



Leicestershire County Council

Appendix 1 - Annual Health, Safety & Wellbeing Performance Report

April 2023 – March 2024

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Key Facts

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Team 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



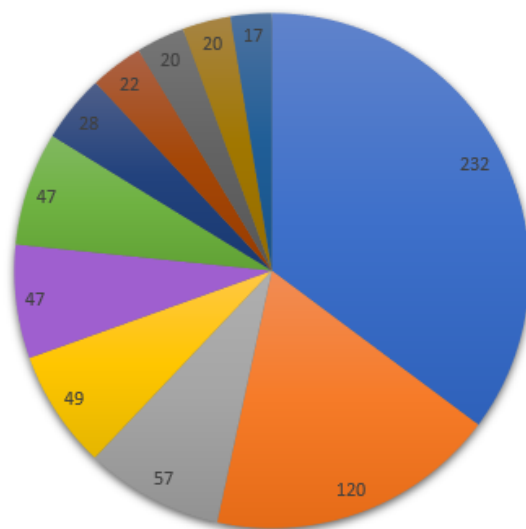
Injuries caused by
physical assaults and
challenging behaviour



Health, Safety and
Wellbeing Training
Courses Completed by
Staff



Accident Data Analysis for Leicestershire County Council April 2023 – March 2024



- Slip, trip or fall
- Struck by object
- Manual handling
- Trapped by object
- Challenging behaviour
- Collision
- Unknow cause of service user injury
- Contact with hot surface
- Contact with sharp object
- Physical Assault
- Contact with stationary object

NB: All data less than 17 has been omitted to enable clarity in the pie chart.

Incident Type	2023/24	% Change	2022/23	% Change	2021/22
Injury	801	+0.1%	800	-8%	876
Near Miss	432	+33%	325	+21%	269
Property Damage	172	+10%	157	+16%	135
Violent Incident	147	+21%	121	-3%	125
Illness/Disease	10	-38%	16	+23%	13
Total	1562	+10%	1419	+0.1%	1418
RIDDOR	26	-28%	36	+38%	26

Information within this report has been gained from Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) accident and incident reporting system, AssessNET on 03/06/2024.

The number of injuries has remained approximately the same compared to the previous year. The number of near misses has increased by 33%, which is positive as the H&S Team continue to remind teams across the authority to report them. It is positive to see that the



number of RIDDOR incidents has significantly reduced by 28%, following the spike in 2022/23. A 70% reduction in RIDDORS was achieved in Environment and Transport Department (E&T), however Adults and Communities Department (A&C) reported 4 RIDDOR's compared with 0 in the previous year.

The number of slips and trips, and injuries caused by violent or challenging behaviour has remained approximately the same, although the overall number of violent incidents (including verbal abuse) has increased. A campaign on violence and aggression in the workplace including hate crime is being planned for the year 2024/25.

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 more than 10 injuries.

A significant increase in injuries can be seen at Beaumanor, however this can be attributed to better reporting of pupil related injuries. In addition, the Head Teacher at Moira Primary School noted that the rise in injuries at the school can be attributed to the increase in pupils with specific needs they have seen at the school, and their incident reporting procedure has become more robust.

Department	Service Area	N° of Accidents (resulting in injury) (2023/24)	N° of Accidents (resulting in injury) (2022/23)
CFS	Children Family Wellbeing Centres	90	73
CR	LTS Catering	76	70
E&T	Recycling and Household Waste Sites	44	33
CR	Beaumanor Hall > Outdoor Learning Activities	41	5
A&C	Provider Services	38	50
LA Sch	Sketchley Hill Menphys Nursery	36	21
LA Sch	Thorpe Acre Junior School	27	25
E&T	Passenger Fleet	27	24
E&T	Highway Operations	18	32
ESPO	ESPO	16	19
LA Nursey	Wigston Menphys Nursery School	17	21
LA Sch	Moira Primary School	15	5
LA Sch	Little Bowden School	15	21
LA Sch	Whetstone Badgerbrook Primary School	15	8
LA Sch	Newbold Verdon Primary School	14	5
LA Sch	Greenfield Primary School	14	12
LA Sch	St Botolph's Church of England Primary School	12	7
CR	Country Parks	12	10
LA Sch	New Swannington Primary School	11	11



RIDDOR Reportable Incidents and Incidents of Significance

The council is obliged to comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). It is a requirement that certain incidents that are more serious are reported to the HSE. The council's policy states that all RIDDOR reportable incidents are to receive a full investigation by the HS&W Team. The investigation report identifies the root cause, along with remedial measures to prevent recurrence. The following information outlines the incidents by department that have been reported under the RIDDOR regulations during 2023/2024.

Corporate Resources (CR) reported 3 RIDDOR incidents within 2023/2024.

1. Country Parks > Beacon Hill Country Park, Upper Playground > 07/04/2023

It was reported that a member of the public (6-year-old child) was playing on the playground at Beacon Hill when she tripped and fell into the fence causing injury to her face. The investigation found that the likely cause of the fall was due to uneven surfaces within the playground. Recommendations were identified to help improve the management of the playgrounds and change the fencing around the area.

2. Commercial Services > Leicestershire Traded Services Catering > Brookside Primary School > 20/06/2023

An employee trapped her finger when putting away folding tables sustaining a finger injury. The investigation found that the area when the tables are stored is restricted which creates a trapping risk. It was recommended that the storage arrangements are reviewed.

3. Commercial Services > Leicestershire Traded Services Catering > Elizabeth Woodville Primary school > 04/10/2023

An employee sustained a back injury from lifting and handling folding tables. The investigation found that the cause of the injury was likely due to overstretching and twisting while carrying out this activity. It was recommended that manual handling training is refreshed.

Local Authority Schools reported 11 RIDDOR incidents within 2023/2024.

4. Belvoirdale Community Primary School > 09/01/2024

A member of staff sustained a fractured hand from an incident that occurred on a bus during a school trip. The Injured Person (IP) stood up to help a pupil who had called for assistance, as she did, the bus driver braked causing the IP to catch her right hand on the built in refreshment area hurting her right hand. Following an investigation, it was recommended that the school have staff placed in strategic locations on the bus to avoid staff having to leave their seats while the bus is in motion.



5. Newbold Verdon Primary School > 04/10/2023

A member of staff was kicked by a pupil with specialist needs causing a knee injury. Although the pupil was known to have specialist needs the incident was not foreseen. The school were recommended to review the EHCP.

6. Ashmount School > 12/09/2023

A member of staff was injured when they were pulling a gym mat trolley that tipped over and caused injury to the IP's foot. It was unknown how the incident occurred; however, the school were recommended to ensure that all staff have received instruction on how to operate the trolley and manual handling training is revisited.

7. Ashmount School > 08/09/2023

A member of staff was injured while a student was in crisis and banging their head on the floor. The member of staff attempted to assist by placing a cushion on the floor however their heads collided causing the member of staff to momentarily lose consciousness. It was recommended that the school revisit the training that staff have in relation to dealing with students in crisis.

8. Ashmount School > 05/09/2023

A member of staff was injured while attempting to assist a student in crisis. The staff member was attempting to get the student's protective helmet however the student kicked the member of staff on the wrist causing a fracture. It was recommended that the school review the associated EHCP and risk assessments.

9. Moira Primary School > 04/07/2023

A pupil was dysregulated in the classroom, the pupil was kicking and wrapped his leg around the back of the fire extinguisher stand and resulted in the fire extinguisher falling over and causing injury to a staff member's foot, resulting in fracture. The injured person was a sports apprentice with limited experience dealing with pupils in crisis. It was recommended that the school review the training arrangements for apprentices.

10. Ashmount School > 19/06/2023

A student was in crisis and was assisted into another room by two members of staff. Another member of staff attempted to assist by opening a door, however the student kicked them causing injury to the breast/chest. It was recommended that all staff are reminded on the protocols to follow while a student is in crisis.



11. Sketchley Hill Primary School > 07/06/2023

A member of staff tripped and fell on the school field. She tripped on a hole in the ground where a goal post used to be. The area had previously been filled in however the students had dug the area out again using sticks. The IP sustained a back injury. It was recommended that the school implement a robust inspection and defect reporting process.

12. Burbage Church of England Infant School > 12/05/2023

A member of staff sustained a knee injury after they were hit by a chair that was thrown by a pupil. Following the incident, the school reviewed the EHCP and were taking advice from Oakfield on how to managing the student's behaviour.

13. Martinshaw Primary School > 26/04/2023

The Premises Officer was attempting to unblock the drains which run from the EYFS/KS1 toilets. This has been a recurring issue over the years, so the IP used the rods which she ordinarily uses to shift such blockages. The force with which she was attempting to dislodge the blockage led to pain in her neck, however the IP was experiencing similar pain at the start of the working day. It was recommended that a risk assessment was put into place for the Premises Officer, also that defects are properly reported through to Property Services.

14. St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School > 19/04/2023

The IP (9-year-old student) was playing football when the ball was kicked over a fence and the IP opened a gate to retrieve it. The mechanism was very stiff as the gate had slightly dropped, when it came free suddenly the IP wasn't expecting it and the tip of her smallest finger on her right hand was banged/crushed against the gate. Following investigation, it was recommended that an inspection and defect reporting system is implemented for this area.

Children and Family Services (CFS) reported 1 RIDDOR incident within 2023/2024.

15. Safeguarding and Performance > 21/06/2023

A Social Worker was assaulted by a young person who was dysregulated during a home visit. The employee sustained multiple bruises. The investigation identified gaps in de-escalation and conflict management training, also gaps in their lone working procedures.

Adults and Communities (A&C) reported 4 RIDDOR incidents within 2023/2024.

16. Home First and Access and Digital > Crisis Response Service > 15/06/2023



An employee fell over while crossing the road / speed bump at County Hall Car Park near Anstey Frith Building. Following this incident, the speed bump was checked for safety however it was deemed that no action was necessary.

17. Communities and Wellbeing > Adult Learning > Enderby Adult Learning > 16/08/2023

An employee fell and broke their wrist while walking across the car park at David Lloyd Leisure. The employee was delivering Adult Learning brochures at the time. As the site is not owned by LCC the defects were reported to the relevant landlord for further investigation and action. The Adult Learning service were advised to update their risk assessment to cover off site activities.

18. Home First and Access and Digital > Hart > 11/09/2023

An employee sustained a shoulder injury following an incident whereby a service user fell, and the IP caught their weight to help prevent a fall. This was not in line with training however it was an instinct to prevent injury to the service user.

19. Home First and Access and Digital > Hart > 06/01/2024

A Home Care Assistant sustained an injury to her hip from repositioning a service user's bed with the help from the family. The investigation found that the IP was rushing and may not have been using the correct manual handling methods. It was recommended that the service refresh their manual handling training for the team.

Environment and Transport (E&T) reported 3 RIDDOR incidents within 2023/2024.

20. Highway and Transport Delivery > Highway Operations > 17/10/2023

An Operative sustained a lacerated hand caused by a chainsaw incident. The Operative was attempting to cut a tree branch at height. The undercut was not deep enough resulting in the Operative attempting to catch the branch to stop it falling. The chainsaw swung and caused the laceration to the hand. The investigation found that there was an element of human error however it was recommended that chainsaw gloves are trialled to prevent future injury.

21. Highway and Transport Technical Support > Fleet Services > 08/06/2023

During routine maintenance of applying grease to a vehicle using a grease gun an employee suffered a torn muscle in his arm, leading to time on light duties. The IP was using the handheld grease gun to apply grease to the rear axle when he felt his muscle twinge causing stiffness and a lack of feeling in his fingers. The investigation found that the injury was likely caused by repetitive strain, and this could be avoided by moving to battery operated grease guns.



22. Highway and Transport Delivery > Highway Operations > 11/05/2023

Whilst getting out of vehicle, the IP's left foot hit the ground, slipped, and twisted the left ankle, this resulted in swelling and bruising. Following investigation, it was recommended that a safe system of work was developed to demonstrate how to safely egress a vehicle using three points of contact.

Chief Executives (CE) reported 1 RIDDOR incident within 2023/2024.

23. Registration Services > South Wigston > Bassett Street Car Park > 08/04/2023

An employee was pulling open the car park gate, the gate swung and hit her ankle. It was later confirmed that the employee has chipped a bone in her ankle. The Registrars will access the area using the pedestrian gate in future if outside of normal office hours.

ESPO reported 3 RIDDOR incidents within 2023/2024.

24. ESPO > Warehouse > 05/12/2023

An employee cut their hand while using a safety knife to cut a piece of cardboard. Following this incident, a safety alert was re-issued to staff who use knives to take care and follow the safe system of work.

25. ESPO > Customer Site Location > 02/10/2023

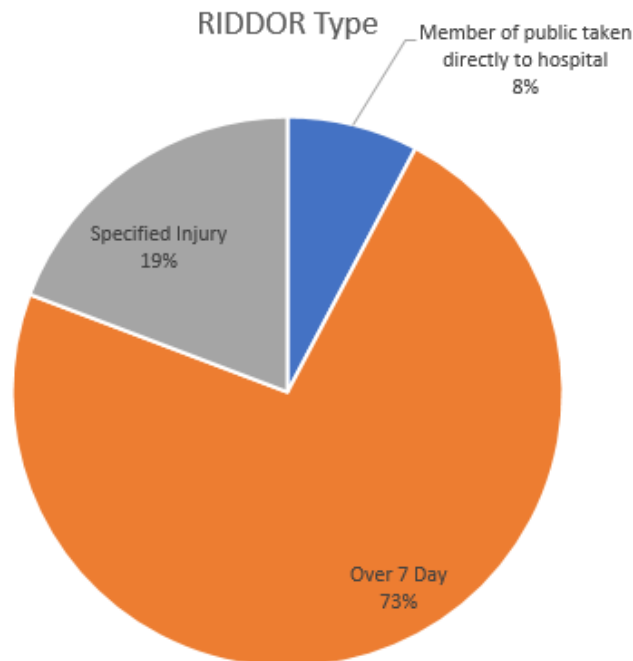
An employee was delivering items to site using a sack barrow. As he tried to negotiate through a closed door he caught his hand, bending his fingers backwards. Following investigation, staff were reminded of the importance of good manual handling techniques.

26. ESPO > Warehouse > 15/06/2023

An employee suffered a manual handling related injury during her shift. The CCTV footage was reviewed and there was no direct cause identified, however staff were reminded of good manual handling techniques.



Over 70% of the RIDDOR reportable incidents triggered the regulations due to the number of days lost by the employee, rather than the type of injury. See the chart below.



Health and Safety Audits

The following services were audited in 2023/2024.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. E&T > Transport Strategy and Policy | 21. CFS > Safeguarding & Performance |
| 2. E&T > Notice processing | 22. CFS > Safeguarding Partnerships
Business Office |
| 3. E&T > Business Support | 23. Birch Wood Special School - Melton
Mowbray |
| 4. E&T > Environment Policy & Strategy | 24. Little Bowden School |
| 5. E&T > Contracts and Compliance | 25. Burton on the Wolds Primary School |
| 6. E&T > Passenger Transport | 26. Thorpe Acre Infant School |
| 7. Public Health > First Contact Plus | 27. Griffydham Primary School |
| 8. CR > People Services > HR/OD/L&D | 28. Hose Church of England Primary
School |
| 9. CR > LTS Catering | 29. Heather Primary School |
| 10. CR > Beaumanor activity centre | 30. Whitwick St John the Baptist Church
of England Primary School |
| 11. CR > Country Parks | 31. Buckminster Primary School |
| 12. CR > Forestry Service | 32. New Swannington Primary School |
| 13. CR > Internal Audit | 33. Stathern Primary School |
| 14. CR > Strategic Property | |
| 15. A&C > Commissioning and Quality | |
| 16. A&C > Business support | |
| 17. A&C > Direct Services | |



- 18.CE > Planning, Historic and Natural Environment
- 19.CE > Strategy and Business Intelligence
- 20.CFS > First Response Assessments & Screening & Vulnerability hub

- 34. Westfield Infant School
- 35. Ellistown Community Primary School
- 36. Burbage Church of England Junior School
- 37. Worthington School
- 38. Wymeswold C of E Primary School
- 39. Kegworth Primary School

Common Findings

The audits undertaken in 2023/24 identified a range of major and minor nonconformities. Individual reports were sent to Service Managers upon completion of the audits. The common findings are briefly outlined below.

- Missing or insufficient risk assessments
- Poor control over staff competency and training.
- Missing or outdated DSE assessments
- Missing or insufficient health and safety induction, and/or missing records
- Insufficient implementation of safety controls including safe systems of work, PPE, or emergency procedures
- Insufficient lone working systems
- Lack of PAT testing
- A range of missing internal compliance checks or monitoring

Enforcement Action

In August 2023 the Environment and Transport Department received an email from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regarding a dust complaint made by a member of public. The Operatives working in an unsafe condition were contractors hired by LCC Highways. A full investigation was undertaken by the H&S team and an action plan produced. The HSE confirmed on the 2nd August 2023 that they had concluded their enquiries and no further action was required.

In October 2023 the HSE visited LCC in relation to the storage and use of Pesticides and associated compliance with the Plant Protection Product (PPP) legislation. In preparation for the visit, each site that stores pesticides was visited by the H&S Team and an action plan was issued. Associated actions included improvement of COSHH paperwork, disposal of banned substances, updating of risk assessments, improvement of spraying records and council wide registration via the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).



The inspector visited Melton Highway Depot and Bosworth Battlefield (Country Park Ranger activities) only verbal advisories were given at the time of the inspection. Following the visit health and safety guidance has been developed for the use and storage of pesticides.

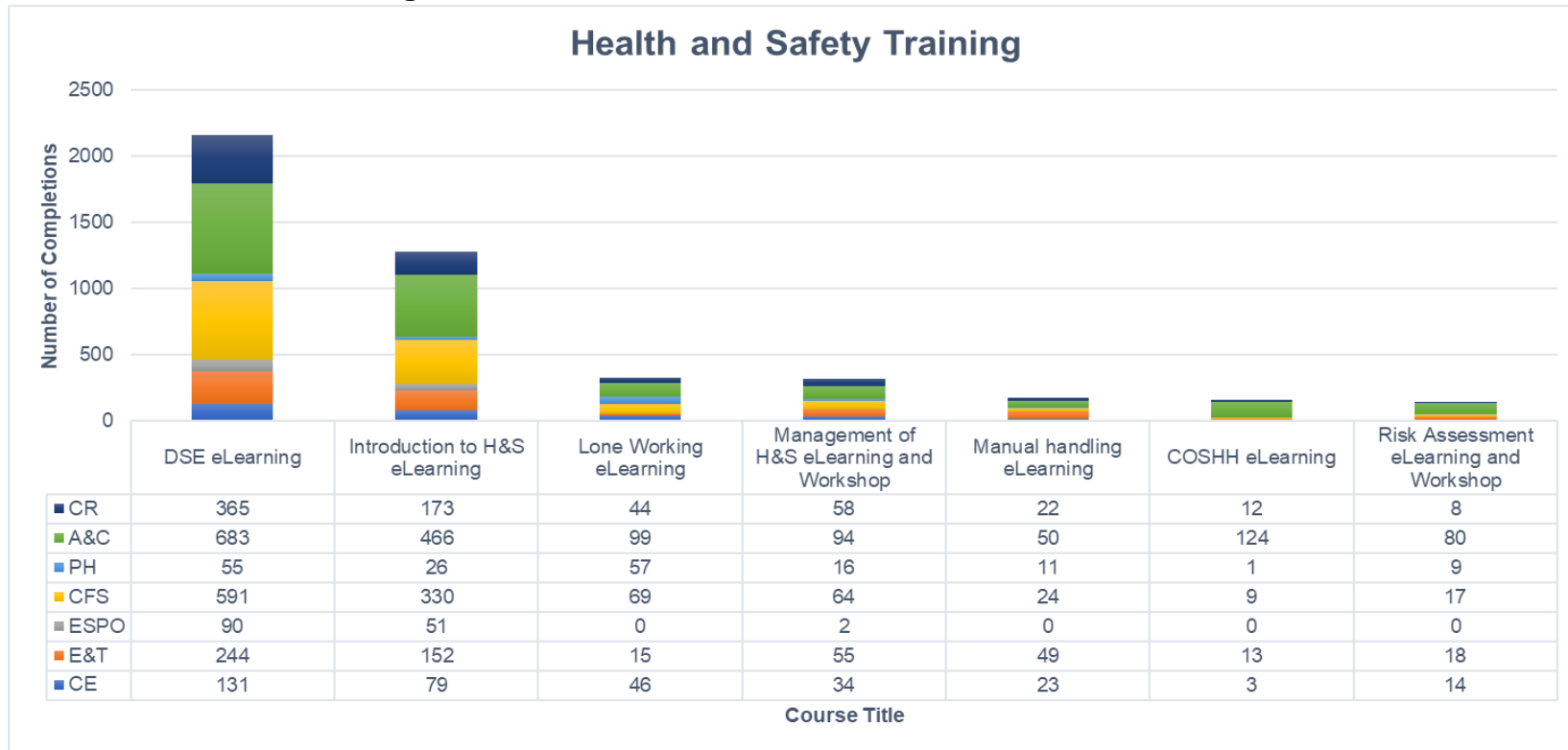
No enforcement action resulted.

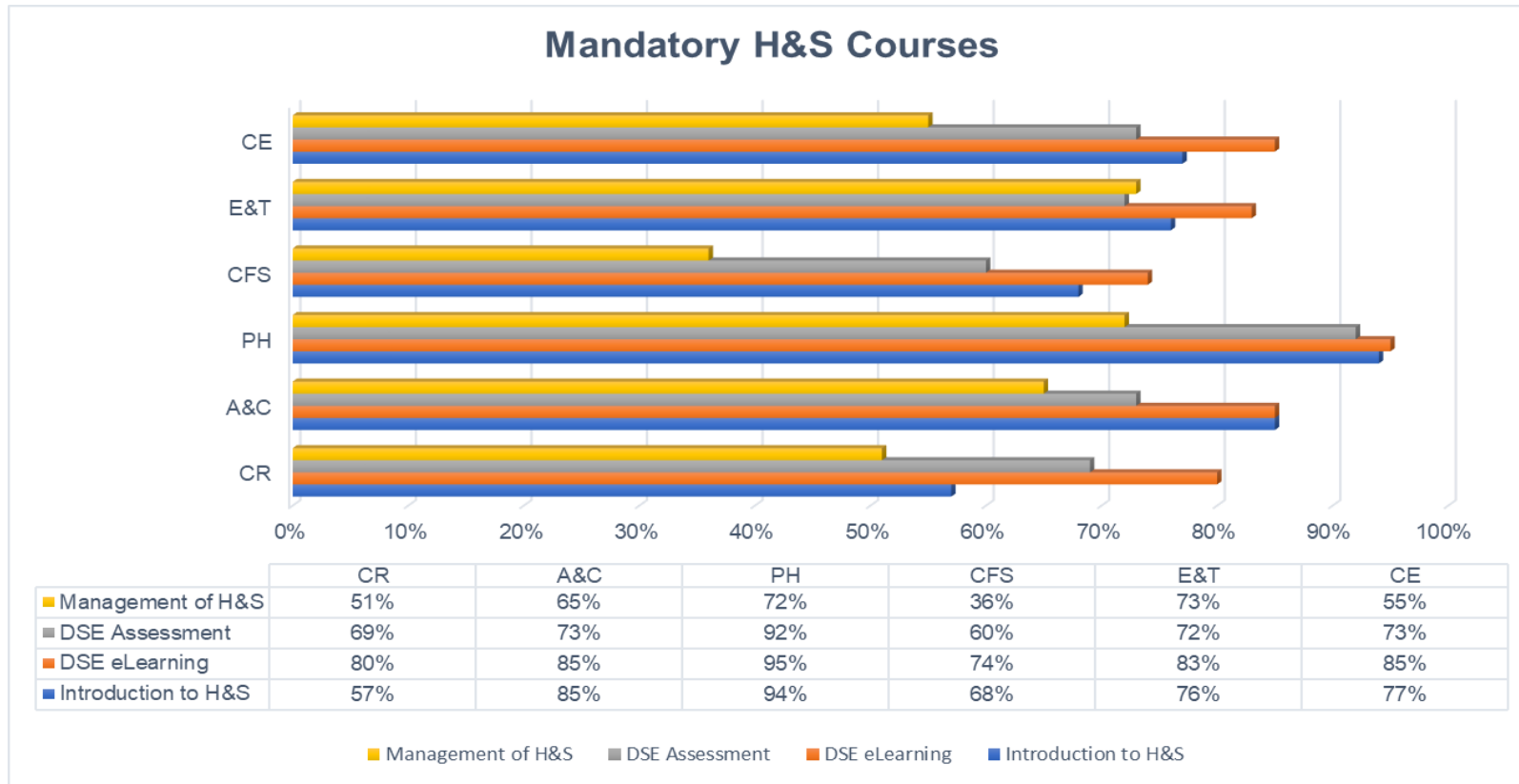


Training Statistics

The following section reports on the numbers of delegates who have attended or completed corporate Learning and Development courses provided by the HS&W Team. 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.

This chart shows the top 7 attended courses in 2023/2024. The full list of courses offered by the HS&W Team can be found on the Intranet and Learning Hub.





Data correct from April 2024

Most departments have seen a gradual increase in compliance, however compliance rates for the Management of Health and Safety have risen significantly in;

- A&C department which rose from 44% in Q1 to 65% at the end of Q4.
- CE department which rose from 23% in Q1 to 55% at the end of Q4.
- CR department which rose from 36% in Q1 to 51% at the end of Q4.



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	2023-2024 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 audits identified major nonconformities compared to 10 in 2022-2023. (2 additional nonconformities were identified outside of audits)
2	All audit report and action plans are developed within 5 working days from the completion of the audit.	This was achieved 100% of the time.
3	Achieve a 10% reduction in workplace accidents resulting in injury year on year.	A marginal increase of injuries was observed. (0.1%)
4	A 10% reduction in RIDDOR reported incidents year on year	The number of RIDDOR incidents reduced by 28%
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% April 2023 – 39% April 2024 – 59%



Wellbeing Activity

The Wellbeing Service annual report can be found [on page 21](#).

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	124	5	116	12	100	12	131
Chief Executives	3	21	2	11	4	30	2	21
Local Authority Schools	8	78	1	34	4	71	8	81
Children and Family Service (Non Schools)	18	232	8	247	21	239	12	233
Corporate Resources	4	104	8	80	7	94	6	96
Environment and Transport	2	31	1	40	5	62	6	53
Public Health	3	12	2	14	5	20	1	27
ESPO	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	5
Academy Schools	21	95	14	57	20	59	13	47
Totals	77	697	41	599	79	676	61	694

Overview	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Total new referrals	213	321	315	258
Total sessions	2552	2664	2863	2666

18% decrease in number of referrals compared to 2022/23.

7% decrease in number of sessions compared to 2022/23.



Recent and Forthcoming Changes

Managers and staff within the Department are advised to be aware of the recent updates that could impact on service delivery.

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill (Martyn's Law)

Martyn's Law is pending UK wide legislation that will place a requirement on those responsible for certain publicly accessible locations to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.

Guidance and Information

The HS&W Team have been actively engaged in reviewing all the LCC policy and guidance documents available on the Intranet and developing further guidance. 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 2023/24 financial year. Managers are advised to ensure that they are familiar with those that are applicable to their operations.

Reviewed Guidance Documents
Lone working
Infection Prevention and Control &BBV
Manual handling
Winter gritting
Inspection checklist
Accident investigation guidance
First aid record form
First Aid Guidance
Glazing
3 Points of Contact for Assess and Egress of a Vehicle - Safe System of Work
Whole Body Vibration
Work Equipment
Asbestos Management Plan
DSE Guidance
Fire Safety Guidance
LOLER Guidance
Safety whilst Smarter Working Guidance



Managers Guide to DSE Assessments
New Guidance Documents
Violence and aggression safety alert
Dust safety alert
CE to UKCA guidance
Knife safety alert
Finger entrapment safety alert
Shelving/Racking Guidance
Crush incident safety alert
Bed Rails Safety Alert
Finger Entrapment in Doors and Gates
Fatal Barrier Crush Safety Alert
Dog Safety Guidance

Conclusion

This report has shown that the number of injuries reported within the council has stayed approximately the same compared to the previous year. However, a significant decrease in RIDDOR's has been observed.

In addition, there has been a steady increase in the number of near misses reported over the last 3 years. This demonstrates that the council's health and safety culture is improving as staff increasingly understand the importance of reporting these types of incidents.

Mandatory Health and Safety training compliance has also improved in all departments, however more work is needed to improve further in this area.

A huge amount of proactive work has taken place over the last 12 months by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, including:

- Delivering the roll out of the Solo Protect app.
- Launching a new online Stress Audit Tool.
- Launching a CDM training course.
- Implementing AssessNET Single Sign On.
- Supporting and delivering on various wellbeing initiatives.
- Carrying out health and safety audits and inspections as planned.
- Responding to the HSE during the pesticides inspections and working with departments to improve H&S management in this area.
- Maintaining our ISO 45001 certification.



Priorities for the year ahead include:

- Launching the reviewed H&S Induction Training.
- Launching revised Fire Safety and Management of Health and Safety Training.
- Launching revised health and safety management system guidance, which will have a stronger emphasis on a risk-based approach.
- Launching an online audit tool using the AssessNET system.
- Maintaining and reviewing our suite of Health and Safety Guidance available on the Intranet.
- Maintaining our ISO 45001 certification.



The Wellbeing Service Annual Report

What is the Well-being Service?

The Well-being Service consists of a stable team of five counsellors and two trainee counsellors, trained in a variety of therapeutics approaches. The service offers employees the opportunity to access a free, safe, and confidential service, where they can explore both work-related and personal concerns. When it becomes challenging to manage issues alone, the Well-being Service is there to talk to. Employees can expect: to see someone that will listen and support without judgment; sessions tailored to meet individual need; a space to explore thoughts and feelings, and to find ways to manage during difficult times. The service offers fast access to one off advice and support sessions ('Pause to Talk' slots) and operates a waiting list to access short-term counselling.

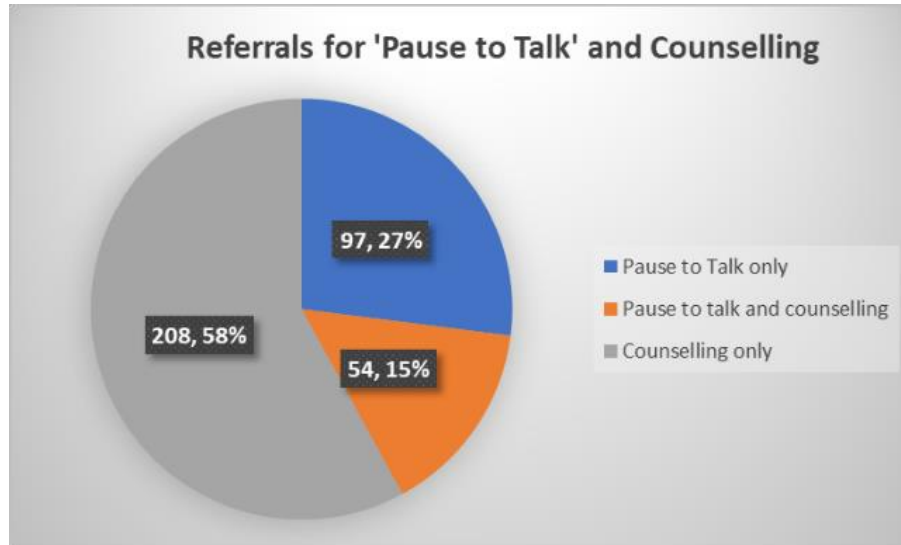
Last year, we set out to bring more diversity to the team and we are pleased to say that the service now offers counselling in Polish, Urdu and Hindi.

Over the past year, a second member of the team has been undertaking clinical supervision training, to ensure that we can continue to attract and support trainee therapists, expand this part of the service, and strengthen the offer to employees.

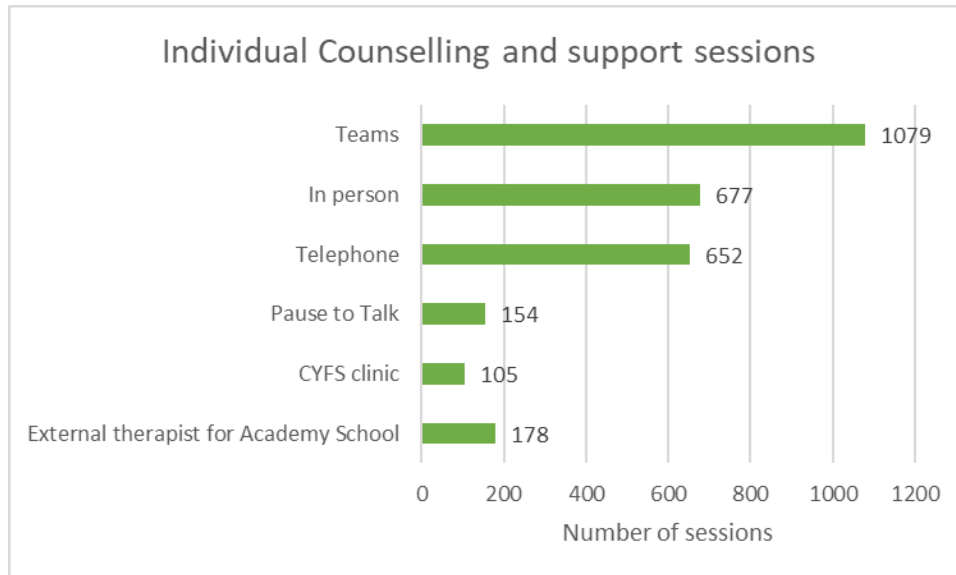
The Well-being Service continues to make use of external therapists to meet the demand from Academy School employees seeking counselling. The external counsellors are qualified and accredited therapists, practicing as members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. This has enabled the service to continue to focus on corporate employees and maintain a stable waiting list.

Service Usage

The Well-being Service received **referrals from 359 employees** from April 2023 to March 2024. This figure includes requests for 'Pause to Talk' slots as well as counselling referrals, (see chart below):



Over that same period, the service provided LCC employees, and employees from the traded services, with **2845 individual counselling or support sessions**. This figure has remained stable compared to the previous year. The breakdown of how these were provided can be seen below:



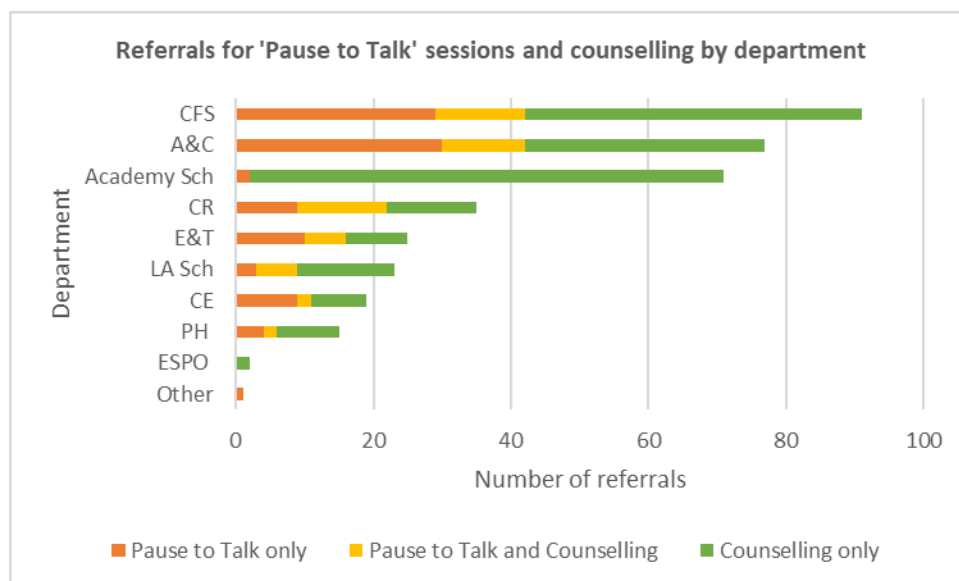
As hybrid working has become embedded into the organisation, the service has seen an increase in requests for counselling to take place online, allowing clients the opportunity to see their counsellor, without the need to lose work or family time travelling to County Hall. However, a significant number of employees prefer to access in person counselling, and the team ensure that this choice is supported and understand that for some employees, seeing another person face-to-face is extremely important and beneficial for their mental wellbeing.



The last year has seen an increase in the number of one-off advice and support sessions (Pause to Talk). This has proved a popular choice for individuals that don't necessarily need to access 6 sessions of counselling or for those that need immediate advice and support. These sessions are usually provided within a few days of initial contact and can be crucial in supporting individuals to talk through their concerns and consider the most appropriate next steps to address challenges to wellbeing. Following the pilot of a clinic for the Children and Family Service (CFS) Department in 2022 - 2023, the team decided to continue with this provision for a further year and offered 105 sessions, mostly focusing on work-related issues pertinent to CFS social care staff and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team.

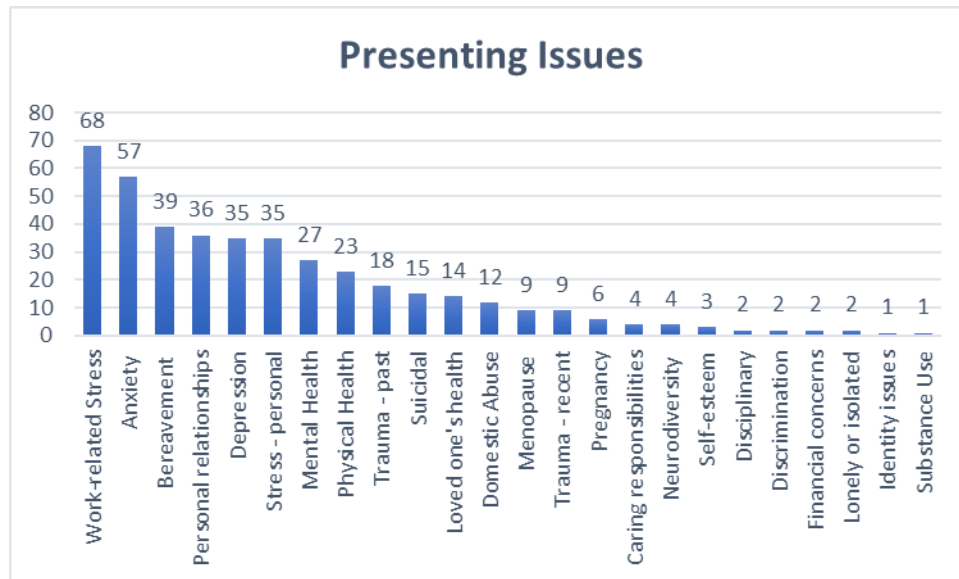
There has been an increase in the use of external therapists, employed to meet the demand from the Traded Service offered to Academy School clients. This has allowed the team both the time and opportunity to focus on delivering groupwork opportunities for corporate clients, whilst ensuring the waiting time to access counselling has not increased.

As has been the trend over the last 5 years, the highest number of referrals were from the CFS and Adults and Communities (A&C) Departments (see chart below), with both departments making good use of the Pause to Talk sessions, as well as the counselling provision.



Presenting Issues – counselling clients only

Employees use the Wellbeing Service to talk about any issue they're finding difficult to manage. At point of referral, clients are invited to give a brief description of what they are seeking help with, and clients often present with more than one concern. The chart below shows the range of different presenting issues and the numbers reporting these concerns at point of referral.



Over the past four years, the top 5 presenting issues remain the same. Whilst the statistics show a fall in the reporting of Anxiety, Bereavement, Personal Relationship Issues and Depression, Work-related Stress continues to rise.

Considering the backdrop of financial concerns, squeezed resources and the uncertainty brought about by organisational change and restructures, these figures are unsurprising. The stressors identified by staff using the Wellbeing Service cover a range of issues, including lack of role clarity; lack of autonomy and feeling micro-managed; high pressure brought about by huge workloads and perceived unrealistic deadlines; lack of line-management support and supervision; challenging relationship dynamics and concerns around how processes of change are communicated and managed. In some teams, particularly where there is a statutory duty to meet targets, there continues to be a culture of working beyond paid hours and subsequently reports of stress and burnout. Reports of Work-Related Stress are often accompanied by high levels of anxiety, whereby employees begin to experience distressing physiological symptoms, which impact many aspects of their life including sleep; leaving their homes; confidence in meetings; and challenges performing everyday duties. Where employee reports of work-related stress are not responded to, well-being can often decline rapidly and in many cases, result in sickness absence or a decision to leave Leicestershire County Council, which inevitably leads to the loss of a wealth of skills and experience and additional costs for the organisation in recruiting and training new staff.

Despite high demand and expectations on employees, work-related stress can often be mitigated by line managers who take steps to help the employee feel supported and valued. These line managers:

- Are willing to make time to listen to the experience of the employee
- Are available for regular support and supervision
- Communicate compassion and empathy



- Feel confident to tailor the response to the individual and make necessary temporary adjustments to enable the employee to move out of the stress response and resume a more efficient way of working.
- Foster an environment of trust and respect.

It should be noted that work-related stress and anxiety only account for part of the overall picture around staff well-being. In addition to work, employees are often managing;

- Long term mental health conditions (including suicidal thoughts and ideation)
- Long term physical health conditions
- Learning difficulties and neurodiverse conditions
- Additional caring responsibilities
- Financial commitments
- Experiencing unexpected events i.e., relationship breakdowns, illness, or bereavement.

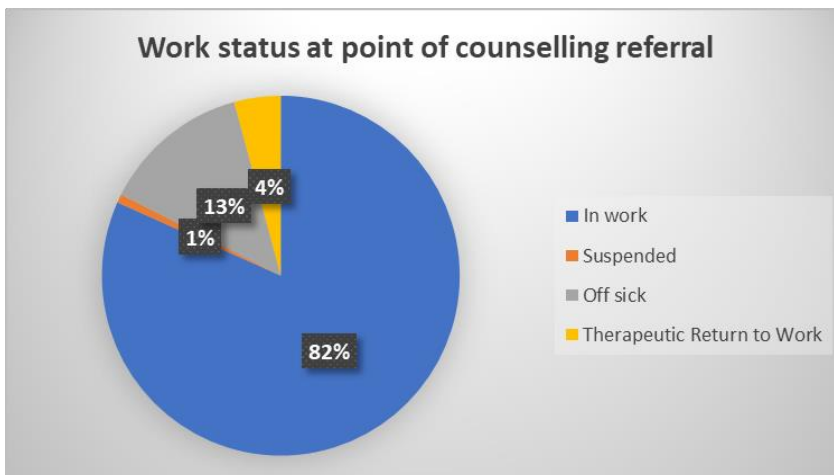
All present challenges that can be very distressing and overwhelming at times and trying to manage these challenges alongside the demands of work can be a difficult balancing act.

We have been supporting the work on LCC's Inclusion Commitment for managers and employees to give additional guidance to support this balancing act. This is welcome addition to the resources already available to support individual wellbeing, particularly the recognition that symptoms and external unpredictable factors can fluctuate from day to day, and efforts to improve wellbeing may need to be flexible to account for this.

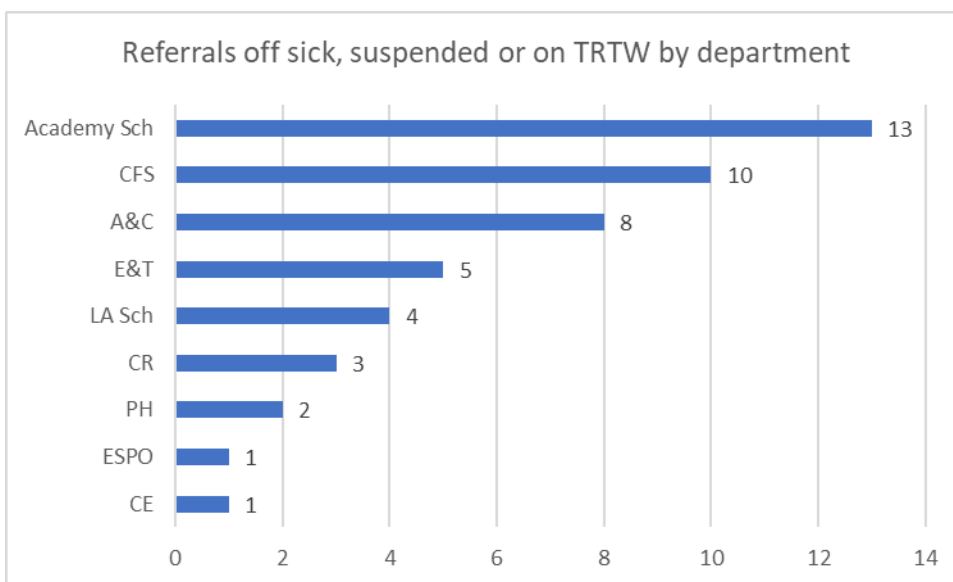
Employees can manage their workload well, despite external demands, if given the opportunity to work in a way that also allows them to make use of flexible working arrangements to attend to personal demands such as caring responsibilities or health appointments, and work at times when their performance is likely to be more efficient. Whilst it is acknowledged that business need must be prioritised, where possible, supporting individual requirements and trusting employees to fulfil their duties is preferable.

Work Status and Support plans – Counselling clients only

Whilst 82% of referrals for counselling were from employees who were attending work, 18% (47 referrals) were received from individuals either absent from work due to sickness; suspended or undergoing a therapeutic return to work (TRTW), see chart below.



Referrals from employees off sick, suspended, or on a therapeutic return to work were from the following departments:



The main presenting issues for this group were *'Mental Health'* – including Depression and Suicidal Ideation (21%) *'Work-related Stress'*; (20%); and *'Anxiety'* (11%). Although the numbers are small, there were reductions in the number of employees in this group presenting with work-related stress and anxiety, but no reduction in those presenting with depression/suicidal ideation. Whilst the Wellbeing service has developed both online and group resources around Stress and Anxiety to support employees to stay in work. Further development work to support with Depression will take place in 2024/25.

The Wellbeing Service, alongside the Health and Safety Advisors, continue to be available for generic conversations with employees, line managers and the Human Resources Department, to consider helpful steps to take in cases where an individual's underlying mental health difficulty/disability may, at times, impact on their ability to perform their job role. However, client confidentiality will always take precedence.



Of those that used the Well-being Service last year, 17% (46 referrals) reported that they were subject to a sickness absence and/or capability support plan. Support plans are an important tool for the organisation to demonstrate that appropriate measures have been put in place to support an employee to improve their attendance or performance. Often these tools are used to good effect by managers, with the best examples setting out SMART manageable goals and detailing clear timescales, so that the employee is confident that they are aware of exactly what steps they need to take to demonstrate a sufficient change; what their line manager will offer to support them; and, exactly what will happen once those goals have been met.

Online and Groupwork Resources

Employees are able to access 4 different **online** interventions to support their wellbeing. One of these includes resources around 'Loss and Bereavement' that employees can browse in their own time, without a requirement to complete a course. Other e-learning interventions include Personal Resilience; Anxiety Awareness and Managing Stress. Employees can choose to complete the e-learning course or simply browse the resources available. The Service also currently offers 3 face-to-face **groupwork** interventions for employees. Completion/attendee numbers are shown below:

Online course	Completions	Groupwork	Attendees
Anxiety Awareness	134	Mindfulness Now	40
Stress Management	77	Bereavement Support Group	19
Resilience	46	Managing Stress	24

Service Developments

Work-related Stress

In September 2023, the service launched a new face-to-face workshop style course to support employees to find ways to better manage Stress, Pressure and Wellbeing. In addition to the pre-existing online 'Managing Stress' modules, this course offers employees an alternative resource for learning new ways of taking responsibility for managing feelings of stress and promotes access to support for those employees that find it challenging to learn via online methods. This four-week course aims to enable employees to understand what stress is and how to stop it; manage wellbeing to beat stress; manage stress at work and improve the ability to manage stress using resilience. Each session includes tuition and exercises to reinforce learning. Group numbers are kept small to ensure a safe and comfortable environment to engage with the course. Over the last year, 4 courses were delivered from September 2023 and in total, 24 employees attended. One delegate said, *"One of the best training courses I've attended. Really interesting and informative."*



The Well-being Service will raise the profile of this course to maximise attendance and encourage line-managers to support staff to access this pro-active and preventative resource.

Going forward, the Well-being Service has decided to change the way we collect data around work-related stress, to create a more detailed picture of the issues that clients of the service are experiencing. Stressors will be recorded in line with the HSE Management Standards: Demands; Control; Support; Relationships; Role, Remote/Hybrid Working and Change, as well as collecting further qualitative data detailing employees' specific concerns. It is hoped that this data will be used to highlight patterns and help departments to target their response to reduce stressors for their teams.

Anxiety

In September 2023, the Wellbeing Service launched the online Anxiety Awareness course. This course helps employees and managers to understand the causes, symptoms and consequences of Anxiety and sets out practical steps that employees can take to begin managing their symptoms. This has been a popular resource and over a 6-month period, 134 employees completed the course. 67 individuals chose to complete the evaluation and 100% of those that provided feedback said that they would recommend this e-learning to others. One person said, *"I have never experienced such a thorough course about anxiety. There are so many different aspects to learn and understand and also things which can help. I have found it fascinating but most of all very helpful for me"*. This course is a very useful starting point for anyone experiencing anxiety and the service would encourage managers to give team members the permission and time to complete the course if they are reporting symptoms of anxiety.

Bereavement

Over the past year, the Bereavement Support Group has become well embedded into the Well-being Service provision and employees are increasingly aware of this as a support option when facing the struggle of coping with bereavement. This course is a combination of psychoeducation and facilitator led peer support, offering employees the opportunity to talk about their own grief and share this experience with other people navigating their own unique journey through this painful process.

The aim of the bereavement support group is to bring together employees that have experienced the death of a loved one or close person. The group is a safe, supportive and confidential environment and meets once a week for 6 sessions. The group is designed to give individuals an understanding of the 5 main stages of grief and the grieving curve and employees are invited to share their experiences of death in different cultures and the importance of family rituals. The group has proved to be an extremely valuable resource. One person that attended said, *"Just want to say how wonderful the session was on Friday. It's such a lovely thoughtful group"*.



Recently, the Well-being Service has taken steps to develop a further support provision in the form of 'Bereavement Listeners'. Bereavement Listeners are employees that understand grief from their own lived experience and have been trained in listening skills to support colleagues across Leicestershire County Council and have been given permission by their manager to undertake this role. Employees that have experienced bereavement and are seeking support will be offered the opportunity to spend some time talking with a bereavement listener, who will be able to help them to understand the support options available both within Leicestershire County Council and external agencies and the steps required to access this support.

Intranet Pages

Over the past year, the Wellbeing Service has been liaising with the Digital Services Team, who are taking the lead, to update the Wellbeing intranet pages to reflect the range of resources available and to offer employees a user-friendly guidance on a variety of common topics that impact mental well-being, along with clear guidance on how to access the various streams of support. Significant progress has been made and this work will continue so that employees feel confident about taking the necessary steps to help themselves or ask for help.

Sudden Death Guidance

Sadly, each year, a number of employees die whilst in service with Leicestershire County Council. Inevitably, this can have a significant impact on individuals within the deceased employee's team and their manager. The Wellbeing Service are currently working in conjunction with Human Resources to create a guide for managers that are faced with managing death within the organisation. One aim of the document is to coach managers through the process and the steps they need to take, reducing the anxiety associated with uncertainty and supporting managers to support their staff.

Equality and Diversity

Over the past year, a therapist within the Well-being service has undertaken training to join the network of Equality and Diversity champions across the council. In addition to this role, the therapist is available to offer Wellbeing support to the Children and Family Service Race Champions. Race Champions offer their time to talk to employees who experience oppression and racism. This work can be upsetting, and these staff benefit from having a wellbeing advisor to support them, if and when the need arises.

Duty Line

The Service regularly asks for client feedback and whilst this is overwhelmingly positive, there has consistently been a request to offer support more quickly. Whilst the team have chosen to maintain a waiting list for counselling, so as not to compromise on the expected quality of the therapeutic interventions and to adhere to ethical guidelines of the governing body, we recognise that there is a growing call for quick access to wellbeing advice and



support. In response to this need, the service recently launched a telephone duty line. This line is available for a two-hour period each day, offering employees and managers multiple opportunities each week to talk to a therapist; receive a triage assessment if required; discuss available support options and plan any next steps to access support. The duty line will be trialled this year and continue if it proves popular with employees.

What's next?

Depression and Suicide

The Service recognises that some employees with long standing mental health issues or recurrent periods of depression may struggle to show noticeable improvement over 6 sessions of counselling. Some of these individuals also express frequent thoughts of suicidal ideation and thus require ongoing support to manage risk or they repeatedly return to the service for further support. In response to the need of this client group, a therapist within the Well-being service is currently being trained to deliver Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy (DIT), an approach approved by NICE to treat individuals with depression. This is also a relational therapeutic approach and so will be useful in treating clients that present with depression or anxiety related to difficult relationship dynamics, whether they be at home or work. It is hoped that this intervention will be available to suitable clients next year.

In addition, the service will develop an online course to support employees experiencing depression and thoughts of suicide; increase awareness of the *Managing Suicide in the Workplace* training; and, contribute to the development of a webpage to support employees experiencing suicidal thoughts, (and their managers), to access appropriate support.

Putting Stress at the top of the agenda

Work-related stress is causing employees distress and putting a huge strain on Leicestershire County Council resources. Tackling this issue is paramount. The Well-being Service will be considering ways that we can support the organisation to respond to this growing challenge and encourage early intervention to prevent escalation to burnout.

Supporting managers

The Service recognise that managers are under incredible pressure to lead their teams to meet increasing demand in a climate of reduced resources, whilst also supporting staff who themselves are experiencing pressure and expressing feelings of stress. Investing in the health and wellbeing of line managers is crucial, as they in turn play a key role in maintaining the health and wellbeing of their team. The well-being service will be considering the development of training resources that can help managers to maintain healthy work boundaries and approach difficult team challenges with confidence and compassion.



Fibromyalgia

The Team have noticed an increase in clients reporting diagnoses of Fibromyalgia. A therapist within the service will begin to explore research in this area and develop a resource to support employees that are struggling with the condition.

What do employees say about the Well-being Service?

In a recent Corporate Resources Staff Briefing, Wellbeing support was highlighted as one of the top 5 strengths of Leicestershire County Council and this is reflected in what clients say too. Following counselling sessions, clients are offered the opportunity to feedback to us about their experience of using the Well-being Service, in the form of a confidential survey. Over the past year, 60 employees completed the survey. This is what they told us:

- **99% 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.
- **99% agreed** that they had confidence in their therapist and his/her skills.
- **90%** told us that personal difficulties were having an impact on their ability to perform their job.
- **64%** told us that work-related difficulties were having an impact on their ability to perform their job.
- **68%** told us that the counselling sessions helped them to stay in work and avoid taking sick leave.
- **95%** said they were 'very likely' to recommend the well-being service to colleagues if they needed support.

As part of the survey, clients are given space to tell us what they think in their own words. The responses reflect the true value of the Well-being Service, and we believe stand as testament to Leicestershire County Council's investment in employee well-being. Here is a flavour of what employees had to say:

"The referral and assessment is very easy to use. I had a session with a worker, and this went very well and they suggested I have further sessions. I felt very supported and listened to."



“I was so grateful to receive pause to talk sessions due to the waiting time for counselling. I found this service exceptionally useful and instrumental at this moment in my life.”

“It provided a much-needed window of time for me to focus on myself and prioritise that over the other demands in my life. I wasn't sure whether i would find it helpful, but it has enabled me to look at things differently, and to be accepting of, and kind to myself”.

“Best counselling therapy I've ever had. (Counsellor) was super helpful and it's changed my life for the better long term. Thanks very much for the help at every step of the way. Made such a massive difference compared to my past experiences with therapy”.

“I have been on such a journey over the last few months and these counselling sessions have been so valuable in helping me find my path forward in such a short space of time. I felt able to open up about things I had pushed down for so long. I felt listened to, validated and valued throughout. I have learnt so much about myself and I am so grateful for the experience that I have had.”

“I found the service to be very helpful and helped me to check in and reflect on my thoughts and mental Health which in return helped me to continue to remain at work, maintain a good mental health and remain focused.”

“The Wellbeing team were incredibly supportive, understanding, and helpful. Offered alternative support while I was waiting for counselling. They were so approachable and caring.”

“I see the service as a vital council resource. I was given the time to talk through my concerns in a non-judgemental way. It felt like someone within the council was finally listening to me.”

“I felt that I had a generous offer of the space and time needed at a very difficult time in my life which enabled me to receive advice and guidance that was integral to my moving through grief and conflict. I felt cared for, and my situation valued which enabled me to stay afloat and keep going and also to come through stronger and equipped to manage things better.”

“Extremely pleased with the sessions I had; went into them not believing I could be helped and have come out with improved resilience, self-belief, and self-worth. (Counsellor) made me feel heard and safe; definitely glad I did it.”



Corporate Wellbeing Update

Key Achievements- last 12 months:

Over the last twelve months, the People Services Wellbeing Delivery Team with support from the Wellbeing Board have been continuing to work on the delivery of the Wellbeing Action Plan 2023-2024.

The focus areas of the action plan include understanding sickness and absence data, training data and other measurement indicators in relation to identified topics which were:

- Stress and mental health
- Improving compassionate leadership, supervision, and management
- Depression, mindfulness, and resilience
- Hard to reach staff and health conversations.
- Physical exercise

The aim of this plan is to develop identified wellbeing initiatives and communications under these areas to raise awareness, support employees and help to break down stigma attached to mental health.

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.

Some of the key achievements have included:

- New stress survey tool was launched.
- Wellbeing bulletin data and popularity data has been reviewed quarterly.
- Delivery of face-to-face stress workshops.
- Workplace health needs assessment was launched.
- Able Futures launched.
- Pause to talk sessions were promoted and delivered.
- Burn out training and workshops were promoted throughout the year.
- A suicide workshop was developed by the Wellbeing team.
- Reasonable adjustments guidance updated and shared.
- Creation of department Wellbeing Representatives.



- Wellbeing Offer summary shared across the LCC.
- Consolidation of wellbeing information on the intranet – this work is continuously ongoing to improve the accessibility of information.
- Work is ongoing to improve communication of wellbeing information to staff members that do not have regular access to the LCC intranet.

Going forward:

Going forward, a new wellbeing action plan is in place, which has a strong focus on:

- Supervision and stress
- Diet and healthy eating
- Sleep
- Physical exercise

These topics were developed from the Workplace Health Needs Assessment supported by Public Health. The ongoing data collection and measurement indicators will be reviewed.

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.