
Report of Corporate Management Team

Report of Kevin Lough, Occupational Health and Safety Manager.

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the council's Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) performance for Quarter two 2020/21.

Executive summary

2. As the Country entered into the latter phases of COVID roadmap recovery, the Health and Safety (H&S) and Occupational Health Services (OHS) continued to provide significant organisational support and interventions. These included provision of revised and updated risk assessments, safe working procedures and guidance to services, including schools.
3. A range of Council related activities still involved significant planning and risk assessment in relation to COVID safety measures. These included council meetings, committees and reopening of Council services. A large number of schools were in COVID outbreak situations prior to summer holiday period commencing and requiring extensive support to control infection related risks.
4. There were four fire related incidents during Quarter two, with no injuries and only minor property damage. CDDFRS undertook five audits of council premises during the quarter with positive outcomes and premises being broadly compliant with fire safety legislative standards.
5. Further proactive work was undertaken during the quarter in relation to employee mental health and wellbeing. This ranged from the preparation of a new employees wellbeing survey, winter flu campaign delivery, promotion of the employee assistance programme and the launch of a new employee wellbeing portal on the intranet.
6. The city safety group and county wide open water safety group convened during this quarter to review open water safety interventions. The new city centre action plan was progressed in terms of initial actions

and the formation of a Student induction week group. There was also extensive communications and awareness initiatives targeted at public safety in open water and cold-water shock via the Councils dying to be cool campaign.

7. Incident statistics show a total of 268 accidents and incidents compared to 329 in the previous quarter. It was positive to report that there were no RIDDOR specified injuries following three in quarter 1 of 2021/22.

Recommendation(s)

8. That Audit Committee note and agree the contents of this report.

268

Accidents, incidents and near misses reported
(329 in Q1 2021/22, 229 in Q4 2020/21, 259 in Q3 2020/21)



96%

Of all reported accidents are either no injury or near miss



Main Accident/Incident Causes



0 RIDDOR 'specified' injury, and 7 over 7 days absence RIDDOR injuries

154 Health Surveillance appointments attended



35 psychological work-related incidents in Q2 2021/22 (compared to 48 in Q1 2021/22, 16 in Q4 2020/21, 41 in Q3 2020/21)

• Better Health at Work *Maintaining Excellence* Award status application progressing

4 fire related incidents



5 CDDFRS inspections of council premises



70 H&S Safety Audits and inspections of DCC premises and activities

0

Enforcement related actions or advice from HSE/CDDFRS following inspections and audit activity at various DCC sites



108 LTSA management referral appointments in OHS

128 physiotherapy sessions attended

29 EAP telephone counselling sessions

114 calls to EAP

Background

9. The HSWSG has been established to ensure that suitable priority is given to the management of HS&W within the council. The group monitors the development, implementation and review of the Corporate H&S Policy to ensure that it is consistently applied throughout the council and that performance standards are achieved. Key reporting topics, including COVID, are detailed below.

COVID 19 H&S Update

10. During Quarter two, the governments COVID roadmap final steps were achieved and step four implemented on 19 July 2021 after a four week pause. This meant that most legal restrictions ended, removing social distancing and social contact restrictions and enabling remaining businesses to reopen. All adults were offered a first dose of the vaccine.
11. The Councils risk assessments and safe working procedures changed to reflect this change in guidance. Council guidance was also adapted to reflect rules regarding self-isolating as a contact which changed from 16 August for people who were fully vaccinated, and for under 18s. Those not fully vaccinated still needed to isolate if they were contacts, and everyone still had to isolate if they tested positive, to protect themselves and others.
12. In September, the Government undertook a further review to assess the country's preparedness for autumn and winter, which considered whether to continue or strengthen public and business guidance heading towards the winter. The Council also supported NHS partners in planning and preparation for the commencement of COVID booster vaccinations in Quarter three. The provision of County hall as a vaccination site was agreed and a repeat of the previous vaccination programme expected to take place. Hospital trusts leading on vaccinating their staff with boosters as well as supporting the delivery of vaccination to primary and social care staff.
13. A number of schools in the county experienced COVID outbreaks during this quarter and these continued to be supported, managed and monitored by the Education oversight multi agency group. Plans were also being made for the return of schools in September and the expected testing arrangements which would be required for Autumn term. It was positive to report that during this reporting period there were no other workplace related outbreaks.
14. During the reporting quarter there was a continuation of council and elected member related meetings and committees. Work was undertaken to ensure that meeting venues were COVID secure and meetings were held in appropriate venues to ensure that social distancing could be maintained. Spennymoor leisure centre was again utilised following the elections for full council meetings.

Fire Incidents

15. There were 4 fire related incidents at Council premises or staffed premises or on-board Council vehicles during Quarter two. These were at:
- Harbour View Extra Care Scheme
 - Greenfields Community College
 - Trinity School
 - Annfield Plain Waste Transfer Station

Fire Inspections – County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

16. There were 5 Fire and Rescue Service inspections of Council premises during Quarter two. These were at Greenfield Community College, Lumley Infants School, St Hilds Primary School, Tanfield School and Walworth School. The outcome of the inspections was that the premises were deemed to be broadly compliant with fire safety legislation.

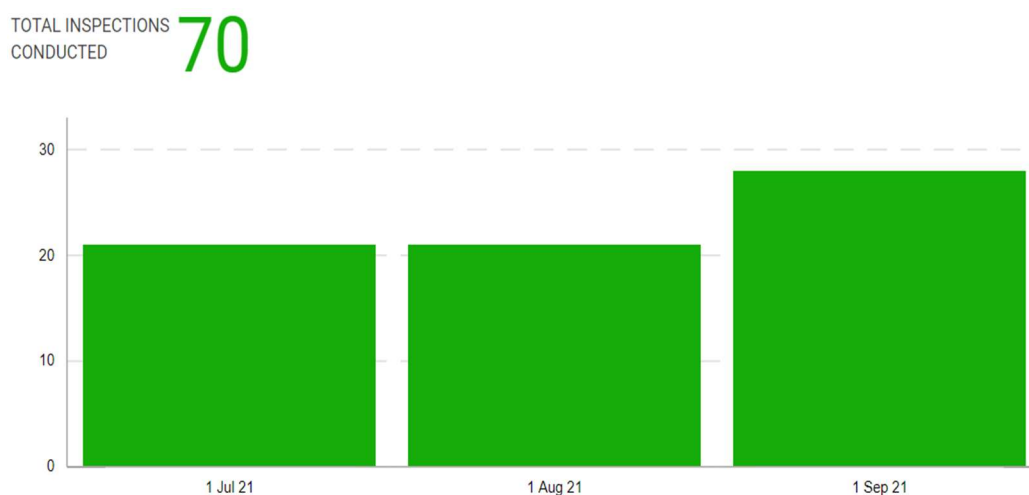
Enforcement Body Interventions & Significant Incidents

17. HSE inspectors visited Morrison Busty depot during the quarter. They inspected the asbestos removal works for the refurbishment project and feedback from inspectors was that they were satisfied with how the work was being carried out in accordance with asbestos regulations.

Audits and Inspections

18. There were a total of 70 audits and inspections undertaken by the H&S team during quarter 2. As per Chart 1 below inspections and audits increased throughout the quarter with most undertaken in September 2021.

Chart 1 – Audit and Inspection Activity for Quarter 2.



19. These audits were undertaken across a range of council service areas as per below Chart 2:

Chart 2 Audit and Inspections per service area

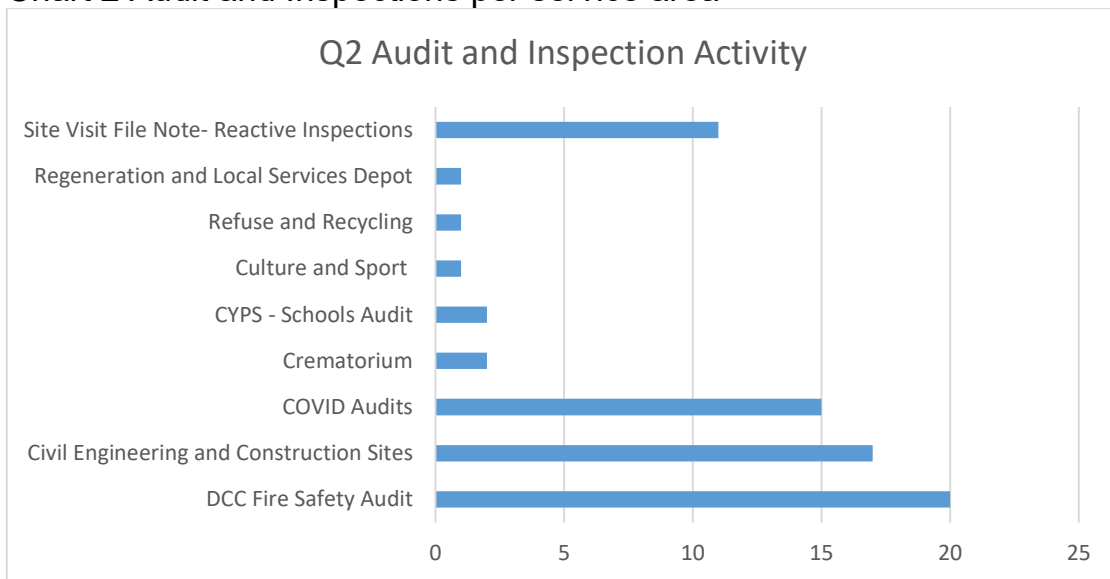
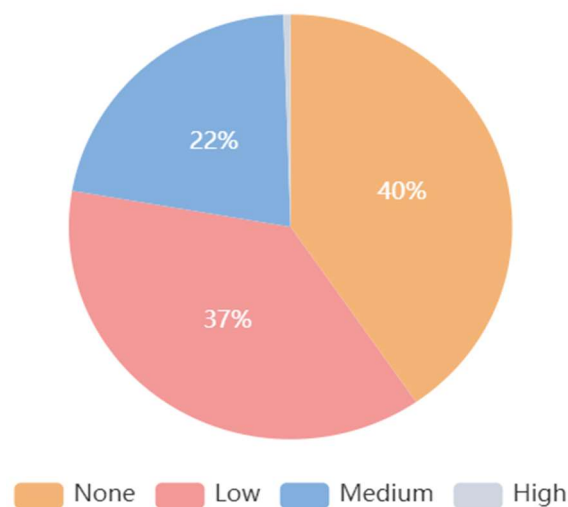


Chart 3 Compliance Actions by Priority



Employee Health and Wellbeing

20. The employee better health at work group met regularly throughout this period and identified ongoing interventions and communications which were again aimed at raising awareness of support and interventions available and ensuring employees were able to access this where required.
21. Further work was undertaken to plan for the delivery of the employee engagement survey. The survey which forms part of the requirement of the Better Health at Work maintaining excellence award, would repeat the survey undertaken in 2020 as part of the gold award criteria. This would provide further insights into employee health and wellbeing and

support an organisational action plan for the maintaining excellence award evidence portfolio.

22. There were further improvements made to the employee wellbeing portal during this period in relation to increased promotion and highlighting of key areas such as financial Awareness, fertility/bereavement, and the menopause. In relation to menopause awareness eight sessions and 160 training places were arranged and made available for employees for this year.
23. The annual employee assistance programme report was produced by Health Assured. Content of the report was noted by the employee better health at work group and actions taken forward accordingly as part of the overall better health at work action plan.
24. Occupational Health Service (OHS) also continued to deliver employee related management referral services during the quarter and supported employees and their managers during the process. A full breakdown of occupational health triage and testing is detailed in the supporting OHS Quarter two report.
25. Planning and preparation for delivery and provision for the winter flu vaccination campaign commenced during this quarter. This would include a repeated targeted vaccination offer for prioritised council staff, delivered by Occupational Health Services at on site locations across the County.

Occupational Health Service

26. The OHS continues to provide face to face appointments at Annand House with a covid 19 risk assessment in place to enable us to deliver essential OH services including immunisations, inoculation injury follow-up which includes a blood test, physiotherapy, drivers medicals, school crossing patroller assessments and statutory health surveillance.
27. A second part-time temporary OH screening nurse has commenced in post to assist with the backlog of health surveillance created by the pandemic.
28. Records management project to digitise and archive paper occupational health records continues at County Hall. Three temporary admin staff have been recruited to carry out this project.

Management Referrals

29. During Quarter 2, 265 employees participated in clinical consultations with the OHS, following management referral in relation to Long Term Sickness Absence (LTSA), Short Term Sickness Absence (STSA), Management Concerns (Man Con) Reviews, and Re referral appointments, Long Term Sickness Absence/Short Term Sickness Absence (LTSA/STSA) and Covid. The number of referrals in Q2 this year has risen from the Q2, 2020/21, an increase of 40 referrals which represents a 18% increase.

Chart 1

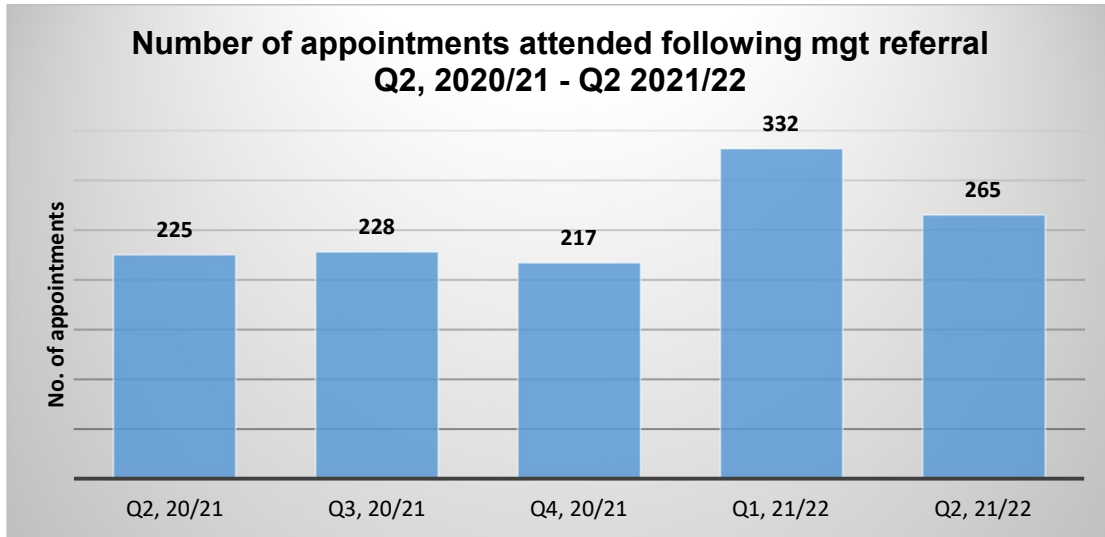
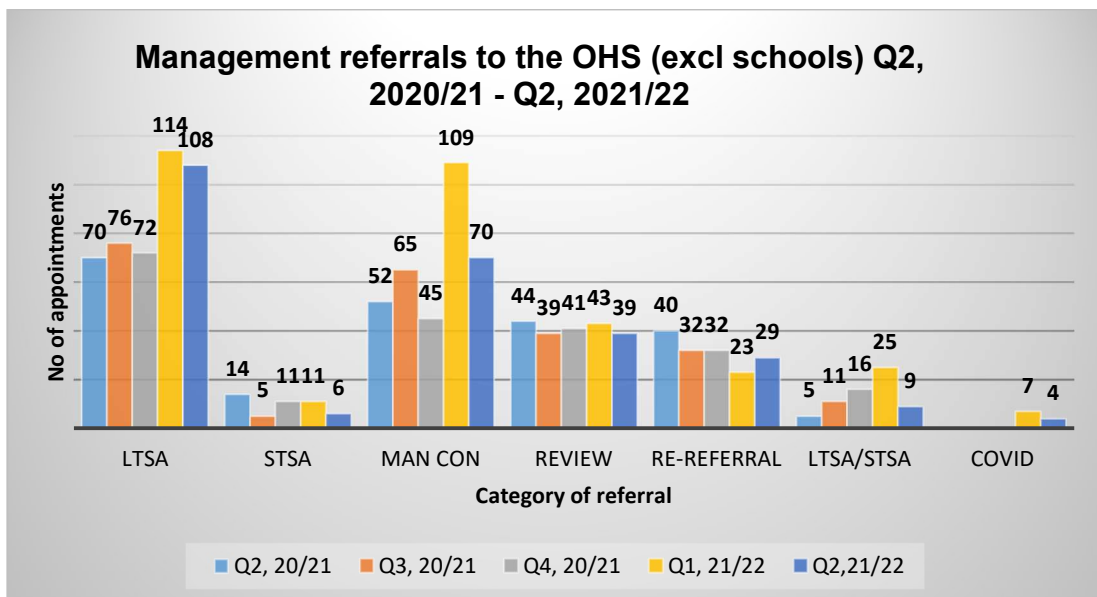


Chart 2 shows the categorisation of management referral appointments attended.

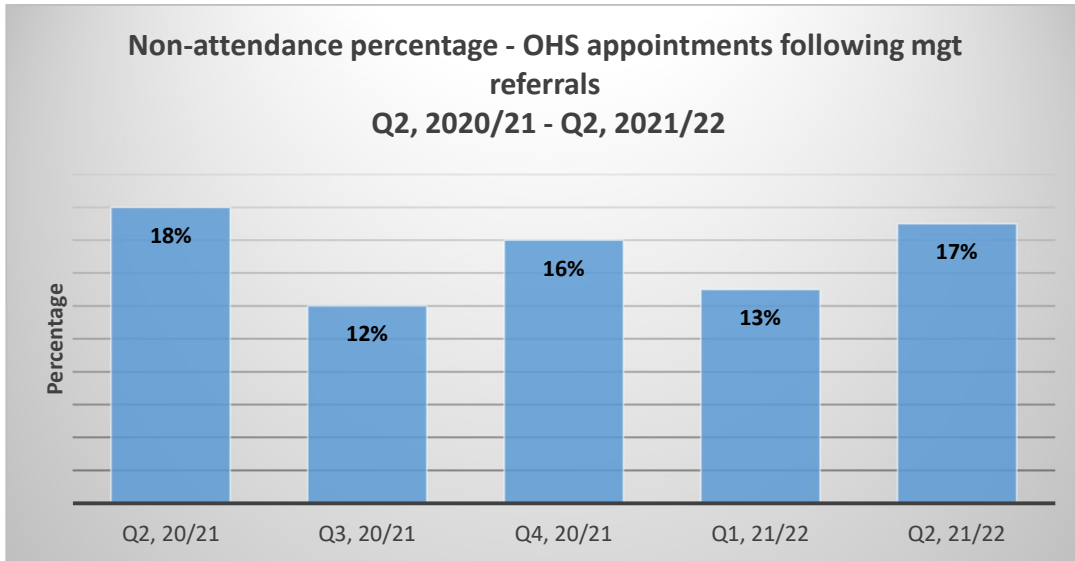
Chart 2



Management Referrals - Non Attendance

30. During Q2 53 employees did not attend their allocated appointment following management referral. This represents a 17% non-attendance rate. See Chart 3

Chart 3



Management Referrals – Employee Attribution

31. During Quarter 2, 108 employees were seen for LTSA of which 24% (n=26) stated to the OHS that they consider the underlying cause to be due to work related factors. Of the employees, 88% (n=23) identified this was due to 'psychological' reasons, 12% (n=3) identified as 'musculoskeletal'. See Charts 4 & 7.
32. Chart 6 shows the cause of absence categories for non-work related LTSA seen in the OHS, 18% (n=15) were due to psychological reasons and 43% (n=35) were due to musculoskeletal problems.

Chart 4

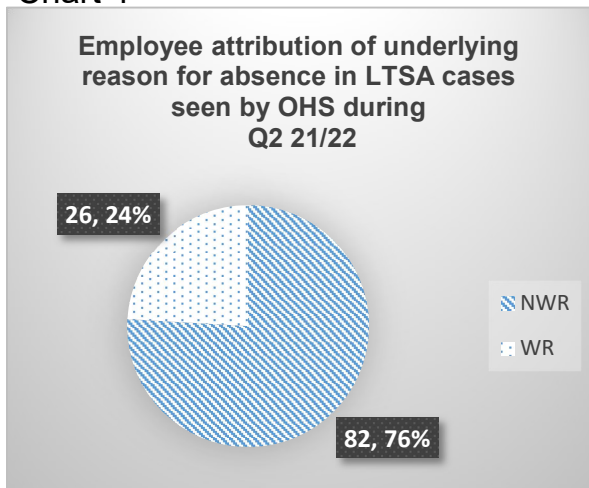


Chart 5

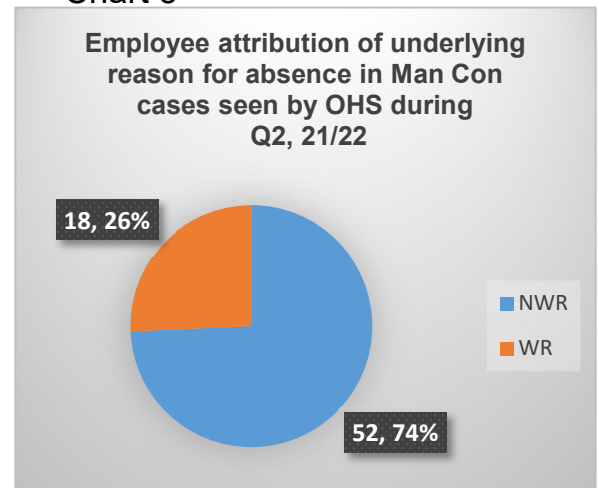


Chart 6

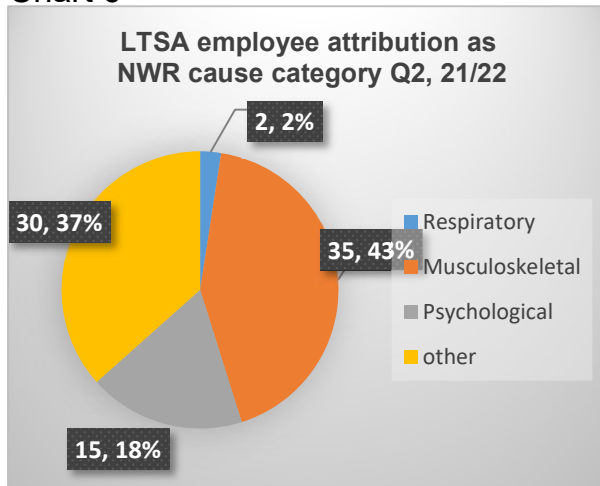
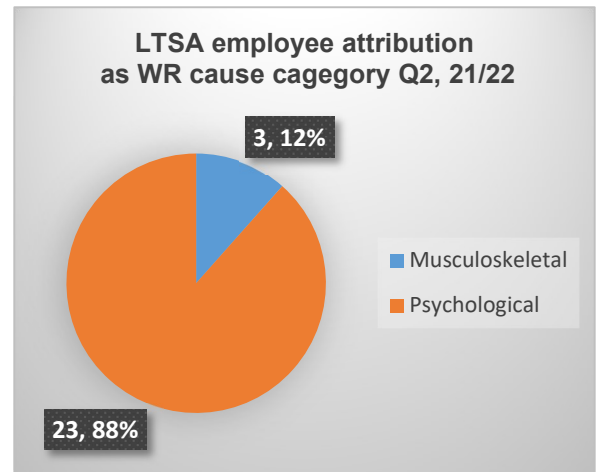


Chart 7



33. Management concern referrals are made when the employee is not absent from work and advice is required relating to work that is affecting the employees health or their health is affecting their work.

34. During Q2,70 employees were seen as a management concern, 26% (n=18) of these referrals stated to the OHS that they consider the underlying cause to be due to work related factors. Of the 70 employees seen 67%(n=12) of the work related and 17%(n=9) of the non-work related were due to psychological reasons, by referring to the OHS support, advice and signposting to EAP can be given at an early stage and hopefully prevent an absence from work. Musculoskeletal problems accounted for 31% of non-work related and 22% of work-related management concern referrals, identifying these issues before they result in an absence from work and allow early intervention which could include referral to physiotherapy. Although not all absences are work related, they can have an impact on work and the wellbeing of employees.

35. Routine physiotherapy clinics now run two days per week in the OHS at Annand House under contract with the OHS, the clinics are a combination of telephone assessments and face to face physiotherapy appointments, should following the physiotherapy initial assessment by telephone the physiotherapist deem this to be clinically required. At the time of preparing this report (06/10/21) the waiting time for an initial assessment is 6 working days. The OHS will continue to monitor this waiting time and report to this group.

Chart 8

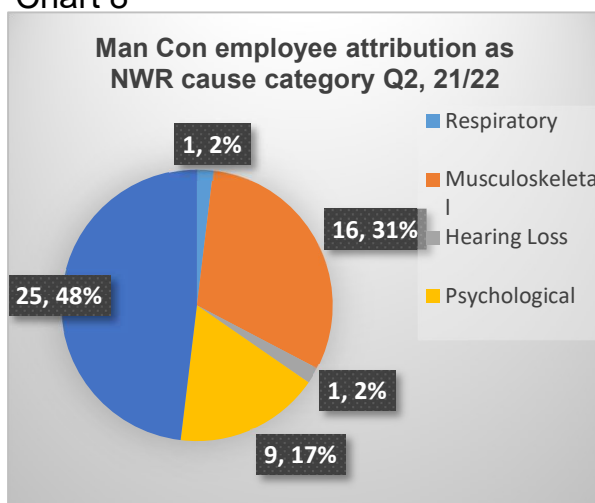
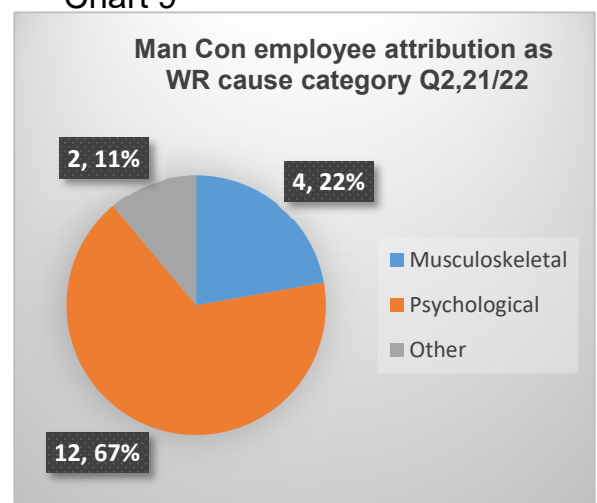


Chart 9



Support Services

36. During Quarter 2, the OHS provided the following additional support services. See Table 1.

Table 1

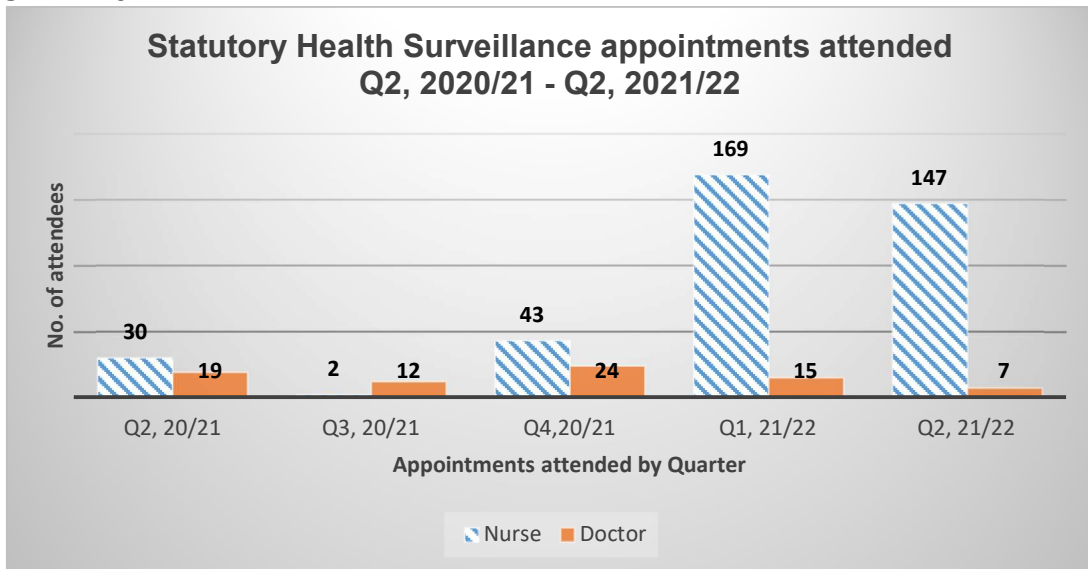
Additional Support services accessed via the OHS	A&HS	CYP S	NC C	RE G	Res	CM	Service not detailed	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2
								21/22	21/22	20/21	20/21	20/21
								Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Number of routine physiotherapy referrals	5	4	15	12	10	0	-	46	37	40	21	27
Number of routine physiotherapy sessions	25	16	32	29	24	0	-	126	121	111	109	110
Number of 'face to face' counselling referrals	0	0	0	1	0	0	-	1	1	0	0	0
Number of 'face to face' counselling sessions	0	5	0	0	0	0	-	5	0	0	0	0
Total number of calls to the EAP	15	14	18	11	23	0	33	114	144	128	135	121
Telephone EAP structured counselling cases	0	1	2	1	5	0	6	15	22	18	11	8
Telephone EAP structured counselling sessions	0	17	1	0	6	0	5	29	90	50	52	33

Health Surveillance

37. During the pandemic the Occupational Health Service (OHS) has continued to provide Statutory Health Surveillance programmes to employees in line with the guidelines issued by the HSE in relation to health surveillance. The HSE advice was reviewed on 30th September 2021 and is as follows:

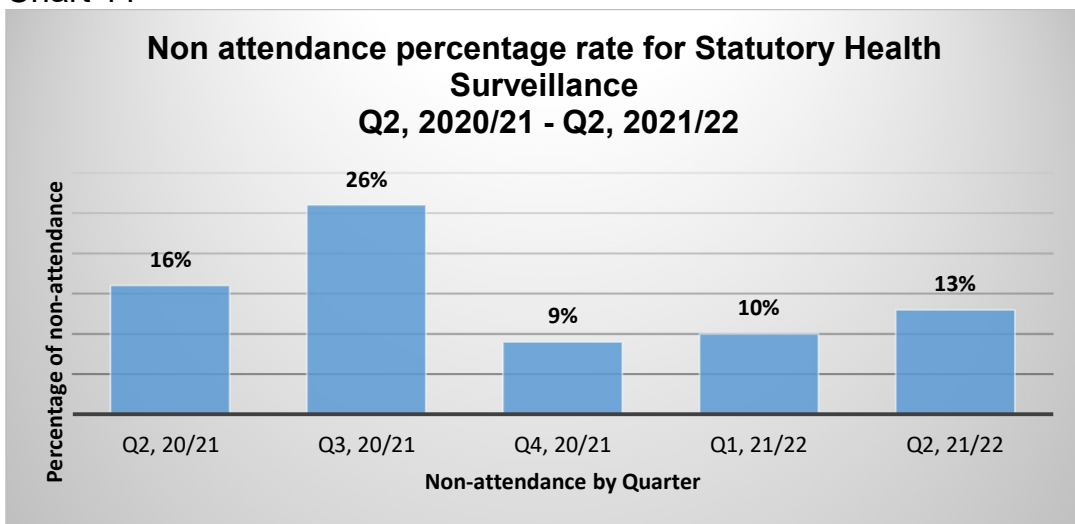
38. During Quarter 2, a total of 154 employees attended OHS appointments for routine statutory health surveillance, 147 with an Occupational Health Nurse and 7 with the Senior Occupational Health Physician.

Chart 10



39. During Quarter 2, 13% (n=22) employees failed to attend their appointment with the OHS in relation to statutory health surveillance. See Chart 11.

Chart 11



Immunisation

40. During Q2 despite the current pandemic the OHS have continued to provide Hepatitis B immunisation to employees whose job role has been identified via risk assessment as requiring an offer of Hepatitis B immunisation, administering a total of 5 vaccines.
41. During Q2 planning for DCC Flu campaign onsite offer to employees working with vulnerable clients was completed. Onsite clinics are

being delivered by OHS nurses in October and further 'mop-up' clinics in the OHS planned for November.

Covid Response

42. During the restrictions in place due to the coronavirus outbreak the OHS have continued to provide Occupational Health provision to DCC and external contracts. This has been done remotely when possible and in line with guidance from the HSE, DVLA, Faculty of Occupational Medicine and the NHS.
43. The OHS have provided advice to managers via management referral specifically relating to employees with health conditions and working during the covid pandemic, returning to the workplace and those who continue to suffer the effects of having covid. The OHS have also provided advice to managers and employees via email and telephone on a variety of covid related matters.

Open Water Safety

44. The City Safety Group and county wide Open Water Safety Group both met during the reporting period. Both groups were supported by multiagency attendance and reviewed plans for risk assessment and controls for open water across the county, including the city centre.
45. The City Safety Group made progress against the revised action plan which was agreed and implemented in Quarter one. A student induction week subgroup was formed and tasked with safety related planning for the induction week in early October 2021. Members of the task and finish group included representatives from the police, fire and rescue service, university, licensing and neighbourhood wardens.
46. Work commenced in relation to a safety related review of the new developments within the City centre and specifically the Milburngate development which will incorporate additional night-time economy areas. Contact was made with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to undertake a risk review of new development areas and also review previous risk assessments of the river corridor throughout the City centre.
47. The County wide open water safety group also met during Quarter 2. Information regarding a plan for a review of previous risk assessments that were undertaken in higher risk open water related locations across the county was considered along with incident updates and county wide water safety related intelligence. Work in relation to the summer water safety related campaigns also commenced and in particular the councils drying to be cool campaign was launched with partners via social media and local press related coverage and interviews.

Violence and Aggression – Potentially Violent Persons Register (PVPR)

48. At the close of Quarter two 2021/22, there were 47 live entries on the PVPR register. The 12 month rolling figures for PVPR live entries are as follows:

Year	Quarter	PVPR live entries
2020/21	3	62
2020/21	4	63
2021/22	1	55
2021/22	2	47
Number of Live Records		47
Number of Additions		8
Number of Removals		16
Number of Warning Letters Sent		0
Number of PVPR Appeals		0

49. Breakdown by service of PVPR views in the last quarter is as follows:

- CYPS - 25 viewed 38 times
- AHS - 41 viewed 208 times
- N&CC - 30 viewed 58 times
- REG - 70 viewed 134 times
- RES - 57 viewed 437 times
- Members - 4 viewed 14 times

50. The below tables detail the Corporate risk that may have an impact on Health and Safety at the end of October 2021.

Health and Safety Related Strategic Risks

Ref	Service	Risk	Treatment
1	AHS	R0685 - Failure/inability to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to delayed economic recovery and adverse impacts on employee resilience and the health and wellbeing of the wider community.	Treat
2	CYPS	0227 - Failure to protect a child from death or serious harm (where service failure is a factor or issue).	Treat
3	REG	R0490 - Serious injury or loss of life due to Safeguarding failure (Transport Service).	Existing controls are considered adequate.
4	AHS	R0562 - Failure to protect a vulnerable adult from death or serious harm (where service failure is a factor or issue).	Treat
5	NCC	R0565 - Breach of duty under Civil Contingencies Act by failing to prepare for, respond to and recover from a major incident, leading to a civil emergency.	Treat
6	RES	R0611 - Serious breach of Health and Safety Legislation.	Existing controls are considered adequate.
7	REG	R0614 - Potential serious injury or loss of life due to the Council failing to meet its statutory, regulatory and best practice responsibilities for property and land.	Treat
8	RES	R0681 - Potential violence and aggression towards members and employees from members of the public	Existing controls are considered adequate.
9	NCC	R0452 - Demand pressures on the Community Protection inspections and interventions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the UK exit from the EU may lead to an adverse impact on public health and safety in Co Durham.	Treat

Statistical Information

51. The H&S team in conjunction with service H&S providers continue to record, monitor and review work related accidents, incidents and ill health. This data is captured through internal reporting procedures and the Corporate H&S Accident Recording Database (HASARD). It is important to note that when setting future performance targets this data should be utilised.

Main implications

Legal

52. Compliance with statutory legislative requirements reduce risks of enforcement action and/or prosecution against the council or individuals. It will also assist in defending civil claims against the council from employees and members of the public, including service users.

Finance

53. Compliance with legislative requirements will reduce increased service delivery costs, financial penalties associated with H&S sentencing guidelines 2016 and successful civil claims against the council. Financial costs may be insured to some degree and uninsured in some cases, with poor outcomes possibly leading to increased insurance premiums. Financial implications also include staff absence associated with physical and mental ill health, staff training, retention, recruitment and productivity.

Staffing

54. In relation to impact on staffing due to employee absence from injury or ill health, attendance management, employee complaints and grievances, recruitment, selection and retention of employees.

Conclusions

55. The move towards the end of the Governments COVID roadmap in this quarter resulted in further significant support related work for services across the council. H&S and OHS services once again worked in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to successfully continue to ensure that council services were delivered as safely as possible.
56. Whilst concerning to see infection rates still being prevalent in schools, it was positive to note that cases associated with Council workplaces remained extremely low. The COVID educational oversight group remained effective in controlling outbreak situations

within schools and proactively dealing with pre-outbreak support and guidance.

57. The number of risk-based audits and inspections from the H&S service showed further signs of increasing across a range of services as Council activities continued to return to business as usual. It was positive to note that 70 proactive and reactive audits and inspections were undertaken with outcomes communicated and resolved with local service managers and reported into service H&S consultative forums.
58. Resumption of services and activities inevitably meant that accidents and incidents have steadily started to increase in 2021/22 with 597 being recorded in the first two quarters, compared to 801 for 2020/21 in total.
59. The council has again been proactive in its approach to mental health and wellbeing. The provision of a new employee health and wellbeing portal was another example of support and guidance in this area.

Other useful documents

- Occupational Health quarter two 2020/21 Report
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing statistical quarter two 2020/21 report

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications - Failure to comply with statutory legislative requirements may result in enforcement action and/or prosecution against the council or individuals. There are risks from civil claims against the council from employees and members of the public, including service users.

Finance – Failure to comply with statutory legislative requirements may result in enforcement action, including prosecution against the council or individuals. These enforcement actions may result in increased service delivery costs, financial penalties associated with H&S sentencing guidelines 2016 and successful civil claims against the council. Financial costs may be insured to some degree and uninsured in some cases, with poor outcomes possibly leading to increased insurance premiums.

Consultation - Service Grouping strategic managers and operational management staff have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - Equality Act compliance ensures consistency in what the council and its employees need to do to make their workplaces a fair environment and workplace reasonable adjustments are required.

Climate change- None

Human Rights - The right to a safe work environment, enshrined in Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, links with numerous human rights, including the right to physical and mental health and well-being and the right to life.

Crime and Disorder – None.

Staffing – Potential impact on staffing levels due to injury and ill health related absence, staff retention and replacement staff.

Accommodation – The report references H&S related risks associated with workplaces some of which may have impact on accommodation design and provision of safety systems and features.

Risk – This report considers physical and psychological risks to employees, service users and members of the public. Risks also relate to the failure to comply with statutory legislative requirements, which may result in civil action being brought against the council and enforcement action, including prosecution against the council or individuals. These enforcement actions may result in financial penalties, loss of reputation and reduction in business continuity.

Procurement – None