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To: Councillor Copland, <u>Convener</u>; Councillor Al-Samarai, <u>Vice Convener</u>; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; Councillor Steve Delaney, the Depute Provost; and Councillors Boulton, Clark, Macdonald, McLeod and Thomson.

<u>Trade Union Advisers</u>: Zemeta Chefeke and Doug Haywood (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); and Fiona Sales (UCATT) and 2 vacancies (VOICE).

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 30 August 2024

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Members of the **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Committee Room 2 - Town House on <u>MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2024 at 10.00am</u>. This is a hybrid meeting and Members and officers may also join online via Teams.**

ALAN THOMSON
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

B U S I N E S S

NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

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

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2.1   <u>Members are requested to determine that any exempt business be considered with the press and public excluded</u>

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

3.1   <u>Members are requested to declare any interests</u>

DEPUTATIONS

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

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

COMMITTEE PLANNER

Please note that the reports for 2025 will be allocated to specific meetings for the next Committee now that the meeting dates for 2025 have been agreed by Council

NOTICES OF MOTION

7.1   None at this time

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

8.1   None at this time

GENERAL BUSINESS

Website Address: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

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

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 24 June 2024. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Clark, Henrickson (as substitute for Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost), Macdonald, MacGregor (as substitute for Councillor Steve Delaney, the Depute Provost), Mrs Stewart (as substitute for Councillor Boulton) and Thomson.

Trade Union Advisers:- Zemeta Chefeke and Carole Thorpe (EIS); David Wallis and Kevin Masson (GMB); Mark Musk (UNISON); 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.   The Convener welcomed the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services back to her first meeting since returning from shared parental leave. He advised the Committee that Lindsay MacInnes had now left the Council for a new post in Dundee and that he wished to put on record the Committee's thanks for both her support to the Committee and hard work over her years with the Council.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

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

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 22 APRIL 2024

3.   The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 22 April 2024 for approval.

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

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

4.   The Committee had before it the business planner as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to agree to remove item 8 (Cluster Risk Register) for the reasons outlined in the planner;

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
24 June 2024

(ii)   to note that item 8 (People Policy Data) was delayed to the September meeting to enable a full year of data to be presented; and

(iii)   to otherwise note the planner.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE UPDATE - CORS/24/183

5.   With reference to article 6 of the minute of its meeting of 26 June 2023 and article 4 of the minute of its meeting of 22 April 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services which provided (i) an update on the progress relating to developing the young workforce; and (ii) details in relation to measures of success of the apprenticeship programme.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee note the progress of the continuing work to develop the young workforce, to do this in line with Local Outcome Improvement Plan commitments, and to shape the workforce for the future.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to note that there would be analysis of the ABZ Campus – Employability Pathway Programme pilot and officers would provide an update to Members; and

(ii)   to approve the recommendation.

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES PROJECT UPDATE - CORS/24/185

6.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services which provided an update on the progress in relation to the Family Friendly Project and also sought approval for the revised Special Leave policy.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the content of the report and the progress made to date within the Family Friendly Project;

(b)   approve changes to the Special Leave Policy to ensure compliance with the Carer's Leave Act 2023 and the Paternity Leave (amendment) Regulations 2024;

(c)   approve the project next steps as outlined in section 5 of the report; and

(d)   instruct the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services to report back to Staff Governance Committee in one year's time with updated policies and documentation for approval.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to note that officers would ensure that the website clearly reflected which staff the policy applied to, and would include a link to the teachers' policy; and

(ii)   to approve the recommendations.

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
24 June 2024

CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY JANUARY TO MARCH 24 - CORS/24/182

7.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services which provided a summary of statistical health and safety performance information for the three month reporting period from January to March 2024 to provide the Committee 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)   to note the concerns raised by the EIS representatives during the meeting, and to note that the Corporate Health and Safety Lead would (a) meet with all Trade Union representatives to gather feedback in relation to the content of the report and (b) reflect this feedback and any changes to the reporting in future quarterly health and safety reports; and
(ii)   to otherwise note the report.

SICKNESS ABSENCE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL, ROADS AND WASTE SERVICES - CR&E/24/178

8.   With reference to article 5 of the minute of the meeting of the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee of 27 March 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director of City Regeneration and Environment which provided an update on sickness absence within Roads, Environment and Waste, and what the Council was doing to reduce absences within those areas.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the explanation and update provided within the report for assurance; and
(b)   instruct the Chief Officers - Operations and People and Citizen Services to incorporate any future updates into the Absence Annual Update (EAS Annual Progress Update, Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update).

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE - CORS/24/184

9.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services which provided an update on progress and activity from January 2023 to

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
24 June 2024

December 2023 towards the Employee Mental Health Action Plan, and presented the refreshed Mental Health Action Plan for 2024.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the continuing progress made on the Mental Health Action Plan and the proactive actions taken to address and support positive employee mental health during the last 12 months; and
(b)   approve the updated Mental Health Action Plan for 2024.
- COUNCILLOR NEIL COPLAND, <u>Convener</u>

	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	9 September 2024								
4	Internal Communications and Employee Engagement Platforms – analysis	SGC 22/01/24 - in respect of analysing the performance of current methods of internal communication to staff, to note that officers would report back to Committee on activity data from staff accessing Sharepoint and Open Forum, taking into consideration the recent public consultations which had also been promoted to staff;		Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.4		
5	Policies for People Update	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		Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5, 2.7		
6	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 30 June 2024		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
7	18 November 2024								
8	Staff Governance Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual effectiveness report		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	8.5		
9	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
10	Corporate Volunteering Policy	A Corporate Volunteering Policy will be presented to Staff Governance Committee for approval later in the year. In addition, guidance for managers will be developed to cover all aspects of volunteering arrangements		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
11	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 & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.4		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
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**
12	Managing Substance Misuse Policy	The revised policy was approved at Committee in November 2023 - to be reviewed annually (report will not be required if no changes are to be made)		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5	R	There are no amendments being made to the Policy that would require Committee approval, therefore it is recommended that this item is rermoved
13	Corporate Health & Safety Policy	To present the revised Health & Safety Policy (report will not be required if no changes are to be made)		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	2.5	R	There are no amendments being made to the Policy that would require Committee approval, therefore it is recommended that this item is rermoved
14	Flexible Working Guidance and Policy	To present the policy for approval		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
15	Smarter Working			Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	TBC		
16	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 30 September 2024		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
17	**2025**								

	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
2									
18	Equality and Diversity Staffing Outcomes / 2025 Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	SGC 13/03/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to provide an update to Staff Governance Committee at a future meeting of the Committee on any impact this report has on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan as well as any changes, updates or new areas of focus based on the data and analysis SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee on progress to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan on an annual basis which will either be as part of Mainstreaming or Progress Report updates or as an independent report in years where there is not a Mainstreaming or Progress Report 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	March 2025	Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	TBC		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
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**
19	Staff Travel Plan & Policy	NZET 27/03/24 - The Committee resolved:- (i)to replace recommendation 2.1 with "instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services, in consultation with the Chief Officer-Finance, to set up an internal officer working group to review and refresh the Council's Staff Travel Policy with the emphasis on walking and cycling"; (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to update the Council's Travel Plan to align with any proposed changes to the Staff Travel Policy resulting from (i); (iii) to instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services to thereafter undertake consultation with Council staff and trade unions on any proposed changes to the Staff Travel Policy and/or the Council Travel Plan; and (iv) to instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services, following analysis of the consultation and finalisation of the documents, to report both the updated Staff Travel Policy and Council Travel Plan back to this Committee and / or other relevant committees by Summer 2025 for approval.		Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
20	Equality and Diversity Policy	If required, to present an updated policy for approval - review date of approved policy is April 2025		Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.6		
21	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 31 December 2024	April 2025	Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
22	EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update	To present an annual report for the EAS/OH & Sickness Absence figures	April 2025	Sharon Robb	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.7		
23	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 31 March 2025		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
24	Cluster Risk Register	To present the annual risk register update	June 2025 if required	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	GD 8.4		
25	Developing the Young Workforce Apprenticeship / Internship Update	To present the annual update	June 2025	Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.2		
26	Family Friendly Policies	SGC 24/06/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services to report back to Staff Governance Committee in one year's time with updated policies and documentation for approval		Sharon Robb	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		

	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
27	Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update	To provide an update in relation to the employee mental health action plan		Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	3.2 iii		
28	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	September 2025	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.2		
29	Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure	The revised policy was approved at Committee in November 2023 - due for review November 2025	November 2025	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
30	**2026**								
31	Managing Performance Policy and Procedure	The revised policy was approved at Committee in January 2024 - due for review January 2026		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
32	**REPORTING DATE TO BE CONFIRMED**								
33	Zero Tolerance Policy	SGC 22/04/24 - to instruct the Interim Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services to combine the three closely linked policies, procedures and approaches relating to Zero Tolerance, Violence and Aggression, and Unacceptable Actions into a single policy; with the exception of pupil behaviour in schools as this was governed by national policy and guidance; and report back to Committee for approval of the final policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
34	Employee Code of Conduct	To present an update on the Employee Code of Conduct		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
35	People development policy / guidance	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		

Page 12

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	9 September 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Corporate Health and Safety – April to July 2024
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/262
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Jenni Lawson
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 April to July 2024 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.

3.   **CURRENT SITUATION**

3.1   The appendix to the report contains a dashboard of the statistical information in relation to health and safety activities for the three-month reporting period April to July 2024. The statistical information also contains an analysis of the key figures in each of the incident and near miss sections.

3.1.1 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 (Apr – Jul 2024)

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.

3.3 Education and Lifelong Learning have created a Microsoft word form which permits any employee who has concerns regarding the non-reporting of incidents by their line manager to raise these with the Chief Officer.

3.4 Since its creation in May 2024 there has been one employee who has used the form. This report was from an employee from a school who has reported on the incident and near miss reporting system since its live date. The report was followed up by the Chief Officer with the employee and they are happy that the process has now been followed. The line manager was reminded of the need to report all incidents where the employee feels there is a health and safety element.

Incident information

3.5 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 reporting years through the Covid pandemic. The comparative figures for this year are in a separate chart due to the change of reporting system.

3.6 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.

3.7 Page five of the appendix details the breakdown of incident causation within the Education Service, where the largest number of incidents occur. Figures have increased both from the corresponding period last year and year on year.

3.5.1 Incident numbers have increased year on year. It is difficult to identify exact reasons for this but the majority of the increase is within Education.

3.5.2 Following the last Staff Governance Committee meeting the Chief Officer of Education and Lifelong Learning, the Corporate Health and Safety Lead and colleagues from all Trade Unions met to discuss the reporting of these incidents to this committee.

3.5.3 A project is already in place to provide an induction programme for head teachers and other members of senior leadership teams. This includes an e-learning module available to all staff on how to report incidents on the corporate system and the process to follow when an incident happens.

3.5.4 The module contains categories of causes, together with definitions, which were discussed and agreed by all members of the Education safeguarding group. The categories and definitions are as follows:

- **Externalising behaviour:** This refers to any behaviour that is directed outwardly, such as aggression, defiance, disruption, or vandalism. Externalising behaviour can be a sign of emotional distress, learning difficulties, or social problems.
- **Inappropriate communication/abuse**: This refers to any communication that is disrespectful, rude, offensive, or abusive, such as swearing, name-calling, bullying, or harassment.
- **Physical injury or violence:** This refers to any behaviour that causes or threatens to cause physical harm to oneself or others, such as hitting, kicking, biting, or throwing objects.
- **Threatened with a weapon:** This refers to any situation where a person is threatened with a weapon, such as a knife, gun, or other object that can cause injury or death.
- **Threatening behaviour:** This refers to any behaviour that intimidates, frightens, or coerces others, such as verbal threats, gestures, or body language.
- **Unacceptable behaviour:** This refers to any behaviour that does not meet the expectations and standards of the school, such as breaking rules, lying, cheating, or being disrespectful.

3.5.5 Many of the incidents are reported either as 'physical injury and violence' or 'externalising behaviour'. There can be no difference in the consequences of these incidents to the staff involved in the different categorisations. The choice on recording of every incident should be done following a consultation between the line manager and the affected member of staff.

3.5.6 None of this reduces the impact that such incidents can have on the staff supporting and teaching the children and senior managers understand that working with children who may exhibit dysregulated behaviours can be challenging at times for staff. However, the support provided by the staff plays a vital role in helping children learn to regulate their emotions and behaviours, and to cope with the demands and expectations of the school environment. By providing consistent, positive, and supportive guidance, staff can help the children understand the rules, boundaries, and consequences of their actions, and to develop skills such as self-control, problem-solving, and empathy. This

can lead to a medium to long term reduction in the level of incidents from an individual child, as they become more confident, cooperative, and resilient.

3.5.7   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 (April – July 2024)

3.6   The table in the Appendix also shows the number of RIDDOR reportable incidents. During the reporting period between April and July 2024 10 incidents involving an employee required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive. The vast majority of these continue to be for over 7-day absences.

3.7   The corporate health and safety team contact the reporting manager when a RIDDOR incident is reported to HSE to get assurance that the correct causation and remedial actions have been identified and that any identified remedial actions have been implemented.

Incident (reportable employee) frequency rates

Period – Quarterly	Reportable Incidence rate	Reporting period
Apr-Jul 2024	1.29	2023/24

3.8   The above figures are calculated using the formula:

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

3.9   The figure for the corresponding period last year (April to July 2023) was 8 RIDDOR reportable incidents and a reportable incident rate of 0.98.

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. The near miss figures have stabilised or reduced slightly year on year and from 2023's corresponding reporting period.

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.

Regulator interventions (HSE / SFRS)

3.15 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.

3.16 There were no HSE visits or interventions during this reporting period.

3.17 SFRS carried out no audit visits of any ACC (Aberdeen City Council) owned or managed buildings during this reporting period.

Fire risk assessments

3.18 Fire risk assessments are completed on a rolling 5-year programme. A total of 18 fire risk assessments were completed during this reporting period. The overall average compliance score was 85%. The issues identified are across the range of topics considered in the assessment process. These issues are given a priority level dependent on the resultant risk which requires an action by a specified date. No building is left at risk during this process.

3.19 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 ad taken to the relevant senior management team meeting to make Service Managers aware of the need to close these off.

Health and Safety Audits

3.20 Compliance visits have been undertaken on several topics / premises within the ACC estate. Topics included Management of Contractors (93%); Lone Working (96%); Security (100%); Line Managers Health & Safety Responsibilities (97%); Workplace Inspections (88%); Control of Substances

Hazardous to Health (COSHH) (75%); First Aid (88%); Waste & Refuse Operations (96%); Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Operations (100%) and Object Handling (100%).

3.20.1 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.

3.21 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 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.

3.22 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

3.23 There were no corporate procedures reviewed this quarter.

3.24 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) *Considering controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A		
Compliance	There is the risk that any injury or serious health and safety incident could result in focus from the Health and Safety Executive which could result in enforcement action in the form of notices or prosecution.	Corporate Procedures require all tasks to be risk assessed and the controls implemented and supervised by line managers. All employees are trained to a level where they are competent to carry out the work. Analysis of the causes of the incidents, near misses and work-related absences and resultant improvements to prevent, where possible, reoccurrences, can reduce the financial	L	**Yes**

| | | exposure to the Council.

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. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Operational** | The risk is that any health and safety incident can lead to an injury to an employee which could have the potential to temporarily or permanently affect either or both their employment and/or their life.

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 | The task has been risk assessed; employees are trained, competent and supervised then there should be less likelihood of incidents. | L | **Yes** | |

	budget due to the associated financial costs.			
Financial	The risk is that any incident has the potential to bring a reduction in the overall budget in place to provide service delivery.	As per compliance above	L	**Yes**
Reputational	Local and National press coverage of any incident can present reputational damage to the organisation.	Each Function should have a robust safety management system in place. There are many facets to this which are important starting from ensuring employees are trained and competent, every hazard is risk assessed and employees are up to carrying out investigation of near misses to ensure controls are reviewed to consider whether remedial actions are required.	L	**Yes**
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A	

8   OUTCOMES

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	A healthy and safe workplace assists the overarching principles of the stretch outcomes within the LOIP (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	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Vikki Cuthbert, Chief Officer Governance in October 2023.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10   BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/A

11   APPENDICES

11.1 Quarterly staff governance Health and safety dashboard April to July 2024

12   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Colin Leaver
Title	Corporate Health and Safety Lead
Email Address	cleaver@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	01224 045640

Date Last Refreshed:

23 July 2024

Staff Governance Health & Safety Report Quarter 1 2024/2025 (Apr 24 to Jun 24)

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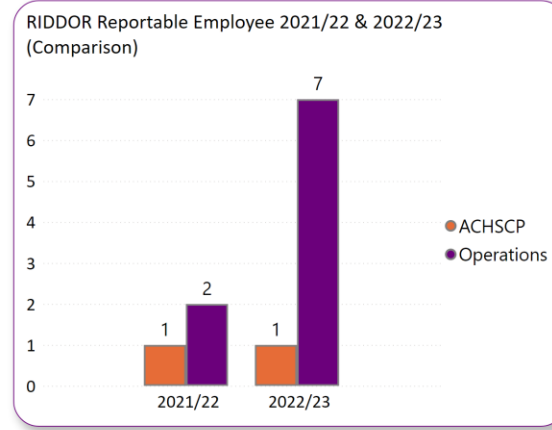
The following tables give breakdown of all employee incidents across all Functions and Clusters in Aberdeen City Council. The tables on the left initially show the number of incidents for each Cluster this reporting period with those tables on the right giving a quarter 1 comparison for each Function from 2021/22 to 2023/24 where applicable.

Page 25

RIDDOR Reportable Employee

Operations IC&FS	2
Resources O&PS	2

RIDDOR Reportable Employee 2021/22 & 2022/23 (Comparison)

Legend: ACHSCP, Operations

	2021/22	2022/23
ACHSCP	1	1
Operations	2	7

RIDDOR Reportable Employee 2023/24 (Comparison)

Legend: Operations, Resources

2023/2024	
Operations	1
Resources	3

Non RIDDOR Reportable Employee

Commissioning CG	1
Customer EI&CE	2
Fam & Comm Educ & Life Learn	30
Operations IC&FS	255
Resources O&PS	16

Non RIDDOR Reportable Employee 2021/22 & 2022/23 (Comparison)

Legend: ACHSCP, Commissioning, Customer, Operations

	2021/22	2022/23
ACHSCP	5	1
Commissioning	2	1
Customer		2
Operations	102	176

Non RIDDOR Reportable Employee 2023/24 (Comparison)

Legend: ACHSCP, Commissioning, Customer, Fam & Comm, Operations, Resources

2023/2024	
ACHSCP	4
Commissioning	1
Customer	2
Fam & Comm	11
Operations	157
Resources	26

Employee Incident Information

RIDDOR reportable incidents were down from 8 in 2022/23 to 4 this year. The number of incidents has increased with majority in externalising behaviour and physical injury or violence in Education. These categories are both related to the behaviour of pupils against employees and result in the same consequences or injury type but would be what should be chosen by the reporting manager after they have had a conversation with the affected employee.
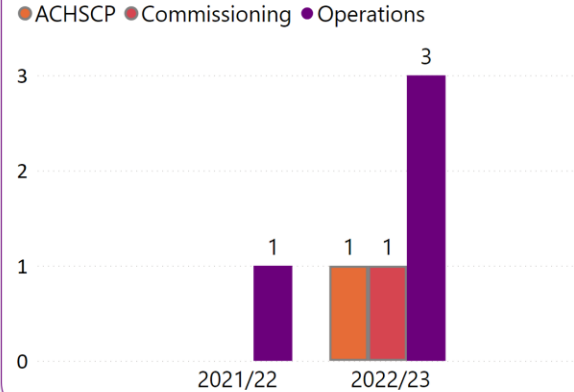
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Reported H&S Incidents (Third Party)
Between Apr to Jun 2024

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 tables on the right giving a quarter 1 comparison for each function from 2021/22 to 2023/24 where applicable.
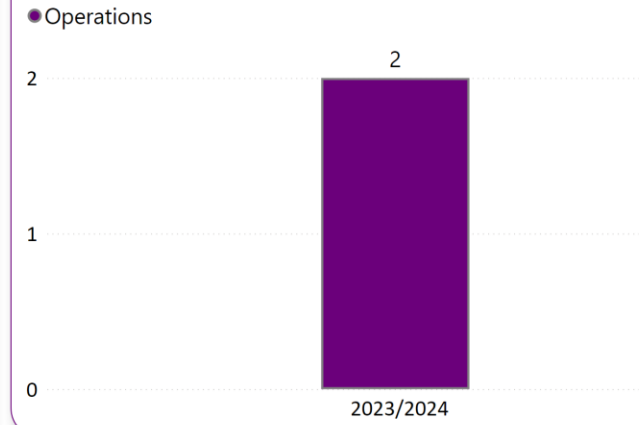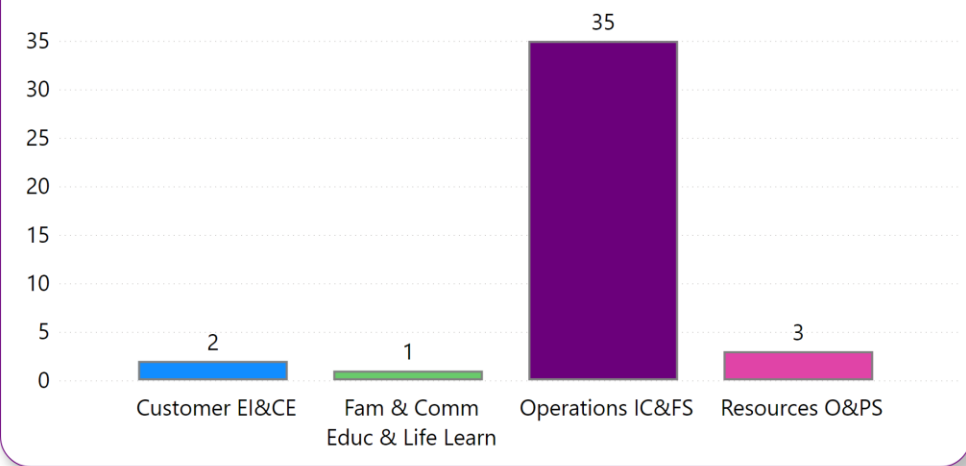
RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee
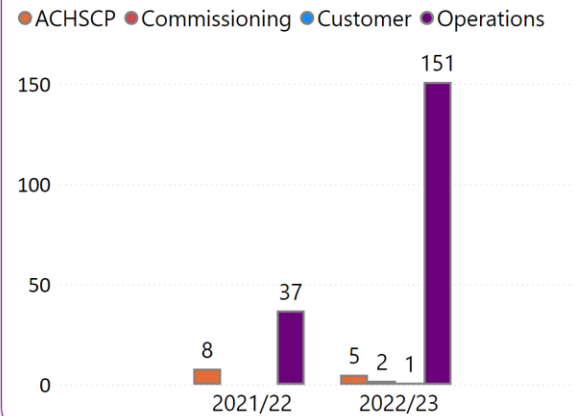
RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee 2021/22 & 2022/23 (Comparison)

● ACHSCP ● Commissioning ● Operations

	2021/22	2022/23
Operations	1	3
ACHSCP		1
Commissioning		1

RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee 2023/24 (Comparison)

● Operations

2023/2024: 2

Non RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee

Customer EI&CE	Fam & Comm Educ & Life Learn	Operations IC&FS	Resources O&PS
2	1	35	3

Non RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee 2021/22 & 2022/23 (Comparison)

● ACHSCP ● Commissioning ● Customer ● Operations

	2021/22	2022/23
ACHSCP	8	5
Operations	37	151
Customer		2
Commissioning		1

Non RIDDOR Reportable Non Employee 2023/24 (Comparison)

● ACHSCP ● Customer ● Fam & Comm ● Operations ● Resources

ACHSCP	Customer	Fam & Comm	Operations	Resources
1	1	6	38	3

2023/2024
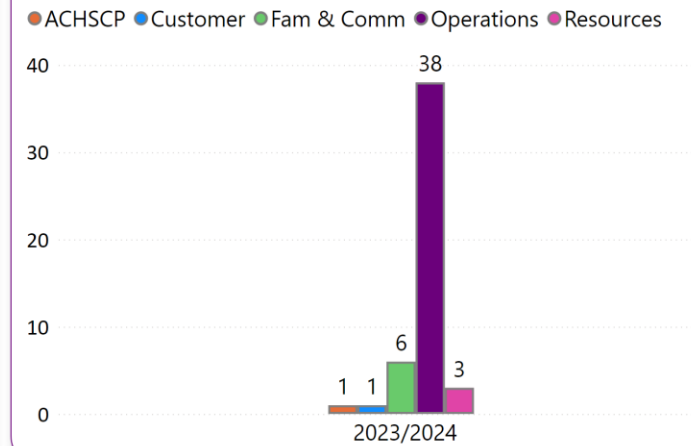
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The table shows incident causation for each Cluster for this reporting period apart from Families & Communities, which is covered in the next page.
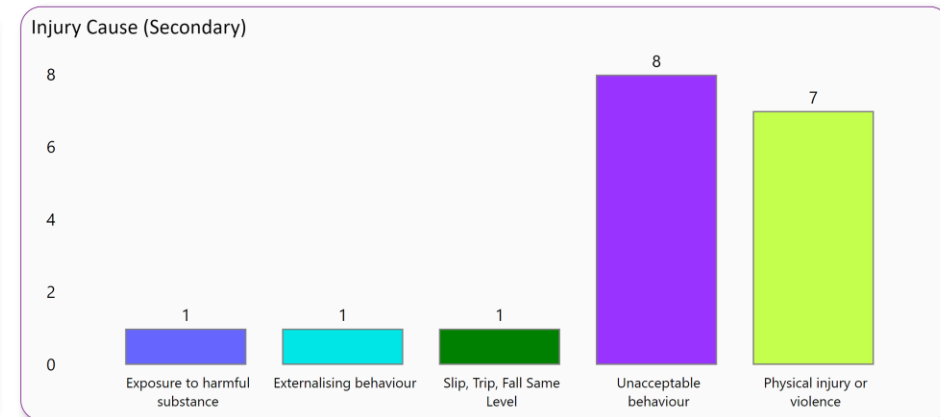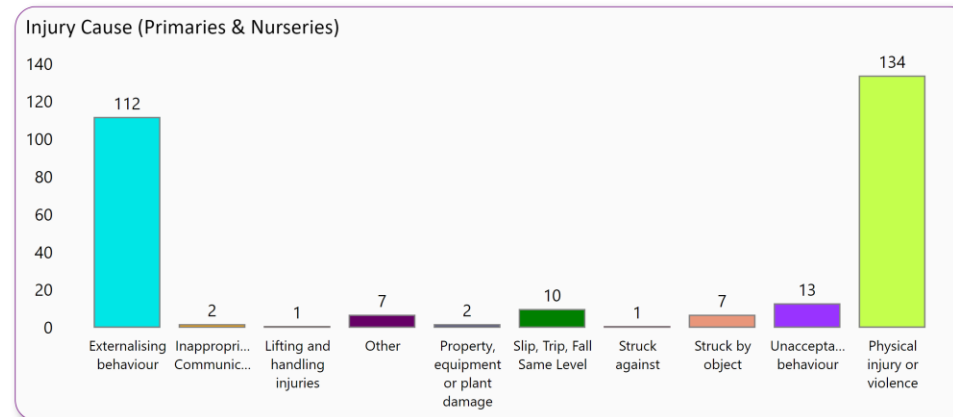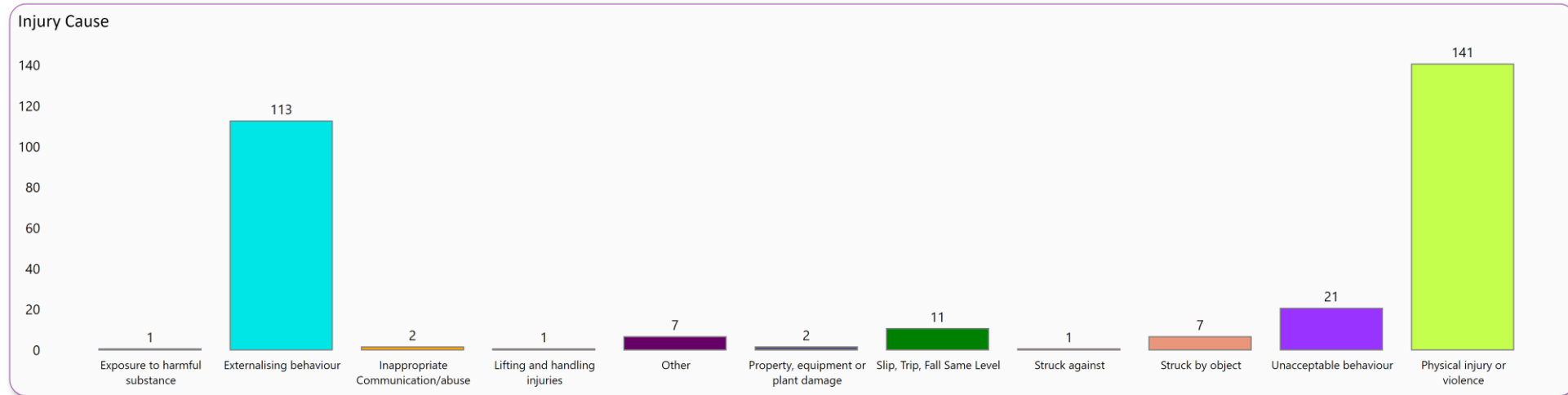
Injury Cause

Cause	Value
Fall from Height Resources O&PS	2
Injured by an animal Resources O&PS	1
Lifting and handling injuries Customer EI&CE	1
Lifting and handling injuries Resources O&PS	3
Other Resources O&PS	3
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level Commissioning CG	1
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level Resources O&PS	6
Struck by object Customer EI&CE	1
Struck by object Resources O&PS	4

Page 29
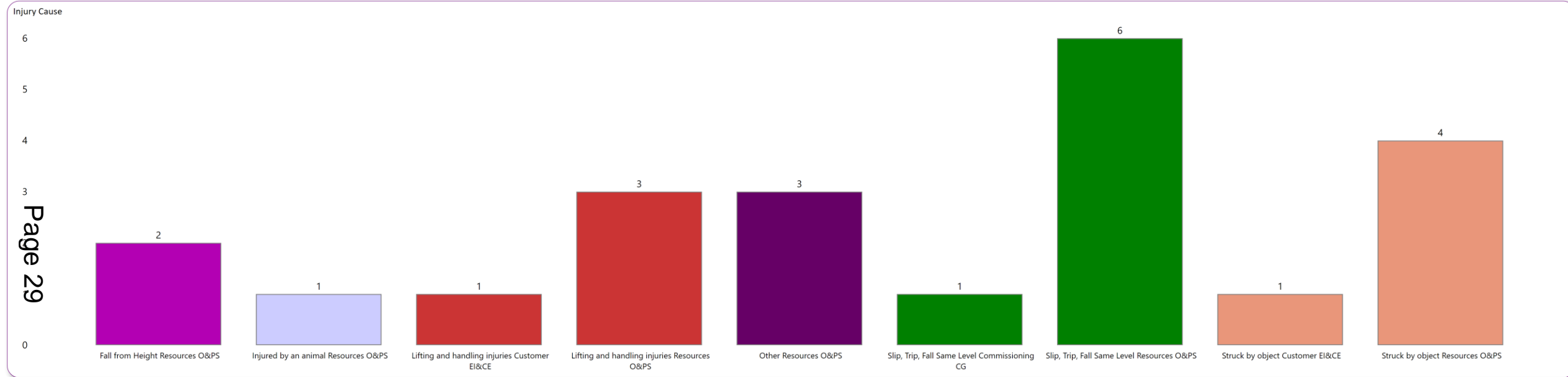
Injury Cause

Fall from Height	Injured by an animal	Lifting and handling injuries	Other	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck by object	Total
2	1	4	3	7	5	22

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The following tables give a breakdown of Families & Communities Incidents.
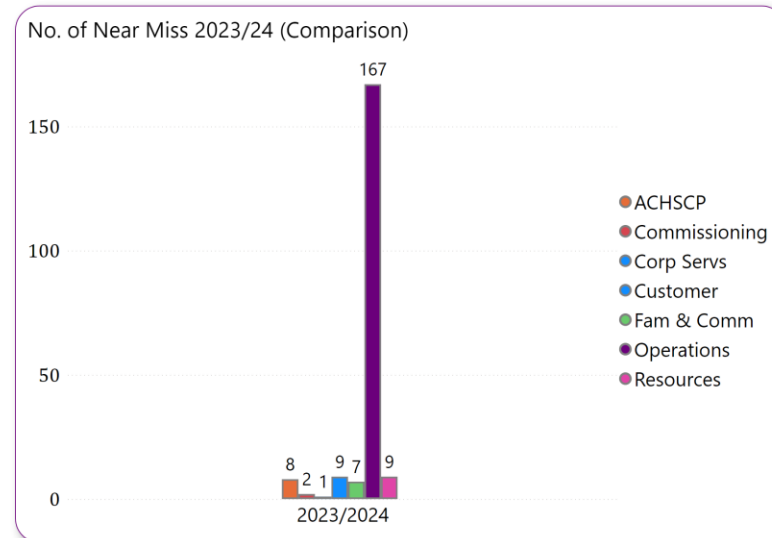
Injury Cause

	Exposure to harmful substance	Externalising behaviour	Inappropriate Communication/abuse	Lifting and handling injuries	Other	Property, equipment or plant damage	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck against	Struck by object	Unacceptable behaviour	Physical injury or violence
Value	1	113	2	1	7	2	11	1	7	21	141

Injury Cause (Primaries & Nurseries)

	Externalising behaviour	Inappropri... Communic...	Lifting and handling injuries	Other	Property, equipment or plant damage	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck against	Struck by object	Unaccepta... behaviour	Physical injury or violence
Value	112	2	1	7	2	10	1	7	13	134

Injury Cause (Secondary)

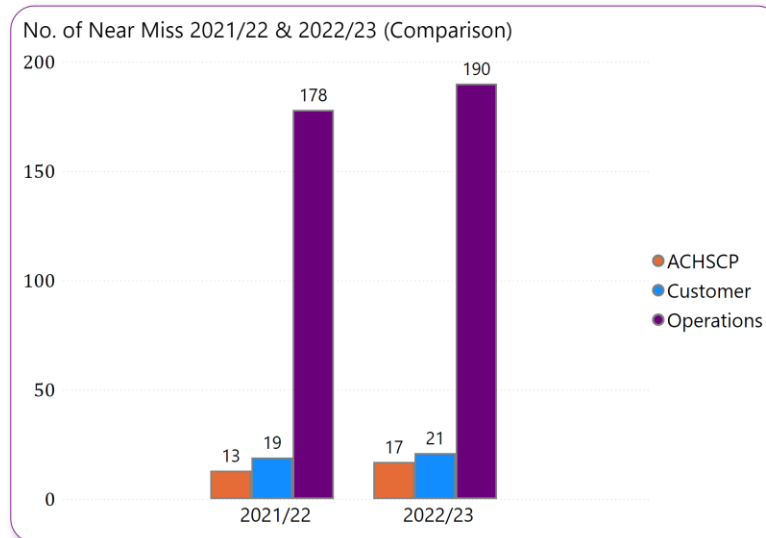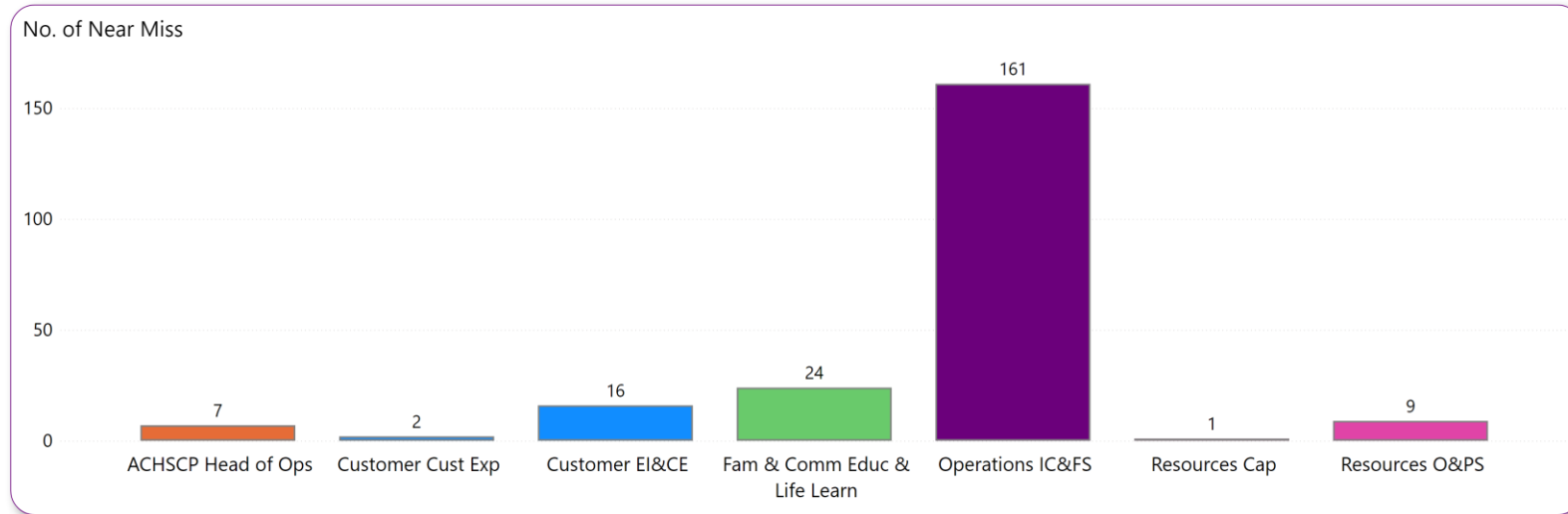|	Exposure to harmful substance	Externalising behaviour	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Unacceptable behaviour	Physical injury or violence
Value	1	1	1	8	7

Injury Cause

Exposure to harmful substance	Externalising behaviour	Inappropriate Communication/abuse	Lifting and handling injuries	Other	Physical injury or violence	Property, equipment or plant damage	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck against	Struck by object	Unacceptable behaviour	Total
1	113	2	1	7	141	2	11	1	7	21	307

Page 32

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Reported H&S Near Miss
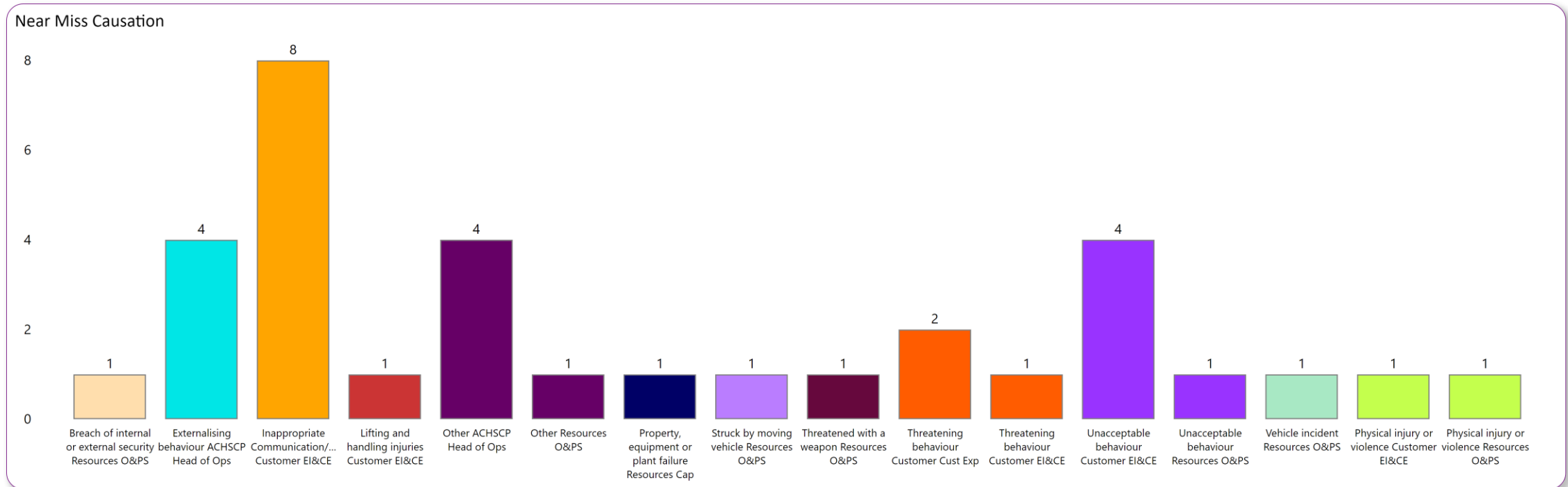## Between Apr to Jun 2024

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 tables: quarter 1 comparison of Near Misses for each Function from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

No. of Near Miss

Bar chart "No. of Near Miss":
- ACHSCP Head of Ops: 7
- Customer Cust Exp: 2
- Customer EI&CE: 16
- Fam & Comm Educ & Life Learn: 24
- Operations IC&FS: 161
- Resources Cap: 1
- Resources O&PS: 9

No. of Near Miss 2021/22 & 2022/23 (Comparison)

Bar chart:
- 2021/22: ACHSCP 13, Customer 19, Operations 178
- 2022/23: ACHSCP 17, Customer 21, Operations 190

Legend: ACHSCP, Customer, Operations

No. of Near Miss 2023/24 (Comparison)

Bar chart 2023/2024:
- ACHSCP 8
- Commissioning 2
- Corp Servs 1
- Customer 9
- Fam & Comm 7
- Operations 167
- Resources 9

Legend: ACHSCP, Commissioning, Corp Servs, Customer, Fam & Comm, Operations, Resources

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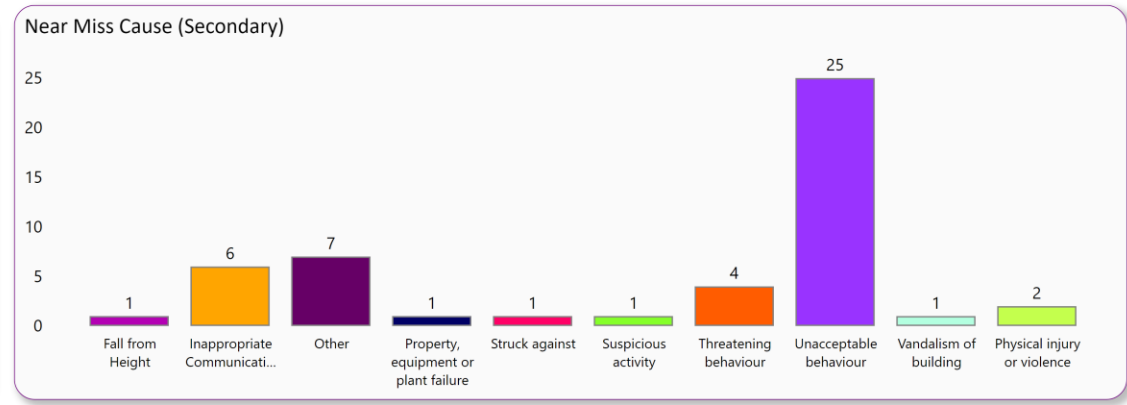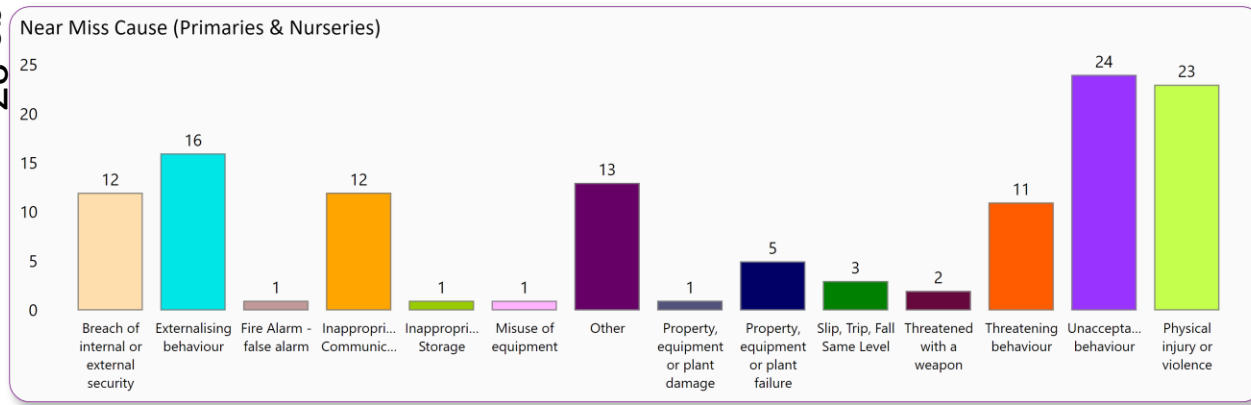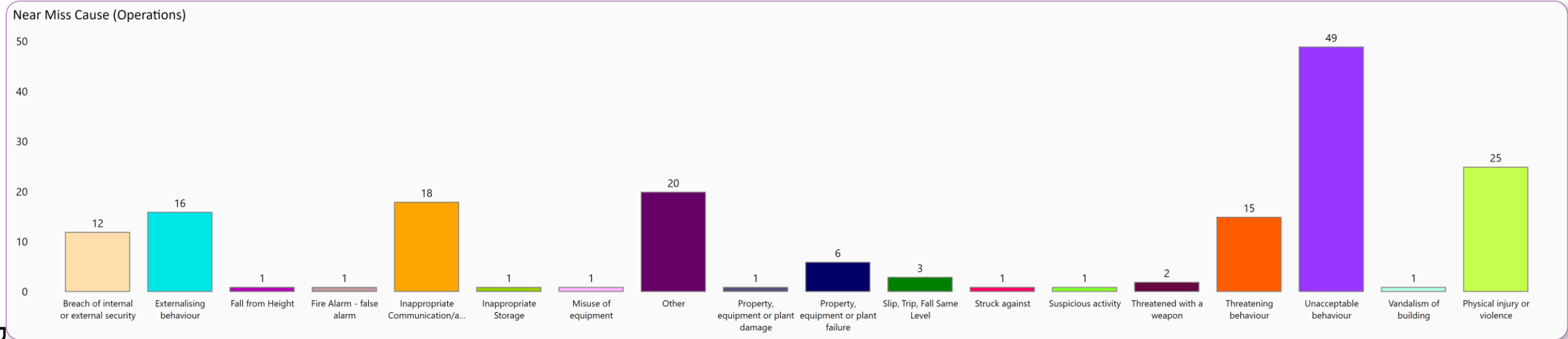
Near Miss Causation

	Breach of internal or external security	Externalising behaviour	Inappropriate Communication/abuse	Lifting and handling injuries	Other	Physical injury or violence	Property, equipment or plant failure	Struck by moving vehicle	Threatened with a weapon	Threatening behaviour	Unacceptable behaviour	Vehicle incident	Total
Near Miss Cause	1	4	8	1	5	2	1	1	1	3	5	1	33

Near Miss

The number of near misses is slightly down on the previous years. The largest number are again in Education involving pupil behaviours under the categories of unacceptable behaviour, externalising behaviour and physical violence ot injury. The choice should agin be made following a discussion between the reporting manager and the affected employee.

Page 36

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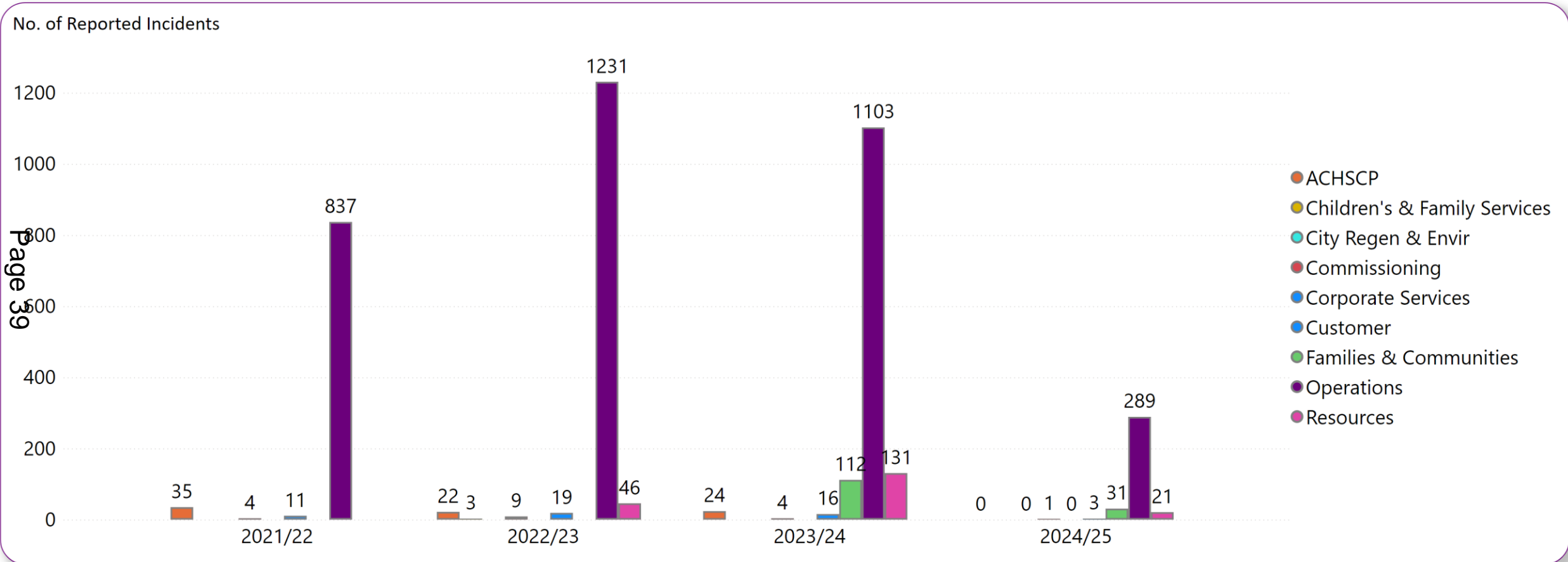The following tables give a breakdown of Families & Communities Near Miss.

Near Miss Cause (Operations)

Cause	Value
Breach of internal or external security	12
Externalising behaviour	16
Fall from Height	1
Fire Alarm - false alarm	1
Inappropriate Communication/a...	18
Inappropriate Storage	1
Misuse of equipment	1
Other	20
Property, equipment or plant damage	1
Property, equipment or plant failure	6
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	3
Struck against	1
Suspicious activity	1
Threatened with a weapon	2
Threatening behaviour	15
Unacceptable behaviour	49
Vandalism of building	1
Physical injury or violence	25

Near Miss Cause (Primaries & Nurseries)

Cause	Value
Breach of internal or external security	12
Externalising behaviour	16
Fire Alarm - false alarm	1
Inappropri... Communic...	12
Inappropri... Storage	1
Misuse of equipment	1
Other	13
Property, equipment or plant damage	1
Property, equipment or plant failure	5
Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	3
Threatened with a weapon	2
Threatening behaviour	11
Unaccepta... behaviour	24
Physical injury or violence	23

Near Miss Cause (Secondary)

Cause	Value
Fall from Height	1
Inappropriate Communicati...	6
Other	7
Property, equipment or plant failure	1
Struck against	1
Suspicious activity	1
Threatening behaviour	4
Unacceptable behaviour	25
Vandalism of building	1
Physical injury or violence	2

	Near Miss Cause																	
Breach of internal or external security	Externalising behaviour	Fall from Height	Fire Alarm - false alarm	Inappropriate Communication/abuse	Inappropriate Storage	Misuse of equipment	Other	Physical injury or violence	Property, equipment or plant damage	Property, equipment or plant failure	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck against	Suspicious activity	Threatened with a weapon	Threatening behaviour	Unacceptable behaviour	Vandalism of building	Total
12	16	1	1	18	1	1	20	25	1	6	3	1	1	2	15	49	1	174

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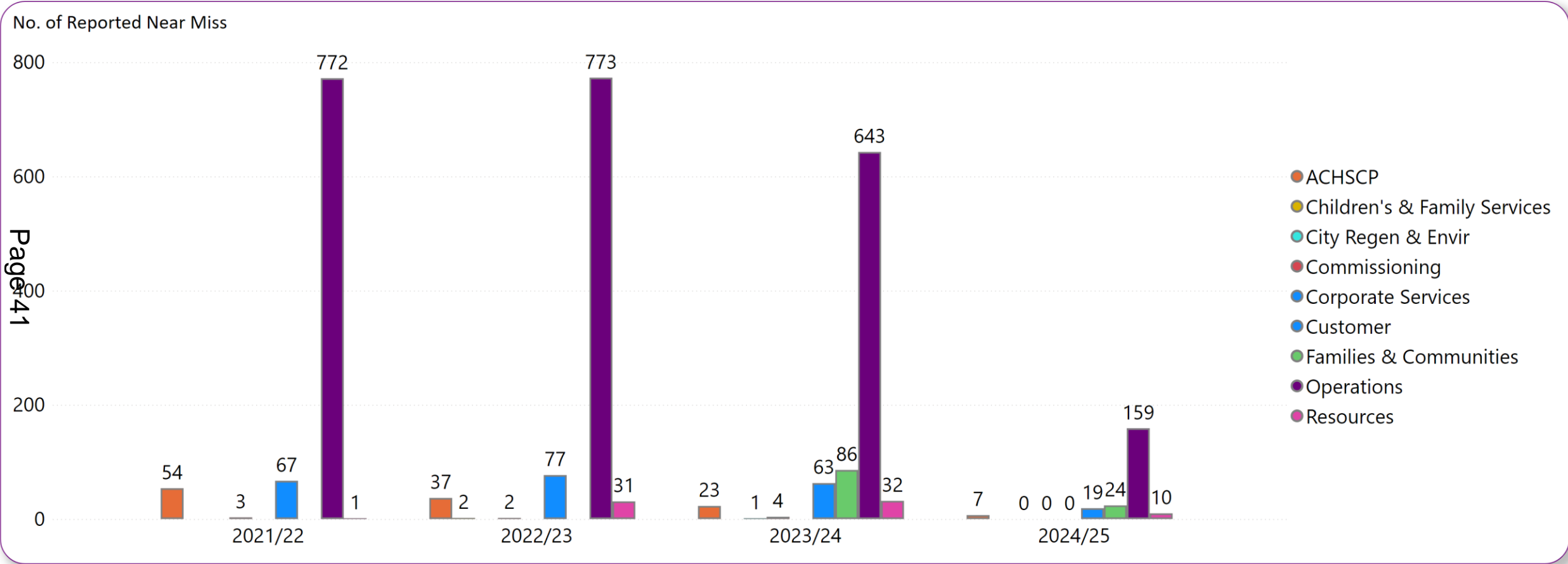
Page 38

Reported Incidents
From 2021/22 to 2024/25 (as at Qtr 1)

The table provides information on the **total number** of incidents for the last four reporting years to Function level.

No. of Reported Incidents

Legend:
- ACHSCP
- Children's & Family Services
- City Regen & Envir
- Commissioning
- Corporate Services
- Customer
- Families & Communities
- Operations
- Resources

2021/22: 35, 4, 11, 837

2022/23: 22, 3, 9, 19, 1231, 46

2023/24: 24, 4, 16, 112, 1103, 131

2024/25: 0, 0, 1, 0, 3, 31, 289, 21

Page 40

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Reported Near Miss
From 2021/22 to 2024/25 (as at Qtr 1)

The table provides information on the **total number** of near miss for the last four reporting years to Function level.

No. of Reported Near Miss

Legend:
- ACHSCP
- Children's & Family Services
- City Regen & Envir
- Commissioning
- Corporate Services
- Customer
- Families & Communities
- Operations
- Resources

2021/22: 54, 3, 67, 772, 1
2022/23: 37, 2, 2, 77, 773, 31
2023/24: 23, 1, 4, 63, 86, 643, 32
2024/25: 7, 0, 0, 0, 19, 24, 159, 10

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	9 September 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Internal Communications and Employee Engagement Platforms – analysis
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/261
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandie Scott and Paula Fullerton
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.4

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. This report follows on from a report to Staff Governance Committee in January 2024 (CUS/24/023), where it was agreed that a further report would be brought to Committee to provide an analysis of the performance of our current digital methods of Internal Communications – with activity data to show employees accessing SharePoint and 'Open Forum' (Viva Engage), taking into consideration the recent public consultations which had also been promoted to staff .

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

2.1. Notes the performance of internal communications and employee engagement.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1. The Aberdeen City Council intranet was first launched, alongside Viva Engage (then called Yammer) in late 2019. Prior to this we held employee communications in multiple locations and communicated through multiple platforms. These included: email cascades, The Zone, People Anytime on WordPress, The Transformation Zone on WordPress and a Chief Executive's blog on WordPress. Our collaboration with Microsoft gave us the opportunity to consolidate these platforms within the Microsoft universe.

3.2. Our vision for internal communications and employee engagement has been developed with a strong focus on culture bringing in our guiding principles - Purpose, Pride, Team, Trust and Value to provide a strong frame work and set of tools for all employees.

3.3. Reaching such a diverse audience across a range of locations, work patterns and needs has its challenges. To address the need and challenges for communication, engagement and support during organisational change, we have developed an approach which is inclusive and engaging for employees in all our job families. This approach, approved by the Committee in January 2023, as part of the Workforce Delivery Plan to support Target Operating Model (TOM) 1.2, is our ACC Approach to Change Management which provides practical resources under seven key areas for leaders of changes to implement.
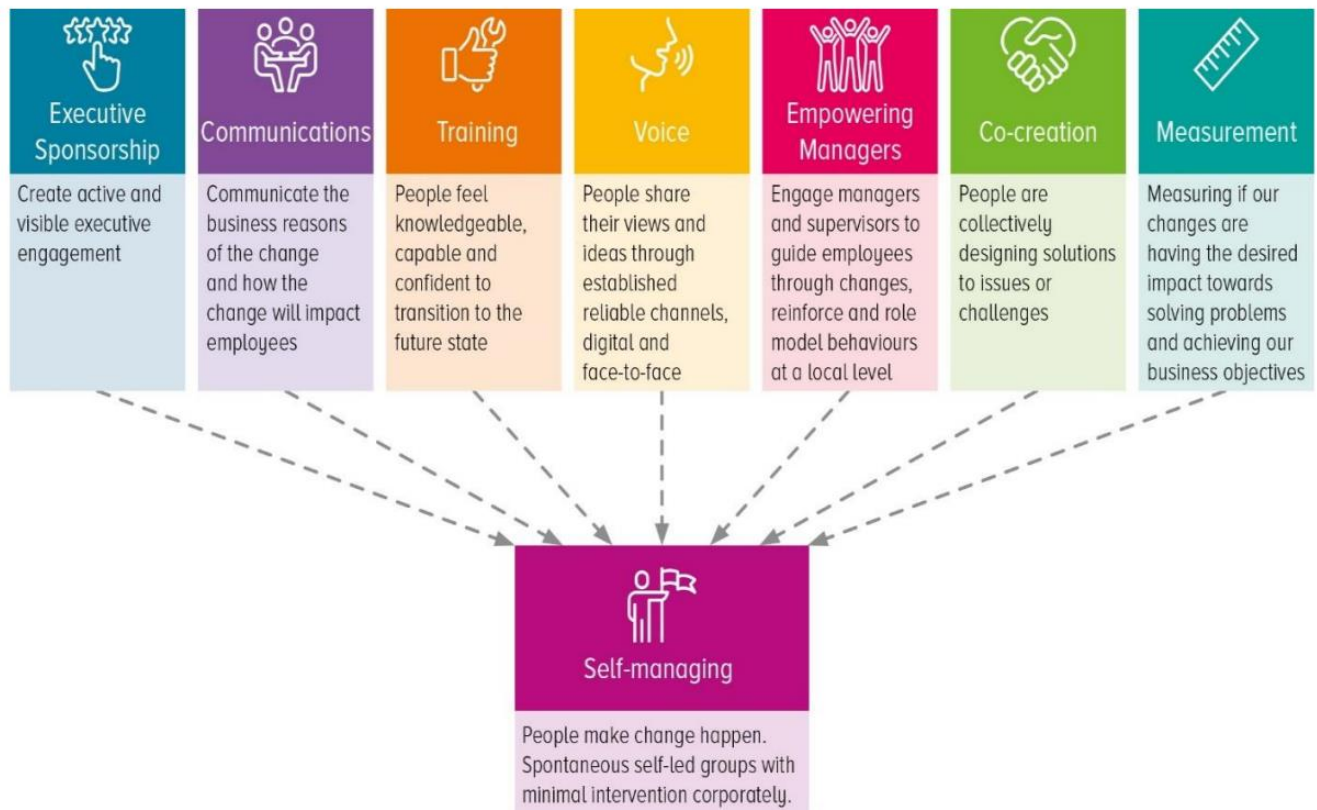
Figure 1: ACC Approach to Change

3.4. The report in January 2024 provided a detailed description of our approach to Internal Communications, with information about the technical, style and content of the all employee intranet.

3.5. The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of the performance of our SharePoint based intranet and Viva Engage, an open chat forum.

Platform Performance Analysis

3.6. **SharePoint Intranet:** our internal communication hub consists of a number of SharePoint sub sites which collectively make up the Intranet. These include:
- Intranet Home – corporate messages, news, Chief Executive's blog
- People Anytime - pay, annual leave, employee relations, policies
- Digital Workplace – digital news and transformation

- [Green Workplace](#) – climate change and net zero
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion hub](#) – equalities and inclusion

Please note the above links are only available for those accessing through an Aberdeen City Council networked device.

3.6.1 Usage figures for the past 90 days (the maximum we are able to view through SharePoint analytics) show us that traffic levels are reasonably consistent throughout the day but with highs in the early morning. Over the last 12 weeks SharePoint highlights Tuesday 8am has the highest traffic – as seen in the graphic below.
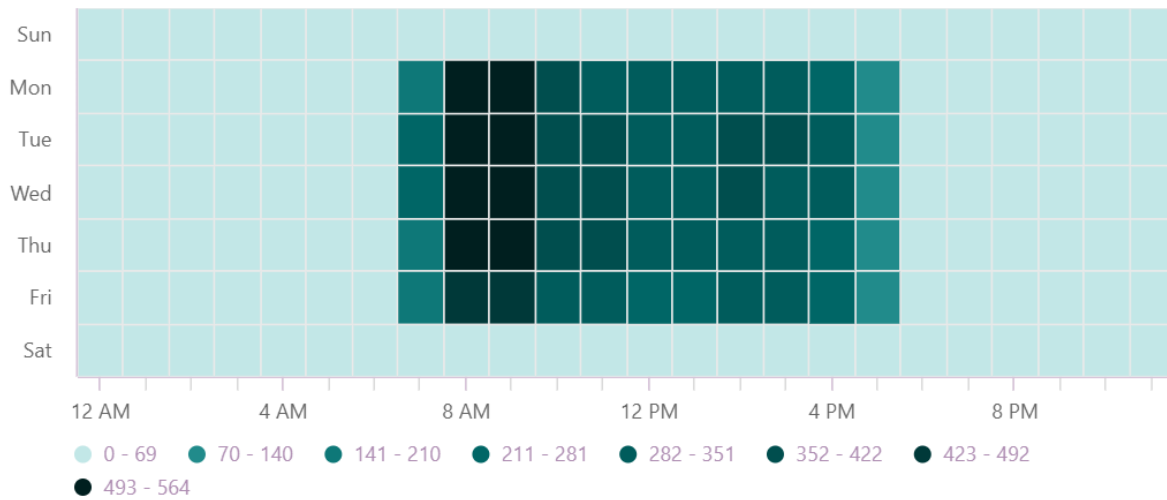
Figure 2: Intranet Hub Site usage analytics

3.6.2 This pattern is repeated on each of the subsites with a slight exception on People Anytime. As indicated on the graphic below People Anytime sees the highest traffic on Monday 9am with peaks also seen Monday 2pm and Friday 9am.
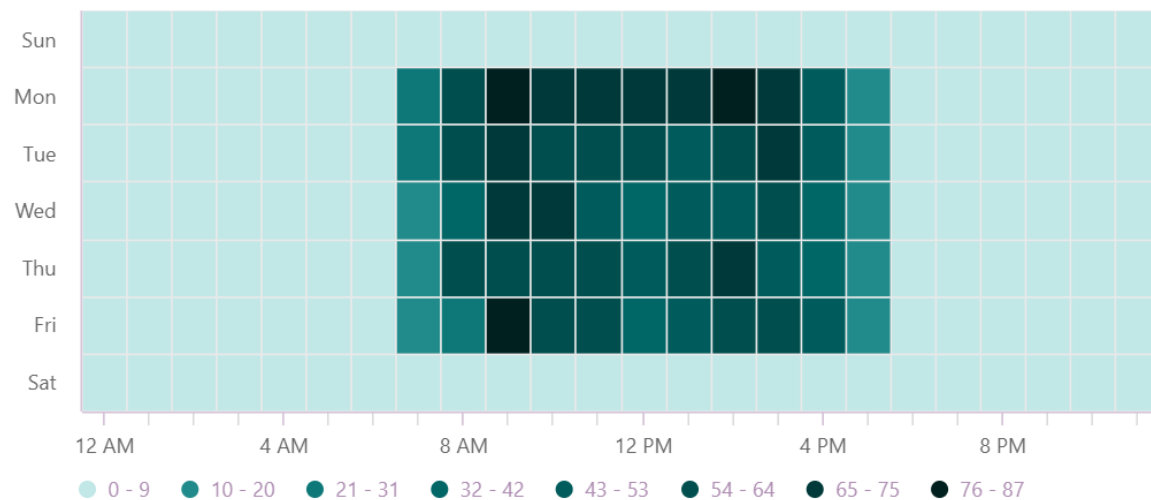
Figure 3: PeopleAnytime analytics

3.6.3 **Popular Pages and Content**: SharePoint analytics is currently limited in the data it provides: overall site visits can be viewed by 7, 30 and 90 days – but no further back. The top ten most popular pages is only available for the last 7 days. As such it is difficult to accurately monitor the popularity of pages over a longer period of time.

3.6.4 The following table has been generated manually by looking at individual page view figures - see Figure 4 below for an example of how this appears. The table pulls out the most recent posts with views above 300 for the past month and also highlights those with high numbers from the first 6 months of 2024 (January to June).

PeopleAnytime
Occupational Health
Changes to Occupational Health provider (July 2024) Our Occupational Health provider will...
EmployeeRelations December 1, 2023
1879 views

Figure 4: to show total number of views a page has received over its lifetime

Page title	Author	Views	Published	Site
July 2024				
Supporting Colleagues after Traumatic Events	Fiona Lindsay	506	25 July	People Anytime
Chief Officer Blog: Equality and Diversity	Isla Newcombe	395	19 July	ED&I hub
Aspiring Leaders programme is open for applications	Sandie Scott	714	12 July	People Anytime
Director Blog: Julie Wood appointment as Chief Officer- City Development and Regeneration	Gale Beattie	551	12 July	Intranet
Festival of the Sea	Suzie Watt	603	11 July	Intranet
Marischal College and Town House Fire Alarm – out of hours	Andy Campbell	945	9 July	Intranet
Chief Exec Blog: General Election Thanks	Angela Scott	366	5 July	Intranet
Chief Exec Blog: Scottish Prison Service early release	Angela Scott	402	4 July	Intranet
Switch off for Summer	Sara Cameron	375	3 July	Green Workplace
Christmas Carvery at the Beach Ballroom	Robert Dean	422	3 July	Intranet
Postal Vote update	Internal Comms	330	2 July	Intranet
January to June 2024				
Marischal College Littlejohn Street staff entrance	Lee Taylor	1141	13 June	Intranet
General Election - Pre election period	Alan Thomson	987	28 May	Intranet
Service vulnerability - restart Google Chrome	Lita Greenwell	853	25 April	Intranet

Page title	Author	Views	Published	Site
Continuous Review & Development (CR&D) end of year review	People Development	820	24 April	People Anytime
Your email signature	Internal comms	1984	19 April	Intranet
Grampian Pride 2024	Kirsty George	850	18 April	ED&I hub
Changes to Flexible Working	Employee Relations	1209	1 April	People Anytime
Director Blog: Appointment of Chief Officer Governance	Andy MacDonald	1208	27 March	Intranet
Chief Exec Blog: Organisational redesign – new structure update	**Angela Scott**	**2125**	**22 March**	**Intranet**
Budget 2024/25 – year ahead part one	Internal comms	1237	18 March	Intranet
New Printing Contract	Jodie Forbes	835	6 March	Digital workplace
Please read: Scam email to city council staff 'from Angela'	Lita Greenwell	1269	16 February	Digital Workplace
CR&D Update	People Development	1080	9 February	People Anytime
Chief Exec Blog: proposed changes to structure approved	**Angela Scott**	**1992**	**7 February**	**Intranet**
Proposed new structure - report now live	**Lindsay MacInnes**	**2080**	**1 February**	**Intranet**
Weather waring issued - 15-18 Jan	Internal Comms	851	15 January	Intranet
Flexi period 2024	**Julie Esson**	**2954**	**9 January**	**People Anytime**

3.6.5 It is clear from the statistics above that pages relating to any impacts on how we work, such as restructures, new ways of working; tools to help how we work – flexi cards, email signatures, CR&D; and messages around cyber security have all received high viewing figures over the past 6 months.   As highlighted posts and details on our new structure or changes to the way we work have had particularly high traffic.

3.6.6 Additional engagement with the pages: Alongside page view, colleagues can also engage with pages through comment and likes. As with social media a 'Like' is a kind of engagement with the readers and appears as a thumbs up on the bottom of each page. Authors are notified when a page receives a like or a comment. Readers are more likely to like or comment on good news posts such as new appointments or award wins.

3.6.7 There is no centralised way to monitor likes and comments through SharePoint analytics, this must be checked manually. An example of a recent page with both can be found at - Director Blog: Julie Wood appointed Chief Officer - City Development and Regeneration (sharepoint.com)
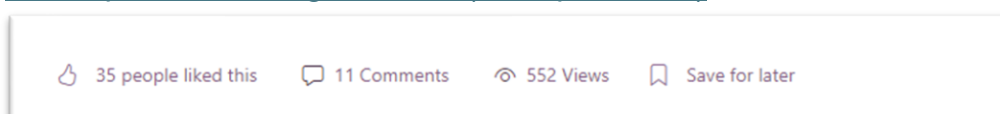

Figure 5 to show how employee interactions with pages are recorded.

3.6.8   When publishing a page, there is also the ability to turn off the comment function. This is used for any proposals where it is useful to consolidate and focus the conversation via Viva Engage or, as in the example of the 35-hour working week, through an online survey.

3.6.9   **WordPress Intranet:** In addition to our SharePoint intranet sites, which are only accessible for those accessing through an Aberdeen City Council networked device, we have a WordPress-based microsite for People Anytime. This site is available to everyone without requiring an ACC log-in and provides essential employee information like staff policies, annual leave, and payroll, making it easy for all employees, including frontline workers, to access these resources. Although site traffic is low, the analysis from the past 28 days shows the following:

WordPress page	Page views
Home Page	1155
CoreHR	310
Opportunities Hub	267
Salary Information	244
Home page / Archives	240
CoreHR - New to CoreHR - Accessing Your Digital Payslip	188
Pay	170
Managing Vacancies	135
Long Service Award Scheme	106
Recruitment, Talent and Opportunities	101
CoreHR - Guides	53
Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing	47
ACC Learn - Online Learning	41*
Flexible Working	37
Increase or Decrease in Contracted Hours	36
Leave	36
Special Leave	36
About Travel & Subsistence Claims	31
Travel and Subsistence	30
All Forms	27
re.cr.uit	23
Voluntary Severance/Early Retirement (VS/ER)	22
Managing Performance	22
Payroll Deadlines and Claim Forms	21
Flexible Retirement Scheme	20

This figure relates to views of the ACC Learn WordPress information page not logins to the ACC Learn training portal. Specific /visitor figures to the ACC Learn portal are not available in this format, however we can say that so far in 2024 - 6,432 users have logged into the system at least once.

3.7 Viva Engage Analysis

3.7.1 Viva Engage is a Microsoft programme that allows interactive communication between the council and employees, functioning similarly to X (formerly Twitter). As a two-way communication platform, it helps promote a culture of engagement and wellbeing among the workforce.

3.7.2 The significant advantage of this communication method over email is that it also reaches all frontline employees who have opted to use their own device and install the Viva Engage app. The 'All Company' community consists of our entire workforce and has 8,790 members, providing us with an effective and direct means of cascading corporate communication with all employees. When an important organisation-wide message is required we can send an announcement on All Company which will 'ping' the email inbox for all staff, or in the app for mobile users. We now use this method rather than an all staff email. Some examples of recent announcements include:
- 19 July- recent Microsoft global outage announcement – seen by 3349 staff
- 6 June – Nominations for Star Awards extension – seen by 3391 staff

3.7.3 Our open forum community 'Ask a Colleague' allows any member of staff to ask questions and for colleagues to provide an answer. Questions asked range from questions around contacts within the council to queries around current projects. An example is shown below:
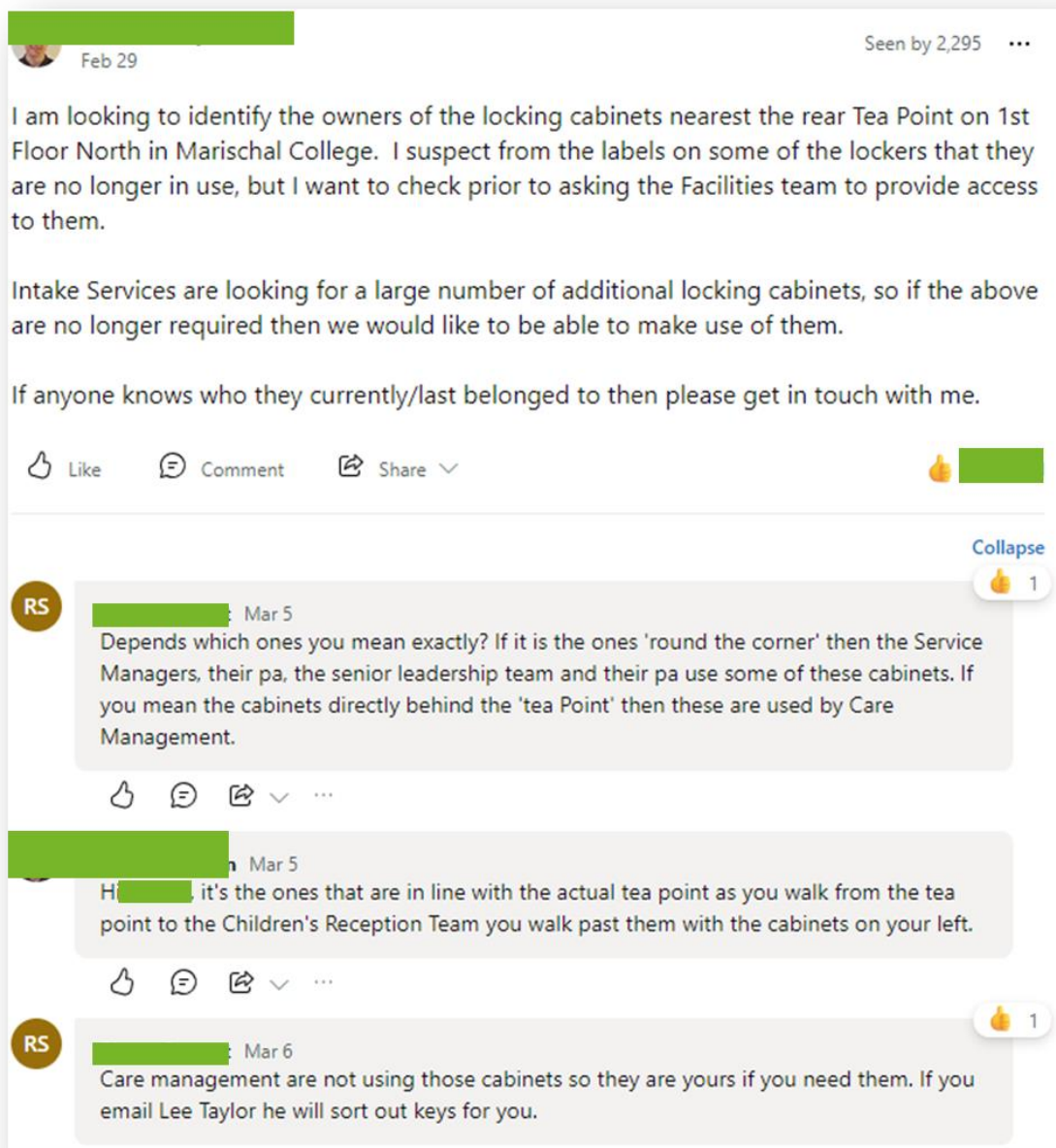
Figure 6 to show colleagues helping each other via Viva Engage

3.7.4 We also use Viva Engage to circulate activity around and encourage sign up to recent surveys and encourage suggestions for transformation projects. By creating various communities within Viva Engage we can cater to specific groups of employees who can choose the groups they are interested in.

3.7.5 Analysis of some of our current communities from the past 28 days (5 July to 2 August 2024) include:

Communities	Members	Posted messages	Read messages	Reacted to messages
All Company	8,790	3	30.63K	14
People Anytime	164	5	4.86K	1

Employee benefits	383	0	264	0
Digital Workplace	207	0	49	0
Classifieds	454	14	7.34K	5
Green Workplace	214	5	3.8K	8
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	116	17	4.09K	21
Mental health and wellbeing	821	9	10.62K	22
Ask a colleague	247	26	23.47K	35
Latest opportunities	352	1	2.68K	1
Menopause – employee peer support	64	1	415	9
Craft lovers	44	0	15	0

Members – people who have chosen to follow the page and therefore get updates on all posts. All staff can see all posts from all communities without having to be a member.

Read messages – total count of views on posts from members and non-members. This count is not unique as a user can revisit a thread and be registered as a view again.

Reacted to messages – staff who have liked or commented on a post. Unlike social media, where likes are often used to express interest, viva engage users may not always feel the need to acknowledge a post that they have read and found useful. The culture of viva engage is to read the information, not always acknowledge it.

3.8 External Communication

3.8.1 While this report is about intranet communications it cannot be fully divorced from external factors. Any stories issued by the council or our partners which could have an impact on staff are shared on our platforms where appropriate. In addition, where we anticipate something is likely to 'hit the press' and impact staff, we have an internal comms cascade to prevent the sense of hearing about it in the press first. Recent examples of when we have worked closely with external communications can be seen around the 2023/24 budget consultation. This includes sharing on the Intranet, Viva Exchange and with Service Managers on Teams for onward sharing. An example can be seen below:

Paula Fullerton
Jun 30, 2023

Seen by 4,952   •••

Aberdeen City Council has launched a landmark public consultation that will help shape thee 2024/25 Budget and future spending plans. - Budget consultation launched by Council (sharepoint.com)

The results will be shared with all Elected Members to help them decide how to allocate funds for running services and set council tax and fees and charges, whilst ensuring the council continues to meet its many statutory duties.

Phase 1 will run until the end of July and invites all citizens of Aberdeen, including our employees, to identify what they think should be the council's spending priorities for the financial year 24/25.

As employees of Aberdeen City Council your vote is just as important and we invite you to submit your own votes on the budget simulator.

The results of Phase 1 will be reported to Full Council in August as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. This will set out the estimated position for the years 2024/25 to 2027/28 and be the basis for Phase 2 of the consultation, which will be held in autumn.

Phase 2 will provide the chance to explore detailed options for producing a balanced budget, including finding necessary savings against an annual spend of more than £560 million. As part of Phase 2 employees will once again be invited to take part in the consultation exercise. More details on Phase 2 will be published in due course.

In the meantime full instructions on how to use the simulator and the consultation, including FAQs, can be found on the Aberdeen City Council website.

Key city stakeholders and organisations are also being contacted to take part and feedback from both consultation phases which will inform the Budget setting early next year.

Budget consultation launched by Council

Aberdeen City Council has launched a landmark public consultation that will help shape the 2024/25 Budget and future spending plans. The results will be shared with all Elected Members to help them decide how to allocate funds

Figure 7 to show external news being reported internally

3.9 Further developments plans

3.9.1 Upcoming advancements in SharePoint analysis include a new SharePoint Page Diagnostics tool which provides page performance details like page loading time and mobile viewing experience and offers suggestions for improvement.

3.9.2 It is known that the intranet does not open by default in all laptops and that it does not open by default when you open a new tab. This is believed to be an issue with Microsoft Edge and a solution is being investigated by Digital and Technology.

3.9.3 SharePoint can only be accessed when logged into the council network on a council device. Whist this offers increased security it also means information cannot be accessed when not at work.

3.9.4 Microsoft Licensing agreements mean that some frontline staff cannot currently access SharePoint. This means we have a requirement to duplicate some staff information in our old intranet site – People Anytime on WordPress. This requires a duplication of work. Digital and Technology are investigating a solution. In the meantime we rely on Teams channels for liaison with frontline managers to make sure key messages are reaching out.*

3.9.5 The new version of the chatbot AB1 is not currently available as a plugin for the Intranet. If this were available it would give us some intelligence around the type of questions being asked by staff and allow us to tailor content accordingly.

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   None

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   The approach to internal communications and employee engagement outlined in this report assists the Council fulfil its statutory duties to inform and consult with its employees.

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

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement **Working in Partnership for Aberdeen**	Valuing our Staff • 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. These proposals take forward the enabling strategies and transformation programme articulated within the TOM 1.2, and form part of the next steps for delivery of the outcomes and commitments.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Our approach to Internal Communications and Employee Engagement supports all stretch outcomes through providing a platform and methodology for the communication and engagement with the workforce on the LOIP.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	As above.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	As above.

9.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	It is confirmed by Chief Officer Isla Newcombe, that no integrated impact assessment is required for this report. This report does however link to the existing draft IIA of Organisational Redesign
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.

10.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1   Workforce Delivery Plan
10.2   Job Families and the Capability Framework
10.3   Workforce Plan Progress Update
10.4   The Four Enablers - Engage for Success
10.5   The Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAtSD) - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

11.   APPENDICES

None

12.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	9 September 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Policies for People Update
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/259
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Sharon Robb
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5, 2.7

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report follows on from a report to Staff Governance Committee in June 2023 (CUS/23/186), where it was agreed that a report would be brought to Committee on an annual basis on the application of the Managing Discipline, Managing Grievances and Dignity and Respect at Work policies.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee:-

2.1 Notes the updated data provided regarding the usage and application of the policies; and

2.2 Notes the improvement actions planned to improve progress on timescales for employee relations casework across the organisation within a joint action plan.
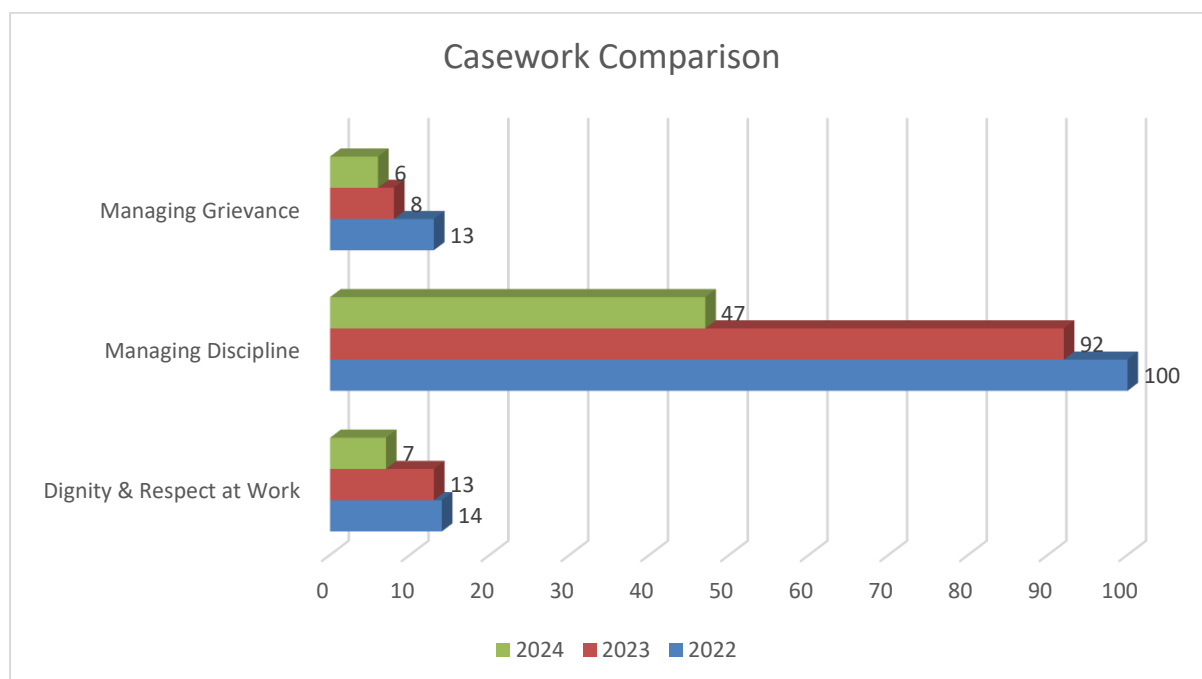
3. **CURRENT SITUATION**

<u>Background</u>

3.1 The revised Managing Discipline Policy was approved by Committee on 7 June 2021, with the revised Managing Grievances and the Dignity and Respect at Work Policies approved by Committee on 28 September 2021.

3.2 The key aims of the policies are to:

1   Increase the use of informal methods of resolution and seek to deal with issues at the lowest level to avoid unnecessary escalation to the hearing stage of policies and

2   To introduce a single investigation process which applies to all 3 policies.

3.3   An [annual update] on the application of these policies was presented at the Staff Governance Committee on 26 June 2023.

Data

3.4   For the purposes of comparison, the data for 2022 from the previous annual update has been included. This has been compared against the period January 2023 to December 2023 and January 2024 to June 2024.

3.5   The graph below shows a breakdown of the type of cases progressed in 2023 and the first half of 2024. For clarity, the 2034/24 data includes only cases which were opened in that period.

Casework Comparison

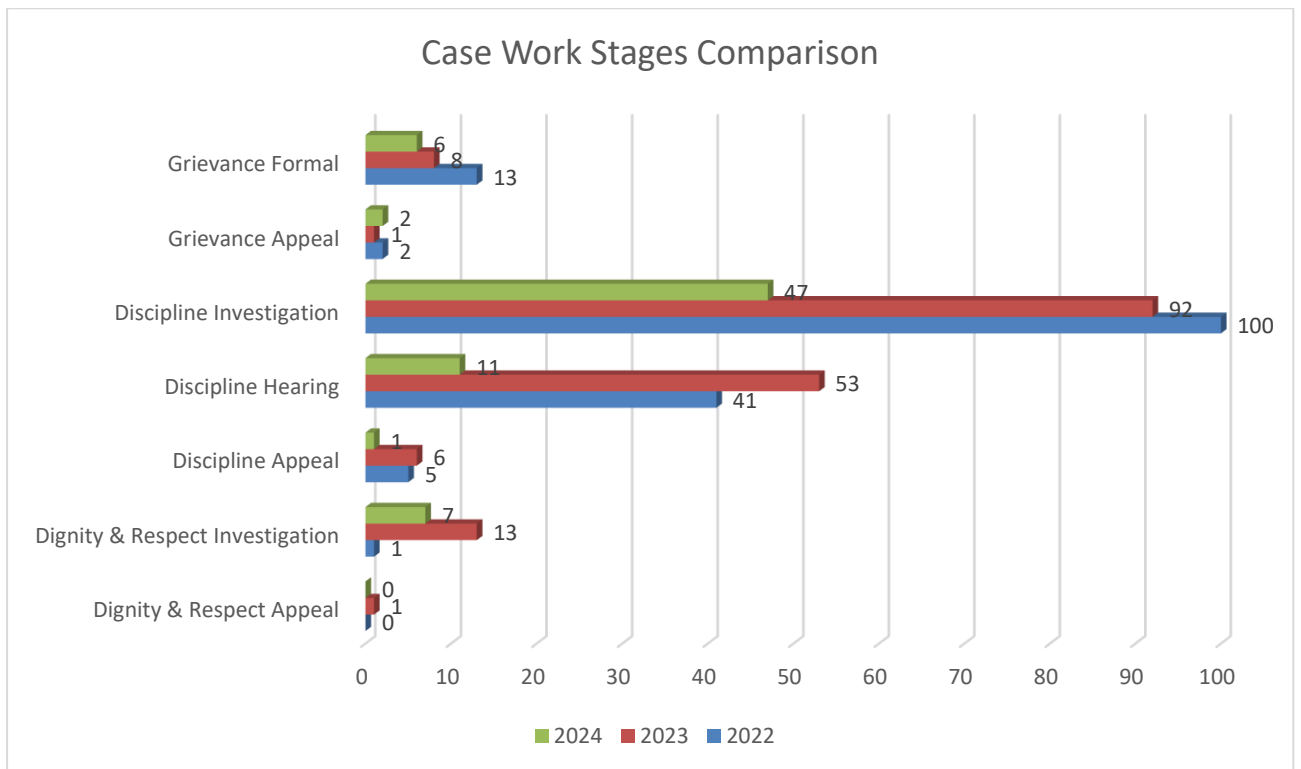| Case type	2024	2023	2022
Managing Grievance	6	8	13
Managing Discipline	47	92	100
Dignity & Respect at Work	7	13	14

3.6   There is a degree of consistency in the numbers of cases opened in 2023 and 2024 when compared to 2022. For Managing Discipline cases, there was an improvement in the number of new cases, with a small decrease from 100 in 2022 to 92 cases in 2023. The 2024 data shows that up to June 2024, there are 47 new cases opened. The full year figures will be reported to Committee next year.
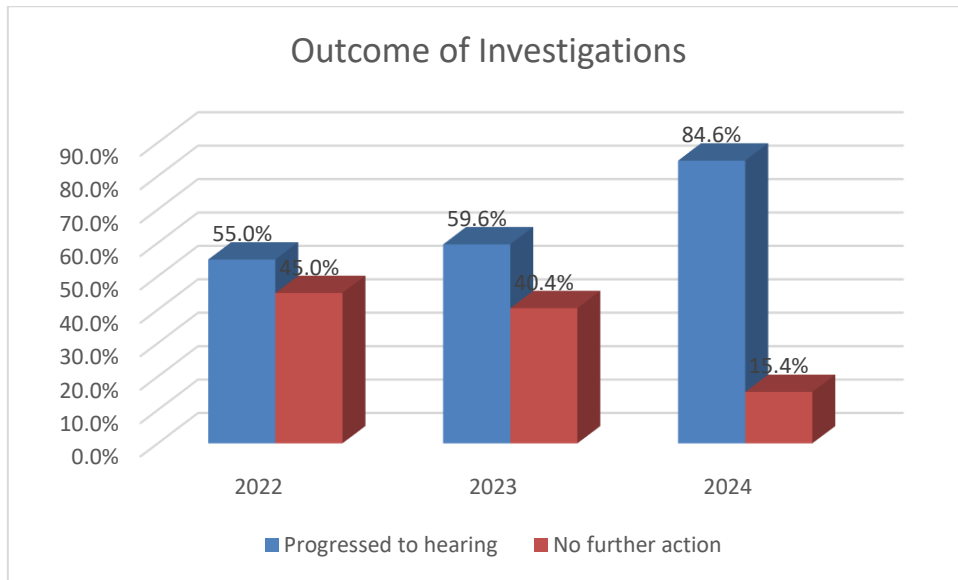
3.7   For Managing Grievance, this again has shown an improvement with a decrease in the number of cases from 13 in 2022 to 8 in 2023. The 2024 data shows that up to June 2024, there are 6 new cases opened.

3.8   For Dignity and Respect cases, this again has shown an improvement with a small decrease in the number of cases from 14 in 2022 to 13 cases in 2023. The 2024 data shows that up to June 2024, 7 new cases were opened.

3.9   The graph below shows a breakdown of the stages within each case type. As above, the 2034/24 data includes only cases which were opened in that period (and therefore some cases may not yet have concluded).

Case Work Stages Comparison

Stage	2024	2023	2022
Grievance Formal	6	8	13
Grievance Appeal	2	1	2
Discipline Investigation	47	92	100
Discipline Hearing	11	53	41
Discipline Appeal	1	6	5
Dignity & Respect Investigation	7	13	1
Dignity & Respect Appeal	0	1	0

Legend: ■ 2024 ■ 2023 ■ 2022

3.10   The number of formal grievances is the same as the number of overall grievance cases as informal grievances are not routinely recorded centrally by the employee relations team; these are often dealt with by management directly. There are only very small numbers of grievances appealed so it is difficult to make any significant comparison between years.

3.11   Whilst there was an increase in the number of disciplinary hearings from 2022 to 2023, the number of hearings in 2024 (to date) appears to show a decrease (whilst noting that not all disciplinary cases started in 2024 will have concluded). There is a small increase in the number of appeals from 2022 to 2023 and to date, 1 appeal in 2024 (whilst again noting that not all cases will have concluded).

3.12   The most notable change between 2022 and 2023 is for investigations under the Dignity and Respect at Work policy, which has increased from 1 to 13. It should also be noted that there was a corresponding decrease in disciplinary investigations. These changes may be attributed to a change in how investigations are recorded. Prior to 2023 both Disciplinary and Dignity and Respect at Work investigations were recorded as generic "investigations" which meant it was not possible to accurately differentiate Dignity and Respect at Work investigations from Disciplinary investigations reported for 2022. These are now recorded separately to allow more accurate reporting. There was 1 Dignity and Respect at Work appeal in 2023.

3.13   The chart below shows that in 2022, 55% of formal investigations progressed to a disciplinary hearing. In 2023, 59.6% of investigations progressed to a disciplinary hearing. In 2024 to date, 84.6% of investigations (although noting that not all will have concluded) have progressed to a disciplinary hearing.

Outcome of Investigations

Chart showing "Outcome of Investigations" with bars for "Progressed to hearing" (blue) and "No further action" (red):

- 2022: Progressed to hearing 55.0%, No further action 45.0%
- 2023: Progressed to hearing 59.6%, No further action 40.4%
- 2024: Progressed to hearing 84.6%, No further action 15.4%

3.14 The data shows that, whilst timescales for the stages of the procedures are a matter of guidance rather than policy, the organisation's average timescales is not currently aligned with the timescales currently set out in the guidance, as detailed in the table below:

Policy Stage	Days in Guidance	Average Days 2023*	Average Days 2024 (to date)*
Disciplinary Investigation	28 *(20 working days)*	85	47
Disciplinary Hearing	14 *(10 working days)*	32	26
Disciplinary Appeal	14/84** *(10/60 working days)*	56	-
Grievance Hearing	14 *(10 working days)*	54	38
Grievance Appeal	14 *(10 working days)*	41	76

* Please note that the timescales are calculated using only stages that have been completed and will not include any which are still ongoing. Therefore these figures may change in subsequent reports.
***Appeal Committee timescales are 12 weeks or 84 working days*

3.15 Whilst each case is individual and has unique challenges, the most common reasons for delays were as follows:
- Sickness absence/annual leave during the process (either employee, trade union representative, People & OD Adviser, Investigating Officer or Disciplinary Hearing Chair; or a combination)
- School holiday periods during investigations for school based employees
- Availability/capacity of investigating officer or disciplinary hearing chair
- Complexity of some cases, such as those involving police investigations.
- Hearing/appeal date being varied by mutual consent

3.16 It is also important to note that the length of each stage is measured as it's time to conclusion. The timescales outlined in the guidance for hearings and

appeals relate to when the case should be heard by (i.e. the original hearing date). In many cases there may be adjournments to seek further information, to consider all the information presented or may take several meetings to hear the entirety of a case. Furthermore the case is not considered concluded until an outcome letter has been issued and the guidance allows a further 5 working days for this to be issued following the case being heard.

3.17   Appeals to the Appeals Sub Committee by necessity have a longer lead in time than officer appeals and in line with the Appeals Sub Committee procedure, these are heard within 12 weeks of a letter of appeal being submitted.

3.18   The table below shows a further breakdown of the timescales for the investigation and disciplinary hearings in 2022 by number of days taken to complete:
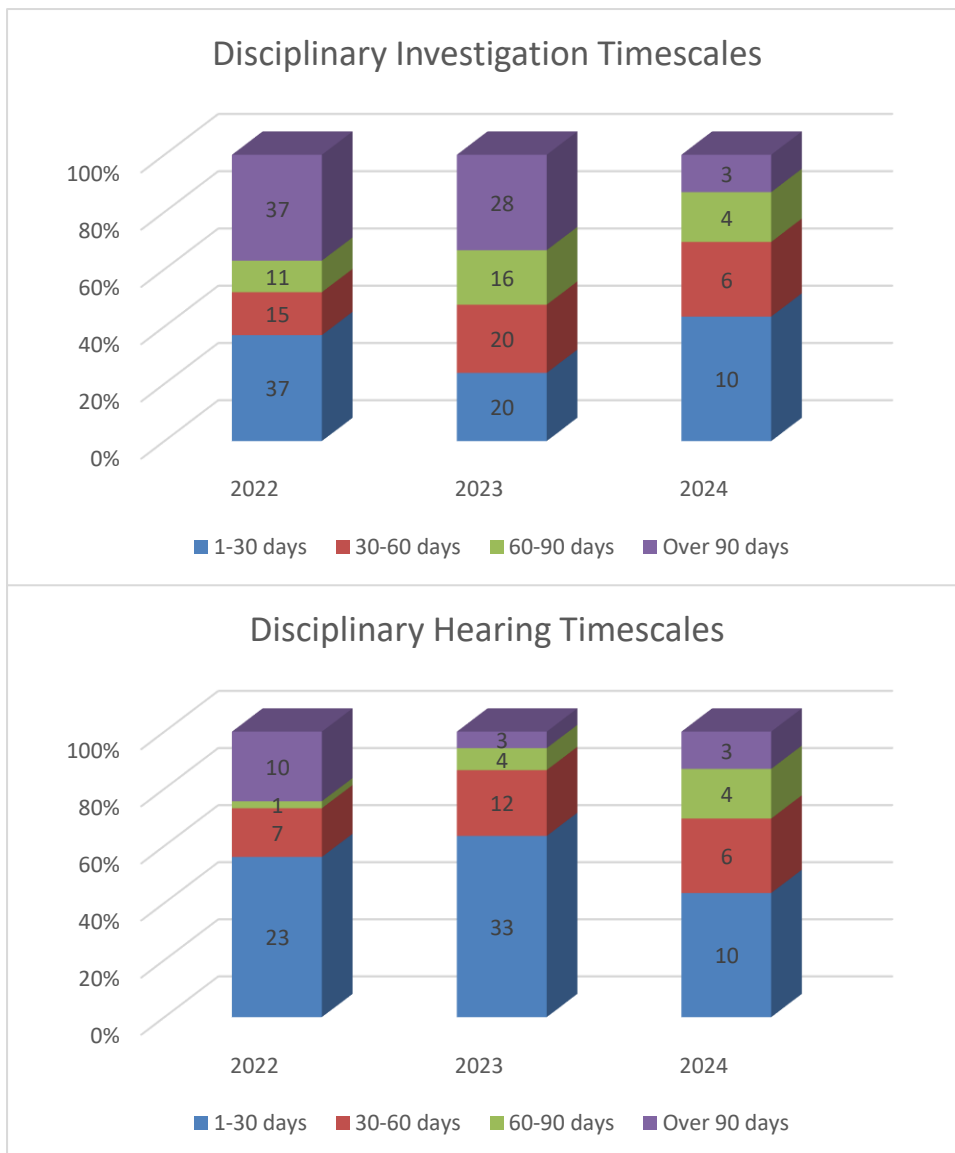
3.19   Whilst the average timescales for completion of disciplinary investigations has risen in 2023, it is also important to note that there has also been a corresponding reduction in the number of investigations over 100 days when compared to 2022. However, this is still significantly higher than the timescales set out in the guidance. There have also been some improvements in the average timescales for completion of Disciplinary Hearings and again, a drop in the number of cases over 100 days.

3.20   There will always be some cases which will exceed the length of time set out within the guidance for a number of reasons, as explained above, however the data shows that this is still an area where there is need for improvement and this has also been highlighted by Trade Union colleagues, emphasising the impact on employees' wellbeing when cases are protracted.

Planned Actions for Improvement

3.21   In order to address some of the issues with timescales within our people processes and concerns raised by our trade union colleagues, an improvement action plan has been developed jointly, with trade union colleagues, and with feedback from managers, chief officers and investigating officers.

3.22   The table below sets out initial actions included within the plan, and these will be continuously reviewed with input from trade union colleagues to ensure progress.

Proposed Action	Why this is important?	Timescale
Communication & Engagement		
Engagement with chief officers to support them to emphasise to their managers about the importance of adherence to people policies and guidance.	The application of these policies within ACC is the responsibility of Chief Officers and feedback from Trade Unions is that visibility and involvement, where appropriate, of Chief Officers for cases in their respective areas could be improved. Feedback from Investigating Officers and Chairs also suggests that operational work is a barrier in terms of meeting timescales and support from Chief Officers in managing priorities would be of benefit.	1 month
Run a feedback session with Investigating Officers/ Hearing Chairs	To gain their input into how the policies are working in practice, understand any barriers and to improve the process	2 months
Training and Development		
Review Investigations Training	Currently training is online and procedural in nature; feedback from investigating officers (IOs) suggests that this does not always sufficiently equip them to undertake	3-6 months

	investigations. A face to face course will be developed and implemented with a focus on improving the timescales whilst ensuring robustness around cases. It is hoped that this will also increase the pool of sufficiently trained IOs and allow cases to be allocated more quickly.	
Review training provision on People Policies for all managers	Review the current training provision for managers on people management and include the importance of considering resolution at informal stage where this is possible and undertaking 'preliminary investigations or fact finding', with the aim of reducing the number of formal cases across the organisation.	3-6 months
Develop training/briefing for Disciplinary Hearing Chairs	Especially useful for managers new to the Disciplinary Hearing Chair role. Training purpose to increase confidence and expertise, as well as a focus on ensuring robustness around cases. Will also hopefully help reduce delays in arranging hearings as will place an emphasis on the need to improve timescales on case completion.	3-6 months
Policy/Practice		
Review and consider options around the current model for allocating Investigating Officers to cases	Feedback from People & OD Advisors and managers indicates delays in the current process for allocating Investigating Officers. Consideration of alternative models may allow some delays to be avoided/reduced.	3-6 months
Review guidance around current timescales	The data within this report indicates that it is not always achievable to meet the timescales. By reviewing the timescales and associated guidance, this will ensure timescales are realistic and also provide clarity on actions that should be taken where achieving these is not possible.	3-6 months
Investigating Officers		
Trial the use of an Investigating Officer role	One alternative Investigating Officer model is to establish a dedicated 'Investigating Officer' role as a test of change. The remit would be solely to undertake investigations with the intention of increasing organisational capacity to complete investigations in accordance with our set timescales. A benchmarking exercise has shown that this has been trialled within	6 months

	other organisations with successful outcomes.	

Digital Reporting		
Review current methods of recording casework information	Reviewing our existing casework register will help ensure data is accurate and up to date for the purposes of tracking cases and reporting.	3 months
Increase visibility of case work data for Chief Officers / Service Managers	Greater visibility of data allows for early intervention in cases, particularly where timescales are identified as exceeding those in the guidance.	12 months
Case Management system	Initial work to scope and implement an alternative case management system, in partnership with Digital & Technology is already underway, which will provide improvements in recording, reporting and overall case flow for all those involved in the management of people processes.	12 months

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   Dealing with disciplinary and grievance issues as promptly as possible and without unreasonable delay contributes to a fair procedure for employment law purposes.

6.   ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1   There are no direct 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	No significant risks identified			**Yes**

Page 64

Compliance	Non-compliance with our policies presents a legal risk of successful tribunal claims.	Functions acting on utilisation, trend and root cause information to develop and implement controls to ensure policy compliance. Provision of robust training in understanding/ applying corporate policies. Provision of specialist support / advice.	M	**Yes**
Operational	Risk to service delivery and standards if staff performance is impacted by ongoing/protracted casework	Provision of information, instruction and training as identified in Job Profiles, skills and training matrices. Open and clear two-way communication at all levels within the organisation.	M	**Yes**
Financial	If corporate policies are not complied with, then the organisation may incur both direct (as a result of tribunal claims) and indirect (due to loss of productivity) costs	Functions acting on utilisation, trend and root cause information to develop and implement controls to ensure policy compliance. Provision of robust training in understanding/ applying corporate policies. Provision of specialist support / advice.	M	**Yes**
Reputational	If corporate policies are not consistently and fairly applied, there is a risk of the organisation	Provision of information, instruction and training as identified in Job Profiles, skills and training	L	**Yes**

	not being seen as an employer of choice and having recruitment and retention issues	matrices. Open and clear two-way communication at all levels within the organisation.		
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified			**Yes**

8. OUTCOMES

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The Prosperous Economy theme in the LOIP makes mention of the importance of retaining talent and expertise in City organisations. This would include the Council. Ensuring that people policies are in place and applied appropriately and consistently should assist with employee relations in the organisation and with the retention of trained and valued employees. This would mean that they can continue in post and contribute to delivering effective services to citizens and businesses, indirectly contributing to the City's economy.
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. Ensuring that people policies are in place and applied appropriately and consistently should assist with employee relations in the organisation, ensuring that conduct issues are efficiently addressed and that employees are supported when undergoing the procedure. This should indirectly assist with employee mental health and wellbeing allowing them to function both in employment and at home.
Regional and City Strategies	This report links directly with the Council's Workforce Delivery Plan - setting up our council in a way that supports our aspirations • Policy review principles are in place that embed early intervention and prevention • Industrial relations are based on positive working relationships with our recognized Trade Unions and have mutual respect at their core

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer People & Citizen Services on 29/8/24.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	Not required

10.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1   [Policies for People Update – CUS/23/186](#)

11.   APPENDICES

11.1   N/A

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