LONDON BOROUGH of MERTON

Annual Health and Safety Report 2021

Produced by Corporate Safety Services

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1. Introduction

As a public body, and a regulator with regard to Health & Safety legislation, the London Borough of Merton 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 Corporate Safety Services Team who provides a statutory Health and Safety service to all employees of the London Borough of Merton, 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.

In line with current good practice and industry standards, Merton'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 moving forward 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 achieving this, Safety Services will work with Departmental Management Teams in identifying and developing suitable systems and procedures in compliance with their duties under the legislation. Our methodology uses the principles of HSE guidance HSG 65, 'Managing for Health and Safety'. The key principles are Plan, Do, Act, Check; these principles underpin the Council's safety management system and operational arrangements as detailed in the Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.

2. Policy and organisation arrangements

The London Borough of Merton is committed to providing its employees with safe conditions of work, so far as is reasonably practicable, and has structured arrangements in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and others who may be affected by our activities. Our aim is to minimise the adverse impacts to individuals and the business from ill health and injury.

2.1 Making it Happen

The fundamentals of safety management remain at the core of what we do:

- Strong and visible leadership
- Collaboration and partnerships, including worker engagement

This is achieved by ensuring that;

- Professional health and safety arrangements are adequately resourced to meet the needs of the organisation
- CMT routinely accepts and acts on health and safety advice ;
- Risk assessments are carried out for all relevant areas under their control

- Actions arising out of Health and safety inspections and audits are acted on in a timely manner
- Line managers are fulfilling their roles in implementing health and safety
- Employees or their representatives are involved in decisions that affect their health and safety.

Departmental Management Teams (DMT) considers the health and safety as an agenda item.

- Horizon scanning to ensure that effective risk management is designed in to our current and future business models

- Both CMT & DMT decisions are made in the context of the organisation's health and safety policy and recognise the importance of 'designing-in' health and safety when implementing change.

What does good safety management look like?

- Visible leadership – DMT members can reinforce health and safety policy by being seen on the 'shop floor', following all safety measures themselves and addressing any breaches effectively and efficiently.
- Having robust procurement standards in place for purchasing goods, equipment and services that recognises health and safety in operation.
- Ensuring that key issues are addressed at risk management committee level, whilst ensuring that effort is not being wasted on trivial risks and unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Assessing the health and safety arrangements of partners, key suppliers and contractors, as their performance could adversely affect the organisation

- Supporting worker involvement in health and safety, above our legal duty to consult worker representatives, can improve participation and help prove commitment from all
- Considering health and safety when deciding senior management appointments.
- Promoting healthy workplace initiatives to encourage and create health working environments, help reduce sickness absence and improve employee wellbeing.

2.2 Corporate Health, Safety & Welfare Policy

Corporate Safety Services produces and reviews the Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Policy annually. The process of revision considers any changes to legislation, organisation and or good practice and changes formally consulted on with the Trade Unions and Management.

The policy is published on the Merton website and there is an expectation that all managers will consider this document and communicate the contents of the policy to staff directly and through the production of their own procedures and arrangements for the safety of their staff.

All policies, advice and guidance are available on the Merton website making it accessible to all who need it.

[Health and Safety Information (web pages)](#)

Planned policy work for 21-22 includes:

- To refresh the Corporate Safety Policy to reflect structural and operational changes
- The Corporate Fire Safety Policy to reflect operational changes to the use of corporate buildings.

Key work streams

As with previous years, we will need to continue to work together with managers and partners to achieve common goals. Our aim is to improve compliance with relevant safety standards, simplifying our processes and collaborating on work streams to ensure that Merton does not overburden managers with complex safety management processes and procedures. Our arrangements will be proportionate and appropriate.

The results of this will be to make it simpler to comply with safety standards and a wider ownership of issues that foster a culture of good safety management and proportionate risk assessment. This is particularly pertinent given the wide-ranging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the myriad of changes that it has necessitated for the modern workplace.

Working with managers through DMT's our focus will consider the implications of;
- New or revised processes
- New or revised working practices and procedures
- New personnel
- Working with other Local Authorities, partners and other organisations.

3. Legislation Update and significant changes for 2020/21

<u>COVID-19</u>

The major effects of COVID-19 arrived at the very end of the 2019/20 year, and brought a nationwide lockdown on 16th of March 2020, followed by two subsequent lockdowns later in 2020 and into 2021. The pandemic has had an extremely large and unprecedented impact on almost all areas of work that may be felt for many years to come. There has been a tragic loss of life, and a great deal of financial hardship from the pandemic that will undoubtedly create many long-term challenges that have to be overcome.

Although an immense tragedy, the pandemic necessitated significant changes to be implemented to working arrangements and has served to highlight the importance of health and safety management within the workplace. Additionally, the pandemic has shown businesses and organisations the benefits of emerging ways of working into the future and highlighted the many advantages that large scale homeworking can offer.

As we move forward, organisations are looking at how they effectively operate whilst also maintaining measures to mitigate the risk of further infection, in line with the Government's 'Roadmap out of lockdown'. Health and Safety, along with Public Health, continues to be at the forefront of managing risk throughout the pandemic through suitable and sufficient risk assessment, in line with the UK Government's COVID-Secure Guidelines and the NHS Test and Trace Service.

The pandemic also saw updates to the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) to include the need to report the following under existing mechanisms:

- Work-related exposure to COVID-19, leading a positive diagnosis.
- Worker fatality following work-related exposure to COVID-19.
- Accidents or incidents at work that lead, or could have led, to the release or escape of COVID-19.

The Safety Services Team has implemented further guidance for managers on these updated reporting requirements, which is available on the intranet.

Whilst managing the risk of COVID-19 infection, there is also a heightened risk of health issues arising out of widespread homeworking. The speed by which the majority of the workforce transitioned to the home environment precluded the normal process of ensuring a suitable working setup within employee's homes. In light of this, the Council approved the procurement of the Healthy Working Program from Cardinus Risk Management, which has since been implemented by the Safety Services Team and rolled out to all staff. The Program replaces the previous paper-based system for Display Screen and Workstation Self-Assessment, and includes an adaptive training module, risk assessment and action plan with helpful guidance to help users

to manage their risk, with support from Line Managers where required. The Council has also implemented arrangements for the collection, purchase and supply of equipment, where necessary to ensure staff can achieve a comfortable and safe workstation, so far is as reasonably practicable.

<u>The Building Safety Bill and Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005</u>

Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, the Home Office produced Building Safety Bill, which seeks to appoint a new department of the HSE as a regulator for high-risk buildings and is currently passing through the legislative process in Parliament. The HSE are now working with partners, including the Local Government Association and Local Authority Building Control, to establish the new regulatory arm to fulfill this function, in anticipation of the Bill soon becoming Statute. The Building Safety Regulator will:

- Implement a new, more stringent regulatory regime for high-risk residential buildings.
- Promote competence among industry professionals and regulators to raise standards in design, construction and the management of buildings.
- Oversee performance systems of all buildings, so one regulator can provide guidance on building performance as well as building safety, ensuring that factors like countering climate change are factored into regulatory decisions.

Whilst this new legislation is primarily aimed at high rise buildings for residential use, the Home Office also carried out a consultation on proposed changes to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) in support of the Building Safety Bill and as a result of findings from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which will have implications for all premises to which the FSO applies.

Following the consultation, the intention from the UK Government is to make the below changes:

- **Guidance –** Guidance issued under the FSO is intended to have a strengthened legislative basis. It is expected that this will be of a similar nature to the HSE's Approved Code of Practice model, which will see such guidance able to be relied upon in support of breaches in a Court of Law.
- **Responsible Persons (RPs)** – The intention is to place a legal requirement on RPs to record who they are, the extent of their responsibility for the building under the FSO, their contact information as part of the fire risk assessment, and to formally identify themselves to all other RPs within the same premises.
- **Quality of Fire Risk Assessments** – Introduction of competency requirements, legal requirement for RPs to record the entirety of their fire risk assessments and a requirement for the RP to record the name and contact information of any person engaged by the RP to undertake all or part of the fire risk assessment in the completed document.

- **Enforcement and Sanctions** - Fines have been brought in for specific offences under the FSO, some of these offences carry unlimited fines

The following areas where also included in the consultation, however are to be subject to further consultation before they are implemented, given the complexity of potential changes:

- **Provision of Information** - RPs in all multi-occupied residential buildings to provide specific fire safety information to residents; this would include providing the fire risk assessments to residents upon request. Also proposing to require RPs in such premises to identify themselves to residents. To ensure that information is transferred effectively between outgoing RPs and their replacements (for example when building ownership changes hands) a new requirement on RPs to provide the most up-to-date fire risk assessment to anyone taking over this responsibility.
- **Maintenance, including the role of residents** - FSO contains two specific provisions requiring the maintenance of facilities, equipment and devices for safeguarding relevant persons and fire-fighters in the event of a fire. Building on discussions with stakeholders, the additional consultation will test views on the effectiveness of these provisions.
- **Higher Risk Workplaces** - Regulations under the FSO may be made requiring additional precautions to be taken in relation to risk to relevant persons in higher risk premises. The Home Office continues to seek further evidence to support decisions on whether and, if so, what further precautions are required for specific premises defined as higher-risk (care homes, sheltered and supported housing, hospitals etc.).

- **Fees and Charges** – Further work will examine the merits of enabling charging for audits and enforcement, which would align with the approach proposed for the new regulator in the draft Building Safety Bill, and look at whether enabling Fire and Rescue Authorities to charge for activity under the FSO in the future will encourage greater compliance.
- **Charging for False Fire Alarms** – Further work will be undertaken to gather and consider views on the current criteria for charging for false fire alarms in FSO regulated premises.

Some of the changes identified will require some alterations to the Council's approach to fire safety; however, some of these changes may not happen, or amended further throughout the process of further consultation and amendment. Additionally, Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry is still ongoing and could put forward further recommendations for change at its conclusion. As such, the Safety Services Team will be watching progress on legislative change in this area closely, and considering any impacts on the Council and any amendments to existing policies and procedures that could be necessitated as a result.

UK law post-Brexit

The UK decision to leave the European Union (EU) took far longer than anyone anticipated to enact, but it is clear that EU Safety Regulations and also EN safety standards are here to stay for the foreseeable future.

EU Health and Safety & Environmental Directives have already been transposed into UK Law, this means that currently nothing will change until the UK Government puts in place mechanisms for further deregulation.

Throughout the UK's time as part of the EU, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HASWA) and the various Statutory Instruments under it, have been in place, effective. Without doubt, we should continue to apply our successful risk-based management systems, as many UK organisations will want to continue to work and trade within the EU and European Economic Area post-Brexit.

Bearing this in mind, it will be in their interest for the UK to continue maintaining compliance with EU legislation. The UK has been a leader in influencing other EU nations and regulators in developing strong foundations for future health, safety and environmental laws. It will be interesting to see if and how that changes into the future.

4. Planning and implementation

As in previous years, our plans are in line with the Health and Safety Executive's business plan.

Key objectives for the HSE for 2021-2022 are to continue building on the sound regulatory framework and reduce harm in the workplace, and favouring engagement and advice over enforcement in the first instance, where appropriate. Additionally, the trial of a new mobile app to adapt the way organisations can access advice and guidance remotely. The HSE are also continuing to focus on providing additional advice and guidance on how to become COVID-Secure, and performing spot-checks on businesses and organisations in areas of the UK, particularly those identified as high risk, to ensure compliance with the UK Government guidelines, alongside its business-as-usual enforcement duties. Work is also well underway within the HSE to set up the new enforcement agency for building safety, known as the Building Safety Regulator, as tasked by the UK Government pending the reform of building and fire safety legislation outlined above.

Merton's health and safety plan is based on a combination of audit and inspection alongside risk management and implementation of best practice / industry standards.

A breakdown of key areas of work includes:

- Routine audit and inspection of Merton owned, managed or maintained premises.
- Inspection of management arrangements and controls.
- Provision of professional advice and guidance to managers and staff, including on measures required by the UK Government's COVID-Secure guidelines and Roadmap out of Lockdown.
- Development and implementation of corporate policies, procedures and guidance to aid managers in compliance of health and safety law.
- Management and oversight of accident and incident reporting and investigation.
- Provision of asbestos management information in schools and corporate buildings, including management reviews and actions with information published and available on the Council website and intranet.
- Management and oversight of water safety and the prevention of Legionellosis.
- Development and expansion of online and self-service H&S learning and development packages and Display Screen Equipment workstation self-assessment.
- Work with Facilities Management to embed the work on statutory compliance and availability of information through publication of statutory information.
- Work with statutory duty holders to produce fire risk assessments and make information available in a variety of relevant formats on the internet and intranet.

4.1 Accident reporting system

Safety Services continues to work with the Business Systems Team to maintain the Council online accident and incident reporting system. All new reports are completed via an E-form, which is available on the Merton Internet page meaning it is accessible to all council employees including schools and other locations outside of the Civic Centre.

Then system also includes a module for the provision of information to protect staff from potentially violent persons by linking information from the accident system to ensure staff accessing information can see relevant information on safety advice and risk management issues. A key feature of the system will be a staff look-up web address that will show information on persons or addresses where safety guidance is required as the result of accidents or incidents being reported on the system.

Whilst initial trials of the module showed promise, it was clear that further work with the Business Systems Team was required to bring the system to the required standard for a full launch. This work was postponed due to the need to focus on the Council's response to the pandemic, however is now one of the team's key work streams for the 21/22 year.

4.2 Advice and Support

In compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and corresponding legislation, the Council employs Safety Professionals to act as competent leads on all matters of health safety and welfare across the Council. Safety Services act under the authority of the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services, as detailed within the Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.

5. Raising Awareness and Promoting a Positive Health & Safety Culture

The Safety Section continues to promote safety awareness, in line with Government initiatives and enforcement agencies, such as the HSE.

The team responds to managers and staff safety concerns and provides advice to the organisation by working with them to resolve issues and improve safety management.

Raising health and safety awareness within the organisation enables managers to consider the risks and produce effective controls to improve safety management and drive forward a positive safety culture and reduced instances of injury and ill health. The Safety Services team maintains professional standards through individual and corporate membership of professional organisations such as the Institute of Occupational Health (IOSH) the British Safety Council and The International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM). Initiatives and information gained through this route is discussed and built into work plans and passed on to managers and staff directly.

In addition, the Safety Services Team sits on the London Councils' Health and Safety Network, which shares and promotes information and best practice across all Boroughs and the City of London, with input from the HSE.

6. Proportionate risk assessment

The formal process for the review of health and safety performance exists across the organisation and is a crucial element of a robust safety management system. It allows the management teams to establish whether the essential health and safety principles are working within the departments.

The Safety Services Team undertakes health and safety audits of all Merton owned, managed and maintained properties. The audits follow a recognised process to get under the skin of the property or service and provide an in-depth look at the management of that part of the organisation. In each case, a report is generated and, along with general information and advice, the responsible manager will receive a list of actions that are prioritised with recommendation as to how to deal with that action.

Actions are split into three categories;

Priority A	**To be completed within 4 weeks.**	• Where a failure to meet or achieve the required standard or level of compliance results in a breach of statutory duty giving rise to an immediate threat to people, property or process • Where there exists an unacceptable level of risk if remedial action is not taken • Where there has been a failure to complete any item previously assigned as Priority B.
Priority B	**To be completed within 8 weeks**	• Where a failure to meet or achieve the required standard or level of compliance will result in a breach of statutory duty giving rise to an imminent threat to people, property or process if action is not taken within the eight week completion period • Where the level of risk will become unacceptable if remedial action is not taken within the eight week completion period • Where there has been a failure to complete any item previously assigned as Priority C.
Priority C	**To be completed within 12 weeks**	• Where a failure to meet or achieve the required standard or level of compliance will result in a breach of statutory duty if action is not taken within the twelve week completion period • Where the level of risk will become unacceptable if

		remedial action is not taken within the twelve week completion period • Any defect identified at the time of the inspection that does not fall into the Priority A or B category.
Specific Completion Date(s)	**As specified within reports**	In cases where a Priority A; B or C ranking is not appropriate a specific date will be given for the completion of any remedial action where the failure to meet or achieve the required standard and level of compliance results in a danger or threat to people, property or process or there exists an unacceptable level of risk to people, property or process if action is not taken by the date given.

In order to promote health and safety and to ensure that the most serious actions are dealt with in required timescales, Priority "A" actions are monitored and reported to Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis as a key performance indicator.

Priority **A** Actions are split into three categories for clarity; Safety Management, Building Management and Corporate Facilities Management:

- **Safety Management** relates to the policy, procedures and arrangements for the staff and others working or visiting the building;

- **Building Management** relates to statutory compliance arrangements in respect of the maintenance and upkeep of the building;

- **Corporate Facilities Management** actions are in place for items relating to building management; plant & equipment maintenance and related statutory documentation where Corporate Facilities Management are the facilities management provider for the premises.

6.1 Issues of note arising from the 2019-20 audits:

There has been continued improvement in the process relating to statutory inspections and the compliance with both safety management and building management. The revised process and creation of the Health and Safety Standards Document have empowered managers to tackle health and safety challenges in their workplace with a wealth of advice and guidance, whilst simultaneously streamlining the work for the Safety Services Team.

Building managers and Head teachers are now well used to receiving reports by exception, allowing them to focus on the areas of issue. The reports refer to the Standards Document and this ensures consistency across all audits. Feedback to this change and the introduction of the Standards Document has been overwhelmingly positive.

We will continue to focus attention on addressing the actions that are raised from those inspections, it is our aim to work with the managers of premises, and the support services of the Council to ensure these actions are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

Working with the FM Compliance & Maintenance Manager, Safety Services have assisted in the procurement of a number of services that will bring about significant change in the management of information and compliance with key processes that will reduce the number of priority actions into the future. These are as follows:

Portable Appliance Testing – A contract has been awarded to SCL Managed Services Ltd. to undertake this work, FM project managers can now identify the order of testing for the buildings they manage.

Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) – A contract has been awarded to Turner & Townsend Ltd. to undertake this work, the respective budget holders can prioritise the properties that require a new/updated FRA.

Fixed Wiring Testing – A contract has been awarded to HMC Compliance Ltd. to undertake this work, the respective budget holders can prioritise the properties that require a new electrical installation condition report to be undertaken.

6.2 Premises inspected 2019/20

Safety Services aims to inspect 50 premises per annum based on a rolling 18-24 month cycle. This is an ambitious target with limited resources; however, Safety services will continue to work towards achieving this goal. In 2019/2020, despite difficulties caused by COVID-19 in the final quarter, the total number of properties inspected was 52 (45 the year prior) and this reflects the work undertaken to streamline the process.

Premises inspected during 2019/20

Premises Type	Number of Inspections	Priority A Actions, Safety Management	Priority A Actions, Building Management	Priority A Actions Corp' Facilities Management
Schools	27	20	122	10
Children's Centres	8	3	5	25
Family Centres	1	3	1	6
Residential Care Homes	1	1	15	0
Youth Centres	1	2	1	8
Libraries	6	6	6	35
Day Centres	3	6	8	15
Watersports Centre	1	1	0	7
Corporate Buildings	4	7	2	19
Total:	52	49	160	125

Whilst 3 audits where cancelled during March as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, the total inspection target (50) was exceeded this year. This is due to the successful changes in the audit process and the subsequent time saved by exception reporting.

The majority of actions prescribed remains in relation to matters of building management in schools, including areas where responsibility for premises-related compliance falls to Facilities Management through schools SLA. These actions range from a lack of statutory compliance documentation available on-site through to physical deficiencies with buildings and/or facilities.

Looking ahead

Auditing

As has already been noted, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the audit process for the coming year. All upcoming audits were cancelled with immediate effect shortly prior to the lockdown in March 2020.

The audit process has remained on hold in order to facilitate other urgent work being undertaken by the Safety Services Team in pursuance of Merton's recovery planning, and pending review. This review is planned to take place over the coming months and will include:

- Examining the method by which audits are carried out, particularly with the chance to use emerging technologies to streamline the process;

- planning for dealing with the backlog of audits;
- consideration to the prioritisation of sites and services on a risk-based approach, and;
- consideration of how to incorporate compliance with current COVID-secure guidelines whilst they are required.

Training

Along with auditing, the pandemic necessitated change to the provision of training courses. All classroom courses were ceased shortly prior to the first lockdown and have remained on hold since this time. The Team has taken this opportunity to examine the provision and make updates to material, whilst also procuring and introducing the Healthy Working system for DSE training and assessment, outlined below.

In addition, work has now started on identifying essential training as part of the tender process for procuring external training, being undertaken by the Corporate Learning & Development Team in HR. The Safety Services Team will continue to provide input and advice on critical health and safety training for staff.

Potentially Violent Persons

The Potentially Violent Persons module of the Accident/Incident Reporting System has been built, however some technical flaws have persisted that prevent a full launch. As previously reported, the response to the pandemic has taken precedence over this work; however, it is the aim of the Safety Services Team to work with the Business Systems Team over the course of this year to ensure that the functionality for managers to report incidents to a Review Officer for a decision, and the ability to seek access to information on the database where necessary is made available.

Managing DSE Risk

Given the need for widespread homeworking at short notice, the Safety Services Team highlighted the need to effectively manage the risks of DSE use; particularly as many staff did not have suitable workstations and equipment for homeworking when the lockdown began. In pursuit of this, the Team made a recommendation to CMT that a system be bought in to provide DSE e-learning and self-assessment for all staff, with an initial focus on those who are working at home temporarily, in order to build a cohesive view of the level of risk within the organisation.

Following the procurement process, with the assistance of Commercial Services, a contract was awarded to Cardinus Risk Management Ltd. for use of their Healthy Working System. The Healthy Working Programme was launched in December 2020 to include all staff, following a trial with a smaller set of participants in October and November 2020. The programme includes all staff, agency workers and contractors, whether they be working in the
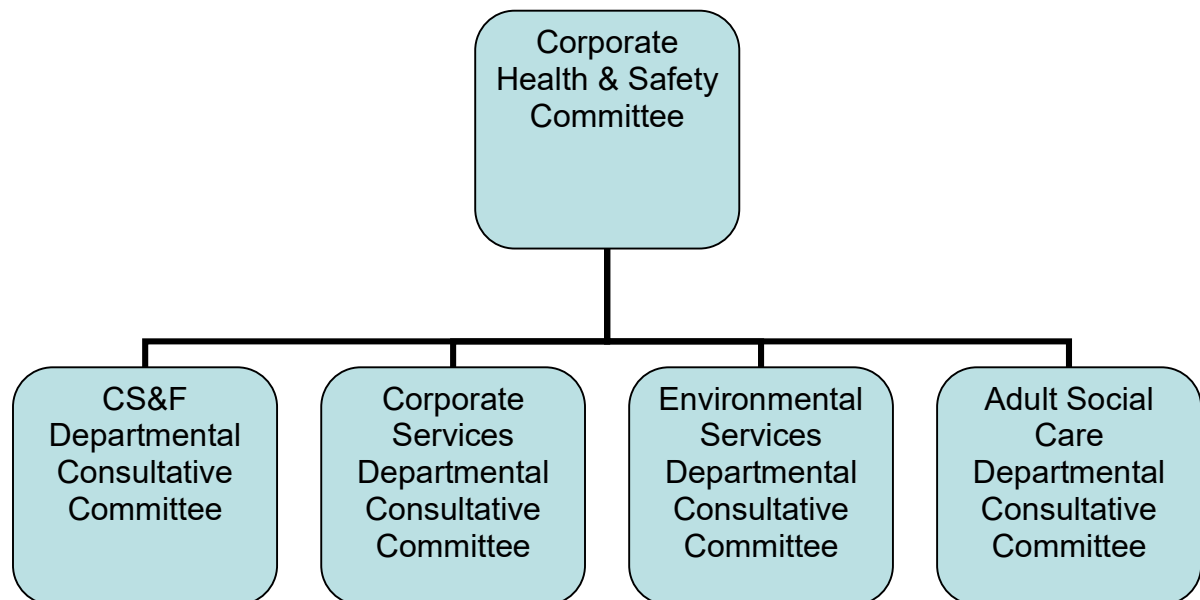
office environment, mobile workers, or across multiple workstations i.e. at home and in the office.

With two core components, the system is ideal for building a picture of risk across the organisation and is also designed to guide staff on actions they can take to manage their own risk, allowing attention to be focussed on those with significant issues, such as those that are exacerbated by inappropriate workstation setup.

The system is incorporated in the Council's SMART Working Project Plan by providing a process for ensuring staff are provided with the right equipment and information on adjusting it to suit their needs, wherever they will be working. The Safety Services Team will produce regular reports in time for monthly project team meetings on the numbers of staff who have and have not completed the programme, in order to help guide whether additional communication is required to improve completion. Additional functionality is currently being developed to allow these reports to identify the line managers of staff who remain outstanding and should be available soon.

Some statistics have been included in section 8, so as to provide a picture of progress so far and a snapshot of risk across the organisation.

7. Health and Safety Committees

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Merton's Corporate Health & Safety Committee meets on a quarterly basis and is well attended.

The Corporate Safety Committee is a consultative forum of trade union representatives and representatives from all Directorates, which discusses safety related issues pertaining to Merton's undertakings.

Various issues are discussed, such as: accident analysis, violence to staff, progress on safety audits, policies, staff training, forthcoming legislation, welfare concerns and general safety concerns etc. The committee is also there to receive reports from Representatives from sub committees on matters that have not been resolved and require higher-level intervention.

The Trade Unions have reviewed the Terms of Reference of the committee to reflect changes in the organisation and the make-up of the group, this ensures the group can continue to meet and work to an effective collaborative framework into the future.

Children Schools & Families and Community & Housing have 2 areas, in which the Safety Services team provide input, these are:

- A joint directorate 'Health & Safety forum'
- Individual Directorate Departmental Consultative Committees (DCCs).

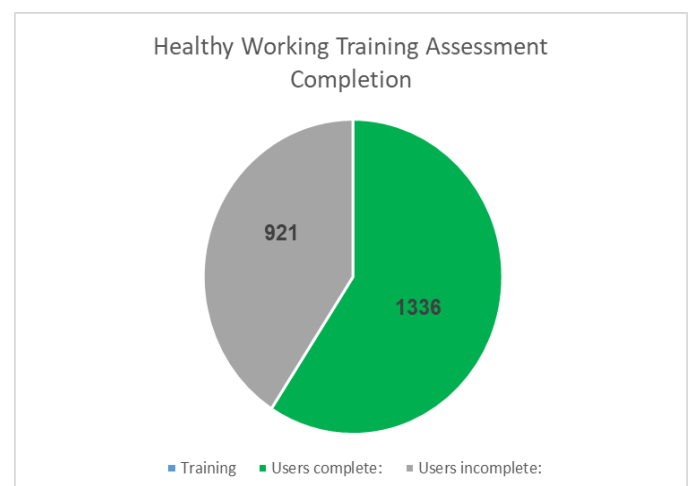Specific Departmental health & safety issues are discussed at these meetings.
The Safety Services Team produces specific interim accident figures for all Departments at these meetings on request.

There is a DCC for Corporate Services, including the Chief Executive's Department, and discussions have taken place with the new Assistant Director of Public Space, Contracting and Commissioning regarding a revised DCC for the restructured Environment & Regeneration department.

8. Performance statistics

<u>Workstation Self-Assessment</u>

The following charts show the numbers of people who have completed the Healthy Working training and risk assessment, along with the numbers for whom the training or assessment is still outstanding.

Healthy Working Risk Assessment Completion

939 | 1318

Users complete: | Users incomplete:

Healthy Working Training Assessment Completion

921 | 1336

Training | Users complete: | Users incomplete:

The system allocates a Risk Score between 0 and 10 to the answers to each question in the risk assessment, depending on potential severity. These answers fall into four Risk Levels based on the following scoring:

Risk Score	Risk Level
7 - 10	High
6 - 4	Medium
3 - 1	Low
0	None

The charts below show the numbers of assessments at the four Risk Levels prescribed by the system. The first chart shows the original status of assessments, this is their Risk Level prior to any tasks being undertaken to reduce risk. The second chart shows the current real-time status of assessments based on users completing tasks to reduce their risk.
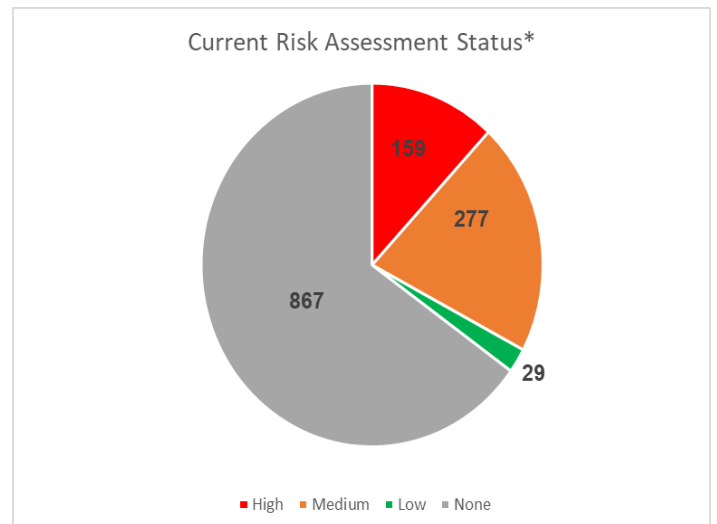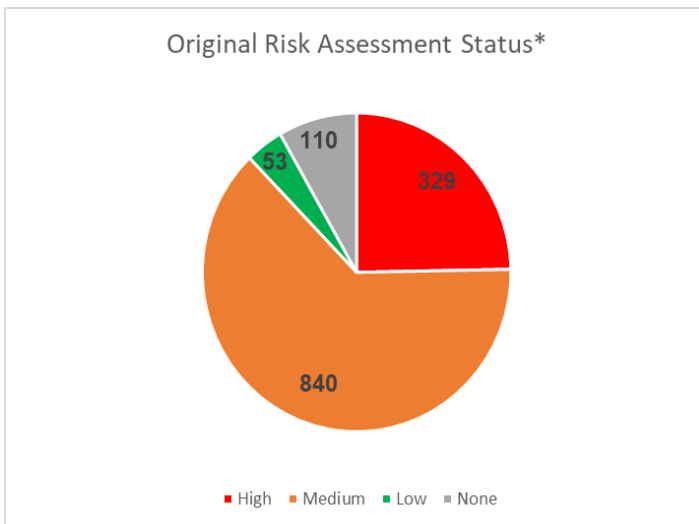

When a user completes a risk assessment on the system, tasks are assigned to them in order to help address the risks that are identified by the answers they give in their risk assessment. The system keeps a log of the number of answers given to each question along with how many people have marked the corresponding tasks complete, as shown in the chart below:

Issues Raised and Outstanding
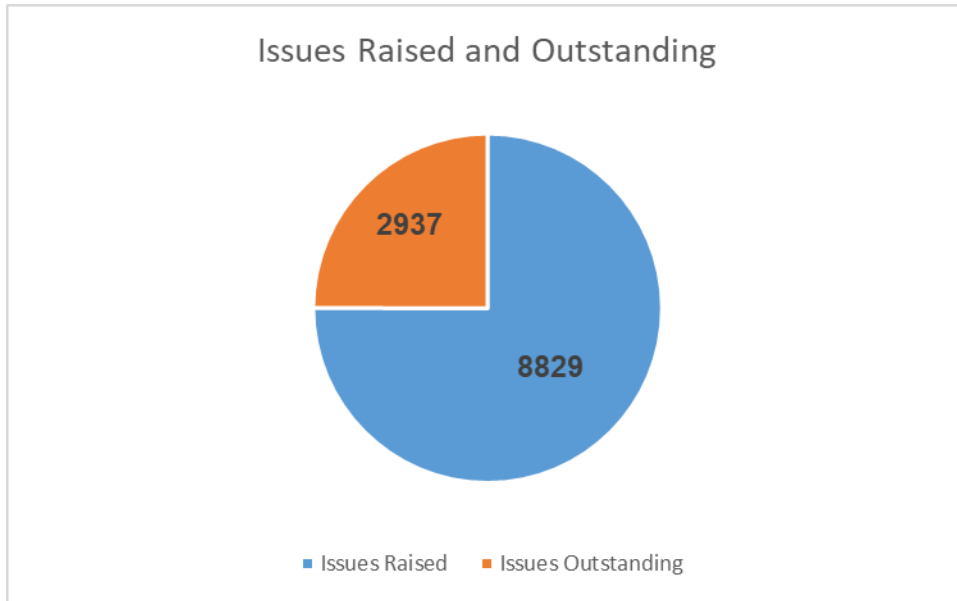
Accidents and Incidents

The following statistics provide a high level view of accident reporting across the council and departments. Annual statistics are also published on the Council website. Safety Services are able to publish reports on a detailed level upon request, by contacting Safety Services on 020 8545 3388 or health.andsafety@merton.gov.uk

All Departments

Overall Accident Statistics by Department
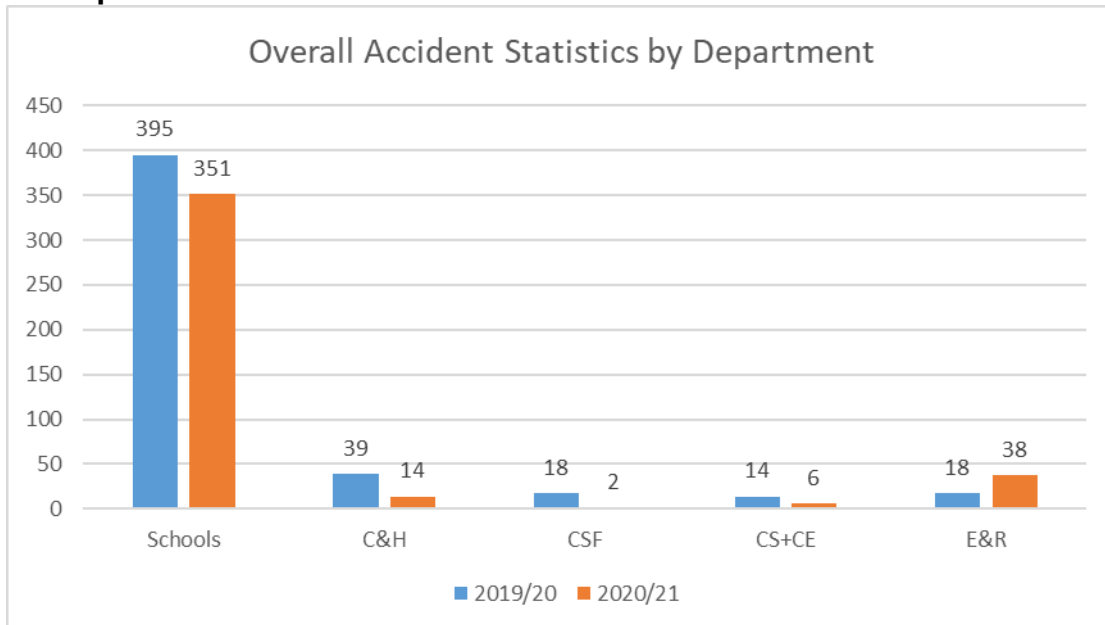
There has been some decrease in numbers of accidents reported in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20. This is mostly likely a result of the widespread homeworking necessitated by the pandemic, but it is also worth noting that overall figures were also decreasing from the 2018/2019 year, prior to the pandemic.

Children, Schools and Families

Children, Schools and Families - Accident Statistics Comparison 2021

Category	2020/2021	2019/2020
Violence and assault	1	3
Verbal abuse and aggression	0	2
Unknown	0	3
Slips, Trips and Falls	1	5
Illness	0	2
Fitting	0	1
Contact with sharp object	0	1
Allergy	0	1

Legend: ■ 2020/2021 ■ 2019/2020
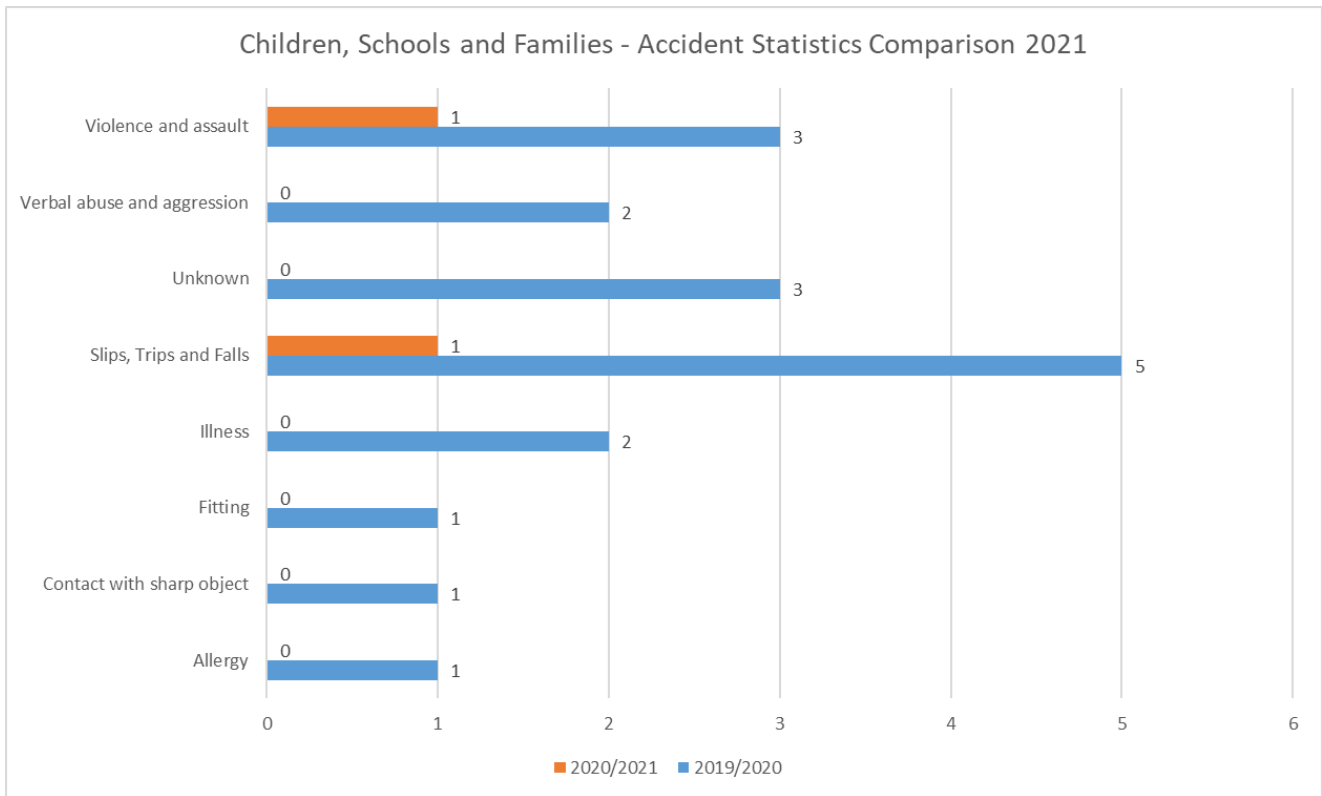
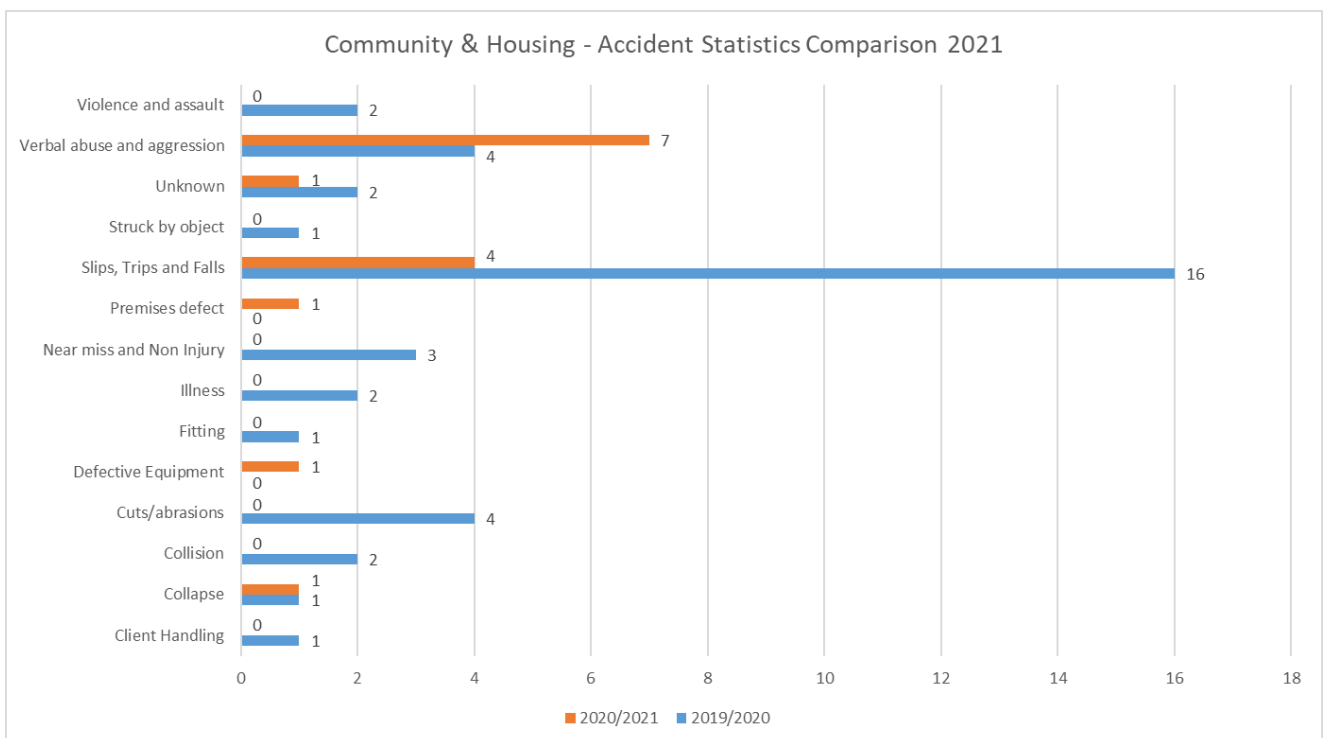The overall number of reports is significantly lower than previous years. Both accidents reported in 2020/21 were from service areas outside of Social Care.

Community & Housing

Community & Housing - Accident Statistics Comparison 2021

Category	2020/2021	2019/2020
Violence and assault	0	2
Verbal abuse and aggression	7	4
Unknown	1	2
Struck by object	0	1
Slips, Trips and Falls	4	16
Premises defect	1	0
Near miss and Non Injury	0	3
Illness	0	2
Fitting	0	1
Defective Equipment	1	0
Cuts/abrasions	0	4
Collision	0	2
Collapse	1	1
Client Handling	0	1

Legend: ■ 2020/2021 ■ 2019/2020
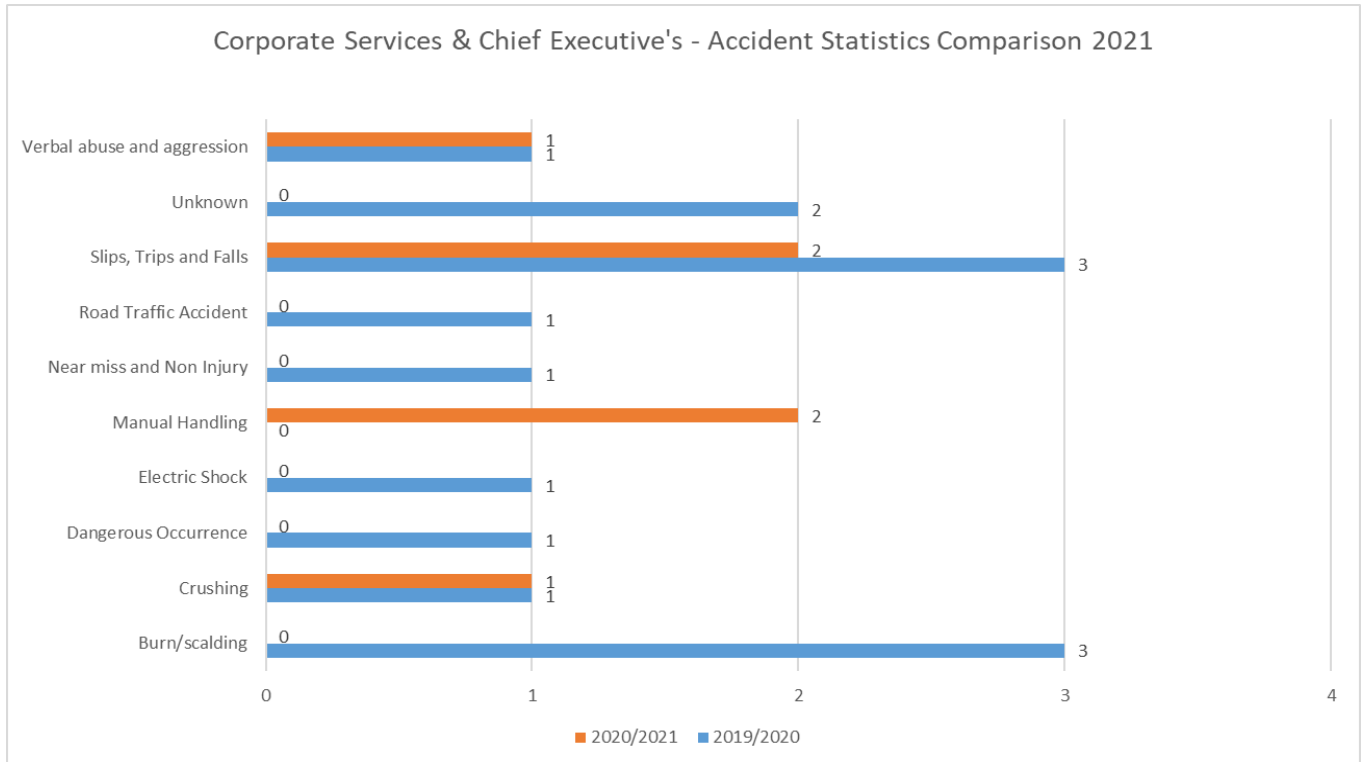
The number of Slips, Trips and Falls being reported has severely decreased, along with a minor decrease in Cuts and Abrasions.

There has been a small increase in the number of Verbal Abuse/Aggression incidents reported, though there were no instances of Violence and Assault reported.

Corporate Services & Chief Executive's

Corporate Services & Chief Executive's - Accident Statistics Comparison 2021

| Category	2020/2021	2019/2020
Verbal abuse and aggression	1	1
Unknown	0	2
Slips, Trips and Falls	2	3
Road Traffic Accident	0	1
Near miss and Non Injury	0	1
Manual Handling	2	0
Electric Shock	0	1
Dangerous Occurrence	0	1
Crushing	1	1
Burn/scalding	0	3

The number of reports more than halved in 2020/2021 from the previous year.

No instances of Violence and Assault reported, though one instance of Verbal Abuse was reported.

2 manual handling incidents were reported, this is unusual, so possibly related to the need for non-routine working during the pandemic.

Environment & Regeneration

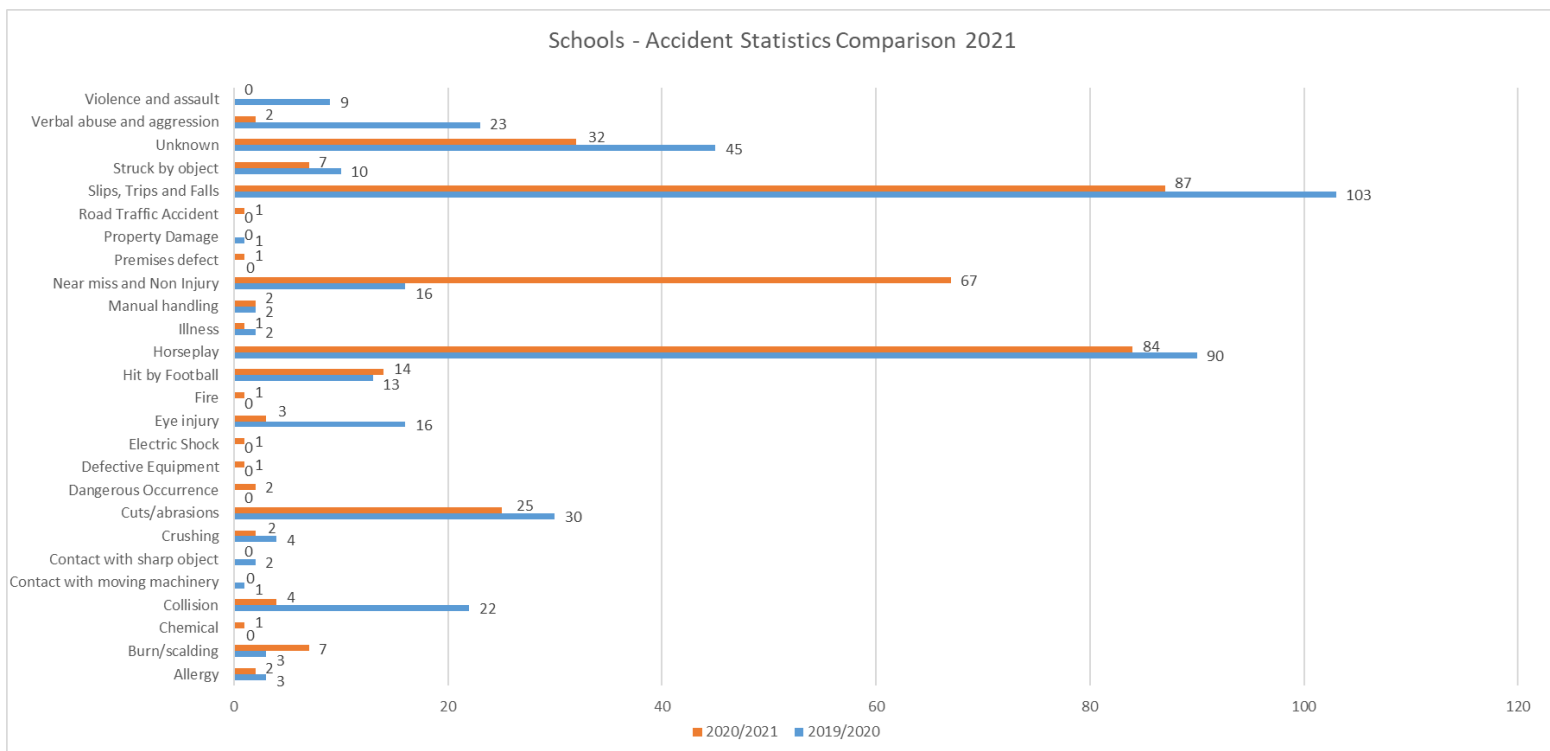Environment & Regeneraton - Accident Statistics Comparison 2021
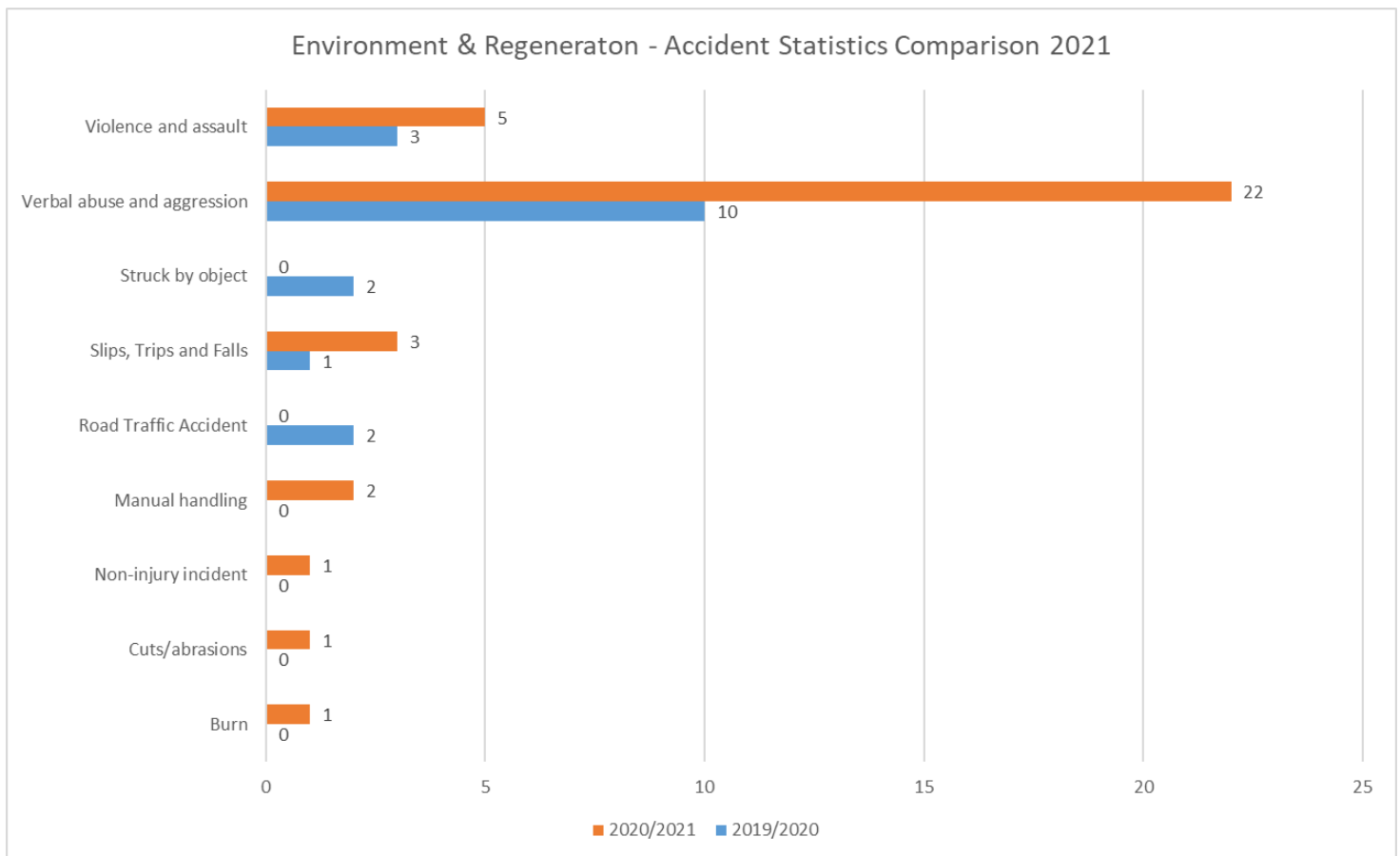
Verbal abuse and assault, along with violence and aggression remain the two highest categories for reporting, though the number of reports has increased significantly this year. The majority of reports were made at the first half of the year, coinciding with the first lockdown and most stringent restrictions on public activity.

Parking Services also now use the system to report most incidents of this nature, where they were previously reported locally within the team; all but one incident relating to violence and assault, along with verbal abuse and aggression in 2020/21 were related to Parking Services.

Schools

Schools - Accident Statistics Comparison 2021

Category	2020/2021	2019/2020
Violence and assault	0	9
Verbal abuse and aggression	2	23
Unknown	32	45
Struck by object	7	10
Slips, Trips and Falls	87	103
Road Traffic Accident	1	0
Property Damage	0	1
Premises defect	1	0
Near miss and Non Injury	67	16
Manual handling	2	2
Illness	1	2
Horseplay	84	90
Hit by Football	14	13
Fire	1	0
Eye injury	3	16
Electric Shock	1	0
Defective Equipment	1	0
Dangerous Occurrence	2	0
Cuts/abrasions	25	30
Crushing	2	4
Contact with sharp object	0	2
Contact with moving machinery	1	0
Collision	4	22
Chemical	1	0
Burn/scalding	7	3
Allergy	2	3

This year saw a sharp spike in near-misses being reported, though 64 of the 67 incidents were reported by Raynes Park High School, who use the system to report even minor incidents and some of those that occur off-site.

The number of slips/trips and falls has decreased slightly in 2020/21; along with a significant decrease in both violence & assault and verbal abuse & aggression since 2019/20.

Summary

In summary, there has been a decrease in reported accidents in most areas over the last twelve-month period. This is potentially due to a normalising process after the introduction of the system in September 2015, and a decrease in activity as a result of COVID-19. Safety Services will continue monitoring the accident reporting data to consider any specific trends that may indicate changes in risk management, which might need to be addressed.

Cases of verbal abuse and aggression have fallen in most departments, except for within Community & Housing and Environment and Regeneration, which instead saw an increase. Reports violence & assault have fallen in every department, except a slight increase in Environment and Regeneration.

It is the intention that further work on the Potentially Violent Persons system will better assist team managers to both report incidents of violence and

aggression, but also to contribute to the prevention of incidents through the streamlining of the process to share risk information between Departments.

Where trends are identified (up or down) this information will be reported to the relevant managers, Directors and consultative committees along with any recommended remedial actions.

END