

Corporate Annual Health and Safety Report

Financial Year
2021/22



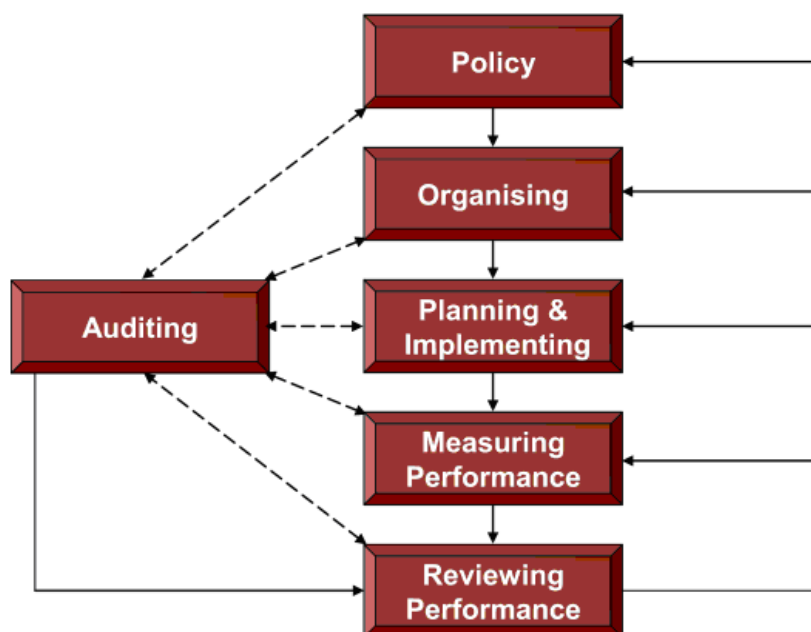
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1.0 Summary

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 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 fourteen 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 high risk 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 and review.

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 2021 to the end of March 2022.

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 and supporting documentation.

Parts of the electronic health and safety portfolio have been reviewed during 2021-22. These reviews have taken account of changes in legislation, and changes in job titles, the policies that have been reviewed can be found in the body of this report.

Operational risk assessments must 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. A risk assessment challenge took place during this financial year, during which Heads of Service and others, reviewed their operational risk assessments.

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 Safety and Health and is a Graduate Member of the Institute of Fire Engineers.

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.

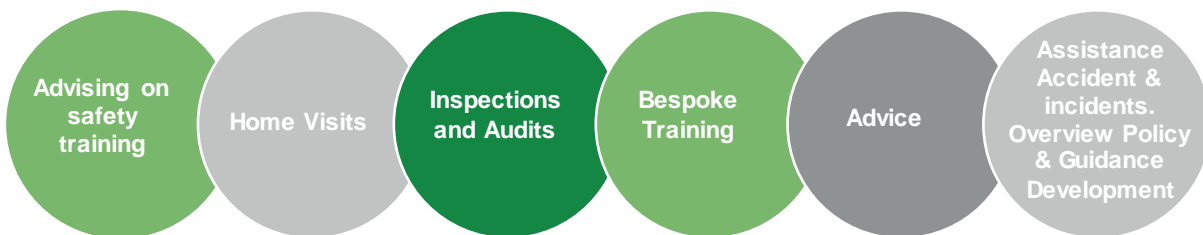
He oversees the operation of the policy and safety management system on behalf of the Chief Executive, and reports directly to him, they meet regularly.

When the Chief Executive is on leave, he 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 this year was to provide support and guidance to acting Heads of Service and others to assist them with understanding and then undertaking their duties and responsibilities in managing health and safety within their respective teams and to offer support and advice in respect of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Some of the support provided includes:



4. Systems in place to identify and assess risks

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.

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, following our 'lessons learned' review, 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; additional 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.

Several site audits and inspection of contractors working for both councils have taken place this financial year, the details can be found later in paragraph 8.1 of this report.

Most of the outcomes of the health and safety inspections and audits have been generally good.

6. Consultative arrangements

The 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, trades union safety representatives.

Microsoft teams facilities are used 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, internal and external
- Fire risk assessment findings, required actions, required improvements, funding
- Discussion and approval of revisions to corporate policies such as: First Aid, Buying New Machinery, Construction Design and Management Regulations, Noise at Work Policy, Health and Safety Guidance for Contractors, and Occupational Road Risk.
- Fire Authority Involvement at SMDC and HPBC
- Fire Authority Audit Outcomes- HPBC Sheltered Schemes at Northlands and Cromford Court
- Monitoring accident and near miss statistics, trends.
- Highlighting contractor management/ compliance/performance issues
- Vertas compliance Issues – fire safety checks, and temperature monitoring issues- audit outcomes
- HSE site visit- contractors site Glossop Market.
- Developing tool box talks, safety alerts and bulletins
- Promoting health and safety across the two Councils
- Introduction of monthly fire safety checks in general needs housing accommodation
- COVID-19- arrangement for agile working, provision of supporting documentation
- Manual handling of white goods- Housing Estate Caretakers
- Discuss the findings of an inspection of the Cuningdale allotment site in Fairfield

- Implications of the Social Housing White Paper, and the introduction of the Fire Safety Act 2021
- Discussions relating to events taking place across the two Councils.
- Discussing mental health and well-being initiatives.

Four meetings are planned for the year 2022/23 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.

Staff training is provided in line risk and in accordance with the Council's health and safety training matrix, to ensure our staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles.

Some training is provided 'on line' 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 and provides evidence that the training has taken place.

In some cases, face to face training, such as for the health and safety awareness, and asbestos awareness courses will always be the preferred training delivery. Some face-to-face training did take place during this financial year once the COVID restrictions were lifted.

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 agile working at home, training was given that ensured staff were safe whilst doing so.

Several specific health and safety courses and 2 civil protection courses were delivered throughout the year with 1490 training places provided and taken.

The courses provided included, fire safety, fire extinguisher use training, asbestos awareness, occupational health, CDM awareness, DSE Guidance, needlestick retrieval, combatting work related stress, and safe working at home.

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, and ensure compliance.

6 compliance audits took place of contractors working for us namely, Hankinson's PLC working on fascias and soffit boards in HPBC area, Jackson and Jackson Ltd carrying out property rendering works in the HPBC area, and Messenger PLC who have been carrying out refurbishment works at Glossop Municipal buildings.

Derbyshire County Council-Vertas were also audited as we had experienced issues of non compliance with Vertas and a risk assessment audit/challenge took place inhouse. An audit of the HPBC Carelink function highlighted some training needs, the overall outcomes were good.

The outcomes of the DCC-Vertas compliance audit were good with improvements seen in documentation control and statutory compliance. The compliance audit of Jackson and Jackson was disappointing and has since resulted in a change of site agent.

The reports are shared with the Alliance Leadership Team and are discussed at the Risk Management Group and the Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group meetings

8.2 Inspections

The purpose of workplace inspections is to proactively 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 56 proactive health and safety inspections, and 7 inspections of contractors' sites across the two councils.

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, and in the parking areas of all Leisure Centres. 22 inspections now take place a year.

All staff carrying out these inspections have been trained, and this process works very well.

Closed Churchyards

In addition to the detail above 9 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.

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. These are reported to the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

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

There were two accidents to staff based or working for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, one was a lost time accident.

	Alliance accidents
(HSE) RIDDOR Reportable-LTA	2
Non - (HSE) RIDDOR Reportable	7
Threats/Near Misses	9
TOTAL	18

Accident to Members of the Public

There have been 6 accidents involving members of the public on sites for which the Council are responsible. 4 of these resulted in minor injuries resulting in first aid, 3 were in locations managed by High Peak Borough Council and 1 at Biddulph Country Park, which we were alerted to by the Health and Safety Executive.

One accident was reported to the Health and Safety Executive as the injured person fell fracturing her wrist and was taken directly to hospital from the Pavilion Gardens. There was no suggestion of any fault on the part of the Council, the IP fell backwards whilst reading an information board.

The other alleged accident was investigated, and the veracity of this alleged accident was questioned from the outset. The alleged injured person changed the location of her fall, in Buxton when challenged. No further communication has been received in respect of this matter.

Lost Time Accidents

Service Area	Lost days	Injury
Development Services	165	Slip, trip, and fall-developers site
Housing Repairs Team	8	Manual handling and lifting-kitchen fitting
Total days lost	173	

The fact that 85 % of staff have worked at home this financial year has impacted positively on our accident statistics.

Therefore, the accident statistics for this year and the previous year should not be seen as representative years for the reasons stated in this report and last years.

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 2021-22, with no enforcement action or intervention from them.

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service carried out three fire safety audits of three of the Sheltered Schemes in High Peak.

The outcomes of all three fire safety audits were all good, and they supported our plans to upgrade the fire alarm systems and CCTV coverage in all three of the locations inspected.

Derbyshire Fire Safety Team also supported High Peak Borough Council following three arson attempts at Marian Court, sheltered scheme at Heath Grove, Buxton.

9.3 Dangerous Occurrences - Diseases

There were no dangerous occurrences reported during the period 2021-2022.

9.4 Achievement awards

The Council has not actively pursued any external achievement awards during 2021-22.

10. Actions undertaken during 2021/22

Actions	Status
1. Carried out an inspection of Northlands, Hartington Gardens and Queens Court	Achieved
2. Carried out Fire Risk Assessments in all corporate buildings and two Sheltered Schemes	Achieved
3. Carried out accident investigations for all over 7-day accidents	Achieved
4. Maintain the regime of planned health and safety inspections	Achieved
5. Carry out risk assessment training.	Not Achieved
6. Developed at least 6 Tool Box Talks -Safety Alerts	Achieved
7. Carried out unannounced site inspections of contractors	Achieved
8. Provided fire risk assessment training for the Housing Team	Not achieved, due to staff recruitment
9. Provided fire extinguisher use training as required.	Achieved
10. Carried out an inspection audit of CDM compliance.	Achieved
11. Carried out refresher workplace inspection training for Scheme Officers	Not achieved, due to staff recruitment
12. Updated guidance in regard of COVID-19 in line with national guidance	Achieved
13. Reviewed First Aid, and Noise Policies	Achieved
14. Reviewed the CDM and Musculoskeletal Policies	Achieved
15. Carried out 4 health and safety performance audits	Achieved more
16. Followed up complex ergonomic DSE Self Assessments for agile workers	Achieved
17. Carried out Asbestos in Depth training for the Housing Repairs Team and Caretakers	Achieved
18. Carried out a health and safety compliance audit of the 'Carelink' service	Achieved

Other additional key actions

- 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 asbestos in Allotments at Cuningdale, Fairfield
- Provided advice on the new Agile Worker Policy
- Provided advice on the implications of the Social Housing White Paper and Fire Safety Act 2021
- Attended or accessed 14 meetings relating to COVID.
- Collected PPE for funeral directors as part of the COVID response
- 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
- Updated the fire risk assessment format used in communal areas of Housing blocks.
- Led the Councils out of hours responses to 22 incidents, storms, Eunice, Franklin, and Arwen.
- Liaised with communities at Alstonefield and Warslow following the storms and power outages
- Assisted with the review of the commercial tenant's handbook.
- 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 10 health and safety assessments PQQ.
- Developed a COVID-19 Return to the Workplace presentation
- Provided guidance on the demolition of Market Street Depot
- Developed manual handling risk assessments for the Housing Repairs Team
- Advised on the suitability of the Stairbuddy 170 stair lifter
- Carried out 4 Water Risk Assessments in line with the Derbyshire Water partnership objectives
- Advised on the requirement for a cable location device and training.
- Provided fire safety training for Biddulph Town Council
- Provided fire safety training for volunteer groups
- Carried out 5 home visits following the receipt of concerns highlighted in DSE Assessments.
- Advised on the revisions to the Operation Bridge plans.
- Reviewed the SMDC -Rest Centre Managers 'handbook
- Responded to two Councillor and 5 residents' complaints
- Provided advice and training in respect of the asbestos incident at the Pavilion Gardens.

11. Plans and targets for 2022/23

- Carry out an inspection of Cromford Court and Eccles Fold.
- Carry out Fire Risk Assessments in all Corporate buildings, and Eccles Fold and Cromford Court.
- Carry out accident investigations over 7-day accidents
- Maintain a 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 <20 and reducing RIDDOR reportable to 0.
- Carry out 5 health and safety inspections of general needs housing units.
- Review the Arson Fire risk assessments (4) until properties are sold.
- Carry out unannounced site inspections- contractors
- Carry out 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- in the wake of the Fire Safety Act 2021
- Review the Lone Worker Policy, response arrangements, once agreed.
- Follow up complex ergonomic DSE-Self Assessments as required
- Develop and deliver a Health and Safety Training Package for Carelink/Housekeeping staff
- Deliver health and safety inspection training for Parkwood staff carrying out inspections on our behalf.
- Carry out 6 water safety risk assessments, in line with the Derbyshire Water Safety Initiative

- Carry out 2 Health and Safety Performance Audits - AES/Buxton Opera House-HPTT.
- Carry out an audit to ensure fire risk assessments have been carried out in communal areas of housing blocks
- Carry out Inspection audit of CDM compliance- Fairfield Roundabout Scheme.

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.

Once the Housing Repairs Team transfer into the new joint venture- Alliance Norse, manual handling risks across the two Councils will be significantly reduced.

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.

Once the Housing Repairs Team transfer into the new joint venture - Alliance Norse, the risk of hand arm vibration risk is significantly reduced.

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. SGS 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 the information from the intrusive survey.

Several new asbestos 'management surveys' were provided during 2021-22.

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, once fully implemented will assist in ensuring the required documentation is available for use.

To strengthen the competency levels within the Assets Team, one officer has recently attended the nationally recognised P405: The Management of Asbestos in Buildings course, and following a significant 'near miss' incident at the Pavilion Gardens, Buxton, all the Assets Team and colleagues from the Housing Repairs Team and Parkwood have undergone an In-Depth Asbestos Awareness Training Session.

Key staff now 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 currently supported by Derbyshire County Council and competent contractors.

Competent support in this area will form part of the new joint venture from July 2022 with Alliance Norse.

Legionella

Our corporate policy on the management of Legionella was updated and issued in 2021 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 2022-2023 once the backlog of remedial works have taken place. Competent support in this area will form part of the new joint venture from July 2022 with Alliance Norse.

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.

This, process along with the building condition surveys, statutory testing, inspection, and staff training, helps us to mitigate fire risks.

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 introduction of the Fire Safety Act during 2022, our Fire Safety Policy will be updated to reflect any changes brought about by the act.

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.

It is anticipated that the fire alarm improvements will commence in summer 2022, at Cromford Court, Whaley Bridge, Eccles Fold, Chapel en le Frith, and Marian Court, Buxton.

A common theme across our corporate buildings and partner buildings relates to; old fire detection systems requiring replacement, or an increased regime of servicing, a need to introduce recorded

inspections of fire doors, upgrade fire doors, and improve fire spread generally by improving compartmentation.

We liaise regularly with both Fire and Rescue Services, this approach has led to a positive working arrangement, with no advisory letters or 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 three minor fires in one of the Sheltered Schemes in Buxton, which was investigated by the Police.

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 further check of these will be carried out during winter 2022.

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 85% 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 several 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 in 2021.

Flu Vaccination

During last winter, 95 employees had free flu vaccinations arranged by the Council.

Musculoskeletal

We continue to 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 professional support where issues of concern are highlighted. 4 ergonomic home visits took place, and 5 other personal risk assessments were developed during the last financial year to ensure staff are not a risk from musculoskeletal and other problems.

4 staff were referred to Occupational Health and as a result, reasonable 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 subsequent training has recently been provided for staff who are our '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.

For those staff agile working, we have 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

During this financial year and the previous year, the Councils had to rapidly respond to a constantly changing situation.

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.

New ways of working guidance and agile homeworker learning packages were developed which included general homeworker safety and workstation assessment to help our employees work safely and comfortably.

Colleagues were supported where circumstances meant that homeworking was not a suitable option or where their role required them to continue to work in the community

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.

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 and its variants. As such we have continued to implement and drive improvements to ensure compliance and effective management of risks.

The Council will continue to monitor the situation regarding covid secure working arrangements and risk assessments and update guidance and working arrangements as required.

13. Conclusion

I am pleased to produce my fourteenth Annual Health and Safety Report for 2021-22.

We have come a long way in establishing our Electronic Health and Safety Portfolio in 2009 and have embedded a positive safety culture across the two councils.

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.

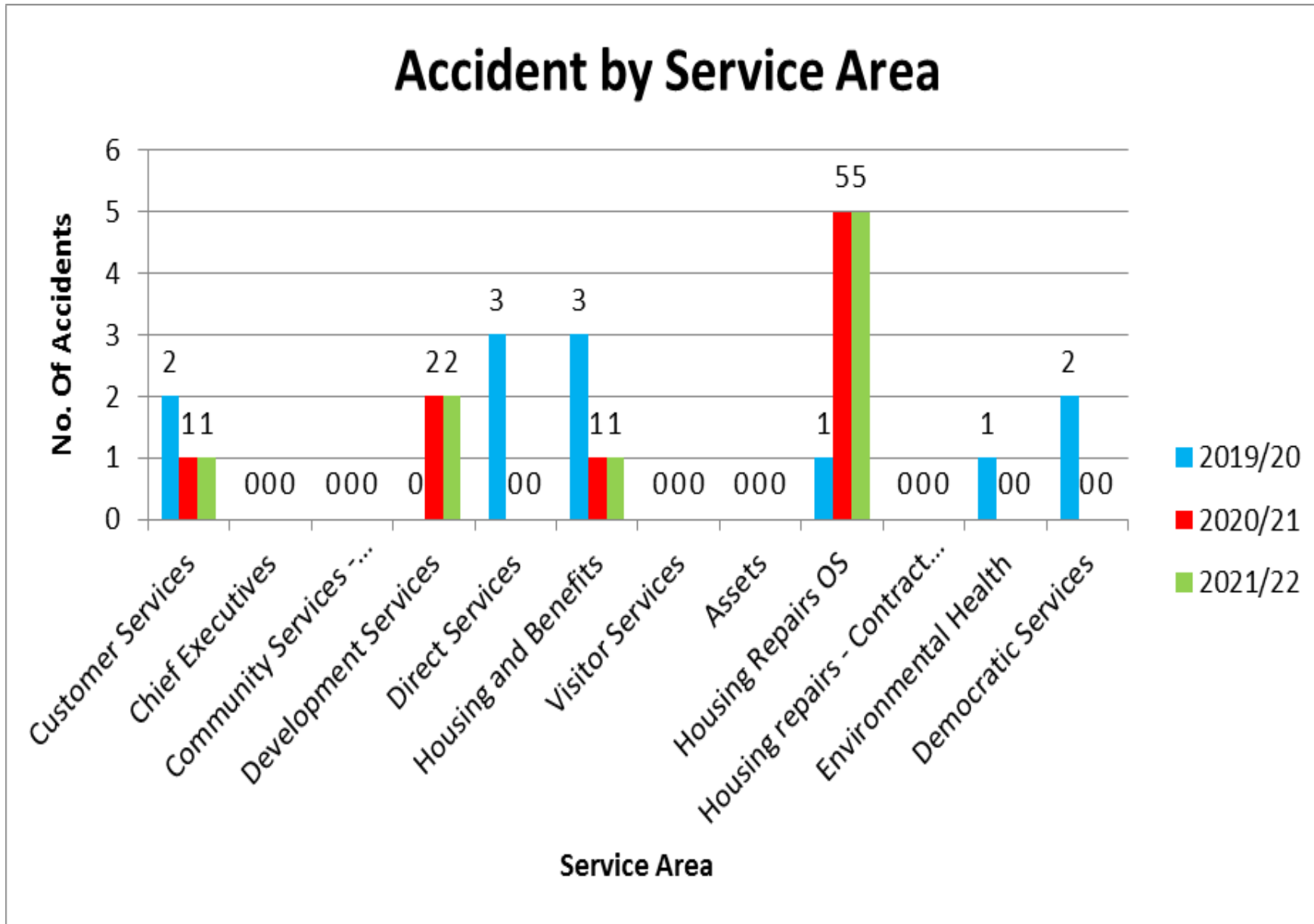
I believe that the best way we can show our staff that we care is to be concerned for their personal health, safety, and wellbeing. This has never been more important to us than throughout the Pandemic. Throughout the past two years we faced an unprecedented challenge to keep all our staff safe and healthy.

It is a credit to our workforce that each challenge was responded to rapidly, enabling us to remain effective councils during this difficult time. We must remain committed to promoting health and safety and to supporting our staff to be the best they can be.

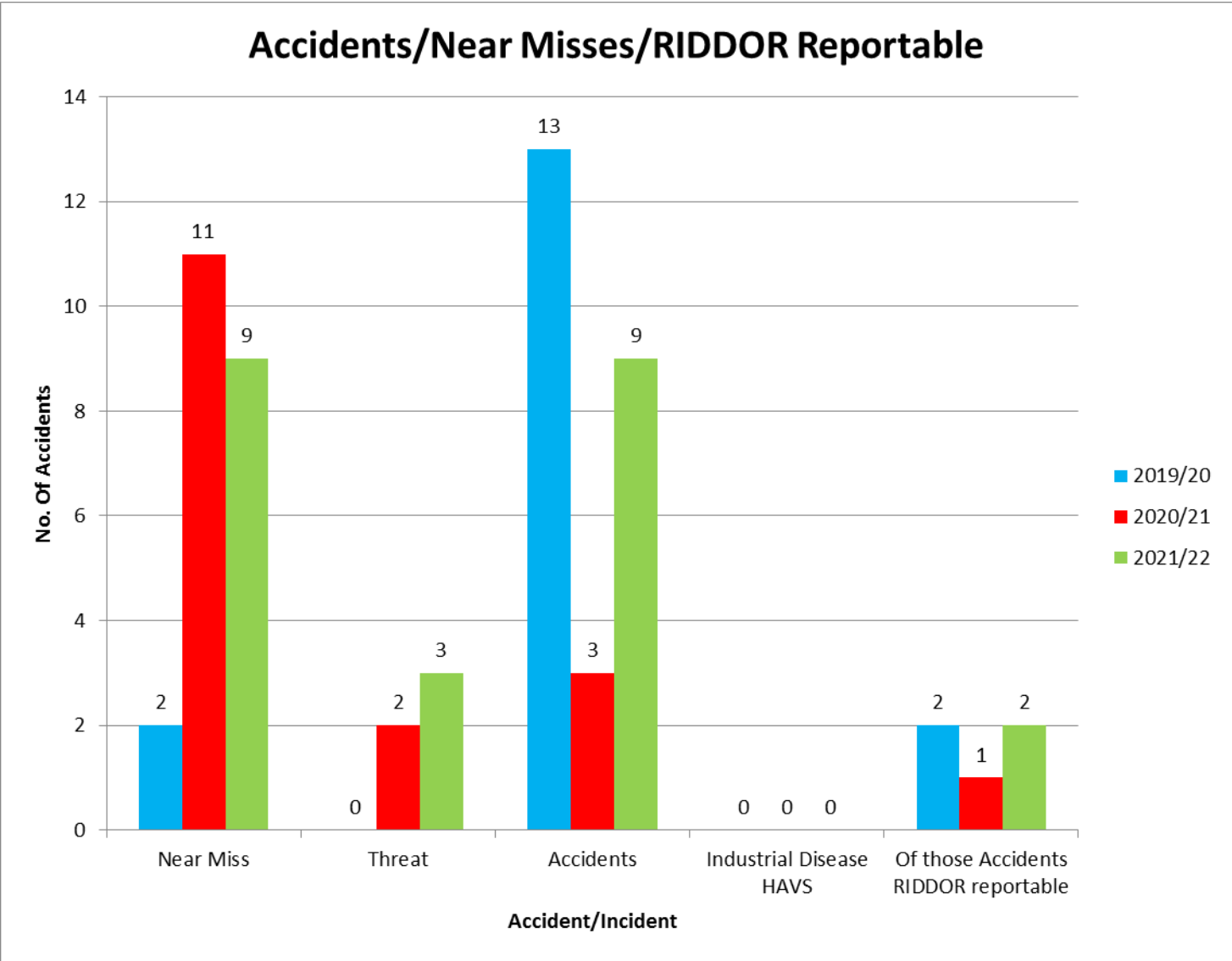
I look forward to sustaining our ability to adapt and learn innovative ways to enrich the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff over the coming year.

David G Owen
August 23rd, 2022

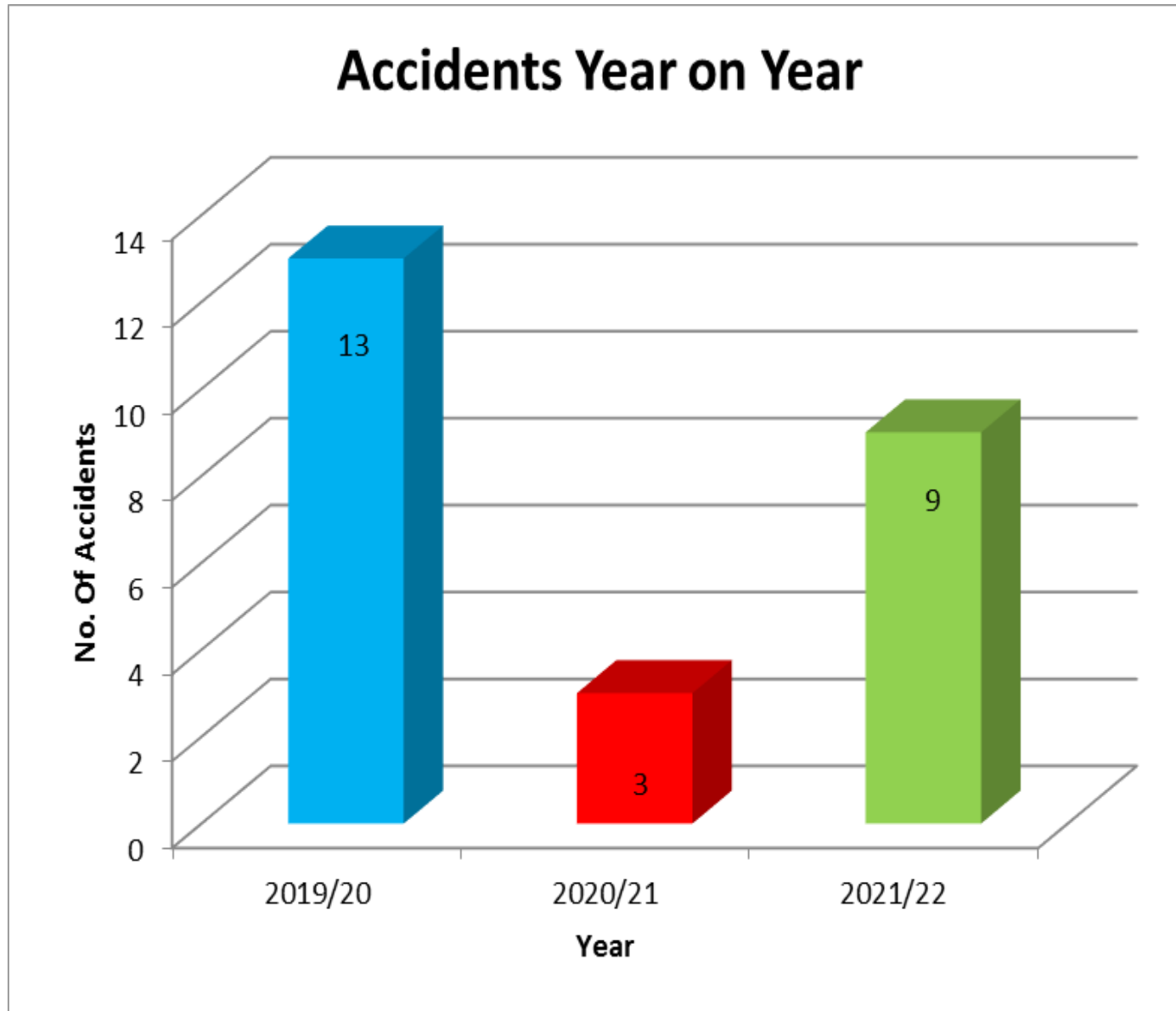
Appendix 1



Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Appendix 4 – Report Categories

Accident/Incident Totals			
	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22
Total Number of Accidents/Incidents	27	18	18
Breakdown of numbers			
Threats/Near Misses	15	11	12
Accidents	12	3	9
Of those Accidents RIDDOR reportable	5	1	2

Type of Accident	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22
Contact with Machinery	0	0	0
Exposed to Dangerous Substance	1	0	0
Fall from Height	0	0	0
Hit by Vehicle	1	0	0
Hit by Flying/Moving Object	1	0	0
Hit by something Static	0	0	1
Eye injury	0	0	1
Manual Handling	3	0	2
Slip/Trip/Fall	2	1	4
Physical Assault	1	0	0
Contact with electricity or electrical discharge	0	0	0
Other type of accident	3	2	1
Threat	13	0	3