



Leicestershire County Council

Appendix 1 - Annual Health, Safety & Wellbeing Performance Report

April 2021 – March 2022

Author: Amy Walling (Senior HS&W Advisor)

**Contributions by: Oonagh Martin (Wellbeing Advisor) &
Tina Goswami (Organisational Development Advisor)**



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Key Facts

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Service endeavour to continually monitor HSW performance within the authority in order that improvements can be made to ensure legal compliance, financial savings and most importantly the safety of staff, clients, pupils, service users, volunteers, and contractors. This annual report highlights some of the work that has been undertaken in the past year to put in place proactive measures, to address compliance issues and to raise awareness of the appropriate hazards and risks. The report also highlights the action that departments have taken to mitigate risks.



Injuries



RIDDOR Incidents



Counselling sessions



Audits



Near Misses Reported



Injuries caused by slips
trips and falls



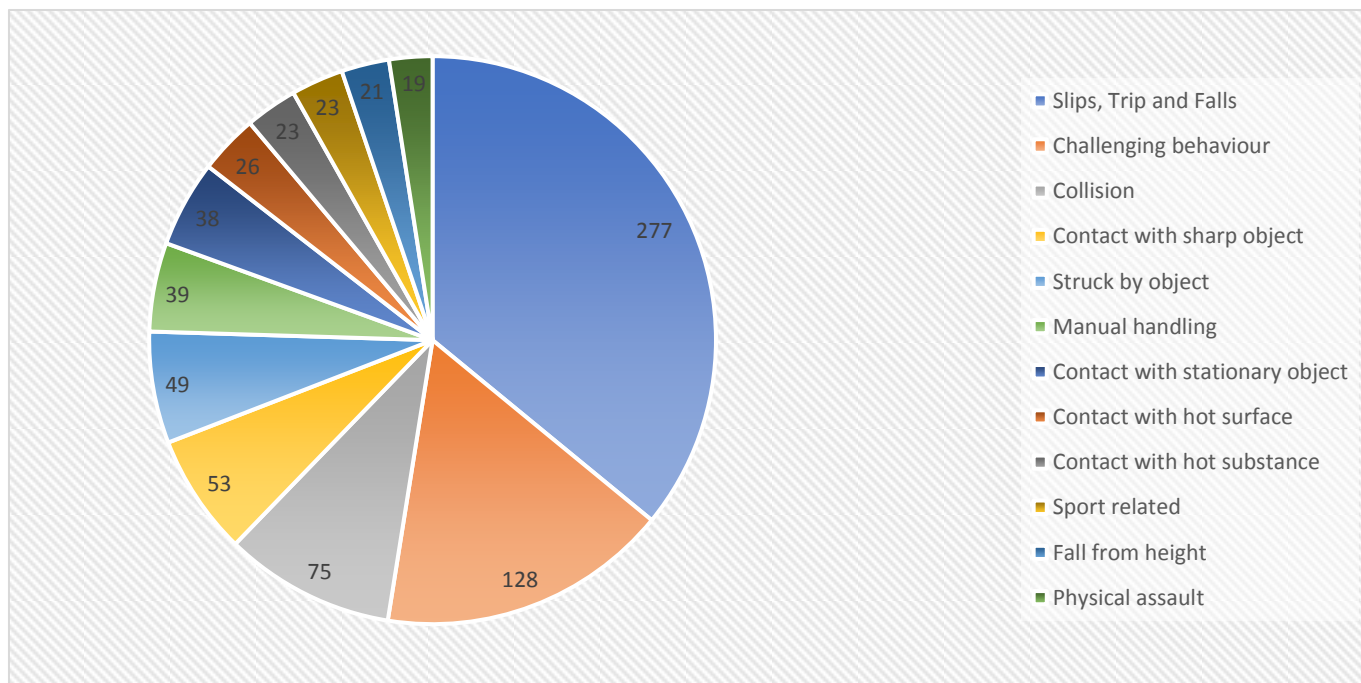
Injuries caused by
physical assaults and
challenging behaviour



Health and Safety
Courses Completed



Accident Data Analysis for Leicestershire County Council April 2021 – March 2022



Incident Type	2021/22	% Change	2020/21	% Change	2019/20
Injury	876	+64%	528	-51%	1082
Near Miss	269	+67%	161	-60%	411
Property Damage	135	+21%	111	-6%	119
Violent Incident	125	+76%	71	-64%	202
Illness/Disease	13	0	13	-48%	25
Total	1418	+60%	884	-51%	1839
RIDDOR	26	+4%	25	-10%	28

Information within this report has been gained from Leicestershire County Council's accident and incident reporting system, AssessNET on 18/05/2022.

There was, understandably, a large reduction in the number of incidents in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout 2021/22 the number of incidents, as expected, increased, however the number of reported incidents is significantly lower than 2019/20. This may be attributed to a number of improvements that have been made within the management of health and safety across the council.



Accidents by Service Area

The council uses the AssessNET system to report all accidents and incidents. The information below shows those services / establishments that have reported the highest number of injuries.

Department	Service Area	N° of Accidents (resulting in injury)
CR	Commercial Services > LTS Catering	117
LA Schools	Primary Schools > Thorpe Acre Junior School	39
E&T	Highways and Transport Delivery > Highway Operations	28
LA Schools	Nursery School > Sketchley Hill Menphys Nursery	28
LA Schools	Special School > Birch Wood Special School - Melton Mowbray	27
LA Schools	Nursery School > The Menphys Centre - Wigston	26
LA Schools	Primary Schools > Little Bowden School	22
E&T	Recycling and Household Waste Sites	22
E&T	Highways and Transport Delivery > Passenger Fleet	21
LA Schools	Primary Schools > Desford Community Primary School	17
LA Schools	Primary Schools > St Deny`s Church of England Infant School	16
LA Schools	Primary Schools > Whetstone Badgerbrook Primary School	15
LA Schools	Special School > Maplewell Hall School - Woodhouse Eaves	15
LA Schools	Primary Schools > St Bartholomew`s Church of England Primary School	13
ESPO	ESPO	12
LA Schools	Primary Schools > Burbage Church of England Infant School	11
CR	Contract and Business Development > Countryside Services	11
LA Schools	Primary Schools > Woodstone Community Primary School	11
LA Schools	Primary Schools > Ravenhurst Primary School	10
CFS	Education Quality and Inclusion > Oakfield PRU	10
A&C	Provider Services > The Trees Residential and Short Breaks Service	10



RIDDOR Reportable Incidents and Incidents of Significance

The council is obliged to comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. It is a requirement that certain incidents which are more serious are reported to the HSE. The following information outlines the incidents by department that have been reported under the RIDDOR regulations during 2021/2022.

A&C reported 2 RIDDOR incidents within 2021/2022. These incidents are summarised below:

1. Provider Services > Emergency Care Team 24/04/2021

A support worker sustained a sprained back when she was transferring a service user by pushing a glide about commode. Upon investigation it was found that the support worker followed correct moving and handling procedures however she had an existing back problem which was exasperated.

2. Adult Learning Service > Round Hill Adult Learning Centre 21/02/2022

A learner sustained fractured ribs and shoulder blade from falling down several steps. The learner was taken to A&E as a result. The investigation found that there were no issues with the condition of the staircase which caused the fall.

CE reported 1 RIDDOR incident within 2021/2022. The incident is summarised below:

3. Trading Standards > Investigations. 22/11/2021

A substance identified as Creosote spilt in room B24 in the County Hall basement area. The seized substance was likely knocked over accidentally in the room leading to the spillage. The investigation found that hazardous substances were being incorrectly stored in the room resulting from poor management of seized goods. The Trading Standards team are currently working through an action plan to improvement the management of their storage room.

LA schools reported 9 RIDDOR incidents within 2021/2022. These incidents are summarised below:

4. New Swannington Primary School – 06/04/2021

A member of staff sustained a fractured leg after a loft ladder at the school collapsed whilst she was walking up the ladder. The investigation found that the loft ladder was incorrectly installed. Following this incident, a safety alert went to all schools notifying



them of the incident and asking them to report all similar types of loft ladders to Property Services for inspection.

5. Little Bowden School – 26/04/2021

A member of staff was struck on the head by a football in the playground, resulting in concussion and post-concussion syndrome, leading to 48 days off work. The investigation found that the member of staff was standing in the area where children are allowed to play with footballs as he was administering first aid. The school were advised to improve their risk assessments in place for playground activities.

6. The Hall School – 21/05/2021

A member of staff sustained a sprained ankle after tripping and falling while chasing after a pupil who ran out of the fire doors at the school. Initially the injury was thought to be a fracture, however it was later confirmed as a sprain.

7. Maplewell Hall School – 09/06/2021

A member of staff sustained a sprain to her ankle leading to 13 days off work as a result of tripping on the school field which had a small indentation in the ground. The investigation found that despite the school carrying out inspections of the area it is likely that an animal could have created the indentation in the ground overnight. The school were reminded to remain vigilant in maintaining the condition of the play areas.

8. Ashmount School – 24/09/2021

A pupil sustained a cut to the chin requiring hospital treatment from dropping to the floor and hitting his chin against the changing couch he was holding onto. The investigation found that the pupil was not able to securely hold onto the side of the couch as padding had been placed around the bar. The school were advised to amend the individual health care plan for the pupil.

9. Ashmount School – 28/09/2021

A member of staff sustained muscular injuries to her back and neck resulting in 84 days off work from being pushed by a pupil in the classroom. The pupil concerned has learning difficulties, and despite there being supervision the pupil acted in this way. The school were advised to review the supervision arrangements in place for this pupil.



10. Belvoirdale Community Primary School – 02/11/2021

A member of staff sustained a head injury and discomfort in the hips leading to 89 days off work due to colliding with another staff member during lunch time. The investigation found that the two staff members were back-to-back and were not aware of each other's presence which led to the collision.

11. Kegworth Primary School – 04/11/2021

A member of staff sustained a knee injury leading to 11 days off work from tripping and falling over the threshold strip of a door while chasing after a pupil. The investigation found that there was no defect with the environment.

12. Ashmount School – 02/12/2021

A member of staff sustained bruising leading to 11 days off work as a result of tripping and falling when the wheelchair she was pushing suddenly stopped. The investigation found that there was nothing obvious which caused the wheelchair to stop however the parents mentioned after the incident that they had noticed that the breaks had been catching and sticking. It was confirmed that this information had not been passed onto the school before. Furthermore, since the incident the school have observed the pupil attempting to operate the breaks while the wheelchair is being pushed along.

CFS reported 2 RIDDOR incidents within 2021/2022. These incidents are summarised below:

13. Oakfield PRU – 02/09/2021

A member of staff sustained an injury to her nose which led to a seizure and unconsciousness as a result of being hit by a pupil while carrying out a team teach (positive handling) restraint. The staff member was known to be epileptic. Her personal risk assessment has since been reviewed and the 'helping hug' has been changed to a different manoeuvre which is more suitable to the environment.

14. Youth and Justice Service – 22/07/2021

An employee sustained a sprained back from a fall while snowboarding at the Snowdome, while taking part in the activity alongside a service user. The employee was subsequently off work for 14 days. The investigation found that the employee was inexperienced in the activity and the instructors were perhaps unaware of her inexperience. Also, the risk assessment did not account for staff members taking part in the activity.



Corporate Resources reported 4 RIDDOR incidents within 2021/2022. These incidents are summarised below:

15. Corporate Facilities and Operations > Countryside Services – 04/04/2021

A member of the public tripped on a tree root at Beacon Hill causing a fractured arm. The injured person was taken to A&E for treatment. The tree root was later removed from the footpath.

16. Commercial Services > LTS Catering > Fosse Primary School – 08/07/2021

An employee sustained a burn to their leg from hot water from the steriliser, resulting in 11 days off work. As she lifted a bowl out of the steriliser, water that had collected in the bowl and tipped down her leg. The investigation found that the bowl had been incorrectly stacked. It was recommended that the service implement a safe system of work regarding the use of the steriliser.

17. Commercial Services > LTS Catering > Sacred Heart Primary School 02/11/2021

A member of staff sustained a cut finger from a knife, resulting in 21 days off work. The investigation found that the knife had been put away incorrectly. It was recommended that the service review how they store knives.

18. Commercial Services > LTS Catering > Woodland Grange Primary School 12/01/2022

A member of staff sustained a cut hand from a vegetable slicing machine, resulting in 26 days off work. The investigation found that the staff member had bypassed the safety guard and put her hand too far into the machine to fit the vegetable in. It was recommended that the service put in place a safe system of work and review their training programme for the use of machinery.

E&T reported 6 RIDDOR incidents within 2021/2022. These incidents are summarised below:

19. Highways Operations 06/05/2021

A member of the public sustained a fractured collarbone from colliding with a ride on mower that pulled out in front of the cyclist. The investigation found that the operative failed to look at the path before turning into it. It was recommended that the service review their documentation and procedures relating to grass cutting.



20. Passenger Fleet 25/08/2021

An employee sustained a bruise and graze to her face from falling over whilst holding hands with a pupil she was supporting. The investigation identified that the pupil did not need their hand holding while being escorted and the pupil risk assessment had not been updated for some time. It was recommended that the service ensure all risk assessments are reviewed within the required time frame.

21. Highways Operations 01/09/2021

An employee sustained musculoskeletal neck pain from being hit on the head by a gas bottle while it was being lifted onto the hot box. The investigation found that there was a lack of understanding and knowledge on how to operate the crane and the hazards associated. It was recommended that the service refresh their training and procedures around this process.

22. Passenger Fleet 27/01/2022

An employee sustained bruises and grazes from tripping and falling over raised metal loops in the car park of the school. The investigation found that the school and Passenger Fleet had failed to identify these as possible trip hazards. It was recommended that the service conduct site assessments across all locations to ensure hazards are identified and rectified.

23. Passenger Fleet 09/03/2022

An employee sustained a sprained ligament from stepping down from his cab and jolting his knee. The employee has osteoarthritis in his right knee, and he is thought to have misjudged the distance from the cab to the floor causing the jolt. It was recommended that the service ensure that the injured employee has a personal risk assessment in place and that all staff are reminded to be vigilant of the hazards when stepping away from vehicles.

24. Passenger Fleet 17/03/2022

An employee sustained a fractured pelvis from stepping backwards and falling outside a service user's home. The investigation found that the employee lost her balance when she stepped backwards onto a gravelled area. It was recommended that the service ensure all staff receive a slip, trips, and falls refresher training.



ESPO reported 2 RIDDOR incidents within 2021/2022. These incidents are summarised below:

25. ESPO 24/01/2022

An employee was lifting the back roller door of his vehicle when he felt a twinge in his lower back.

26. ESPO 22/09/2021

An employee placed 10 boxes of paper onto his sack barrow, as he went to lift this, he felt a sharp pain in his lower back. Statement taken states he had approx. 132kg in weight on his barrow (these are rated to carry up-to 350Kg) but he had lowered this (i.e., placed on its back) to aid loading.

Health and Safety Audits

The following services were audited in 2021/2022.

- Environment and Transport > Highways Development Management
- Environment and Transport > Assets and Major programs
- Environment and Transport > Network Data and Intelligence
- Environment and Transport > Midlands Highways Alliance
- Environment and Transport > Business Services
- Environment and Transport > Special Projects
- Public Health > Business services
- Corporate Resources > Commissioning and Procurement
- Corporate Resources > Transformation
- Corporate Resources > Cafes
- Corporate Resources > Soft FM Contract Management
- Corporate Resources > Site FM County Hall
- Corporate Resources > Data Protection
- Corporate Resources > EMSS
- Chief Executives > Registration Services & Coroner's Service
- CFS > Locality field social work (Locality teams)
- CFS > Children in care, Care leavers, Fostering and Adoption, Virtual schools (Children in care & care leavers)
- CFS > Children & Family Wellbeing Service
- CFS > Children & Family Wellbeing Service - Youth and Justice
- Adults and Communities > Museums
- Adults and Communities > Older Adults Melton & Older Adults Mental Health Evington Centre



- Adults and Communities > Safeguarding
- Adults and Communities > Working Age Adults (Disability) > Charnwood
- Adults and Communities > Working Age Adults (Mental Health) > Approved Mental Health Practitioners / Mental Health/ Forensics
- Adults and Communities > Waterlees

Major Non-Conformities

1. An audit of OA Melton & OAMH Evington Centre was undertaken in September 2021. **The audit highlighted major and minor non-conformities. The major non-conformities are outlined below.**

Older Adults Melton & Older Adults Mental Health Evington Centre
Major Non-Conformity
No health and safety documentation available at the time of the audit.

2. An audit of Safeguarding was undertaken in August 2021. **The audit highlighted major and minor non-conformities. The major non-conformities are outlined below.**

Safeguarding
Major Non-Conformity
No health and safety documentation available at the time of the audit.

3. An audit of Waterlees was undertaken in February 2022. **The audit highlighted major and minor non-conformities. The major non-conformities are outlined below.**

Waterlees Court
Major Non-Conformity
The majority of risk assessments are out of date.

4. An audit of Youth and Justice in March 2022 **highlighted major and minor non-conformities. The major non-conformities are outlined below.**

Youth & Justice
Major Non-Conformity
Incomplete health and safety training.
Lack of lone worker control and workplace risk assessments.



Incomplete actions following an accident investigation.

* Minor non-conformities were also identified.

HSE Enforcement Action

The HSE contacted the HS&W service following the RIDDOR report at Oakfield PRU. They provided the HSE with the accident investigation report and no further action was taken.

Croft Highways Depot was visited by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service on the 23/09/2021, which resulted in a scoring of 'broadly compliant' which is the highest rating they provide. The remedial actions which were noted are in the process of being completed by E&T, Operational Property Services, and the HS&W Service.



Training Statistics

The following section reports on the numbers of delegates who have attended or completed corporate Learning and Development courses provided by the HS&W Service. **Note:** Figures exclude job specific training which may have a safety consideration and any training which may have been arranged directly by managers within a department.

Course	A&C	E&T	CFS	CE	CR	PH	ESPO
Personal Resilience	9	2	21	0	2	0	0
Mindfulness Now	5		9	0	6	0	0
COSHH	68	10	9	0	8	3	0
Fire Safety E-Learning	157	9	35	0	19	2	0
Fire Safety Practical	18	13	19	0	11	0	0
Introduction to H&S (Mandatory)	173 58% compliant	93 67% compliant	139 54% compliant	42 61% compliant	156 51% compliant	35 83% compliant	18
Legionella Awareness	34	1	8	0	1	3	1
Management of H&S (Mandatory)	33 28% compliant	15 22% compliant	31 34% compliant	3 34% compliant	36 31% compliant	10 56% compliant	1
Manual Handling	65	46	23	12	20	6	0
Principles of Risk Assessment	27	53	7	2	2	6	0
Working at Height	19	13	12	4	20	1	0
Asbestos Awareness	8	5	4	0	0	0	0
Fire Risk Assessment	2	2	0	0	3	0	0



Albac Mat	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
Evac Chair	6	4	0	0	0	0	0
DSE	248 60% compliant	181 78% compliant	302 58% compliant	51 68% compliant	221 72% compliant	64 91% compliant	39
Lone Working	73	17	55	0	0	9	0
Stress Awareness E-learning *	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Managing Wellbeing, Stress and Pressure *	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	945	464	674	114	511	139	59

*Please note these two Stress courses have been unavailable as they are being reviewed.



Key Performance Indicators

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were set out in the 2020 – 2025 Health and Safety Strategy to monitor improvements in Health, Safety and Wellbeing across the council. The table below details the performance.

Annual Performance

No.	Key Performance Indicator	2021-2022 Performance
1	Improve health and safety compliance so that there is a 10% reduction in the number of major nonconformities identified in audits each year.	4 major nonconformities were identified during 2021-2022. Due to COVID 19 and audits not taking place there is no data from the previous year to compare this to.
2	All audit report and action plans are developed within 5 working days from the completion of the audit.	This was achieved 54% of the time.
3	Achieve a 10% reduction in workplace accidents resulting in injury year on year.	The number of injuries increased by 64%, which was due to the large reduction last year caused by COVID 19. However, there has been a 19% reduction compared with 2 years ago.
4	A 10% reduction in RIDDOR reported incidents year on year	The number of RIDDOR incidents increased by 4%, due to the large reduction last year caused by COVID 19. However there has been a 7% reduction compared with 2 years ago.
5	All accidents / incidents which are RIDDOR reportable will be subject to an accident investigation.	100%
6	To achieve a 10% increase in the number of Managers trained in Health and Safety.	April 2022 – 54%



Wellbeing Activity

The Wellbeing Service annual report can be found [on page 22](#).

The data below is in relation to the usage of the internal Wellbeing Service (Counselling Sessions).

Department	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	New referrals	No. of Sessions	New referrals	No. of Sessions	New referrals	No. of Sessions	New referrals	No. of Sessions
Adults and Communities	18	133	8	125	4	76	17	97
Chief Executives	0	21	0	11	1	14	0	15
Children and Family Service LA Schools	12	95	8	65	7	82	14	67
Children and Family Service Non Schools	24	141	19	187	14	209	16	192
Corporate Resources	6	93	3	55	4	75	7	76
Environment and Transport	6	61	6	38	6	32	4	41
Public Health	2	25	1	5	2	14	2	9
ESPO	0	10	1	3	1	5	0	0
Traded	26	163	15	100	37	177	30	152
Totals	94	742	61	589	76	684	90	649

Overview	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Total new referrals	304	320	213	321
Total sessions	2183	3084	2552	2664

50% increase in number of **referrals** compared to 2020/21.

4% increase in number of **sessions** compared to 2020/21.



Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The overall usage of the EAP service had **reduced by 30%**.

A decision was made that from the start of April 2022 the EAP service would be withdrawn due to the low usage of the service.

Service Type	A&C	CFS	CR	E&T	ESPO	PH	Total
Legal & Information	5	5	1	4	1	0	16
Emotional support	26	18	12	5	4	1	66
Total	31	23	13	9	5	1	2



Recent and Forthcoming Changes

Managers and staff within departments are advised to make themselves aware of the recent HSE safety alerts that could have an impact on service delivery. Where necessary guidance documents have been updated and communicated internally.

PPE Regulations

On 6 April 2022 the Personal Protective Equipment at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2022 (PPER 2022) came into force. They amend the 1992 Regulations. They extend employers' and employees' duties regarding PPE to limb (b) workers. Limb (b) workers have a different employment relationship as they work under a contract for service. If PPE is required, employers must ensure their workers have sufficient information, instruction, and training on the use of PPE.

A limb (b) worker now has a duty to use the PPE in accordance with their training and instruction, and ensure it is returned to the storage area provided by their employer. Managers are advised to ensure all workers including limb (b) workers are provided with suitable PPE required for their role. This has been communicated to all managers that this would affect.

Protecting pregnant workers and new mothers

The HSE has updated its guidance on protecting new and expectant mothers' managers must also carry out an individual risk assessment that covers a worker's specific needs when they inform you in writing that they:

- are pregnant
- have given birth in the last 6 months, or
- are breastfeeding

Guidance on this is available on the Intranet.

Protect Duty

The Government will soon be announcing Protect Duty. This legislation, and the changes it brings, will enhance the protection of publicly accessible places from terrorist attacks and ensure that businesses and organisations are adequately prepared to deal with incidents.

Safety Alerts

Ear loop respirators/masks do not provide protection as tight fitting RPE - New HSE research has revealed that respirators/masks which rely on ear loops (including those provided with clips, 'snuggers' or other means of tightening the fit of the mask) to hold the respirator/mask in place, do not protect people adequately when used as tight



fitting respiratory protective equipment (RPE). Managers are advised to be aware of this, and ensure they order RPE through approved suppliers.

Guidance and Information

The HS&W Service have been actively reviewing all their council's policy and guidance documents available on the Intranet and developing further guidance where this is needed. This ensures that the policy and guidance given to Managers remains relevant, concise, and appropriate to the changing circumstances of the Authority. The following table outlines the policies that have been reviewed or developed within the 2021/22 financial year and those that are planned for review during the next. Managers are advised to ensure that they are familiar with those that are applicable to their operations.

New Guidance Documents	Reviewed Guidance Documents
PPE Waste Guidance - covid	LCC H&S Strategy 2020-2025
How to Safely Lift a Load	Lone Working
Sharps Disposal and Needlestick Injury	Driver and Vehicle Safety Policy
How to Store Chemicals Guide	How to Carry Out Pre-Use Checks
DSE dashboard user guide	Display Screen Equipment
Managers Guide to Responding to DSE Assessments	Safety Whilst Smarter Working
Fan Incident Safety Alert	Use of Car Seat Belts and Restraint Systems for Children
How to Improve Health and Safety Culture	Working at Height
How to Undertake a Ladder Inspection	First Aid Guidance
Lateral Flow Testing Guidance	How to guides - ventilation CV19
Pocket Guide to Workplace Safety	How to guides - face coverings CV19
Guidance for vehicle sharing	Slips trips and falls poster
Safety While Home working	10 steps to safety
COVID response procedure- health and social care	Microwave guidance
DSE Managers Guide	Bomb Threat, Suspicious Packages, Firearm Threat and Lockdown
How to Carry Out Pre-Use Checks	Confined Spaces
ISO migration guide	Confined spaces permit



Conclusion

This report has shown that the number of injuries reported by the council has increased by 64% compared to the previous year, however compared to the year pre Covid-19 pandemic there has been a 19% decrease. Furthermore, the number of RIDDOR reportable incidents has reduced by 7% compared to the year pre Covid-19 pandemic.

These positive reductions may be attributed to the pro-active work the HS&W Service has been undertaking in engaging with departments and working with managers. This includes:

- Delivering ISO 45001 training sessions
- Running a near miss reporting campaign
- Reviewing and delivering H&S training courses
- Carrying out routine H&S inspections and audits
- Running a Slips, Trips and Falls campaign in the autumn/winter
- Producing H&S resources including the Staying Safe in the Workplace Guide, Home Working Guide, and Pocket Guide to H&S

Priorities for the year ahead include:

- Delivering the roll out of a Lone Working app
- Launching new Accident Investigation and CDM training courses
- Supporting and delivering on various wellbeing initiatives
- Carrying out health and safety audits and inspections
- Developing and reviewing H&S guidance
- Working towards the objectives set in each departmental action plan
- Reviewing H&S training courses and developing new courses
- Providing continuing support to the Ways of Working programme on health and safety related aspects



The Wellbeing Service Annual Report

The Wellbeing Service currently consists of four qualified counsellors. The steadiness and consistency in the team has contributed to the smooth running of the service and the consistently high quality of counselling and support that has been provided.

Over the past two years, the service has adapted well to the changing needs of employees and has now fully embedded the offer of telephone and online counselling, whilst maintaining face-to-face provision for those that wish to access this. At point of referral, clients state their preference and the service aim to accommodate individual need.

The Wellbeing Service is also a placement provider for trainee therapists. Trainees are required to meet certain requirements before selection, in order to maintain the standards expected. There are currently three trainees working within the team, supervised by one of the service's qualified and accredited counsellors.

Employees are given a choice about whether they would be willing to see a trainee or not. Trainees are an invaluable resource to the service, helping to meet the demand for counselling and in turn benefit from working with a diverse range of issues and accessing in-house training.

REFERRALS

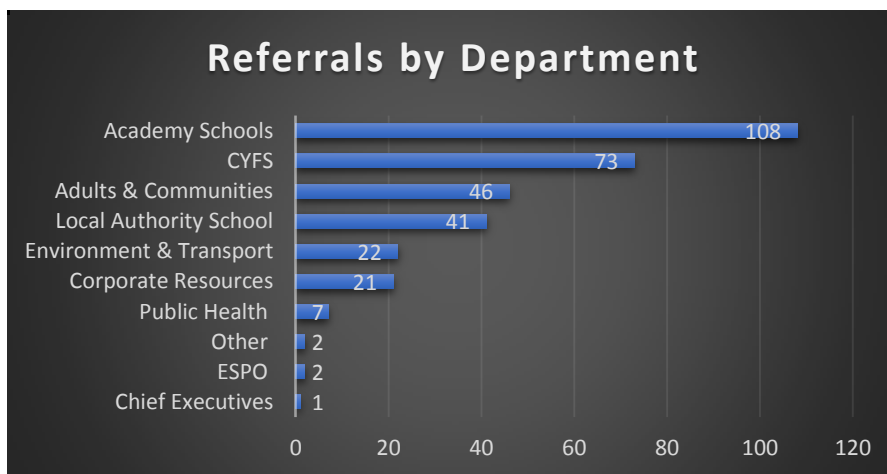
The wellbeing Service received a total of **323 referrals** from April 2021 to March 2022, an increase of 110 referrals from the previous year.

Over the year, the service offered **2679 individual support sessions**, 141 more than the previous year. Based on client choice, 614 of these sessions were in person at County Hall; 1307 were conducted over the telephone; 688 were online sessions via Microsoft Teams and a further 70 sessions were offered as immediate access 'Pause to Talk' slots.

The following graph shows the pattern of referrals over the year. Referrals averaged 27 per month, with a spike up to 49 in May 2021, following the easing of post-Christmas lockdown restrictions.

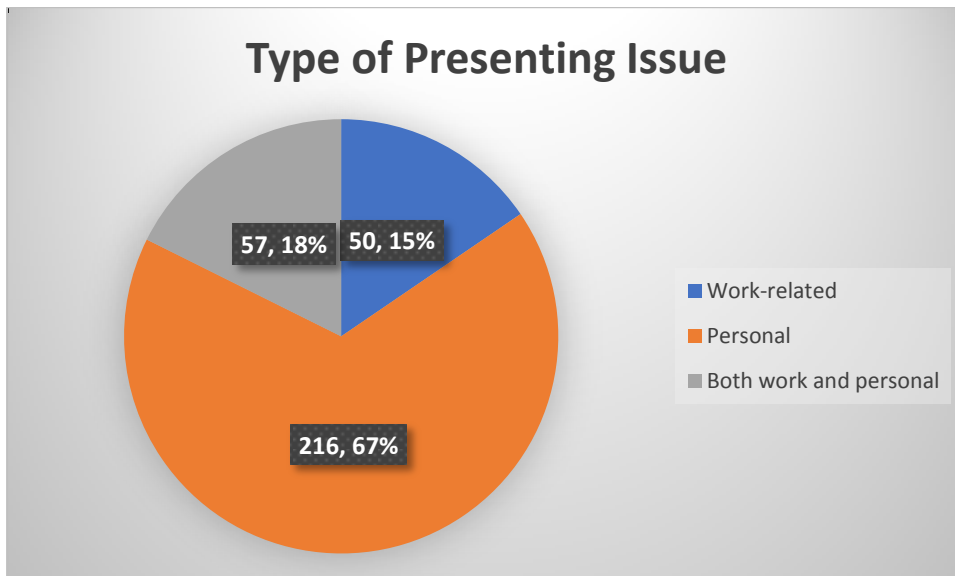


Referrals by department, and from academy schools (see chart below) indicates a significant rise in the number of employees seeking support from Academy schools. . Amongst council employees, the highest number of referrals came from the Children and Families department, followed by Adults and Communities and then from staff based at locally maintained schools. 73 employees sought help from the Children and Families, 46 from Adults and Communities and 41 from locally maintained schools.



PRESENTING ISSUES

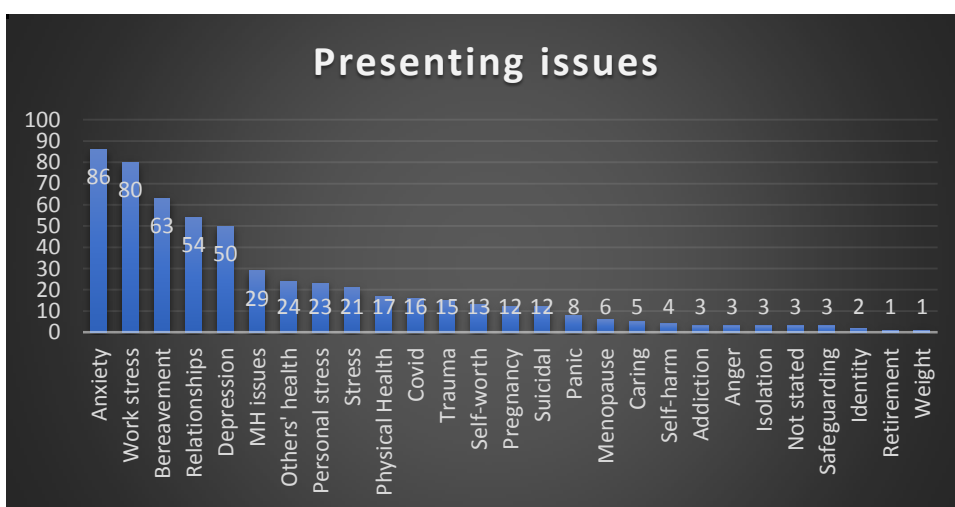
Referrals consisted of employees presenting with personal issues; work issues and a combination of both work and personal, (as shown in the graph below). One third of all referrals mentioned a work-related issue as being one of the reasons for accessing counselling support.



At point of referral, clients sought help with a range of different presenting issues, (see chart below). Although the presenting issue does not always reflect the complexity of individuals' situations or what they want help to work on, it does give a flavour of the nature of well-being concerns amongst staff.

There was a significant rise in the number of clients presenting with anxiety and work-related stress, (which included perceived unmanageable workload or demands, burnout, work relationships, work-related trauma, and issues of discrimination).

In addition to anxiety and work-related stress, similar to the previous year, difficulties in personal relationships, bereavement and depression all featured highly.



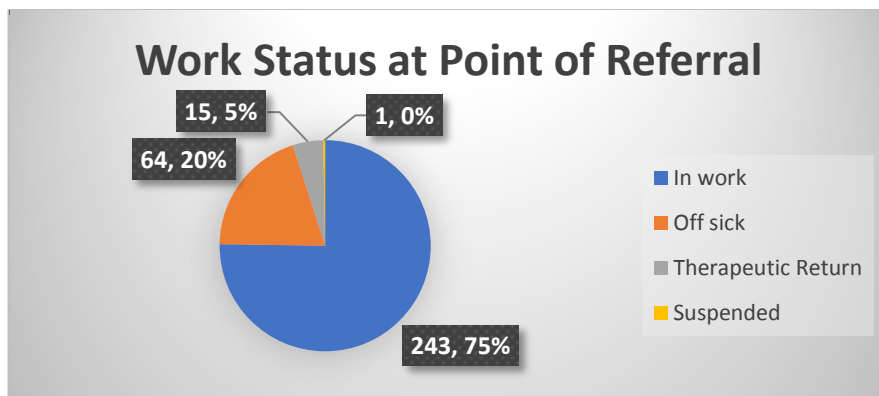
Over the year, 45 referrals (14%) were considered as priority, and were escalated to the top of the waiting list. These were cases that presented with risk concerns such



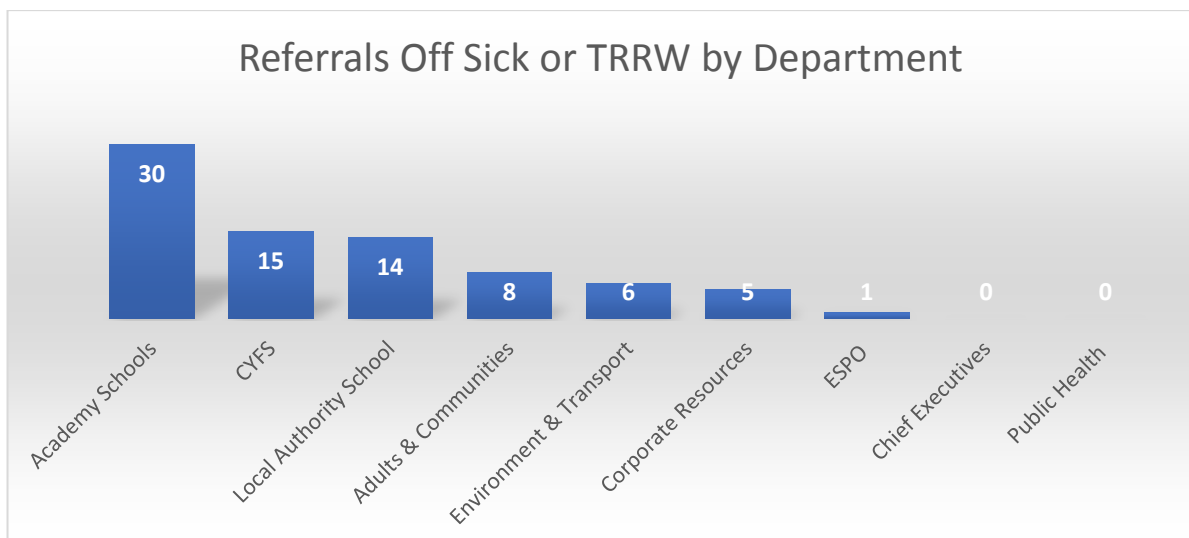
as suicidal ideation (n = 12), safeguarding issues (n = 3) or deemed to be in need of immediate intervention (n = 30).

WORK STATUS

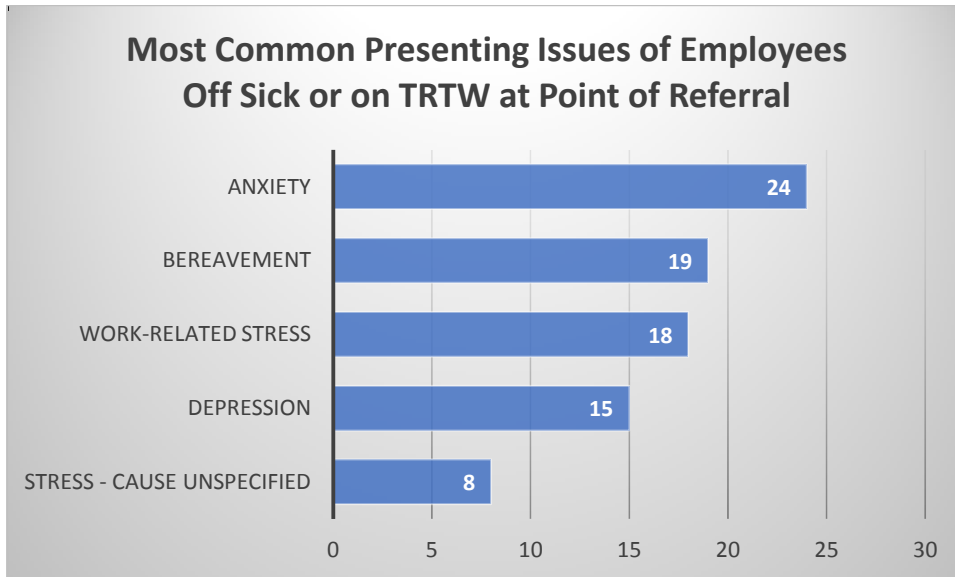
Whilst 75% of referrals came from employees who were attending work, 25% were received from individuals either absent from work due to sickness or undergoing a therapeutic return to work (TRTW), see chart below.



The 79 referrals that were either 'Off Sick' or on a 'Therapeutic Return to Work' (TRTW), were from the following departments:

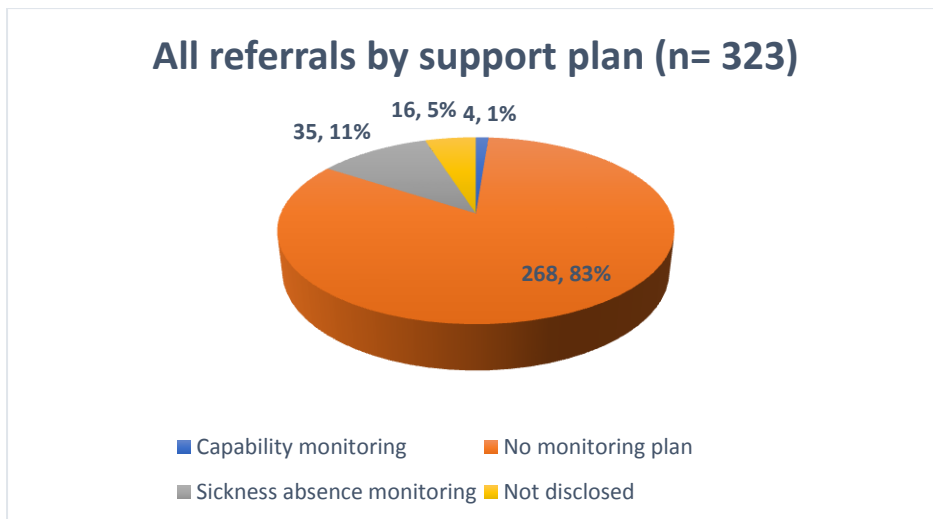


The main presenting issues for this group were 'Anxiety' (30%); 'Bereavement' (24%) and 'Work-related Stress' (23%). These were the same top three presenting issues as last year, amongst the 'Off Sick' group. Online resources have now been developed to support employees to understand bereavement and with practical support around managing Stress and Pressure at work. An online course focused on understanding and managing anxiety is currently in development.



12 percent (n = 39) of referrals reported that they were subject to a monitoring or support plan at point of referral, (see chart below).

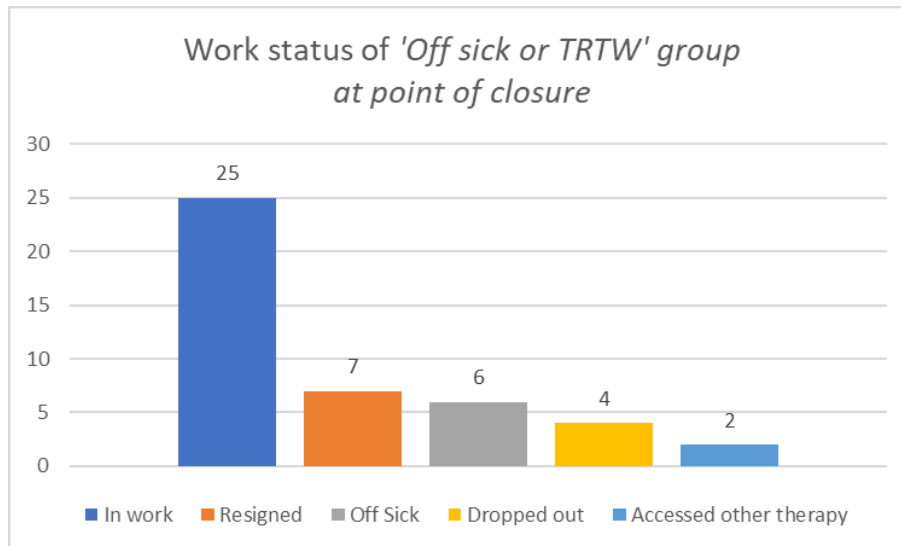
The Wellbeing Service has a policy of escalating clients to the top of the waiting list if they are at risk of dismissal. The service plays a crucial role in supporting clients to get back to work following a period of sickness, and also, to remain in work during challenging periods, when they may be experiencing stress at home and/or work.



Of the 79 cases that were off sick or on a TRTW at the point of referral, 44 had been closed at the end of the financial year. Within this group of closed cases, 25 had returned to work, 6 continued to be off sick and 7 had resigned, (see chart below). Amongst the 7 employees that had handed in their notice, all but one cited work-related stress as a reason for seeking support from the service. Although numbers are small, work-related stress may be a factor in resignations across the council and



so it seems vital that employee well-being is prioritised in order to retain knowledgeable and experienced staff.



USE OF EXTERNAL THERAPISTS

In the event that employees have not able to be seen by the Wellbeing Service, (for example, due to an ethical conflict or if an individual's access needs cannot be met by the service), then external therapists are used. Over the past year, the support of external therapists has been sought on 9 occasions. Most of these outward referrals have been to offer a safe, confidential space to employees who have worked closely with the Wellbeing Service, where ethical boundaries have become blurred. Other referrals included accessing support to meet needs around issues of equality and diversity. Our aim is to ensure that the service is inclusive to all.

EMERGING THEMES

Whilst the content of employee counselling sessions must remain confidential, there are some themes that have emerged over the past year.

Overwhelmed employees: A significant number of employees have talked about having workloads that they feel are unmanageable, resulting in stress, anxiety, and burnout.

Many clients have reported a culture of working well beyond paid hours, including evenings and weekends, and using annual leave in order to get on top of work and meet required targets. Many employees have felt that this way of working is expected of them and that they are seen as not being capable if they only work during their paid hours and fail to meet deadlines.



Staff are committed to meeting the expectations of their workload and so often feel unable to prioritise their own well-being. Individuals have raised issues of not being granted permission to set their Teams status to 'do not disturb', and so find it incredibly challenging to concentrate on completing reports with endless interruptions from service users, colleagues, and managers.

For other employees, particularly managers, the shift to meetings via Teams has meant that individuals have less control over their calendars and the ability to pace their work. Meetings are often booked in back-to-back throughout the day and there is a lack of natural breaks between meetings. Individuals often have little opportunity to move away from their screens or take a short mental break from their work, as they would naturally have done when working in an office environment

Whilst working under high pressure for short periods is manageable for most employees, the relentless level of intensity in some teams, coupled with the lack of time and space to recover, has a significant impact on staff resilience and is leading to stress and burnout.

Discrimination: Some employees have raised issues of perceived discrimination from both managers and colleagues. Concerns include not having contributions to team meetings included in minutes; feeling left out or not acknowledged in group settings; homophobic comments; not feeling trusted (having whereabouts and work scrutinised in a way that colleagues are not subjected to); being treated differently to other colleagues and not feeling part of a team.

Clients have reported feeling fearful that if they raised their concerns, they would be further targeted and might be at risk of losing their job. This has meant that some clients have felt that their only option is to leave the council, despite being passionate about their roles. It is suggested that further steps are required to create 'safe pathways' to voice issues of perceived discrimination and to create an environment that encourages an openness to listen, learn and change.

The Wellbeing Service has already taken proactive steps to liaise with key individuals to begin thinking about how 'safe pathways' to talk can be implemented. They have also been developing links with the Children and Families department in supporting their race champions.

Working from home and isolation: The move to hybrid working has been welcomed by many clients, but for some, particularly for those that have joined the council since March 2020, and where office working is not required, the experience has been isolating.

Some clients have reported feeling that they are not part of a team and find it difficult to know where support can be accessed when they need questions answered. Others worry about interrupting others or being viewed as not capable. For some, the support afforded by a brief chat with colleagues in the office is no longer available



and so the natural opportunities to de-brief and process difficult work or personal situations has been lost and has an inevitable impact on general well-being.

Whilst some employees would like to return to the office, in order to reduce their sense of isolation, they often feel there is no point, when the rest of their team are working from home. In some teams, meetings continue to be held without cameras on and so some employees have no visual contact with team members.

Whilst it is not the organisation's responsibility to manage issues of loneliness, the impact of this on well-being can inevitably affect work performance. It is therefore important that managers facilitate opportunities for peer support and encourage regular communication amongst team members.

DEVELOPMENT WORK

As a result of national lockdown measures, the service was required to cease delivering the face-to-face '*Mindfulness Now*' course.

Since lockdown measures have been eased, the face-to-face courses have resumed. This is a popular course, and the feedback has been positive.

One person said, "*This was the best course I have attended this year and it was so beneficial. The facilitator led with sensitivity and gentleness but also a good insight and sense of humour too. It was an oasis in a very dry desert in terms of connection with others*".

In the previous financial year, the service launched online resources for employees interested in or affected by '*Loss and Bereavement*'. To date, 93 individuals have accessed these resources.

Whilst some found the material very useful, the feedback also raised a wish for in person support, prompting the service to consider alternative ways of supporting bereaved employees. During this year, in addition to one-to-one counselling support, the service plans to begin offering face-to-face psychoeducational/support groups to support bereaved employees.

In response to growing concerns around workplace stress, the service designed an online course, '*Managing Stress*', which can be accessed via the learning hub. This self-help course was launched in April 2022.

The course consists of 4 core modules, helping people to understand the nature of stress and includes numerous additional resources to support employees to take positive action to address their own stress, make lifestyle changes and in doing so improve their well-being.



To date, the resources have been accessed by 124 employees. 57% of those accessing the stress course were from the Adults and Communities or Children and Families departments.

As depression features highly in presenting issues, the service has created several infographics, which are designed to help employees understand what depression is; notice the signs and symptoms of depression; take some simple self-help steps to manage depression and highlight some steps a manager may take to support a team member experiencing depression. These may be a useful starting point to begin a discussion around depression within teams and can be found on the Intranet's Wellbeing page.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Wellbeing Service continues to offer one-to-one counselling as the main therapeutic intervention, as this is what is valued by our staff. In order to continue to offer this, without compromising on quality, the service operates a waiting list, which fluctuates depending upon demand.

In April 2022, the council ended their contract with the Employee Assistance Programme, (EAP). This telephone advice and support line was not well utilised by employees and was not value for money. It was expected that this would inevitably place an increase in the demand for advice and support from the Wellbeing Service and thus have an impact on waiting times.

Although these wait times are considerably less than other comparable free provision in the community, (e.g., voluntary services and NHS IAPT provision), the service recognises a need to offer employees immediate access to resources that can help them to manage their own mental health and develop resilience, as an alternative to, or an interim measure, whilst awaiting counselling.

In addition to the '*Loss and Bereavement*' and '*Managing Stress*' courses, the service is currently developing an online self-help course for individuals experiencing anxiety. Supporting employees and managers to spot the early signs of anxiety and put measures in place to relieve areas of perceived threat is essential to maintain a healthy work team. Plans are also in place to develop a similar resource for individuals experiencing depression.

The service acknowledges that there is a lot of excellent wellbeing work being delivered by various individuals across the council, however, employees have told us that it is not always clear where to look for support and how to access it.

The Team will therefore be part of an initiative, alongside the Corporate Wellbeing Working Group, to centralise the support available, so that employees are clear on where to view well-being support, what's available across the council and how to



access the support. Likewise, individuals and departments offering well-being initiatives can add to this central well-being site and are likely to reach a wider audience.

A member of the team will continue to offer individual advice and support sessions to individuals that are affected by issues related to the Menopause and is currently undertaking training as a Menopause Champion, to stay abreast of organisational training and initiatives.

A member of the team has recently undertaken training in Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy. This is a NICE approved therapeutic intervention for depression offered by the NHS. A supervised trial of this intervention will begin later this year.

Although clients are offered the opportunity to feedback on their experience of using the wellbeing service, not all employees take up this opportunity. The team aims to hear back from more clients this year, inviting employees to have a voice and help shape the future of the service.

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES THINK OF OUR SERVICE?

Once clients have ended their counselling sessions, they are sent a link to a confidential survey, inviting them to provide feedback on their experience.

Over the past year, 62 employees (20%) using the Wellbeing Service have completed the survey and the responses have been overwhelmingly positive. The feedback regarding the referral and assessment process indicated that employees felt the service was easy and simple to access and the team were responsive in communicating and arranging an assessment, usually within 2-3 weeks.

As with previous feedback, some employees said that following their initial assessment, they would have liked to begin counselling sessions sooner and that the wait sometimes felt difficult. The service does acknowledge that waiting to access support when going through a challenging time can be frustrating and so we hope that employees can make use of online well-being resources and 'Pause to Talk' sessions whilst waiting to be seen. We know that GPs often signpost to workplace counselling as the wait times are far quicker than individuals can access via NHS provision. **So, what did employees have to say?**



100% agreed that the well-being team listened to them and treated their concerns seriously

99% agreed that the service helped them to better understand and address their difficulties

99% agreed that they received the help that mattered to them

100% agreed that they had confidence in their therapist and his/her skills

“I found the referral process very straightforward. The response time to the referral was good and the assessment/service process was explained very well. This was reassuring”.

“The process overall was very good. However, I feel that the initial time between the assessment and then beginning counselling needs to be swifter. Once you have built up the courage to reach out and ask for help, it needs to happen, you need it then”.

“I found the service invaluable, and I can honestly say that it saved my life as I was feeling suicidal and had already made a plan”.

“If you reach out they will respond”.

“My Counsellor took me on a journey which has enabled me to address and accept many adverse areas of my life”.

“The staff are helpful, kind and caring. They put your needs first and take their time to listen and understand how you’re feeling and why you could be feeling that way”.

“I feel that I have been helped so much during these sessions and feel much better able to cope with any future problems that may occur”.

“I found it so helpful and the fact that it can be accessed during work time makes it so much more user friendly”.

“Brilliant. It has brought me out of a very low dark space, back into the light. I understand now that I am worth something and stronger than I realise”.

“It’s basically having the freedom to talk to someone in confidence about a particular problem who listens and doesn’t judge you and often helps you see a situation in a different perspective”.



“This an excellent and very important service. I have found the counselling sessions invaluable. They have helped me to reflect on both myself and my current issues and to look for better coping strategies and strategies to move forward with my life”.

87% told us that personal difficulties were having an impact on their ability to perform their job.

68% told us that work-related difficulties were having an impact on their ability to perform their job.

81% told us that the counselling sessions helped them to stay in work and avoid taking sick leave.

98% said they were ‘very likely’ to recommend the well-being service to colleagues if they needed support.



Corporate Wellbeing Update

Key Achievements- last 12 months:

The subject of Wellbeing has increased since the pandemic, with many departments all keen to respond and provide relevant support to employees. This however resulted in a large amount of duplication and lack of cross working within the organisation.

Over the last twelve months, a new formal wellbeing structure has therefore been created. This structure comprises of a Corporate Wellbeing Board, People Services Wellbeing Delivery Team and departmental Wellbeing representatives who are scheduled to meet every quarter.

Following the creation of the new structure, a dedicated Corporate Wellbeing Action Plan (2021- 2023) has been produced in light of the data from annual staff and wellbeing surveys as well as the intelligence gathered from Wellbeing Advisors.

The focus areas of the action plan include Sleep, Depression, Physical Exercise, Mindfulness, Bereavement, Resilience, Stress Management and Anxiety. The aim of this plan is to develop identified wellbeing initiatives and communications under these areas to raise awareness, support employees and also help to break down stigma attached to mental health.

Examples of such initiatives include raising awareness of national wellbeing events such as Stress Awareness Week through the monthly Wellbeing Bulletins, running staff workshops on Sleep and Mental Wellbeing as well as developing guidance documents and digital posters on Depression.

The work is carried out by the People Services Wellbeing Delivery Team with the support of the Wellbeing Advisors, Comms and departmental Wellbeing Representatives as required. Progress on the action plan is regularly reported to the Wellbeing Board on a quarterly basis and feedback is also obtained from departmental Wellbeing Representatives on current wellbeing related priorities.

This arrangement is working well, having a regular dialogue with department representatives has been very valuable. The Wellbeing Action Plan helps to focus on delivering corporate wellbeing initiatives whilst responding as needed to areas of staff concerns and arising issues. In addition, Leads of Equality Groups have also been regularly communicated with to provide updates on wellbeing interventions as well as signposting to existing sources of support to share with their groups.



With the increased interest in Wellbeing, members of the People Services Delivery Team have attended a recent New Starters Network meeting to talk about the Wellbeing agenda and our strategic priorities. This was a good opportunity to inform new starters of the offer available, the corporate Wellbeing structure now in place, upcoming focus areas and also engage them in what else we could consider including in our offer.

Going forward:

Going forward, we shall progress with delivering the priorities outlined in the Wellbeing Action Plan (2021-2023) which will be reviewed next year.

We will continue to build even stronger networks with the departmental Wellbeing Representatives and Equality Group Leads, working alongside the Wellbeing Board to create a wellbeing offer which applies to all employees across the council.

We shall also continue to tackle the ongoing challenge of engaging with hard to reach and front-line employees.

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