

Audit Committee

30 September 2022

2022/23 Quarter 1 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance Report



Report of Corporate Management Team

Report of Kevin Lough, Corporate Health and Safety Manager.

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update to Audit Committee on the council's Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) performance for Quarter one 2022/23.

Executive summary

2. There was further progression towards a living with COVID and despite this timely reminder of ongoing personal choices and responsibility were provided against a backdrop of increased rates at the end of quarter one. Plans were being made for offering a fourth booster vaccination for the over 50's and those at higher risk to ensure protection was provided ahead of the autumn and winter period.
3. There were 373 accidents and incidents during quarter one which was a decrease from the previous quarter (472). Of these there were 6 RIDDOR reportable over 7 days incidents and 1 RIDDOR specified injury related incident. Over all the figures indicate a return to pre COVID related statistics and accident rates.
4. There were 2 fire related incidents at Council premises during Quarter one. These were at West Rainton children's home and Willington Library. Whilst there were no injuries to employees or service users, these required emergency services intervention. In terms of enforcement activity there was two CDDFRS inspections of County Hall and Chester le street CE primary school, with actions being attributed to the latter to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation.
5. There were in excess of 100 H&S and fire safety audits and inspections of council premises and work activities during the quarter which resulted in an overall compliance rate of 94.31%. Once again, the majority of

noncompliance issues were of a low priority and almost 300 opportunities for improvement were identified during auditing as well as best practice being evidenced in many areas.

6. Progress was made in relation to a second employee working well survey. Consultation of the revised 2022 survey was undertaken and early indications were that a survey proposal could progress to CMT in August 2022 ahead of a proposed survey launch at the end of September 2022.
7. A review of automated external defibrillator devices was completed during the quarter. This resulted in several recommendations to improve workplace provision within the Council but also to support, facilitate and publicise their locations across the County and work in partnership with the Northeast Ambulance service to ensure accurate intelligence and information exists regarding their provision.

Recommendation(s)

8. Audit Committee is recommended to note and agree the contents of this report.

373

Accidents, incidents and near misses reported (1469 in 2021/22 and 760 in 2020/2021)

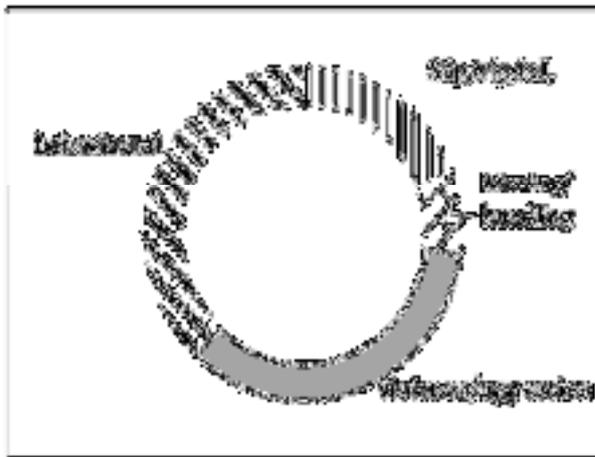


95%

Of all reported accidents are either no injury or near miss



Main recorded accident causes



1 employee reported injury and 6 over 7 days absence (RIDDOR injuries)

143 employees attended safety health surveillance



100% of employees at work identified as health and safety risk



20 psychological work-related incidents in Q1 2023
- 100 in 2022/23
- 107 in 2021/22

2 fire related incidents



A complete inspections of council premises



687 pre-employment/ placement assessments with OHS

1

Enforcement related action or advice from HSE/CDDFRS following inspections and audit activity

607 health consultations in OHS

85 physiotherapy sessions attended

52 EAP online counselling/ CBT sessions

126 calls to EAP

Background

- 1 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.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025

- 2 A revised Health, Safety and Wellbeing strategy for 2022-2025 has been consulted upon and presented to CMT on 3 August 2022. A series of communications promoting the strategy will be undertaken to ensure that service groupings are aware of the aims and objectives and are able to develop localised service action plans linked to these.
- 3 This post COVID strategy replaces the previous 2017 version and focuses on six key areas which are control, compliance, culture, cooperation, competence, and communication. A series of key milestones for each of the indicators has been attributed and will be implemented and monitored through the corporate HSWSG group.

COVID 19 H&S Update

- 4 During Quarter one, government and UKHSA guidance evolved further to reflect living safely with respiratory infections, including coronavirus (COVID-19) and continued to focus on personal choices and safe behaviours.
- 5 This guidance has been reflected in council workplaces and continues to be informative and guide employees to learn to live safely with coronavirus (COVID-19), and what actions can continue to be taken to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others. These actions will also help to reduce workplace and community transmission of other respiratory infections, such as flu, which can spread easily and may cause serious illness in some people.
- 6 During the first quarter 2022 there was an upturn in order and demand for lateral flow testing kits, moving towards the end of the free provision. Many employees therefore would not be able to take a test when symptomatic and corporate guidance was issued to ensure that employees remained aware of symptoms of COVID and respiratory diseases and encouraged to take actions such as working remotely wherever possible to protect others from the risk of infection.

- 7 There was evidence nationally and locally that there were increased numbers of COVID related infections occurring and new variants emerging. Rates were much higher than public health colleagues were expecting approaching the summer months. Increasing case rates were resulting in higher hospital admission despite the vaccination programme. Planning was being put in place to offer everyone aged 50 and those who are more vulnerable to be a COVID-19 booster and a flu jab this autumn under plans to increase protection against respiratory viruses ahead of winter.
- 8 Reviews of workplace posters, information, provision of cleaning equipment and hand sanitiser were undertaken during the quarter to ensure that necessary equipment and information remained in place, particularly as there was an increase in COVID related cases being reported at the end of the quarter and into quarter two.

Consultation/Communication

- 9 Trade Union H&S representatives continue to actively participate in the corporate and service specific H&S meetings. Each service grouping has an established H&S forum that meets on a regular basis. The H&S team continue to undertake, on a priority basis, a range of joint audit and inspection programmes in conjunction with trade union H&S representatives.
- 10 A schools trade union consultation meeting continues to be held on a monthly basis. This meeting is attended by H&S representatives along with officers from CYPS and HR.

Audits and Inspections

- 11 There were a total of 111 audits and inspections undertaken by the H&S team during quarter one.

Chart 1 – Audit and Inspection Activity for Quarter 1.



- 12 From the audits undertaken the following headline percentage compliance scores can be determined for each area:

Table 1 Compliance scores Q1 2022/23.

TITLE	INSPECTIONS	SCORE (%)
	Total	Average
AHS General Audit 2022	2	97.37%
Care Connect (CC) / CCTV Works Audit	1	80.56%
Civil Engineering and Construction Sites	20	88.95%
Clean & Green (General)	4	93.75%
CYPS General Audit 2022	5	92.06%
Extra Care Audit 2022	3	99.02%
Fire Safety Audit	2	97.67%
Refuse and Recycling	16	93.13%
School Audits	50	94.90%
Sub Depot	1	97.37%
Waste Transfer Stations	2	90.40%

Q3 2021/22

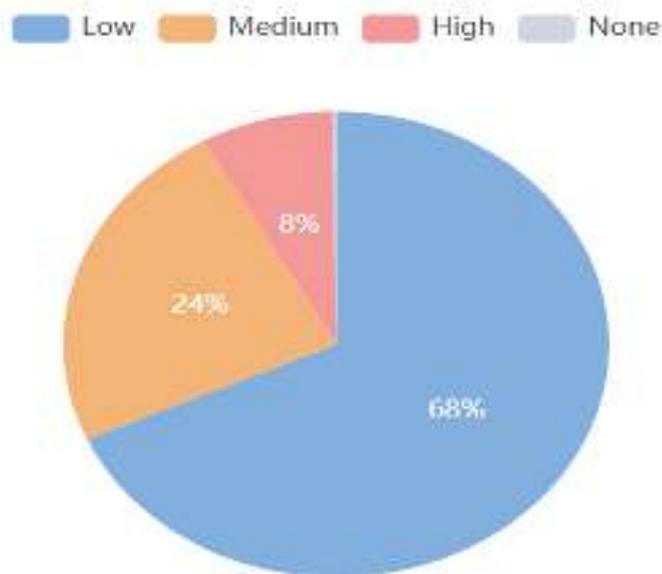
Audit and Inspection Area	Compliance Score %
DCC Fire Safety Audit	95.03
Civil Engineering and Construction Sites	85.56
CYPS - Schools Audit/COVID Audit	96.98
Culture and Sport	89.85
Refuse and Recycling	96.83
NACC Services/Depot	91.81

Q4 2021/22

Audit and Inspection Area	Compliance Score %
Civil Engineering and Construction Sites	85.80%
Culture and Sport- leisure	95.66%
DCC Fire Safety Audit	94.59%
DCC Schools audits	95.44%
Waste Transfer Stations	98.51%

- 13 From the compliance scoring it must be noted that the majority of non-compliance related issues identified were low to medium low as per below chart 2.

Chart 2 Compliance Actions by Priority



Site	High Priority Actions
BFM Construction sites	8
Ferryhill Station Primary	5
Highways Operational	4
Castleside Primary	4
Woodhouse Community Primary School	2
Seaham Trinity Primary	2
Kelloe Primary	1
West Cornforth Primary	1
South Hetton Primary	1
The Oaks secondary school	2
St Cuthbert's primary	1
Framwellgate Moor children's home	1
Leisure Services	1

Fire Incidents

- 14 There were two fire related incidents at Council premises or staffed premises during Quarter one. These were at West Rainton Children's Home and Willington Library.

West Rainton Children's Home

- 15 It was reported that at approximately 22:17 hours on 22 April 2022 a young person returned to the home after some free time and went to his bedroom and set two fires within it. The Police and Fire Service were called, the Fire Service sent two appliances to the home and the fire

was extinguished quickly. There was minimal damage to the property and the house was successfully evacuated, no injuries were reported to the staff or other young person in the home at the time. The home was able to resume operational duties shortly after the incident.

- 16 Following the incident, the young person was arrested and subsequently charged with arson and is awaiting to go to court. The young person has also been moved to a more suitable placement out of the County and no further incidents have been reported at this premises.

Willington Library

- 17 At approximately 17:45 hours on 29 April 2022 a member of the public contacted the Police that youths were setting deliberate fires at the rear of the library premises. The CCTV footage from the library shows the youth turning up with their own fuel believed to be leaflets from the nearby Doctors surgery and setting fire to them in the grounds. The Police arrived at 18:35 hours however the youths had dispersed by this time.
- 18 The following day library staff liaised with the local PCSO for the area and CCTV footage was taken with the aim of identifying the youths involved. Fortunately, there was no damage to the building from this incident and staff remain vigilant with regards to anti-social behaviour as this is the second time in a few months where youths have been congregating at the rear of the library and engaging in anti-social behaviour. Police enquiries are ongoing with regards to identifying the youths.

Fire Inspections – County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

- 19 There were two Fire and Rescue Service inspection of Council premises during Quarter one. These were at County Hall Durham and Chester-le – Street CE Primary School. The outcome of the inspection of County Hall was that the premises were deemed to be broadly compliant with fire safety legislation. At Chester - le - Street CE Primary School it was deemed that there were minor deficiencies of legislation. This related to emergency lighting and checking the operation of final exit doors fitted with magnetic locks. The Senior H&S (fire) advisor has visited the school and given appropriate advice and liaised with the Fire Service regarding this matter to resolve.

Employee Health and Wellbeing

- 20 The employee better health at work group, chaired by Corporate Director Adult and Health Services, met again during this quarter, 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 The better health at work group reviewed the proposed employee working well survey content and survey timescales prior to submission to CMT in August 2022 for final approval. Work undertaken to provide a draft survey to the group has been approved and subject to some final feedback being incorporated, this piece of work will be presented to CMT as scheduled.
- 22 Planning for the staff flu vaccination programme for 2022/2023 has also commenced during the quarter. Ahead of a proposed launch in September, a range of communications will be launched as per previous years. JCVI guidance is awaited on the possibility of a joint flu and COVID vaccination, however this could be 1-2 years away still depending on research and testing developments.
- 23 Further work continues regarding improving menopause related awareness and support. Options to sign the Menopause Workplace Pledge are being considered. Space has been made on the employee wellbeing portal for menopause. Menopause awareness day on 18 October 2022 will be promoted via the better health at work group. Consideration is also being given to incorporating menopause awareness training as mandatory as part of induction training for new and existing employees.
- 24 Following the introduction of health advocates and anti-stigma ambassadors for mental health, a review of the advocates network is being undertaken to ensure that post COVID arrangements remain robust in terms of organisational and geographical coverage for workplace support and awareness activities.

Open Water Safety

- 25 The City Safety Group and county wide Open Water Safety Group both met during the reporting period. Both groups were supported by multi agency attendance and reviewed plans for risk assessment and controls for open water across the county, including the city centre.
- 26 The City Safety Group made further progress against its action plan which was agreed in 2020. Action owners were identified in relation to

the independent assessment of the city centre river corridor by RoSPA and monitoring of recommendations progress will be undertaken to ensure delivery.

- 27 The County wide open water safety group also met during Quarter one to review work undertaken across the County in 2021 and plan for future activities and interventions in 2022. Further interventions, particularly regarding education and awareness for young people in the Chester-Le-Street riverside complex area were delivered during this quarter and led by APP coordinators in that area as part of a multi-agency approach. Several schools accommodated water safety assemblies in Chester-Le-Street and feedback on delivery of these educational activities was extremely positive. Public rescue throw line training was also undertaken for riverside park employees and friends of the riverside group members by emergency services. There were also further improvements to the riverside park in terms of lost and found children designated location points and repairs to fencing and footpaths.
- 28 Reassessments of previous open water safety risk assessments have been completed during this quarter for the higher risk locations across the county to ensure that public safety control measures are in place as we approach increased periods of footfall and seasonal warmer weather.
- 29 Work has been undertaken in Shotton to address regular anti-social behaviour that has been affecting provision of public rescue equipment at Shotton pond. Local youths have, over a prolonged period of time, been deliberately setting fire to life rings installed at the pond. Clean and green colleagues have been replacing this equipment on an ongoing basis for a number of years. A life ring was deployed by a 12-year-old boy to assist in saving a man at this location in 2017 and therefore it has been essential that damaged equipment has been replaced. Such has been the frequency of damage, a decision has been taken to install alternative vandal resistant equipment in the form of throw lines which are secured within metal cabinets, in order to prevent arson attacks. These will be installed in September 2022 and users of the equipment will be required to call 999 and ask for the fire and rescue service to provide a code to gain entry and access to the lifesaving equipment. It is hoped that this approach will reduce the risks of life saving equipment not being available and reduce replacement costs for damaged life rings that have been incurred during the last few years. Communications have been issued regarding this with the AAP coordinators and with local councillors.

Occupational Health

- 30 During Quarter 1, 317 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 appointments attended in Q1 this year has decreased from the Q1, 2021/22, a decrease of 15 referrals which represents a 4% decrease.

Chart 3

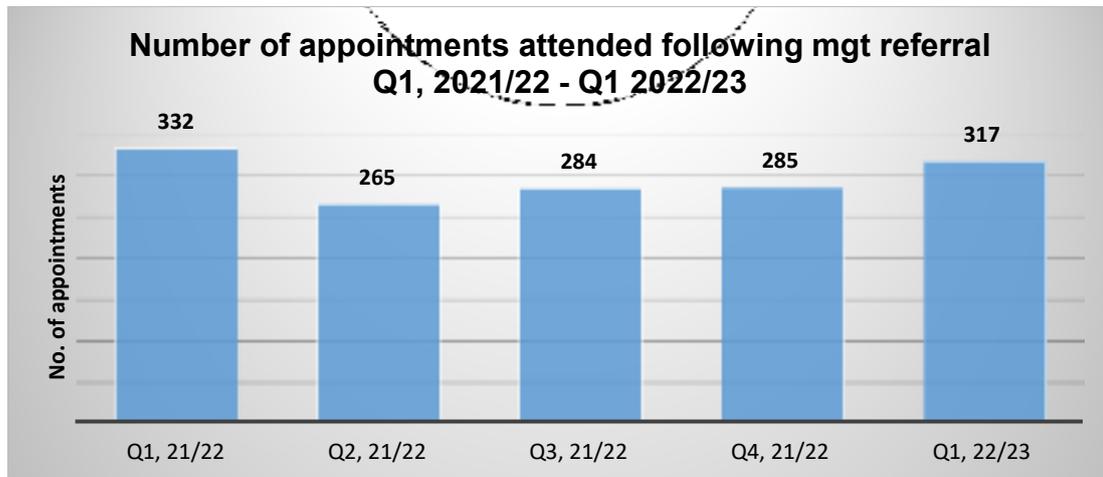
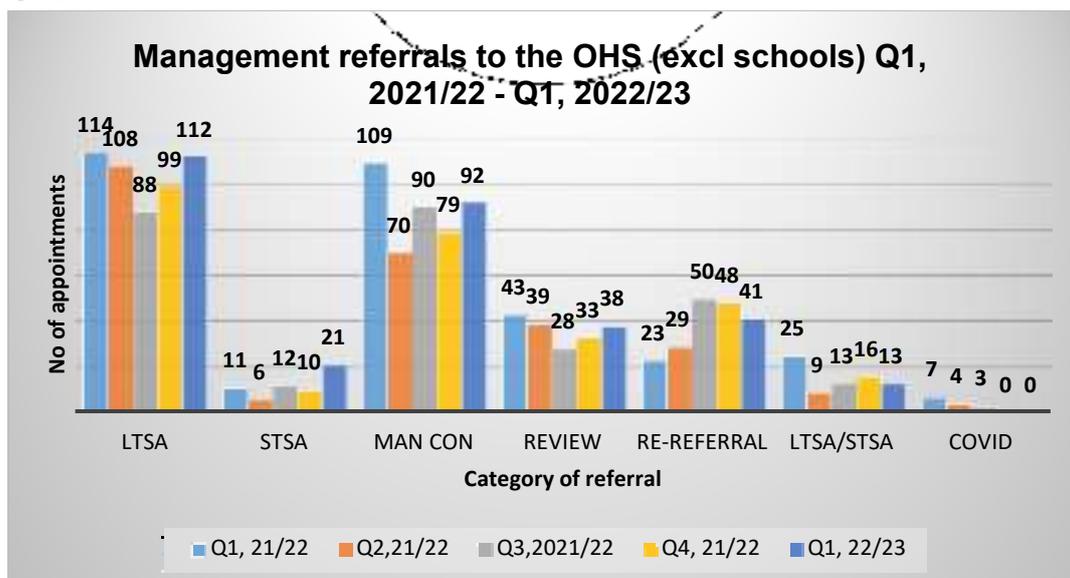


Chart 2 shows the categorisation of management referral appointments attended.

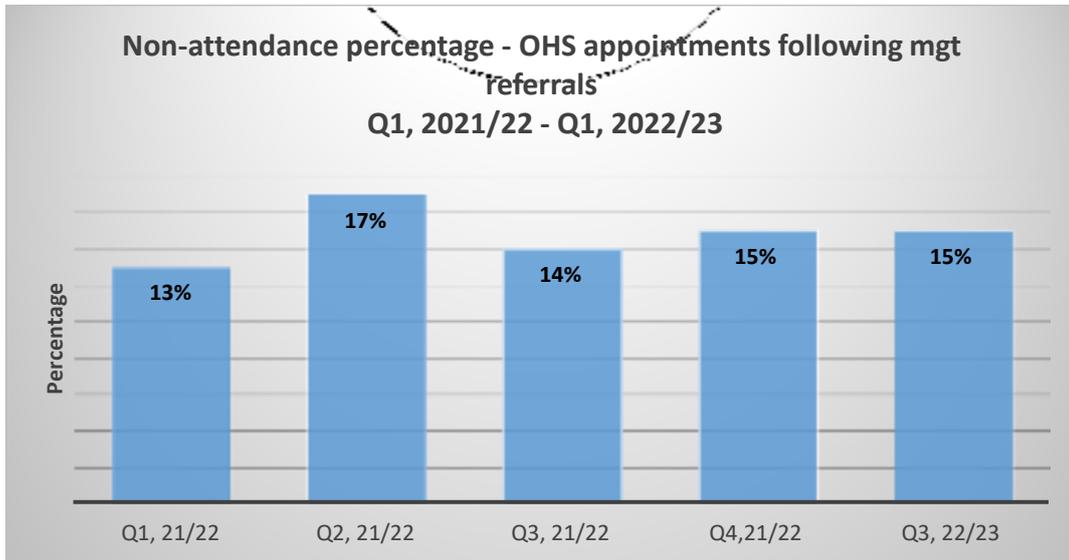
Chart 4



Management Referrals - Non Attendance

- 31 During Q1, 58 employees did not attend their allocated appointment following management referral. This represents a 15% non-attendance rate. See Chart 5.

Chart 5



Management Referrals – Employee Attribution

- 32 During Quarter 1, 112 employees were seen for LTSA of which 20% (n=22) stated to the OHS that they consider the underlying cause to be due to work related factors. Of the 22 employees, 94% (n=21) identified this was due to 'psychological' reasons and 5% (n=1) identified as 'musculoskeletal' See Charts 6-9.
- 33 Chart 6 shows the cause of absence categories for non-work related LTSA seen in the OHS, 17% (n=15) were due to psychological reasons; 33% (n=29) were due to musculoskeletal problems; 5% (n=5) was due to respiratory problems; 2% (n=2) were due to hearing problems; 5% (n=5) were due to Covid and 38% (n=34) was due to other.

Chart 6

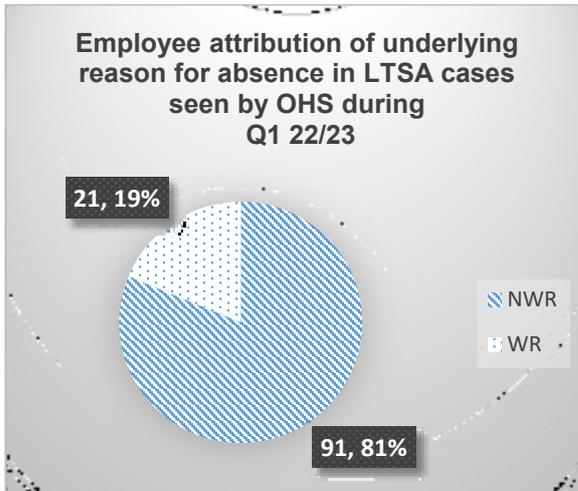


Chart 7

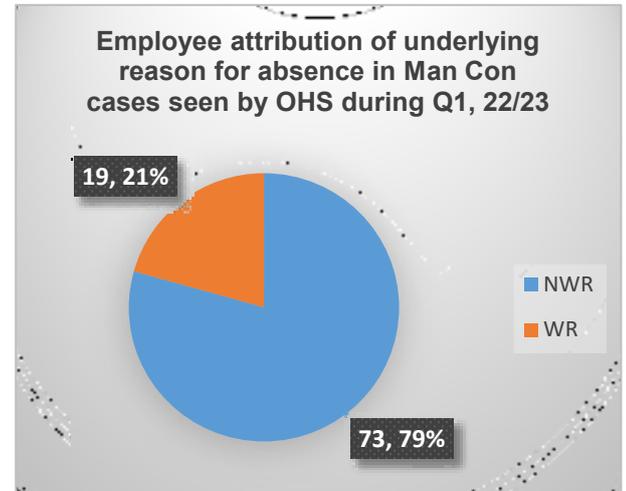


Chart 8

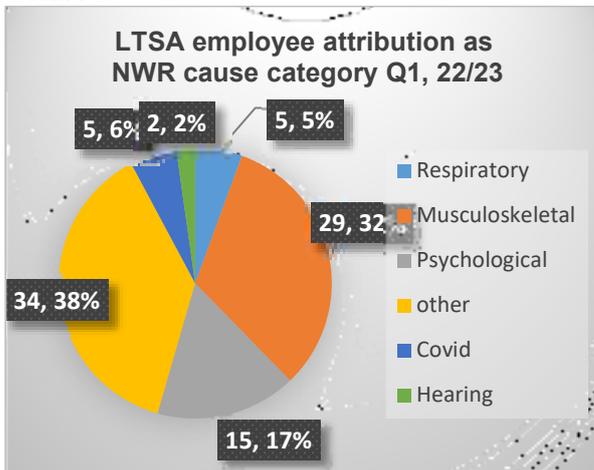
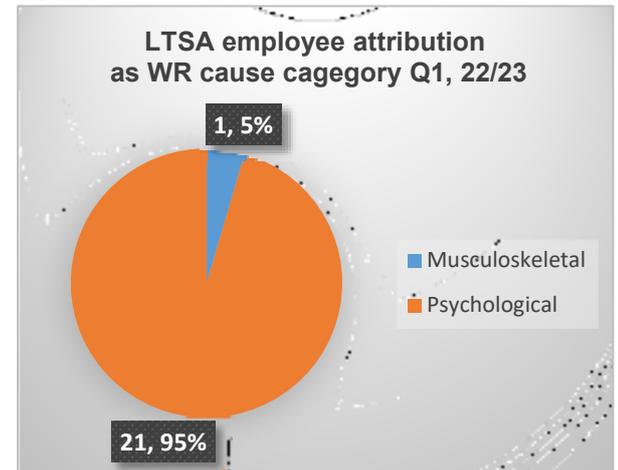


Chart 9



- 34 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.
- 35 During Q1, 92 employees were seen as a management concern, 15% (n=12) of these referrals stated to the OHS that they consider the underlying cause to be due to work related factors. Of the 92 employees seen 58% (n=11) of the work related and 10% (n=7) 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 26% of non-work related and 32% 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.

- 36 Further analysis of the data relating to management concern referrals identified that 2% of the LTSA referrals received in Q1 were seen in the previous 12 months as a management concern referral.

Chart 10

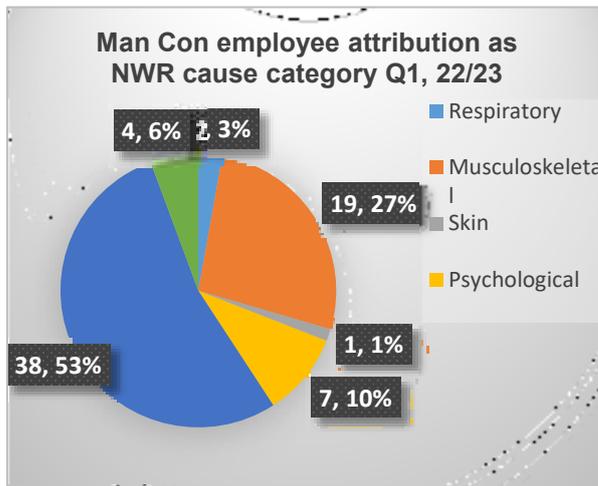
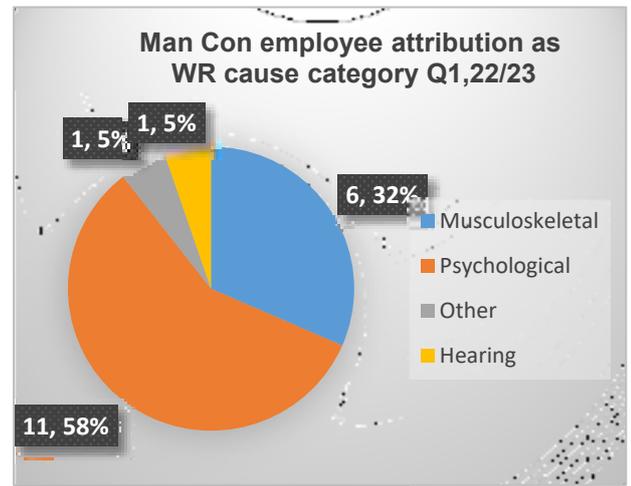


Chart 11



Support Services

- 37 During Quarter 1, the OHS provided the following additional support services. See Table 1.

Table 1

Additional Support services accessed via the OHS	A&HS	CYPS	NCC	REG	Res	Cex	Service not detailed	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1
								22/23	21/22	21/22	21/22	21/22
								Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Number of routine physiotherapy referrals	6	25	14	12	8	0	-	65	57	59	46	37
Number of routine physiotherapy sessions	35	54	47	52	26	0	-	214	188	176	126	121
Number of 'face to face' counselling referrals	0	3	1	2	0	0	-	6	2	0	1	1
Number of 'face to face' counselling sessions	0	1	0	12	0	0	-	13	0	0	5	0
Total number of calls to the EAP	11	25	5	0	25	0	26	92	159	125	114	144

Telephone EAP structured counselling cases	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	77	15	22
Telephone EAP structured counselling sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62	29	90
Employees referred to online counselling	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	5	5	5	3	7
Online Counselling Sessions	2	1	1	0	1	0	2	7	9	10	93	25
Employees referred to online CBT	0	11	6	0	2	0	15	32	9	15	0	0
Online CBT sessions	9	2	0	0	6	0	11	22	72	46	0	0

Physiotherapy

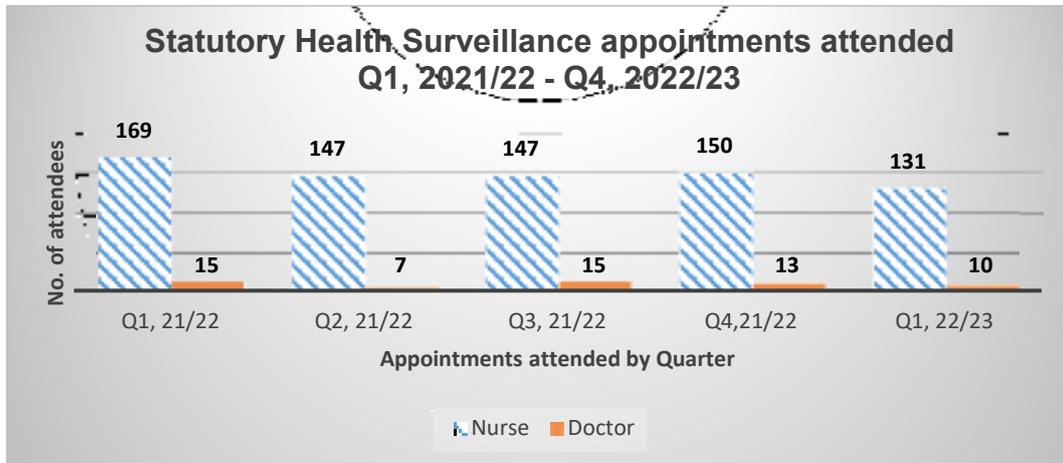
- 38 Routine physiotherapy clinics operate two days per week in the OHS at Annand House under contract with the OHS, the clinics are a combination of telephone assessments and face to face physiotherapy appointments, should following the physiotherapy initial assessment by telephone the physiotherapist deem this to be clinically required.
- 39 Q1 data provided by the contracted service has identified that 40% of the referrals for physiotherapy were related to work, it was also reported that 3 of the referrals were reported by the employee to be following a work accident. The 3 referrals reported this quarter were from different services therefore no potential hotspots were identified. At the time of preparing this report (26/7/22) the waiting time for an initial assessment is 13 working days. The OHS will continue to monitor this waiting time and report to this group.

Health Surveillance

- 40 The OHS continues to provide statutory health surveillance programmes to employees in line with HSE guidelines. The OHS has addressed the backlog of health surveillance created by the pandemic and face to face health surveillance is up to date with the exception of one depot that requires an onsite clinic and is currently not suitable due to building work. Some health surveillance clinics have been carried out on site to minimise the effect on service delivery.
- 41 During Quarter 1, a total of 141 employees attended OHS appointments for routine statutory health surveillance, 131 with an

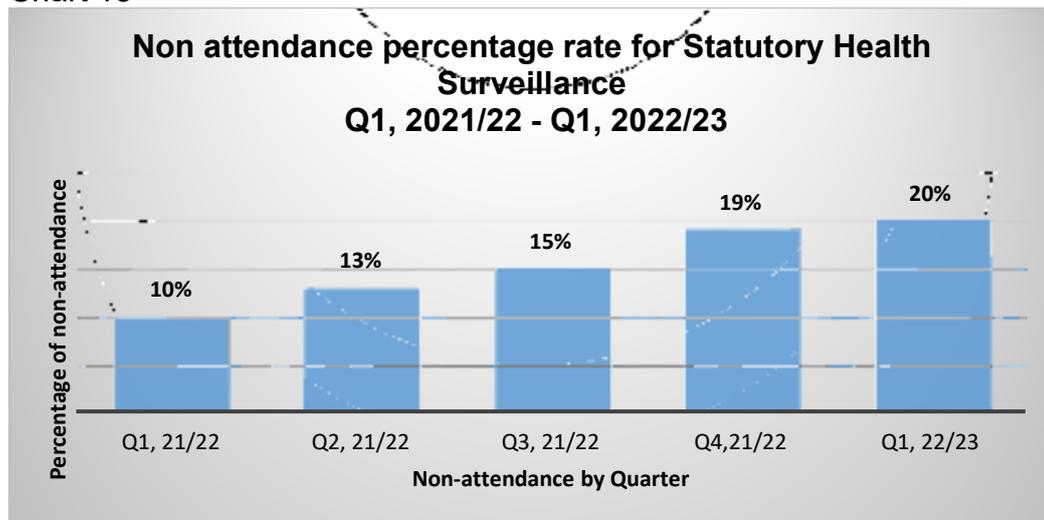
Occupational Health Nurse and 10 with the Senior Occupational Health Physician.

Chart 12



- 42 During Quarter 1, 20% (n=36) employees failed to attend their appointment with the OHS in relation to statutory health surveillance. See Chart 13.

Chart 13



Welding

- 43 New guidance was published by the Health and Safety Executive in February 2020 regarding welding operations, this has led to a DCC Health and Safety Service driven project to revisit risk assessments for areas of the Council undertaking welding activities. The OHS have attended visits to a number of work sites to undertake walkthrough surveys, with a Health and Safety Officer. Biological monitoring is being arranged and a schedule of respiratory health surveillance for those employees identified by the risk assessment is to be arranged.

Immunisation

- 44 During Q1 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 25 vaccines.
- 45 During Q1 there were 3 inoculation incidents, 2 involving spitting into the eye by a client and 1 human bite. Appropriate action was taken to support the employees involved including immunisation, follow up blood tests, advice and signposting to the EAP. Planning for the staff flu vaccination programme for 2022/2023 has also commenced.

Review of Automated External Defibrillators (AED's)

- 46 A review of AED's was undertaken to ensure that the Council had adequate arrangements in place across its workplaces and was also supportive of third-party provision within communities and private sector workplaces.
- 47 Whilst the Council has a comprehensive offer in terms of provision of AEDs in its workplaces the review resulted in a number of recommendations in relation improving awareness, access and provision, not only in Council workplaces but communities also. A summary of recommendations include:
- Revision of current AED Council workplace policy.
 - Providing NEAS on an ongoing basis with information and intelligence regarding locations of AED's across the County.
 - Active promotion of the NEAS 'circuit' scheme on the Council public facing website on a designated page which is easily identifiable and accessible.
 - The Council, in a public health capacity, should undertake further promotion and awareness of CPR, how to undertake this and where to access formal training. This could be supplemented by Council website videos and visual aids to improve general untrained awareness.
 - The Council website should also promote the British Heart Foundation 'find a defib' app when it is launched in late 2022.
 - The Council, as a public health authority for the County, should work with and support NEAS, to engage and establish what provision of AED's are provided in the private and voluntary sectors and encourage registration of devices with NEAS.
 - The Council should work with NEAS to support provision of AED's in areas of foreseeable health risk and deprivation where SCA's related

risks are statistically higher, utilising local cardiac arrest data as appropriate.

- The Council should consider what funding is available to supplement NEAS funding initiatives and further incentivise AED's across the county.
- The Council should request that NEAS promote both CPAD and non CPAD devices across the county and display these on the circuit system. This would provide residents with a clear indication of where there are AED's and if they have 24/7 accessibility or restricted accessibility such as during normal business hours.
- The Council should review its current landlord approval policy and process for third party requests for installing CPAD on council buildings to ensure that there remains a balance of clear delineation of liabilities and providing improved access to AED's for the public.
- Where Council premises are closed or operational use reduced, checks should be undertaken to ensure that if AED's are present and will be no longer available that there remains alternative provision in that locality area.
- The Councils Education service should undertake schools related awareness and promotion of DfE offer of funding. This should also include the requirement for schools to check with their insurance provider before choosing to locate an AED in a publicly accessible location.
- Launch awareness campaign within Schools to consider purchasing AED's as part of their first aid risk assessment, as with other Council locations, in particular those schools where fitness equipment has been provided and is accessible to the public and where the premise is used outside of curriculum time for public fitness activities.
- Where schools are intending to install a community access device then consideration should be given to its location as when schools perimeters are secured this will result in a restriction to the device if situation within secure school grounds.
- A further review of locations and accessibility of AED's should be undertaken once the additional intelligence referenced in this report has been provided to NEAS and populated to supplement existing information. Work can then be focused on any communities without known AED availability and funding can be identified and allocated to such areas for provision.

Violence and Aggression – Potentially Violent Persons Register (PVPR)

- 48 At the close of Quarter one 2022/23, there were 85 live entries on the PVPR register. The 12 month rolling figures for PVPR live entries are as follows:

Year		Quarter	PVPR live entries
2021/22		2	47
2021/22		3	66
2021/22		4	75
2022/23		1	85
Number of Live Records			85
Number of Additions			22
Number of Removals			12
Number of Warning Letters Sent			12
Number of PVPR Appeals			1

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

- CYPS - 41 viewed 58 times
- AHS - 39 viewed 57 times
- N&CC - 37 viewed 67 times
- REG - 97 viewed 207 times
- RES - 74 viewed 385 times
- Members - 1 viewed 4 times

Corporate risks that may have an impact on Health and Safety on 5 August 2022

50 The below tables detail the corporate risk that may have an impact on Health and Safety at the end of July 2022.

Health and Safety Related Strategic Risks

Ref	Service	Risk	Treatment
1	CYPS	Failure to protect a child from death or serious harm (where service failure is a factor or issue).	Treat
2	REG	Serious injury or loss of life due to Safeguarding failure (Transport Service).	The current controls are considered adequate.

3	AHS	Failure to protect a vulnerable adult from death or serious harm (where service failure is a factor or issue).	Treat
4	NCC	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
5	RES	Serious breach of Health and Safety Legislation	The current controls are considered adequate.
6	REG	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
7	RES	Potential violence and aggression towards members and employees from members of the public	The current controls are considered adequate.
8	NCC	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
9	NCC	Potential impacts of the spread of Ash Dieback Disease on the environment, public safety, and Council finances.	Treat

51 One risk has been closed, *“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”*.

52 This risk has been closed following a decision by Corporate Management Team to discontinue the Covid risk register and for significant, residual Covid risks to be managed through existing business as usual processes. This followed the Government’s publication, in February 2022, of the Spring Plan: Living with Covid, which removed all remaining domestic restrictions, while encouraging safer behaviours through public health advice.

53 One risk has been added, *“Potential impacts of the spread of **Ash Dieback Disease** on the environment, public safety, and Council finances”*.

- 54 Ash dieback is a fungal disease, first found in the UK 20 years ago, particularly in the south, and can now be found across County Durham. It has the potential to cause significant damage to the County's ash population, with implications for woodland biodiversity and ecology, landscape and townscape character. There are also potential public safety implications and additional resources will be required to manage trees and woodlands, and to prevent accidents.

Statistical Information

- 55 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

- 56 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

- 57 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

- 58 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

- 59 Whilst a return to business as usual continues it was still appropriate to remind employees of the ongoing risks regarding COVID, support the up-and-coming autumn and winter vaccination programme and retain workplace control measures such as sanitiser, cleaning equipment and ventilation guidance.
- 60 Accident statistics indicate that rates continue to return to pre pandemic levels, with a total of 373 accidents during this quarter. There was only 1 RIDDOR specified injury and 6 over RIDDOR 7-day related incidents which are below average for a quarter.
- 61 Whilst concerning to see COVID infection rates increasing across the county and several workplace outbreak control teams being put in place, the health impacts were significantly less and reiteration of the importance of COVID controls was a proportionate and appropriate approach.
- 62 The continued audit and inspection activity by the H&S team continues to provide opportunities for improvement in relation to the working practices and procedures, with almost 300 flagged items being identified during the quarter. The majority of items identified continue to be low priority which is positive.
- 63 Another fire related incident reported during this quarter at Willington library continues with a long running causation theme of anti-social behaviour. The H&S service continue to work with CDDFRS and police neighbourhood teams to address issues and take action where appropriate against individuals.
- 64 The development of a revised employee working well survey provides the Council with an excellent opportunity to gain insight into employees views on a range of key issues regarding workplaces, working practices and working conditions across the organisation. This is timely given the volume of organisational change that has occurred pre and post pandemic.
- 65 The review of AEDs from a Council workplace and general public health perspective has resulted in some very useful recommendations which will result in improved provision, awareness and accessibility across the County and ensuring that partnership working with NEAS continues.

Other useful documents

- Occupational Health Quarter one 2022/23 Report
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing statistical Quarter one 2022/23 report

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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