

Corporate Annual Health and Safety Report

Financial Year
2020/21



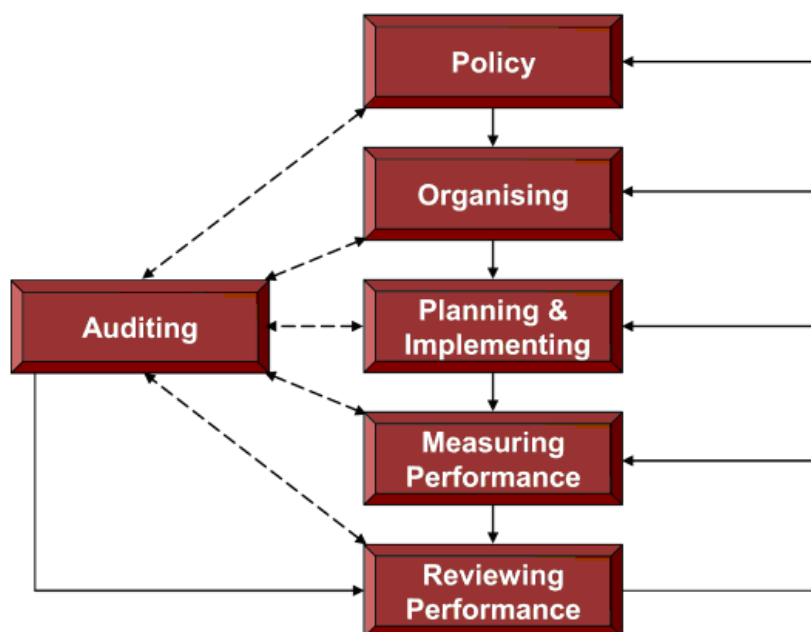
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1.0 Summary

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.



In adopting this model, we ensure policies; procedures and systems are in place to meet the requirements of current legislation and best practice. Principal areas of work include an ongoing review of the safety management systems in order to ensure they are robust in light of legislation regarding corporate manslaughter and recommendations promoted by the Institute of Directors and Health and Safety Executive guidance 'Leading Health & Safety at Work' 2013.

Over the last thirteen 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 has taken place to ensure we remain 'leading edge' Councils from a health and safety perspective.



Our 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 health and safety function have been previously subjected to a review by internal audit. Our arrangements have also been previously 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 covers the period from the beginning of April 2020 to the end of March 2021.

The report also provides supporting statistical information in the appendices.

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 2020-21. This review has taken account of changes in legislation, and changes in job titles, the detail of the policies that have been reviewed can be found in the body of this report.

Operational risk assessments have had to be continually reviewed to respond to the challenges brought about by the Coronavirus Pandemic, once reviewed these have been shared with staff and the Trades Unions.

Finally, all changes as above have been endorsed by the Alliance Leadership Team, and Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group.

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, who manages the function. He is a Registered Safety Practitioner and Chartered Member of the Institute of Occupational Health and Safety.

The post holder 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.

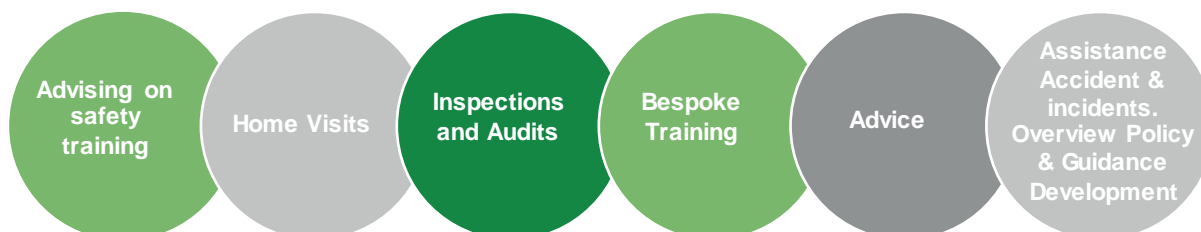
The Corporate Health and Safety Adviser oversees the operation of the policy and safety management system on behalf of the Chief Executive and reports directly to him.

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

He plays a vital role overseeing and promoting good health and safety management, ensuring accountability, and reviewing the way things are done. All actions are aimed at encouraging a positive safety culture within the Council, and that the function is seen as a tool to ensure goals are achieved and projects succeed, rather than being used as a restrictive one.

One of the key roles of the team this year was to provide support and guidance to acting Heads of Services to assist them with understanding and then undertaking their duties and responsibilities in managing health and safety within their respective teams.

Some of the support provided includes:



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 Leadership Team, the Trades Unions and the Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group.

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

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 Compliance Group supported by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser and they meet regularly to discuss health and safety and emergency planning matters.

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 this proactive process. This approach 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 also carried out by Principal Designers and CDM Advisers who are engaged by the Assets Team.

The CDM Adviser role is not a legal requirement but does offer competent advice and support to those overseeing major construction projects.

6 audits and 6 site inspections have taken place during this year of contractors carrying out works for the Councils, the outcomes have been generally good.

6. Consultative arrangements

Our Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes representatives from all medium to high-risk areas across the two councils, meets four times a year.

We use video conferencing and Microsoft Teams facilities during these meetings to reduce mileage and officer time.

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

- Outcomes of planned health and safety inspections
- Fire risk assessment findings, required actions
- Discussion and approval of revisions of corporate policies such as the Electricity at Work Policy, Working at Heights Guidance, Managing Contractors Policy, Accident Reporting Procedure, DSE Policy, COSHH Policy, Bouncy Castle and Inflatables Policy and the Pregnant Workers Guidance.
- Fire Authority Involvement at SMDC and HPBC
- Monitoring accident and near miss statistics, trends, and costs
- Highlighting contractor management/ compliance issues
- Vertas compliance Issues
- Public Convenience Inspections
- Health and safety issues in Sheltered Schemes and Housing Blocks
- National HSE prosecution/notifications and updates
- Developing tool box talks, safety alerts and bulletins
- Promoting health and safety across the two Councils
- Receiving updates from partner organisations
- COVID-19-HSE Audit outcomes
- Radon issues at Buxton Town Hall, and other properties and monitoring within the housing stock
- Discussing staff concerns
- Discussing mental health and well-being.

Four meetings are planned for the year 2021/22 coinciding with the Emergency Planning Compliance Group.

7. Corporate health and safety training

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

Due to COVID restrictions most of our health and safety training courses for this financial year were carried out via the 'e' Essentials system.

In this way training is given at a time convenient for the person being trained and gives us evidence that confirms those receiving the training have read and understood it. This method of training reduces the resources required to deliver these courses and the time employees are away from their duties.

In some cases, face to face training, such as for the asbestos awareness courses will always be the preferred training delivery.

As will be appreciated, many of the courses have focused on the various aspects of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and have ensured our staff are aware of changes and what is expected of them. Similarly, as 90% of our staff have been working at home, training was given that ensured staff were safe whilst doing so.

A toolbox talk is an informal safety briefing that forms part of our overall safety program. Toolbox talk briefings are a short training opportunity taking no more than 20 minutes for the person being trained to read through. They cover special topics on a range of health and safety aspects.

Several specific health and safety courses and 2 civil protection courses were run throughout the year with 2924 training places taken.

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
Face Fit Training -Respiratory Protection	2020-21	34
Collection and Disposal of sharps *		6
DSE Assessors Training *		15
DSE Policy*		43
Health and Safety Induction*		12
Coronavirus- Vehicle Cleaning Tool Box Talk *		139
Coronavirus- Property Cleaning Tool Box Talk *		86
Coronavirus- Wearing PPE Tool Box Talk *		319
Coronavirus- Safe Working at Home *		305
Coronavirus- Recognising symptoms this winter*		286
Coronavirus- Fire Safety *		307
Coronavirus- Office Safety Rules*		299
Coronavirus- Lifting the Lockdown Guidance*		227
Coronavirus- Returning to the Workplace*		233
Fire Safety on Line *		274
Are you sitting comfortably? *		282
Health and Safety Champions Training *		12
Strategic Emergency Response		1

CITB STMS -Site Management Safety Training		4
Legionella Management training		1
Asbestos Awareness on Line		39
Number of training places taken by staff attending health and safety courses including E-learning		2924

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 COVID-19 Pandemic I have not been able to carry out the two planned health and safety audits.

8.2 Inspections

The purpose of workplace inspections is to identify any safety issues that require remedial action.

Whilst the programme of inspections has been disrupted due to buildings being closed and key staff not being able to attend, I have managed to pull back some of the delayed inspections and have carried out 53 proactive health and safety inspections took place.

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 have been trained by the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser, this process is now working very well.

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.

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.

There have been 12 SMDC staff referrals and 10 HPBC staff referrals to Occupational Health within the period covered by this report.

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

Radon monitoring has been carried out across the two councils and this issue is covered in more detail in paragraph 12 of this report.

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 3 accidents, 3 were non lost time, NLT 0 were lost time meaning off work for 7 days and above, and 11 near miss/verbal threats.

2 Accidents occurred to members of the public of which 1 was reported to HSE, one related to a third party slipping and breaking a wrist at Leek Butter market, the second a market trader in the Leek Market was clearing away her stall when a partition fell on her.

There were no accidents or near misses to staff based or working in the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area.

	Alliance accidents
(HSE) RIDDOR Reportable	1* Member of Public
Non - (HSE) RIDDOR Reportable	3
Threats/Near Miss	11
Members of the Public	2
TOTAL	3

Lost Time Accidents

Service Area	Lost days	Injury
	None	
Total days lost	0	

The fact that 90 % of staff have worked at home this financial year has impacted positively on our accident statistics. Therefore, the accident statistics for this year should not be seen as a representative year for the reasons stated in this report.

9.2 Enforcement notices, Fee for Intervention costs

Our relationship with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and two Fire Authorities continued to be good in 2020-21, with no enforcement action or intervention from them.

During 2020-21, the Health and Safety Executive carried out COVID-19 spot checks and inspections by calling, visiting employers, and inspecting all types of businesses in all areas to ensure they were working safely.

A site visit took place to Victoria Hall in Glossop and a telephone audit took place that covered both Councils. This confirmed the Health and Safety Executive were assured that our part occupied Council buildings offered a COVID secure environment for our staff and visitors.

Such confirmation offers further reassurances and confidence to our staff who will be returning to their office base, who may be feeling anxious and stressful.

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service had planned to carry out a fire safety audit in February 2021, this did not take place. The outcomes of three fire safety audits will form part of my annual report for 2021-2022.

9.3 Dangerous Occurrences - Diseases

There were no dangerous occurrences reported during the period 2020-2021.

9.4 Achievement awards

The Council has not actively pursued any external achievement awards during 2020-21.

10. Actions undertaken in 2020/21

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 less than <20, reducing RIDDOR reportables to 0.	Part Achieved
4. Carry out fire risk assessments of all corporate buildings	95% 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	Not 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- mainly COVID related	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 an external provider
13.	Develop a fire safety strategy for Sheltered Schemes and review the Fire Safety Policy	Not Achieved
14.	Carry out accident investigations over 7-day accidents	Achieved
15.	Carry out a public liability Inspection of public conveniences	Achieved
16.	Review the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group	Achieved
17.	Carry out Risk Assessment training	Not Achieved
18.	Carry out Fire Risk Assessment training for Housing Officers	Not Achieved
19.	Provide fire extinguisher training as required	Not Achieved
20.	Carry out health and safety training for Sheltered Scheme Officers and Housekeepers	Not Achieved
21.	Review the CDM, Fire, Noise, and musculoskeletal policies	Part Achieved
22.	Carry out unannounced health and safety site inspections- contractors	Achieved
23.	Carry out Inspection audit of CDM compliance.	Not Achieved
24.	Develop Health and Safety Training Package for Carelink Staff	Not Achieved
25.	Carry out training for the Housing Repairs Team and Caretakers	Not Achieved

Other additional key actions undertaken

- Carried out arson risk assessments for 5 vacant Council buildings.
- Undertook health and safety consultation work for New Mills and Biddulph Town Councils.
- Developed a fire safety checklist for general needs accommodation units
- Gave advice on the Heath Reservoirs in Glossop
- Gave advice on the new asbestos surveying specification
- Attended or accessed 29 meetings relating to COVID.
- Collected PPE for funeral directors as part of the COVID response
- Advised on the correct specifications for personal protective equipment
- Advised the Reinstating of Services Recovery-Sub Group
- Made dally COVID Situation Reports to the Staffordshire Resilience Forum.
- Reviewed the Alliance Business continuity plan and established the priority meanings
- Developed service level agreements for New Mills Town Council- and Biddulph Town Council-
- Updated the fire risk assessment format used in communal areas of Housing blocks.
- Led the Councils out of hours responses to 42 incidents and Storm Christoph attended TCG meetings, site visits etc.,
- Assisted with the review of the Commercial Tenants handbook.

- Developed a DSE Workstation Assessors and training package and arranged the training.
- Developed a generic and specific risk assessment template and polling station layout document for use during the May 2021 Elections during COVID-19, carried out calculations to ensure compliance at the count venues.
- Gave fire safety and asbestos guidance for inclusion in a newsletter for HPBC Tenants.
- Carried out health and safety inspections of the HPBC- Housing Repairs Team
- Completed 12 health and safety assessments PQQ.
- Developed a COVID-19 Return to the Workplace Presentation
- Assisted Democratic Services in planning the HPBC Mayoral Celebration.
- Advised on the revisions to Operation Bridge plan.

11. Plans and targets for 2021/22

- Carry out an inspection of Northlands, 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
- Reduce accidents to less than <20 and reduce RIDDOR reportables to 0.
- Develop at least 6 Tool Box Talks -Safety Alerts- News from the Court, briefings
- 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 an inspection audit of CDM compliance.
- Carry out refresher workplace inspection training for Scheme Officers
- Review the Fire Safety, First aid, Noise, Musculoskeletal, and the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Policies
- Develop a health and safety training package for Carelink staff
- Carry out a health and safety audit of the Carelink service
- Carry out 2 Health and Safety performance audits – Parkwood and DCC
- Follow up complex ergonomic DSE-Self Assessments- homeworkers
- Carry out training for the Housing Repairs Team and Caretakers

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 and lifting

A robust manual handling and lifting policy is in place, and manual handling training has been given to high-risk worker groups which includes the Housing Repairs Team and the Estate Caretakers.

A new risk assessment format for manual handling was introduced in 2018 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 or sharing the load. 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.

Hand Arm 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 during 2019 and 21 additional vibration assessments were 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. Individual 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 'management' inspections. Tersus currently provide surveys for the housing elements of HPBC.

To further enforce the principles of the policy which includes a permit to work system, additional training has taken place during 2020 so key staff are aware of their specific responsibilities. New surveys are developed where intrusive works take place, and as a result the 'management surveys' are updated to capture all of the information from the intrusive survey.

Several new asbestos 'management surveys' were provided during 2020-21.

An asbestos register, which holds all the asbestos surveys across the Council corporate and housing stock, is being developed by the Head of Assets. A new software package will assist in ensuring the required documentation is available for use.

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 2020 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 must 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 regularly, 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.

New legionella risk assessments will be commissioned in 2021-22 once the backlog of remedial works have taken place.

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, following changes raised in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and subsequent report our Fire Safety Policy will be updated during 2021-22.

This, process along with the building condition surveys, statutory testing, inspection, 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 regularly. 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 on a risk basis.

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.

274 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 'Stay Put/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 upgrading of fire alarm systems, and the need to upgrade cold smoke seals and fire doors.

The Assets Team are costing out the works, and the improvements will commence in 2021, 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, with 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 average action level of 300 Becquerels.

The 30-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.

Previously radon levels in the Staffordshire Moorlands area have been very low, a check of these will be carried out during 2021-22.

Radon in corporate buildings is overseen by the author of this report, and further reports are issued as the results are received and remedial action is taken as is required by the external contractor.

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

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. A 6 monthly recorded ladder/platform inspection takes place, and a visual inspection of the ladder/platform takes place before it is used.

Home Working

With 90% of our workforce moving to working from home following Government guidance to do so, the councils have had to respond appropriately to meet various challenges of a home environment.

This has included:

- Enabling staff to take furniture and ICT equipment home to enable them to work from home
- Heads of Service reviewing deadlines to potentially re-order work priorities where appropriate.
- The development of an Agile Working Policy to offer some staff the option of continuing to part work from home utilise homeworking where appropriate.
- Supporting staff to work safely at home, enabling them to work their hours around home demands where possible.

The Councils responded to employees working from home by seeking to stabilise home working environments in support of musculoskeletal health.

This was achieved by producing a revised homeworkers checklist for staff, tool box talks, safe systems of work and a number of home visits.

Employee Well Being

The Councils are committed to improving and sustaining the health and wellbeing of its employees, through supporting a healthy and productive workforce that is highly engaged with the overall objectives of the Council.

We do this by placing importance on preventative health initiatives, providing tools and support to encourage people to stay fit, happy, and healthy.

An innovation to assist staff in staying fit and healthy is a walking scheme promoted by the Service Commissioning Team

Flu Vaccination

During last winter, 125 employees had free flu vaccinations. It will be even more important this year than in previous years to encourage take-up by staff, given the positive effect this will have on protecting health services from the impact of flu this year. During 2021-22 we plan to offer staff COVID-19 booster jabs as part of the planned vaccination programme, in accordance with government guidelines.

Musculoskeletal

We recognise that musculoskeletal problems can be a reason for sickness. We continue to encourage staff to complete the new self DSE assessment process and seek support from the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser carried out 4 ergonomic home visits and 5 other personal risk assessments during the last financial year to ensure staff are not a risk from musculoskeletal and other problems.

5 staff were referred to Occupational Health and as a result, adjustments were put in place.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Councils recognise that mental ill-health is a health and safety issue for both Heads of Service, and employees; it acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing work place stressors where possible.

A mental health awareness session took place in September 2019 and the intention is to develop a strategy to support Heads of Service and staff by appointing and training key staff to be 'mental health first aiders'.

The purpose of this role is threefold, being able to recognise the early signs and symptoms of common workplace mental health illnesses, having the necessary skills to have a supportive, non-judgmental conversation with those who need it, and possessing the knowledge and confidence to guide colleagues to the appropriate professional support if they require it.

During the COVID lock downs we maintained a regular dialogue with staff through tool box talks and the 'Keeping you Informed' electronic newsletter, and the Monthly Team Briefings' who may have been affected by home working, and potential mental health concerns, issuing guidance on where to find help and support.

Occupational Health support

The external Occupational Health provider has continued to meet the organisation's requirements for dealing with and promoting health at work issues.

The core functions of Occupational Health are work-health assessment screening, sickness absence management and health promotion. The Occupational Health service also provides a proactive health surveillance programme.

This is based on health surveillance checks, consisting of hand-arm vibration, audiometry, vision screening and in some cases a general life-style check.

Coronavirus

Any given year will bring its challenges around service delivery, with unplanned and ad-hoc issues.

However, the COVID-19 global pandemic that has emerged in the last 12 months has given the Councils and in particular the health and safety function its largest challenge ever. The impact that COVID-19 has wreaked on individuals, families, communities, and the economy is unprecedented.

The Councils have had to rapidly respond to a constantly changing situation and continue to do so.

Practically overnight, this affected the health and safety work programme and priorities and saw the immediate suspension of planned audits, inspections and training, the work of other teams was heavily impacted upon too.

There was a need for us rapidly redeploy resources and adapt their skillsets to focus on each COVID related challenge as they became apparent, from creating the initial COVID Secure risk assessments through to translating a myriad of government advice, scientific studies, and sector practise.

Site surveys were undertaken of all our buildings to ensure that each environment was adapted to be COVID-19 secure, updates were shared with staff via the intranet to make sure employees knew what to expect if they needed to access our buildings.

As previously highlighted in this report, the HSE carried out site visit and a COVID-19 Telephone Compliance audit, and as a result they confirmed our premises were categorised as Covid Secure.

The passion and professionalism of those who work for the two Councils was evident, the COVID response was a professional one involving the ALT all teams, which enabled rapid but well-informed decisions to be made.

As this report evidences, our commitment to health and safety remains vigilant and committed to the control of all workplace risks, not just COVID-19. As such we have continued to implement and drive improvements to ensure compliance and effective management of risks.

13. Conclusion

I am pleased to produce my thirteenth Annual Health and Safety Report for 2020-21.

The last twelve months have been the most challenging period in recent years for the country, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, many people in the UK have lost their lives before their time.

The result of the pandemic means that all the incomplete actions from the previous financial year have had to be brought forward into this year's actions to ensure they are completed.

This report summarises the performance and programme of work undertaken at a corporate and operational level during 2020/21 and demonstrates an ever-developing safety culture that ensures 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.

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.

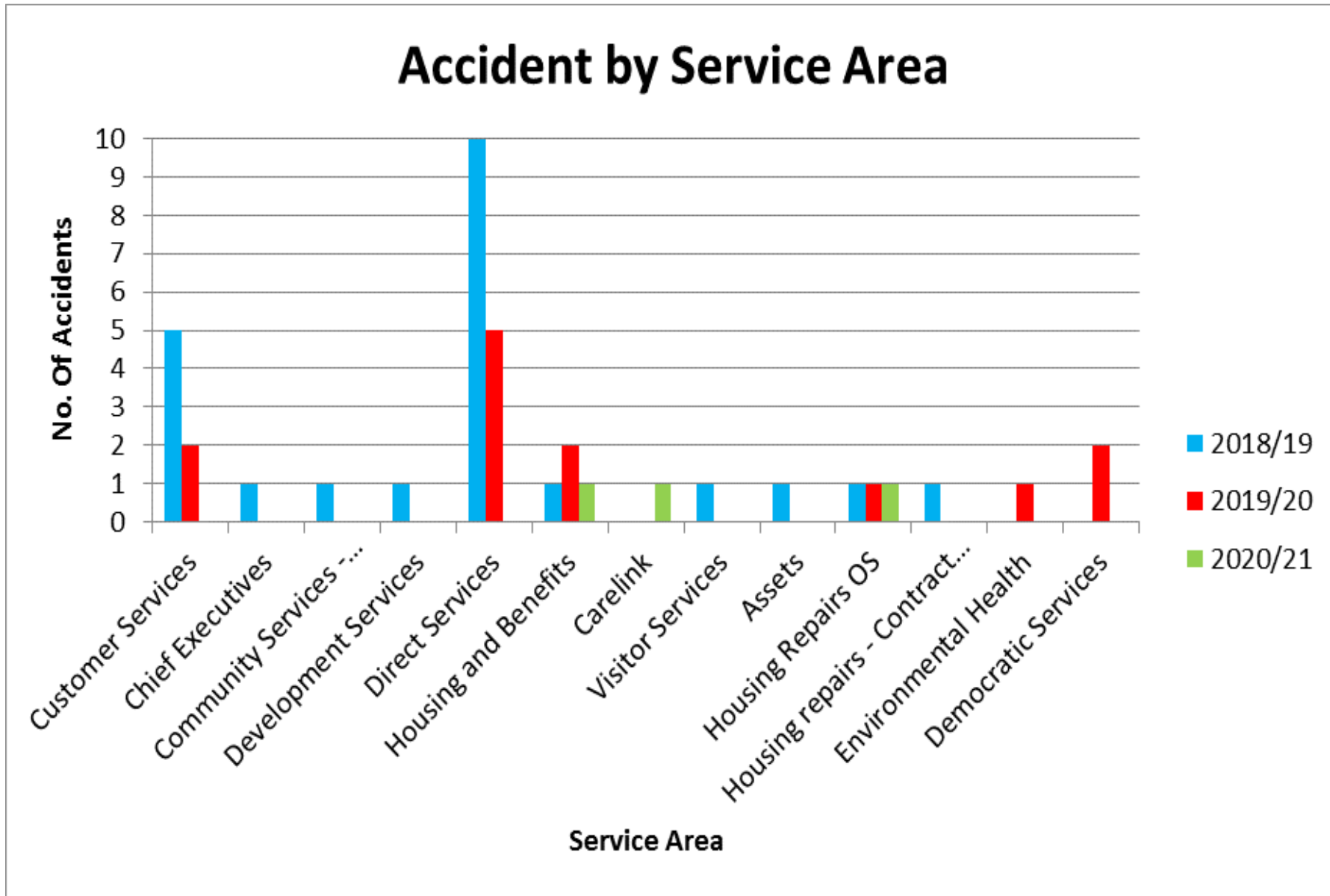
It is imperative that we continue to demonstrate that our staff have the skills, knowledge, training, and experience to fulfil their respective roles.

Being able to demonstrate a commitment to health and safety, competency through effective record keeping is vital to any defence. We are now in a good position to be able to demonstrate we have a good health and safety record; however, we must not become complacent, and must remain ready to prepare for future changes in legislation and guidance and respond to these accordingly.

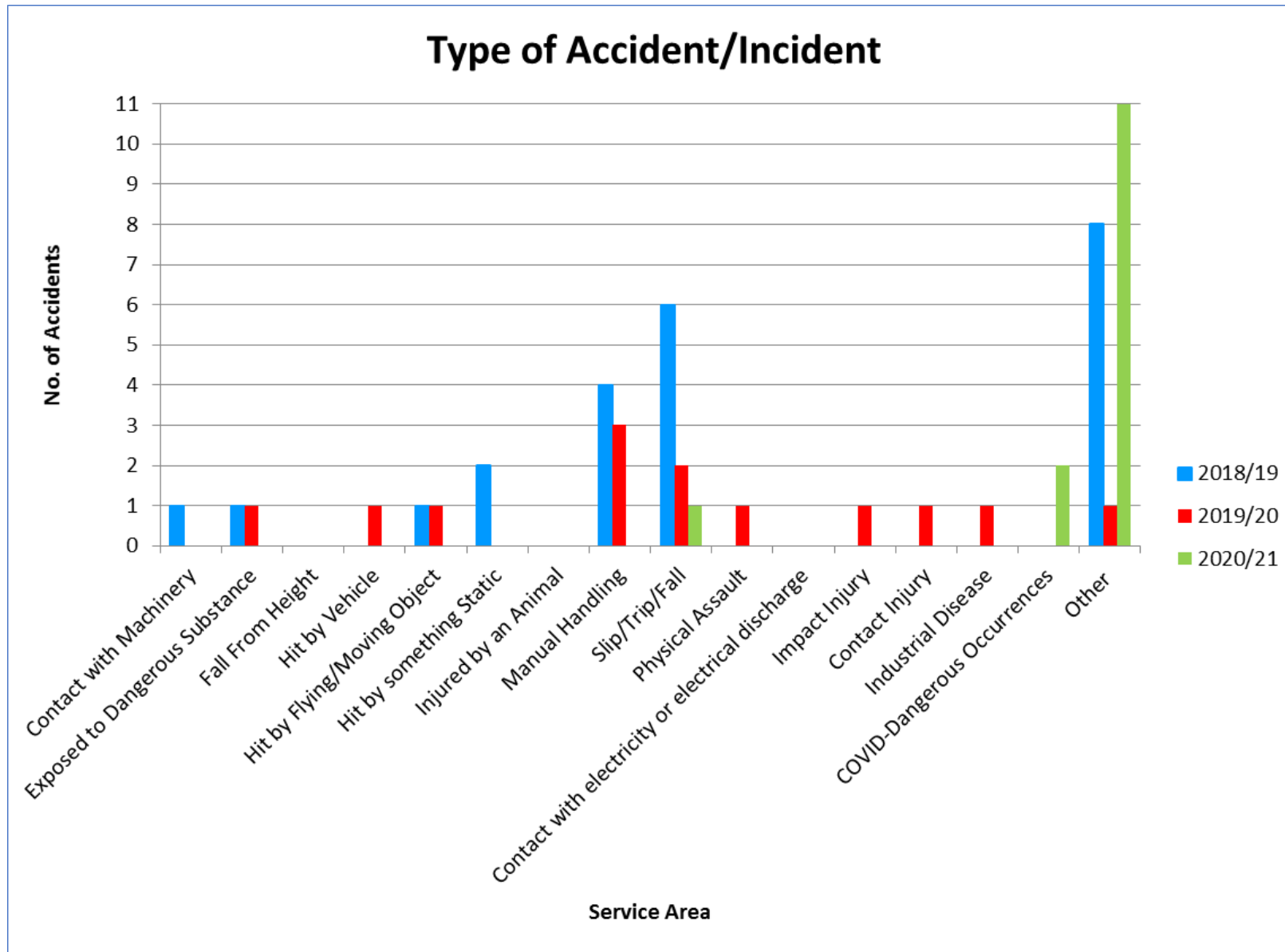
The continued support and leadership of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Heads of Service, Managers, staff, Trades Unions and Elected Members is the key to driving forward health and safety standards. This in turn assists us in reducing accidents, reducing ill health,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

We should look positively to the opportunities and challenges of the next 12 months as we continue to work together in new ways achieving our goals and, ultimately underpinning and further protecting a sustainable working future for our staff, and those affected by what we do.

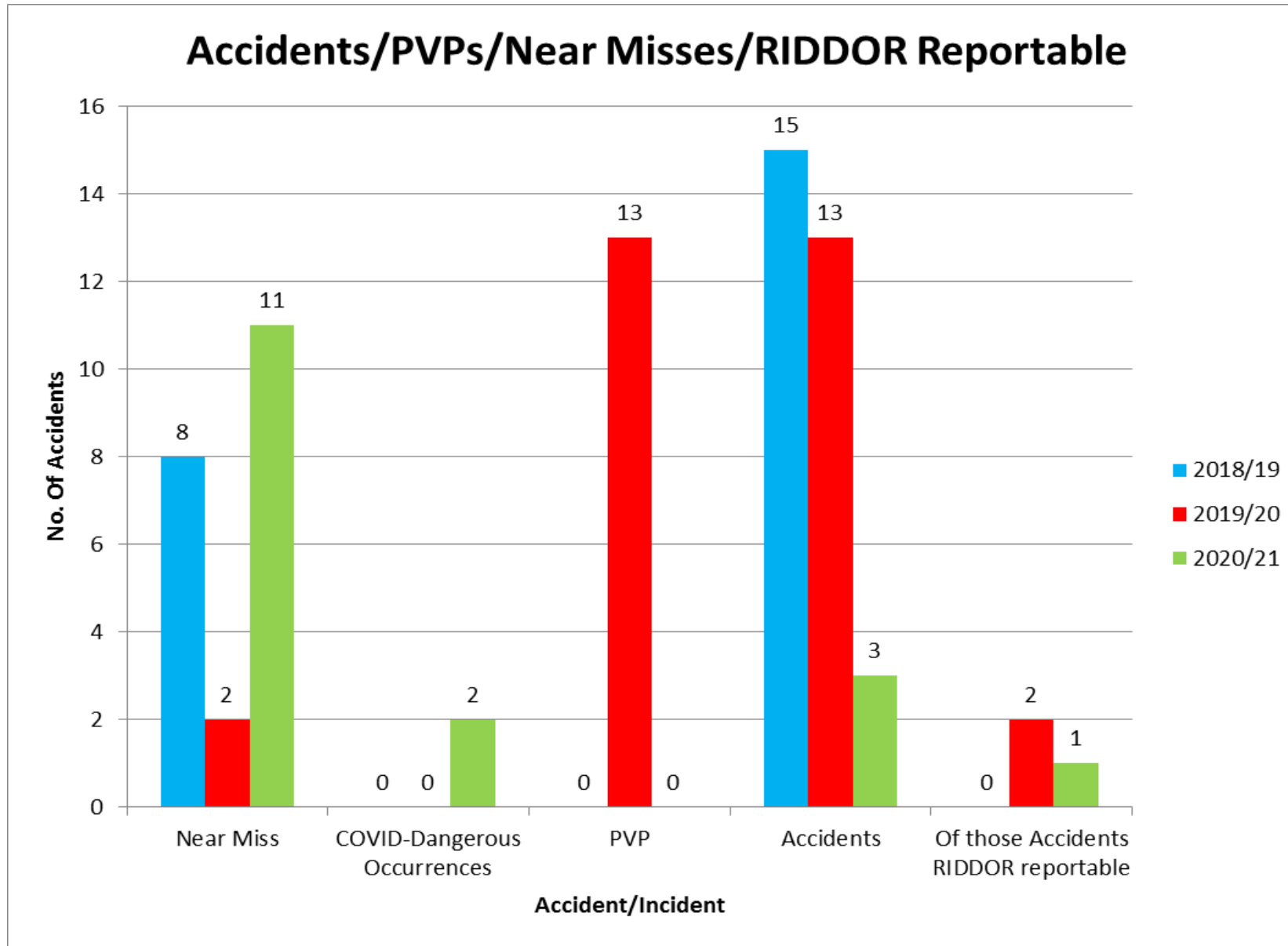
David G Owen
Corporate Health and Safety Adviser
August 3rd, 2021



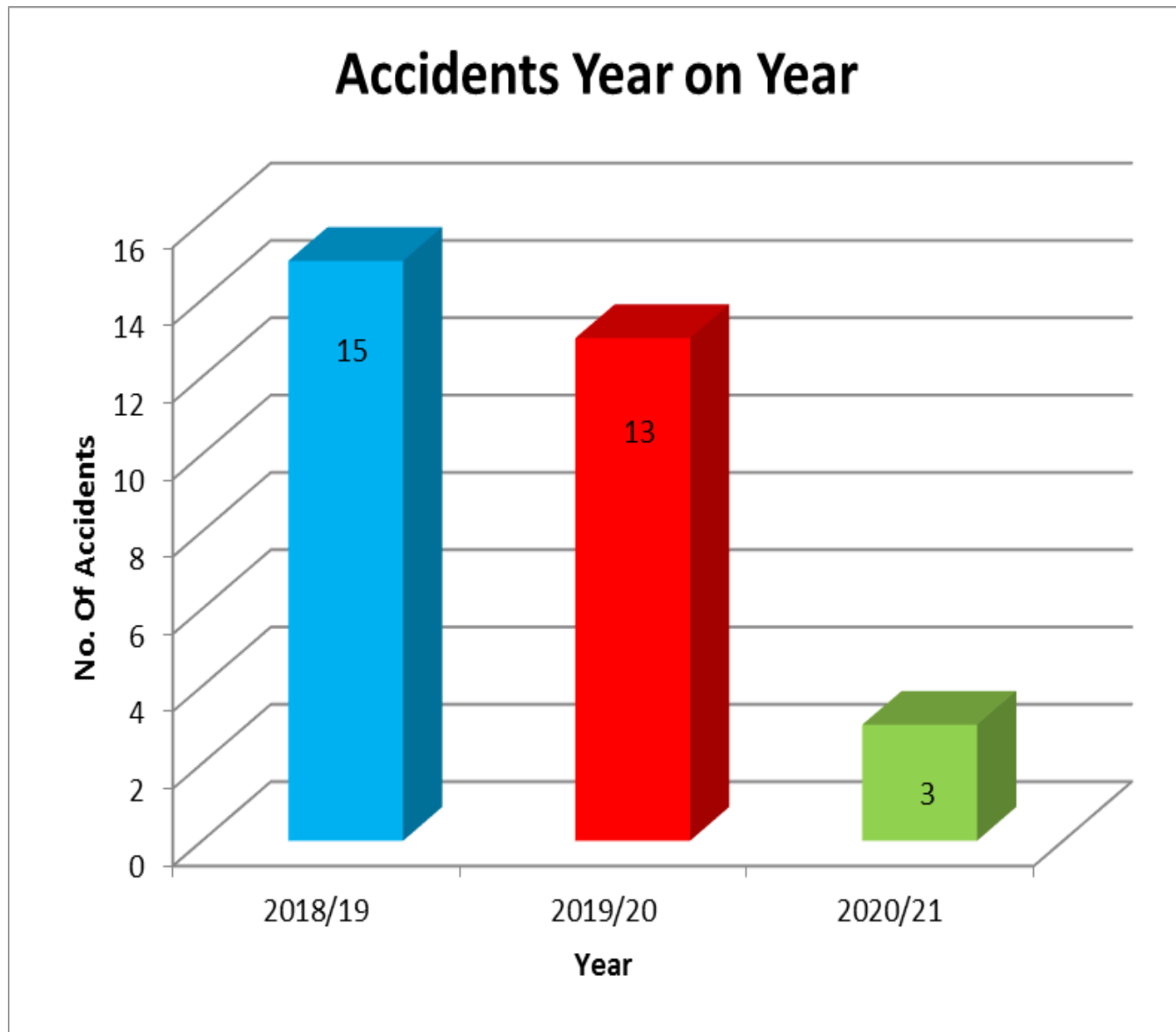
Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Appendix 5 – Report Categories

Accident/Incident Totals			
	2018/2019	2019/20	2020/21
Total Number of Accidents/Incidents	15	27	18
Breakdown of numbers			
Near Miss	0	2	11
Threat	8	13	0
Accidents	15	12	3
Of those Accidents RIDDOR reportable	5	2	1

Type of Accident	2018/2019	2019/20	2020/21
Contact with Machinery	1	0	0
Exposed to Dangerous Substance	1	1	0
Fall from Height	0	0	0
Hit by Vehicle	0	1	0
Hit by Flying/Moving Object	1	1	0
Hit by something Static	2	0	0
Injured by an Animal	0	0	0
Manual Handling	4	3	0
Slip/Trip/Fall	6	2	1
Physical Assault	0	1	0
Contact with electricity or electrical discharge	0	0	0
Other type of accident	0	3	2
Threat	8	13	0