

Woking Borough Council

Annual Health & Safety Report

2022/23

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Safety & Insurance
Officer

Shaping the *future*
of our borough



2022/23

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1. Introduction

As a public body, and a regulator regarding Health & Safety legislation, Woking Borough Council must lead by example. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) continue to hold Local Authorities to account on this basis and expect councils to put in place robust arrangements for managing the health, safety and welfare of staff and others who interface with the authority as part of the Council's business.

The Council fulfil this requirement through the Health, Safety and Insurance Officer who provides a statutory Health and Safety service to all employees of Woking Borough Council, as required by duties imposed on employers under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The Health, Safety and Insurance Officer was appointed to the post on 1 February 2023 and is a qualified health and safety professional to advise the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Senior Managers, and Line Management regarding the implications of the Health and Safety Policy together with the requirements of current legislation on the activities undertaken by the Council.

In line with current good practice and industry standards, Woking Borough Council's strategy reflects the work of the HSE, whose principles are to ensure that those who create risks take responsibility for managing those risks.

In following this principle, we will ensure that our systems reflect the HSE in that actions should be proportionate to the risks and, where possible, are tailored to the areas of the business where significant risks are generated, the work undertaken and the people who work there.

In the past quarterly reports have been provided to the Corporate Leadership Team, with the 4th quarterly report – i.e., the report for the whole of the financial year - being submitted to the Standards and Audit Committee.

2. Legislation Changes

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 came into force on 23 January 2023. Statutory duties under legislation according to building height and those imposed on the Council cover the provision of appropriate fire safety information and instructions to residents in general needs blocks of flats and sheltered schemes owned and managed by the Council (noting that all relevant buildings are confirmed as low rise.)

The information must be provided directly to new residents as soon as reasonably practicable after they have moved into their accommodation and then reissued to all existing residents at periods not exceeding 12 months thereafter.

3. HSE Intervention

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Intervention is if the HSE visit the workplace and find that we are in material breach of health and safety law, we would have to pay for the time it takes to identify what is wrong to help us put it right. HSE's hourly rate under Fee for Intervention in 2023/24 has been increased from £163 to £166.

We have had no HSE interventions in the year 2022/23.

4. Accidents and Near Misses

In the event of an accident, dangerous occurrence or "near miss" happening at, or associated with work, the priority is to deal with any injured persons and make safe or isolate the cause / area of the accident.

All accidents resulting in, or that could have resulted in personal injury (however minor they appear) must be reported within 48 hours to the Health, Safety, and Insurance Officer on the Accident Report Form or Near Miss Report form as appropriate. More serious accidents / dangerous occurrences must be reported immediately or as soon as practically possible.

Some incidents, particularly the more serious, may attract media attention and it may be appropriate to advise Marketing & Communications as soon as possible.

Detailed accident statistics for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 are attached in Appendix 1

There were twelve accidents to employees, none of which has been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR.)

There were five accidents to members of the public / non employees, one of which has been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

Amey

Amey reported twenty-three accidents and one hundred and twenty-six misses to employees. None of which were RIDDOR reportable. There were no accidents to non-employees.

Brookwood Cemetery

Brookwood Cemetery reported no accidents and no near misses.

Freedom Leisure

Accident statistics for Freedom Leisure are shown in Appendix 2. There was a total of eleven accidents involving employees - two at the Leisure Centre, six at the Pool in the Park and three at the new Eastwood Leisure Centre that opened in October 2021. No accidents to Freedom employees were required to be reported to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) under RIDDOR.

Members of the public sometimes go to the Pool in the Park and the Leisure Centre seeking first aid treatment for accidents which occurred in areas that are not responsibility of Freedom Leisure, such as Woking Park, the slope up to the Pool in the Park, the skate park, the children's play area and the car parks. These incidents are recorded as accidents and included in the accident statistics below. At the Leisure Centre there were 271 accidents to non-employees, of which 128 are described as sport-related injuries. No accidents to non-employees were required to be reported to the HSE under RIDDOR.

At the Pool in the Park, there were 132 accidents to non-employees, of which 4 are described as sport-related injuries and 12 occurred outside of Freedom Leisure's premises. No accidents to non-employees were required to be reported to the HSE under RIDDOR.

At the Sports Box, there were 19 accidents to non-employees of which all 19 are described as sport-related injuries. No accidents to non-employees were required to be reported to the HSE under RIDDOR.

At the Eastwood Leisure Centre there were 28 accidents to non-employees of which 22 are described as sport-related injuries. No accidents to non-employees were required to be reported to the HSE under RIDDOR.

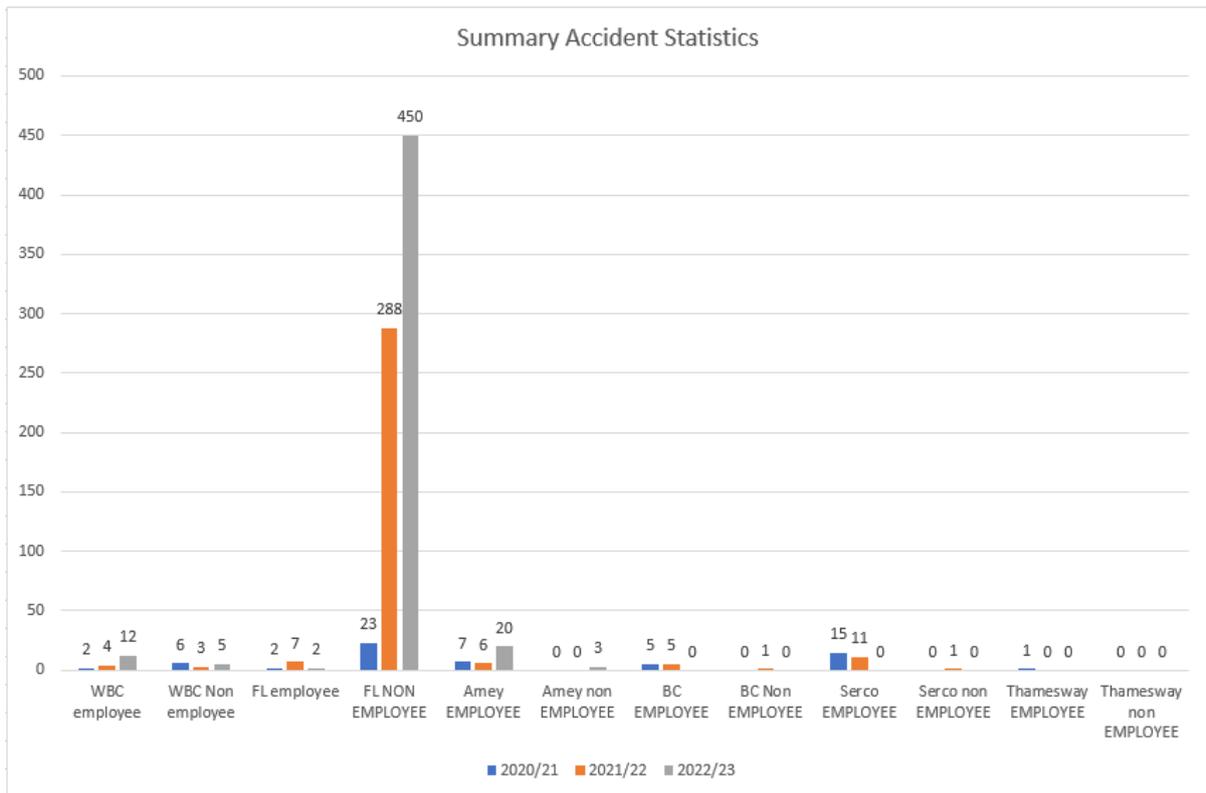
To put these figures in context, in this period there were 368,758 visitors to the Leisure Centre, 358,379 visitors to the Pool, 181,652 visitors to the Sports Box and 244,494 visitors to the Eastwood Leisure Centre.

Serco

Serco reported no incidents and one near miss.

Thameswey

Thameswey reported three incidents and four near misses, none of which were RIDDOR reportable.



To compare the figures throughout the years we can see an increase in accidents and near misses. It should be noted that 2022 was the first full year at work without any Covid-19 lockdown restrictions since the beginning of Covid. Although this appears to look like a rise in incidents, this is displaying a full year with no lockdowns or restrictions.

5. Aggressive Incidents

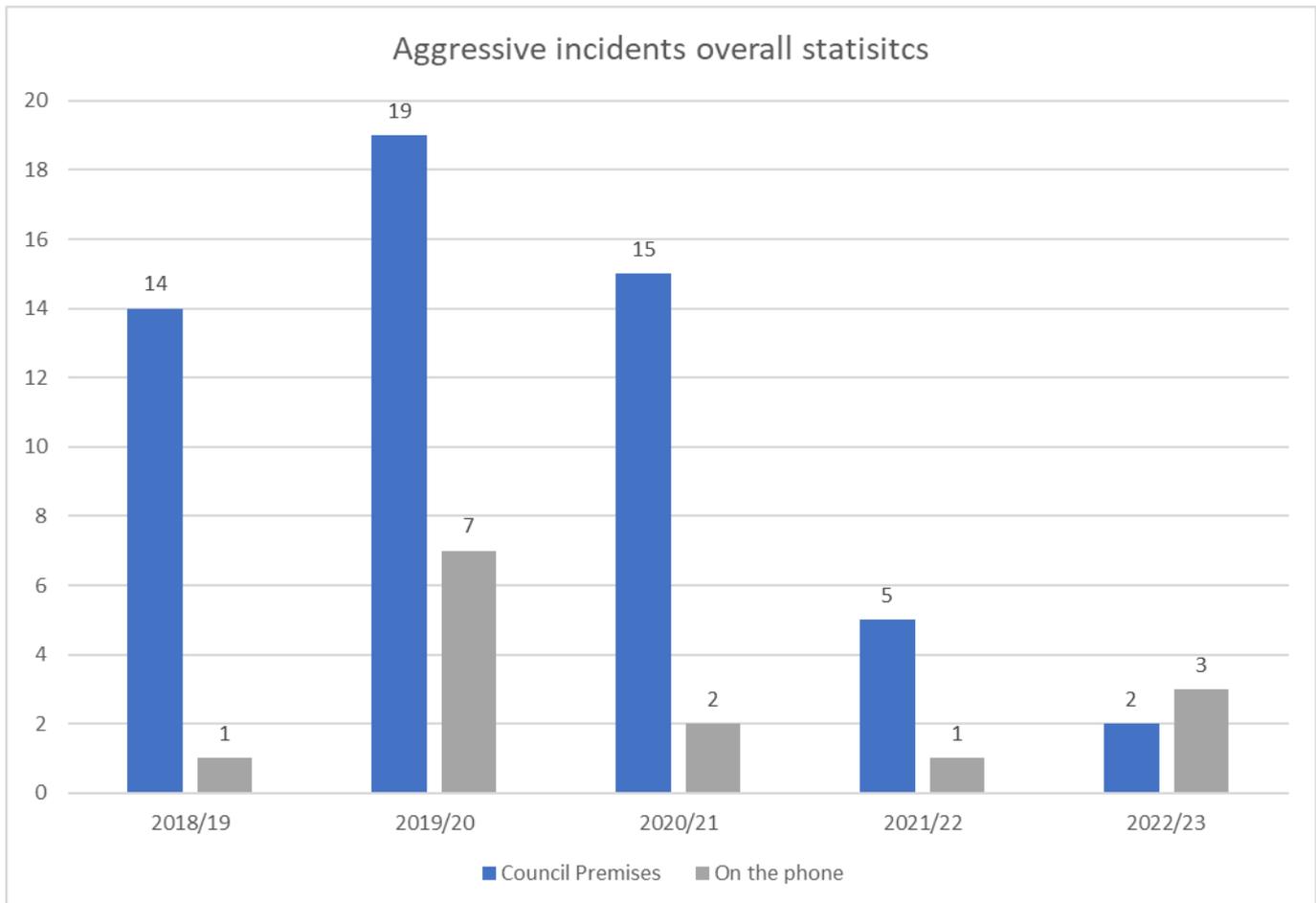
No member of staff should have to accept that the threat of aggression or violence is part of the job. However, we do have to recognise that as Council staff, we regularly come across members of the public who, for a variety of reasons, can become verbally abusive or, in exceptional cases, physically violent. Regrettably, but inevitably, incidents will occur.

There have been five aggressive incident reports received from 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023. Two of which relate to the same incident.

Two of the incidents took place in Council premises, and three incidents on the phone. Two of the incidents on the phone has been reported to the police and is still being investigated.

Four people have been sent a letter advising that their behaviour was not acceptable and that a marker had been placed against their records to warn other staff who might have cause to deal with the person concerned.

Posters were presented on the front reception desk to reduce violence and aggression against staff. No warnings were received from outside organisations about people who had been aggressive.



6. Health and Safety Training

All Council staff plus staff from other organisations that are based in the Civic Offices or who visit regularly and require a photo ID card receive a Health and Safety induction before a photo ID card is issued. Once a photo ID card is issued, the holder can move around the Civic Offices without needed to be escorted by a member of Council staff.

Inductions are held at the Civic Offices every Monday morning (although inductions for Street Angels are usually held outside office hours) and take approximately 45 minutes. A sub-titled version was purchased, so that it is available for any new starters with hearing impairments.

Training undertaken this year includes:

Induction training for all WBC staff on their first day - 97 employees, 14 of which are work experience students.

Induction training for all staff from other organisations who are based in the Civic Offices including:

- DWP – thirteen people
- Surrey County Council – twenty-five people
- Surrey Police civilian counter staff – seven people
- Others - fifteen people
- First Aid training courses including:
- Emergency First Aid at Work course (1 day) – 9 people

Employees are required to undertake health and safety eLearning which is provided by a training portal called WorkRite. All staff are required to undertake the following courses:

- Fire Awareness
- Manual Handling Awareness
- Mental Health Awareness
- Personal Travel Safety
- Slips, Trips & Falls

The vast majority of staff use a computer and work in an office to some degree, therefore most staff will also be required to undertake:

- Display Screen Equipment for Agile Workers
- Office Health & Safety

There are courses undertaken by staff where appropriate to their role, including:

- Asbestos Awareness
- Conflict Resolution
- COSHH
- Driver Awareness (*mandatory for all staff with a leased car, car allowance or who drive for work purposes*)
- First Aid (*mandatory for all staff with a first aid qualification*)
- Food Safety 1 (*mandatory for all Community Meals Service staff*)
- Food Safety 2 (*mandatory for all Community Meals Service staff*)
- Legionella Essentials
- New & Expectant Mothers (*to be taken by the New & Expectant Mother AND her line manager*)
- Risk Assessment (*mandatory for all managers*)
- Working At Height

A summary of the number of eLearning courses completed is attached as Appendix 3. Where the number of staff is referred to, that relates to current staff as at the time of writing and does not include those who left before this report was written. This is because when staff leave, their log in to the WorkRite training portal is deactivated and deactivated accounts are not included in the reports that can be run on courses completed. Therefore, the actual number of staff who completed an eLearning course during 2021/22 might be higher than the number listed in the summary.

Three reminders are sent automatically to all those with an outstanding online course. These e-learning courses help us to ensure that staff receive refresher health and safety training. CLT support this by making it clear that this training is mandatory and advising Senior Managers that their staff are required to complete the training when it is scheduled.

7. Employer Liability Claims

There was one employer's liability claim received during the year 2022/23. The total reserve against this claim is £9,612.00

8. Hybrid Working and Looking into The Future

Many of us have had to change the way we work because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This has created advantages for some and challenges for others. Hybrid working is an opportunity to create a better way of working, so we won't return to the way we worked before the pandemic.

Hybrid working is being able to work from different locations at different times using spaces more effectively and more efficiently. This could be a mix of working in an office and at home.

On the challenging side of things, hybrid working has affected the evacuation process due to a number wardens working from home yet we have put in measures to ensure the duties are covered by senior officers as required.

What we're doing

We are going to speak to staff to help us navigate what their working week looks like and if they are a Fire Warden and/or First Aider. This will assist us in discovering if we require more Fire Wardens and /or if the Fire Evacuation plan needs amending to reflect Hybrid Working. The Survey details are in Appendix 4.

Fire Evacuation Training for all Senior Managers in the absence of a Fire Warden has been conducted.

9. Communication

The Health, Safety & Insurance Officer was appointed to the post earlier on in the year, as mentioned in the introduction of this report. Since then, they have visited all Woking Borough Council offices to introduce themselves.

EWOK, the intranet is a form of communication which is great to advertise health and safety reminders – such as e-learning reminders.

As we are aware, the Council is facing a staff restructure. The Health and Safety Officer believes that at this moment in time, it would come across as insensitive to post e-learning reminders on the intranet.

EWOK has been used to promote one health and safety post through 2022/23. [Health and Safety \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com). This form of communication will be utilised significantly for health and safety throughout 2023/24 going forwards.

10. Financial Implications

During the year 2022/23, the Finance Control Panel has been introduced. Any item, course, website etc, costing more than £500 must be sent to the Panel and be approved. The Financial risk of not purchasing what we are required by legislation, far outweighs the cost of these materials. The FCP have a good system in place that allows the Health and Safety Officer to select that these items are a 'statutory requirement.'

11. Performance on Priorities for the year 2023/24

In the new year, it is vital that as we become a smaller Council, Health and Safety is at the forefront of our minds.

Fire Safety Management. A review of the current Fire Evacuation Plan needs to be amended and published to reflect the Council becoming smaller and staff members working from home.

Training and assessment for the working in home environment. To discover how many employees are working at home to deliver additional Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training and revise the policy to reflect this.

Effective Training and Development. We will continue to deliver comprehensive training through the e-learning website, WorkRite.

Mental Health and Wellbeing. To work closely with the Senior Policy officer to create a safe space for staff to discuss mental health.

Driver Safety Management. The system we currently use to check the status of staff's drivers' licence is being re-considered, as part of the Fit for the Future plan. A new system will need to be sourced and financed agreed.

Governance, Consultation & Communication. To improve communication and engagement in relation to health and safety and collective awareness of risks, roles, and responsibilities. It has been concluded within this report that communication could be stronger, the Health and Safety Officer will be utilising the intranet and broadcasting emails. We will develop a programme of communication, engagement and awareness raising activities to strengthen understanding and confidence around health and safety.

To strengthen governance arrangements, the Health and Safety Officer is looking to develop a 'Health and Safety Working Group.'

12. Conclusion

During 2022/23 there has been many changes at Woking Borough Council and more to come for 2023/24. These changes undoubtedly impact Health and Safety and although H&S has achieved making the amendments so far, there remains more to do to ensure the Council has a fully robust health and safety managements in place and a safety aware culture and the priorities set out above are intended to provide a robust framework for this work.

13. Appendix

- Appendix 1 – Accident Analysis Summary Table
- Appendix 2 – Freedom Leisure Accident Statistics
- Appendix 3 – Summary of eLearning Courses
- Appendix 4 – Proposed Agile Working Survey