

# Public Document Pack



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

Trade Union Advisers: Doug Haywood and Jacqueline Munro (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, 6 June 2025

## **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

The Members of the **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Committee Room 2 - Town House on MONDAY, 16 JUNE 2025 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>

ALAN THOMSON  
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

## **B U S I N E S S**

### **NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS**

1.1 There are no items at this time

### **DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS**

2.1 There are no items of exempt business

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS**

3.1 Members are requested to declare any interests

## **DEPUTATIONS**

4.1 None at this time

## **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

5.1 Minute of Previous Meeting of 21 April 2025 - for approval (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

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

9.1 Corporate Health and Safety - January to March 2025 - CORS/25/146  
(Pages 13 - 34)

9.2 Citizen Interaction Policy - CORS/25/156 (Pages 35 - 62)

9.3 Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update -  
CORS/25/149 (Pages 63 - 86)

9.4 Cluster Risk Register and Assurance Map - CORS/25/147 (Pages 87 - 94)

Website Address: [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Service updates for this Committee can be viewed here:- [Staff Governance Committee service updates](#)

Integrated Impact Assessments can be viewed here:- [Search Integrated Impact Assessments | Aberdeen City Council](#)

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Stephanie Dunsmuir, email [sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

## STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 21 April 2025. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; and Councillors Boulton, Clark, Greig (as substitute for Councillor Delaney), McLeod, Thomson and Tissera.

Trade Union Advisers:- Kevin Masson and Neil Watson, GMB; Brenda Massie, UNISON; Doug Haywood and Jacqueline Munro, EIS; Mishelle Gray, UNITE; and Fiona Sales, UCATT.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be viewed [here](#).

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

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. Councillor Thomson made a general statement of transparency by virtue of her membership of UNISON Grampian Health Branch, but did not consider that this required a declaration of interest to be made in respect of any of the items of business.

## MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 27 January 2025 for approval.

### The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

Members asked a number of questions on the planner.

### The Committee resolved:-

to note the business planner.

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### FLEET DRIVER POLICY - CRE/25/060

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director City Regeneration and Environment which sought approval for the Fleet Driver policy.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the implementation of the Fleet Driver policy; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Operations to ensure that the policy was easily accessible to all drivers and line managers and that managers were supported in the fair and consistent application of the policy.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved the recommendations set out in the report.

Councillor Thomson, seconded by Councillor Tissera, moved as an amendment that the Committee take no action.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (5) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; and Councillors Clark and Greig; for the amendment (2) – Councillors Thomson and Tissera; declined to vote (2) – Councillors Boulton and McLeod.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to adopt the motion.

### CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY QUARTERLY UPDATE - OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2024 - CORS/25/073

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which presented a summary of statistical health and safety performance information for the three month reporting period from October to December 2024 to allow Committee 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.

Members and Trade Union Advisers asked a number of questions on the report.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that officers were undertaking further analysis of the spike in education incidents in February / March and would provide a service update to Members should there be any particular causes found;

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- (ii) to note that officers would involve Trade Unions in respect of internal meetings on plans to remedy any instructions from the Health and Safety Executive regarding asbestos; and
- (iii) to note the report.

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE (EAS) ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND ABSENCE ANNUAL UPDATE (JANUARY - DECEMBER 2024) - CORS/25/075**

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which provided an update on utilisation of the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) provided by VIVUP during the last 12 month period from January – December 2024, as well as the regular 12 monthly update on Occupational Health and Absence from January – December 2024.

#### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) consider the contents of the report; and
- (b) note the improvement in the sickness absence figures throughout 2024; progress made in relation to the Attendance Improvement Project; and the continuing drive to raise awareness of frontline staff support initiatives.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that officers would liaise with the provider as to whether there could be identification of the reasons for the drop in usage of the EAS support and provide information to Members if possible, outwith the meeting;
- (ii) in respect of the comments from Members on section 3.2.7 of the report and the fact that it would be helpful for reasons for referral to be available, to note that officers would raise this with the provider;
- (iii) to note the comments from Members and Trade Union advisers in respect of employees having access to reports from the provider prior to managers, and to further note that officers were working with the provider to establish whether the functionality of the system could be changed to allow this;
- (iv) to note that officers would liaise with the provider to see if any further breakdown of the figures at 3.1.4 of the report was possible; and
- (v) to approve the recommendations.

### **NEONATAL CARE LEAVE AND PAY - CORS/25/076**

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which provided information on the introduction of the new Neonatal Care Leave and Pay legislation which came into effect on 6 April 2025.

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### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report and the introduction of the new legislation; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services to include the Neonatal Care Leave and Guidance as part of the Family Friendly policy and associated guidance documents to be reported to Staff Governance Committee in June 2025.

### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that while the legislation was specific on what could be provided under the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023, officers would be considering any other support or provisions which could be made available as part of the ongoing work on the Family Friendly Policy; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

## **DISCLOSURE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2020 - UPDATE - CORS/25/077**

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which provided information on the changes in relation to the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 which came into effect on 1 April 2025.

### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee note the content of the report and changes to Disclosure Scotland and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme as a result of the new legislation, for assurance.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to the requirements for PVG checks to be undertaken.

### **The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to request that officers clarify whether Members who were on groups such as the Disability Equity Partnership would require to be PVG checked and provide an update to Members outwith the meeting;
- (ii) to note that an Elected Member briefing on Disclosure Scotland Checks / PVG Membership had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting; and
- (iii) to approve the recommendation.

- **COUNCILLOR NEIL COPLAND, Convener**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	<b>STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER</b> 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	<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Chief Officer</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Terms of Reference</b>	<b>Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T</b>	<b>Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred</b>
3	<b>16 June 2025</b>								
4	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	D	The substantive employee trade union engagement required is not yet completed due to current business demands.
5	Employee Experience Survey 2025	To present the results and findings from the survey		Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.7	D	Due to current business demands, analysis is still to be finalised.
6	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	To present the quarterly update		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
7	Citizen Interaction 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		Lucy McKenzie	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		

[illegible]

	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	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.	Summer 2025	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5	D	The draft Council Travel Plan (2025) is to be presented to Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on 10 June 2025, and it contains an instruction to the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning and Chief Officer - People and Citizen Services to update the Staff Travel Policy and report to the Staff Governance Committee within the next 12 months.
11									
12	25 August 2025								
13	Mortuary Staff Move	To present an update to Committee	Summer 2025	Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.2		
14	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
15	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	To present the quarterly update		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
16	3 November 2025								
17	Bairns Hoose	To present an update to Committee		Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.2		
18	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	To present the quarterly update		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
19	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		Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5, 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									
20	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		
21	Managing Substance Misuse Policy	The revised policy was approved at Committee in November 2023 - to be reviewed annually	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
22	Corporate Health & Safety Policy	To present the revised Health & Safety Policy	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	2.5		
23	Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure	The revised policy was approved at Committee in November 2023 - due for review November 2025	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
24	2026								
25	Volunteers Policy	The revised policy was approved at Committee in January 2025 - due for annual review	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
26	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 31 December 2025	April 2026	Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
27	EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update	To present an annual report for the EAS/OH & Sickness Absence figures	April 2026	Sharon Robb	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.7		
28	Managing Performance Policy and Procedure	The revised policy was approved at Committee in January 2024 - due for review January 2026	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
29	2027								
30	Flexible Working Policy	The revised policy was approved at Committee in January 2025 - due for review February 2027	Scheduled for review February 2027	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
31	Fleet Driver Policy	To seek approval of the policy	Scheduled for review April 2027	Patric Bakhuizen	Operations	City Regeneration and Environment	2.5		
32	REPORTING DATE TO BE CONFIRMED								
33	Employee Code of Conduct	To present an update on the Employee Code of Conduct		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
34	People development policy / guidance	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Staff Governance Committee
<b>DATE</b>	16 June 2025
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Corporate Health and Safety – January to March 2025
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CORS/25/146
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Alan Thomson/Vikki Cuthbert
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Colin Leaver
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	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 January to March 2025 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 January to March 2025. 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 (October to December 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.

#### **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 reporting years through the Covid pandemic. The comparative figures for this year are in a separate chart due to the change of reporting system.
- 3.4** Pages 2 and 6 now show the comparison figures for corresponding quarters for injury incidents and near misses.
- 3.5** 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.
- 3.6** 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 from the corresponding period last year by 13% to 535 from 472 which is a reduction on the increase between 2022/23 to 2023/24 where it was 40%.
- 3.6.1** Whilst it is difficult to identify exact reasons for incident increase, it would be reasonable to conclude it is possibly due to an increase in reporting following encouragement from Senior Managers and Trade Unions, a possible increase in the level of incidents or more likely a mix of both.
- 3.6.2** The trend over the last 6 months has again had a further upturn similarly to previous years. Education is considering the effect of holiday and post-holiday periods on these figures.
- 3.6.3** On page 11 the charts represent incident figures in primary and secondary schools to show whether there was a reduction in reporting during school holiday periods. The charts show that in each of the last two years the incident

reporting levels drop at the same time during the year and coincide with the school holiday periods and increase after the holidays. This would be as expected as most incidents are pupil behaviour related.

- 3.6.4 The main categorisation of the incidents is either as 'physical injury and violence', unacceptable behaviour or 'externalising behaviour' and are mainly due to pupil behaviours. There are no differences in the consequences of these incidents to the staff involved in the different categorisations. The choice on where to report the incident should be done following a consultation between the line manager and the affected member of staff.
- 3.6.5 The support provided by the staff continues to play 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. This consistent, positive, and supportive guidance 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 continue to 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.

### **HSE Reportable incidents (January to March 2025)**

- 3.7 The table in the Appendix also shows the number of RIDDOR reportable incidents. During the reporting period between January and March 2025 8 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.
- 3.8 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**

<b>Period – Quarterly</b>	<b>Reportable Incidence rate</b>	<b>Reporting period</b>
Jan –Mar 2025	1	2024/25

- 3.9 The above figures are calculated using the formula:

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

- 3.10 The figure for the corresponding period last year (Jan – Jun 2024) was 10 RIDDOR reportable incidents and a reportable incident rate of 1.25.

### **Reportable Diseases**

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

### **Near Miss Information**

- 3.12** Near-miss incidents help to identify potential hazards and mitigation strategies before an injury occurs. Recognising and reporting near-miss incidents can significantly improve employee safety before an incident occurs.
- 3.13** 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. These elements of a health and safety management system are now monitored daily when a manager reports an incident or near miss to ensure that reporting managers have both elements in place.
- 3.14** 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 increased this year from 2023/24's corresponding reporting period.
- 3.15** 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)**

- 3.16** 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 interventions with HSE over the period. However, a response was given to HSE outside this reporting period on the letter received following the asbestos visits to Council public premises. HSE have responded to the Council's planned actions related to the control of asbestos positively and have agreed that the issue is now closed.
- 3.18** SFRS carried out no audit visits of any ACC (Aberdeen City Council) owned or managed buildings during this reporting period.

### **Fire risk assessments**

- 3.19** Fire risk assessments are completed on a rolling 5-year programme. A total of 26 fire risk assessments were completed during this reporting period. The issues identified are across the range of topics considered in the assessment process. These issues are given a priority level requiring an action by a

specified date dependent on the resultant risk. No building is left at risk during this process.

- 3.20** There were 275 identified actions allocated to Managers, these are inserted into the fire risk actions database and monitored to a close. This database is available to all Chief Officers and Service Managers on the managers' portal, which shows live data on open, closed, and overdue actions. Should an action pass the compliance date a reminder is sent to the responsible manager and the Service Manager. They are also taken to the next relevant senior management team meeting to make everyone there aware of the need to close these off.

### **Health and Safety Audits**

- 3.21** Compliance visits have been undertaken on several topics / premises within the ACC estate; Line Managers Health & Safety Responsibilities; Risk assessment; Workplace Inspections; Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Operations.

3.21.1 There were 16 actions raised against Managers in this period, which are recorded in an action log. 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. This action log is reviewed monthly and where they become overdue then the responsible manager is reminded of the action and the Service manager also made aware of the need to close it off.

3.21.2 Follow up visits are also carried out on several of the completed actions which have the potential to result in more serious consequences and to audit that controls continue to be suitable and sufficient and are being followed.

### **Health and safety policies, procedures, and guidance**

- 3.22** There were no corporate procedures reviewed this quarter.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** 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.	<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</p>	L	Yes

		of costs to the organisation.		
<b>Operational</b>	<p>The risk is that any health and safety incident can lead to an injury to an employee which could have the potential to temporarily or permanently affect either or both their employment and/or their life.</p> <p>The risk to our citizens is 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>	The task has been risk assessed; employees are trained, competent and supervised then there should be less likelihood of incidents.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial</b>	The risk is that any incident has the potential	As per compliance above	L	<b>Yes</b>

	to bring a reduction in the overall budget in place to provide service delivery.			
<b>Reputational</b>	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	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	

## 8 OUTCOMES

<a href="#"><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></a>	
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, acting Chief Officer Governance in March 2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

## 9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/A

## 10 APPENDICES

10.1 Quarterly Staff Governance Health and safety dashboard January to March 2025

## 11 REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Tel	01224 045640

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# Staff Governance Health & Safety Report

## Quarter 4 2024/2025 (Jan 25 to Mar 25)

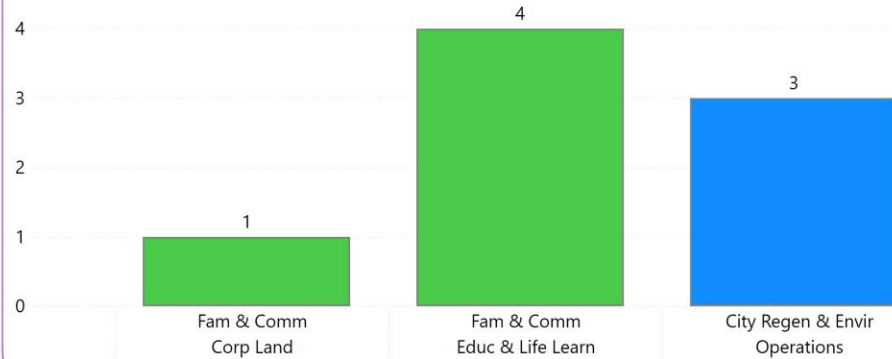
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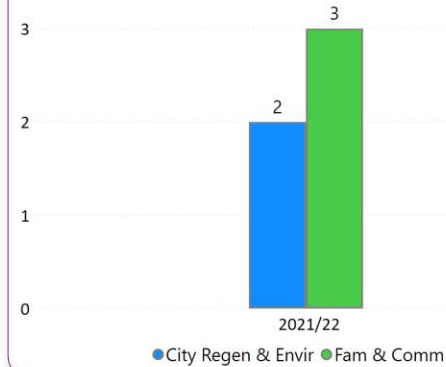
## Reported H&S Incidents (Employee) Between Jan to Mar 2025

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 4 comparison for each Function from 2021/22 to 2023/24 where applicable.

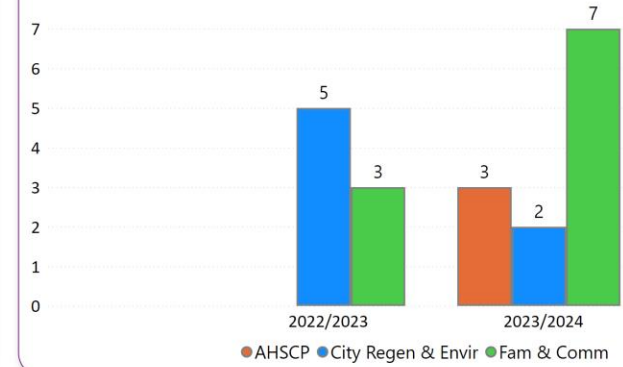
RIDDOR Reportable Employee



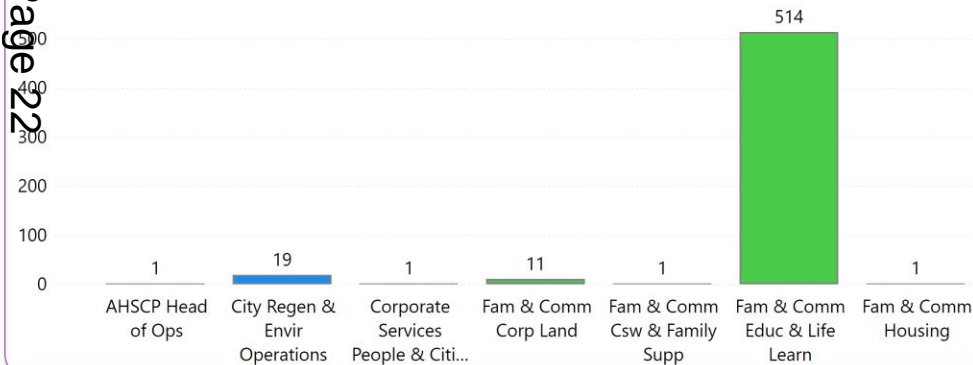
RIDDOR Reportable Employee 2021/22 (Comparison)



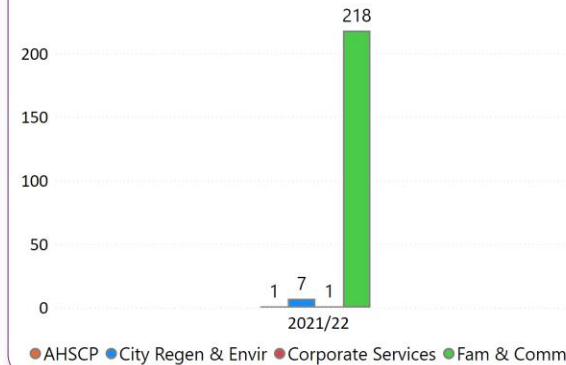
RIDDOR Reportable Employee 2022/23 & 2023/24 (Comparison)



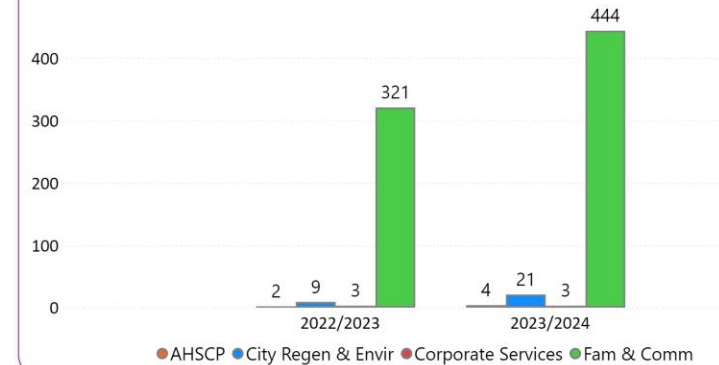
Non RIDDOR Reportable Employee



Non RIDDOR Reportable Employee 2021/22 (Comparison)



Non RIDDOR Reportable Employee 2022/23 & 2023/24 (Comparison)

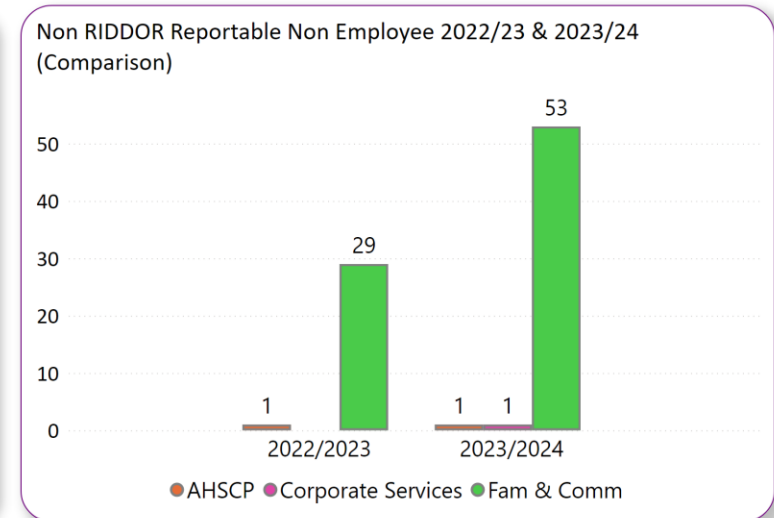
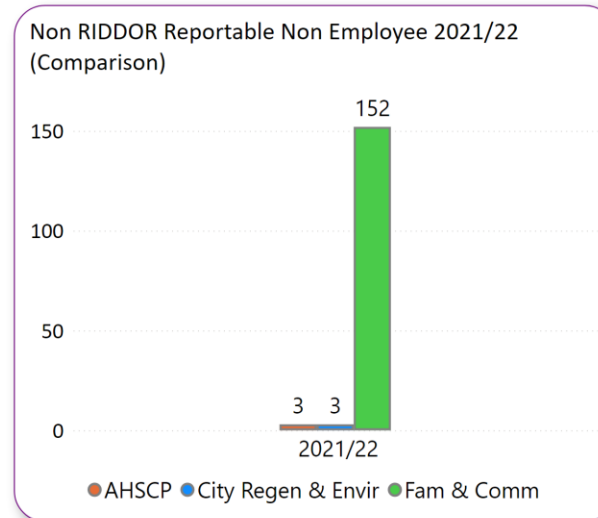
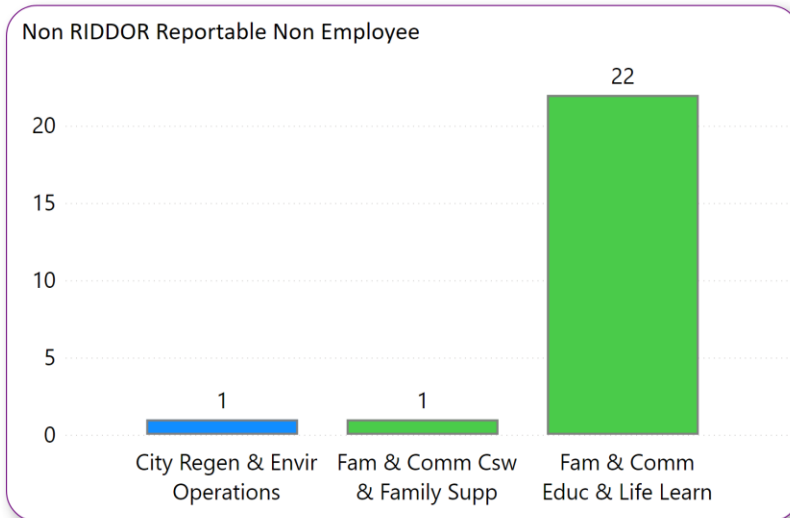
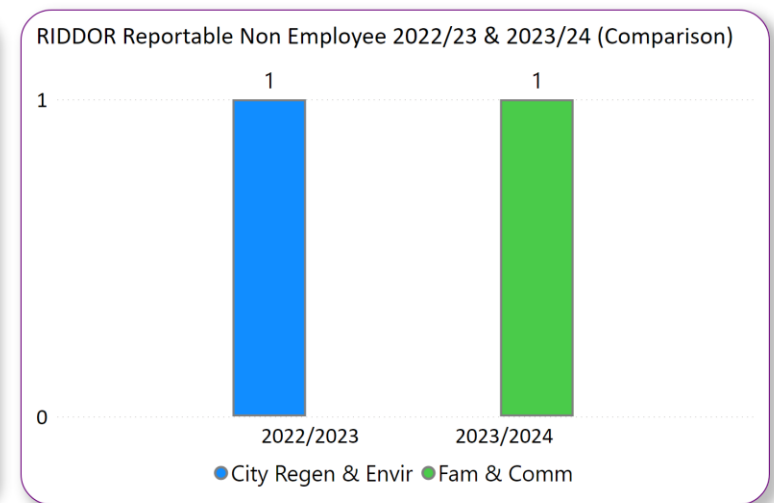
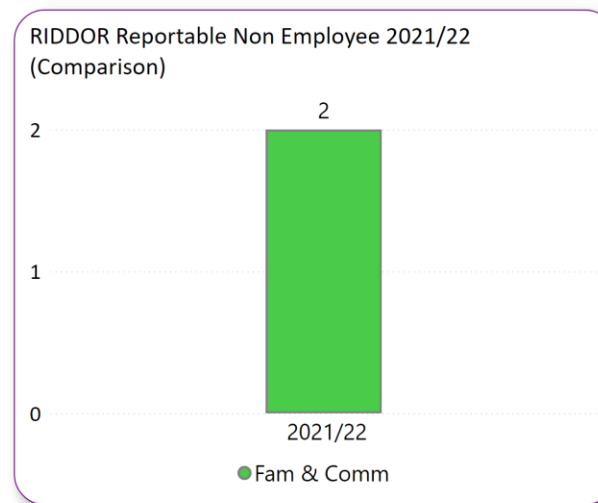
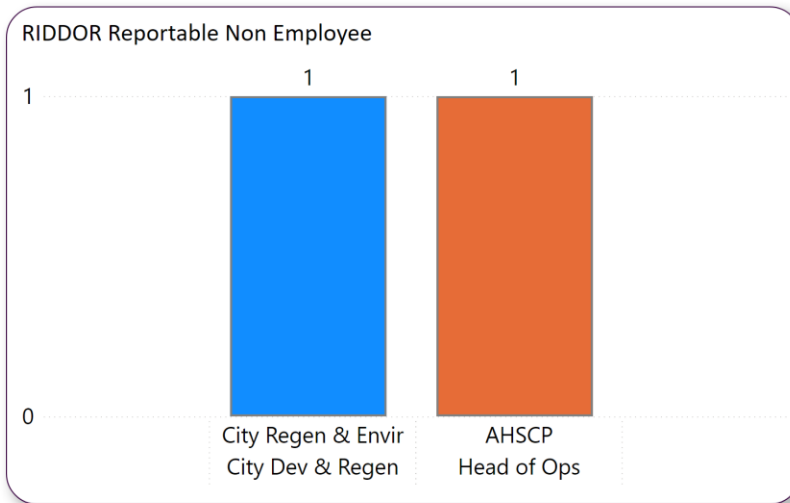


### Employee Incident Information

RIDDOR reportable incidents are reduced from 10 to 8 for same period last year. Incidents reported have increased from 472 to 535, an increase of 13% in last year with majority being within Education. Causation still falls mainly into categories which are a result of pupil behaviours. The trend appears to be for the two years figures available that reporting increases from quarter 2 of both years until quarter 4 at which point the figures reduce again creating a wave pattern of incident reporting.

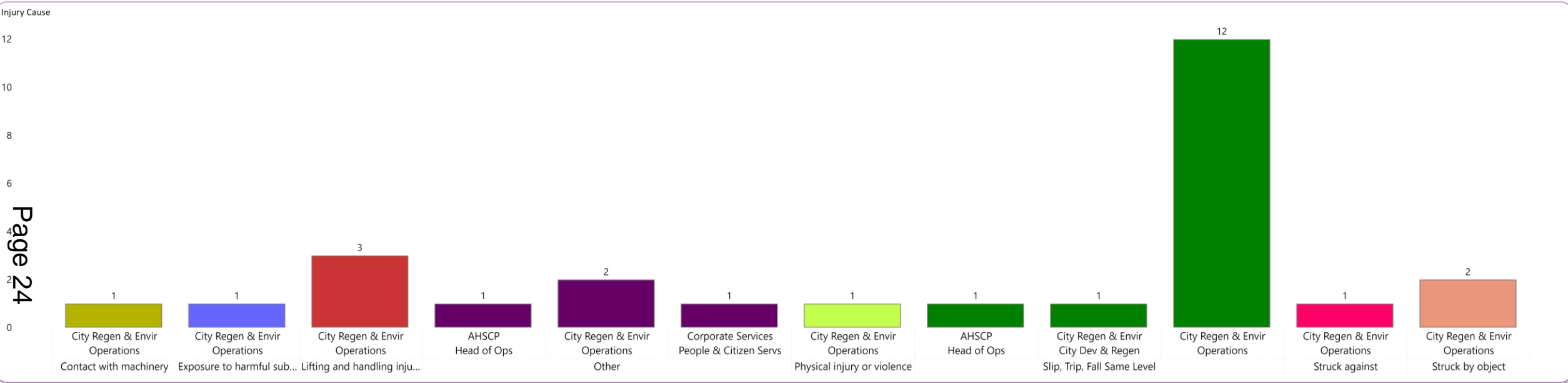
## Reported H&S Incidents (Third Party) Between Jan to March 2025

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 4 comparison for each function from 2021/22 to 2023/24 where applicable.



H&S Incident Causation  
Reported between Jan to March 2025

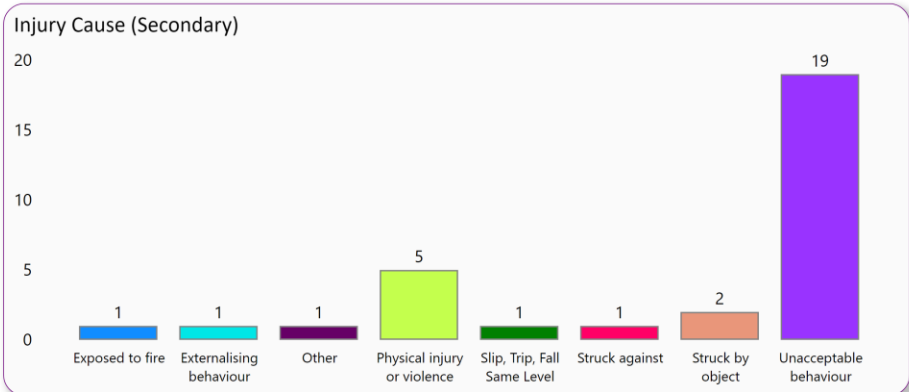
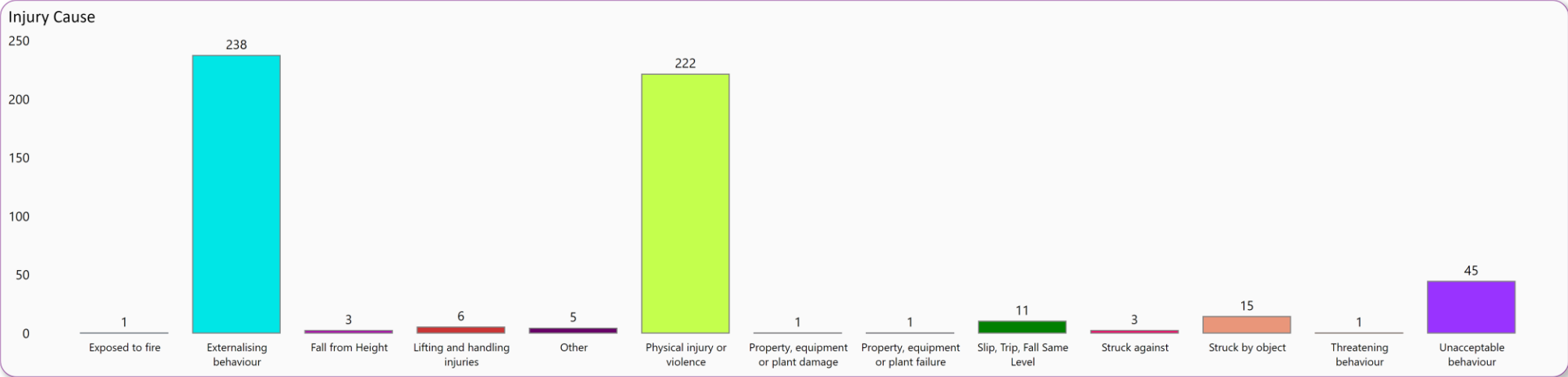
The table shows incident causation for each Cluster for this reporting period apart from Families & Communities, which is covered in the next page.



Injury Cause								
Contact with machinery	Exposure to harmful substance	Lifting and handling injuries	Other	Physical injury or violence	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck against	Struck by object	Total
1	1	3	4	1	14	1	2	27

Families & Communities reported H&S Incidents  
Between Jan to March 2025

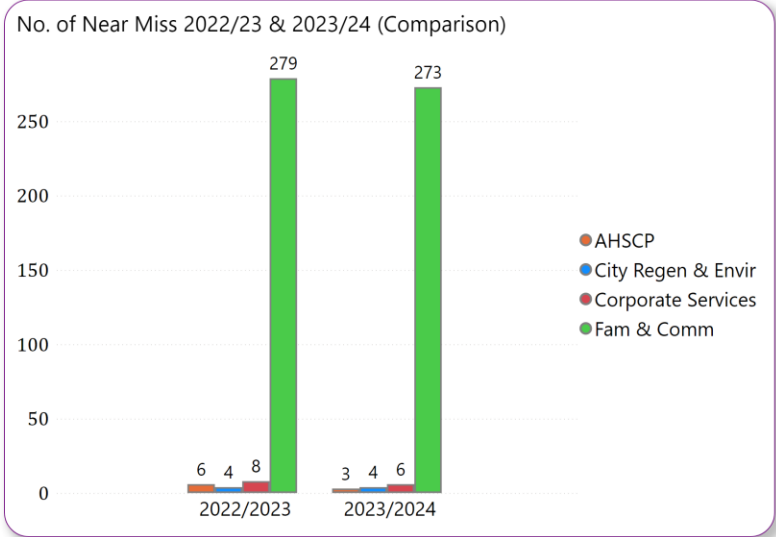
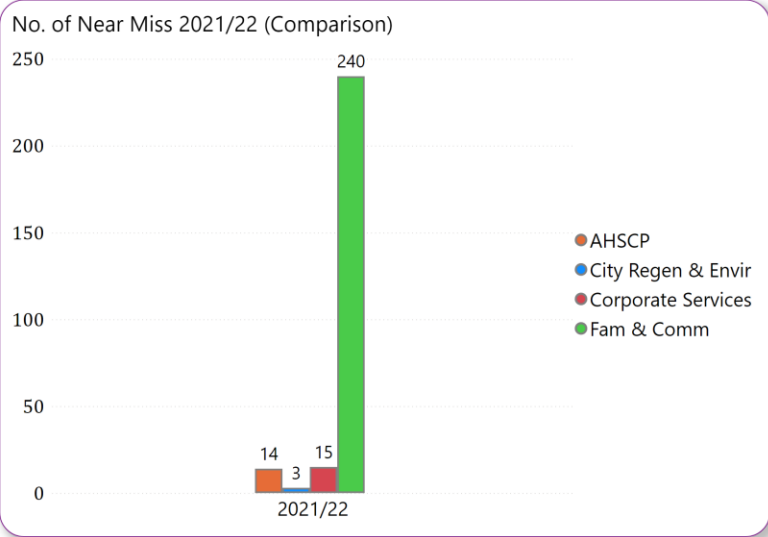
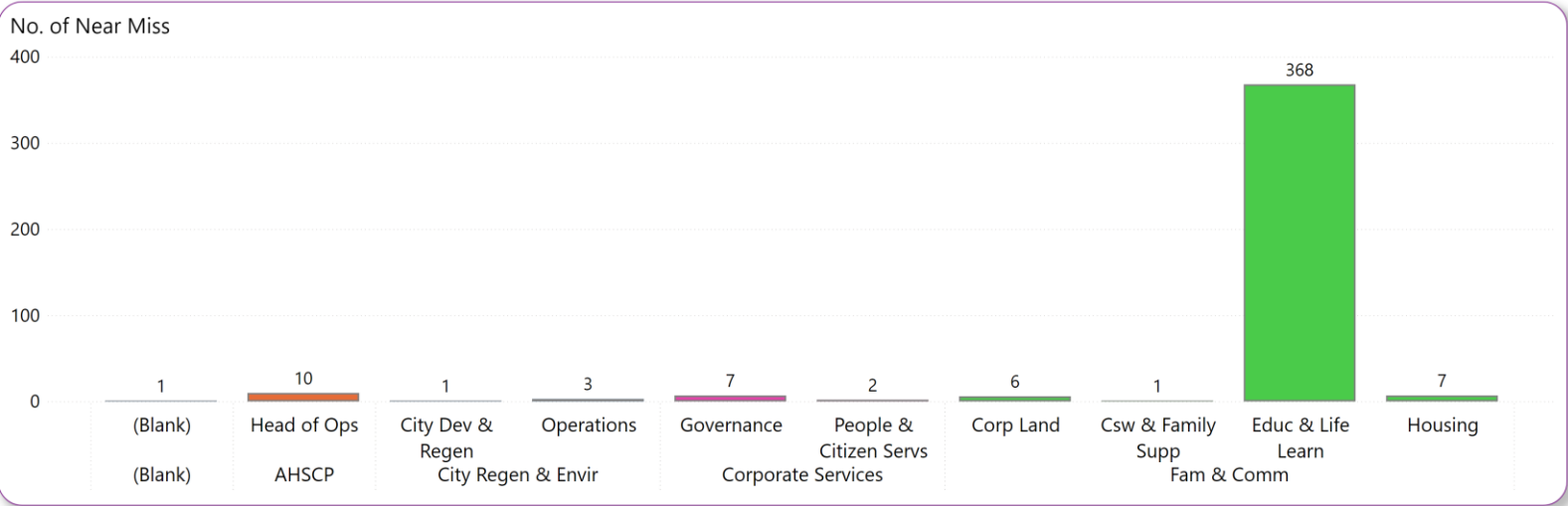
The following tables give a breakdown of Families & Communities Incidents.



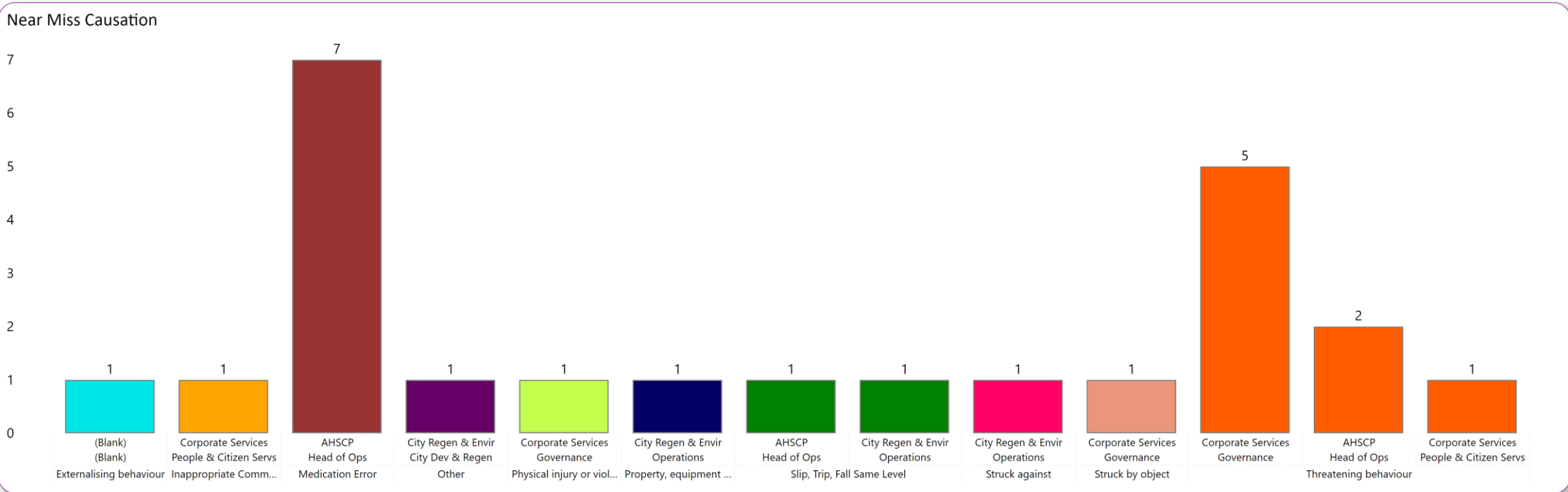
Injury Cause													
Exposed to fire	Externalising behaviour	Fall from Height	Lifting and handling injuries	Other	Physical injury or violence	Property, equipment or plant damage	Property, equipment or plant failure	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck against	Struck by object	Threatening behaviour	Unacceptable behaviour	Total
1	238	3	6	5	222	1	1	11	3	15	1	45	552

Reported H&S Near Miss  
Between Jan to March 2025

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 4 comparison of Near Misses for each Function from 2021/22 to 2023/24.



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.



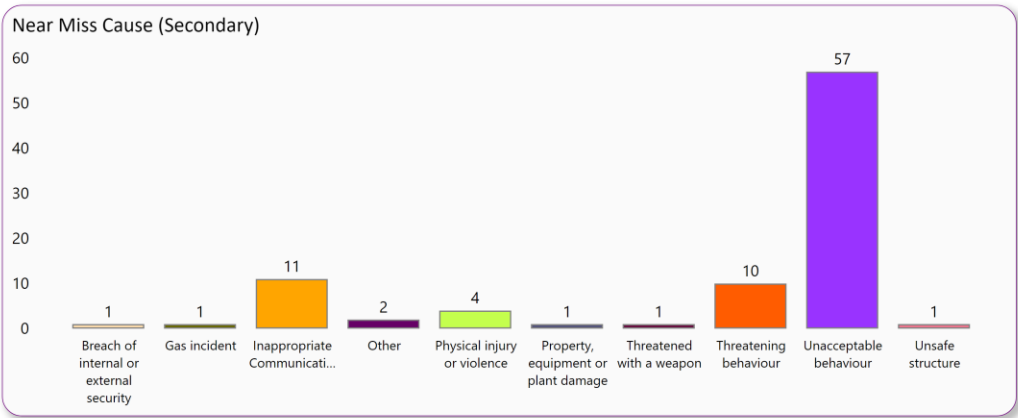
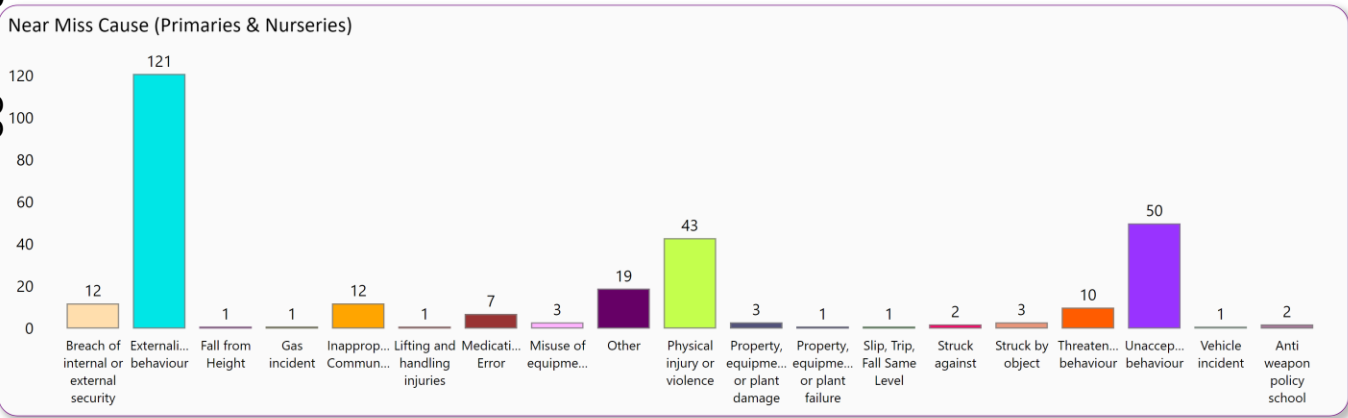
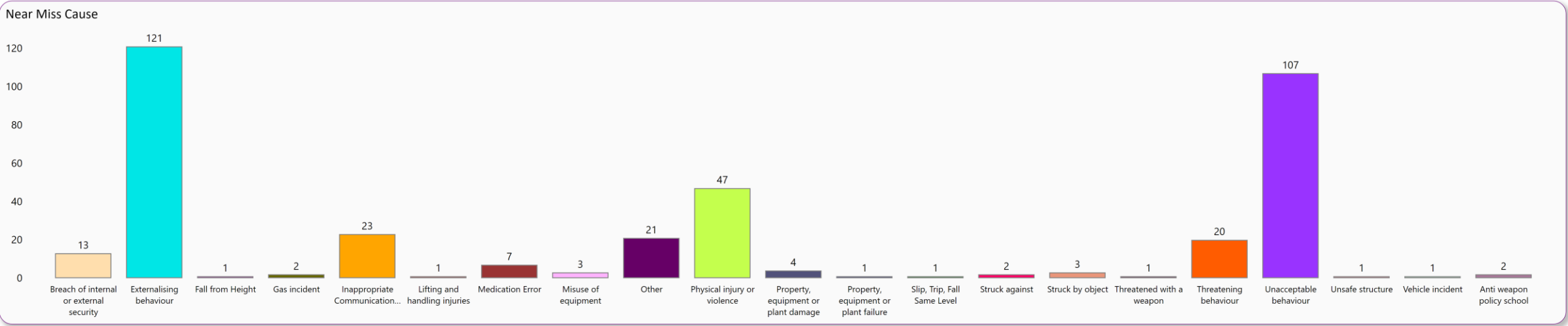
Near Miss Cause										
Externalising behaviour	Inappropriate Communication/abuse	Medication Error	Other	Physical injury or violence	Property, equipment or plant failure	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck against	Struck by object	Threatening behaviour	Total
1	1	7	1	1	1	2	1	1	8	24

**Near Miss**

Near misses have increased from 286 to 401 over the corresponding periods, an increase of 40%. As with incidents the majority are reported from within Education and the causation is again those categories which are a result of pupil behaviours. As with incident trends the wave pattern shows the same rise and fall of reporting over the same periods with reductions across April to September, which could possibly be as this runs across the main holiday periods within schools

Families & Communities reported H&S Near Miss  
Between Jan to March 2025

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



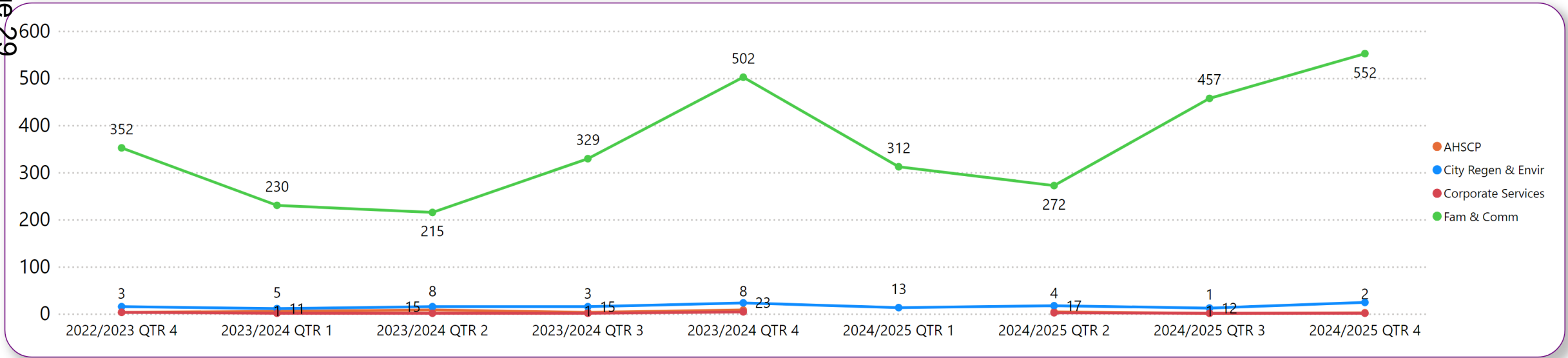
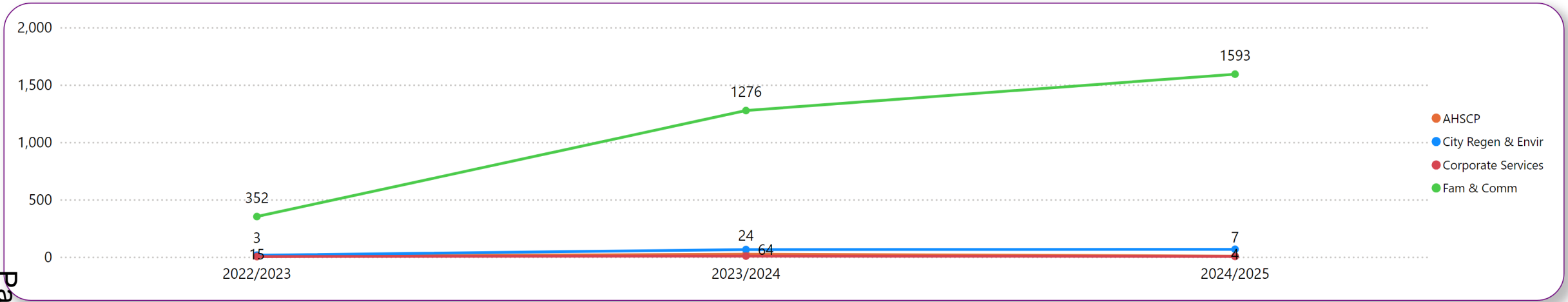
Near Miss Cause																					
anti weapon policy school	Breach of internal or external security	Externalising behaviour	Fall from Height	Gas incident	Inappropriate Communication/abuse	Lifting and handling injuries	Medication Error	Misuse of equipment	Other	Physical injury or violence	Property, equipment or plant damage	Property, equipment or plant failure	Slip, Trip, Fall Same Level	Struck against	Struck by object	Threatened with a weapon	Threatening behaviour	Unacceptable behaviour	Unsafe structure	Vehicle incident	Total
2	13	121	1	2	23	1	7	3	21	47	4	1	1	2	3	1	20	107	1	1	382

# Reported Incidents

## From Q4 2022/23 to Q4 2024/25

The tables provides information on the **total number** of incidents from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to Function level.

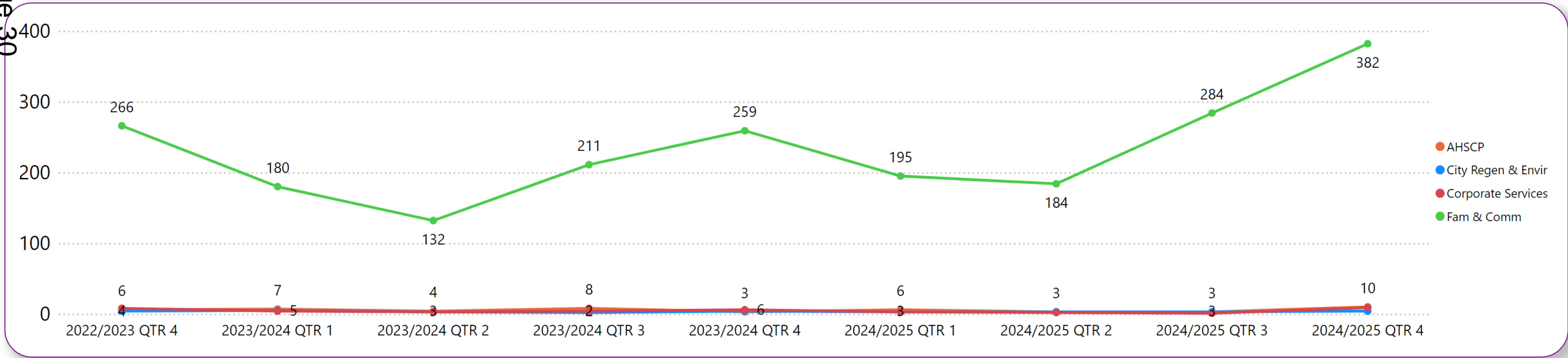
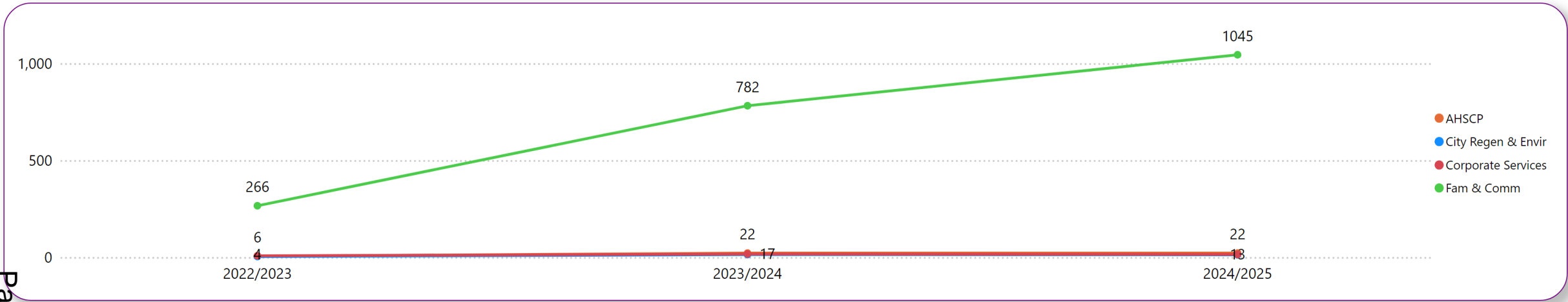
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Reported Near Miss  
From Q4 2022/23 to Q4 2024/25

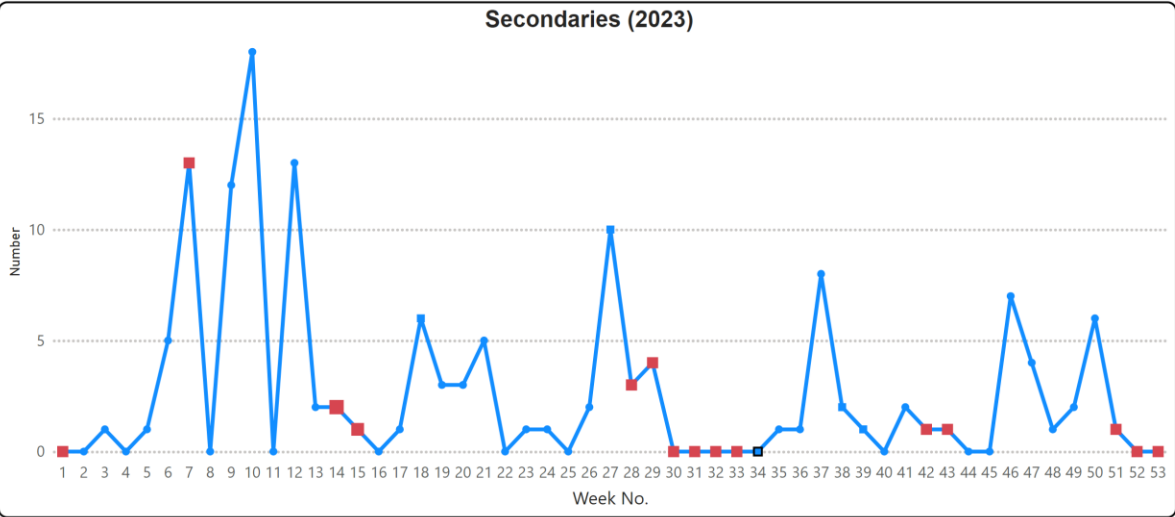
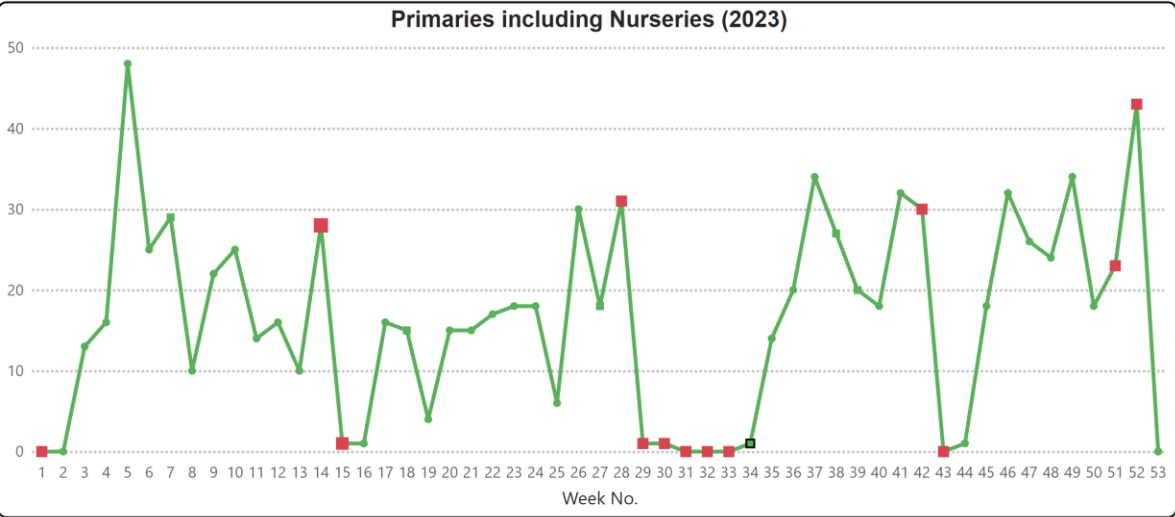
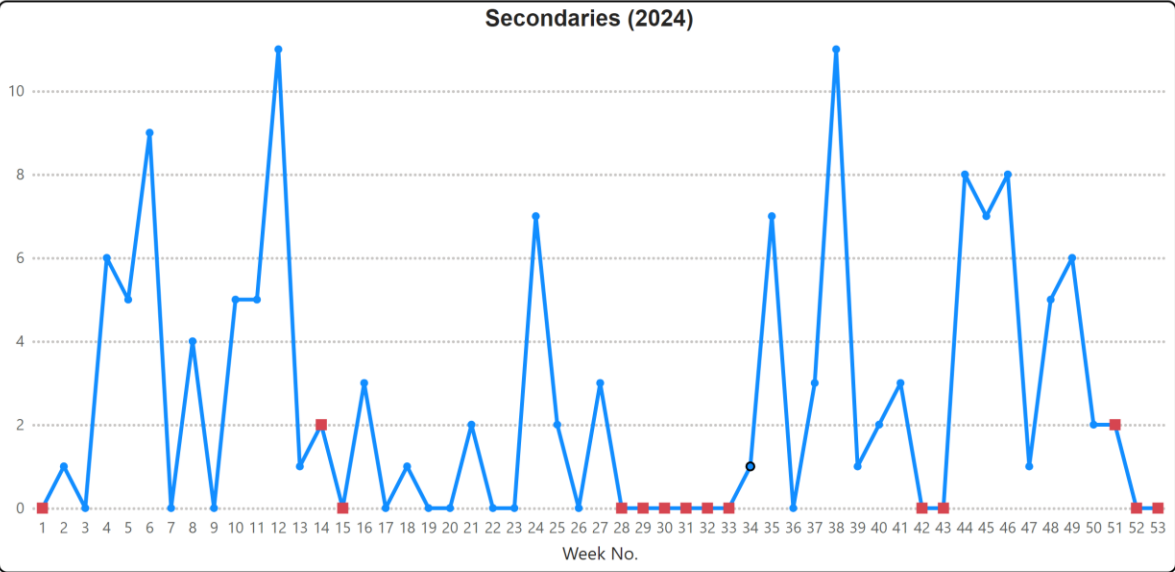
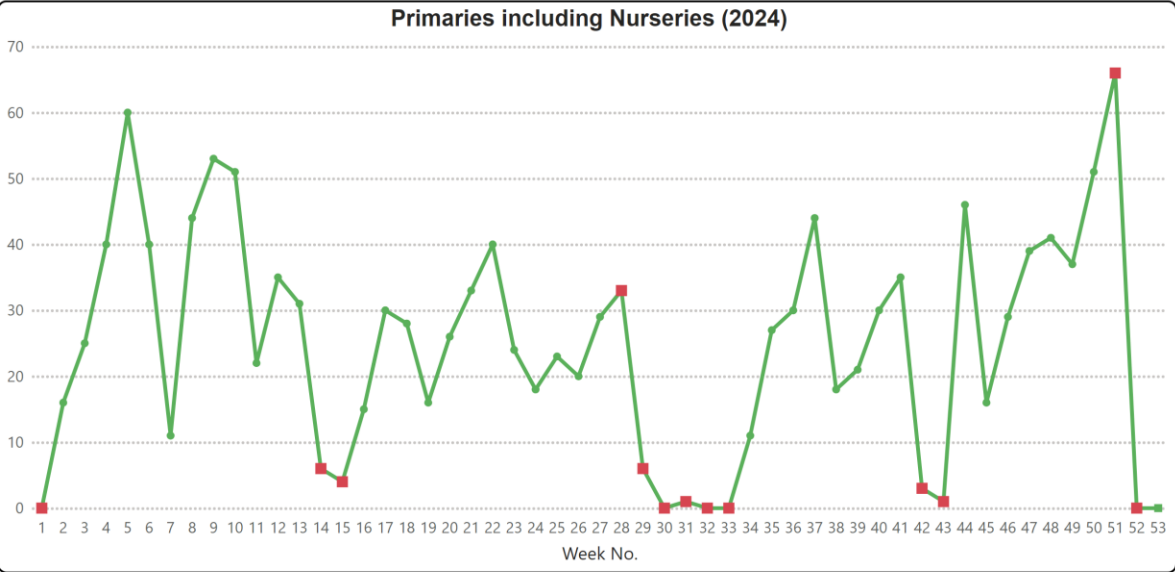
The tables provides information on the **total number** of near misses from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to Function level.

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Reported Incidents in Schools  
(2023 & 2024)

The tables below provide information on the number of reported incidents in Schools each week during 2023 and 2024. Those weeks with red markers represent incidents (if any), noted during the Easter, Summer, October and Christmas holidays.



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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Staff Governance Committee
<b>DATE</b>	16 June 2025
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Citizen Interaction Policy
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CORS/25/156
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald, Executive Director for Corporate Services
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Isla Newcombe, CO People and Citizen Services
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Lucy McKenzie, Citizen Services Manager
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.5

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report follows on from a report to Staff Governance Committee on 22 April 2024 (CORS/24/111), where the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services was instructed to combine three closely linked policies, procedures and approaches relating to Zero Tolerance, Violence and Aggression, and Unacceptable Actions into a single policy. This is with the exception of pupil behaviour in schools as this is governed by national policy and guidance.
- 1.2 It was agreed that the final policy would be brought to Committee for approval.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 approves the implementation of the Citizen Interaction Policy and notes the accompanying procedure, which together promote positive citizen engagement, promotes employee and elected member safety, and provide clear guidelines for managing challenging citizen interactions;
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services to make the Citizen Interaction Policy and supporting Managing Citizen Interaction Procedures are easily accessible to employees, managers and elected members; and
- 2.3 instructs the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services to publish the Citizen Interaction Policy, Zero Tolerance Pledge and Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure externally on the Council's website.

### 3 CURRENT SITUATION

#### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 Since the previous Committee decision, research, engagement, and collaboration has been conducted to develop a Citizen Interaction Policy (Appendix A), drawing on case studies and best practices as recommended by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The policy enforces zero tolerance for violence, aggression, and abuse towards employees, promoting mutual respect between employees and citizens.
- 3.1.2 The new single policy incorporates guidance previously provided within the three separate approaches and policies. The aim of combining all existing guidance into one policy is to make it easier for employees to find information relating to challenging behaviour.
- 3.1.3 The policy applies to all those working on behalf of the council, including agency workers, volunteers, and elected members, who interact with citizens. The policy applies to all those working on behalf of the council, (including agency workers, volunteers, and elected members, who interact with citizens. The policy also details the responsibilities of the Council, elected members, managers, and employees in ensuring safe and respectful interactions.
- 3.1.4 The Citizen Interaction Policy aims to ensure that Aberdeen City Council provides clear and accessible services to all citizens while maintaining a safe working environment for employees. The updated policy now includes guidelines on addressing social media harassment, along with information on available support for affected employees.
- 3.1.5 The policy now includes guidance for Elected Members on handling difficult constituent interactions. Ensuring the safety of elected members and candidates is a national priority. While the initiative Operation Ford addresses harassment or intimidation connected to an elected member's official duties, the Council's Citizen Interaction Policy provides guidelines around other unacceptable actions they may face.
- 3.1.6 The proposed approach towards unacceptable behaviour from a child or young person has been outlined in accordance with the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) principles.
- 3.1.7 A supporting 'Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure' has also been developed for reference alongside the policy. The procedure provides more detailed guidance around how to manage challenging citizen interactions, including zero tolerance incidents.

## 3.2 Summary of the Citizen Interaction Policy

- 3.2.1 This new policy incorporates the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance including a focus on encouraging positive relationships with citizens. There is an emphasis that employees should aim to defuse and de-escalate situations where possible.
- 3.2.2 The policy outlines what citizens can expect when receiving services through the We CARE Charter and Commitments. It also outlines what the Council

expects from citizens in return. It emphasises positive engagement and provides procedures for when interactions become challenging or a 'zero tolerance' approach needs to be taken. This includes how we handle violent, aggressive and/or abusive behaviour from citizens making verbal, written or physical contact with us.

- 3.2.3 Citizen interaction also includes online comments about Aberdeen City Council or individual employees, whether shared publicly or in a forum or way that means they are not private, even when they are not shared directly with the Council.
- 3.2.4 All members of the community have the right to fair and equal access to Council services and this policy does not interfere with the need to ensure that any service provided is accessible to all on an equal basis. We recognise that some citizens may find it challenging to interact with the Council and reasonable adjustments should be considered. Some of our citizens will also come into contact with the Council at difficult times in their lives or when experiencing challenging circumstances, and this may impact on their behaviour. At the same time, our employees are entitled to be treated with respect as they carry out their roles and it is important to recognise situations that are unacceptable or inappropriate in a professional environment.
- 3.2.5 While we strive for positive interactions, there may be instances where the behaviour or actions of individuals using our services necessitate action to protect our employees and our ability to provide services. This includes zero-tolerance incidents and also other scenarios such as excessive contact and unreasonable demands on our services.
- 3.2.6 The policy signposts to associated procedures and documentation to guide employees in managing citizen interactions, including social media harassment and interactions with children and young people.
- 3.2.7 It should be noted that by adopting a zero tolerance approach and implementing restrictions of contact with citizens where necessary, this does not prevent citizens from accessing essential services that the Council provide. This includes submitting complaints under our Complaints Handling Procedure.

### 3.3 Consultation and Engagement to date

- 3.3.1 The policy has been consulted on with all relevant Clusters and has been approved by the Council's Policy Group. Engagement with elected members has taken place through the Members Working Group.
- 3.3.2 The policy has been shared and discussed with Trade Union colleagues, and the feedback has been positive. Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) have advised that while they are reassured that the policy offers appropriate protections for teachers in relation to social media harassment and issues arising from interactions with parents and carers, it explicitly excludes interactions with children and young people in schools. It has been agreed

that a similar exercise to consolidate guidance will be undertaken within Education in relation to children and young people in the school setting. This will support Education employees in navigating the supporting procedures when physical and verbal abuse occurs. Once drafted, the proposed guidance will be shared with the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) for ratification and to raise awareness among teaching colleagues.

- 3.3.3 The guidance around handling situations involving children and young people has been discussed with Youth Participation Groups to ensure that our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 are met.

### 3.4 Next Steps

- 3.4.1 It is proposed that the Citizen Engagement Policy, Zero Tolerance Pledge (Appendix B) and sections of the Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure relating to this policy will be published externally on our website.
- 3.4.2 The new policy and pledge will be published and promoted internally through our digital platforms – the intranet, the Customer Academy and our internal employee networks to ensure employees are aware of available support and reporting mechanisms.
- 3.4.3 A direct link to the guidance will be published on the Elected Member Information and Development home page on the intranet to ensure the guidance is easily accessible to all Elected Members. Engagement will continue through the Members Working Group and ongoing awareness sessions related to Operation Ford.
- 3.4.4 An awareness raising campaign will run to inform and educate citizens about the Citizen Interaction Policy. This includes the Council's zero tolerance expectations and standards of behaviour when interacting with our employees and our elected members. Updated Zero Tolerance posters (Appendix C) will be displayed in public facing Council buildings such as the Customer Service Centre, Community Hubs and school receptions, to visibly demonstrate the organisation's commitment to creating a safe and respectful work environment for all employees, and to communicate its expectations of appropriate behaviour from citizens and stakeholders.
- 3.4.5 The awareness campaign will also serve to remind employees of their rights to work in a safe and respectful environment and reinforce that the Council is committed to preventing and addressing violence and aggression in the workplace. The campaign will remind employees and managers of the support and resources available to individuals who experience or witness zero tolerance incidents, and the consequences for those who violate the policy.
- 3.4.6 The awareness campaign will encourage employees to report and address any incidents they encounter and give reassurance that their report will be listened to and acted upon. It will also signpost to the training and support available.

- 3.4.7 It is proposed that we engage our Leadership Forum of over 600 leaders and managers in the Council to raise awareness of the policy and their responsibilities, including risk assessments and incident reporting. We will signpost to resources and training as outlined in the policy and supporting procedures, so that they can better support their employees with the behavioural skills required for dealing with difficult situations.
- 3.4.8 By providing training for staff, the Council can ensure that they have the skills and confidence to handle challenging citizen interactions, reduce the risk of injury and distress, and improve the quality-of-service delivery.
- 3.4.9 We will monitor incidents of violence and aggression to measure the impact of the awareness campaign and identify any trends that need further investigation.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Any costs associated with training required would be covered by the Corporate Training Budget.
- 4.2 Any costs associated with a promotional campaign would be covered by the People and Citizen Services revenue budget.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Incidents of aggressive, violent or abusive behaviour can give rise to criminal or civil legal action. This Policy will assist the Council meet its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **7. RISK**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level</b>	<b>*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions</b>	<b>*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?</b>
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	If we do not promote a safe environment for our staff and citizens,	The risk is mitigated through robust processes and procedures	Low	No- in this instance we want

	then there is risk that we do not meet our strategic objectives.	such as risk assessments, management of unacceptable actions and proactive communication around zero tolerance approach when interacting with the Council.		to avoid risks in this area rather than tolerate.
<b>Compliance</b>	As employers, The Council has duties under Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Although not specifically identified, there is a requirement to ensure the safety of employees in respect of harm caused by violent or aggressive behaviour from service users.	Assessments are carried out to identify any risks to the safety of employees and mitigating actions are put in place to sufficiently reduce the risk of unacceptable actions towards employees whilst at work. This includes providing training to employees on dealing with unacceptable behaviours, sharing information on service users where required to reduce the risk to employees, making reasonable adjustments to working practices where necessary and provide debriefing and support after an incident occurs.	Low	Yes

<b>Operational</b>	The effects of unacceptable actions in the workplace can impact considerably both on staff and other citizens. If unaddressed, this can potentially lead to poor morale, increased staff turnover, absence and litigation, making it more difficult to recruit.	There are robust supporting policies in place, which are easily accessible to provide guidance to managers and staff around how to manage challenging behaviours. Debriefing, and support is provided to impacted individuals where necessary, after an incident occurs.	Low	No- as above
<b>Financial</b>	Without clear processes in place, there is a risk of injury and claims being made to/against the organisation. Should inadequate policy provision be in place this could be detrimental when considering such claims.	The risk is mitigated through robust processes and procedures such as risk assessments and the combined policy itself provides the clarity to citizens and staff as to what is acceptable.	Low	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	If unacceptable actions are unchallenged this can lead to a poor image for the organisation.	There are robust supporting policies in place, which are easily accessible to provide guidance to managers and staff around how to manage challenging behaviours.	Low	No - averse to risk in this area and so want to exceed this RAS in this area.
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	There are no associated environment/climate related risks.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Yes

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b><u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></b>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the Prosperous Place Theme within the LOIP. Aberdeen City Council's vision is for Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. This means all people being able to access our services, regardless of their background and circumstances, so that we help all people, families, businesses and communities to do well, succeed and flourish in every aspect.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	None.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Zero Tolerance Update and Action Plan Report \(CORS/24/1111\)](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A – Citizen Interaction Policy

11.2 Appendix B – Zero Tolerance Pledge

11.3 Appendix C – Zero Tolerance Poster

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Lucy McKenzie
<b>Title</b>	Customer Services Manager
<b>Email Address</b>	LucyMcKenzie@aberdeencity.gov.uk

# Citizen Interaction Policy

Approved by Staff Governance Committee on  
20XX with an implementation date of 20XX

<b>Policy Number</b>	POL-CS-0021
<b>Policy Author/s and Owner</b>	Lucy McKenzie
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Staff Governance Committee
<b>Scheduled Review</b>	May 2027
<b>Date and Changes:</b> V1 April 2025	

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## **1. Why does the Council need this Policy?**

- 1.1 As a local authority, our objective is to be open and accessible to everyone. It is important that we provide clarity and reassurance for citizens, employees and Elected Members on how we interact with citizens accessing our services. This policy sets out what citizens can expect from us when receiving our services, and what we expect from citizens.
- 1.2 This policy aims to support employees in encouraging positive engagement with citizens and it also signposts to procedures to support employees when interactions become challenging or a 'zero tolerance' approach needs to be taken. This includes how we handle violent, aggressive and/or abusive behaviour from citizens making verbal, written or physical contact with us. Aberdeen City Council is committed to providing a safe working environment for our employees.
- 1.3 All members of the community have the right to fair and equal access to Council services, and this policy does not interfere with the need to ensure that any service provided is accessible to all on an equal basis. While we strive for positive interactions, there may be instances where the behaviour or actions of individuals using our services necessitate action to protect our employees and our ability to provide services.

## **2. Application and Scope Statement**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees<sup>1</sup> (including agency workers and volunteers) and Elected Members who interact with citizens.
- 2.2 This policy covers any citizens that interact with the Council. This includes citizens as service users, including children and young people, parents or carers of a school child, consultees or constituents to elected members. The standards of engagement we support are the same for all. However, it does not apply to children or young people in schools or care settings, where other policies and guidance are to be followed (See Section 5.6 below).
- 2.4 Where an employee is the victim of violence, aggression or unacceptable actions involving a colleague or manager, the Council's Dignity and Respect at Work Policy should be referred to for information and advice. The Member Officer Relations Protocol would be referred to for any actions of this nature by an Elected Member.

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<sup>1</sup> Employees" in this policy refers to anybody engaged in work for Aberdeen City Council, including relief / casual workers, agency workers, interns, apprentices and volunteers. Employees of the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership will also use documentation approved by the Integrated Joint Board (IJB)

- 2.5 This policy also incorporates guidance for Elected Members who may face similar challenges due to the nature of their roles. It does not include harassment or intimidation connected to an elected member's official duties. Such incidents should be referred to Police Scotland under Operation Ford.

### **3. Responsibilities**

- 3.1 The Council is responsible for delivering accessible services to citizens. The Council must also establish a safe and supportive working environment for its employees, clearly define unacceptable behaviour for citizens interacting with employees, and outline expectations for employees. Additionally, it sets out the behaviour standards expected of employees.
- 3.2 Elected members are responsible for providing leadership and encouraging organisational compliance with the policy.
- 3.3 The Chief Officer, People and Citizen Services is responsible for managing this policy.
- 3.4 Chief Officers and Directors are responsible for applying this policy within their service area.
- 3.5 All managers are responsible for:
- ensuring employees are aware of and understand the contents of this policy, and to apply this policy when interacting with citizens.
  - embedding the We CARE Charter and Commitments within their service area and commit to providing the best service we can to our citizens.
  - ensure that risk assessments are undertaken and that resources are in place to sufficiently mitigate the risk of unacceptable actions.
  - understanding how to respond to unacceptable actions.
  - taking appropriate action against unacceptable behaviour towards an employee whilst they are at work.
  - supporting their employees and colleagues who may have experienced an incident.
  - providing support and training for employees to put boundaries in place safely and consistently.
  - carrying out a de-brief with their employees after any significant incident.
  - recording incidents on the corporate reporting system
  - sharing information on service users where required to reduce the risk to employees with other Services in accordance with Data Protection and Human Rights Legislation.
- 3.6 All employees have responsibility for:

- awareness of and compliance with the contents of this policy.
  - encouraging positive engagement with citizens and upholding the principles outlined in the We CARE Charter and its commitments.
  - understanding how to appropriately respond to unacceptable actions including reporting any incidents to line management.
  - recognising that their role can be crucial in providing assistance or support to those in need.
  - undertaking relevant training so that they are able to put boundaries in place safely and consistently.
  - assisting in the prevention and reporting of workplace violence and aggression.
- 3.7 External and partner organisations should have their own arrangements in place for managing unacceptable actions.
- 3.8 Any instances of non-compliance with the policy should be reported to the Service Manager of the relevant service in the first instance.
- 3.9 Any feedback or suggestions for improvement of this policy should be communicated to the Customer Feedback Team. The Customer Feedback Team's contact details can be found externally on the website and internally on the intranet.

## **4. Supporting Procedures and Documentation**

- 4.1 The policy should be read in conjunction with the following supporting corporate policy and procedures:
- [Our Guiding Principles](#)
  - [We CARE Charter and Commitments](#)
  - [Zero Tolerance Pledge](#)
  - [Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure](#)
  - [Social Media Guidance](#)
  - [Complaints Handling Procedure](#)
  - [Dignity and Respect at Work Policy](#)
  - [Member Officer Relations Protocol](#)
  - [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- 4.2 There are references to other sources of relevant supporting guidance within the above procedures.
- 4.3 Local procedures may be developed by individual Clusters and Functions to support this corporate policy. This may include how they will align to the We CARE Charter, and/or manage the risks of unacceptable actions.

## 5. About this Policy

### 5.1 We CARE Charter and Commitments

- 5.1.1 Aberdeen City Council's vision is for Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. This means all people being able to access our services, regardless of their background and circumstances, so that we help all people, families, businesses and communities to do well, succeed and flourish in every aspect.
- 5.1.2 [Our Guiding Principles](#) guide the way we work, the way we behave with each other and make sure we all have the same understanding of what it means to work here. The [We CARE Charter and Commitments](#), aligned with the organisation's vision and values, is an external pledge to our citizens about what they can expect from us.
- 5.1.3 The [We CARE Charter and Commitments](#) sets out what all citizens can expect when they engage with us as a council. The CARE acronym within the Charter represents four key responsibilities - Connected, Accessible, Responsive, Empowered, with an overarching message that we care about our citizens, which is central to the Target Operating Model.
- 5.1.4 Our employees are committed to supporting positive engagement and providing excellent customer service. We are here to help and support citizens and we ask them to work with us in making this possible. This includes ensuring people have an equal opportunity to access our services and providing information about how they can request adjustments in the way we deliver our service for them. We also explain clearly what we need from them to provide the best possible service.
- 5.1.5 We understand that people who come to us may have experience of trauma, or have specific needs and requirements. We will ensure our employees have appropriate training to identify where additional support may be needed and always treat our citizens with empathy and understanding.

### 5.2 Zero Tolerance Pledge

- 5.2.1 The We CARE Charter outlines the standards citizens can expect when engaging with our services, while our [Zero Tolerance Pledge](#) specifies the standards we expect from citizens.
- 5.2.2 We recognise that some of our citizens will come into contact with the Council at difficult times in their lives or when experiencing challenging circumstances, and that this may cause them to act in ways that are out of character. At the same time, our employees are entitled to be treated with respect as they carry out their roles and it is important to recognise situations that are unacceptable or inappropriate in a professional environment.

- 5.2.3 Our Zero Tolerance pledge of violence, aggression and abuse towards our employees and elected members is published on our website. Signage, developed in collaboration with Trade Unions, is also prominently displayed in public buildings where citizens may visit and engage with Council employees, to communicate our Zero Tolerance Pledge. The signage promotes positive interactions and reminds everyone of their right to a safe and respectful environment.

### **5.3 Taking a Zero Tolerance Approach**

#### **5.3.1 When should interaction not be tolerated?**

Our employees deserve a safe and respectful place to work. While it is not possible to produce a comprehensive list of actions that would be considered inappropriate, any act of abuse, either physical or non-physical aggression such as assault, threats or name calling to an employee in the course of their duties may fall into the 'zero tolerance' category.

For employees, it is important that they know and understand that if they feel threatened and at risk, they do not need to maintain contact simply because a direct threat has not been made.

#### **5.3.2 Consistency is important and each Service Manager should ensure that all employees within their team:**

- can clearly explain and understand, what their boundaries are.
- are given support and training to put boundaries in place safely and consistently.
- know how to deal with zero-tolerance behaviour should it occur.

#### **5.3.3 What actions are considered to fall within the zero tolerance category?**

Zero tolerance incidents includes any behaviour or language, oral or written, that may cause employees to feel afraid, threatened or abused. This includes:

- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Personal verbal abuse
- Derogatory remarks and rudeness
- Inflammatory statements
- Unsubstantiated allegations
- Any abuse or negative comments related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010). This includes both verbal and non-verbal behaviours such as comments, snubs or inappropriate questions that negatively target aspects of a person's identity or create hostility.

#### **5.3.4 Aberdeen City Council has a duty of care towards members of the public that come onto its premises. On occasion, the nature of citizens' behaviour may compromise this duty. The following types of behaviours also fall within the zero tolerance category; however, this is not an exhaustive list:**

- Behaviour which is distressing towards other citizens while on Council premises
- Damage to Council property
- Disruptive physical behaviour that prevents the efficient and effective delivery of services to other citizens. This category includes such behaviours as:
  - being noticeably under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs
  - distressing other customers, even if there is not felt to be a risk of actual violence
  - inappropriate behaviours
  - refusing to leave premises when formally requested to do so

5.3.5 Incidents may arise at the beginning of contact with a citizen or after a period of positive interaction. The Council will aim to moderate the offending behaviour, in order to allow the individual access to the services they need. Where violence or aggression occurs during an interaction with a citizen, employees should take a zero tolerance approach. They should act immediately and appropriately to deal with the situation.

5.3.6 The [Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure](#) is in place which sets out the actions to be taken to deal with the immediate situation and to ensure the incident is recorded and reported appropriately. It also provides guidance around what training is available to employees and how to support employees impacted by an incident.

5.3.7 Upon completion of the Managing Zero Tolerance Incidents process, the next steps in the Managing Citizen Interaction procedure should be followed, to manage ongoing contact (see Section 5.4 below). See Appendix below for a process flow chart.

## **5.4 Managing Citizen Interaction**

5.4.1 The Council aims to support everyone engaging with us to do so positively, to help us provide them with the best possible level of service. We also accept that individuals may be upset and distressed when they contact us, and we want to support them to engage with us.

5.4.2 Employees should aim to defuse and de-escalate situations where possible. However, there are some situations that we need to respond to or manage because of the negative impact on the wellbeing of our employees and our ability to provide a service. This includes when zero-tolerance incidents occur, as detailed above.

5.4.3 Wherever possible, we will give the individual the opportunity to change their behaviour before a decision to implement the [Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure](#) is taken. This is normally through the issue of a written warning.

5.4.4 Before considering implementing the Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure, we will seek to restore the relationship and communicate as normal whenever possible. However, we will take action and implement restrictions, if the situation becomes

unacceptably challenging, and is resulting in unreasonable demands on our services or unreasonable behaviour towards our employees and/or other citizens.

- 5.4.5 Interaction encompasses all types of verbal contact (such as phone calls, or in-person conversations) and written communications (including letters, emails and online forms), as well as interactions at Council related events and online. Online comments about Aberdeen City Council or individual employees, which are shared publicly or in a forum or way that means they are not private, also count as engagement even when they are not shared directly with the Council.
- 5.4.6 It is important to ensure our response is proportionate to the behaviour and the impact on our services and employees. The [Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure](#) sets out how we identify and respond to citizen engagement that needs to be managed. The procedures also provide guidance around supporting employees.
- 5.4.7 It is important to note that citizens who are being managed under the Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure cannot be prevented from contacting us about services they need or have a statutory right to. This includes making contact by telephone for emergency matters, submitting complaints under the [Complaints Handling Procedure](#), Freedom of Information requests (FOI) or Subject Access Requests (SARs). If further advice or guidance regarding managing citizen behaviour or complaints is required, please contact the Customer Feedback Team. For advice regarding FOI or SARs, please contact the Access to Information Team. Contact details for the Customer Feedback Team and Access to Information Team are available on our website.

## **5.5 Support for Employees Facing Social Media Harassment**

- 5.5.1 In today's interconnected world, the prevalence of social media has provided a platform for communication and sharing, but it has also opened avenues for harassment and unacceptable actions. Aberdeen City Council has a responsibility to support their employees and ensure a safe and respectful workplace environment. The [Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure](#) provides clear guidance on the support available to employees facing social media harassment.
- 5.5.2 Information about our procedure for engagement on our own social media channels can be found here: [Social Media Guidance](#).

## **5.6 Children and Young People**

- 5.6.1 This policy will primarily be applicable in relation to adults but will also be relevant on occasions where unacceptable behaviour has been experienced from a child or young person, if not in a school or care setting (see Section 5.6.4 below).
- 5.6.2 The approach towards unacceptable behaviour from a child or young person is handled in accordance with the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) principles.

The [Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure](#) should be applied to deal with the immediate situation, e.g. unacceptable behaviour from a group of young people visiting a library.

- 5.6.3 If there is a requirement for ongoing management of the child or young person's interactions, then while the Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure still applies, there should be increased focus on restorative actions. Efforts should be made to work with the child/young person's responsible adult or a Council employee that the child/young person trusts and regularly interact with, e.g. a teacher, to try and resolve the matter without restrictions being implemented. More information can be found in the Managing Citizen Interaction Procedure.
- 5.6.4 Where unacceptable behaviour has been experienced from a child or young person in a school or care setting, alternative policies and guidance should be followed.
- 5.6.5 The Education Behaviour Action Plan is approved by Education and Children's Services Committee. The policies and guidance that should be considered in such situations within Education are:
- Individual school level relationship/promoting positive behaviour policies (available from schools)
  - Incident and Near Miss Reporting Guidance
  - Person Centred Risk Assessment Guidance
  - Minimising Exclusion Policy and Guidance
  - Supporting Learners Physical Intervention and Seclusion Guidance

The relevant documents are also available for Education employees here: [Supporting Learners \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

- 5.6.6 Employees in the Children's Residential workforce are part of a specialist, regulated sector. They receive support to enhance their skills and knowledge of child development to effectively prepare for behavioural challenges. As outlined in the Service's Ethos of Care, this includes responding to children by applying Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) in their day-to-day supports. Additionally, all employees undertake Behavioural Support Strategies (BSS) as a complementary behavioural management approach. Practice developments are implemented as required.
- 5.6.7 If you are an employee within a school or care setting and require further support, please contact your line manager to discuss.

## **5.7 Elected Members**

- 5.7.1 While Elected Members will work to support positive engagement, there are some situations that they may not respond to or need to manage because of the negative impact on the ability to provide a service. It is understood that individuals may be

upset or distressed when they contact the Council, and Elected Members want to support them to engage with the Council.

- 5.7.2 Wherever possible, the reason for managing engagement will be explained clearly to the constituent. Elected Members will work to ensure that their response is proportionate and necessary.
- 5.7.3 The decision whether or not to take a management approach, as outlined in Section 5.4 above, should be taken by the Elected Member and does not affect the constituent's right to request a service from Aberdeen City Council directly or approach another Ward member.
- 5.7.4 It should be noted that the demands or behaviours that led to a management approach being used may result in subsequent measures being put in place by other Elected Members, if they see fit.
- 5.7.5 **Approach to communicating**

Elected Members will be clear and straight-forward when communicating that a situation needs to change, or that engagement will be managed.

a) **Warning**

If appropriate, a warning will be given which explains the engagement that must be managed, and the constituent will be given the opportunity to stop this behaviour. Elected Members will encourage positive engagement, and the decision to provide a warning is at the Elected Members' discretion.

b) **Restrictions**

Where necessary, Elected Members may determine that it is necessary to formally manage or restrict engagement. Elected Members will explain this in writing to the constituent and outline the alternative routes available to them. This includes seeking the services of an Advocate, another Elected Member or contacting Aberdeen City Council services directly.

5.7.6 **Record**

A record of the correspondence will be kept in line with data requirements.

## 6. **Risk**

6.1 This policy and its supporting documentation will manage the following risks:

- **Compliance Risks** – This policy and its supporting documentation will manage the risk of unacceptable actions towards employees whilst at work. This includes

providing training to employees on providing accessible services, dealing with unacceptable behaviours, sharing information on service users where required to reduce the risk to employees, making reasonable adjustments to working practices where necessary and provide debriefing and support after an incident occurs.

- **Financial Risks** – This policy and supporting documentation mitigates the risk of injury and claims being made to/against the organisation. The risk is mitigated through robust processes and procedures such as risk assessments and the combined policy providing clarity to citizens and employees as to what is acceptable.
- **Reputational Risks** – This policy and supporting documentation manages the risk of reputational damage and supports the existing frameworks in place that provide clear customer service standards and guidance. There are robust supporting policies in place, which are easily accessible to provide guidance to managers and employees around how to manage challenging behaviours.
- **Operational Risks** – This policy and supporting documentation assists in mitigating operational risks which may occur should negative interactions impact the operational delivery of council services. If effectively managed, the impact should be minimized and employees effectively supported.

## 7. Environmental Implications

- 7.1 This policy does not relate to, nor have an impact on, any environmental factors.

## 8. Policy Performance

- 8.1 The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by each Cluster's monitoring and review process. Incident recording will also be monitored. Corporately, the Customer Feedback Team will monitor situations where the Managing Citizen Interaction Policy has been implemented and identify any inconsistencies.

## 9. Design and Delivery

- 9.1 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) have developed an 'Engagement Policy' which helps Local Authorities in supporting positive engagement and managing unreasonable contact with citizens. This policy adheres to this guidance to foster positive engagement and adopts the same methods to manage contact from citizens following instances of unacceptable behaviour. This includes best practice around responding to social media harassment.
- 9.2 This policy is aligned to supporting delivery of the Council's statutory obligations. It is recognised that as a local authority we have an obligation to deliver statutory services and individuals cannot be refused access. This policy provides guidance

around how to ensure this is achieved, by supporting citizens and safeguarding employees.

- 9.2 This policy supports the Prosperous Place Theme within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). Aberdeen City Council's vision is for Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. This means all people being able to access our services, regardless of their background and circumstances, so that we help all people, families, businesses and communities to do well, succeed and flourish in every aspect.

## **10. Housekeeping and Maintenance**

- 10.1 The policy will be subject to a biennial review.
- 10.2 This policy replaces the previously separate Violence and Aggression procedure and Unacceptable Actions policy and consolidates into one.
- 10.3 The supporting documentation specified within this policy will be reviewed and updated as and when required. All corporate procedures are consulted on with Clusters and signed off by the Chief Officer – People & Citizen Services.

## **11. Communication and Distribution**

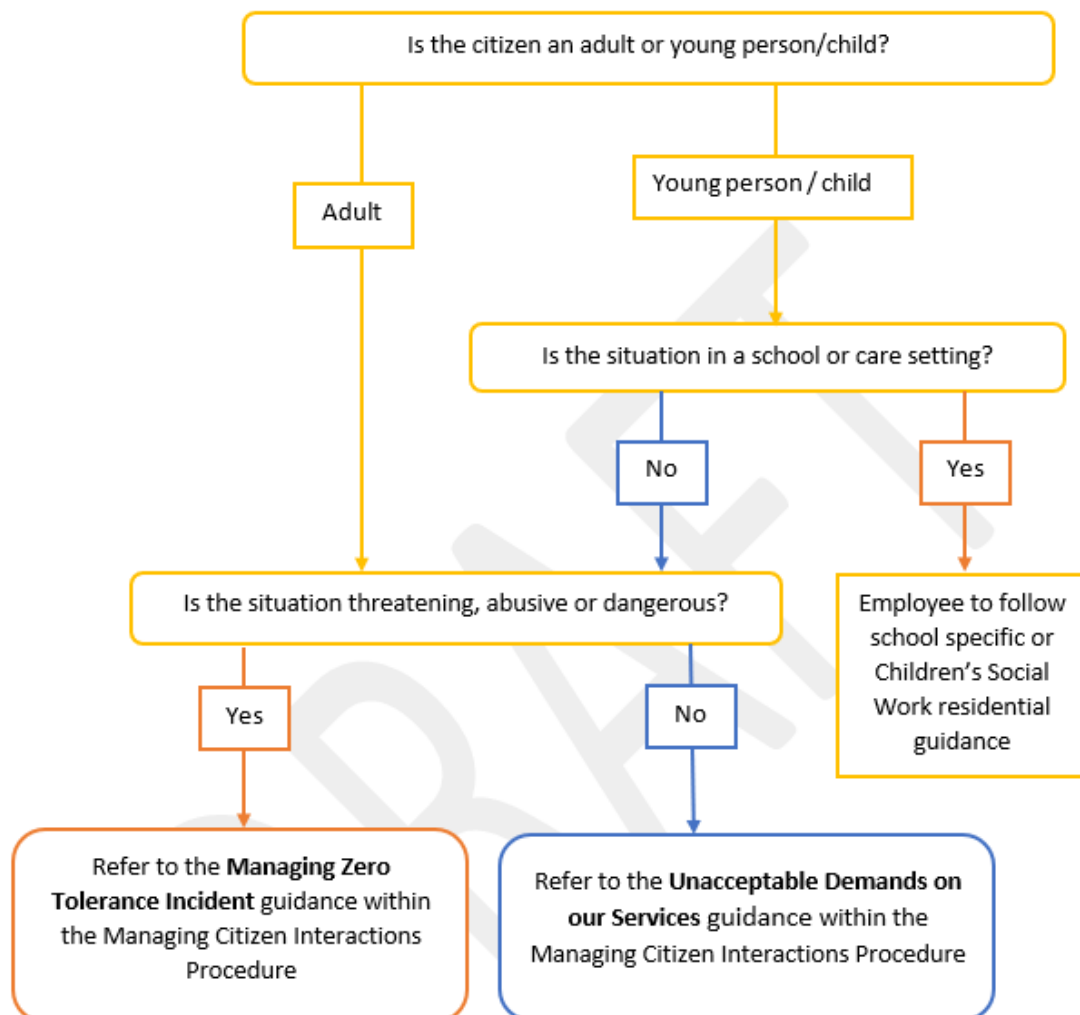
- 11.1 The policy has been consulted on with Trade Unions and all relevant Clusters. It has been made available internally through the intranet and distributed through The Council's Leadership Forum to support awareness. The Customer Feedback Team will promote the consistent implementation of the policy.
- 11.2 The policy will be published externally on the Council website.

## **12. Information Management**

- 12.1 Data generated by this policy will be stored and managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and supporting Handbook of procedures.

### 13. Appendix

The process map below outlines the steps to take when considering managing a citizen's interactions.



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## **Appendix B – Zero Tolerance Pledge**

Everyone has a right to a safe and respectful environment.

We are committed to a zero tolerance approach in relation to any sort of behaviour or language, oral or written, that may cause employees to feel afraid, threatened or abused.

This includes:

- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Personal verbal abuse
- Derogatory remarks and rudeness
- Inflammatory statements
- Unsubstantiated allegations
- Any abuse or negative comments related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010). This includes both verbal and non-verbal behaviours such as comments, snubs or inappropriate questions that negatively target aspects of a person's identity or create hostility

We also have a duty of care towards members of the public that come onto our premises. On occasion, the nature of citizens' behaviour may compromise this duty. The following types of behaviours also fall within the zero tolerance category; however, this is not an exhaustive list:

- Behaviour which is distressing towards other citizens while on Council premises
- Damage to Council property
- Disruptive physical behaviour that prevents the efficient and effective delivery of services to other citizens. This category includes such behaviours as:
  - being noticeably under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs
  - distressing other customers, even if there is not felt to be a risk of actual violence
  - inappropriate behaviours
  - refusing to leave premises when formally requested to do so

Please be mindful of your behaviour and language when communicating with our employees. We reserve the right to immediately cease communication in cases where such behaviour is displayed.

We hope that you welcome our zero tolerance approach, which is in place to protect the interests of our employees as well as the citizens and communities we serve.

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Staff Governance
<b>DATE</b>	16 June 2025
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CORS/25/149
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald, Executive Director Corporate Services
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer People and Citizen Services
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Sharon Robb, Employee Relations Casework Lead
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	3.2iii

### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present committee with an update to the Mental Health Action Plan for 2025, which is aligned to our Workforce Delivery Plan and our approved approach to culture change.
- 1.2 To update Committee on progress and activity from January to December 2024, towards our Employee Mental Health Action Plan.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

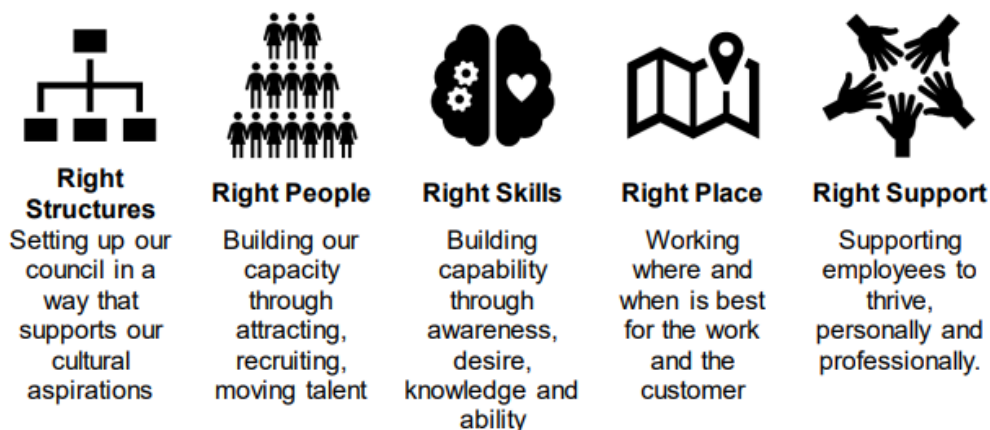
That the Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the continuing progress made on our Mental Health Action Plan and the proactive actions taken to address and support positive employee mental health during the last 12 months; and
- 2.2 Approves the updated Mental Health Action Plan for 2025.

### 3 CURRENT SITUATION

#### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 In [January 2019](#), Committee approved its first Mental Health Action Plan. Since that time, annual reports have been presented to Staff Governance Committee providing updates on progress made towards the plan.
- 3.1.2 In January 2023, Committee approved the [Workforce Delivery Plan](#), which set out the detail for delivery of the workforce strategy aspect of the transformation programme.
- 3.1.3 The Workforce Delivery Plan identified five key levers that needed to be addressed in order to meet local and national challenges and deliver our workforce transformation.



3.1.4 This paper addresses the fifth lever, Right Support, and specifically presents a further update to our Mental Health Action Plan to set out our priorities to deliver two of the strategic objectives listed in the Workforce Delivery Plan:

3.1.4.1 Aberdeen City Council aims to be a supportive, caring employer that offers a range of holistic mental health and wellbeing support, solutions and interventions which are available across our workforce. This aims to; support staff from a financial wellbeing perspective through the cost-of-living crisis; as well as from a mental wellbeing perspective recognising and supporting work/life balance with the aim of enabling employees to remain in work or return to work.

3.1.4.2 The Mental Health Action Plan seeks to continue support and reduce absence levels across the organisation and ensures employees are provided with a range of resources and interventions to remain in work whenever possible and allows support to be targeted to the areas of highest need.

3.1.5 These programmes of work are well underway, and this report provides an update on the ongoing progress made between January and December 2024.

## 3.2 National Context

3.2.1 The Scottish Government continues to place Mental Health and Wellbeing at the centre of their Programme for Government – and in November 2023 published their Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan 2023 – 25, which highlights the importance of local authorities in promoting mental health and wellbeing within their communities and implementing strategies and initiatives to address mental health stigma, provide support in educational and workplace settings, and enhance crisis support services.

3.2.2 In addition, the Programme for Government includes the ‘Creating Hope Together’ suicide prevention strategy, a national review of the Eating Disorder Services Implementation Group and the Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill.

3.2.3 To achieve the outcomes of the Scottish Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy the key areas of focus are to:

**Promote** positive mental health and wellbeing for the whole population, improving understanding and tackling stigma, inequality and discrimination.

**Prevent** mental health issues occurring or escalating and tackle underlying causes, adversities and inequalities wherever possible; and

**Provide** mental health and wellbeing support and care, ensuring people and communities can access the right information, skills, services and opportunities in the right place at the right time, using a person-centred approach.

3.2.4 Internally, we have continued to align and embed these three key areas of focus within our own Mental Health Action Plan as follows:

- **Promote** mental health and wellbeing for the whole organisation through a renewed focus on communications campaigns (including events) to raise awareness of these tools and a platform that is easily accessible (see **Workstream 2** of the Mental Health Action Plan 2024).
- **Prevent** mental health issues occurring or escalating through a focus on self-help tools and resources that empower employees to support their own health and wellbeing (see **Workstream 1**) and training for employees so that they have the skills to manage their own wellbeing and support their colleagues (see **Workstream 3**); and tackling underlying causes, adversities and inequalities wherever possible through data reporting to target interventions proactively to areas of highest need (See **Workstream 6**)
- **Provide** mental health and wellbeing support and care through our managers supporting their teams confidently and appropriately (see **Workstream 5**); through a person-centred approach to mental health and wellbeing support by focusing on employee engagement, empowerment and co-creation (see **Workstream 4**).

3.2.5 [Audit Scotland's 2023 Local Government Overview](#) notes that councils have never faced such a challenging situation. Service demands have increased and funding is forecast to reduce in real terms. Workforce pressures have increased due to resourcing challenges in a competitive labour market, and budget challenges, employee retention and sickness absence levels are putting councils under continued pressure. They conclude that wellbeing initiatives must continue, and councils should monitor the impact of new ways of working.

3.2.6 The [Working Lives Scotland 2024](#) report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in Scotland found that:

- **25% of employees** feel their work impacts negatively on their mental health.
- **45% of employees** have experienced a mental health condition over the last 12 months.

The most common reported mental health conditions are:

- **Anxiety** (27%)
- **Depression** (17%)
- **Sleep problems** (27%)

### **Gender Differences**

**Women** are more likely to experience mental health conditions:

- **Anxiety** (32% of women vs 21% of men)
- **Sleep problems** (31% of women vs 23% of men)

### **Disabled Employees**

- **Disabled employees** report poorer relationships with their managers and a more negative impact of work on their mental health
- **39% of disabled employees** experienced workplace conflict, impacting their mental health

### **Workplace Conflict**

- **28% of employees** experienced workplace conflict, which negatively impacts their mental health
- **49% of those who experienced conflict** say their work impacts negatively on their mental health

### **Psychological Safety**

- **69% of employees** feel that no one in their team would deliberately act in a way that undermines their efforts

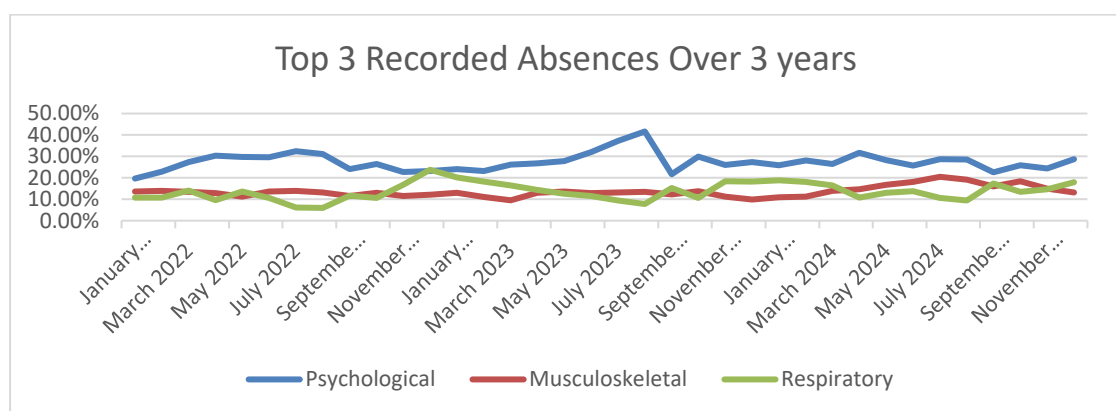
3.2.7 A previous survey by the CIPD and Simplyhealth 2023 indicated that stress was a significant factor for both short and long-term absence, with over 76% of respondents reporting stress-related absence in their organisation in the past year. Heavy workloads remain by far the most common cause of stress-related absence (67%), followed by management style (37%). The CIPD are expected to publish a refreshed Health and Wellbeing Survey towards the end of 2025 and this will be used to further inform and update our mental health action plan in the future

## **3.3 Local Context: Absence Data**

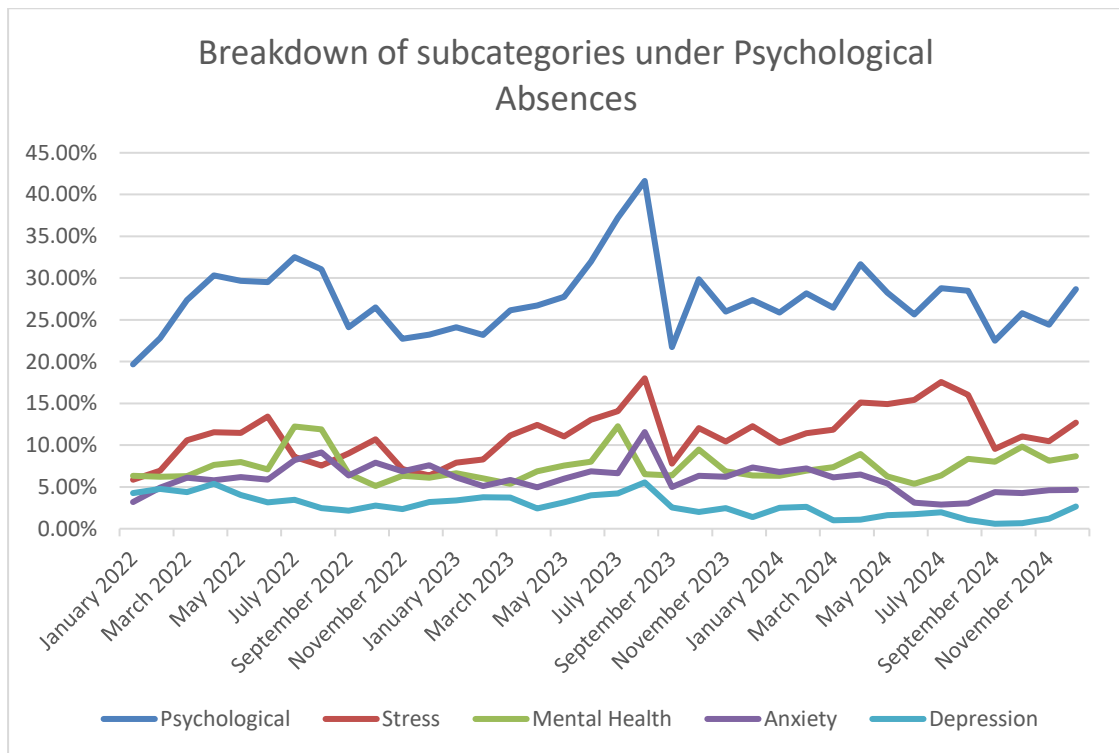
3.3.1 Aberdeen City Council has a focus on the social or wider determinants of health, which are the non-medical factors that influence people's health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping daily life that include the broad social and economic circumstances which together influence the health of the population, which includes the determinants of the mental health of employees.

3.3.2 The data on employee absences from January to December 2024 shows that psychological absence - which includes anxiety, depression, mental health, work-related stress and personal stress - is still one of the three most common reasons for absence reported for Aberdeen City Council- and this has not changed in the past 3 years (the others reasons in the top 3 being musculoskeletal and respiratory illnesses).

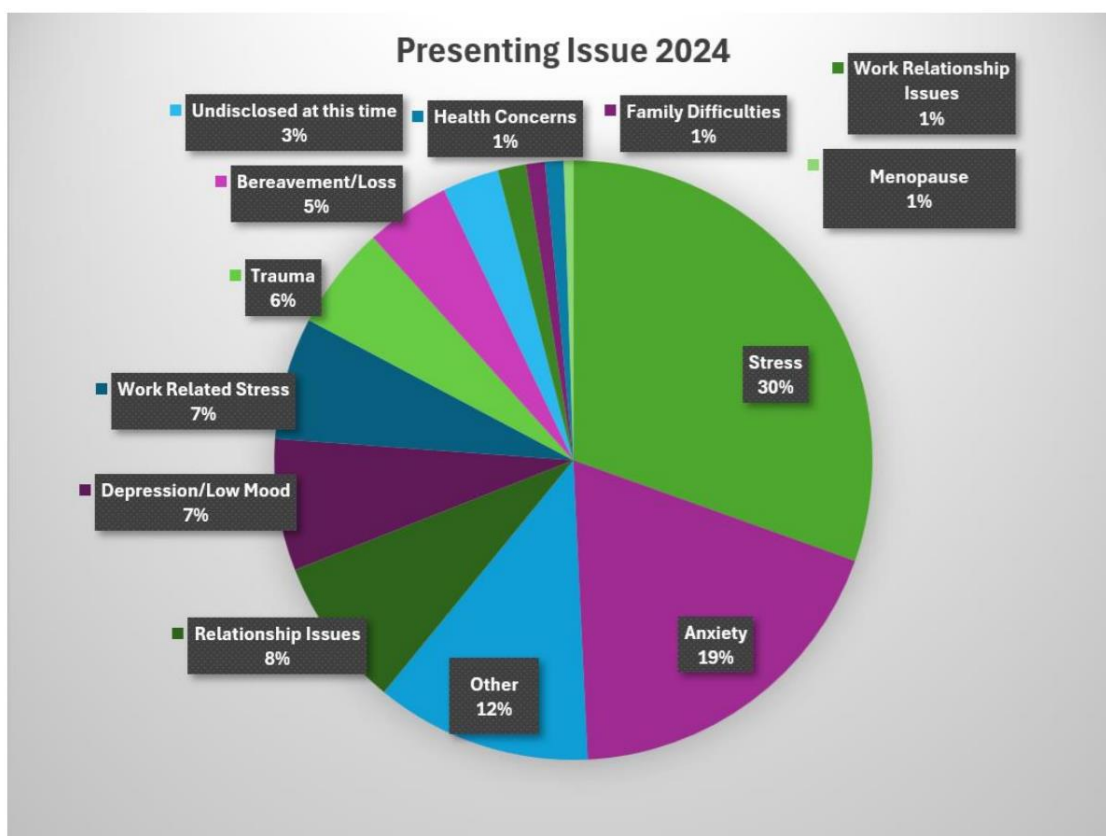
3.3.3



3.3.4 Psychological absence accounts for an average of 27% of all absences in 2024. This has decreased from 29% in 2023 and a return to the average of 27% in 2022. This is consistent with the national picture. Psychological absences are influenced by both personal and work-related factors and CoreHR does not have the ability to distinguish between these. Further analysis of referrals to the Employee Assistance Programme can identify the personal or work-related factors contributing to 'Stress'. The relevant figures are provided below in paragraph 3.6.3. The graph below shows a breakdown of the different sub-categories of psychological absences over 3 years. This shows that stress remains consistently the top reason for psychological absences since mid 2022 while depression remains the least common reason.



3.3.5 In addition to our absence data showing that stress is the most common reason for psychological absence in 2024, we also find that stress is the most common reason for referrals to our Employee Assistance Programme. As reported in [EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update January – December 2024](#) – personal stress accounts for 30% of referrals, anxiety accounts for 19%, depression accounts for 13% and work related stress accounts for 7% of all referrals to our Employee Assistance Programme.



3.3.6 Our local picture is consistent with national findings that stress is currently the top cause of absence across the country. Life events can also have an impact on work-related stress. Things that cause stress outside of work might also include:

- when someone has died
- divorce
- menopause
- caring responsibilities
- poor health

### 3.4 Local Context: Employee Voice

3.4.1 In late 2024/ early 2025, an Employee Experience Survey was carried out. The survey gathered feedback from employees on their wellbeing to build on previous feedback gathered from the 'Wellbeing Pulse Check' in winter 2023 and to provide valuable insights into the mental health and wellbeing of our workforce, assist us to identify any hot spots and trends across the organisation and to inform priority areas for the Mental Health Action Plan in the year ahead.

- 3.4.2 Our intended outcome is for our programme of support and tools to be readily accessible to all our employees by using different methods of communications which have been identified as successful to reach staff in those areas. This aligns to the wider Scottish Government initiative for resources to be easily available to all.
- 3.4.3 Regular consultation and open dialogue with Trade Union colleagues has supported us to improve our communication and engagement campaigns and allows us to deliver on communication of our mental health first aid network, physical wellbeing initiatives and awareness raising communications over the period January to December 2024. These continue to include the delivery of our poster and leaflet campaigns to frontline employees.
- 3.4.4 Feedback from surveys undertaken by trade union colleagues identifying pockets in the organisation where communications are still in need of additional work has indicated that there continues to be a need for increased awareness raising campaigns in mental, physical and financial wellbeing topics.
- 3.4.5 It is important for us to continue to take action to reduce levels of psychological absence because of its impact on the quality and continuity of service delivery, and the morale and productivity of staff. It can also lead to significant increased costs for the council, such as sickness absence costs, overtime, agency, training costs.
- 3.4.6 A project team has been established with the aim to improve absence levels in the organisation and a report is anticipated at Staff Governance Committee in August 2025 providing a revised Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy. Overall our absence rates over the past 12 months have been on a downward trajectory, as reported to committee in December 2025 - [Employee Assistance Service \(EAS\) Annual Progress Update and Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update \(January – December 2024\)](#)
- 3.4.7 As a result, a continued focus on the mental health and wellbeing of our employees, which it is hoped will continue to reduce the level of psychological absence, remains a top priority for the year ahead. This can be achieved by reviewing and implementing effective policies, initiatives and interventions that aim to address the causes and consequences of stress and other psychological conditions; and a proactive and holistic approach to wellbeing, which includes the 4 key elements, psychological, social, physical and financial wellbeing. This is reflected and presented in our updated Mental Health Action Plan for 2025.

- 3.4.8 It is intended to undertake a further “wellbeing pulse check” later in the year , as well as utilise the results from the employee survey, to inform the continued development of the Mental Health Action Plan.

### **3.5 Refreshed Mental Health Action Plan**

- 3.5.1 To address the two strategic objectives set out in the Workforce Delivery Plan under ‘Right Support’, our six updated workstreams agreed at committee in 2024 continue to be our focus for the refreshed Mental Health Action Plan for 2025 A detailed report of activity delivered in 2024 under these six workstreams is available in Appendix 1.

#### **3.5.2 Mental Health Action Plan: Strategic Objectives**

- 3.5.2.1 To reduce (psychological related) absence levels across the organisation and ensure employees are supported to remain in work or return to work effectively through a range of resources and interventions, whenever possible and that is beneficial to them, and target support to the areas of highest need.

### 3.5.3 Mental Health Action Plan 2025 – The Workstreams

The following table sets out our 6 mental health action plan workstreams and the priorities set against these for the year ahead.

Workstream	Priorities for the year ahead
<b>1: Self-help tools and resources that empower employees to support their own health and wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the YourCare portal available through VIVUP and deliver awareness raising campaign.</li> <li>• Launch Salary Finance support on VIVUP Employee Benefits site and deliver associated ‘financial wellbeing’ awareness raising campaign.</li> <li>• Review and evaluate partnership with Paths for All, Employee Step Count Challenge to continue to deliver inclusive physical activity initiatives across the organisation.</li> <li>• Collaborate with our Environmental colleagues to encourage staff to access volunteering initiatives and access our outdoor green spaces</li> <li>• Continue to promote and encourage staff to use our mapped out City Centre walking routes to encourage better physical wellbeing</li> </ul>
<b>2: Communications campaigns (inc. events) that raise awareness of these tools and a platform that is easily accessible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to ensure coverage of all comms campaigns includes physical campaigns and Viva Engage to be inclusive and accessible for frontline colleagues.</li> <li>• Our aim is that 95% of employees are aware of the ACC Employee Assistance Provider Vivup – and how to access it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ And that 50% of employees are aware of the YourCare platform available as part of Vivup.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Our aim is that 95% of employees are aware of Reasonable Adjustment Passports</li> <li>• Our aim is that 95% of employees are aware of Mental Health First Aiders</li> <li>• Support staff through cost of living crisis by developing closer working partnership with Financial Inclusion team to promote information and advice to the organisation internally.</li> <li>• Increase awareness of Employee Benefits opportunities and promote potential savings.</li> <li>• Deliver a communications campaign to raise awareness of proposed Zero Tolerance campaign – to support frontline colleagues facing violence and aggression in the workplace, ensure they are aware of policies and procedures to support them and report incidents.</li> <li>• Deliver communication campaign that normalises talking about mental health at work.</li> </ul>

<b>3: Training for employees so that they have the skills to manage their own wellbeing and support their colleagues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training for frontline employees in preventing violence and aggression – including how to de-escalate possible disputes, manage their emotions and keep themselves and others safe.</li> <li>• Continue to deliver Mental Health and Wellbeing section within Corporate Induction to engage and communicate support initiatives to all new employees</li> </ul>
<b>4: Employees owning the change and co-creating the future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with frontline employees to co-create the new Zero Tolerance policy and guidance – ensuring steps are in place to protect their wellbeing during and after violent or aggressive incidents.</li> <li>• Undertake employee engagement with Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) and other Equality Working Groups to understand needs of protected groups and improve accessibility and shape future wellbeing initiatives.</li> <li>• Continue to increase number of Mental Health First Aiders to reach target of 2.5% coverage across organisation.</li> <li>• Deliver additional Continuous Professional Development and support for Mental Health First Aiders</li> <li>• Introduce a more formal method of supervision by way of 1-2-1 meetings with MHFAs across the organisation</li> </ul>
<b>5: Managers support their teams confidently and appropriately</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure and/or deliver training for managers in frontline areas to upskill them in debriefing individuals and teams after incidents of violence, aggression or trauma.</li> <li>• Our aim is that 100% of managers are aware of Wellness Action Plans as part of their absence management practice.</li> <li>• Our aim is that 100% of managers are aware of Reasonable Adjustment Passports</li> <li>• Our aim is that 100% of managers are aware of Stress Risk Assessments for individuals and teams.</li> <li>• Our aim is that 100% of managers have completed the mandatory Mentally Healthy Workplaces eLearning</li> <li>• Our aim is that 100% of managers have a wellbeing conversation with their employees every year.</li> <li>• Our aim is that 100% of Service Managers have undertaken Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness for managers and Supervisors.</li> <li>• Upskill managers to have the confidence to support and have conversations with staff about their mental health and wellbeing</li> </ul>

**6: Data reporting to target interventions proactively to areas of highest need.**

- Repeat Wellbeing Pulse Check in Winter 2025 to gather feedback on success of above initiatives
- Target initiatives based on the data gathered from various systems, surveys, Core HR, focus groups and anecdotal feedback gathered

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Mental health and wellbeing is increasingly becoming a core component of service delivery, linked to both staff retention and customer satisfaction. There is the potential to reduce direct and indirect costs in relation to sickness absence, low morale/engagement and increased turnover by supporting and promoting positive mental health. This can have a significant impact on Function / Cluster budgets.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Failure to comply with legislation in ensuring a safe and healthy workplace has the potential to result in enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Such intervention can result in potential prosecution (criminal) and employees (civil claims) are more likely to succeed following a successful HSE prosecution. Changes in the Sentencing and Fines Guidance for health and safety non-compliances are resulting in increased financial penalties. Fine starting points are based on an organisation's turnover. As Local Authorities do not have turnover; their Annual Revenue Budget is deemed to be the equivalent. This amount is then altered depending on the culpability of the organisation and harm factors to employees and members of the public.
- 5.2 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, there is a legal requirement to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of our employees. This includes minimising the risk of stress-related illness or injury to employees.

#### 6. 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?
Compliance	Compliance with legal requirements ensures the health and safety of employees	Actions outlined in the appendix provide additional support for employees.	M	Yes
Financial	If no action is taken to support	Implementation of the Mental Health	M	Yes

	individuals and address trends, then the organisation will incur both direct and indirect costs.	and Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy and supporting Stress Procedure. Effective management and maintenance of a mentally healthy workplace and provision of appropriate support.		
<b>Reputational</b>	Without ensuring suitable employee support there is a risk of the organisation not becoming an employer of choice and having recruitment and retention issues.	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	<b>L</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
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.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to Mental Health Action Plan update 2024 ( <a href="#">Mental Health Action Plan.pdf</a> ) has been reviewed and no changes required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	not required

Other	N/A
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## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Working Lives Scotland 2024](#)
- 10.2 [Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2023 - 2025](#)
- 10.3 [Simply Health | CIPD - Health and Wellbeing at Work Report 2023](#)
- 10.4 [EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update January – December 2024](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Mental Health Action Plan Progress Report: January – December 2024

## 12. REPORT AUTHORS CONTACT DETAILS

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## Appendix 1

### Mental Health Action Plan Progress Report: January – December 2024

#### Workstream 1: Self-help tools and resources that empower employees to support their own health and wellbeing

Improvement actions	Progress update January – December 2024	Status
<b>1. Establish and build new partnership with Able Futures to help employees living with mental health to stay in work.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership established 2022 and continued to promote through 2025 - a great build on to the employee assistance service and good feedback received</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>2. Establish Wellness Action Plans for employees to share with managers before there's a crisis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellness action plans were launched in 2023 and an ACC template shared with managers looking to additionally support staff continue to be promoted and managers encouraged to access this tool when supporting staff.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>3. Embed Vivup as our new Employee Assistance Provider (EAP). Launch YourCare portal – a proactive wellbeing hub tailored to individual's experience.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion and awareness of Vivup EAP. Vivup – new EAP – launched October 2022. Focus in 2024 was to build on our promotional campaign to raise awareness of new provider and the 24/7 service they provide to employees, including immediate crisis support.</li> <li>Intranet pages continually updated with regular reminders via blogs and Viva Engage posts. Links to EAP added to all other wellbeing promotional campaigns to ensure good visibility.</li> <li>Poster and leaflet campaigns out across entire council estate – including schools, depots, housing offices. All pigeon holes now populated and posters delivered to bothies and frontline canteen spaces to ensure frontline visibility</li> <li>Virtual team meetings attended to promote services.</li> <li>Review progress and report uptake to Staff Governance Committee.</li> <li>YourCare portal launched in 2023– additional promotion required to further embed in 2025.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

Improvement actions	Progress update January – December 2024	Status
<b>4. Establish partnership with Paths for All Workplace Step Count Challenge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source and deliver 2<sup>nd</sup> Step Count Challenge to encourage inclusive staff participate in physical wellbeing activities with healthy engagement connecting teams and services right across the organisation</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>5. Absence project to refresh Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance guidance with updated available wellbeing support</li> </ul>	Ongoing – new policy expected August 2025
<b>6. Reasonable adjustment passports rolled out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched and communicated to support employees with a variety of issues.</li> <li>Additional communication needed to further increase awareness and encourage use.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered Ongoing
<b>7. Stress Risk Assessments – communicate and raise the awareness of the importance of these.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raised awareness and promoted Stress Risk Assessments via one-to-one coaching conversations with managers.</li> <li>Team Stress Risk Assessments utilised with Housing by Health &amp; Safety team.</li> <li>Additional promotion required.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

**Workstream 2: Communications campaigns (inc. events) to raise awareness of these tools and a platform that is easily accessible.**

Improvement actions	Progress update January – December 2024	Status
<b>1 Create a single accessible online Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub – as a one-stop-shop for all resources.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Originally delivered 2019, significantly enhanced and promoted to support people during the pandemic in 2020, continuous improvement delivered to keep pace with evolutions in intranet.</li> <li>Created a Mental Health and Wellbeing Managers Toolkit as a one stop shop for managers to find resources and share support with employees</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>2 Raise awareness of Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub through a regular programme of blogs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular communication campaigns around professional services available for support</li> <li>Viva Engage used to share Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing initiatives and to promote campaigns.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

Improvement actions		Progress update January – December 2024	Status
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser delivering Therapet Service and talking to staff individually to increase visibility and to help breakdown barriers for staff accessing support</li> </ul>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Target Frontline Operational Areas for communication and engagement to break down the stigma of mental health.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications significantly increased this year using a variety of methods including poster and leaflet and social media campaigns to spread the word.</li> <li>Significantly increased communication to frontline employees using their own Microsoft Teams sites and Viva Engage communities.</li> <li>Network of frontline managers created to help with the distribution of frontline campaigns to ensure posters and leaflets shared across workspaces</li> <li>Poster campaigns delivered to outlying venues, Altens, Tullos, Kittybrewster, Duthie Park to ensure delivery of key wellbeing initiatives.</li> </ul>	☑ Delivered and Ongoing
<b>4</b>	<b>Focus on financial wellbeing to support people through the cost of living crisis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information shared around Citizens Advice Bureau Debt Support team on Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing Hub and via Viva Engage.</li> <li>Financial Wellbeing intranet pages updated.</li> <li>Additional work required in 2025 to support employees through continued cost of living crisis.</li> </ul>	☑ Delivered and Ongoing
<b>5</b>	<b>Continue to raise awareness of Mental Health First Aiders and grow network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical poster campaigns delivered to raise the profile of the MHFA and other support area and initiatives in outlying sites with details on how to get involved or contact.</li> <li>Additional dates to add new MHFA to network to cover staff leaving and enhance provision of service to make it more easily accessible</li> </ul>	☑ Delivered and Ongoing
<b>6</b>	<b>Align with national wellbeing campaigns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued increase in number of messages this year using other platforms including social media for maximum reach.</li> </ul>	☑ Delivered and Ongoing
<b>7</b>	<b>Information to signpost employees to various bereavement support services, policies and external organisations to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In response to the loss of colleagues via tragic means in 2022-23, we increased focus on support available for employees affected by trauma and bereavement. Created specific, easy to find pages on the intranet relating to bereavement along with support services available, internal</li> </ul>	☑ Delivered and Ongoing

Improvement actions	Progress update January – December 2024	Status
<b>better support the workforce in times of grief.</b>	and external, with additional information signposting employees to external professional organisations.	

### Wellbeing Awareness Campaigns and Initiatives delivered – January – December 2024

Mental Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion Initiatives promoted across the organisation - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered	
Aberdeen Sports Village – Free Family Open Day	Mental Health Festival
Aberdeen Sports Village – Summer Promotion – Staff Discount Promotion	Mental Health Improvement and Wellbeing Service
Access to Work Information Session - DWP	Mindfulness Mondays at Aberdeen Health Village – ACHSCP
Alcohol Awareness Week – National Campaign	Movember (Mental Health) Campaign – John Duthie
ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)	National Fitness Day – National Campaign
Breathing Space Awareness Session – HWL Campaign	NHS 24 Mental Health Hub Awareness Campaign
Chronic Pain Information and Support Session	Penumbra 365 (Mental Health Services) Awareness Session
Dynamics of Domestic Abuse Training	Pillow Talk Event – Ladies Health and Wellbeing Hangout
Hand Washing Awareness Campaign – Health Protection Scotland	Prevent Suicide – Awareness Campaign – Northeast Scotland
Healthy Eating Week 2024 – National Campaign	Sport Aberdeen – Drop In Activities
Heartfulness Mediations Sessions	Sport Aberdeen – Summer Fitness Pass – Staff Discount Promotion
Lunchtime Led Walks – Staff Walks – ACHSCP	Supporting Women’s Health in the Workplace – Vivup Your Care Portal
Meditation Open Day and Wellbeing Week Information – Kadampa	The Changing Room – Mental Health Support - AFCCT
Men In Mind (Men’s Mental Health Peer to Peer Support Group) Awareness Campaign	Winter Wellbeing Tips including Vaccinations
Men’s Health Week 2024 – P is for Prostate – Awareness Campaign	Workplace Volunteering Opportunities – Awareness – HWL Campaign

Menopause Awareness for Managers/Supervisors Training – HWL Campaign	World Menopause Day – Awareness Event
Menopause Awareness and Resources and Support available on People Anytime	World Mental Health Day
Mental Health Awareness for Managers	World Suicide Prevention Day - Suicide Prevention National Campaign
Mental Health Awareness Week – Movement - Mov	Your Care Campaign – Vivup Your Care Portal Awareness

### Workstream 3: Training for employees so that they have the skills to manage their own wellbeing and support their colleagues

Improvement actions	Progress update January – December 2024	
<b>1. Provide training for employees on how to manage their own resilience and wellbeing.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eLearning modules available on Building Resilience and Psychological First Aid: Taking Care of Yourself.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>2. Provide employees with the skills to support their peers colleagues with their mental health, tackle the stigma of mental health, and build confidence to have conversations around suicide</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eLearning module made available to provide employees with awareness and skills to tackle stigma in work - Ask Tell, Save a Life short online learning</li> <li>Mentally Health Workplaces eLearning available to all. This training is for anyone who wants to learn more about mental health in the workplace. Everyone has a role to play in creating a mentally healthy workplace and it can have benefits for you and your colleagues</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>3. Provide employees with skills to support women at work going through the menopause.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menopause Awareness training available through ACC Learn and aimed at all employees to support women in the workplace</li> <li>Develop a Menopause Policy and Guidance</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>4. Provide employees with the skills to support their colleagues experiencing domestic abuse.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intranet landing page created which includes information about how to support a colleague and links to the Aberdeen Protects website. Training also available for staff to undertake to find out more about coercive and controlling behaviours</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

<b>5. Ensure employees are ‘Trauma Informed’ so that they know how to support their colleagues and customers who have experienced trauma.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added to Capability Framework for relevant job families.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Frontline Customer Services:</b> I understand the impact that trauma can have on an individual and the positive difference I can make to the customer’s experience</li> <li><b>Social &amp; Community Services:</b> I know how to spot the signs and respond to people who are affected by trauma.</li> <li><b>People Manager:</b> I know how to spot the signs and respond to people who are affected by trauma</li> </ul> </li> <li>Trauma Informed eLearning – developed by NHS Grampian - available for all staff</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
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#### Workstream 4: Employees owning the change and co-creating the future.

Improvement actions	Progress update January – December 2024	Status
<b>1. Expand Mental health first aider network to increase coverage across the organisation to 2.5% and make finding support accessible to all</b>	Continued to grow the Mental Health First Aid network Feedback suggests this is a vital frontline service used by many staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>2. Upskill, develop and motivate current support MHFA through peer sessions and one-to one for debriefing and sharing best practice.</b>	Sessions delivered to Mental Health First Aiders to upskill and increase knowledge around hot topics like Domestic Abuse, Wellness Action Plans, Bereavement Support, Breathing Space Support Service Awareness, Penumbra 365 Support Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>3. Continuous review of MHFA list to ensure wide coverage</b>	Increased reach of Mental Health First Aiders with many now trained throughout school settings with a total of 130 volunteers. This equates to 1.6% of employees trained across the whole organisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>4. Target schools for recruitment and training of MHFAs</b>	Training to be available to both primary and secondary schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>5. Employee engagement and inclusive groups to drive and shape initiatives - focus groups and networks to gather</b>	Viva Engage used to create communities for peer support and discussion around various mental health and wellbeing topic. This enables employees to find and share resources for self-help	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and ongoing

additional anecdotal feedback and needs and priorities

## Workstream 5: Managers support their teams confidently and appropriately

Improvement actions	Progress update January – December 2024	Status
1. <b>Upskill managers so that they have greater awareness of Mental Health and how to support their employees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness for managers and Supervisors sessions procured through NESCol - ?? managers trained in Jan -Dec 2024 to support managers to have sensitive conversations positively.</li> <li>• Mental Health and Wellbeing resources readily available and made externally accessible for managers to share easily with staff</li> <li>• eLearning is mandatory for managers: Mentally Health Workplaces. This training is for anyone who wants to learn more about mental health in the workplace. Everyone has a role to play in creating a mentally healthy workplace and it can have benefits for you and your colleagues</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
2. <b>Ensure that managers are 'trauma informed' and understand how trauma can impact on mental health.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The responsibility for managers to be 'trauma informed' is clarified through their People Manager Capability Framework: <b>People Manager:</b> I know how to spot the signs and respond to people who are affected by trauma.</li> <li>• Trauma Informed training available for all employees through ACC Learn.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
3. <b>Deliver new Quality of Working Lives Stress Risk Assessment training to managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborated with the Health and Safety Team and Employee Relations and Wellbeing to develop training available for individual managers and teams support to complete QWL Risk Assessment. This is now provided on a one-to-one basis by H&amp;S Advisers to manager as required.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

<b>4. Coach and support managers directly.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser provides regular contact and support to managers across the organisation to provide 1-2-1 support and advice where needed.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>5. Ensure managers are having wellbeing conversations with employees at least once per year through CR&amp;D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellbeing check-in question added to End of Year appraisal in CoreHR – to be piloted during 2024 and has been adopted as a standard part of CR&amp;D.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered

**Workstream 6: Data reporting to target interventions proactively to areas of highest need.**

<b>Improvement actions</b>	<b>Progress update January – December 2024</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>1. Continue work towards improving data recording reasons for absences and reporting on this</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work continuing to analyse the data and target initiatives according to where the data leads</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<b>2. Attend Health and Safety Committee Groups and SMTs to discuss data and identify potential supports to be implement in targeted areas.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular updates send to H&amp;S groups. Current report will be distributed to groups.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<b>3. MHFA Recording Tool – encourage recording of interactions to show the demand on the network and help build data trends on where staff are contacting from</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to analyse the data gathered from the MHFA Recording Tool to help identify hot spots and trends and to help target initiatives and awareness raising campaigns across the organisation.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<b>4. Introduce Wellbeing Pulse Checks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further Wellbeing Pulse Check Surveys to be send out in 2025 and analyse data gathered to identify trends and target initiatives across the organisation</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<b>5. Analyse and interrogate Power BI Absence data and use this information to target areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing analysis of the data to identify trends and target initiatives across the organisation</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

<b>6. Analyse data received from Employee Assistance Programme and use this to target areas of need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing analysis of the data to identify trends and target initiatives across the organisation</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Staff Governance Committee
<b>DATE</b>	16 June 2025
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Cluster Risk Register and Assurance Map
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CORS/25/147
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald, Director – Corporate Services
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	General Delegation 8.4

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Assurance Map in accordance with Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference to provide assurance that workforce related risks are being managed effectively within the People and Citizen Services Cluster.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the Assurance Map set out in Appendix 1.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Risk Management Policy Framework states that all committees should receive assurance on the risk management arrangements which fall within their terms of reference. This is provided through the risk registers for the relevant Clusters which fall within the remit for this Committee as detailed below:

- People and Citizen Services (Workforce related risks)

- 3.2 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for overseeing the overall system of risk management and for receiving assurance that the Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT) are effectively identifying and managing risks. Reviewing the strength and effectiveness of the Council's system of risk management as a whole is a key role for the Committee.

#### **Risk Registers**

- 3.3 The Council's Risks Registers are tools used by Functions and Clusters to capture and manage the risks which could prevent achievement of organisational outcomes and service delivery.

- 3.4 The Council's Corporate Risk Register (CRR) captures the risks which pose the most significant threat to the achievement of the Council's organisational outcomes and have the potential to cause failure of service delivery. The CRR is scrutinised annually by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.5 At the present time, there are no Cluster level Workforce related risks within the People and Citizen Services Cluster and as this was the case in 2024, there are no comparisons with previous risk scores to be reported at this level. There is therefore no Cluster risk register to present to Committee.
- 3.6 Cluster Risk Registers provides the organisation with the detailed information and assessment for each risk identified including;
- **Current risk score** – this is current assessment of the risk by the risk owner and reflects the progress percentage of control actions required in order to achieve the target risk score.
  - **Target risk score** – this is the assessment of the risk by the risk owner after the application of the control actions. This is aligned with the risk appetite for this particular category of risk.
  - **Control Actions** – these are the activities and items that will mitigate the effect of the risk event on the organisation.
  - **Risk score** – each risk is assessed using a 4x6 risk matrix as detailed below.

The 4 scale represents the impact of the risk and the 6 scale represents the likelihood of the risk event.

Impact		Score					
Very Serious	4	4	8	12	16	20	24
Serious	3	3	6	9	12	15	18
Material	2	2	4	6	8	10	12
Negligible	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Score		1	2	3	4	5	6
Likelihood		Impossible	Almost Very Low	Low	Significant	High	Very High

- 3.7 Development and improvement of the Cluster Risk Registers and associated risk management processes has continued since the Cluster Risk Register was last reported to Committee:
- The Council's Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) was reviewed and updated.
  - Work to complete the recommendations from the internal audit of the Council's Risk Management arrangements including enhancements to

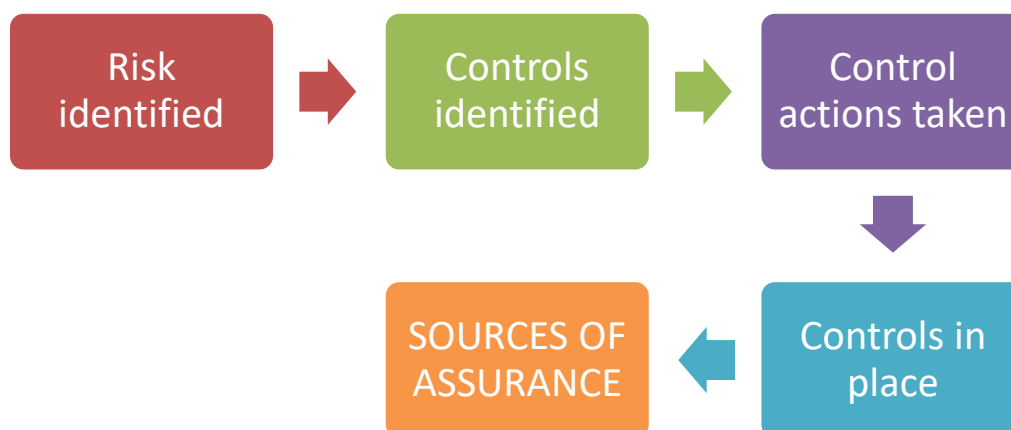
Cluster Risk Management reporting which are incorporated within this report.

- On-going improvements and updates to the “Managing Risk” pages published on the Council’s intranet pages which contains information and links for officers and elected members on the Council’s RAS, Risk Management Policy, Guidance and Training. This supports the further embedding of our risk management culture and ensures that everyone knows the part they play in managing risks within the wider system.
- Risk owners and leads continue to review and update risk registers to improve monitoring and reporting across the organisation. These are mechanisms which reflect the day-to-day business of assessing and mitigating the risks and opportunities inherent in delivering public services.

### **Assurance Maps**

- 3.8 The risk registers which are reviewed by the Council’s Committees detail the risks identified within each of the relevant Functions and Clusters and provide detail of the risk, the potential impact and consequence of the risk materialising and the control actions and activities required to manage and mitigate the risk. Assurance Maps as set out in appendix 1 provide a visual representation of the sources of assurance associated with each Cluster so that the Committee can consider where these are sufficient. Sources of assurance are controls which are fully effective, following the completion of control actions.

Presentation of each Cluster’s assurance map provides full sight of the defences we have in place as an organisation to manage the risks facing local government.



- 3.9 The Assurance Map provides a breakdown of the sources of assurance within “three lines of defence”, the different levels at which risk is managed. Within a large and complex organisation like the Council, risk management takes place in many ways. The Assurance Map is a way of capturing the sources of assurance and categorising them, thus ensuring that any gaps in sources of assurance are identifiable and can be addressed:

<b>First Line of Defence “Do-ers”</b>	<b>Second Line of Defence “Helpers”</b>	<b>Third Line of Defence “Checkers”</b>
The control environment; business operations performing day to day risk management activity; owning and managing risk as part of business as usual; these are the business owners, referred to as the “do-ers” of risk management.	Oversight of risk management and ensuring compliance with standards, in our case including ARSC as well as CMT and management teams; setting the policies and procedures against which risk is managed by the do-ers, referred to as the “helpers” of risk management.	Internal and external audit, inspection and regulation, thereby offering independent assurance of the first and second lines of defence, the “do-ers” and “helpers”, referred to as the “checkers” of risk management.

### **People and Citizen Services Risk Overview**

- 3.10 As a Senior Management Team, as part of our governance arrangements we consider risk on a regular basis, and horizon scan forthcoming legislation (or any other source) for any potential risk, as well as taking account of any audit recommendations that arise that have risk implications. Should any risk(s) be identified, we would take the necessary actions to add into our Cluster risk register.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. This report deals with risk management at Cluster level and this process serves to identify controls and assurances that finances are being properly managed.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The Council’s Risk Registers serve to manage many risks with implications for the legal position and statutory responsibilities of the Council.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7. RISK**

- 7.1 There are no risks arising from the recommendations in this report. The Committee is provided with assurance that any risks presented within the Cluster Risk Register that may affect achievement of organisational outcomes and delivery of services for each Cluster are identified, appropriately managed and that the Council’s activities are compliant with its statutory duties.

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?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	The council is required to have a management system in place to identify and mitigate its risks.	The council's risk management system requires that risks are identified, listed and managed via Risk Registers.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes

## 8. OUTCOMES

- 8.1 The recommendations within this report have no direct impact on the Council Delivery Plan however, the risks contained within the Council's risk registers could impact on the delivery of organisational outcomes.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	It is confirmed by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	Not applicable

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

## 11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Assurance Map – People and Citizen Services (People Services)

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## Appendix 1 – Assurance Map – People & Citizen Services (People Services)

Assurance Map		
Cluster - People & Citizen Services (People Services)		
Corporate Risk Register Risk:		
<b>1. Workforce Resilience</b> Risk that a reduced workforce due to budget pressures, as well as external factors such as hard to fill roles or national policies may impact workforce resilience, our capacity and ability to deliver services, and in turn lead to reductions in service delivery and outcomes and an increase in Trade Union activity with the potential for industrial action.		
First Line of Defence (Do-ers)	Second Line of Defence (Helpers)	Third Line of Defence (Checkers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff and managers implementing related procedures and guidance flowing from policies and ACC Workforce Delivery Plan</li> <li>People Services delivery against Workforce Delivery Plan</li> <li>Risk Assessment of people-related risks by staff and managers</li> <li>People Services enabling effective people management, support and development through relevant advice to managers</li> <li>Managers undertaking relevant training and development</li> <li>Monitoring of employee-related data by People Services and all Senior Management Teams via People Performance Dashboard</li> <li>Skills audits and professional development plans used to build training requirements and programmes of development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People related policies and procedures</li> <li>Relevant guidance for managers and staff available on People Anytime (staff intranet)</li> <li>ACC Workforce Delivery Plan</li> <li>Management and Leadership Training and Development Opportunities</li> <li>Job Families and Capability Framework</li> <li>Re.cr.uit Scheme - Internal Recruitment and Internal Movement of Staff</li> <li>FAIR agreement with Trade Unions</li> <li>Regular engagement with Trade Unions including Directors Union Engagement meetings/LNCT</li> <li>Outlined approaches to trade union and staff engagement and consultation (business case and adoption and change management approaches)</li> <li>Temporary Movement of Staff Protocol</li> <li>E-learning system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COSLA – national negotiating body via SJC and SNCT.</li> <li>Scottish Government – checking compliance with national initiatives e.g. Early Years Expansion, Pupil Equity Fund</li> <li>Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) / ACAS-- professional bodies available for benchmarking / best practice advice and guidance</li> <li>Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS) – professional body available for benchmarking / best practice advice and guidance and links into COSLA</li> <li>Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMiE) reports – use a sampling strategy for inspections across school leadership and learning and teaching</li> <li>Disclosure Scotland – monitoring requirements for work with vulnerable groups</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers engaging staff and trade unions during change in line with our people change procedures and approach</li> <li>• Managers completing Continuous Review and Development and 1:1s</li> <li>• Leadership Forum</li> <li>• Staff and managers completing mandatory training requirements</li> <li>• Reporting of mandatory training completion and exception actions by managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health provider to support staff eg those reporting stress</li> <li>• Quality of Working Lives Stress Risk Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health Action Plan and Substance Misuse Action Plan</li> <li>• Mental Health First Aid Network</li> <li>• Your Care online wellbeing staff portal</li> <li>• Wellness Action Plans</li> <li>• Reasonable Adjustment Passports</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Corporate Boards</li> <li>• Council Committees</li> <li>• Corporate Management Team (CMT)</li> <li>• Data Protection processes and Information Governance including DPIAs</li> <li>• Employment Legal Team</li> <li>• Consultation and legislative tracker to horizon scan for changes in the law</li> <li>• Risk Appetite Statement</li> <li>• Business Continuity Sub-Group</li> <li>• Employee Data Forum</li> <li>• Utilisation of RPA for council processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Office – monitoring requirements for right to live/work in UK</li> <li>• ICO – monitoring data breaches and any related investigations</li> <li>• GTCS/SSSC- set out registration requirements for specific parts of the workforce</li> <li>• Employer Accreditations including Quality of Working Lives, Young Person's Guarantee, Disability Confident, Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, Equally Safe at Work</li> <li>• Benchmarking through Local Government Benchmarking forum (LGBF) measuring indicators such of cost of HR gender profile and workforce profile across all 32 Local Authorities (Statutory Performance Indicators)</li> <li>• Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report</li> <li>• Staffing Watch Report</li> <li>• Internal Audit Assurance Review Outcomes/ Recommendations</li> <li>• Employee Experience Survey and Wellbeing Pulse Checks</li> <li>• Data Gathering and Analysis</li> </ul>
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