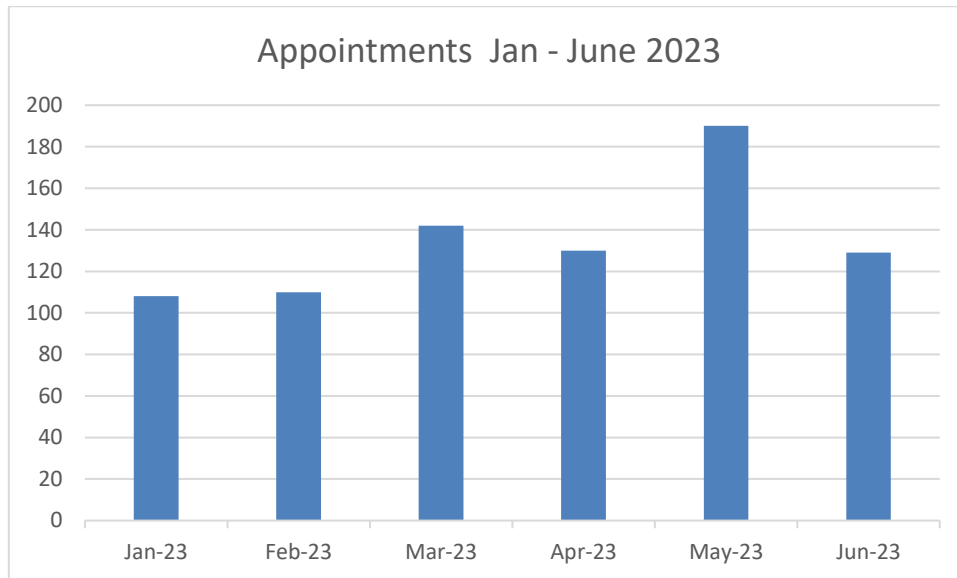


3.1.27 Feedback received to date from employees who have accessed the VIVUP employee assistance programme includes the following statements:



3.2 Occupational Health Service

- 3.2.1 The Occupational Health contract sits with TAC Healthcare, formerly International SOS (formerly trading as Iqarus).
- 3.2.2 The contract with TAC Healthcare has been extended until August 2024, as approved by Finance and Resources Committee in September 2023. [Workplan and business Cases F&R Committee Sept 2023](#)
- 3.2.3 The contract was extended due to issues with market availability of occupational health providers; providers have reported a shortage in suitably qualified staff, which impacts on the services they are able to offer, and reduces interest in tendering for new contracts.
- 3.2.4 In addition to the issue relating to staff shortage across providers, the merger of International SOS with TAC Healthcare offers a range of new options to maximise the value of the contract, including access to a new online portal for submitting referrals and a greater range of bespoke services.
- 3.2.5 The table below shows the volume of appointments made for the period January – June 2023.



3.2.6 These figures include all appointments, including health surveillance assessments and pre employment screening as well as management referrals.

3.2.7 The table below shows the level of attendance at appointments,

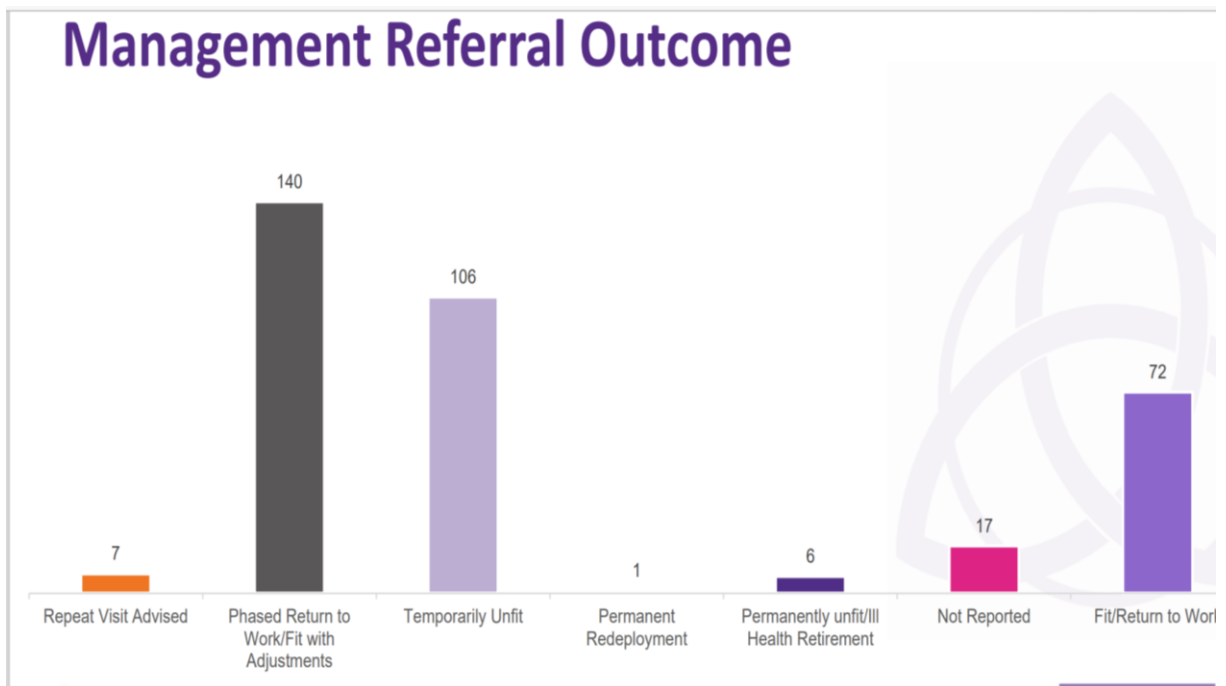
	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	Apr 2023	May 2023	Jun 2023
Attended	93	99	121	126	161	116
Cancelled	4	6	13	0	20	7
Did Not Attend	11	5	8	4	9	6

3.2.8 The cancelled appointments were either re-booked for a time that was more suitable for the employee or were cancelled as the employee had returned to work.

3.2.9 An appointment is recorded as did not attend (dna) if the employee fails to answer the initial telephone call from the OH provider; all dna appointments are identified and followed up with the service. It had been identified towards the end of 2022 that in some cases phone calls were being made by the provider outwith the timeslot advised to the employee. Those which were unanswered were then being included as dna appointments. This was raised with the provider, and in the first six months of 2023 the average number of dna appointments has reduced to 7 per month, compared to 11 per month for the last 6 months of 2022. This improvement is largely due to better adherence to appointment times and improved communication to the employee from the provider. Work continues with services in which the employees failed to attend appointments for other reasons to identify these and reduce the number of dnas.

Management Referral Outcomes

3.2.10 The graph below shows the outcomes from management referrals made during the period January – June 2023.



3.2.11 A total of 212 appointments resulted in the employee returning to work, either fully or on a phased return with adjustments in place. This represents 60.7% of the management referrals made over the period.

3.2.12 137 appointments confirmed that the employee was currently unfit for work, however only 7 of these required a repeat appointment to be made.

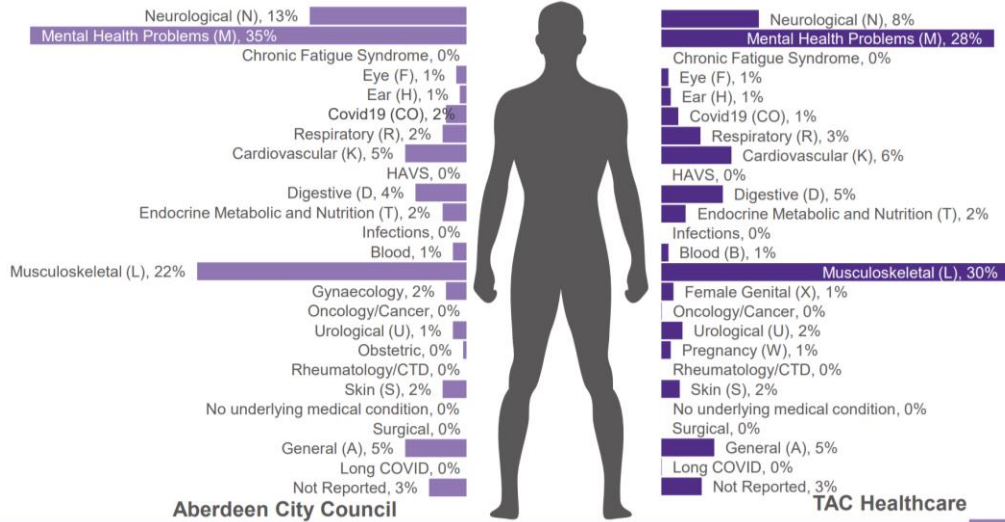
3.2.13 6 employees were identified as meeting the criteria for ill health retirement, and 1 employee was placed on the redeployment register as the OH advice was that they would not be able to return to their substantive roles.

3.2.14 In 17 cases no OH report was issued to the employer. As the Occupational Health report is classed as the employee's medical information, the employee can request that the report is withheld. In such circumstances, management continues to manage the employee's absence on the basis of the information that is available (for example the information contained on fit notes from the GP.) Work and communication will be undertaken with both managers and employees to promote the culture of mutual trust which will allow all employees to feel comfortable with sharing their reports. It should be noted, however, that the number of referrals for which no report was received is less than 5% of the total number of referrals made.

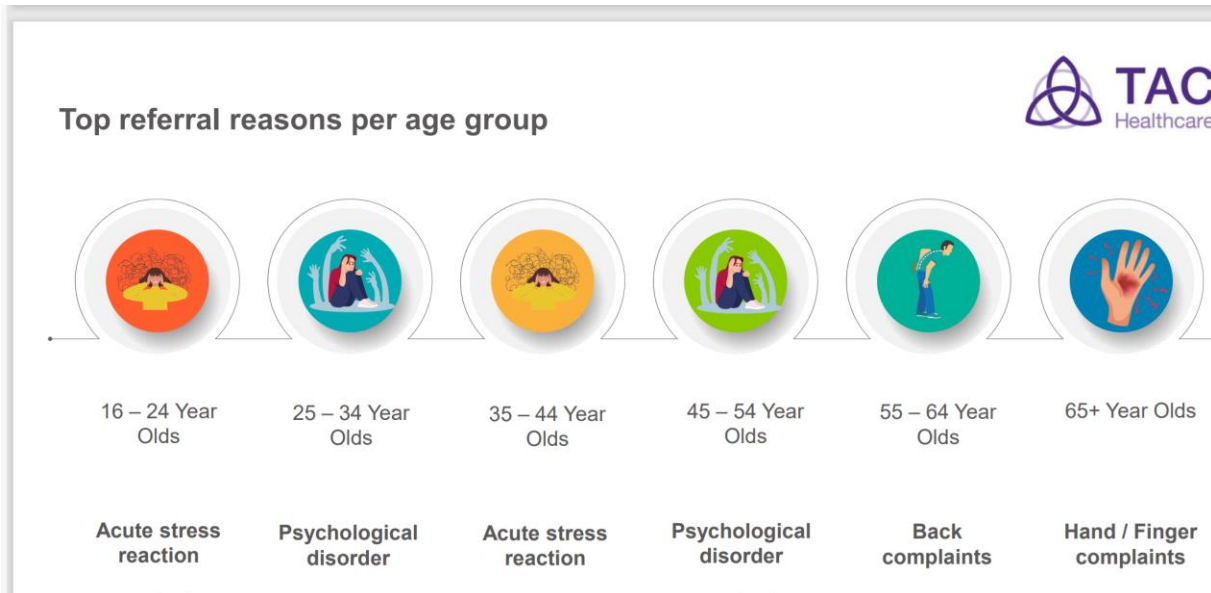
3.2.15 The pictogram below illustrates the medical reasons for the management referrals, and compares the ACC referral levels for each category (on the left of the diagram) with the overall number of referrals TAC are receiving (on the right). This demonstrates that the spread of absence reasons leading to referrals within the Council are very much in line with the reasons other organisations are making OH referrals.

3.2.16 The 2 most common reasons for referring to OH are mental health and musculoskeletal, which is consistent with the absence data.

Physical Diagnostic Outcome from OH Consult

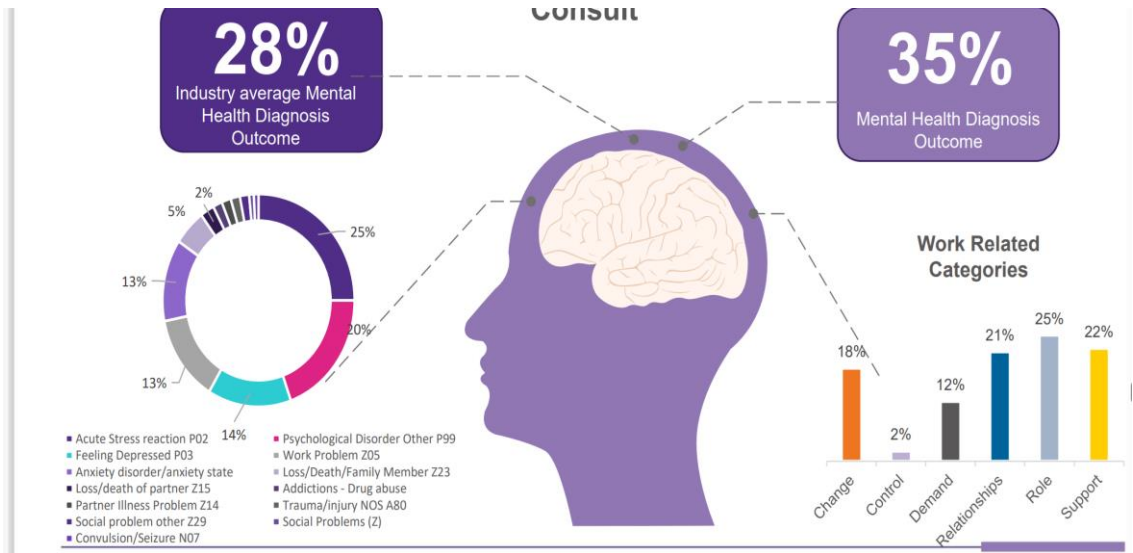


3.2.17 The pictogram below shows the top referral reasons by age group

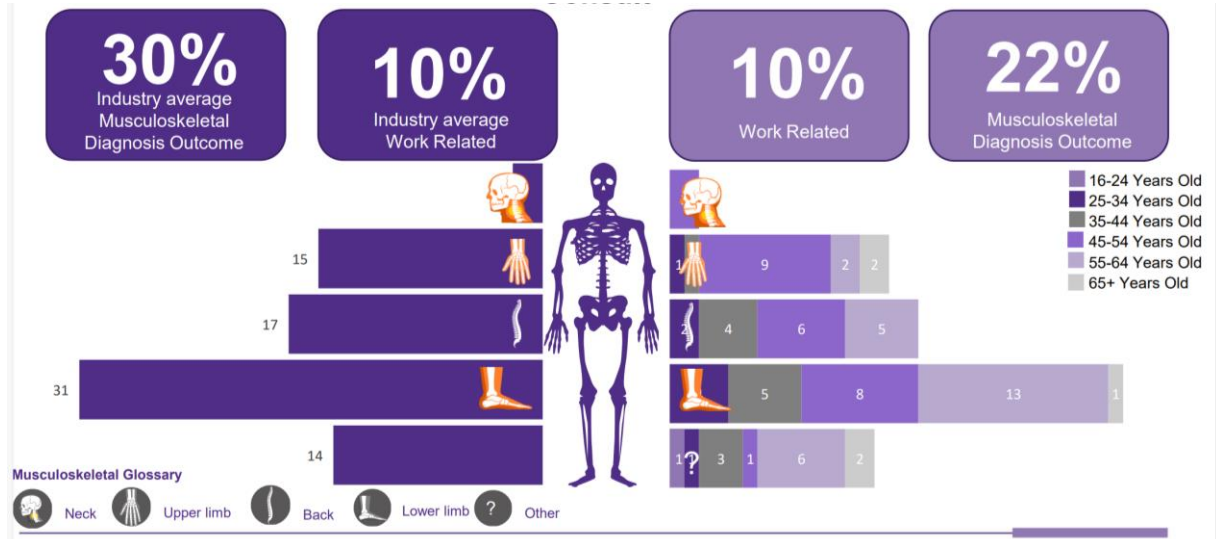


3.2.18 As shown, for employees under the age of 55 years old, the top reason for referral related to mental health, whilst for employees over the age of 55 years old the top reason for referral related to musculoskeletal conditions. This is consistent with the top 2 reasons for absence over the period.

3.2.19 A further analysis of the referrals relating to mental health issues shows that out of these referrals that are in relation to perceived work related issues, the most prevalent identified stressor relates to the role held by the employee. This is a change from the period up to December 2022, in which change was identified as the most prevalent identified stressor.



3.2.20 The most prevalent cause of musculoskeletal referrals related to lower limb injuries (39% of all musculoskeletal referrals) with back issues being the second highest (23% of all musculoskeletal referrals).

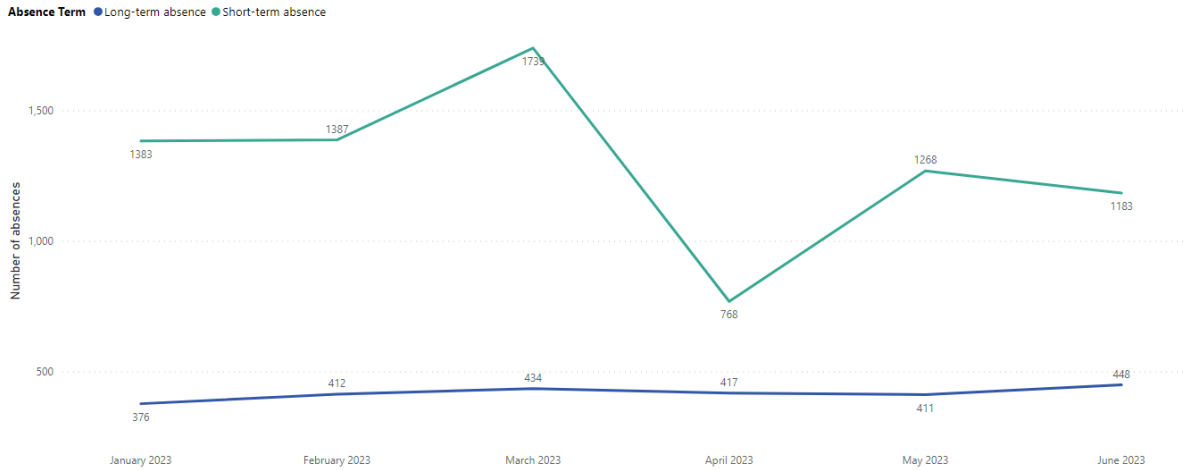


3.2.1 Sickness Absence

Data

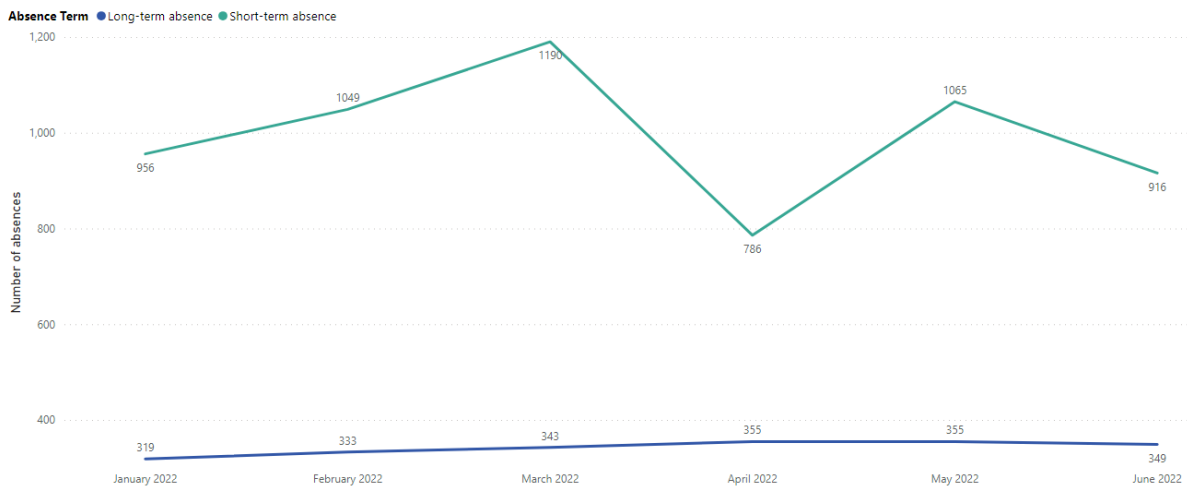
3.3.1 The graph below shows the absence trend for short term and long term absences over the period January – June 2023. This shows a spike in short term absence in March 2023, and a reduction in April 2023. This reduction is not unusual at this time of year, as this includes a 2 week school holiday period.

Absence Monthly Trend, Number of Short-Term and Long-Term Absences



For purposes of comparison, the graph below shows the absence term trend information for the period January – June 2022

Absence Monthly Trend, Number of Short-Term and Long-Term Absences

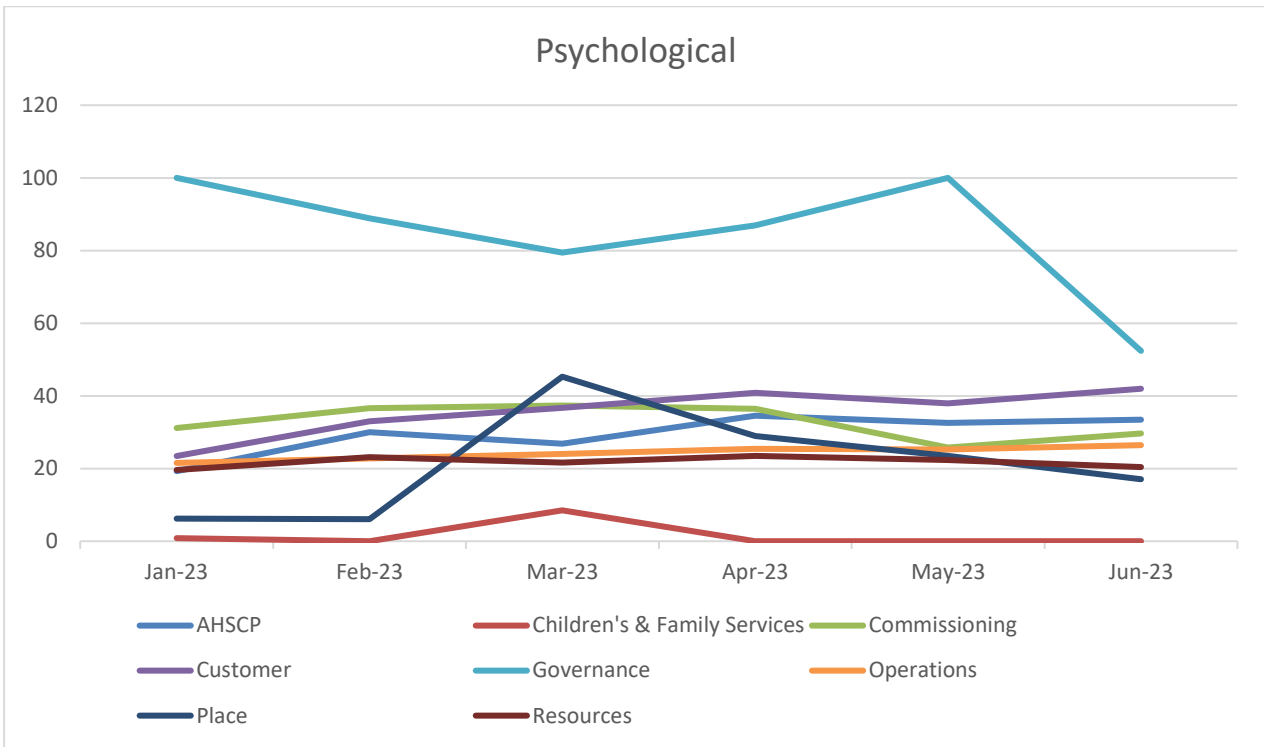


3.3.2 The table below sets out the breakdown of absence reasons for each month. Psychological and musculoskeletal continue to be the most prevalent reasons for absence, and this is reflected in the data received from the Occupational Health service.

Sickness Category Breakdown, Monthly

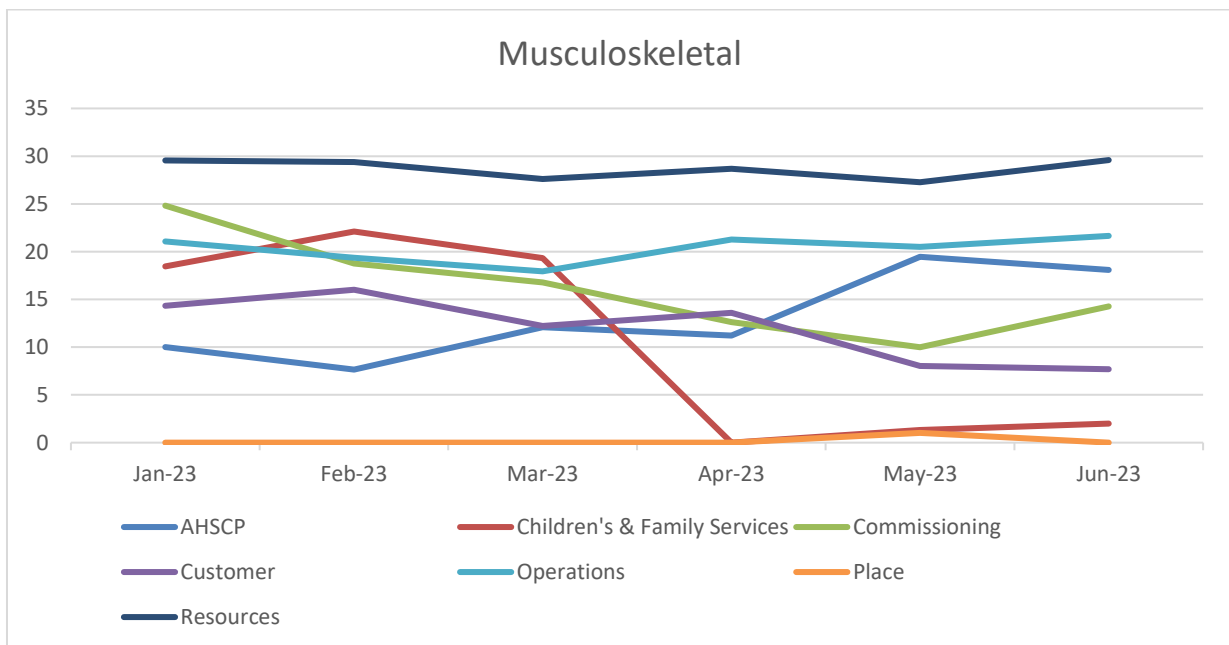
SICKNESS_CATEGORY	January 2023	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023
☐	0.21%	0.19%	0.18%	0.23%	0.20%	0.20%
☐ Bacterial	0.95%	1.36%	0.76%	1.04%	1.26%	1.27%
☐ Cardiovascular	1.98%	1.83%	1.82%	2.77%	2.89%	2.85%
☐ Covid-19 Related	3.28%	3.86%	6.46%	3.76%	3.07%	2.18%
☐ Dermatological	0.43%	0.52%	0.82%	0.52%	0.75%	0.64%
☐ Endocrine	0.09%	0.11%	0.15%	0.32%	0.33%	0.27%
☐ Gastro-intestinal	6.05%	6.80%	7.49%	6.40%	6.87%	7.70%
☐ Gynaecological	1.50%	1.31%	1.30%	2.06%	1.42%	1.65%
☐ Hospitalisation	9.96%	9.28%	8.35%	9.75%	10.21%	9.14%
☐ Malignancy	3.94%	4.21%	3.44%	3.42%	3.42%	2.85%
☐ Musculoskeletal	19.30%	18.14%	16.73%	19.22%	19.06%	19.78%
☐ Neurological	5.94%	6.66%	5.76%	5.72%	6.10%	6.97%
☐ Ophthalmic	0.47%	0.60%	0.54%	0.54%	0.36%	0.71%
☐ Other	2.55%	3.54%	3.03%	3.22%	2.50%	2.12%
☐ Psychological	22.01%	24.46%	25.59%	27.75%	26.76%	28.73%
☐ Respiratory	18.17%	14.51%	14.21%	11.30%	11.70%	10.15%
☐ Urological	0.48%	0.29%	0.29%	0.24%	0.72%	0.64%
☐ Viral	2.69%	2.32%	3.08%	1.73%	2.38%	2.15%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

- 3.3.3 As illustrated by the graph below, the Functions within which psychological absences were highest (as a percentage of total absence within the Function) were Governance, Commissioning, Customer and AHSCP.
- 3.3.4 The level of sickness absence attributable to psychological absence in Operations and Resources closely mirrored the level of psychological absence across ACC as a whole.
- 3.3.5 The Children's and Family Services Function showed a lower level of psychological absence as a percentage of total absences than the ACC level.
- 3.3.6 Both Place and Governance show dramatic spikes in psychological absence, however due to the fact that these are smaller clusters and the overall level of absence is much lower, these can be explained by a single absence/small numbers of absences.



3.3.7 The graph below breaks down the musculoskeletal absences by Function. There were no instances of musculoskeletal absence in Governance over the period and therefore this Function do not appear on the graph.

3.3.8 The highest levels of musculoskeletal absences are within the Resources Function, and these are in the main within the Operations and Protective Services Cluster, where the highest numbers of frontline manual workers are employed.



Absence Improvement Project

3.4.1 The aims of the Absence Improvement Project are:

- To reduce the number of absences extending beyond 6 months through supporting employees back into the workplace or progress through ill health retirement/capability.
- To reduce the number of employees hitting short term absence triggers (3 occasions or more in 12 months).
- To improve overall employee mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, creating a sense of belonging and inclusion, alongside fair work practices.

3.4.2 These aims are linked to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan through building the Council's capacity to deliver services. [Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26 - Community Planning Aberdeen](#)

3.4.3 The aims also link to the Workforce Delivery Plan, through ensuring that the right support is in place for employees. [Workforce Delivery Plan \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

3.4.4 The key project streams are around:

- Accurate and accessible real time data reporting
- Data informed support programmes targeted at early intervention
- Review of policy, guidance and training
- Implementation of quarterly absence data deep dives with SMTs, supported by People & Organisational Development Advisers

3.4.5 The project will also link to ongoing work around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Fair Work.

3.4.6 Progress will be reported through the Performance Board and future updates to Staff Governance Committee.

Workforce Health Research Project

3.5.1 The National Institute for Health and Care Research is undertaking a project into workforce health. [23/83 Workforce health | NIHR](#)

3.5.2 The research question for the project is "What are the most effective interventions that organisations can adopt to improve the physical and mental health of the UK workforce?"

3.5.3 Another aspect of the research is around organisational culture and how a culture that prioritises fairness, justice and diversity can help to foster environments that improve health and mitigate health inequalities and social exclusion.

3.6.4 Working collaboratively with the Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Centre, which is being led by Aberdeen City Council in collaboration with NHS

Grampian and Aberdeen University, it is hoped that one of the Research Fellows can undertake this research.

3.6.5 The application for funding requires to be lodged by 12th December 2023 and work is underway on an application for stage 1 funding.

3.6.6 The findings from this research will be helpful to inform not only improvements around absence management, but also in relation to the ongoing work around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and corporate culture.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The costs associated with the provisions of EAP and OH services are as set out below:

Service	Provider	Annual budgeted cost
Occupational Health	TAC Healthcare	£122,000
Employee Assistance Programme	VIVUP	£2,500*

* The service is provided free of charge as part of the overall employee benefits package, however we have elected to pay £2,500 per annum to allow family members and dependents to access the programme.

4.2 The direct financial costs associated with sickness absence relate to the payment of occupational sick pay and cover of essential services. The indirect costs relate to impact on service delivery.

4.3 There is also the potential for employment tribunal associated costs if an employee were 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. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no 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) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
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)	Assessment of risk via stress and Quality of Working Life 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.	M	Yes
Operational	Risk to service delivery if absence levels	Provision of information, instruction and	M	Yes

	are high and employees are not supported back to work timeously	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	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.	M	Yes
Reputational	Without ensuring suitable employee support there is a risk of the organisation not being seen	As above	L	Yes

	as an employer of choice and having recruitment and retention issues			
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8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The provisions within this report support the delivery of the Policy Statement through ensuring that sufficient resources are available to deliver the Council services which will achieve the policy priorities.</p> <p>Recognise that the Council depends upon its staff to deliver the services it provides and believe the Council must properly reward, train and support its staff.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
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.
Workforce Plan	As set out in the Workforce Plan, the emphasis on developing internal capacity and the need for flexibility and efficiency in our reducing workforce, there is a need to focus on supporting employee health and wellbeing.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 Assessment completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. Appendices

None

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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