

Corporate Annual Health and Safety Report

Financial Year
2023/24



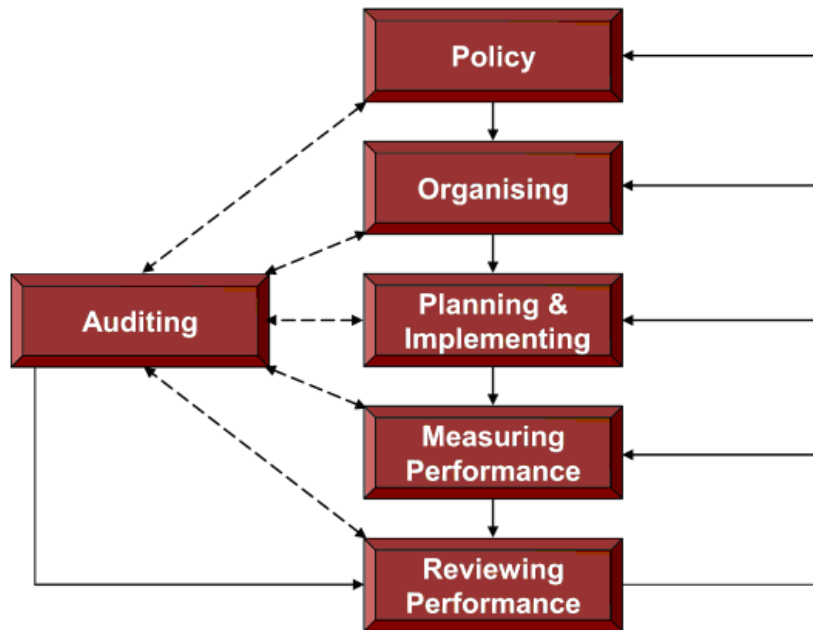
CONTENTS

1. Summary
2. Corporate commitment to health and safety
3. Provision of competent health and safety advice and support
4. Systems in place to identify and assess risks to the organisation
5. Monitoring of contractors
6. Consultative arrangements
7. Corporate health and safety training
8. Proactive health and safety monitoring
9. Reactive health and safety monitoring
10. Progress against the action plan for 2023/24
11. Proposed plans and targets for 2024/2025
12. Significant and emerging risks
13. Conclusion

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.

Our approach to health and safety management follows the principles of **Plan, Do, Act, Check** as detailed in the HSE's 'Managing for Health & Safety' (HSG65). It enables us to demonstrate that we follow the HSE's recommended advice in managing health and safety.



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 system to ensure they are robust in light of legislation regarding corporate manslaughter and recommendations promoted by the Health and Safety Executive.

Over the last sixteen 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.

In addition to the corporate health and safety policy, we have 37 accompanying policies, procedures and forms, which form part of the Council's Electronic Health and Safety Portfolio, this source of information is available to all staff.

We continue to improve systems for carrying out risk assessments and making sure that they are regularly reviewed; we have recently focussed on lone workers; fire safety, workstation assessments and for many other aspects of a good health and safety management system.

As noted in the body of this annual 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 previously assessed 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 2023 to the end of March 2024.

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 2023-24. 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 challenges. Once reviewed these are shared with staff and the Trades Unions.

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

Start safe:
Have everything you need to do your job safely, before you start.

Talk safe:
Speak up if something is unsafe, make it safe and report it - you will be supported.

Home safe:
What we all want, to go home safely to our family and friends.

High Peak Borough Council | STAFFORDSHIRE moorlands DISTRICT COUNCIL
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

3. Provision of competent health and safety advice and support

The corporate health and safety function comprises of one full time post, held by the Corporate Health and Safety Manager, 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.

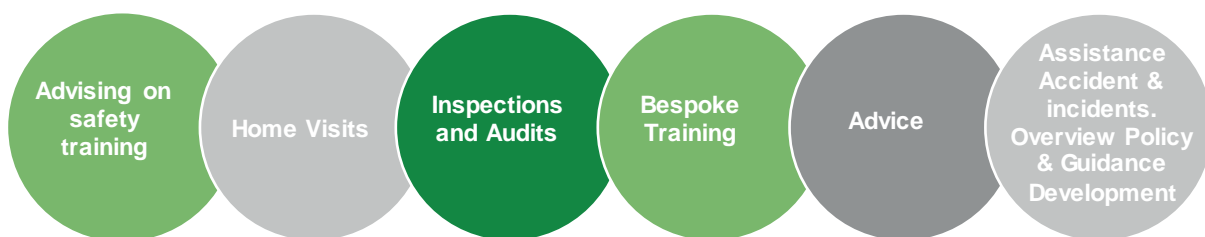
When the Chief Executive is on leave, he reports to the Deputy Chief Executive.

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.

During this financial year he has led on a re-focus of health and safety compliance in helping to prepare for the Social Housing Inspectorate visits planned for later in 2024. He has provided fire safety training for Alliance Norse staff and has supported others in detailing the health and safety service provision required for the third council controlled company My Active.

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, Trade Unions, key staff, and those attending the Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group.

The cornerstone of health and safety is risk assessment. The risk assessment process is embedded within the Council's Electronic Health and Safety Portfolio 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 the health and safety elements are carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Manager. 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. Audits and inspections also take place of Alliance Norse, and Alliance Environmental Services and Parkwood.

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 (not a legal requirement) who are engaged by the Assets Team, and by Alliance Norse.

From this year there is a new duty brought about by the Building Safety Act 2022 to liaise with building control experts at the design stage.

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 compliance audits have been generally good.

6. Consultative arrangements

The Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group, chaired by the Chief Executive, includes Heads of Service/representatives from all medium to high-risk areas across the two councils, and staff representatives.

Microsoft Office 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, updates and funding.
- Discussing issues of non-compliance
- Discussion and approval of revisions to corporate policies.
- Fire Authority Involvement at HPBC
- Health and Safety Compliance Audit Outcomes- 6

- Monitoring accident/incident and near miss statistics, trends.
- Highlighting contractor management/ compliance/performance issues
- Water Safety Risk Assessments -HPBC and SMDC
- Promoting health and safety across the two Councils
- Policy reviews
- Introduction of monthly fire safety checks in general needs housing accommodation
- Implications of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended 2021, the Fire Safety Act 2021, and the Building Safety Act 2022.
- Discussions relating to events taking place across the two Councils.
- Discussing mental health and well-being initiatives.

Four meetings are planned for the year 2024/25 coinciding with the Emergency Planning Compliance Group.

7. Corporate health and safety training

Each year the Corporate Health and Safety Manager 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 with risk and in accordance with the Council's health and safety training matrix. It enables us to meet our statutory duties, ensures our staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles, reduces accidents, and helps embed a positive safety culture.

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.

Further refresher training took place on fire safety at home, ergonomic safety, and safe DSE set up took place, for those 85% of our staff who are agile working from home.

999 health and safety courses and civil protection courses were delivered throughout the year with 826 health and safety training opportunities, and 173 training places covering counter terrorism and emergency planning.

The health and safety courses provided included: working from home, contractor evaluation training, accident reporting, inspection training, health and safety training for housekeepers, fire extinguisher in use training, first aid in the office, CDM Client duties awareness training, DSE Guidance, combatting work related stress, mental health first aid, and fire safety on line training.

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 audit/inspections took place of contractors working for us namely, Keble Heath carrying out civil engineering works at Birchall Playing Fields. Parkinson's PLC working on the refurbishment of Glossop Market Hall, one inspection and a site audit. Restoration Projects working at the Pavilion Gardens.

Leisure Energy working on decarbonisation works at Buxton Pool and Biddulph Leisure Centre.

Full compliance audits took place of Parkwood Leisure at Biddulph Leisure Centre and a Fire Safety Audit to monitor compliance across the housing stock.

The outcomes of most of the audits were good, with the outcomes of some requiring some improvements to a greater or lesser degree. In all cases follow up meetings have taken place to monitor progress, and there have been no occasions where the responses received have warranted further escalation or action.

All of the audit reports have been shared with the Alliance Leadership Team, the outcomes are also 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, and to ensure we and those working for us comply with legislation.

55 proactive workplace health and safety inspections have taken place and others on contractors' sites have taken place 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, parks, leisure centres and swimming pools; this coupled with site visits that highlight that our Council controlled companies and partners are working in accordance with industry standards. Where issues of non-compliance have been highlighted subsequent meetings have taken place 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, monthly fire safety checks and quarterly health and safety inspections take place at the Retirement Living Complexes at High Peak Borough Council, and in the parking areas of all Leisure Centres.

All staff carrying out these inspections have been trained by the author of this report, and the processes work well.

Closed Churchyards

In addition to the detail above 9 health and safety inspections of closed churchyards in the High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands took place to support the Head of Service Commissioning.

Once a Church of England churchyard closes for burials, the liability and maintenance of them mostly 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' and the diocese, closed churchyards can be effectively managed, and the significant risks, reduced, managed, or addressed.

The outcomes of the inspections are shared with the Head of Service Commissioning, the Parochial Church Council and Incumbent.

AES have site risk assessments for all of the closed churchyards, these are updated regularly.

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.

Near Misses

There have been 5 near misses during this time period. One related to a property fire at Mersey Bank, Glossop, the activation of a misting system in one of our properties which avoided a fire situation, 3 verbal altercations involving our frontline housing services staff.

Non Lost Time Accidents

There have been 5 workplace accidents, all of which resulted in no time being lost.

These comprise a trapped finger, back pain after a Perspex screen fell against a member of staff. An employee being hit by a falling pole ladder, and two minor eye injuries.

	Alliance accidents
(HSE) RIDDOR Reportable-LTA	0
NLT - (HSE) None RIDDOR Reportable	5
Verbal Threats/Near Misses/Property fire	5
TOTAL	10

Accidents to Members of the Public

There have been 6 accidents to members of the public, on Council owned or managed land, but no cases where the injured person was taken from site directly to hospital. A stall holder in Leek Market fell over and injured herself. A member of the public fell on external concrete steps in Glossop injuring herself.

A staff member of the NHS, located in Moorlands House fell in Vicarage Road car park, resulting in her employers reporting this as a RIDDOR Accident to the HSE.

An elderly gentleman bumped his head on the screen at Glossop Municipal Buildings, a tenant at Milton Court, Buxton banged his head on a balcony, and a visitor to Buxton Town Hall alleged he had slipped on the steps, but suffered no injuries, he just suffered from shock.

Lost Time Accidents

A lost time accident refers to any incident that results in keeping an employee away from work for any period of time, as well as permanent disabilities and conditions that may prevent an employee from ever returning to the job or performing their regular work tasks.

I am pleased to report that there have been no at fault RIDDOR reportable accidents this year.

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 2023-24. With no enforcement action or serious interventions from them.

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) did have cause to write three letters of concern to HPBC regarding concerns they had at a number of housing properties in the Glossop area.

In order to support our most vulnerable residents who require full-time support onsite, HPBC entered into an agreement with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) some years ago, whereby HPBC granted a tenancy to non-cohabiting tenants to live together on the understanding DCC would ensure 24 care is provided.

The care provider appointed by DCC was seemingly unaware of our role as landlord and so contacted DFRS rather than us to raise concerns, some of which were down to a lack of understanding.

All the recommendations highlighted by Derbyshire Fire and Service, were rectified swiftly, and DFRS accompanied the author of this report to audit the improvements made.

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service have since confirmed in writing that the matters raised are now closed..

This further focus of fire safety in one of the tenanted properties, resulted in the Council making significant improvements to the fire escape route to a property that is the home of two severely disabled tenants.

9.3 Dangerous Occurrences - Diseases

There was one dangerous occurrences reported during the period 2023-2024. This related to the gas explosion at one of our properties at Ollersett Avenue, New Mills.

HPBC oversaw the response phase of this incident, supported by other agencies, and managed the recovery phase following it.

The outcomes of the explosion resulted in the tragic death of our tenant. Following the forensic investigations, the Health and Safety Executive have confirmed they do not intend to take any action against Cadent gas or the Council, as there was no cause to do so.

As the dangerous occurrence- RIDDOR was not due to any fault of High Peak Borough Council it does not form part of our accident statistics.

Whilst not a dangerous occurrence, the Council did offer support residents in Castleton, Derbyshire and at one property in Ipstones, Staffordshire Moorlands during and following Storm Babet.

9.4 Achievement awards

The Council has not actively pursued any external achievement awards during 2023-24.

10. Actions undertaken during 2023/24

Council	Title of Corporate /Service Objective	Result of Action	Priority H/M/L	Link to Corporate Plan	Start Date	Deadline for completion	Lead Officer	Progress
<p>The Health and Safety Action Plan for 2023/24 follows a similar format and style to that of the previous plans. It has been developed to support the Council's commitment to sensible risk management with the theme "Risk-led Safety, Evidence Driven Safety Management".</p> <p>This Health and Safety Action Plan prioritises the work of the Corporate Health and Safety Manager, and also places responsibilities Heads of Service and other Managers to take ownership of health and safety to carry out and review their operational risk assessments, report workplace accidents and to ensure responses to workplace inspections and fire risk assessments are responded to within the agreed timescales. The Corporate Health and Safety Manager will carry out performance audits as required by the Alliance Leadership Team to ensure full compliance and demonstrate continuous improvement. In addition to this he will carry out unannounced site visits to those contractor sites working on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>The Corporate Health and Safety Manager will continue to provide supporting documentation - checklists, proformas, aide memoirs, safety alerts, tool box talks, advice and guidance etc, to directorates, managers, employees, elected members and trades unions to facilitate development and implementation of, local action plans and compliance with this Council Action Plan and the Council's Health and Safety Policy. This plan links to the HSE's recommendations for developing Health and Safety Action Plans and links to the objectives of the Corporate Plan. Items highlighted in red are those that could not be achieved due to COVID-19 restrictions and have been brought forward into this year's work plan. Items in green are areas where I am recommending an action.</p> <p>David G Owen - Corporate Health and Safety Manager - March 17th 2023</p>								
Corporate Health and Safety								
Policy								
HPBC & SMDC	Review the Health and Safety Policy to reflect changes.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved
HPBC & SMDC	Review Electronic Health and Safety Portfolio regarding changes in legislation, structural changes.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved
Measuring Performance								
HPBC	Carry out an inspection of Cromford Court and Eccles Fold.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	Ensuring a Safe Place of Work and ensuring housing is fit for purpose	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved
HPBC & SMDC	Carry out Fire Risk Assessments in all Corporate buildings, and at Eccles Fold and Cromford Court.	Statutory Compliance/Reduction in claims/fire incidents	High	Ensuring a Safe Place of Work and ensuring housing is fit for purpose	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved, plus Queens Court
HPBC & SMDC	Carry out accident investigations over 7 day accidents	Statutory Compliance- Limit liability	High	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved
HPBC & SMDC	Maintain a regime of planned Health and Safety Inspections	Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved
Planning								
HPBC & SMDC	Develop at least 6 Tool Box Talks -Safety Alerts- News from the Court Briefings	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved
HPBC/ SMDC	Reduce accidents to less than <20 and reducing RIDDOR reportable to 0.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved
HPBC/ SMDC	Review the Arson Fire risk assessments 4 until properties are sold.	Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved for the 2 now left
HPBC/ SMDC	Carry out health and safety training for housekeeping staff	Statutory Compliance/Reduction in claims/incidents	Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well-motivated workforce	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved 7.03.24

HPBC/ SMDC	Carry out unannounced site inspections- contractors teckal companies.	Contractor Monitoring- Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved 6
HPBC/ SMDC	Provide fire extinguisher training and risk assessment as required	Statutory Compliance/Reduction in claims/incidents	Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well motivated workforce	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved
HPBC/ SMDC	Review the Lone Worker Policy, once a new system is operational.	Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO and Head of OD	Achieved January 2024
HPBC/ SMDC	Follow up complex ergonomic DSE-Self Assessments or home visits.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved 7
HPBC/ SMDC	Provide contractor evaluation training	Statutory Compliance	Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well motivated workforce	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Done 24.04.23
HPBC/ SMDC	Deliver health and safety inspection training for Parkwood and other staff carrying out car park or other inspections on our behalf.	Statutory Compliance	High	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well-motivated workforce	Apr	Mar-2024	DGO	Done 20th and 21st April 2023
HPBC/ SMDC	Carry out 8 water safety risk assessments.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved 14
HPBC/ SMDC	Provide IOSH Managing Safely Training for Heads of Service		Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well-motivated workforce	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Not achieved
HPBC/ SMDC	Complete health and safety inspections of partner organisations.	Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved 2

Audit and Reviewing of Performance

HPBC & SMDC	Carry out 1 Health and Safety Performance Audits - The Springs Centre or Parkwood Leisure Centre	Statutory Compliance	High	Audit and Reviewing of Performance	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved Parkwood
HPBC	Develop an audit protocol that ensure the Council is meeting the new fire safety requirements, and the requirements detailed within the social housing act.	Statutory Compliance	High	All aims and including compliance with new legislation.	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO Head of Housing and Assets	Developed fire safety audit protocol May 2023
HPBC	Carry out an audit to ensure fire risk assessments have been carried out in communal areas of housing blocks	Statutory Compliance	High	Ensuring housing is safe and fit for purpose/investing in staff	Apr-2023	Mar-2024	DGO	Achieved 27.04.23

Other additional key work actions

- Responded to three Councillor and 1 residents' complaints
- Carried out 7 Enhanced DSE assessments
- Carried out a fire risk assessment for Queens Court
- With support from the Head of Organisational Development completed and submitted two COVID inquiry surveys
- Carried out fire safety training for New Mills Town Council
- Updated the SMDC Elected Members Emergency Plan
- Developed a Fire Safety and Asbestos - Audit Protocol
- Ongoing liaison with DFRS
- Developed additional fire safety guidance for housing tenants
- Safety Alert-News from the Courts 6

- Asssted Biddulph Town Council in achieving the Rospa Silver Award 2023
- Assisted Leek Town Council with the development of a fire risk assessment
- Provided 'Managing Safely Training' for Biddulph Town Council
- Carried out Emergency Planning Training
- Provided 5 articles for the tenant newsletters
- Completed 6 contract evaluations
- Coordinated HPBC/SMDC responses to Storm Babet
- Trained AES staff in Workplace Inspection protocols
- Agreed and completed the data sharing protocols for the Staffordshire Resilience Forum
- Met with Castleton Parish Council representative and HPBC Councillor for the Hope Valley following Storm Babet
- Led the Council's response- and supported the recovery phase -Ollersett Avenue explosion
- Developed a recovery cell protocol
- Carried out an inspection of St Peter's Church, Caverswall following a road rage Incident.
- Followed up HM Coroner recommendation at Harehills, Glossop
- Provided Fire Safety Training for Alliance Norse
- Carried out due diligence checks of Cheshire Demolition.
- Provided Health and Safety Training for Housekeepers

11. Plans and targets for 2024/25

Council	Title of Corporate / Service Objective	Result of Action	Priority H/M/L	Link to Corporate Plan	Start Date	Deadline for completion	Lead Officer	Progress
<p>The Health and Safety Action Plan for 2024/25 follows a similar format and style to that of the previous plans. It has been developed to support the Council's commitment to sensible risk management with the theme "Risk-led Safety, Evidence Driven Safety Management".</p> <p>This Health and Safety Action Plan prioritises the work of the Corporate Health and Safety Manager, and also places responsibilities Heads of Service and others to take ownership of health and safety to carry out and review their operational risk assessments, report workplace accidents and to ensure responses to workplace inspections and fire risk assessments are responded to within the agreed timescales. The Corporate Health and Safety Manager will carry out performance audits as required by the Alliance Leadership Team to ensure full compliance and demonstrate continuous improvement. In addition to this he will carry out unannounced site visits of council controlled companies and to those contractors working on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>The Corporate Health and Safety Manager will continue to provide supporting documentation - checklists, proformas, aide memoirs, safety alerts, tool box talks, advice and guidance etc, to directorates, managers, employees, elected members and trades unions to facilitate development and implementation of, local action plans and compliance with this Council Action Plan and the Council's Health and Safety Policy. This plan links to the HSE's recommendations for developing Health and Safety Action Plans and links to the objectives of the Corporate Plan. Items highlighted in red are those that could not be achieved during this financial year have been brought forward into this year's work plan. Items in green are areas where I am recommending a new action.</p> <p>David G Owen - Corporate Health and Safety Manager - February 5th 2024</p>								
Corporate Health and Safety								
Policy								
HPBC & SMDC	Review the Health and Safety Policy to reflect changes.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC & SMDC	Review Electronic Health and Safety Portfolio regarding changes in legislation, structural changes.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
Measuring Performance								
HPBC	Carry out an inspection of Cromford Court and Eccles Fold.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	Ensuring a Safe Place of Work and ensuring housing is fit for purpose	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	

HPBC & SMDC	Carry out Fire Risk Assessments in all Corporate buildings, and at Eccles Fold and Cromford Court.	Statutory Compliance/Reduction in claims/fire incidents	High	Ensuring a Safe Place of Work and ensuring housing is fit for purpose	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC & SMDC	Carry out accident investigations over 7 day accidents	Statutory Compliance-Limit liability	High	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC & SMDC	Maintain a regime of planned Health and Safety Inspections, and fire risk assessments.	Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	

Planning

HPBC & SMDC	Develop at least 6 Tool Box Talks -Safety Alerts- News from the Court Briefings	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Reduce accidents to less than <20 and reducing RIDDOR reportable to 0.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Review the Arson Fire risk assessments 2 until properties are sold.	Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Carry our riskassessment training	Statutory Compliance	Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well-motivated workforce	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Carry out fire safety refresher training for Housing staff	Statutory Compliance/Reduction in claims/incidents	Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well-motivated workforce	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Carry out 6 unannounced site inspections- council controlled companies.	Contractor Monitoring- Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Provide fire extinguisher training and risk assessment as required	Statutory Compliance/Reduction in claims/incidents	Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well-motivated workforce	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Update the health and safety policy revision protocol.	Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Follow up complex ergonomic DSE-Self Assessments, and home visits.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Carry out contractor evaluations- due diligence checks	Statutory Compliance	Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well-motivated workforce	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Carry out the remaining 4 water safety risk assessments.	Statutory Compliance	Medium	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/ SMDC	Provide IOSH Managing Safety Training for Heads of Service		Medium	Legal Compliance and Ensuring a well-motivated workforce	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO or external	
HPBC/ SMDC	Complete health and safety inspections of contractors working for the Council.	Statutory Compliance	High	All Aims	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	

Audit and Reviewing of Performance

HPBC & SMDC	Carry out Health and Safety Performance Audits - The Springs Centre, Buxton, and Fire Safety Compliance Audit of Alliance Norse	Statutory Compliance	High	Audit and Reviewing of Performance	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
-------------	---	----------------------	------	------------------------------------	----------	----------	-----	--

HPBC	Develop an audit protocol that ensure the Council is meeting its requirements under the Control of Asbestos Regulations.	Statutory Compliance	High	All aims and including compliance with new legislation.	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
SMDC	Review the rest centre details within the Rest Centre Managers Handbook	Statutory Compliance	Medium	Statutory Compliance	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC/SMDC	Develop health and safety awareness training for Elected Members	Raising Awareness	Medium	Statutory Compliance	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	
HPBC	Carry out an audit to ensure additional signage and the relevant evacuation strategies have been shared with tenants.	Statutory Compliance	High	Ensuring housing is safe and fit for purpose/investing in staff	Apr-2024	Mar-2025	DGO	

12. Significant and emerging risks

Significant risks within the Council

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

Asbestos

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

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 under our 'duty to manage'. This is to ensure that the asbestos stock remains safe and is well managed.

Management surveys are also carried out in communal areas of retirement living complexes, general needs accommodation, and refurbishment and demolition surveys domestic properties where construction work is carried out.

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

Following the formation of Alliance Norse our current Asbestos Policy was updated in September 2023 to ensure the new arrangements for ensuring compliance are reflected within it.

The Head of Assets is leading on this along with the development of an asbestos management plan, and an asbestos register, supported by the Assets Team and colleagues from Alliance Norse.

Several new asbestos 'management surveys' were provided during 2023-24.

The author of this report has developed an asbestos audit protocol that the Assets Compliance Team can use to monitor compliance with asbestos.

One member of the Assets Team and a staff member within Alliance Norse holds the nationally recognised P405-The Management of Asbestos in Buildings course. This ensures key staff have the practical knowledge and skills to manage asbestos in buildings and have a sound knowledge base to audit asbestos removal projects.

15 Housing staff will be provided with asbestos awareness training during 2024.

Where it is cost effective and practicable to do so, and as part of major refurbishment projects the removal of higher asbestos containing materials is considered to reduce the risk of exposure. Removals will be undertaken by licensed contractors.

Legionella

The management of legionella across the two Councils is managed by the Assets Team supported by Alliance Norse and competent contractors.

Our corporate policy on the management of Legionella was updated and issued in September 2023, to reflect the new working arrangements with our Council controlled company Alliance Norse.

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.

Alliance Norse, and their contractors now carry out all monitoring for us through their preferred contractors – Alliance Norse Ltd use their agent Houseman Environmental.

Our Alliance Norse, property services team and Houseman Environmental (for non-corporate properties) carry out regular monitoring to ensure full compliance with the policy. Surveys and risk assessments are reviewed regularly, flushing and temperature monitoring is carried out monthly by trained persons.

Those fulfilling roles are detailed within the Legionella Policy.

New legionella risk assessments will be commissioned in 2024, these are reviewed every 2 years, and there are some outstanding issues that will require further attention.

Competent support in this area now forms part of our joint venture with Alliance Norse which is monitored by the Assets Team.

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, that requirement was updated with a review of legislation during 2021.

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

In May 2023 the Fire Safety Management policy was again updated, by the author of this report and a new fire risk assessment pro forma and fire log book was introduced.

These changes to policy came about following the introduction of the Fire Safety Act, 2021, The Building Safety Act 2022, and The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

These changes have significant implications for High Peak Borough Council as a social housing provider and landlord.

Employees are provided with regular fire safety training.

Housing Properties

In addition to the above regulatory changes, the introduction of the Social Housing Act 2023 High Peak Borough Council in particular, will now have to evidence the following, where the fire safety legislation, and Act applies.

- Fire risk assessments are in place, and these are reviewed annually or after material change or a fire situation.
- External wall inspections, and balcony inspections following the PAS9980 standard are carried out
- Flat entrance fire door inspections, where two or more properties share a communal corridor are carried out, and defects are addressed. This also applies to leasehold properties
- Tenants must be regularly consulted on fire safety issues, requiring the Council to detail how they will ensure their homes are safe.
- Fire safety signage must be updated to reflect the specific evacuation strategy, and other fire safety issues, such as fire safety on balconies.
- Develop a monitoring protocol that will assist the Council in confirming it is meeting the above requirements.

All our Retirement Living Complexes (High Peak Borough Council), and all our corporate buildings and communal areas of flats, have a detailed fire risk assessment these are reviewed regularly.

The planned L1 Part 6 fire alarm upgrades at Queens Court, Fairfield, Cromford Court, Whaley Bridge, Eccles Fold, Chapel en le Frith, and Marian Court, Buxton are now complete, there is just Hartington Gardens that will require the fire alarm upgrades, which is planned to be completed by 2026.

Fire Doors- Flat entrance doors and others

Annual fire door inspections of HPBC housing stock where two or more properties share a communal area commenced in 2023-24. These were carried out by specialist inspectors. The outcomes of the inspections highlighted that 91% of fire doors did not meet the current British standards.

A budget of 2.5 million pounds has been allocated to address this.

A fire door specification has been developed and having discussed this with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, the improvement programme will be completed within 3 years or sooner. The improvement plan has prioritised the properties where the fire door replacement/upgrades will take place based on the size of buildings their use, fire risk assessment outcomes, demographic age and vulnerability of tenants.

Tenants have been advised of the planned improvements in the tenants newsletter, and an annual fire door inspection will take place. Alliance Norse are required to provide quarterly progress updates at the Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group until all the fire doors have been upgraded or replaced.

Fire door inspections and compartmentation surveys have also taken place within some of the corporate buildings.

External Wall and Balcony Inspections (Fire Risk Assessment)

In association with the author of this report, Alliance Norse have developed a balcony and external wall inspection schedule utilising iAuditor. This inspection format closely follows the general principles detailed in PAS9980 the agreed national standard.

The report adopts the RAG (Red/Amber/Green) risk rating approach to identified risks.

Given that none of HPBC housing accommodation has any insulation of concern, and after discussions with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service the external wall and balcony inspections will be carried out in year 1 and then in year 3.

On the understanding that if there are any near misses /fires or changes to the buildings an additional wall/balcony inspection will be carried out.

Alliance Norse are required to provide quarterly progress updates at the Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group until all the external balcony and wall inspections have taken place, and to highlight issues requiring attention.

CO2 Detector Programme

Following concerns raised during 2023, regarding the progress being made with this issue, Alliance Norse have now confirmed (March 2024) that all housing properties have been fitted with battery powered CO2 detectors.

The plan in the near future is to look at upgrading these to hard wired units and explore technological advancements that can detect issues earlier.

For all buildings, the findings of the fire risk assessments are shared with the Assets Team who raise issues requiring action with Alliance Norse.

Corporate Properties

Following the completion of fire risk assessments a common theme has developed across our corporate buildings and partner buildings, which 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, carry out compartmentation surveys, and improve fire spread generally by improving compartmentation standards.

Within this financial year compartmentation surveys and fire door inspections have highlighted the need for improvements to fire doors and fire proofing at a number of our properties. At Moorlands House, improvement works are estimated to cost around £156,000. The Assets Team have confirmed that this work will form part of the planned improvements for Moorlands House.

At a cost of £30,000, the L5 fire alarm system has been recently upgraded, to cover areas of Moorlands House that were not currently covered by automatic fire detection.

At Buxton Town Hall the fire alarm system needs upgrading, as do some of the emergency lighting units. A decision was taken in 2022 with support from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, not to replace the fire alarm system unless it fails. The frequency of servicing was increased to quarterly rather than replace the two systems.

The increased servicing regimes will alert us to early problems, and if the systems are showing indications it is failing, the fire alarm and emergency lighting would be upgraded at that point. Weekly fire alarm checks and emergency lighting checks highlight both systems continue to be fully operational.

During this financial year there have been no near misses or fires in any of our corporate buildings.

Domestic Housing property fires

There have been no fires in our housing properties this year.

There was an activation of a sprinkler system in a property in Gamesley, with no major damage or injury to the tenant.

Radon

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

The 33-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 is 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 in our corporate buildings and leisure centres was carried out during winter 2022, through to February 2023, the outcomes in every case resulted in low readings with no further action required.

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 through Alliance Norse, in accordance with the Councils' Radon Policy.

Home Working

With 85% of our workforce are working from home, guidance has been developed and issued to ensure our staff remain safe whilst working at home.

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.
- Ensuring Self DSE Assessments are carried out, and the actions from these are progressed.
- Supporting staff to work safely at home, enabling them to work their hours around home demands where operationally possible.
- Issuing fire safety and first aid guidance to staff to ensure the fire safety and first aid arrangements at the 'work place' are not compromised.
- The Council has also responded to ensuring staff working from home are not compromising their musculoskeletal health. This was achieved by producing a revised homeworkers checklist for staff, tool box talks, safe systems of work and has included several home visits.
- If staff cannot afford to work from home given the increase in heating/living costs, or have feelings of social isolation, our employees also have the option to work from any of the offices.

A focus during next year will be to promote and increase 'usage of the lone worker support tools' by staff. It is anticipated this provision will also be offered to Councillors.

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.

Flu Vaccinations

During last winter, 72 employees had free flu vaccinations arranged by the Council.

Musculoskeletal and ergonomic issues

We continue to recognise that musculoskeletal problems can be a reason for sickness.

We continue to encourage staff to complete the Self DSE assessment process and seek professional support where issues of concern are highlighted. 7 ergonomic home visits took place during the last financial year to ensure staff are not a risk from musculoskeletal and other problems.

2 staff were referred to Occupational Health and as a result, reasonable adjustments in both cases were put in place.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Both 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 wherever possible.

A mental health awareness training session took place in September 2019 and subsequent training has recently been provided for staff who are our designated 'mental health first aiders'.

Our staff and mental health first aiders have access to the staff support facility through to Occupational Health should they require this.

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, support, sickness absence management and health promotion.

The Occupational Health service also provides a proactive health surveillance programme.

There were 21 referrals to the occupational health clinics in the above period (5 stress related. Remainder muscular skeletal, neurological and gastric problems).

5 were related to stress (2 work related and 3 personal stress). Follow up actions included : phased returns, wellbeing risk assessments developed, along with sign posting to the wellbeing hub, counselling and mental health first aiders.

4 employees were also sent back to occupational health during this period for review.

13. Conclusion

On a personal note, today I celebrate 35 years working in Local Government.

I am pleased to produce my sixteenth Annual Health and Safety Report for 2023-24.

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

As the focus on service delivery changes to those of a service commissioning body, we must continue to develop our existing positive safety culture, to ensure that it will be robust enough to positively impact on the environments in which our staff work. Our safety culture must also be embedded into the culture of our council controlled companies.

We must all strive to further reduce 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 ensure and demonstrate that our staff have the skills, knowledge, training, and experience to fulfil their respective roles. We must ensure those commissioning services have the skills to act as the competent and informed Client.

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 lose focus or become complacent, and must remain ready to prepare for future changes in legislation and guidance and respond to these accordingly.



Among our biggest challenges ahead relates to our ability to evidence full compliance in the wake of the introduction of three pieces of fire safety /building safety legislation, and the introduction of the Social Housing Act, along with changes to the Construction Design and Management Regulations and the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 where a project is notifiable.

It is imperative that we have competent staff, robust systems and procedures in place that enable us to be in a position to confirm our compliance, as failure to do so could result in enforcement action, and a negative affect on our reputation.

The continued support and leadership of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Heads of Service, Managers, staff, 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.

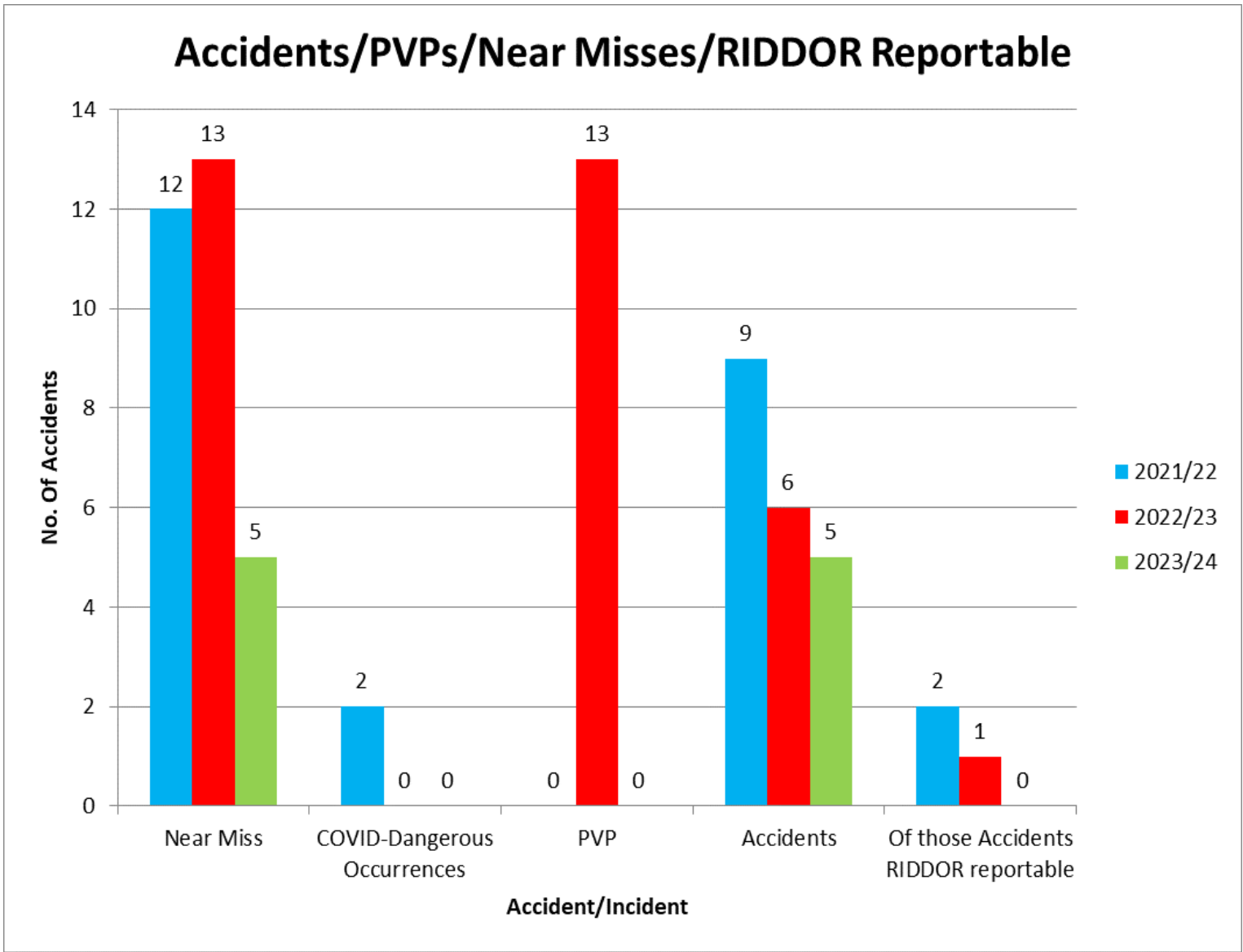
I believe that the best way we can show our staff that we care is to be concerned for their personal health, safety, and wellbeing. This has never been more important to us than throughout the past twelve months with the challenges brought about by Storm Babet and the explosion at Ollersett

Avenue where again our staff and those from our two council controlled companies exceeded all expectations.

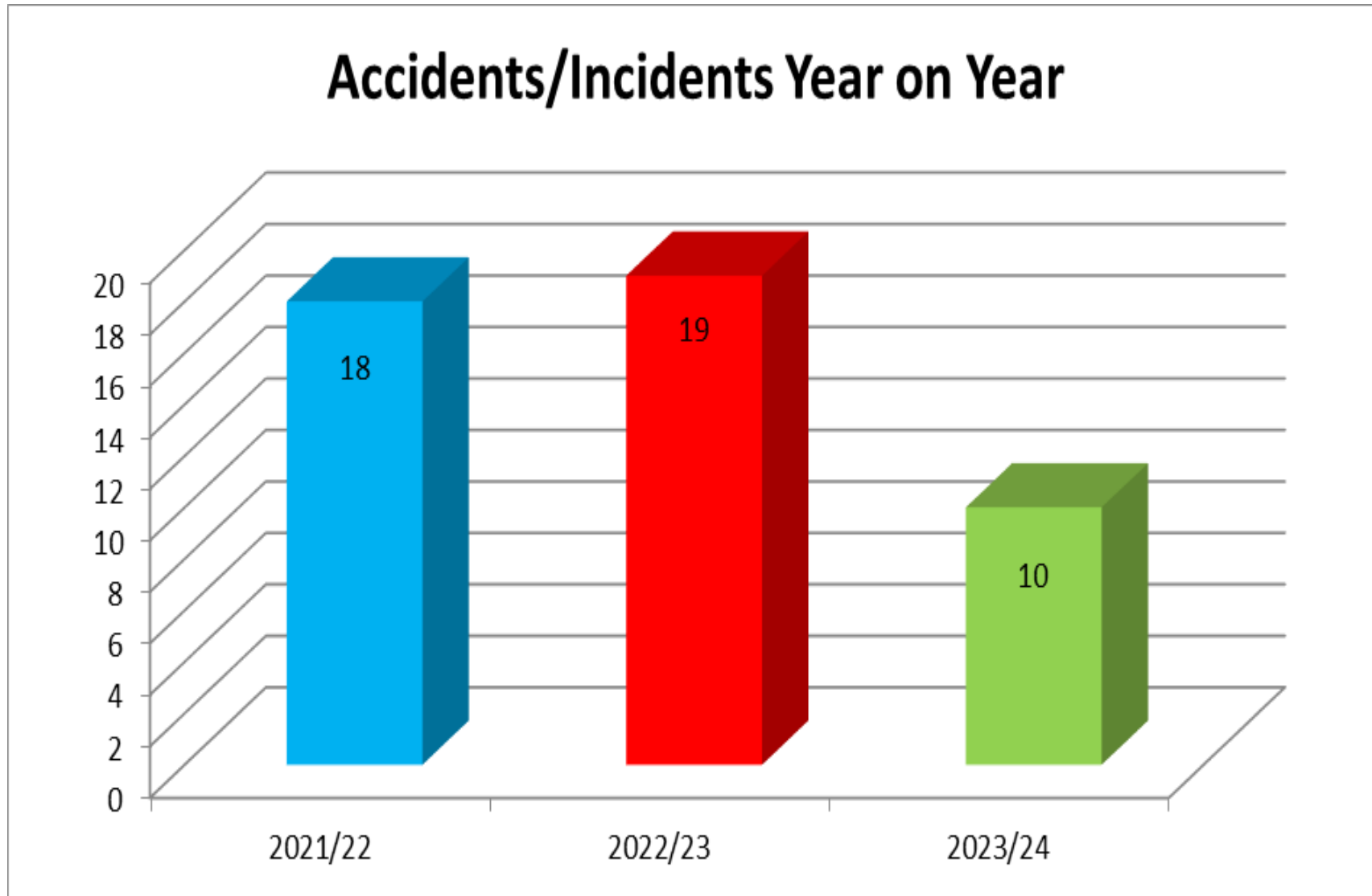
We must remain committed to promoting health and safety and to supporting our staff to be the best they can be and adapt and learn innovative ways to enrich the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff over the coming year and beyond.

David G Owen
Corporate Health and Safety Manager
July 31st, 2024

Appendix 1



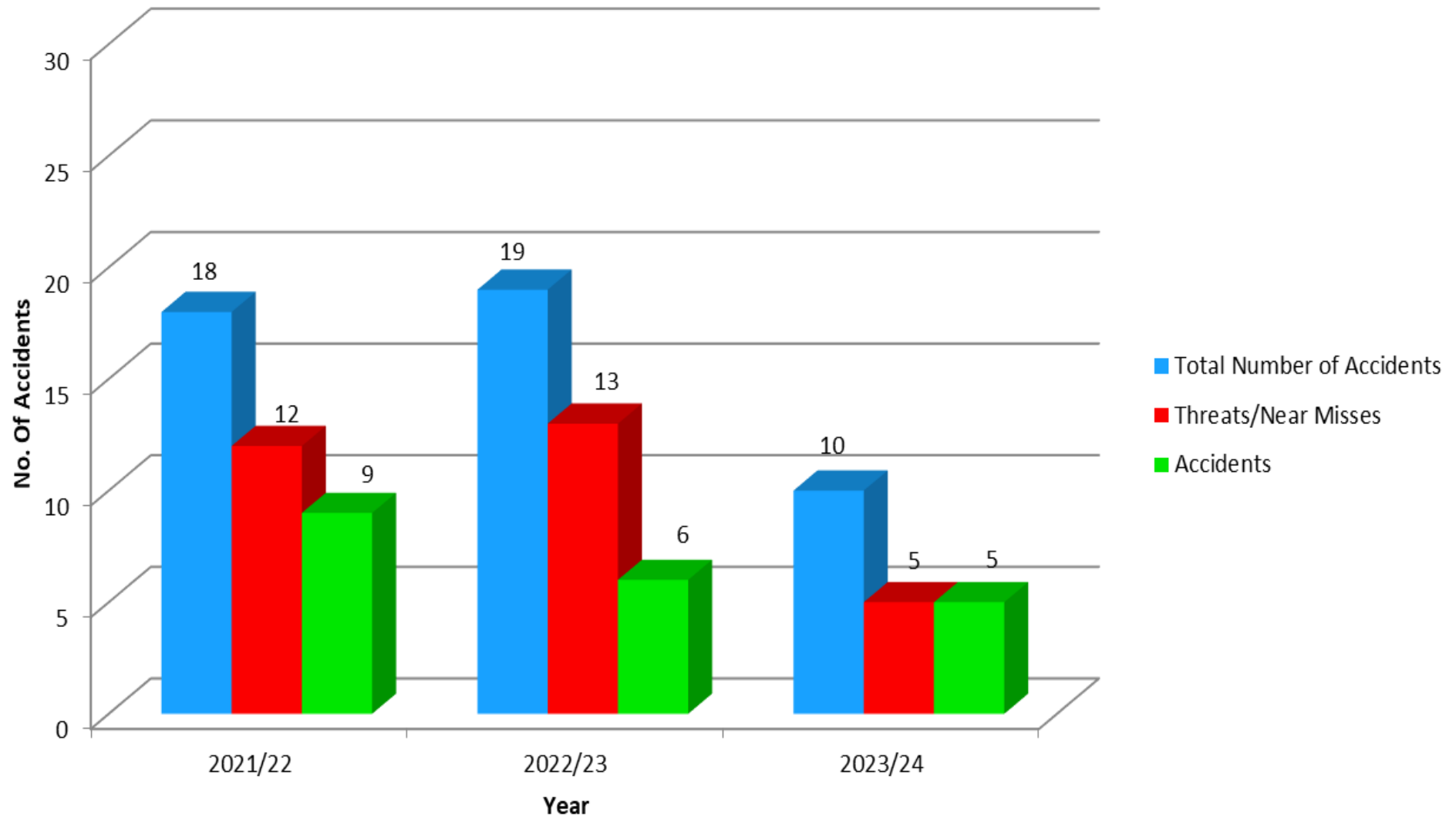
Appendix 2



Appendix 3 – Report Categories

Accident/Incident Totals			
	2021/2022	2022/23	2023/24
Total Number of Accidents/Incidents	18	19	10
Breakdown of numbers			
Threats/Near Misses	12	13	5
Accidents	9	6	5
Of those Accidents RIDDOR reportable	2	1	0

Accident by type



Type of Accident	2021/2022	2022/23	2023/24
Contact with Machinery	0	0	0
Exposed to Dangerous Substance	0	0	0
Fall from Height	0	0	0
Hit by Vehicle	0	0	0
Hit by Flying/Moving Object	0	0	2
Hit by something Static	1	1	0
Eye injury	1	0	2
Manual Handling	2	3	0
Slip/Trip/Fall	4	2	0
Physical Assault	0	0	0
Contact with electricity or electrical discharge	0	0	0
Other type of accident	0	0	1
Threat	3	13	0

Type of Accident/Incident

