

5th June 2026

Agenda Item No.

Annual Health and Safety Report 2025/26

Report by: Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources

Wards Affected: None

Purpose

To enable ongoing scrutiny, the report provides an update on Health and Safety activity since the report to Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on 21st May 2025. The report provides high level information with summary detail.

Recommendations

Committee Members are asked to:

- (1) Review performance and activity for the 2025 -2026 financial year
- (2) Note the progress made regarding improving workforce practices and performance in the organisation and advise on any further activity
- (3) Endorse continued focus on the priorities identified

Resource Implications

None

Legal & Risk Implications

Health and Safety at work is about identification of risk and elimination or management of that risk through control measures. The report outlines key health and safety focus areas, supporting proactive and effective action through 2025/26.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

This report has been shared with the Council Executive Team and the Corporate Health and Safety Strategy Group, which includes Trade Union representation.

Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders will continue to be a feature of the Council's shared commitment to working together.

1.0 Background

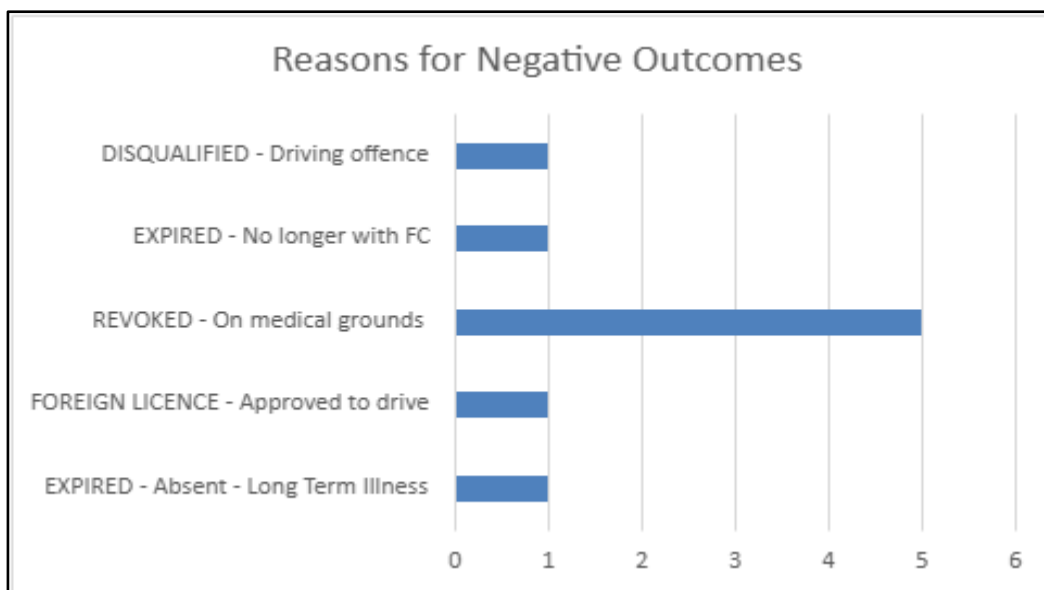
- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Council's health and safety performance, achievements and challenges during 2025/26. Fife Council is committed to a positive health and safety culture and continual improvement to safeguard the health and safety of employees, clients, and service users across Fife.
- 1.2 The Corporate Health & Safety Team's core purpose is to provide leadership, assurance, and professional expertise to ensure Fife Council meets its legal and moral responsibilities for health, safety, and wellbeing, while continuously improving safe practice across all services.
 - Leads and maintains the Council's health and safety governance framework, ensuring policies, systems, and arrangements are in place and effective across the organisation.
 - Provides competent professional advice and support to Directorates and Services on legislative compliance, risk management, and best practice.
 - Supports delivery of the Health & Safety Management System, including monitoring, audit, and assurance activity.
 - Drives continuous improvement in health, safety, and wellbeing, working collaboratively with directorates and services to reduce risk and strengthen a positive safety culture.
 - Contributes to incident learning, risk assessments, and targeted improvement activity to help prevent harm to employees, service users, contractors, and the public
- 1.3 In addition to the strategic governance and assurance provided by the Corporate Health & Safety Team, specialist Health & Safety capacity is embedded within Services where work activity carries higher and more complex risk, including a Team Manager (Compliance & Risk, including H&S) in Education and dedicated Health & Safety posts within Environment & Building Services, Transportation and Facilities Management. These specialist teams provide expert, sector-specific advice, translate corporate policy and legal requirements into effective local practice, and support managers to identify, assess and control operational risks.
- 1.4 During the 25/26 year, the HR Health & Safety team worked with Services reviewing 3,522 incidents. The Procedures and Guidance documents are regularly reviewed and updated where required.

2.0 Priorities and Continuous Improvement

2.1 Driving at Work

- 2.1.1 The DAVIS system continues to provide the Council with an automated method of ensuring that employees driving their own, or Council vehicles, on Council business have the appropriate licence to do so. Oversight of compliance remains with the HR Health & Safety Team.

During the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, 6998 licence checks were undertaken with 6989 returning positive results and 9 returning negative outcomes.



2.2 Violent Marker System

- 2.2.1 The Violent Marker System (VMS), holds the addresses of individuals where employees may be at risk during home visits or remote working. This is managed by a cross-service Violent Marker Review Group (VMRG) who ensure that risks are managed through effective control measures such as use of SOS fob, two-person visit to supplement risk assessments.
- 2.2.2 During 2025/26 there were 242 named properties added to the VMS, an increase from 207.
- 2.2.3 Elected Members can contact Legal and Democratic Services before undertaking home visits who will access relevant information on the VMS on their behalf.

2.3 Lone and Remote Workers

- 2.3.1 Around 320 managers and employees have been supported through training over the last year, complemented by direct engagement with the workforce,

including a powerful video message from a Home Carer, Dive into Digital presentation and tailored messaging to staff work mobiles.

- 2.3.2 There are 3559 Lone & Remote Working Fobs now allocated across the Council. Although the increased numbers is a step in the right direction, the opportunity still exists to improve fob usage across all Services/Directorates. The table below highlights the increase of usage of the fobs.

Year	No. of active fobs	No. of days fobs have been used
22/23	1553	55,400
23/24	2668	116,127
24/25	2556	173,244
25/26	3041	234,380

A total of 42,121 alerts have been raised in the past 12 months, 34,048 of these were yellow alerts in which the user will leave a short voice message with task or location specific information about their work activities.

8,036 accidental or test alerts were raised. 37 genuine red alerts were raised by fob users throughout the previous 12 months. 6 of these were escalated by the Alarm Receiving Centre, external call handlers who receive alarms from employees requesting assistance from the emergency services.

2.4 Fire Safety

- 2.4.1 Undertaking Fire safety compliance inspections, completing fire risk assessments and providing technical support and advice continues to present challenges to the corporate Health & Safety team. As part of the Council's Workforce Youth Investment programme, a new Fire Safety Trainee has been recruited and is proving to be a valuable investment. This does not provide a long term solution to an area of increasing risk. Discussions are planned to consider options to address this particular area over the next year.

2.4.3 Insurance Surveys

AIG carried out a Risk Improvement Survey of Windmill Community Campus, Glenwood High School and Dunfermline Carnegie Library and Gallery. A standard insurers risk improvement action was identified at Glenwood HS, recommending both kitchens are fitted with suppression systems. Local management was highly praised by the Risk Engineer at Windmill Campus, in particular, the maintenance of comprehensive fire safety documentation and frequent formal workplace inspections.

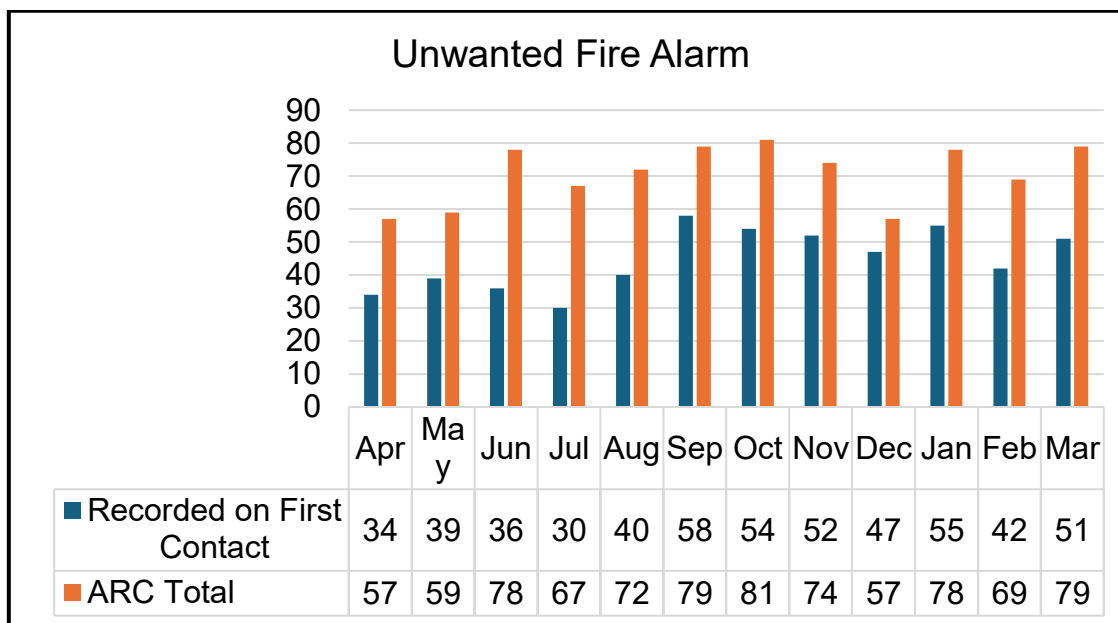
2.4.4 Fire Incidents

There were 20 recorded fire incidents on Fife Council premises last year. The incidents resulted in minor damage with no injuries. Wilful fire raising remains the most common cause of fire with 12 incidents including 6 set by pupils in toilets.

Whilst the number of lithium-ion battery incidents is low, 2 bin lorry fires were likely caused by batteries, the risk is increasing and the knowledge is continuing to evolve. Interim guidance has been issued to all premises supported by a communications campaign for safe use and disposal. In a wider context, Housing and Safer Communities have published general guidance for tenants and communities.

2.4.5 **Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)**

The Corporate H&S team and Education Compliance teams continue to monitor UFAS reporting and causes. The table below shows UFAS recorded on First Contact compared with registered figures from our Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) provider.



2.4.6 Recording levels have improved rising to 58% of UFAS recorded with a cause, compared to around 36% last year. Towards the end of the year recording improved significantly achieving 70% and 80% with the issuing monthly reports to Services, detailing missed alarms for action and recommendations to reduce unwanted alarms. The overall number of UFAS recorded this year (April 25 - March 26) was 850, a slight 4% increase, likely in part because of increased coverage of buildings with automatic fire detection. System faults have reduced but accidental and testing causes have increased.

2.4.7 **Housing**

Communities Directorate have provided regular updates to Cabinet Committee and People and Communities Committee on fire safety strategy for domestic properties. The Cabinet Committee agreed at their meeting on [4th December 2025](#) to introduce programmed work for fitting water-based sprinklers across all Tower Blocks maintained by Fife Council.

A separate report on [Fire Mitigation in Housing Stock](#) was considered by the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 12th March 2026. The report sets out a four-stage process of fire safety improvements across Tower Blocks, Homeless Hostels, Extra Care Housing and medium rise flats in partnership with our framework specialist contractors.

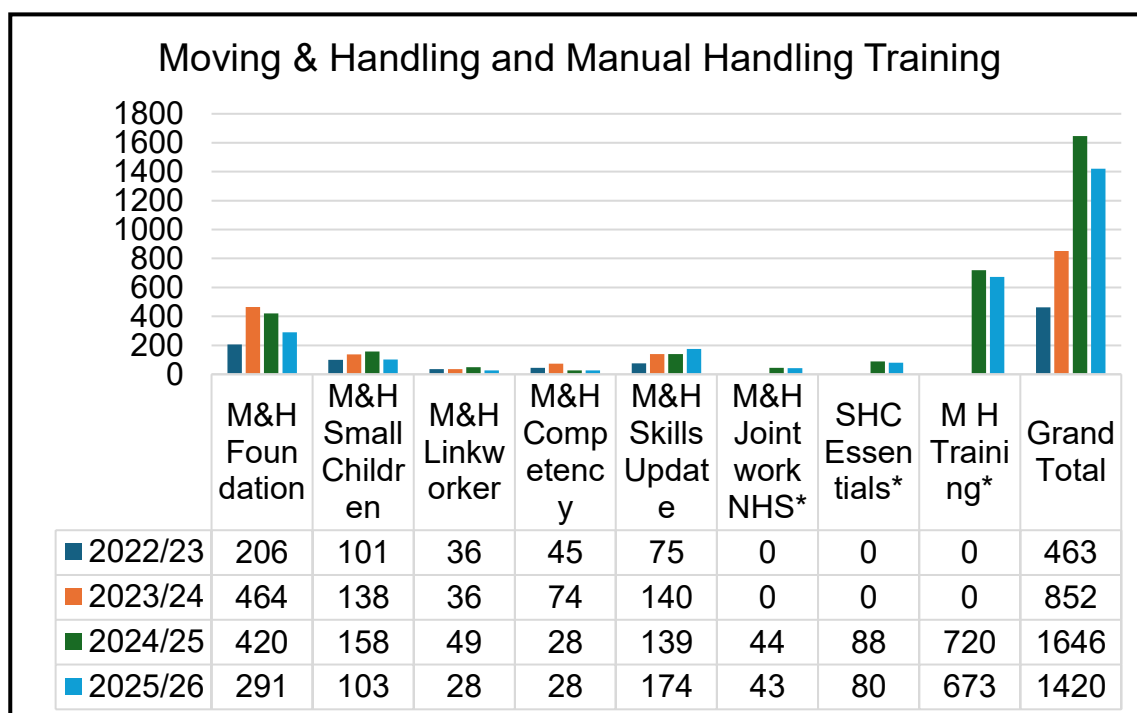
2.4.8 Health and Social Care

Following inconsistent operation of the fire alarm system and interfaces observed during evacuation drills a review of systems was carried out across all care homes. The fire alarm cause and effect of each home was tested and reprogrammed where necessary to accurately reflect the homes evacuation strategy.

Lindsay House care home fire compartmentation is under investigation with a full fire stopping survey by specialist contractors commissioned. The premises are fitted with comprehensive sprinkler coverage and an addressable fire alarm system. Fire safety is managed to a very high standard with a low likelihood of fire, and the evacuation strategy is considered to remain acceptable.

2.5 Manual Handling (People and Inactive Loads)

- 2.5.1 Musculoskeletal disorders remain a significant issue within the workforce, accounting for approximately 22% of working days lost and 12% of sickness absence occurrences. These conditions not only impact the health and wellbeing of employees, but also place considerable pressure on service delivery and organisational resources. Manual Handling training is a critical activity aimed at increasing competence and capabilities of those employees whose work roles involve manual handling. Effective training supports safer working practices, reduces the risk of injury, and enable staff to perform their duties confidently while meeting statutory health and safety requirements.
- 2.5.2 The Moving and Handling Team and a network of Moving and Manual Handling Trainers continue to manage and deliver mandatory training courses utilising eLearning and classroom-based learning. The training is a statutory requirement for the organisation to protect staff from avoidable injury, reduce incidents and accidents and ensure safe dignified care for service users. Sessions delivered are covered below which evidences the level of training commitment for 2025/26.



* Training where we only have partial statistics

- 2.5.3 Demand for training continues to grow due to increased operational pressures across Directorates, workforce turnover and recruitment of new staff requiring foundation training and expanded service delivery models introduced through the Right Care for You agenda. The MH team has reduced in size following the end of a secondment, which combined with the continued roll out of the Right Care for You programme and increasing demands is stretching the team's current capacity. Existing resource constraints have created training bottlenecks which can impact service delivery and create organisational risk. Discussions with relevant Heads of Service have been taking place to identify funding options to increase the team. A update report will be taken to Finance & Corporate Services Management team when necessary.
- 2.5.4 While the table above focuses solely on the team's training activity, this reflects only a small portion of the Moving & Handling Team's overall contribution to the organisation. Beyond delivering essential training, the team provides expert guidance and support, leads assessments and interventions in complex handling cases, and plays a critical role in accident and incident investigations that directly reduce organisational risk. They ensure safe, effective practice through timely professional advice, robust risk assessments, and hands on demonstration of proper techniques and equipment use. In 2025/26 the team received 260 requests for support and investigated 54 handling related accident/incidents/near misses.
- 2.5.5 Moving & Handling Linkworkers increased from 319 to 330. The role of the Link Worker is to promote and reinforce safe manual handling practices in the workplace, carry out formal risk assessments and handling plans, monitor and supervise staff performance, provide on-site instruction, and maintain

their own competency through regular updates. Training is delivered on a quarterly basis, supported by a managed waiting list. This approach ensures that staff identified as higher priority, based on the nature and risk profile of their role, are allocated places at the earliest opportunity.

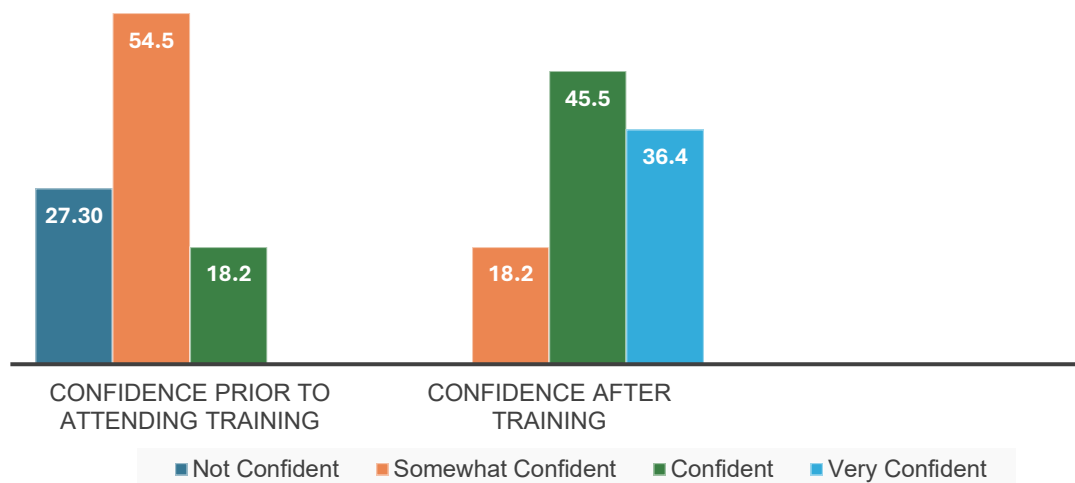
- 2.5.6 Linkworker update training enables Fife Council to provide assurance that staff undertaking moving and handling risk assessments remain competent and up to date. The training ensures Linkworkers are informed of relevant updates, including learning outcomes arising from incidents, and confirms their capability to carry out on-site competency assessments for care staff. Where Linkworker training is not current, there is an increased organisational risk that systems of work may not be suitable and sufficient, or that critical information which could reduce the likelihood of accidents or incidents is not effectively communicated. To address this, further work is ongoing to improve training attendance. In addition, supplementary face-to-face skills update training is planned during the current year to enhance Linkworkers' confidence and competence in carrying out their role.

Right Care for You (Single Handed Care)

- 2.5.7 The Right Care for You project, launched in September 2023, aiming to ensure people receive the right care, at the right time, tailored to their individual abilities. Support is driven by assessed needs and person-specific risk assessments, built around four principles: respect and dignity, coordinated support, personalised planning, and empowerment.
- 2.5.8 The project began in Care at Home, where many service users required two or more carers due to moving and handling needs linked to prescribed equipment. By introducing specialised equipment and advanced moving and handling techniques, service users have been supported to improve independence and function. This has led to better personal outcomes and enabled many to safely move to single-carer support, reducing service complexity and costs for the Partnership with significant savings reported by HSCP.
- 2.5.9 The Moving and Handling Team led Fife Council's contribution to the Risk Assessment Process and Training workstream. They developed and delivered new training programmes to ensure staff were equipped to support the approach safely. The Care at Home phase has successfully concluded: all existing multi-carer packages have been reviewed and reduced where safe, and people currently in hospital are assessed for suitability before discharge.
- 2.5.10 Feedback on the implementation of Right Care for You has been effective, with 91% of participants highlighting that the training they attended increased their skills and knowledge, with one of the trainers highlighting that;

“at first carers were very worried about Right Care for you, but once training was carried out and they were able to be proactive with the equipment and techniques, they felt more confident and left good feedback”.

Confidence of participants prior to and following training



The approach has been embedded into standard practice within Care at Home and Occupational Therapy Services. Overall 73% reported Right Care For You integrated into their day-to-day practice, while the remaining 27% indicated that their current case allocations have not yet required its application.

- 2.5.11 Work has begun on the next phase of roll out, with training needs analysis and discussions carried out with Older Peoples Residential Services (OPS) and Adult Services Resources (ASR) to plan rollout tailored to each service's specific needs and additional training courses are planned to support the services to upskill their staff teams.

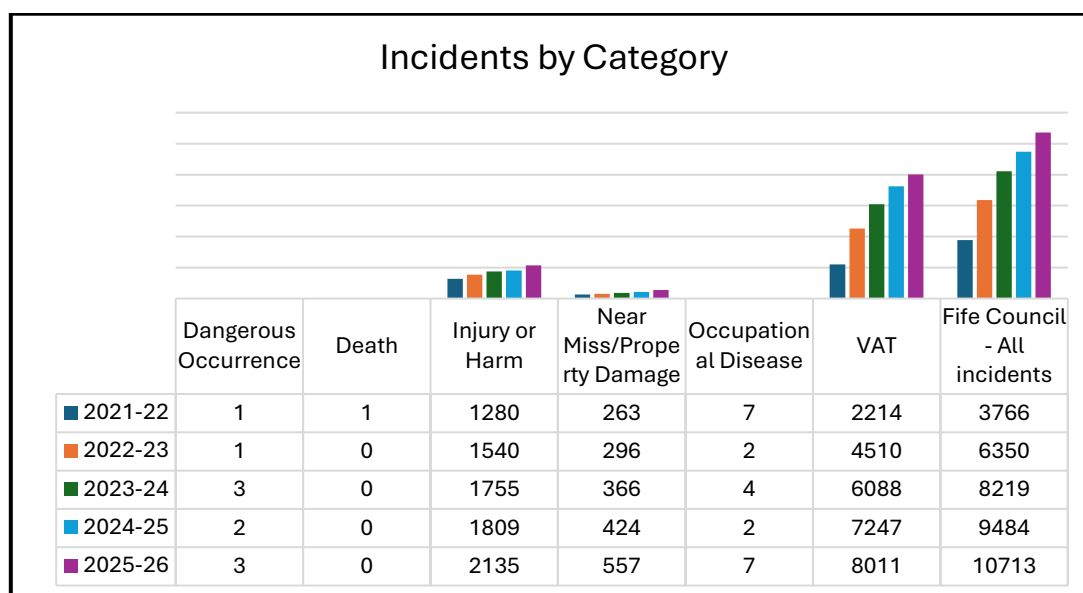
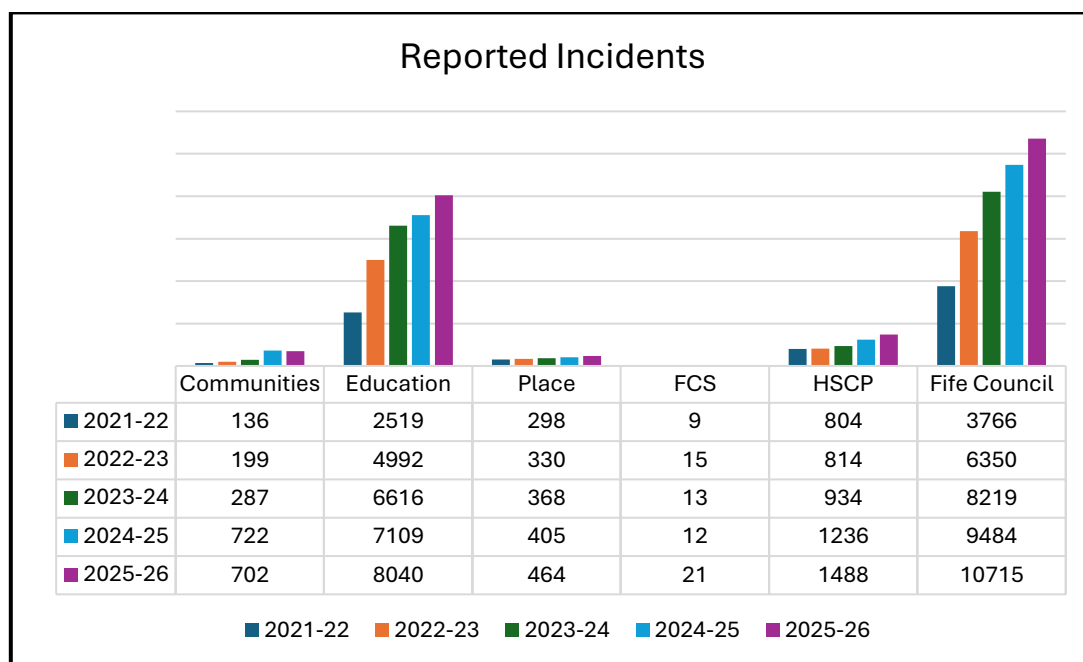
Manual Handling – Inactive Objects

- 2.5.12 The development of a Manual Handling Competency Assessment framework is reaching completion, this ties in with an existing model which has successfully been in operation for those services where they are moving and handling people. This replaces the need for staff to return to a classroom to take part in Manual Handling Update every three years and, in its place, have their competence measured in their workplace. The moving and handling team will carry out these competency assessments as well as train and support MH Trainers to deliver this within their own service areas.

3.0 Health and Safety Risk Management

- 3.1.1 Incidents reported through the First Contact incident reporting software, Assyst, are reviewed by the Health and Safety team. Incident reporting scorecards developed using Power Bi enable up to date reports for Directorates/Services to facilitate trend analysis.
- 3.1.2 There were 10715 incidents reported to Health & Safety in 25/26 which is a 13% increase in reporting of all incidents.

- 3.1.3 Over the year there has been an 31.4% increase in Near Miss reporting, which is a good leading indicator. Other main increases include Violence, Aggression or Threat 10% and Injury or Harm 18%. All incidents are thoroughly investigated, and any identified learning shared where required with the aim to prevent recurrence.

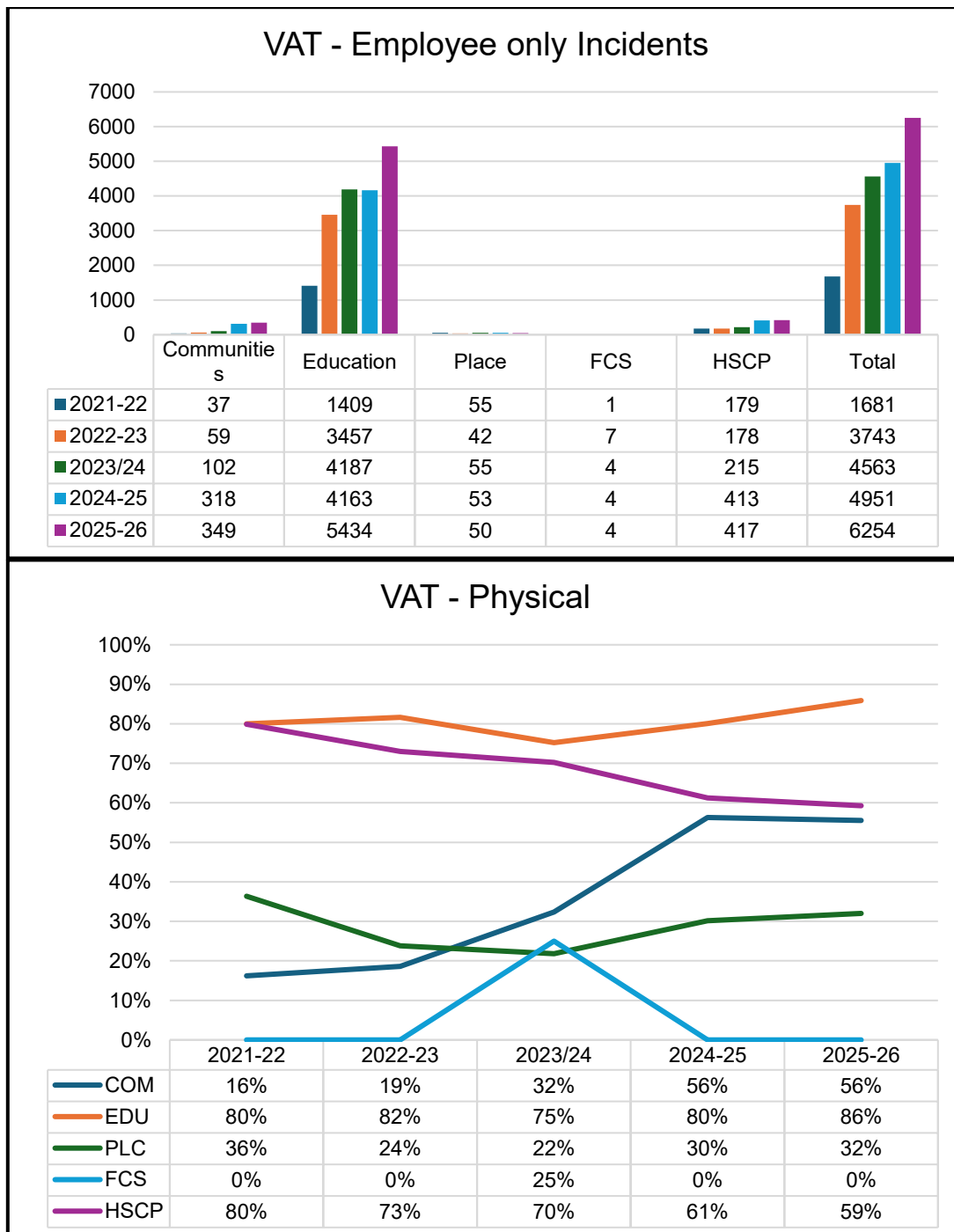


- 3.1.4 The VAT incidents recorded in the above table reflects **all** incidents reported on HS1 form. That includes Service Users, Pupils, members of the public and dangerous dogs as the affected 'person'.

3.2 Violence, Aggression and Threat (VAT) – Employee only Incidents

- 3.2.1 Violence, aggression and threatening behaviour remains a significant and sustained issue across the organisation. In 2025/26, there was a further 12% increase in the number of VAT incidents recorded where the employee was recorded as person effected. The data shows that VAT incidents most often

affect employees working in front-facing services. While many incidents do not result in physical injury, a meaningful number lead to lost or restricted work time, impacting both staff wellbeing and service delivery. The second table provides a breakdown of physical incidents as a percentage of overall incidents.



3.2.2 The VAT Joint Working Group, formed in 2025/26, the VAT Reduction Charter agreed in March 2026, the Toolbox Talk briefing together form a clear, joined-up framework to prevent and reduce violence, aggression and threat (VAT) across the organisation.

- **VAT Reduction Charter:** Establishes a shared commitment between the Council, employees, managers and trade unions to promote safety, prevention, support and learning
- **VAT Joint Working Group:** Coordinates delivery of this commitment by sharing best practice, monitoring trends and driving consistent action across services
- **VAT Toolbox Talk:** Converts strategy into accessible frontline guidance, supporting managers and employees to prevent incidents and reinforce safer behaviours

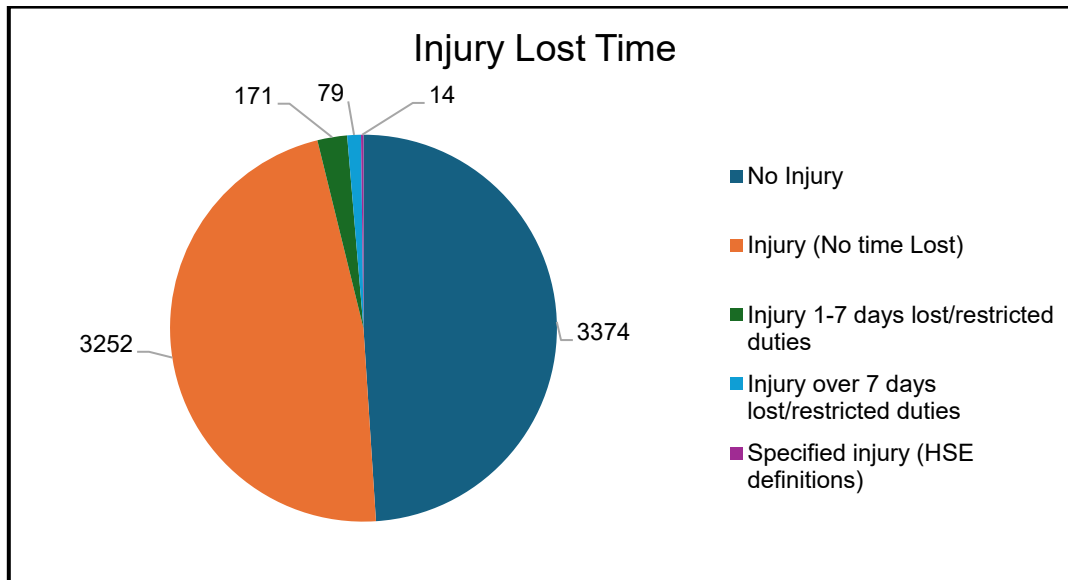
3.2.3 The Education Directorate has acknowledged a sustained increase in violence, aggression and threatening behaviour towards staff and has set out a coordinated programme of actions to reduce risk, improve consistency and strengthen staff safety and wellbeing.

3.2.4 The Education Directorate reported to Cabinet on 8th January 2026 [Promoting Positive Relationships in Schools](#) which recognised a sustained increase in violence, aggression and threatening behaviour towards staff. The report highlighted a coordinated programme of action to improve staff safety and reduce risk. This includes:

- Strengthening whole-school prevention through revised *Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour* guidance
- Embedding trauma-informed, de-escalation and restorative practice
- clarifying the proportionate use of consequences and risk assessment
- Improving the quality and use of incident data to identify trends and target intervention

Enhanced reporting, leadership oversight, Trade Union engagement, staff wellbeing support, and strengthened multi-agency and parental working are intended to improve consistency, transparency and assurance, and reinforce that violence and threatening behaviour towards staff is unacceptable.

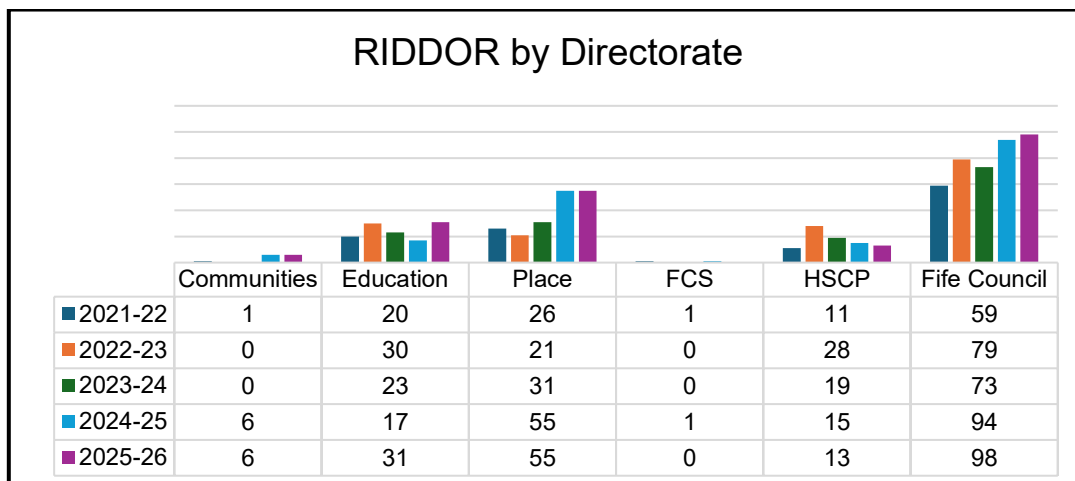
3.2.5 Not all incidents result in lost time, the table below provides information on the severity of incidents on Fife Council employees, specifically relating to working time lost as a consequence of the incident.



3.3 **Reportable Incident Reports (RIDDOR)**

3.3.1 Fife Council is required to report more serious accidents and incidents to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations (RIDDOR)¹. We report incidents to employees and members of the public.

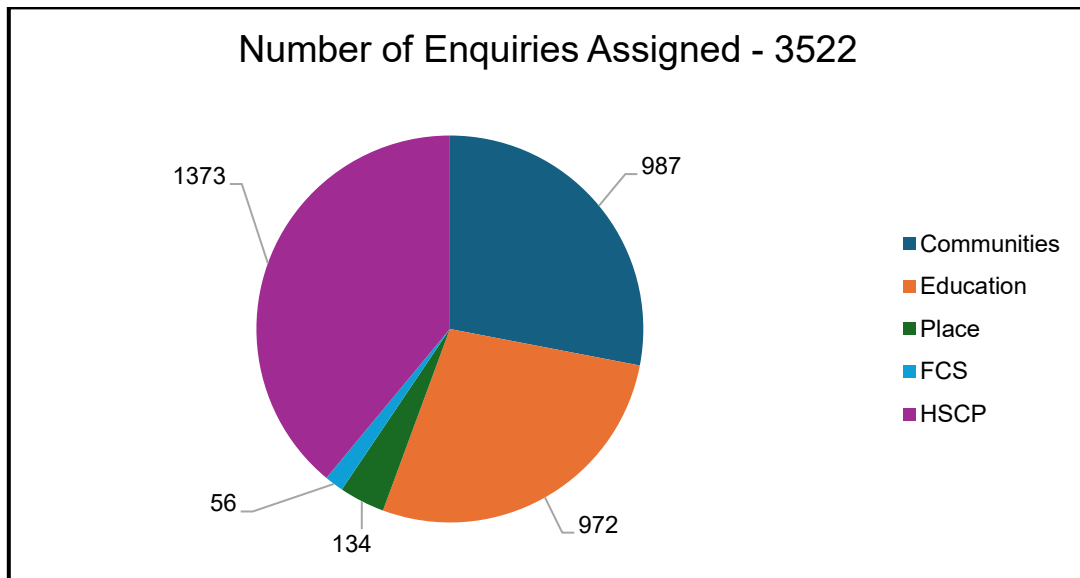
3.3.2 Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, 98 incidents were reported to the HSE. The breakdown of reportable incidents by Directorate is provided in the table below. These relate to employees only. This shows a 4% increase in incident reporting compared with 2024/25.



3.4 **Health & Safety Team Activity**

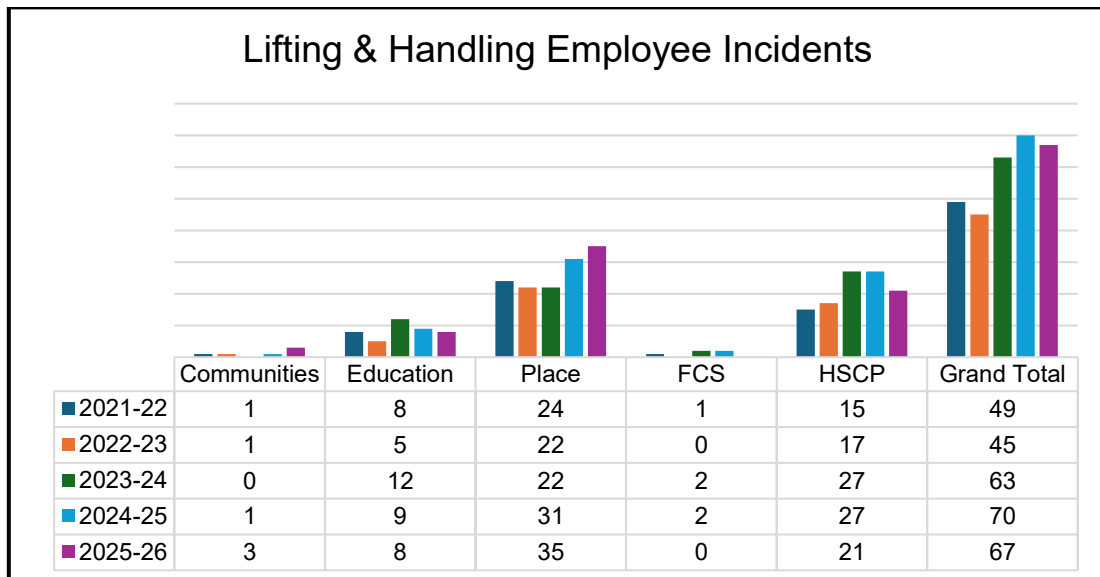
3.4.1 The table below shows Health and Safety (H&S) enquiries where Services have requested assistance on a H&S matter. In terms of overall volume, the corporate Health & Safety team dealt with 3522 incidents.

¹ RIDDOR is the law that requires employers, and other people in control of work premises, to report and keep records of work-related accidents: which cause death; work-related accidents which cause certain serious injuries (specified injuries); diagnosed cases of certain industrial diseases; and certain 'dangerous occurrences' (incidents with the potential to cause harm).



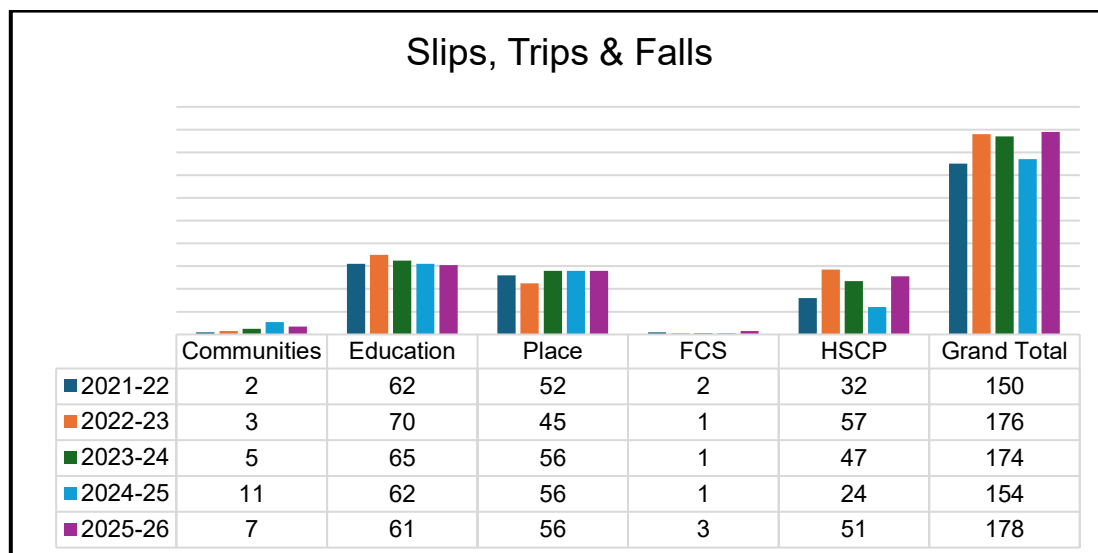
3.5 Lifting & Handling - Employee Incidents

- 3.5.1 Lifting and Handling incidents have experienced a slight reduction from 70 to 67 over the year. Using poor techniques contributes to cumulative musculoskeletal issues, and related absences, without always being preceded by a specific incident. This highlights the importance of ensuring manual handling training is undertaken within services including initial and refresher training.



3.6 Slips, Trips and Falls - Employee Incidents

- 3.6.1 The table below highlights a 15% increase in Slips, Trip or Fall incidents on the previous year. In each case, the incident was reviewed, and corrective action taken where required to prevent a recurrence.



3.7 **Employer's Liability Claims**

- 3.7.1 Although the cost of claims is a performance indicator, timescales for completion of litigation and settlement payments are generally out with the influence of current managers. There was a slight decrease in the cost of claim settlements in 2025/26 from £1.052m to £1.010m. Maintaining a positive Health & Safety culture—supported by robust safe systems of work—remains essential to preventing harm, reducing avoidable incidents and protecting employees.

The number of claims closed during the year reduced from 58 to 45, 11 of which were closed where no responsibility was found against Fife Council.

Cause description	Closed	Total payments (£)
Working Conditions	6	271,008.94
Other – single-claim causes	7	290,701.76
Trip / Slip	10	166,586.40
Assault	11	126,271.75
Lifting / Moving Equipment	3	61,230.70
Other	3	63,931.60
Needlestick	2	31,044.68
Defective Tools / Equipment	2	750.00
Total	45	1,010,525.83

Claim Duration	Number of claims
Under 6 months (0–182 days)	2
6–12 months (183–365 days)	9
12–24 months (366–730 days)	11

Over 24 months (731+ days)	23
Total	45

Directorate	Number of closed claims
Communities	3
Education	12
FCS	0
HSCP	6
Place	20
Other (FRS/Unidentified)	4
Total	45

3.8 Health and Safety Executive Enforcement or Contravention Notices

3.8.1 There were no Enforcement Notices served on the Council, however there were three Notices of Contravention (a letter explaining and identifying material breaches of health and safety laws). Each of these relate to incidents arising in 2024/25 financial year, however notices were not received during that period.

- **Finger Trapping** - On 20 February 2025, a child sustained an injury at St Andrews Nursery School. While being assisted by an Early Years Officer in the changing room, the child placed her hand between the door and the frame as it was closing. Her left pinkie finger was trapped, resulting in blood blisters on the finger pad and cuts and bruising to the fingernail. At the time of the incident, a door guard had not been fitted to the door
- **Direction to Leave Undisturbed** - On 13th February 2025, a Direction to Leave Undisturbed notice (DTLU) was issued in relation to a Council domestic property to preserve the integrity of the scene during an ongoing Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation. Unfortunately due to an administrative oversight, work was undertaken on the property contravening the DTLU
- **Risk Assessment, Halbeath** - On 4th March 2025, an employee was conducting a routine repair on the 'bin lift' at the rear of a refuse collection vehicle in the Halbeath Depot. As part of this, they require to change a sensor. When the bin lift was in the maximum 'top' position the employee reached up, and their fingers were then caught in the bin lift clamp. As a result of this they suffered injuries to their right hand and wrist

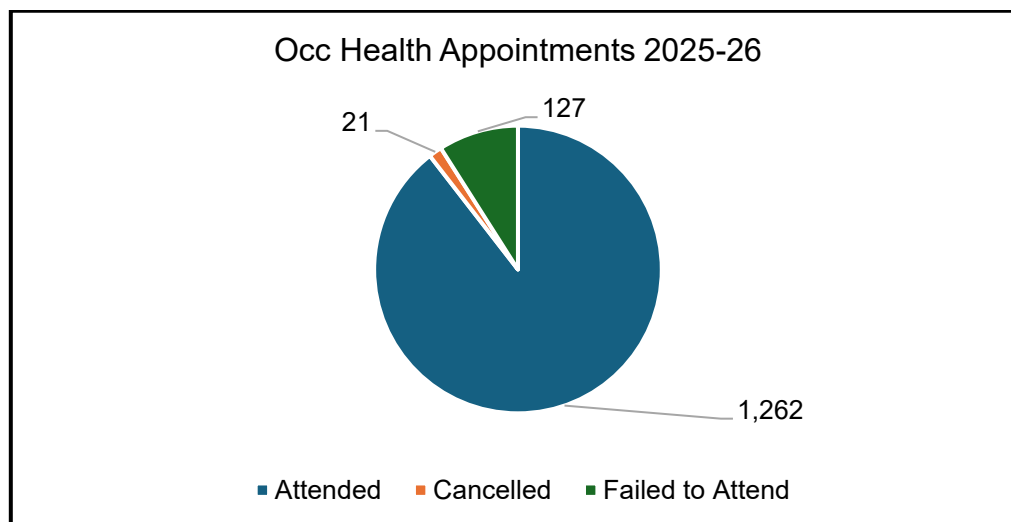
3.9 Health and Safety Management Framework

3.9.1 The Health & Safety Management Framework (HSMF) provides the Council's formal mechanism requiring health and safety to be embedded as a core management responsibility across all Services meeting legal duties. Completing and maintaining the Health & Safety Management Framework provides the workforce with clear, consistent protection and assurance that health and safety risks are being actively identified, assessed and controlled.

3.9.2 Over the last 12 months, the Corporate Health & Safety team have worked with Directorates and Services to progress completion of HSMF for their areas. The efforts from the team has resulted in all Services, with one exception, completing and publishing HSMF. The application of the framework improves transparency, reduces avoidable incidents, supports wellbeing, and reinforces a positive safety culture.

3.10 Health Surveillance

3.10.1 The annual health surveillance programme continues to operate well with the existing service provider. The figures in the 2025-26 showed an increasing number of staff failing to attend initial scheduled appointments. A process was developed and implemented to track these and to try and reduce the numbers of non-attendance.



3.11 Stress Management

3.11.1 Completing Service level stress risk assessments enables the Council to meet its legal health and safety duties by treating stress as a recognised workplace hazard and demonstrating that foreseeable risks are being identified, assessed and controlled.

3.11.2 Stress Risk Assessments are a preventative, risk-based approach which allow Services to address pressures before they escalate into stress-related illness, reducing avoidable sickness absence, workforce disruption and associated costs.

3.11.3 The Stress Overview Group comprising Directorate Senior Managers has a remit to review and agree corporate priorities and actions. The group have overseen the publication of 28 Service level risk assessments. In addition supported Council wide communication promoting support available for non-work related stress.

3.11.4 The average working days lost (WDL) for all employees is recorded as 15.32 WDL per FTE. Stress absences for the same period accounts for 2.74 WDL

per FTE or 17.9%. Non work-related stress accounted for 1.74 WDL per FTE (11.4%), work related accounted for 1.00 WDL per FTE (6.5%).

4.0 Service Reports

4.1.1 As set out in section 1.3, in addition to the corporate Health and Safety team, Environment & Building Services, Transportation and Facilities Management have dedicated health and safety resources. Much of their work aligns with corporate objectives and each play an active role in achieving those. In addition this report highlights areas of success, specific to their areas, in the previous 12 months.

- **Governance, assurance and documentation**
 - COPC Workbook reviewed and updated
 - Kitchen Day Books & Delivery Books reviewed & updated
 - Review and updated Health and Safety Management Framework documents
 - Update workplace inspection service procedure and implement
 - Finalised and published Service Level Stress Risk Assessment
- **Training, competence and compliance**
 - Cook Safe & House Rules Refresh Training - with all Hospitality Coordinators, who then delivered to Catering Supervisors
 - Delivered Food Hygiene Training to approximately 400 staff
 - Annual Planned REHIS Food Hygiene Training Programme developed with an additional 170 staff to be trained this year
 - Delivered First Aid at Work Training to 17 staff
 - Training for School Crossing Patrol Officers on ROSPA guidelines
 - Dates are in place to have the mandatory training Manual Handling Working at Height, H&S Awareness and Harness training
 - Lone Working Fobs – refresher
- **Engagement, wellbeing and communications**
 - Summer Summits with Catering Supervisors, including Child Protection training and Wellbeing and Wellbeing Days for Janitors
 - Increase communication with workforce including new areas such as Viva Engage
 - Toolbox Talks delivered, including Safe Winter Driving guidance
- **Systems, tools and safer equipment**
 - Roll out new training database for office based staff which will include mandatory eLearning to ensure compliance
 - Long reach battery hedge cutters are now in place. Looking to phase out petrol mowers and replace with battery

5.0 Continuing and Future Work Priorities

5.1 Priorities For 2026-27

- 5.1.1 A great deal of work has been undertaken by the Corporate and Service Health & Safety teams over the past year. The priority remains to continually promote and embed a strong health and safety culture at all levels of the organisation.

5.2 Health and Safety Strategy

- 5.2.1 The Council's Our People Matter (OPM), our People and Workforce Strategy, sets out the Council's high level health and safety strategy. The Corporate Health & Safety team will drive forward positive engagement, ensure safe systems of work and will work with Directorates to deliver the following positive actions:

- **Governance and consultation**
 - Identify ways to continually look for opportunities to increase participation and engagement on health and safety at Directorate and Service level
- **Risk Management and HSMF**
 - Complete and keep the Health & Safety Management Framework (HSMF) current across all Services, supporting Services to complete risk profiles
 - Expand data-led assurance using incident trends, inspection findings and audit outcomes to target support and measure improvement
- **Engagement and positive culture**
 - Promote consistent learning and development, including role-specific toolbox talks and learning-from-incidents briefings
 - Recognise and share examples of good practice across Directorates to reinforce positive behaviours and a proactive safety culture

5.3 Implementation of Stress Risk Assessments

- 5.3.1 Employee wellbeing remains a key priority, recognising that poor mental health is one of the primary drivers of sickness absence within the Council. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Council's substantial change agenda, which can increase pressure on employees and has the potential to impact service delivery.
- 5.3.2 Continued monitoring of Stress Risk Assessment actions through Stress Overview Group, Directorate and Service level H&S consultation forums.

5.4 Reducing Violence, Aggression & Threat

- 5.3.3 As noted in 3.2.1 of this report, Violence, Aggression and Threatening behaviour toward Council employees continues to present significant challenge to the Council. The aims set out in the VAT reduction Charter explains actions aimed at reducing the number of incidents, to support this the Corporate Health & Safety team will:

- **Leadership and shared ownership**

- Promote the VAT Reduction Charter and maintain senior oversight to ensure arrangements are applied consistently
- Work with Directorate and Trade Union Safety Representatives, using shared information to agree improvements that make employees safer
- **Prevent harm through planning and controls**
 - Review risk assessments for higher-risk roles and situations, checking that controls are practical, understood and used in day-to-day work
 - Where there is an ongoing risk, support timely referrals to the Violent Marker Review Group so the right safeguards are in place before visits
- **Listen, learn and improve**
 - Make reporting straightforward and reinforce a supportive environment when they report VAT incidents and near misses
 - Monitor and share VAT incident data to understand what is happening to staff, target prevention activity, and provide assurance on progress
 - Support prompt investigation so learning is captured and shared, and improvements are put in place to reduce repeat incidents
- **Support after an incident and build confidence**
 - Ensure colleagues get consistent post-incident support, including line manager check-ins and access to HR advice, occupational health and counselling
 - Provide role-appropriate training (including de-escalation and managing conflict) so staff feel prepared and supported to keep themselves and others safe

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This report presents information on key health and safety activities within Fife Council in another year of challenges. Occupational health and safety risks continue to be managed to protect the health and wellbeing of Fife Council employees and those who use our services.

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