
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

27 September 2022

Cabinet

Title: Health and Safety Annual Report 2021/22

Purpose: To provide Cabinet with an update report on the Health and Safety performance within Council Services during 2021/22.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet notes the Annual Health & Safety Performance update for 2021/22 and the comparison against 2019/20 and 2020/21. Also that Cabinet notes the response to the COVID Pandemic and the delivery of a COVID safe election.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Health and Safety cuts across every Service within the Council. North Ayrshire Council has a legal duty of care to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who are affected by its business. Corporate Health and Safety operates in partnership with all Services and external partners to provide advice, guidance and support to improve the health and safety culture and reduce the risk of injury and ill-health incidents.
- 1.2 The Corporate Health and Safety team issues and keeps under review a range of guidance documents to reflect organisational change and new updated working practices.
- 1.3 With reference to the Corporate Health & Safety Annual Report at Appendix 1, information is provided which illustrates the incident trends within the Council. Readers should note some important information regarding the three years of statistics; that 2019/20 is a stand-alone year and cannot always be used for trend analysis, with 2020/21 and 2021/22 both being COVID-19 years, with differing lengths of lockdowns taking place.
- 1.4 The Corporate Health and Safety team has been particularly active during 2021/22 in supporting Council Services to work in a safe manner during the pandemic and ensuring the delivery of a COVID safe election in May 2021.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act places a Duty of Care on employers towards employees while they are at work. To meet its Duty of Care, it is essential that the

Council works pro-actively to provide safe systems of work risk assessments and training, as well as monitoring health and safety performance.

2.2 The Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report, which is attached at Appendix 1 to this report, is a key part of the monitoring and reporting process to Elected Members.

2.3 The Annual Report outlines in detail the following:

- Developments during 2021/22
- Corporate Health and Safety Training
- Incident Statistics and monitoring
- Planned Improvements for 2022/23.

Developments

2.4 Much of the focus of the team during 2021/22 related to supporting Council Services to work in a safe manner during the pandemic – this included supporting the development and review of Covid-19 risk assessments and guidance across a range of locations and work activities, carrying out a wide range of site visits and providing advice and guidance.

2.5 There was a continued focus on working from home with Corporate Health & Safety providing Guidance documents and Toolbox Talks to assist employees with this new working environment. There was also a focus on the health of employees and the effects that homeworking may have on their wellbeing with a number of wellbeing initiatives introduced as well as encouragement to have informal Microsoft Teams Meetings to stay connected with fellow employees and team members.

Training

2.6 All face-to-face training was suspended in March 2020 and this has continued into 2021/22; however, a virtual risk assessment course was developed and rolled out during 2021/22.

Incident Monitoring

2.7 Monitoring the Council's performance of health and safety requires statistics to be analysed to identify appropriate actions. The monitoring is undertaken by Elected Members, Chief Officers, Senior Management and Trade Unions.

2.8 To support effective Health and Safety monitoring, each Directorate holds a Health and Safety Planning Group meeting, normally chaired by a Chief Officer on a quarterly basis. The purpose of these meetings is to review, discuss and plan operational Health and Safety performance, actions and incident statistics.

2.9 Furthermore, on a quarterly basis, the Corporate Health and Safety team reports on directorate performance statistics, health and safety projects and performance to the Corporate Health and Safety Group chaired by the Leader of the Council and attended by senior health and safety representatives from all Services and Trade Unions.

- 2.10 Section 4 of the annual report provides a detailed review across a three-year period, which shows a slight increase this year (1521) compared to 2019/20 (1344). It is recognised that 2020/21 statistics overall are impacted by the pandemic.
- 2.11 With regard to the more serious incidents which are reported under the RIDDOR (Reporting of Incidents and Dangerous Occurrences) regulations, there is an overall downward trend with the Place Directorate showing a 50% improvement in 2021/22 compared to the previous year, recognising that 2020/21 was a pandemic year.
- 2.12 Connected Communities worked with the Corporate Health and Safety Team to support community organisations and the third sector during the Covid-19 pandemic and as organisations started their recovery. The Community Facilities team consolidated the learning from managing the PPE supply for schools and Connected Communities. The learning contributed to a Covid Restart Toolkit which was co-produced with community organisations. A robust package of safety measures was drawn up to facilitate the return of lets and these measures included restart toolkits, revised capacity numbers, building risk assessments, COVID-19 supplementary terms and conditions and sector specific guidance.

Planned Improvements

- 2.13 Plans are in place to deliver further improvements to the Health and Safety framework during 2022/23 – these include:
- Replacement of the current health and safety incident reporting system (HSIR);
 - Procurement of a supplier for lone working devices; and
 - Re-introducing the delivery of face-to-face training.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Cabinet notes the Annual Health & Safety report for 2021/22 and the comparison against 2019/20 and 2020/21. Also that Cabinet notes the response to the COVID Pandemic and the delivery of a COVID safe election.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 None.

Human Resources

- 4.2 Supporting health, safety and wellbeing for Council employees, customers and service users.

Legal

- 4.3 Ensuring that the Council meets its Duty of Care and complies with Health and Safety legislation. Failure to do so may result in prosecutions or financial penalties.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 A robust Health and Safety culture supports the delivery of the key priorities in the Council Plan 2019-2024.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Corporate Health and Safety Team consults regularly on Health and Safety with Elected Members, employees and Trade Unions. The subject matter within this report has been shared at directorate planning groups and at the Corporate Health and Safety group.

Mark Boyd
Head of Service (Finance)

For further information please contact **James Walls, Team Manager (Health & Safety)**, on **01294-324679**.

Background Papers

None.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY

ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

&

3 Year Statistical Comparison (2019/20 – 2020/21 – 2021/22)

Version:	4.0
Date:	05/09/2022
Author:	James Walls
Classification:	Public



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

1 Background

- 1.1** The Health and Safety at Work Act places significant requirements on employers to ensure a Duty of Care to employees while at work. To meet its Duty of Care, it is essential that the Council provides safe systems of work, carries out risk assessments and monitors health and safety performance in relation to its services, employees and service users. Monitoring the Council's performance of health and safety requires statistics to be gathered and analysed, to identify appropriate action. The monitoring is undertaken by Elected Members, Chief Officers, Senior Management, Employees and Trade Unions.
- 1.2** To support effective Health and Safety monitoring, each directorate holds a Health and Safety Planning Group meeting, normally chaired by a Chief Officer on a quarterly basis. The purpose of these meetings is to review, discuss and plan operational Health and Safety performance, actions and incident statistics.
- 1.3** On a quarterly basis, the Corporate Health and Safety team reports on combined directorate statistics, health and safety projects and performance to the Corporate Health and Safety Group chaired by the Leader of the Council and attended by senior health and safety representatives from all Council Services and also Trade Unions.
- 1.4** The Corporate Health and Safety Team comprises three Health and Safety Advisers, one Trainee Health and Safety Adviser and the Health and Safety Manager, who provide professional advice, guidance and support to Council Services, including the Health and Social Care Partnership, aiming to improve safety performance.
- 1.5** The Corporate Health and Safety Team continues to promote the theme of "Safety in Mind". The overarching aim of this theme is to raise the profile and understanding of Health and Safety in the workplace and to keep health and safety at the forefront of all our employees' minds on a day-to-day basis.

2 Developments during 2021-22 including response to the COVID 19 Pandemic

- 2.1** As a result of the spread of the COVID 19 Virus, the United Kingdom entered a pandemic lockdown just before the start of the new 2020/2021 financial year and the pandemic continued throughout the 2021/22 financial year. General offices, public facing offices, libraries and other services remained closed, with the vast majority of employees working from home. Schools were back up and running part way through 2021/22, front-line services such as social care and building services emergencies continued to operate as normal.
- 2.2** The Corporate Health and Safety Team have been totally focussed in supporting all Services with their COVID-19 requirements, this has meant that a number of activities reported on in previous Cabinet reports had to be deferred or significantly reduced. It is planned to resume these towards the second half of 2022/23.

- 2.3** The sections below include the areas where the Corporate Health and Safety Team has supported all Services in relation to the implementation of COVID-19 requirements.

Reviews of Policies and Guidance

- 2.4** To ensure all Employees have access to current health and safety information and advice, all policies and guides have been published on the Council intranet and external website.
- 2.5** The Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (CHS&WP) communicates the Council's commitment, direction and priority of protecting employees' health, safety and wellbeing within the workplace. The policy provides clarity and definition of workplace responsibilities at each level within the Council and was developed in partnership with Chief Officers, Employees and Trade Unions.
- 2.6** The following documents have been Developed/Updated since the last Cabinet report:
- Waste Vehicle Safety Alert
 - Molift (1 Person Hoist) Safety Alert
 - Asbestos Guidance
 - Managers COVID Monitoring Checklist
 - Update to the Slip Trip Fall Documentation
- 2.7** The following documents have been under review and will be updated in 2022/23:
- 6 Monthly Inspection Guidance
 - 6 Monthly Inspection Form
 - New Health & Safety Reporting System Guidance

Health and Safety Audits

- 2.8** The Corporate Health and Safety Team carried out a number of office re-opening visits to ensure that the relevant controls were in place. In total 20 premises were visited including Cunninghame House and Montrose House in Arran.
- 2.9** The visits were very positive and well received and helped facilitate the re-opening of premises following the relaxation of COVID restrictions.

HSE Visits

- 2.10** In 2021/22 we received one visit from the Health & Safety Executive which was carried out at the Princess Street Hostel. The inspection went very well and we received good feedback from the inspector.

Risk Assessment/Guidance Support

- 2.11** During the pandemic, the Corporate Health and Safety Team have been heavily involved in assisting Services with the on-going review of their COVID-19 Risk Assessments and the implementation of general Guidance Documents. This included COVID Risk Assessments and Guidance for the Scottish Parliamentary election in May of 2021. The following areas were covered:

- Cunninghame House
- Bridgegate House
- Building Services Portland Place
- Education Premises
- Health and Social Care Premises
- Election Polling Stations
- Election Postal Vote Location Saltcoats Town Hall
- Election Count Venue St Mathews Academy
- General Work Activity Risk Assessments

3 Corporate Health and Safety Training

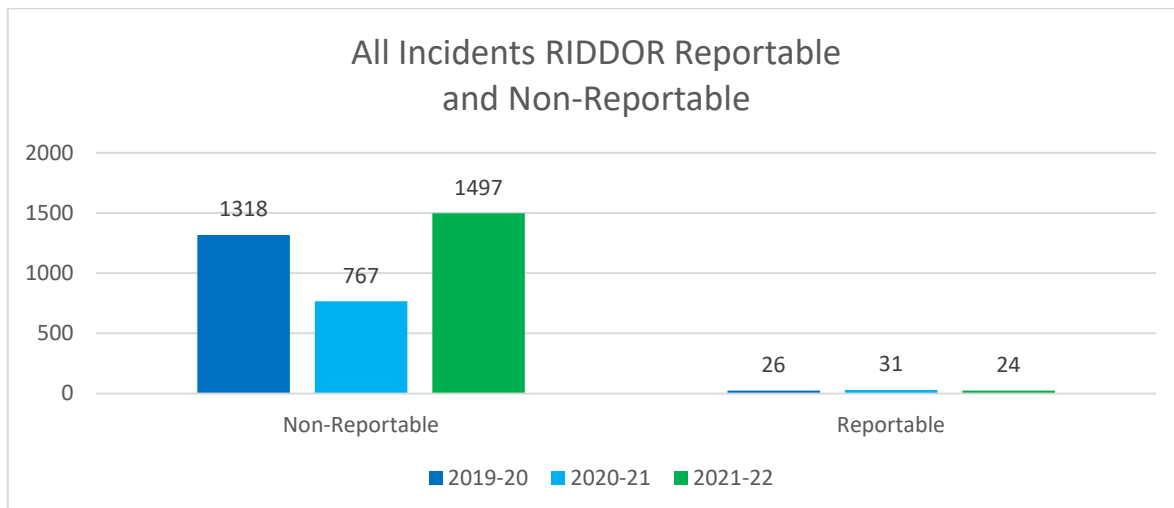
- 3.1** During 2020/21, all face-to-face training was suspended due to the COVID-19 lockdown. However, Services were still able to access the e-learning on-line courses and were able to continue with some level of training.
- 3.2** The Corporate Health and Safety Team recognised that additional training was required especially regarding risk assessment. In the middle of the pandemic we started on the development of a virtual risk assessment course which was available in May 2021.
- 3.3** The team were also approached by Connected Communities with a request to train a number of volunteer groups. A scaled down version of the corporate virtual risk assessment course was developed and delivered by our new trainee safety adviser. The first course was rolled out at the end of March 2021 and continued into the following year, the training has been well received by the volunteer groups.
- 3.4** Corporate Health and Safety were also looking into the possibility of running IOSH courses via a virtual format, however, due to the continued work brought by COVID, this was deferred.

4 Incident Statistics

- 4.1** A key part of the Corporate Health and Safety Team's monitoring role is to collect and review statistics on all reported Health and Safety incidents and near misses.

All Health and Safety Incidents

- 4.2** Graph 1 below provides an analysis of incidents over a 36-month period and shows a comparison of all incidents from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2022.

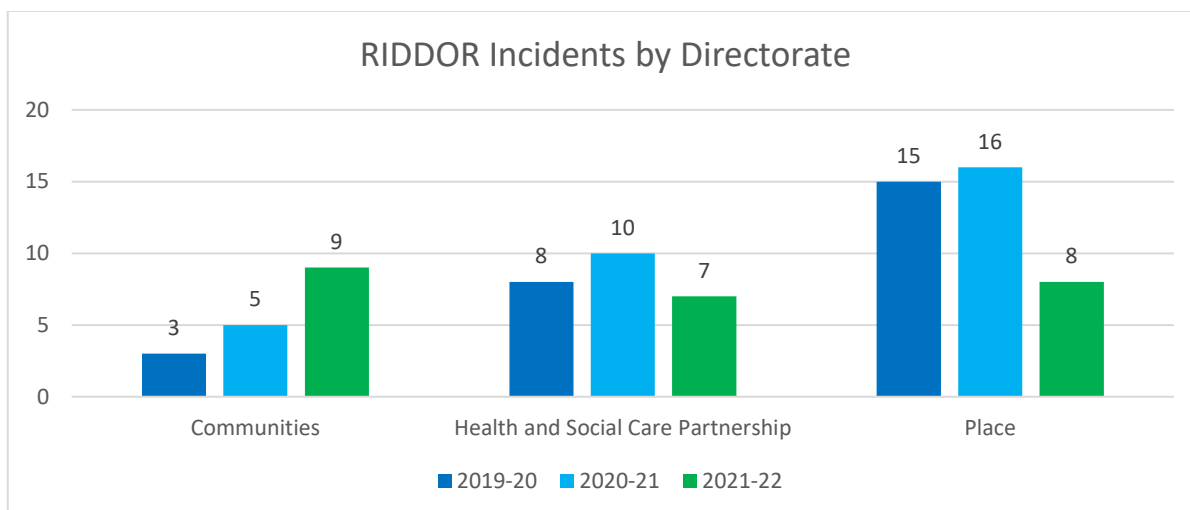


Graph 1

- 4.3** **Graph 1** shows a split between the RIDDOR Reportable incidents and the non-Reportable incidents. If we add both together, in 2019/20 we had a total of 1344 incidents, in 2020/21 we had a total of 798 incidents and in 2021/22 we had a total of 1521 incidents. The total number of RIDDOR incidents reportable to the HSE are shown above in **Graph 1**, however, further detailed analysis is provided in the paragraphs below. What the data shows is that although 2021/22 returned the highest number of incidents, it also returned the lowest number of RIDDOR incidents which is positive, as these incidents result in the more serious injuries.

RIDDOR Incidents by Directorate

- 4.4** The Council has a legal duty to report certain incidents to the Health and Safety Executive as per the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Graph 2 below shows a comparison of RIDDOR reportable incidents across all Directorates over the last 3 years.
- 4.5** Graph 2 below shows that over the 3-year period, the Place Directorate has reported the highest number of RIDDOR incidents with a total of 39, followed by the Health and Social Care Partnership with 25 and Communities with 17. It is positive to see that in 2021/22, the Place Directorate have reduced the total number of RIDDOR incidents by 50% compared to the previous year.

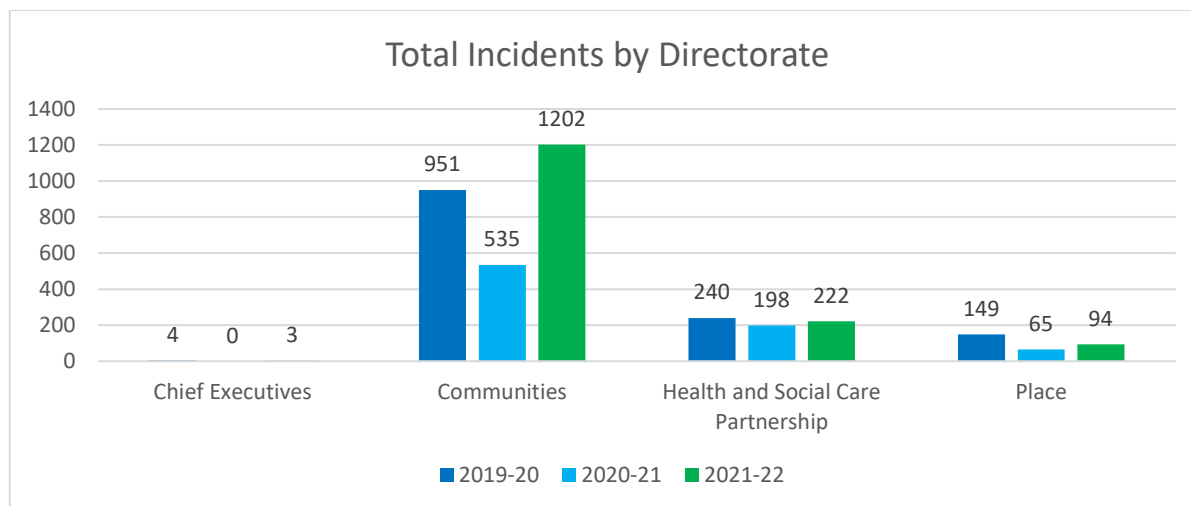


Graph 2

- 4.6** Directorates comply with the findings identified in all RIDDOR Incident Investigation reports which detail corrective actions to help prevent reoccurrence. Directorates also share their RIDDOR incidents and findings to the Corporate Health and Safety Group to help others learn from experience.

All Incidents by Directorate

- 4.7** Graph 3 below gives an analysis of the total number of all incidents that have occurred over the 3-year period and breaks down the incident statistics by Directorate.

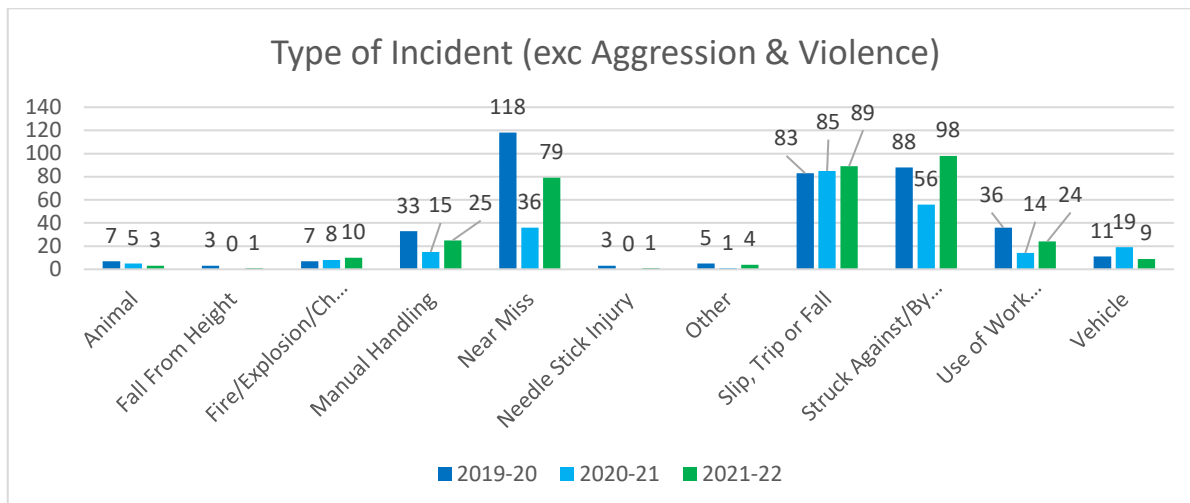


Graph 3

- 4.8** This shows that over the 3-year period, Communities & Education recorded the most incidents with a total of 2688, Health & Social Care Partnership returned 660 and Place 308. These totals include aggression and violence incidents. In 2020/21 within Communities & Education, there was a significant reduction in the number of incidents, however this covers the period of school closures through the COVID-19 lockdown.
- 4.9** Further detail on the incidents within these three Directorates is provided later in this report; however, no further information is provided on Chief Executives as the number of incidents is very low. This helps to focus attention on the most significant areas.

Most Common Incidents (excluding Aggression and Violence)

- 4.10** Graph 4 below shows the total number of incidents by cause (excluding Aggression and Violence) across the Council over the past 3 years.

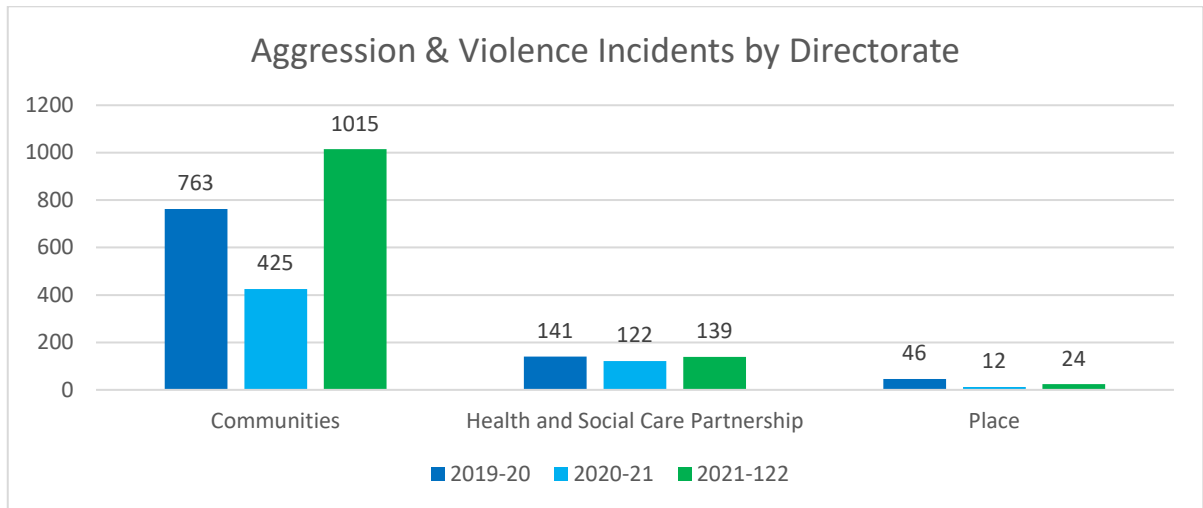


Graph 4

- 4.11** The incident type showing the highest numbers across the 3-year period is 'Slip Trip and Fall' with 257 incidents, Struck Against/Struck By 242, Use of Work Equipment 74 and Manual Handling 73.
- 4.12** The reporting of near miss incidents is a pro-active way of investigating issues before they become accidents/incidents where people are injured. The Near Miss Campaign in 2018/19 raised awareness and encouraged employees to report Near Misses. **Graph 4** above shows that near miss incidents started off high in 2019/20, probably as a result of the near miss campaign and then took a dip in 2020/21 before rising again in 2021/22.

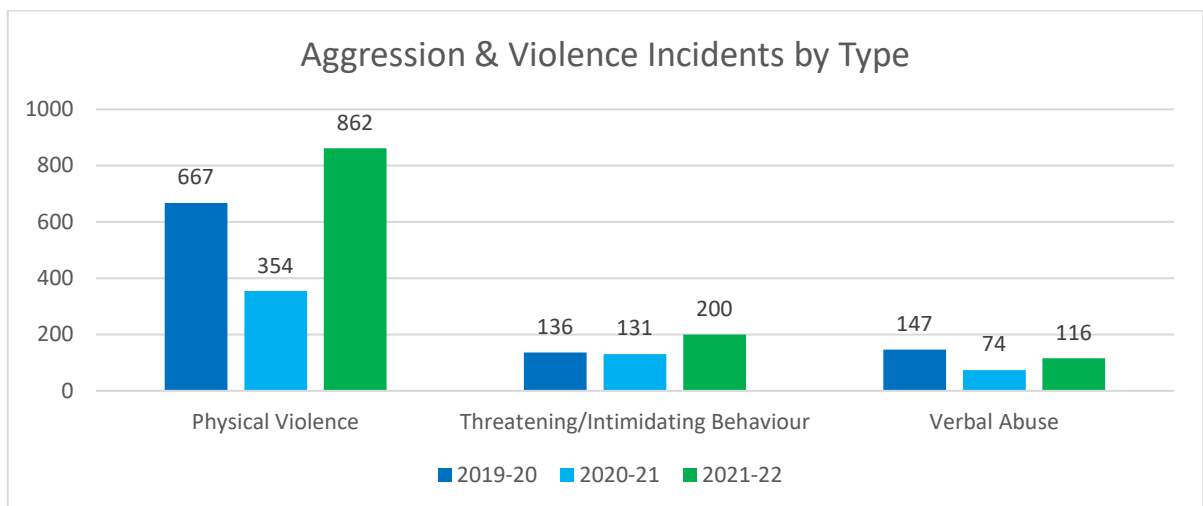
Aggression and Violence Incidents

- 4.13** **Graph 5** below gives an indication of where the most aggression and violence incidents are taking place with Communities & Education returning the most incidents. A more detailed breakdown can be found later in this report.
- 4.14** H&SCP have been pro-active in ensuring that staff are reporting all incidents of physical and verbal aggression towards staff, however minor. This has resulted in an increase in reporting.
- 4.15** Place Directorate are returning low numbers however still realise the need to train staff. As a result, a number of employees within Housing and Building Services have received Aggression and Violence training from Corporate Health and Safety.



Graph 5

4.16 **Graph 6** gives more detail on the type of aggression and violence incidents that are taking place across all Directorates, with physical violence being the most significant cause.

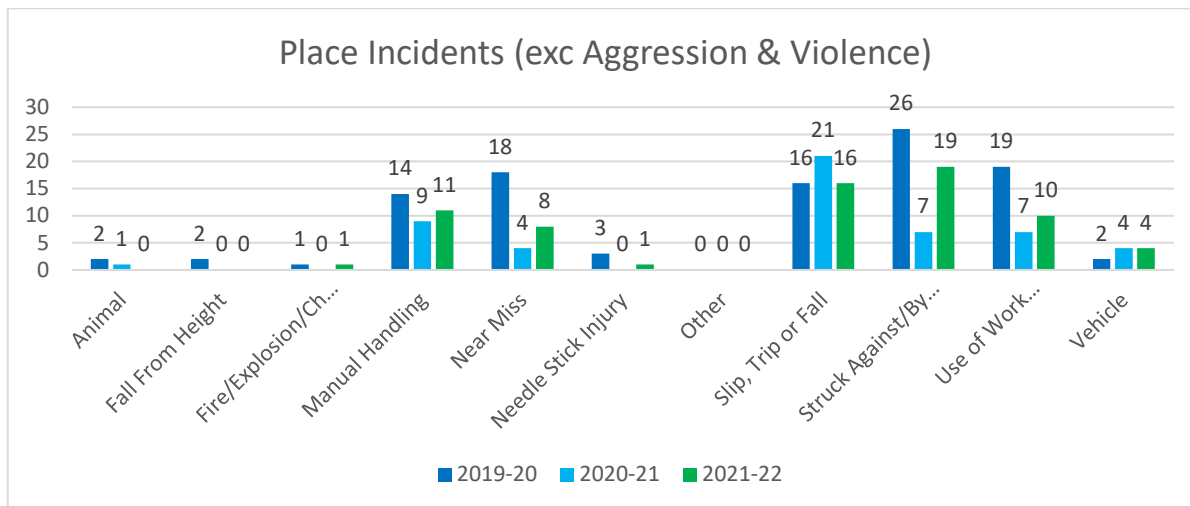


Graph 6

Analysis of Incidents by Directorate

Place Directorate

4.17 **Graph 7** below gives a detailed analysis of the common types of incidents (excluding Aggression and Violence) within the Place Directorate.



Graph 7

- 4.18** For the year 2019/20 there was a total of 103 incidents, for 2020/21 53 and for 2021/22 70, however, COVID 19 impacted on the figures returned for 2020/21. Over the 3-year period, the type of incident returning the highest numbers was 'Slip Trip Fall' (53) 'Struck Against/Struck by Object' (52), 'Use of Work Equipment' (36) and 'Manual Handling' (34).
- 4.19** With reference to graph 2 in the report, we can see that RIDDOR incidents have reduced by 50% on last year with a total of 8. We continue to roll out learning outcomes from all our incidents and with increased training and awareness the focus is to drive this number down further.
- 4.20** It has been important to deliver essential services within a safe COVID-19 working environment. Work has been undertaken and reviews ongoing with COVID-19 Risk Assessment and Safe Systems of Work throughout the Place Directorate and across a number of locations outlined in section 4.21.
- 4.21** Focusing on last year's activities, improvements have been made in the following areas:
- Manual handling and emptying of bins risk assessments were reviewed for Streetscene for locations such as Largs and Portencross
 - Toolbox Talks developed and delivered on Hand Sanitiser and Sharps Awareness.
 - Protective Services risk assessment following a serious dog attack
 - Transport Road Traffic Incident Investigation Guidance developed
 - Kitchen waste disposal arrangements including CoSHH Assessments
 - Catering risk assessment and catering face covering exemptions
 - Active Travel bike loan risk assessment
 - Review of manual handling risk assessment for Facilities Management
 - Meetings and communications with representatives from the Maritime Museum at the older timber wharf, Irvine harbour to discuss the dangerous conditions of the wharf and dangerous activities being undertaken there. Roads agreed to reinstate the boundary fence to a satisfactory state and erect signage indicating the following: Dangerous structure/keep out and Dangerous structure, mooring prohibited.

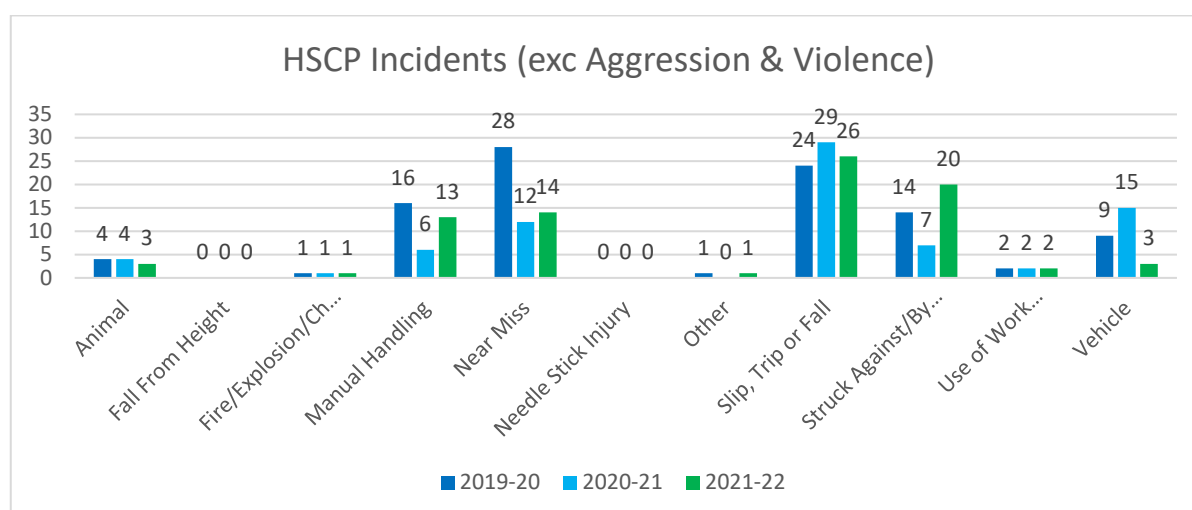
- The managers' version of COVID-19 compliance recording document was circulated again to managers to allow them to conduct and record their own spot checks
- Slip, Trip Fall Campaign was launched at the start of November
- Various investigations and investigation reports

4.22 With regards to the control of Hand Arm Vibration, we are looking at implementing the HSE Exposure Calculator with the possibility of having this available via phone or tablet. A Hand Arm Vibration risk assessment is also being reviewed and when ready will be implemented in conjunction with a Safe System of Work Procedure.

4.23 Looking towards 2022/23, the Place Directorate will focus on improvements in the following areas: Slip Trip Fall awareness, Hand Arm Vibration, Manual Handling, Incident Reporting and Investigation and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health.

Health and Social Care Partnership

4.24 **Graph 8** below gives a detailed 3-year breakdown of incidents within the Health and Social Care Partnership (excluding aggression and violence). This shows that in- 2019/20 there were a total of 99 incidents, 2020/21 returned 76, and 2021/22 returned 96.



Graph 8

4.25 Over the 3-year period, the incident type returning the highest numbers is 'Slip Trip Fall' with a total of 79. The next highest incident type is 'Struck Against/By Object' with 41, followed closely by 'Manual Handling' with 35 and 'Vehicle' incidents with a total of 27. Vehicle incidents are down by 12 compared to last year and down by 6 compared to 2019/20.

4.26 Near Miss Incident Statistics are pro-active indicators. Reporting levels were higher in 2019/20 prior to the impact of the pandemic, however the last 2 years has seen a dip in reporting.

4.27 With reference to RIDDOR incidents, graph 2 shows that we are down by 3 compared to last year. The majority of RIDDOR incidents within HSCP are in relation to direct assistance/personal care with service users whose needs are becoming more varied and complex. It is important to focus on reducing the

numbers further, as these are the types of incidents where employees receive more serious injuries.

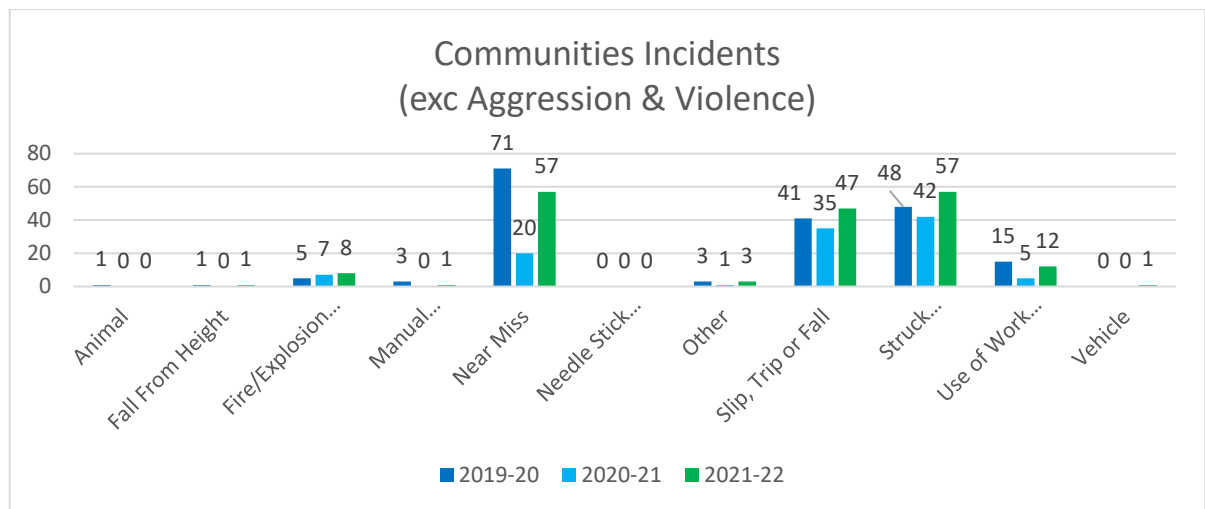
- 4.28** HSCP were responsible for assisting NHS Ayrshire and Arran in the deployment of the Covid 19 vaccination and testing programmes to both staff, and the population of North Ayrshire.
- 4.29** HSCP along with NAC colleagues supplied premises and staff to assist with the vaccination program throughout 2021. HSCP also aided in the fixed and mobile testing of the community using NAC properties for fixed asymptomatic testing along with programming the mobile testing buses.
- 4.30** HSCP assisted in Flu programme completion for 65yrs+, 18-64yrs “at risk”, pregnant women, health and social care staff and minority communities.
- 4.31** A PPE distribution centre was established from the outset of the pandemic, this was re-located to West Road in Irvine. The centre distributed PPE across North Ayrshire to front line staff and is used as a training & distribution centre for lateral flow testing (LFT) kits. This centre will continue to provide PPE & LFT kits across the council to front line staff well into 2022.

Health and Social Care Premises and services were subject to Infection Prevention and Control guidance which changed at different points during the pandemic based on Covid-19 prevalence and the protection measures required to keep vulnerable patients and service users safe. This included settings such as care homes, day services and community-based care delivery. This guidance was also widely disseminated to commissioned care providers in North Ayrshire.

- 4.32** Healthy Working Lives activities and information was promoted within the Service. Information is circulated across the Partnership notifying staff of available activities to assist with health and wellbeing across the workforce.
- 4.33** Scottish Government has allocated funding to North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership to support the wellbeing and mental health of staff who work within the Primary Care and Social Care sectors, including independent contractors, out of hours services and support staff.
- 4.34** The grant scheme remains open, to date a total of 111 grant applications have been received for a wide range of wellbeing activities such as cycling and wellbeing retreats, yoga sessions, escape rooms, fitness and wellbeing equipment, therapy treatments e.g., reflexology, reiki, Indian head massage.
- 4.35** Staff have had opportunities to sign up for mindfulness training, online fitness and yoga as well as a range of workshops delivered by Optima Health such as Emotional Wellbeing, sleep, financial wellbeing, returning to the workplace, psychological impact of working from home and weight management information sessions.
- 4.36** Libraries and various other locations throughout the Council were made ‘Covid safe’ to give Care at Home Assistants a place to go before/during/after their shift, where they could pop in for some time-out for their wellbeing, with tea/coffee, biscuits, soup and other snacks made available.

Communities & Education Directorate

4.37 **Graph 9** below gives a detailed analysis of incidents within the Communities & Education Directorate where, in all three years, 'Struck Against/By Object' (147), followed by 'Slip Trip Fall' (123) and 'Use of Work Equipment' (32) are showing the highest numbers out-with Aggression and Violence incidents.



Graph 9

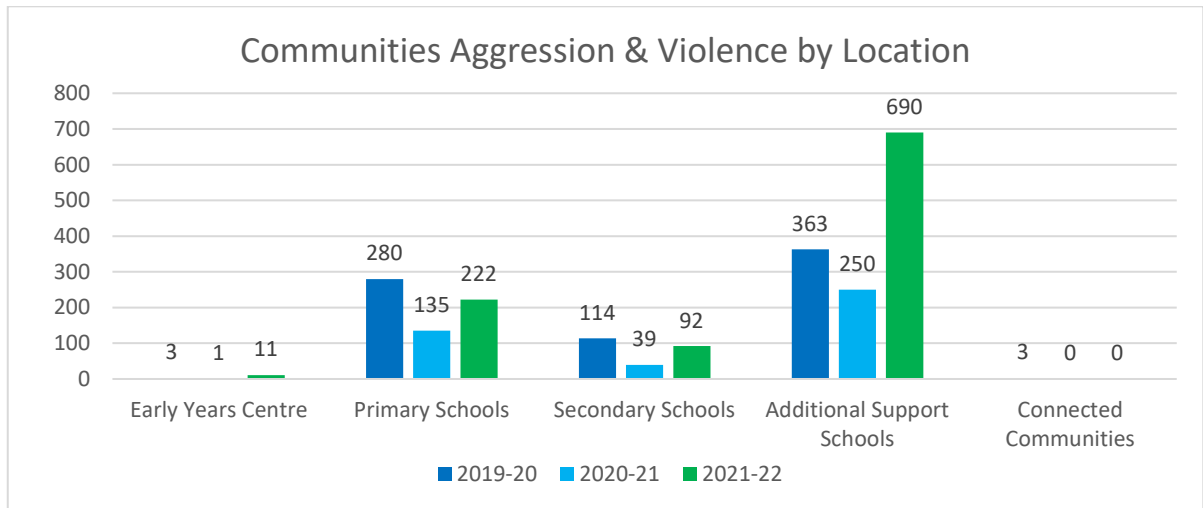
4.38 Over the 3-year period, the parts of the body being injured the most from 'Struck Against/By Object' are Head/Neck (57) followed closely by Arm/Hand (40) and then Leg/Ankle/Foot (15). The areas generating the highest numbers of 'Slip Trip Fall' incidents are Playgrounds/External Areas (26), Inside of School (52) and Gyms (12).

4.39 With reference to Near Miss Incidents, this is a positive health and safety performance category and would fall into the pro-active bracket as it results in corrective actions being implemented to prevent an incident taking place where someone suffers an injury. 2019/20 has returned the highest numbers and this may be as a result of the Near Miss Campaign which ran in 2018 and highlighted the importance of reporting Near Miss Incidents.

4.40 With reference to Aggression and Violence Incidents, the following totals were generated across the 3-year period, 2019/20 (763), 2020/21 (425) and 2021/22 (1,015).

4.41 **Graph 10** below gives further analysis and shows that over the 3-year period, the highest number of incidents are taking place within ASN schools with a total of 1,303, followed by primary schools with a total of 637 and secondary schools with 245. In 2021, the 4 ASN Schools were closed with all the children moving to the new Lockhart Campus.

This had an impact on the children moving from relatively small buildings to the new campus and this change has produced some challenges which will take some time to work through. However, quarter four statistics are showing an improvement on the number of incidents being recorded.

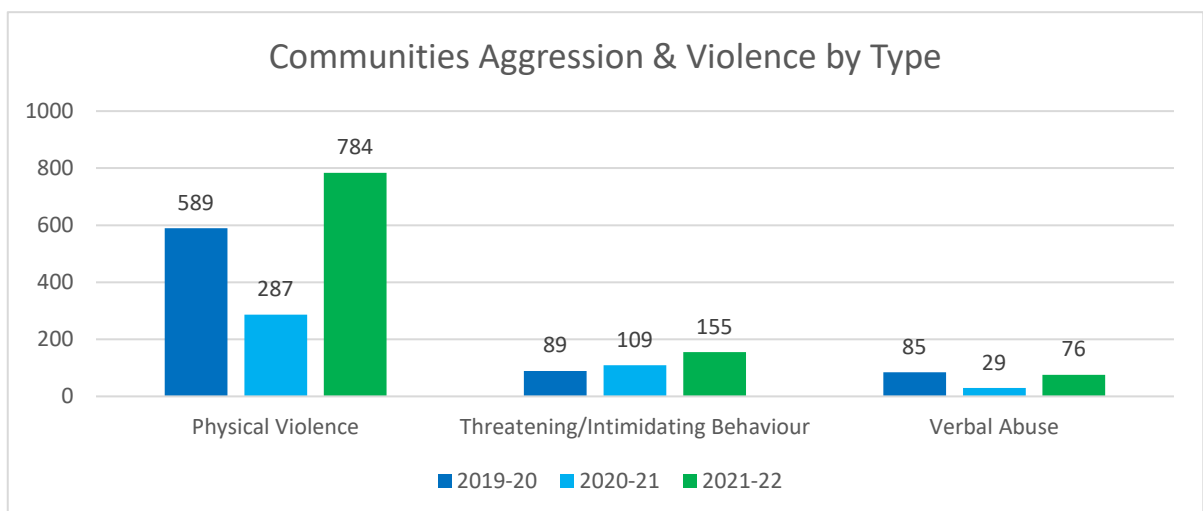


Graph 10

4.42 **Graph 11** below shows a comparison of the type of aggression and violence incidents, where physical violence is returning the highest numbers with a dip in 2020/21 due to the lockdown school closure.

4.43 The impact of Covid on children and young people and their return to school cannot be underestimated. The relocation of ASN provision to the new Lockhart Campus was also a major milestone in our approach to supporting needs in North Ayrshire. Analysis of the data from the HSIR system shows that the number of recorded incidents of aggression and violence in ASN schools is proportionally higher than in other education settings. This is in line with expectations and can partially be explained as a result of specific additional support needs, including medical conditions. The Education Service continues to pro analyse the circumstances behind this data which the subject of ongoing discussions and planning at the service Health and Safety sub-group and other forum.

4.44 At the request of Head Teachers, a new category has been added to the incident report form – Aggression and Violence Without Intent. This allows staff to record incidents that they believe to be unintentional, and with reference to the Aggression & Violence incidents recorded last year (2021/22), 182 were deemed to be without intent.



Graph 11

- 4.45** Staff and Trade Unions have explored ways of trying to reduce the number and type of Aggression and Violence incidents; schools will continue to review pupil care plans and where appropriate consult and discuss pupil needs with parents and health partners. Where necessary, multi-agency meetings are set up to assist in developing strategies to support the needs of the young person and assist staff.

COVID 19 Planning

- 4.46** The Communities and Education Directorate (Education) set up a COVID-19 Recovery Board to plan and assist schools with risk assessments and Guidance ensuring the safe return and on-going attendance of staff and pupils to schools and early years centres.
- 4.47** Part of the planning required the service to produce a Local Resilience Plan and COVID-19 specific generic risk assessments - one for early years establishments and the other for schools. At each point when the Scottish Government and Education Scotland publish new and updated guidance on COVID-19, these documents were reviewed, updated, and circulated to schools.
- 4.48** During the pandemic, Lateral Flow Test devices were made available to all staff in all educational establishments as well as all S1 to S6 pupils. Education HQ have also agreed that any member of education staff visiting a North Ayrshire Council educational establishment should also complete an LFT prior to visiting the establishment.

Connected Communities

- 4.49** The Service developed a series of restart plans and timelines for the phased and safe return of the remaining lets, activities, and services. The restart plans were used as the framework to recover and reinstate provision in a safe, cautious, and manageable way focussing on needs and impact. Engagement took place with a range of stakeholders, staff groups, TU officials and partner organisations to test the framework and consider any adjustments to timelines or priorities. The recovery and renewal of services and community activity was smooth, and successful due to meticulous planning and ongoing support provided to voluntary organisations.
- 4.50** A robust package of safety measures was drawn up by the Service to facilitate the return of lets and these measures included restart toolkits, revised capacity numbers, building risk assessments, COVID-19 supplementary terms and conditions and sector specific guidance. Ongoing support electronically and in person was provided to organisations to build capacity and capability to recovery services and income.
- 4.51** Community Facilities proactively updated the Community Organisations/Centres Restart Toolkit and a range of internal and external services and partners utilised this to re-activate the use of buildings and reinstate activities safely, confidently, and compliantly. The kit was shared with a range of other authorities and third sector partners and amended to suit their needs. The toolkit featured a range of guidance including updated links to a host of sector specific and industry specialised Covid guidance as well as incorporating all other required steps, checklists & templates. The Service worked directly with organisations including independent Associations to provide guidance and assistance with risk assessments and other safety

measures from onset of Covid-19 through to full recover and reinstatement of services.

- 4.52** Partnerships continued with NHS &HSCP supporting the ongoing vaccination programmes and testing programmes across a number of Community Halls and Centres, predominantly Ardrossan Civic Centre. The Community Facilities Team worked closely with the partners on booking schedules and resource planning. Venue Assistant staff were released by the Service to assist with marshalling duties, caretaking and security duties as well as supporting enhanced cleaning regimes. Toolbox talks with Venue Assistant were periodically refreshed to take account any changes in the risk and controls.
- 4.53** PPE ordering, requests and distribution continued to be led for the Directorate centrally by Community Facilities. A structured electronic ordering procedure was embedded in practice and worked efficiently and effectively across all establishments and staffing groups. Stock levels, values of supply and demand were monitored, reported and discussed on a regular basis to ensure that needs and expectations were being met by staff and partner organisations.
- 4.54** During the reporting period the Service transitioned from the doorstep delivery of emergency food parcels to alleviate resources, fuel and transport and to offer a more dignified option for people facing food poverty. Discussions were led by Community Facilities and featured the Contact Centre, North Ayrshire Foodbank and partner food establishments to co-develop the transition plan. The Service developed a standard operating & safety guide for Community Food Larders which enabled these to develop at scale and pace.
- 4.55** Staff wellbeing continued to be a priority with regular check-in's, one-2-one sessions and surveys to assess workload, priorities and wellbeing. Service safety infographic flyers were developed and issued to all staff groups highlighting changes with restrictions, guidance and to reinforce 'safety first' messages from the outset of Covid until recovery. Hybrid working was embedded across teams. Transition plans were in early development for reinstatement of desk spaces and return to Cunninghame House. An electronic booking system for desk spaces was configured to assist manage hot desking in a safe and controlled manner.
- 4.56** All Risk assessments continued to be proactively reviewed, updated, displayed and communicated. The 6 monthly Workplace inspection programme continued and officers were still visiting sites where appropriate to support staff face-to-face and undertake compliance checking.
- 4.57** Community Hubs continued to operate, and collaborate with internal and external partners to provide a range of support packages and sign posting services throughout the recovery stages of the pandemic. A range of communication tools and platforms were used to raise awareness of the supports available.
- 4.58** Library services operated broadly in a click and collect model during this period . A steady restart programme allowed face to face library provision and services to recommence smoothly. Sites were operating during the reporting period although pre-covid opening hours are not yet fully recovered.
- 4.59** Community Learning & Development (CLAD) Youth and Adult Learning, Capacity Building continued to operate on a hybrid model maximising the opportunity to utilise

electronic service delivery models to deliver online sessions where more feasible and practical and undertaking face-to-face engagement, depending on circumstance, resourcing, and community need.

Arran Outdoor Centre continued to support the emergency accommodation strategy during the pandemic and were heading in the direction of full recovery, engaging with schools and facilitating staff and pupil visits.

- 4.60** New partnerships were formed with Facilities Management and Community Facilities to re-model existing period product action plans and to develop an ambitious strategy focussing on the needs of the most vulnerable. A range of improvement measures were put in place during the reporting period to the benefit of North Ayrshire staff, visitors and citizens.
- 4.61** The Directorate established a short life working group (SLWG) to review the culture, processes and performance around Health & Safety and staff wellbeing and to identify opportunities for improvement. Health & Safety leads were identified within Connected Communities and Education and a series of meetings /workshops were held incorporating H&S Corporate reps. A range of improvements were quickly identified and opportunities for replicating best practice and streamlining systems was captured. When the SLWG draws to a close the representatives will present a Discovery and Action report and take this forward with the aim of being sector leading in H&S practices.
- 4.62** Further collaboration with the Council's Risk Manager and the North Ayrshire Foodbank which resulted in the further developed Service Blackstart and Resilience Plans. Scoping work was underway to: procure agile generator sets; identify community hubs; procure bulk ambient food stocks and to design a package of Blackstart awareness sessions and support.

5 Corporate Health and Safety Planned Improvements

- 5.1** To meet the requirements of Health and Safety legislation in relation to the Duty of Care and to improve the management of Health and Safety within the Council, it is important to identify areas to improve the safety culture and performance at all levels.
- 5.2** Corporate Health and Safety in conjunction with Directorates will seek to implement continuous improvement in a variety of ways. The following improvement actions are currently planned for 2022/23:
- Procure and implement a new Health & Safety Reporting System
 - Develop guidance for the new HSIR System
 - Review and cascade new or amended Health and Safety Policies/Guidance
 - Procure supplier for Lone Working Devices
 - Increase delivery of health and safety training for all Services, including:
 - Re-introduction of face-to-face training
 - Complete development of an 'Incident Investigation Training Course for Managers/Supervisors' and roll out to services
 - Develop training for the new HSIR System and roll out across all directorates
 - Development of a Dynamic Risk Assessment training course
 - Implementation of COSHH Awareness course.