



**Report for:                    Employees’  
   Consultative Forum**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	19 September 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Information Report</b> - Annual Health and Safety Report for 2023-2024
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Stacy Bailey, Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Wards affected:</b>	N/A
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix 1 – Analysis Report for Accidents and Incidents Q1 to Q 4 (Apr 23 – Mar 24) Appendix 2 – Accident/Incidents Trends Appendix 3 – H&S Strategy 2022-2025 and Corporate H&S Performance Plan 2023-2024 Appendix 4 – Employee Assistance Programme Utilisation Data (March 23 – February 24)

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report details the annual review of H&S performance to enable the Council to determine its effectiveness in managing risk and address any shortcomings.

### **Recommendations:**

The Forum is requested to:

1. Note the Accidents and Incidents report for information
2. Note the H&S Strategy and Corporate H&S Plan as set out in Appendix 3
3. Note the information on Employee Assistance Programme

**Reason:** To update the Forum on the Annual Health and Safety report.

## **Section 2 – Report**

This report summarises the Council's health and safety (H&S) performance for the year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, providing an update of activities and giving information on outcome measures – training, audits and accidents. This report also includes the:

- 2022/25 H&S Strategy
- 2023/24 Corporate H&S Performance Plan

### **Executive Summary**

2.1. The Corporate H&S Service has continued to develop the H&S management system and provide support and guidance across the organisation.

2.2. The key work streams undertaken by the H&S team have been:

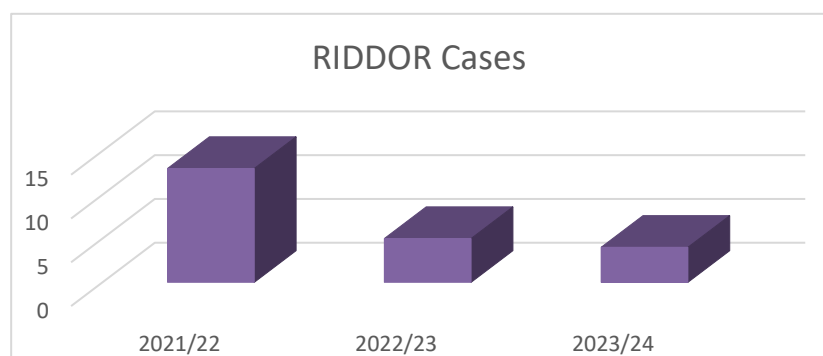
- The annual review of the Corporate H&S Policy
- Reviewed a number of H&S policy arrangements and codes of practice
- Provision of H&S support, advice and guidance across resources, place, people directorates and in schools.
- Reviewed and amended the H&S handbook.
- Delivery of H&S management system refresher training by the H&S team.
  - 604 staff have completed the Evotix Assure H&S management system refresher training/relaunch
  - 9 staff have attended Display Screen Equipment hub4 management portal refresher training on adding 'users', launching and following up issues and making reasonable adjustments.

- Inspections, audits, site visits, monitoring and investigation of accidents/incidents
  - 8 H&S audits were undertaken in 23/24 (all children centres), limited due to resource issues, there were 55 in the two-years previous.
  - Only 2 team management self-audits were undertaken 23/24, 12 in the 2 years previously.
  - 14 school audits were completed.
  - As 19 schools and 1 children centre were audited in 2022/23 they will be audited next in 2024/25 - as these schools were deemed compliant, leading to the decision to conduct the audit after 2 years.
  - Audit actions are articulated on to Evotix Assure
  
- Risk Assessments
  - 370 risk assessments on SHE Assure, 84% (309) have no review date set.
  - 50% the 370 are over 1 year old, a default review period unless otherwise specified.
  - Of the remaining 61 assessments (with review dates) 60% (37) are overdue for review.
  - Arguably we have an overdue review run rate of 63%.

2.3. HR continues to manage the occupational health (OH) service and employee assistance programme (EAP), due to direct links with employment and sickness.

2.4. Key incident indicators are as follows:

- No enforcement action from the HSE.
- There has been a 52% increase in the number (558) of accidents/incidents reported in comparison with the previous year. This increase could be attributed to the Evotix Assure relaunch and working with key stakeholders to create a positive Health and Safety Culture.
  - There has been a decrease to 4 in the number of RIDDOR incidents



- For maintained schools who buy into the H&S SLA, The H&S team has been working in partnership with the Head Teachers and promoting continuous improvement in the performance of each school's H&S arrangements. The audits program is key for promoting continuous improvement. Additionally, we are actively requesting all other non SLA maintained schools to provide compliance data.
- The accident/incident data for SLA maintained schools is generated from the incident reports on Evotix Assure system.

## **Improvement Plan**

- 2.5. Following the completion of an external audit in March 2016, a series of actions were approved by the Corporate Strategic Board and the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee (GARMSC) culminating in a three-year H&S strategy document including an annual corporate H&S performance plan setting out the aims and objectives for the Council to meet the strategy.
- 2.6. The action plan is monitored quarterly by the Corporate Health & Safety Board. The focus is on transparency and ensuring all leaders and staff are aware of their responsibilities and that effective governance is in place.
- 2.7. The Corporate Health & Safety Policy for the Council has been reviewed and consulted on, with feedback from the trade unions incorporated. At the time of writing, the policy is being prepared for the Managing Director to sign.
- 2.8. High priority will be placed on outstanding actions from the Corporate Health & Safety Performance Action Plan, ensuring they are implemented. In particular:
  - Management self-audits
  - General H&S service led audits corporately and for maintained schools
  - Introduction to incident investigation course for first line managers
  - Promote incident reporting

## **H&S Policy and Guidance**

- 2.9. A review of H&S, policy, arrangements and codes of practice was undertaken this year, and are now in the consultation stage with stake holders. This is to ensure London Borough of Harrow meets its obligations under the H&S at Work Act (HASAWA)1974.
- 2.10. The following documents have been reviewed and are now in the consultation stages
  - Asbestos policy
  - Health & Safety policy
  - Display Screen Equipment Code of Practice
  - Health & Safety Performance Plan

- Health & Safety Handbook
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan Guidance

## **H&S Groups**

2.11. Head of Corporate Health & Safety meets with stakeholders and unions regularly to discuss a variety of health, safety and welfare issues. The Corporate H&S Board (CHSB) has continued to hold meetings both virtually and in person to discuss and track a variety of issues arising.

## **Safety Culture**

2.12. Safety Circle meetings have now restarted in some areas. Reminders have been sent to Directorates and the H&S Team is keen to further engage with these meetings through the period 2024-2025 as the focus needs to shift from reactive to anyone having any issues they want to raise, at a proactive monitoring forum.

2.13. The updated H&S handbook is available to all staff, including those within schools. A copy of the handbook can be downloaded from Evotix Assure document library, [reference 133](#).

## **Risk Assessments, H&S Visits, Inspections and Audits**

2.14. Site visits, risk assessments, audits in schools, inspections and accident investigations have continued to be performed by the Corporate H&S service through the organisation.

2.15. Of the 370 risk assessments on SHE Assure, 84% (309) have no review date set, 50% are over 1 year old. Of the remaining 61 assessments (with review dates) 60% (37) are overdue for review. Therefore, arguably we have an overdue review run rate of 63%. H&S will review & purge old assessments, engage team managers, offer training. Senior managers to include as an annual appraisal target.

2.16. Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) completed:

- 51 FRAs at corporate, libraries, children centres and parks been carried out
- 339 Council Housing FRAs completed
- 21 school FRA were found to be within review date through audit out of 24 and an action was raised against the 3 schools .

2.17. Asbestos re-inspection surveys were carried out on all corporate buildings, 11 community schools with SLA schools, 412 Council Housing Asbestos surveys have been completed within this period, while others have been completed they were not uploaded onto the 365 system at the time of generating this report.

2.18. Facilities Management will be uploading all maintained school compliance data to their new Concerto system Q4 2024/25.

2.19. Audits

- 2 Management self-audits have been carried out within this period.
- 8 H&S service led audits were completed for the Children Centres (aka Hubs)
- 14 maintained schools; the other 19 schools and 1 Children Centre were deemed compliant in the previous year and will be audited in 2024/25.

2.20. DSE 60% e-learning and self-assessment compliance in the last year, however this is too onerous and should be reduced to 3-year cycle or sooner if required (significant change/requested (issues developing)).

### **Occupational Health (OH) & Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

2.21. Medigold provide the OH service and Health Assured the EAP, these are overseen by HR.

2.22. The OH Service continues to provide adequate health surveillance, return to work rehabilitation, health promotion and reduction of work-related sickness absence.

2.23. **Appendix 4** provides a breakdown of EAP Utilisation

2.24. The EAP has continued to be promoted. Employees can freely obtain a range of services including specialist counselling and financial advice.

### **Promotion of Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

2.25. Practical initiatives and steps have also been taken to support staff's mental health and wellbeing such as support resources on the intranet and the Wellbeing awareness days where there is a variety of activities, and other events on the wellbeing calendar.

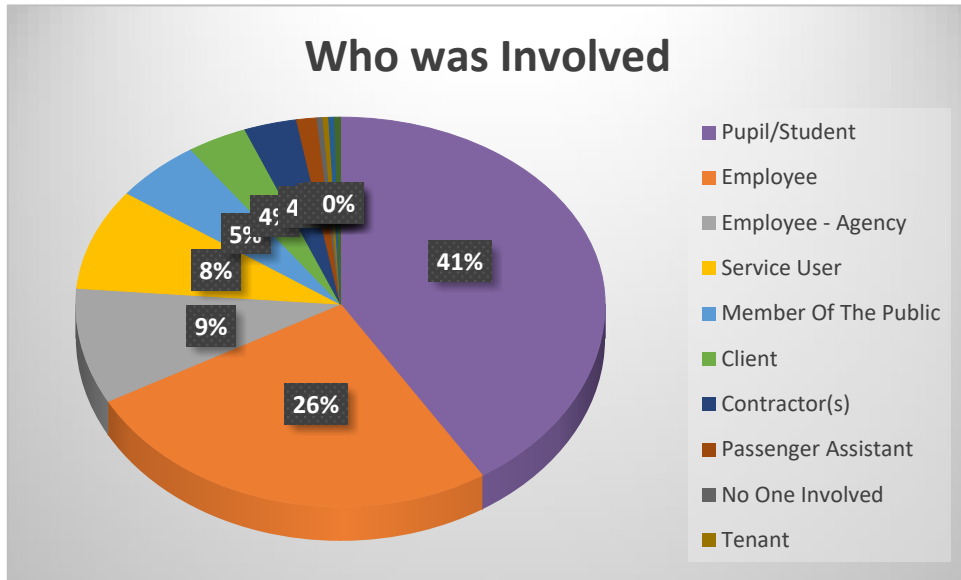
2.26. The Council has trained at least 15 wellbeing champions in this period. MECC Training offered to all wellbeing champions. Support Mental health awareness week, world mental health day and suicide prevention day. MHFA refresher training for wellbeing champions is in progress.

### **Incidents reported**

2.27. Incident performance is monitored by the Corporate H&S Board (CHSB) on a quarterly basis. The data is considered both in terms of volume and through key performance indicators which allow consideration of the number of employees and number of employee hours worked.

2.28. There have been 136 employee related incidents in this period (this includes all near misses, not just accidents), which is 26% of all incidents/accidents reported.

*NB. Fewer reports does not necessarily indicate fewer incidents.*

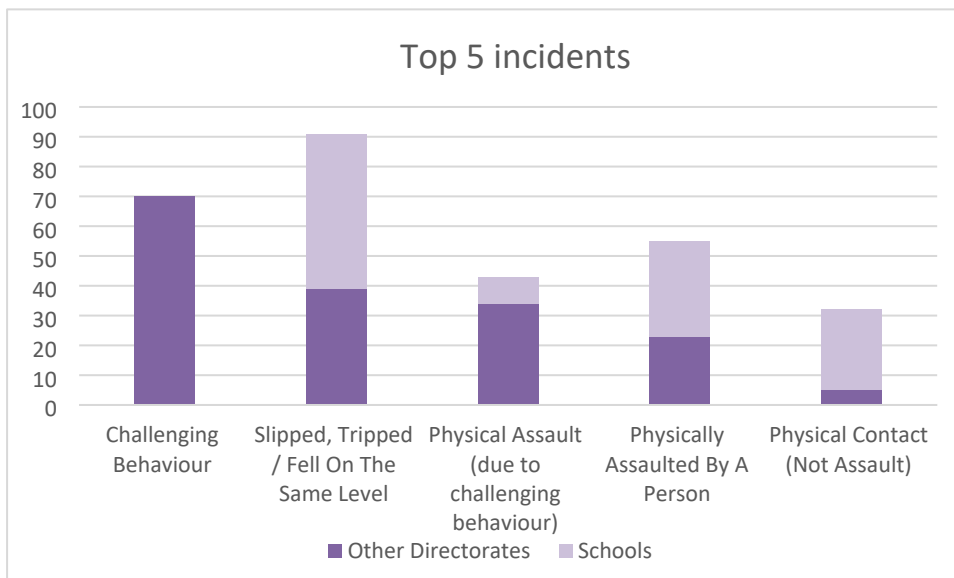


2.29. This year the top 5 accident types across the corporate estate, including schools (who buy into the H&S SLA), were –

1. Slipped, Tripped / Fell on the same level 91
2. Challenging behaviour 70
3. Physically assaulted by a person 55
4. Physical assault (due to challenging behaviour from children) 43
5. Physical contact (not assault) 32

Please note, some of the above incidents were in SEN schools.

Across the Council, 4 RIDDOR types of incidents were recorded. A further breakdown is included in **Appendix 1**



- 2.30. **Place directorate accounted for 51% out of 558 incidents recorded for the year 2022/23.** Of the 285 incidents recorded, the majority of incidents reported were minor.
- 2.31. **People's directorate accounted for 14% out of 558 incidents recorded for the year 2022/23.** Of the 78 incidents recorded, the majority of incidents reported were minor.
- 2.32. **Resources directorate accounted for 1.3% out of 558 incidents recorded for the year 2022/23.** Of the 7 incidents recorded, the majority of incidents reported were moderate.
- 2.33. **Schools accounted for 33.7% out of 558 incidents recorded for the year 2022/23.** Of the 188 incidents recorded. the majority of incidents reported were moderate.

## **H&S Training**

- 2.34. Refresher training programme has continued to be delivered by the Corporate H&S Service, however due to the shutting down of the training academy this is on hold. Then risk assessment level 3 training course is currently under review.
- 2.35. Staff are able to access the mandatory general H&S module through LMS365. The completion rate of the mandatory H&S training on LMS365 across all directorates is 87.6%.
- 2.36. 60% of Staff have completed their display screen equipment DSEasy refresher training in the last 12-months
- 2.37. System refresher training completed in this timeframe include.
- 604 staff completed the SHE Assure refresher training
  - 9 managers completed the DSE hub4 refresher training

## **Legislation Update**

- 2.38. The period 2023/24 saw some changes in legislation, guidance, codes of practice, health & safety updates and general safety notices as follows:
- **First aid at work: Guidance on regulations 2013 (as amended 2018 and 2024) -** The third edition, revised in 2024, incorporates minor updates to underscore employers' obligations to consider employees' mental health in their first-aid needs assessment, replace 'catastrophic bleeding' with 'life-threatening bleeding' while offering enhanced guidance on risk mitigation, and streamline the process for determining appropriate first aid measures.
  - **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) Guidance updated in 2024 -** The H&S Executive (HSE) released updates aimed at clarifying incident reporting requirements and improving form usability under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). [HSE releases updates to RIDDOR guidance | IOSH magazine](#)



## **Stakeholder Feedback**

- 2.39. The Corporate Health & Safety Board, chaired by the Director of HR and OD, includes representatives from both recognized Trade Unions, who continue to be proactive in their approach to health & safety.
- 2.40. Collaboration with the trade unions, through the sharing of relevant documents and addressing raised concerns, has positively impacted the implementation of Health & Safety within the Council. Notably, access to risk assessments, safe systems of work, safety tours, policies, procedures, and all other documents is facilitated through the Evotix Assure software, the Council's H&S management system.

## **Management Assurance**

- 2.41. Monitoring of H&S performance within the organisation will continue to sit with the Corporate Health & Safety Board, on a quarterly basis.
- 2.42. Quarterly updates around performance, H&S strategy & Corporate H&S performance plan, accident/incidents data, and policies are usually presented to the Corporate Leadership Team.

## **Plans for April 2024 - March 2025**

- 2.43. The key actions for 2024/25 include the following:
- Corporate H&S to initiate a new audit plan Q3 2024.
  - Corporate H&S to support managers to complete self-audits.
  - Implement a new corporate H&S structure that supports the whole of the Council with qualified H&S professionals.
  - DSE e-learning and self-assessment is too onerous and should be reduced to 3-year cycle or sooner if required (significant change/requested (issues developing) Head of Corporate H&S will consult.
  - Corporate H&S will continue to lead on plans to monitor operational and occupational risk assessments.
  - Corporate relaunch/take up of the Evotix Assure software as the recognised software system for all H&S matters including reporting of work-related incidents that happen while working from home. Focus will be placed on training individuals and teams on the use of Evotix Assure software.
  - H&S support and advice within the London Borough of Harrow.
  - Implementation of the H&S strategy and the Corporate H&S plan.

**Legal Implications**

- 2.44. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees, and to prepare (and review) a policy in relation to it.
- 2.45. There has been no enforcement action from the HSE in this time frame. Recommendations of the ECF for implementation have to be referred to the relevant portfolio holder or Cabinet
- 2.46. The Council’s Constitution states the following at Part 3A Terms of Reference for the Employees’ Consultative Forum (ECF): ...

**3.0 Health & Safety**

3.1 The ECF will seek to promote health and safety and welfare within the Council and will keep under review the measures taken to ensure health and safety and welfare at work.

The Forum will receive and comment on reports, including:

- The Council’s half-year and annual health and safety performance report providing an update of health and safety activities and giving information on outcome measures.

**Financial Implications**

2.47. There is a revenue budget of £345k (net) to support H&S function across the organisation, not including HRA H&S compliance manager post.

**Risk Management Implications**

- 2.48. Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **Yes**
- 2.49. Separate risk register in place? **Yes**
- 2.50. The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below

The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Failure to fulfil the Council’s Health & Safety duties leading to a harmful event for individual/individuals for whom the Council is responsible leading to litigation	Continual monitoring of key measures listed in the corporate risk register 2023/24 to manage risk to ensure they are being implemented and are effective. Review of the H&S service and its structure to enable it to be sustainable in the long term for future council requirements Implementation of the further actions listed in the corporate risk register.	<b>RED</b>

## **Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

2.51. Protected characteristics are constantly measured as part of any H&S system, especially aspects of age and disability.

## **Council Priorities**

2.52. The delivery of H&S management is integral to and supports the achievement of all Corporate Priorities and individuals.

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

**Statutory Officer: Sharon Daniels**

Signed by the Chief Financial Officer

**Date: 12 September 2024**

**Statutory Officer: Caroline Eccles**

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date: 12 September 2024**

**Chief Officer: Stacy Bailey**

Signed by the relevant Director

**Date: 5 July 2024**

## **Mandatory Checks**

**Ward Councillors notified:** No, as it impacts on all Wards

**EqIA carried out:** No, as no decision is required.

## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

Contact: Clyde Jackett, Dip2OSH, CMIOSH | Head of H&S (interim)

Email: [clyde.jackett@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:clyde.jackett@harrow.gov.uk)

**Background Documents:** None