

**South Ayrshire Council**

**Report by Chief Governance Officer  
to Joint Consultative Committee  
of 1 April 2025**

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**Subject: Health and Safety Update**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current position in respect of Health and Safety issues across the Council.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the JCC agrees that the support arrangements in place for Health and Safety are consistent with the achievement of Council objectives.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 A high standard of Health and Safety performance is one of the Council's primary objectives and is recognised as an integral part of service delivery.
- 3.2 An updated position statement in respect of the support arrangements in place to manage Health and Safety effectively is a standing item on the First Tier JCC agenda.
- 3.3 This report reflects recent and ongoing Health and Safety activity and draws on incident statistics and health and safety audit information gathered from Quarter 3, October 2024 to December 2024.

**4. Proposals**

4.1 ***Fire Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Audit Programme***

Fire Risk Assessments provide a detailed analysis of fire safety arrangements within operational properties and form the basis of compliance with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005. Health and Safety Audits are also a legislative requirement and carried out via a rolling programme of inspections undertaken by the Risk and Safety team.

A total of 11 properties had Fire Risk Assessments and Health and Safety Audits undertaken during the period from October 2024 to December 2024 and fully detailed reports with action plans were issued to Service Leads and Duty Holders.

As you may be aware, in July 2023 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) implemented a major change in terms of revised response arrangements to automated alarm calls, introducing the concept of 'call challenge' which requires additional confirmation via a 999 that fire, or signs of fire, are present within a building before they agree to dispatch an appliance. In response to these changes, and to ensure compliance with the revised procedures, our Property Compliance Team within Asset Management have delivered training to duty holders within Council premises in relation to the interpretation of fire alarm panels. (Sleeping accommodation is exempt from the protocol).





#### 4.2 ***Pentana Health and Safety Actions***

Health and Safety Action Plans are prepared for Service Leads on a quarterly basis using the Pentana reporting system. These reports outline a list of outstanding actions that may have been identified through the Health and Safety Audit Programme, Fire Risk Assessments, Incident Investigations, or other third-party inspections. Timescales for completion are tracked through Pentana and Service Leads or their delegates can update the system to close off any actions assigned within their area of responsibility.

These reports also include information on progress by the Property Compliance Team on the regulatory testing rolling programmes or identified non-compliances as they relate to property infrastructure e.g. electrical and gas installation, asbestos management, fire systems maintenance, testing of lifting equipment, legionella and water quality regimes.

Progress against the Pentana action plans is reported as part of the wider quarterly Health and Safety Reports compiled Corporately and for each Directorate.

#### 4.3 ***Health and Safety Risk Assessment Programme***

Risk assessments continue to be developed for work activities where a significant risk has been identified and training is available for managers and supervisors to carry out this task. Following an Internal Audit Report in 2019, Service Leads are asked to provide regular updates in the form of self-evaluation regarding the status of their Service risk assessments - indicating whether they are on target  not on target, some concerns  not on target, major concerns  or completed  .

Support is provided as required, and there is a particular focus on ensuring that relevant Services are addressing key issues which continue to feature via incident reports such as Violence and Aggression, Manual Handling and the use and maintenance of Lifting Equipment.

Specialist assessments regarding Hazardous Substances, Hand / Arm Vibration (HAVS), Asbestos and Legionella continue to be monitored and updated as required.

#### 4.4 **Health and Safety Training**

Most roles across the organisation require some form of Health and Safety training and there are several generic courses available on the Coast platform.

There is a mandatory Health and Safety Awareness Course for all employees and a range of comprehensive 'Managing Health and Safety' modules for Managers and Service Leads. A separate course on Health and Safety management is provided for Head Teachers and School Management Teams.

Courses are also available for Manual Handling, Health and Safety Risk Assessment, Tackling Violence and Aggression, Fire Warden and Fire Safety Awareness, Safely Investigating Signs of Fire, Health and Safety for Homeworkers, Managing Asbestos and Working at Height.

The Risk and Safety Team is working to extend the breadth of online provision currently offered and work is ongoing to build additional Health and Safety modules.

Face to face training delivery on a number of health and safety topics is also provided on request and this is beneficial for those without PC access or where practical demonstrations are a component of the course content.

Many specialised or externally accredited courses are also sourced by Services as required.

#### 4.5 **Accidents/ Incidents**

In Quarter 3, October 2024 to December 2024, a total of 70 workplace accidents were recorded across the Council which is 15 less than the previous quarter and 26 less than the same quarter of last year.

Of these, 33 were 'employee' accidents and the remaining 37 involved service users / clients / member of the public or pupils.

The employee accidents are broken down by Directorate as follows;

Chief Exec	HSCP	HO&D	C&T	Education	Total
0	16	8	2	7	33

The non- employee accidents are broken down by Directorate as follows;

Chief Exec	HSCP	HO&D	C&T	Education	Total
0	30	1	3	3	37

In Quarter 3, October 2024 to December 2024, a total of 11 incidents involving Violence and Aggression were recorded across the Council (excluding Education) which is 20 less than the previous quarter and 11 less than the same quarter of last year.

The 'Violence and Aggression' Incidents are broken down by Directorate as follows;

Chief Exec	HSCP	HO&D	C&T	Total
0	7	2	2	11

For Education, in Quarter 3, October 2024 to December 2024, a total of 237 incidents involving Violence and Aggression were recorded across the Council. Previously, Education statistics were excluded from this report, as the information is held by Education. However, to ensure a more joined up working approach, the Risk and Safety team will be reporting on this data going forward and will be able to provide comparisons in future reports.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) include a requirement for notification of serious / prescribed incidents to the Health and Safety Executive. There were 5 such reports in this quarter, 2 more than the previous quarter and 3 more than the same quarter last year.

The team continue to work with Services to progress risk reduction initiatives for accident and incident prevention. Service Leads recognise the importance of striving to ensure a downward trend and promote a safe and healthy environment for employees and service users. The potential for Council employees to be exposed to violence and aggression continues to receive targeted support. This has included conducting ongoing investigations, frontline workspace assessments, development of Coast training and advice on physical interventions, use of a personal safety device as well as the skills required to decelerate and de-escalate crisis situations.

Furthermore, the team are progressing the development and implementation of a corporate Violence and Aggression Charter. The team will involve stakeholders, and this includes consulting with Trade Union representatives through the TU Liaison meetings.

Exposure to levels of unacceptable behaviour is a significant issue for Public Sector workers in the UK.

The team is committed to supporting managers to review, refresh and tailor their Violence and Aggression risk assessments to ensure that all reasonable measures can be taken to mitigate this risk.

#### 4.6 ***Links to Insurance and Risk Management***

Further initiatives on incident prevention form the basis of work currently being undertaken by the wider team. Strategies are being developed to reduce insurance costs across the Council's property, motor and liability policies. Inevitably successes in these areas will have a positive impact in terms of the overall Health and Safety performance of the organisation.

The Strategic Risk Register is reported on a 6 monthly basis for scrutiny and endorsement to both the Audit and Governance Panel and Cabinet. The high level risk management arrangements for 'Public and Employee Safety' are recorded alongside a number of other strategic risks which link to health and safety more generally.

Directorate Risk Registers also include reference to the ongoing management of health and safety risks at a more operational level.

The information contained within SAC risk registers informs internal audit's annual audit plan.

#### 4.7 ***Further Health and Safety Information***

All current policies, standards, reports, assessment forms and other related documentation is available on the CORE. Printed copies should be accessible within ring-binders at Council locations where employees have limited electronic access.

Further advice, support or guidance can be sought from the Risk and Safety Team, Tel: 01292 613068 or email: [corporate.safety@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.safety@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**Background Papers**    **None**

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**Date:**    **25 March 2025**