

Corporate Annual Health and Safety Report

Financial Year
2019/20



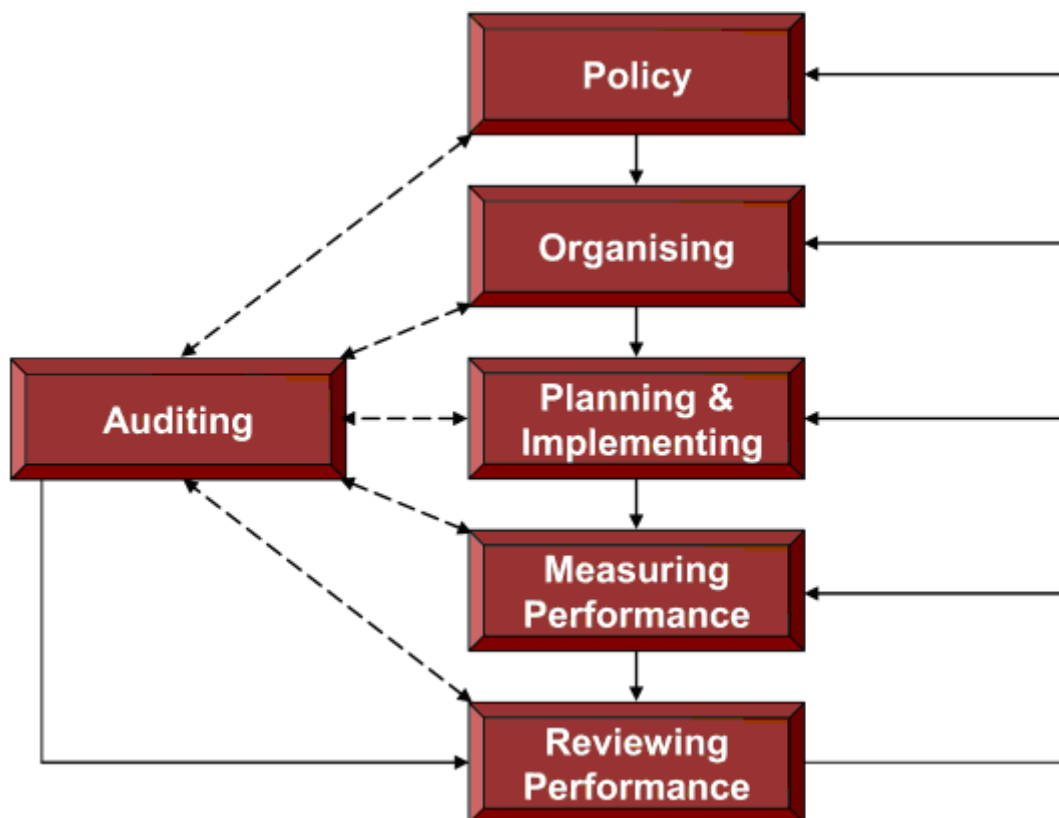
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Summary

Reviewing performance is an important part of health and safety management as it enables an organisation to learn from all relevant experience and apply the lessons. It is based on a systematic review of performance based on data from monitoring and audits of the whole health and safety management system.

Managing for health and safety (HSG65) a national standard for health and safety management, explains the plan, do, check, act approach and shows how it can help organisations like ours to achieve a balance between the systems and behavioural aspects of management. It also treats health and safety management as an integral part of good management generally, rather than as a stand-alone system.

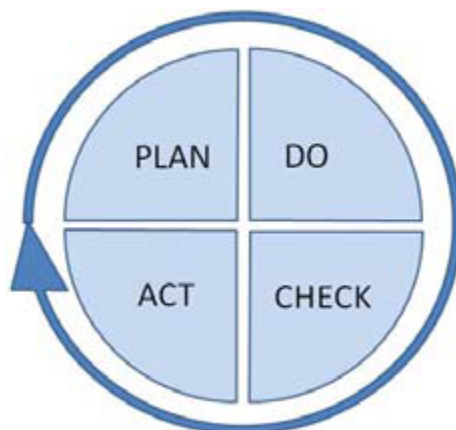


Adopting this model the corporate health and safety team continues to ensure policies; procedures and systems are in place to meet the requirements of current legislation and best practice. Principal areas of work have included a review of the safety management systems in order to ensure they are robust in light of the new legislation regarding corporate manslaughter, which came into effect on 6 April 2008, and the Institute of Directors and Health and Safety Executive guidance 'Leading Health & Safety at Work' 2013.

Over the last ten years we have been working to strengthen the Council's position in relation to health and safety management. This has been a process of gradually tightening up on our policies and procedures and ensuring that these remain relevant and up to date.

We now have improved systems for carrying out risk assessments and making sure that they are regularly reviewed; for tracking of lone workers; workstation assessments and for many other aspects of a good health and safety management system. The system remains live and continues to undergo a process of continuous improvement.

As noted in the body of this report, considerable work was also undertaken, and is continuing, in areas such as asbestos management and legionella management in corporate buildings and in the housing stock at High Peak Borough Council.



The ongoing emphasis is on a sensible, risk-based approach, building health and safety into our normal way of working rather than regarding it as an ‘add on’ to ensure that we get it right and keep it that way.

The activities of the team have also been subjected to a review by internal audit. Our arrangements have also been reviewed by Zurich our insurers who have categorised our approach to health and safety as good to best practice.

This report refers to key aspects of health and safety that occurred across High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The report deals with the period from the beginning of April 2019 to the end of March 2020. The report also provides supporting statistical information in appendices at the end of this report.

2. Corporate commitment to health and safety

Both Councils recognise their obligations under health and safety legislation and have declared their commitment to improving the health, safety and welfare of their employees and others within the corporate health and safety policy.

Parts of the electronic health and safety portfolio have been reviewed during 2019-20. This review has taken account of changes in legislation and the senior management changes that took place in February and March 2020.

Reviews of our Corporate Health and Safety Policy, our Pregnant Worker Policy, DSE Policy and Gas Policy have place during this financial year.

All changes have been endorsed by the Alliance Management Team, and Corporate Health and Safety Committee and have been shared with the Trades Unions.

3. Provision of competent health and safety advice and support

The corporate health and safety function comprises of one post – being the full time 37-hour post held by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser.

To assist the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser and the Councils in meeting their statutory obligations, a number of none technical elements of the function have been allocated to other persons.

This includes the maintenance of health and safety training records, and the development of pregnant worker risk assessments. This enables the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser time to deal with the management of health and safety function and to concentrate on the technical and strategic elements of the role.

The Corporate Health and Safety Adviser is the 'competent person' as defined in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.Regulation 7. He also leads on fire safety, emergency planning and business continuity planning across the two councils.

The Corporate Health and Safety Adviser oversees the operation of the policy and safety management system on behalf of the Chief Executive. He is available to advise all staff on health and safety related matters.

As part of the senior management changes in February/March 2020 and revision of reporting lines, the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser, now reports directly to the Chief Executive, this reporting line reflects best practice as detailed by the Health and Safety Executive, and follows the advice given by our insurers. It ensures that decisions relating to health and safety are discussed and actioned at the most senior management level in the Council.

When the Chief Executive is on leave, the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser reports to the Deputy Chief Executive.

4. Systems in place to identify and assess risks

All new legislation and supporting guidance is reviewed by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser, to determine whether action is necessary to meet these requirements within the Council. New or significant changes in policy are agreed by the Alliance Management Team, the Trades Unions and the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

The cornerstone of health and safety is risk assessment. The risk assessment process is embedded within the Safety Management System and training is provided as required to ensure competent persons are available to undertake appropriate assessments.

The Chief Executive and Heads of Service are nominated 'Safety Champions' across the two councils. This role includes being responsible for the general co-ordination, implementation and monitoring of the health and safety policy and performance. The Corporate Health and Safety Adviser and Chief Executive meet regularly to discuss health and safety and emergency planning matters.

The introduction of 'safety champions' ensures that health and safety issues are considered for all major projects at the concept stage, where interaction is essential to maintain standards without incurring additional costs, and ensure ownership of health and safety at service area level.

The Chief Executive chairs the Corporate Health and Safety Committee supported by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser.

5. Monitoring of contractors

The pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) assessments for health and safety are carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser other staff are involved in assessing quality, finance, and other elements of the process. This rigorously assesses suitability of prospective contractors wanting to work for the Council.

Unannounced health and safety inspections and performance audits take place to ensure the activities of our contractors are regularly monitored. Issues of non compliance are brought to the

attention of the procurement/contract monitoring officer for rectification. With major contracts, regular progress meetings take place where health and safety is a standing agenda item.

On occasions where contractors are found to be working in a non-complaint way, meetings are set up to offer advice and guidance to ensure health and safety standards are improved. Where there are cases of repeated non-compliance, contractors are not invited to tender for works until they can demonstrate significant improvements have taken place.

On larger construction projects where the full application of the CDM (Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015) applies; the monitoring of contracts is carried out by CDM Advisers who are engaged by the Assets Team.

This is not a legal requirement but does offer competent advice and support to those overseeing major construction projects.

6. Consultative arrangements

Our Corporate Health and Safety Committee which includes representatives from all medium to high risk areas across the two councils, meet four times a year. We use video conferencing facilities during these meetings to reduce mileage and officer time.

The Committee has worked so far within the spirit of co-operation with consultation taking place on a number of key subjects including:

- Planned health and safety inspections
- Fire risk assessment findings
- Revision of the Gas Safety Policy
- Fire Authority Involvement at SMDC and HPBC
- Monitoring accident statistics, trends, and costs
- Contractor management issues
- DCC Compliance audit
- Development of new noise and vibration assessments
- Health and safety issues in Sheltered Schemes
- National HSE prosecution/notifications and updates
- Developing tool box talks, safety alerts and bulletins
- Promoting health and safety across the Council
- Receiving updates from partner organisations
- Internal audit of the Corporate Health and Safety function
- Radon issues, policy, Buxton Town Hall, and monitoring in the Housing stock
- Discussing staff concerns
- Discussing mental health and well being

Four meetings are planned for the year 2020/21 coinciding with the Emergency Planning Compliance Group.

7. Corporate health and safety training

Each year the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser organises and delivers several health and safety and emergency planning training courses. The courses are run throughout the year and are available to all staff.

The demand for courses remained high during the 2019-20 year. During the last twelve months a significant amount of health and safety training has taken place.

We continue to see an increase in the number of health and safety courses being completed via the 'e' Essentials system, reducing the resources required to deliver these courses and the time employees are away from their duties.

Several specific health and safety courses and civil protection courses were run throughout the year with 1833 places taken.

Also 14 tool box talks (a shorter activity-based training sessions) have been developed and introduced. These covered, hand arm vibration syndrome, confined spaces, correct footwear, working adjacent to traffic, use of power tools, leptospirosis, noise, hot weather, staying hydrated, combatting stress at work, accident reporting, working at heights, coronavirus and health and safety matters. In most cases, these are delivered by team leaders following support from the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser a number were delivered via the Infoaware portal.

Our health and safety introduction course for new starters, and fire safety courses are accessible via our online portal 'E' Essentials.

4 Managers attended emergency control room training to enable them to be able to set up and crew our emergency control rooms should the need arise. 2 attended the Strategic Emergency and Crisis Management Course at Emergency Planning College.

The training developed by or given by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser is indicated by an asterisk *, all other training has been provided by external providers.

Below are details of the health and safety training provided:

Title	Date	Numbers
14 Tool Box Talks*	April-March	1289
Grounds Maintenance Training*	April 2019	25
Manual Handling and Lifting*	June 2019	31
Fire Warden Training*	April 2019	22
Fire Extinguisher Training*	June 2019	7
Health and Safety Induction*	April-March	26
Fire Safety Online *	July-Oct 2019	251
Construction Design and Management Regulations	May 2019	4
Legionella and Asbestos Policy Training*	July-Oct 2019	29
Mental Health Awareness	April-March	40
Annual Asbestos Awareness Training	May 2019	26
Traffic Management Awareness	April-March	32
Fire Evacuation Chair Training	Feb 2020	10
Suicide Awareness (Mind)	April-March	28
Safe and Well Checks Refresher Training	April-March	13
Number of training places taken for staff attending health and safety courses including E-learning		1833

8. Proactive health and safety monitoring

8.1 Audits

Health and safety audits are undertaken to identify, monitor and eradicate any potential risks associated with unsuitable equipment and/or procedures. Due to the additional work created by the Todbrook incident only one health and safety performance audit was carried out to ensure that we are compliant with relevant statutory guidance.

The compliance audit examined the arrangements in place at Derbyshire County Council for statutory inspection and testing at 5 corporate buildings. The audit looked at gas safety, fixed electrical installations, emergency lighting, asbestos management, legionella management, fixed electrical inspections, and cleanliness standards.

The outcomes of this audit were generally satisfactory, with some aspects being rated as good, however issues regarding standards of cleanliness are being progressed by Derbyshire County Council.

8.2 Inspections

The purpose of workplace inspections is to identify any safety issues that require remedial action. 65 planned proactive health and safety inspections took place in line with the planned programme of inspections. The frequency of these inspections has been previously agreed with the Health and Safety Executive and is seen as 'about right' for the risks involved. These inspections have highlighted areas where improvements have been made and conversely highlight improvements to be made. This enables the two councils to manage, limit, and where possible, offset their potential for liability.

The regime of planned inspections includes all corporate buildings, leisure centres and swimming pools; this coupled with site visits that highlight that our partners are working in accordance with industry standards. Where issues of non-compliance have been highlighted subsequent meetings have taken place with those contractors to prioritise the actions required. Issues of non-compliance are also brought to the attention of our service partners at their operational meetings.

In addition to the corporate regime of health and safety inspections, a new regime of health and safety inspections was introduced in 2016 in the sheltered schemes at High Peak Borough Council. 15 inspections now take place a year. All staff carrying out these inspections has been trained by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser, this process is now working very well.

Gamesley

The Corporate Health and Safety Adviser carried out four health and safety inspections of the Gamesley Estate looking at the potential for public liability claims. Due to a high level of third-party claims, this area was highlighted as an area of concern following a recent internal audit. The reports have been prioritised based on risk, the Assets Team have arranged for improvements to walls, car parking areas, pavements, and garages.

Closed Churchyards

In addition to the detail above 5 health and safety inspections of closed churchyards in the High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands areas took place to support the Cemeteries Officer.

Once a Church of England Churchyard closes for burials, the liability and maintenance of them passes on to the Council under the 1972 Local Government Act.

A significant amount of work will be required to address many of the items raised, however it is hoped that in partnership with the Parochial Church Councils' closed churchyards can be effectively managed, and the significant risks, reduced, managed or addressed.

8.3 Environmental monitoring

Work continued in relation to monitoring of the workplace.

21 vibration measurements were undertaken in line with the corporate policy and records of hand held vibration trigger on time have been made.

6 Additional noise assessments were carried out principally on equipment used by the Housing Repairs Team.

A continued provision of health surveillance for high-risk employees in respect of audiometric testing and vibration assessments is carried out in conjunction with the human resources team.

During 2020/21 it is anticipated that a formal policy will be developed in association with our occupational health provider that details the type and frequency of the health surveillance we provide.

There have been 22 SMDC staff referrals and 43 HPBC staff referrals to Occupational Health within the period covered by this report.

In addition to the above 36 new starters have been referred as part of the pre employment offer medical assessments.

9. Reactive health and safety monitoring

9.1 Accident and assault statistics

All accidents resulting in lost time 7 days or more that occurred across the two councils were investigated and corrective and preventative measures put in place as required.

A summary of accident information and accident category type is attached in the appendices at the end of this report.

The accidents/incidents for the last financial year are 12 accidents, 9 were non lost time, NLT 3 were lost time meaning off work for 7 days and above, and 15 near miss/verbal threats.

4 Accidents occurred to members of the public of which 2 were reported to HSE, one related to a third party falling off some gritstone steps at Victoria Hall, Glossop whilst reading a notice in a window, the second a lady who slipped on leaves in Ashwood Park, Buxton.

One member of the public sat on a chair that was found to be damaged, and an elderly resident slipped in a pothole by his garage causing very minor injuries.

	Alliance accidents
(HSE) RIDDOR Reportable	3
Non - (HSE) RIDDOR Reportable	9
Threats/Near Miss	15
Members of the Public	4
TOTAL	12

Lost Time Accidents

Service Area	Lost days	Injury
Customer Services	93	Trapped finger in a document safe
Direct Services	25	Hit by a passing vehicle, causing multiple injuries
Direct Services	19	Injured shoulder whilst the driver door to a vehicle unexpectedly opened. The seat belt saved employee from falling from the vehicle.
Total days lost	137	

The fact that accidents for the year 2019-20 have reduced compared with the previous year is seen as a significant positive.

This reduction is also partly due to the Waste Collection Service moving into the AES business model, where they are now responsible for reporting, investigating, and introducing preventative measures following accidents at work.

Also, at the beginning of the last financial year I sent out an email to Managers with advice on how to reduce workplace accidents, this innovation has had the desired outcome.

We have a robust regime of training, a suite of tool box talks and safety cards, detailed risk assessments, inspections of the operational services teams, and many other proactive systems in place.

There has been an increased awareness of the need to report inappropriate verbal exchanges and potential violence between members of the public and Customers Services staff.

Additional personal safety training for staff has been given to customer facing staff and enforcement officers, and other proactive arrangements are in place to offer protection to our staff. In one case a persistent and vexatious aggressor has been banned from entering Council premises.

9.2 Enforcement notices, Fee for Intervention costs

Our relationship with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) continued to be good in 2019-20, with no enforcement action or intervention from them.

9.3 Dangerous occurrences - Diseases

There were no dangerous occurrences reported during the period.

We reported a confirmed case of HAVS (Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome).

In such cases referrals are made to our occupational health provider for advice and assessment.

Personal risk assessments are developed for those with the disease and they are subject to ongoing periodical health surveillance, and workplace adjustments ensuring the condition does not worsen.

9.4 Achievement awards

The Council has not actively pursued any external achievement awards during 2019-20.

10. Actions undertaken in 2019/20

Actions	Status
1. Review the health and safety portfolio	Achieved
2. Carried out an inspection of Cromford Court and Eccles Fold Sheltered Schemes	Achieved
3. Reduce accidents to below 15 RIDDOR reportable accidents to 0	Partly achieved
4. Carry out fire risk assessments of all corporate buildings	Achieved
5. Carry out planned health and safety inspections across all the council and partner managed buildings	Achieved
6. Complete two health and safety performance audits inspections	Part achieved
7. Update corporate guidance in line with changes in legislation	Achieved
8. Carry out accident investigations of lost time accidents	Achieved
9. Develop six tool box talks. Developed 14	Achieved
10. Reviewed the health and safety training matrix - post AES transfer	Achieved
11. Developed and delivered training in manual handling for the Housing Repairs Team and others	Achieved
12. Carry out Mental Health Awareness Training	Achieved by external provider
13. Develop a fire safety strategy for Sheltered Schemes review Fire Safety Policy	Not Achieved
14. Carry out accident investigations over 7-day accidents	Achieved
15. Carry out a public liability Inspection audit of all car parks	Achieved

Other key actions undertaken

- Provided advice and checked 9 event plans for community bonfires, and other events.
- Carried out 4 personal risk assessments.
- Updated the Corporate Legionella policy to enable the Assets Manager to apportion people to specific roles.
- Attended 14 Tactical and 6 Strategic Compliance Group Meetings in response to the Todbrook Reservoir Incident
- Arranged a site visit to the Todbrook site.
- Arranged the annual SMDC Rest Centre Exercise at Gradbach Mill.
- Arranged an Emergency Planning awareness training for SMDC Councillors
- Provided support to residents of Lightwood Road, Buxton following localised flooding.
- Gave advice on musculoskeletal issues
- Provided advice on the inadequacies of several asbestos annual inspections and the need for new surveys.
- Ensured all new staff can access the health and safety portfolio.
- Provided workplace inspection training for service partners-(Parkwood)
- In addition to the above the following additional corporate work took place.
- Carried out contractor vetting for health and safety for 9 contracts.
- Provide advice as necessary to members, managers, and employees.
- Attended contract meetings with Derbyshire County Council
- Represented the Council at external events.

- Carried out radon monitoring at corporate buildings.
- Undertook a review of water safety measures at the Pavilion Gardens.
- Responded to 35 out of hours calls.
- Provided fire extinguisher training.
- Developed a ladder use sticker to reinforce safe use of ladders.
- Gave advice on the security measures required for vacant buildings.
- Carried out health and safety consultation work with New Mills Town Council.

11. Plans and targets for 2020/21

- Carry out an inspection of Hartington Gardens and Queens Court.
- Carry out Fire Risk Assessments in Corporate buildings and two Sheltered Schemes.
- Carry out accident investigations for all over 7-day accidents
- Maintain the regime of planned health and safety inspections
- Develop at least 6 Tool Box Talks -Safety Alerts- News from the Court Briefings
- Reduce accidents to less than 15 and reducing RIDDOR reportable accidents to 0.
- Review the health and safety training matrix- post AES staff transfer.
- Review the function and membership of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Carry out risk assessment training.
- Carry out unannounced site inspections of contractors
- Provide fire risk assessment training for the Housing Team
- Provide fire extinguisher training as required.
- Carry out refresher workplace inspection training for Scheme Coordinators
- Review the Fire Safety Policy.
- Review the First aid Policy.
- Review the Musculoskeletal Policy
- Review the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Policy
- Develop a health and safety training package for Carelink staff
- Review the Noise at Work Policy
- Carry out 2 Health and Safety Performance Audits - Parkwood/Facilities Management Provider.
- Carry out an inspection of all public conveniences

12. Significant and emerging risks

Significant risks within the Council

Due to the diverse work of the Council, a variety of risks are present.

Manual handling

A robust manual handling and lifting policy is in place, and manual handling training has been given to high risk worker groups. A new risk assessment format for manual handling has been introduced following changes at national level promoted by the HSE Health and Safety Executive.

Our approach to manual handling is as follows.

Avoid hazardous manual handling operations 'so far as is reasonably practicable', by redesigning the task to avoid moving the load or by automating or mechanising the process.

Make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided.

Reduce the risk of injury from those operations so far as is reasonably practicable, by breaking loads into manageable pieces. Where possible, provide mechanical assistance, for example, a sack trolley or hoist.

Where this is not reasonably practicable, then explore changes to the task, the load, and the working environment.

Vibration

A robust policy is in place which was scrutinized by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) during 2018.

This encourages the purchase of low vibration equipment and promotes job rotation to reduce adverse medical effects. Those worker groups at high risk have received training and 21 additional vibration assessments have been carried out to ensure our equipment is safe to use, and staff know how to report vibration ill health conditions.

Trigger on time monitoring has taken place; this information is used in association with the vibration readings to determine the time a person uses a piece of equipment and ensures the exposure action levels are not breached.

Our vibration emitting equipment is regularly serviced, and is colour coded this relates to the vibration levels taken. Those using the equipment fully understand what the colour coding means.

Our Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) Matrix was last updated in 2019. This gives guidance to our employees on safe use of vibration emitting equipment, and time restrictions.

In addition to these proactive actions, those at risk, from vibration induced injury, are regularly assessed by our Occupational Health provider, which alerts us to early symptoms and any required changes.

Asbestos

Our corporate policy on the management of asbestos details the arrangements for managing asbestos. Responsibilities are allocated within the policy.

As asbestos in many forms is prevalent in many Council buildings and our housing stock, we must ensure that the asbestos is risk assessed surveys are provided and management carries out annual inspections where this is required. This is to ensure that the asbestos stock remains safe and is well managed. Surveys are also carried out in communal areas of sheltered schemes and domestic properties where construction work is carried out.

At present Derbyshire County Council (DCC) supports us in arranging the management surveys on corporate buildings and carrying out the recorded annual inspections. Tersus provide surveys for the housing elements of HPBC. A programme of training sessions took place in 2017 and annual asbestos awareness training for the Housing Repairs Team.

To further enforce the principles of the policy which includes a permit to work system, additional training has taken place during 2019/20 so key staff are aware of their specific responsibilities.

An asbestos register, which holds all the asbestos surveys across the Council corporate and housing stock, is being developed by the Head of Assets.

To strengthen the competency levels within the Assets Team, three officers have attended the nationally recognised P405: The Management of Asbestos in Buildings. Now that they have attended

the training, they have the practical knowledge and skills to manage asbestos in buildings and have a sound knowledge base to audit asbestos removal projects.

The management of asbestos across the two Councils is managed by the Assets Team supported by competent contractors.

Legionella

Our corporate policy on the management of Legionella was updated and issued in 2019 to reflect changes to the 'Responsible Person' role and changes in the senior management structure.

Given that there is a risk of Legionella developing in our water systems, we have to ensure that the risk of Legionella is assessed and management (through our contractors) carry out annual inspections, temperature readings, and treatment and replacement of systems as required. DCC and other contractors now carry out all monitoring for us through their preferred contractors - DCC uses their agent Hydro X to carry out this work.

The DCC property services team and S3 Compliance (for non-corporate properties) carry out regular monitoring to ensure full compliance with the policy. Surveys and risk assessments are reviewed every two years and temperature monitoring is carried out monthly by trained persons.

Considerable work was also undertaken, and is continuing, in areas such as asbestos management and Legionella management. The regular inspection regime and follow up audits, along with the development of an Asset Management Plan, are assisting us in progressing with the required improvements in these areas. This has been an important step towards minimising the risks posed by these health hazards.

The Head of Assets and her team are overseeing this work. Those fulfilling roles as detailed within the policy, have recently attended external training, confirming their competency.

Fire safety

Given the age and condition of some of the Council buildings a low to medium risk of fire exists. From 2005 there was a legal requirement on Councils to carry out fire risk assessments and review these annually. In 2015 the fire safety policy was again updated and a new fire risk assessment pro forma introduced. This, process along with the building condition surveys and staff training helps us to mitigate fire risks.

All our sheltered schemes (High Peak Borough Council), and all our corporate buildings and communal areas of flats, have a detailed fire risk assessment these are reviewed annually. For corporate buildings Derbyshire County Council is working through the various action plans and prioritising the actions required, for others the Assets Team are actioning these based-on risks.

Employees are provided with regular fire safety training; In 2018 I developed a new online training package; this assists us in meeting our training obligations without causing significant disruption to operational activities by staff being taken away from their duties for training.

251 employees have received fire safety on line training over the last 12 months.

In the Sheltered Schemes, 'fire safety in the home' talks have taken place, to raise awareness amongst our tenants. This training has been provided in association with the Fire Safety Team at Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The 'Stay Put Policy' documents in place at the Sheltered Schemes are now titled 'Defend in Place' Policies to avoid confusion.

Following the outcomes of the fire risk assessments some further fire safety improvements are required in the Sheltered Schemes. These improvements relate to the fire alarm systems.

The Assets Team are costing out the works, and the improvements will commence in 2020, at Cromford Court, Whaley Bridge, Eccles Fold, Chapel en le Frith, and Marian Court, Buxton.

We liaise regularly with both Fire and Rescue Services, this approach has led to a positive working arrangement, and no enforcement issues.

During this financial year there have not been any fires in any of our corporate buildings.

Domestic Housing property fires

During this financial year, there have been no fires within our domestic housing stock.

Radon

Radon levels at Buxton Town Hall are currently maintained at a level below the new average action level of 300 Becquerels.

The 29-year-old radon remediation system is serviced by a specialist contractor every spring, with filters changed every six months. There have been no significant issues with the radon remediation unit this year.

Ongoing radon monitoring will be carried out throughout the year to monitor radon trends.

Radon in corporate buildings is overseen by the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor, reports are issued as the results are received and remedial action is taken as is required.

Radon in the housing stock is managed by the Assets Team supported by a competent contractor

Stress and wellbeing risk assessments

Throughout periods of significant organisational change or due to external stressors, some staff can suffer the effects of stress. To manage this, a Well Being Policy has been developed and issued to staff by the Organisational Development team.

There has been a slight decrease in the number of stress/ well-being risk assessments developed. This is usual during periods of uncertainty and change. These are carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser following referrals from the occupational health provider.

The purpose of these assessments is to support the employee at work, consider adjustments to their workload, offer them additional support where this is required and protect the reputation of the Council. Such assessments are carried out in a confidential setting.

4 well-being/stress assessments were carried out during 2019-20. These related to ergonomic issues and have been managed by the introduction of reasonable adjustments to the workstation, and in some cases, the provision of chairs and other specialist equipment.

DSE musculoskeletal issues

The introduction of new ways of working in the form of a hot desking model has offered us an opportunity to share some of our accommodation with others.

This in turn has enabled us to improve the standard of accommodation with the provision of new desks, chairs, and other furniture. From a musculoskeletal point of view this should assist our staff in reducing such conditions as the furniture is standardised, it meets legal requirements and where a specific requirement is needed these are catered for as part of the assessment criteria.

Whilst there was an initial resistance to adopt this model, most staff appreciate the reasons for it and have commented that they like the informality of it. There are issues for staff, who deal with confidential materials and commercially sensitive material, but these issues are managed, and meeting rooms are available for use in such circumstances.

To remind staff of correct workstation setting up procedures we designed and have distributed a mouse mat that has been issued to all staff across the two councils. Additional safety guidance in the form of a leaflet covering the protocols to be adopted has been issued, and we have tried two stand/sit desks to assist staff who have lower back issues.

It is hoped that within the next 12 months, we will have an electronic DSE Self-Assessment, and online training model that will make this process less time consuming.

The hot desking model has been temporarily suspended due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Working at Heights

On the HPBC side of the Alliance we have staff that regularly work at heights on scaffolds and accessing work from ladders. They have been recently trained in safe working at height practices point of work risk assessments are being developed and other task specific risk assessments have been updated.

Wherever possible, working at heights should be avoided. Ladder work should be strictly controlled, and ladders should only be used as a working platform, where it is not practicable to use other means.

Scaffolding towers and other safer methods of working have been introduced.

There were no working at height accidents or near misses during this financial year.

Transport Risks

As a proportion of our workforce carry out duties close to or on the highway, this poses a potential risk to them. To manage this, risk transport checklists and risk assessments have been developed for all depots. Speed limits have been introduced at the two main operational depots at Leek and in Buxton.

Some further work is required to further define pedestrian walkways, provide additional signage, and create traffic free zones at the depots.

In addition to this our programme of training covers working on or adjacent to the highway, ensuring work on heavily trafficked roads takes place when there is traffic control in place, using the vehicles as a barrier whilst working on the highway, along with the requirement to wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Mental Health

The Council recognises that mental ill-health is a health and safety issue for both managers and employees; it acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors where possible.

Awareness training has been provided and the introduction of mental health first aiders is being explored.

Coronavirus

COVID-19 - No information relating to the current COVID-19 pandemic is included within the 2019-20 annual report due to the minimal impact on health and safety the lockdown and government guidance had within this financial year.

The significant impacts of COVID-19 will be covered in detail within the 2020-21 annual report

13. Conclusion

I am pleased to produce my twelfth Annual Health and Safety Report for 2019-2020.

It has been both an eventful and a successful year for health and safety across the two Councils, where we have seen an increase in staff training, and a reduction in workplace accidents.

The Toddbrook Incident at Whaley Bridge in August 2019 really tested our collective resilience. The responses and outcomes very much demonstrated our 'can do' approach and resulted in very commendable actions from all those who were involved.

During this financial year we have also seen some of our staff colleagues transfer into the new business venture AES.

This report summarises the performance and programme of work undertaken at a corporate level during 2019/20 and demonstrates an ever-developing safety culture that promotes high standards in health and safety management.

We have come a long way in establishing our Electronic Health and Safety Portfolio in 2009 and embedding a positive safety culture. The focus of our work has been to establish the policy, organising, planning and implementation components of that system with a view to improving communication, competency, and ensuring compliance.

We now need to further concentrate on measuring performance and audit and review elements of those systems.

We must continue to develop our positive safety culture, to ensure that it will be robust enough to positively impact on the environments in which our staff work, reducing the numbers of incidents within our work places and stand up to scrutiny from both external enforcing authorities and internal scrutiny whilst providing a sensible and cost effective approach to managing risk.

Coupled with this is the change of approach of the Health and Safety Executive as regulator. It is imperative that we can demonstrate that our staff have the skills, knowledge, training, and experience to fulfil their respective roles.

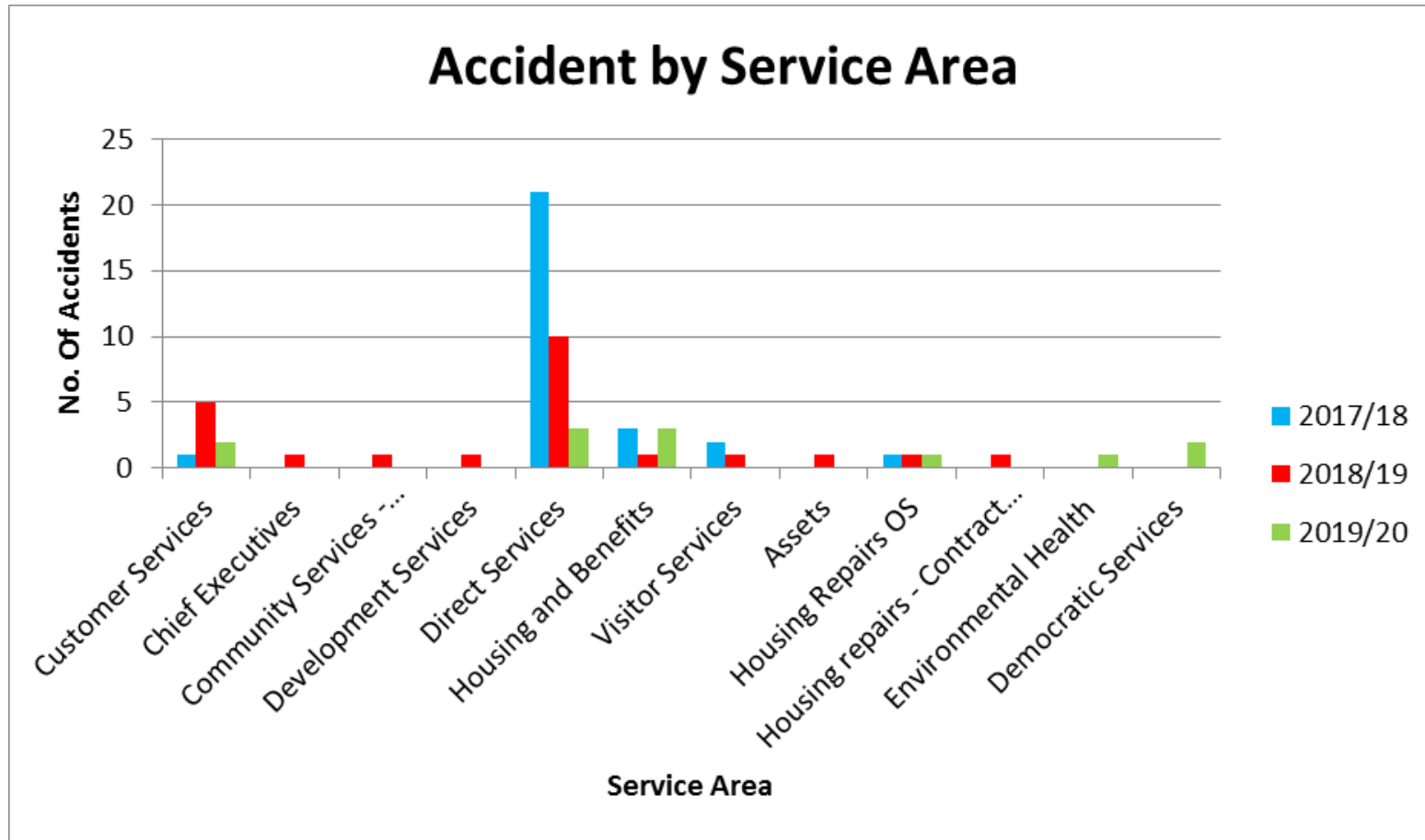
Being able to demonstrate a commitment to health and safety, competency through effective record keeping is vital to any defence. We are in a good position to be able to demonstrate we have a good safety record.

The continued support and leadership of the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Heads of Service, Service Managers, staff, Trades Unions and Elected Members is the key to driving forward health and safety standards. This in turn assists us in reducing accidents, reducing ill health, and improving the working environment.

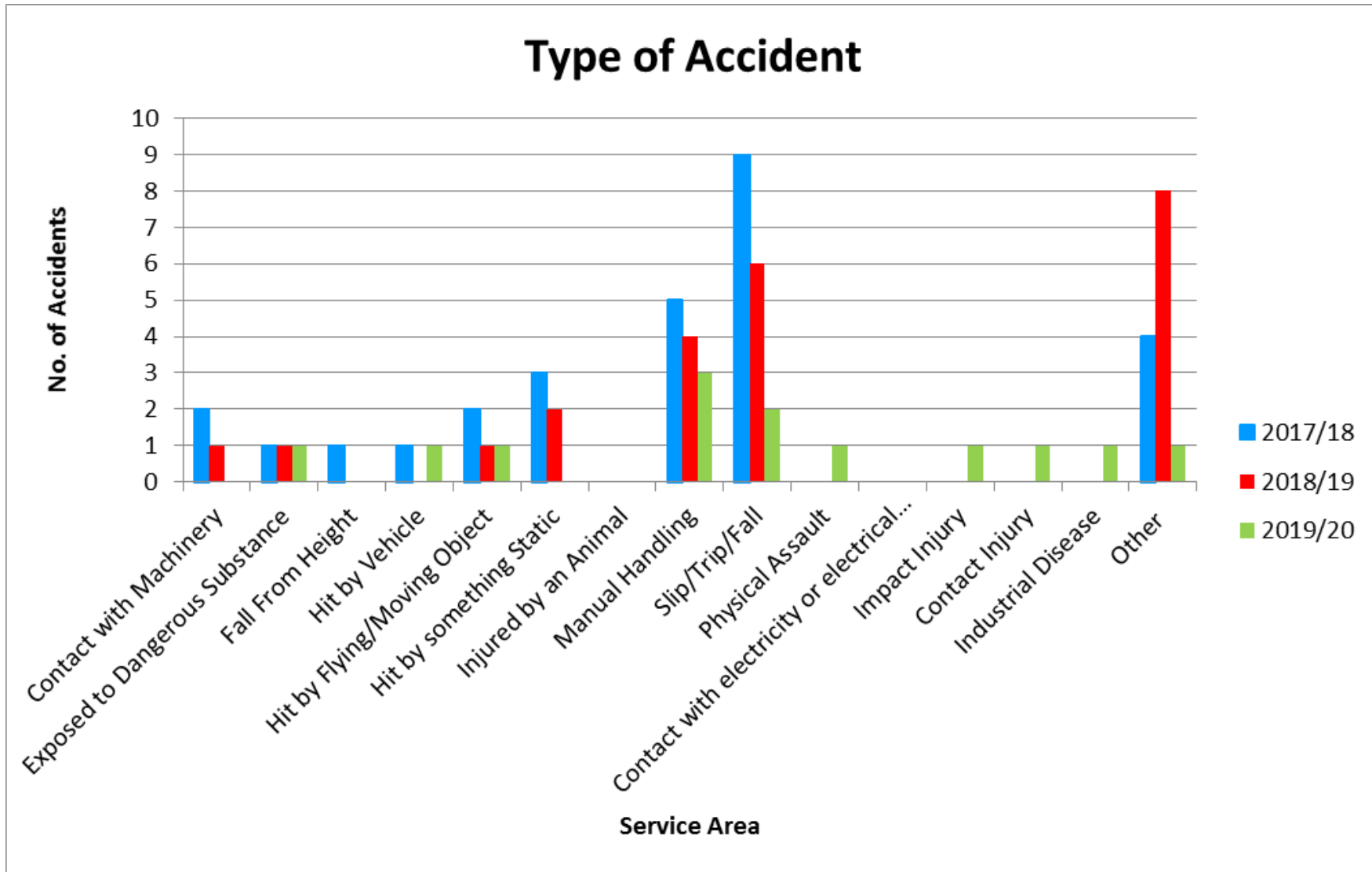
In conclusion I look forward to the challenges of the next 12 months as we continue to work together towards achieving our goals and, ultimately underpinning and further protecting a sustainable working future for our staff and those affected by what we do.

David G Owen
Corporate Health and Safety Adviser
October 23rd, 2020.

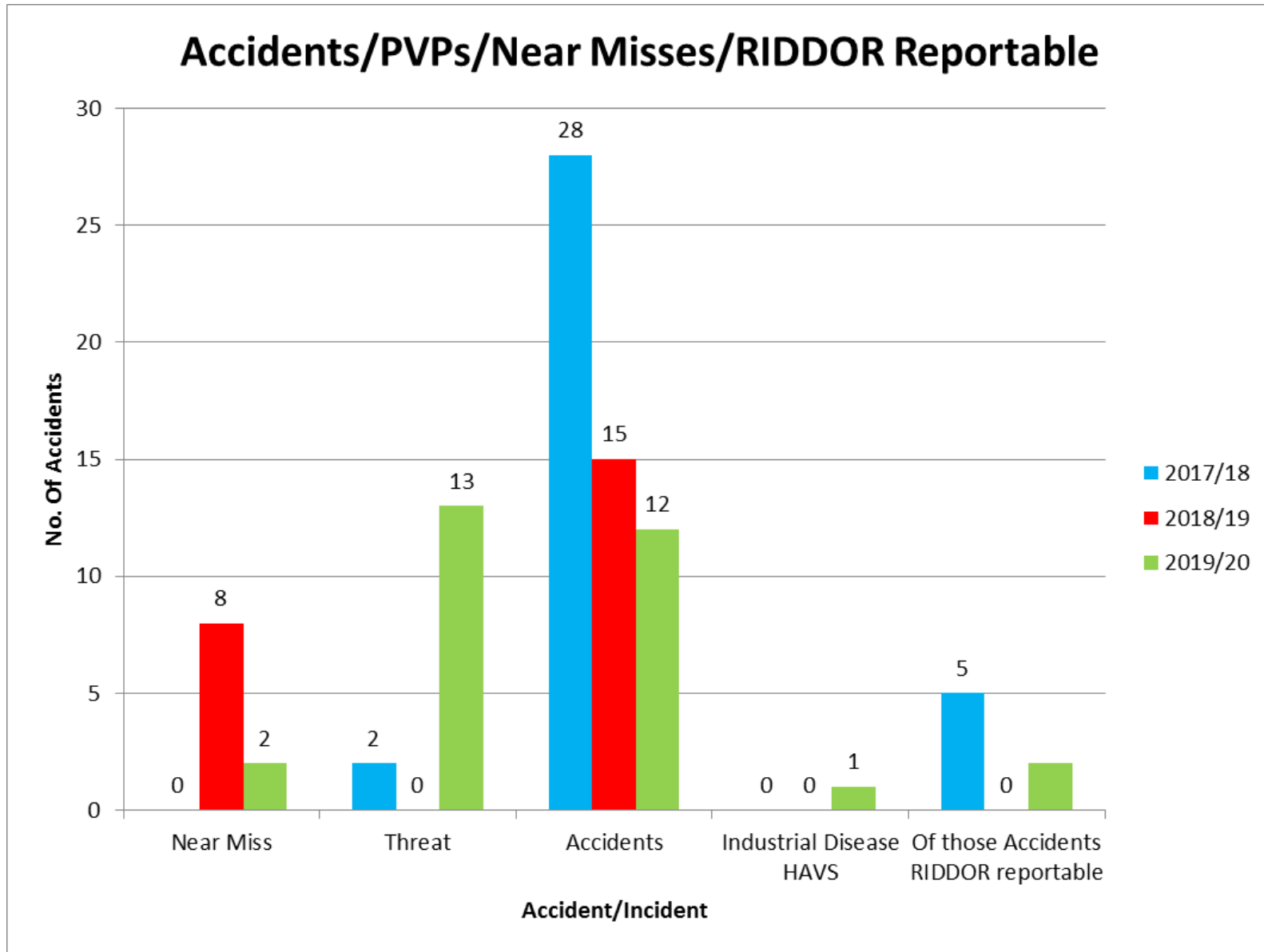
Appendix 1



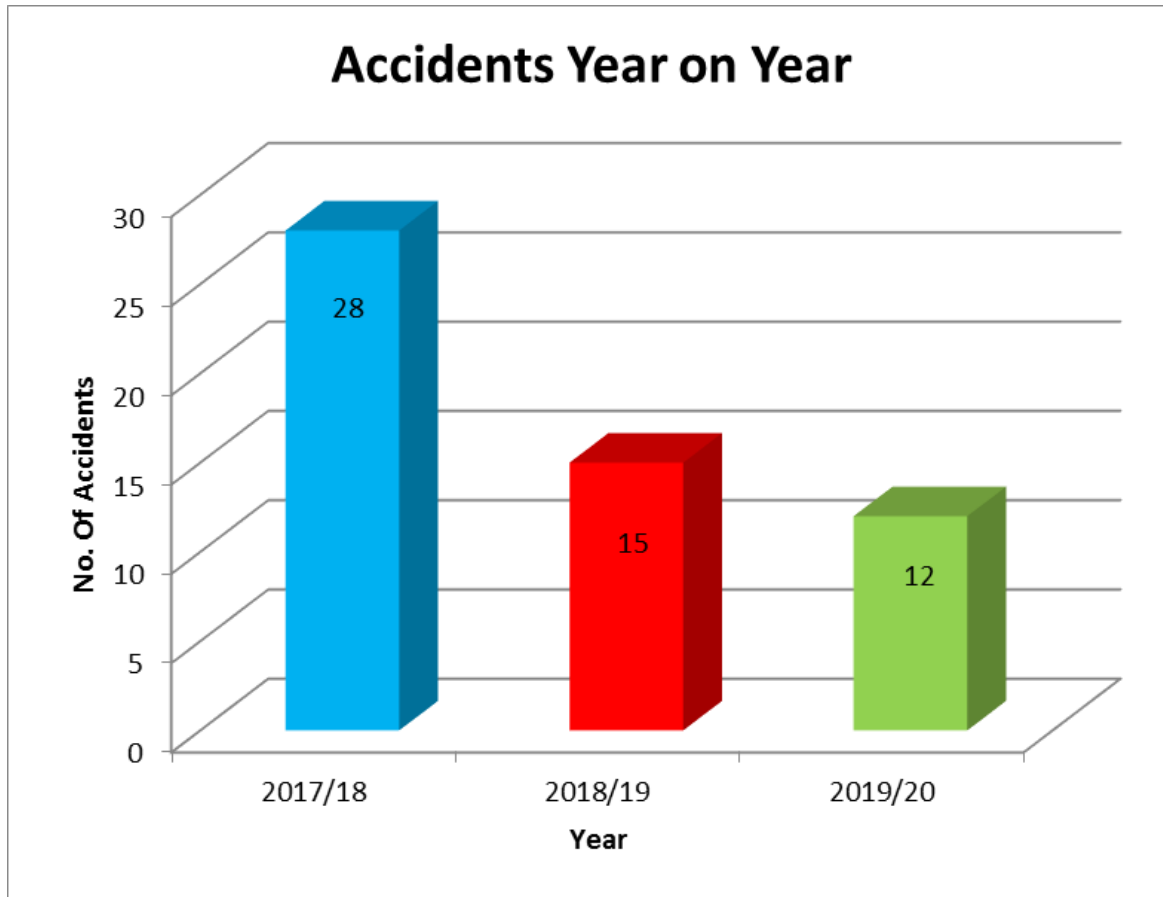
Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Appendix 5 – Report Categories

Accident/Incident Totals			
	2017/2018	2018/19	2019/20
Total Number of Accidents/Incidents	30	15	27
Breakdown of numbers			
Near Miss	0	0	2
Threat	2	8	13
Accidents	28	15	12
Of those Accidents RIDDOR reportable	5	5	2

Type of Accident	2017/2018	2018/19	2019/20
Contact with Machinery	2	1	0
Exposed to Dangerous Substance	1	1	1
Fall from Height	1	0	0
Hit by Vehicle	1	0	1
Hit by Flying/Moving Object	2	1	1
Hit by something Static	3	2	0
Injured by an Animal	0	0	0
Manual Handling	5	4	3
Slip/Trip/Fall	9	6	2
Physical Assault	0	0	1
Contact with electricity or electrical discharge	0	0	0
Other type of accident	4	0	3
Threat	2	8	13