



# **Health and Safety**

## **Annual Report**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019**

## **Introduction**

1. This report covers the council's financial reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.
2. Over the last 12 months there has been a number of staffing changes within the Shared Health and Safety Service which has allowed for a refocusing of priorities to some specific high risk areas of work, most notably construction and waste collection. In addition the health and safety services to schools have been consolidated to create a schools specific health and safety team delivering services to schools in both York and North Yorkshire. This not only ensures a more consistent approach but provides a much more resilient service.

## **Key areas of Health and Safety Work in 2018/19**

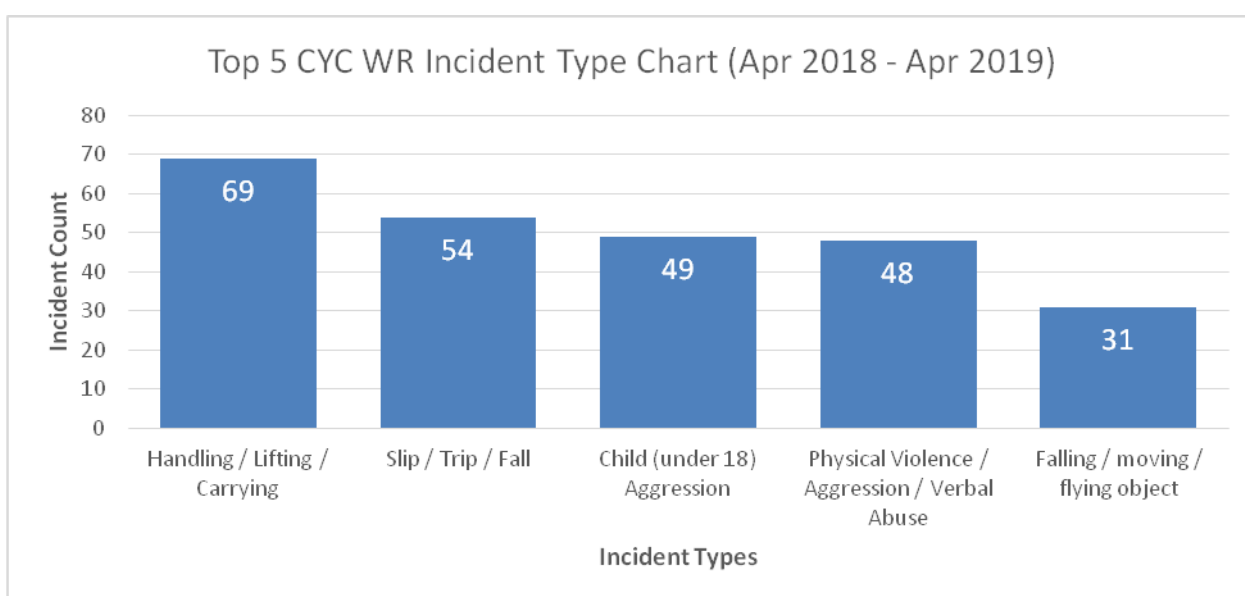
3. The Corporate Health and Safety Policy was significantly reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive supported by the Corporate Management Team. The main area of revision was to ensure the policy clearly sets out the council's direction. It now also recognises that there are significant improvement and redevelopment plans for the city which will involve major construction work. These schemes will require CYC to work closely and in partnership with other organisations if the health and safety risks are to be effectively managed. The policy also provides the basis for the health and safety culture within CYC and sets down what is expected by those organisations who undertake work on behalf of the council.
4. The revised policy also recognises the council's ongoing commitment to protecting staff from verbal and violent aggressive behaviour. This issue has been of concern for some time as it is a major cause of reported incidents by staff. The council's approach was specifically endorsed by the then Portfolio holder for the Environment.
5. Elected Members continue to actively consider health and safety risks and associated management with significant reports being considered by the Portfolio Holder in July, September and December 2018. There was also a formal interim report on health and safety performance in January 2019.
6. Following the adoption of a corporate Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy which was outlined in last year's report; a testing organisation has now been procured, ( the policy allowed people to be tested in certain circumstances e.g. after an accident), a Manager's Tool Kit written and a number of training sessions for managers held. The policy was fully implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

7. There have been a number of topic based audits over the period covered by this report in the waste collection service which identified a number of opportunities for improvement. These are currently being implemented by the service management. The waste service has brought in extra resource to support the service implement these improvements.
8. Waste collection is a high risk industry and as such the service undertook a major training exercise of their workforce in December 2018 in relation to working with vehicles. Unfortunately incidents can occur and one incident, post the training, resulted in a waste loader being seriously injured. Members of the health and safety team have worked closely and supported the service through the detailed investigation.
9. Another service undertaking high risk operations is within the Highways Service. One of these operations involves excavation work. Over the last 12 months there have been a number of cable strikes involving both electrical and fibre optic cables. Underground services, particularly fibre optic cables, can be an issue especially if the service installer has not installed them to the required standard in the past. The installers are normally outside the control of CYC so it is sometimes difficult for the CYC operatives to avoid this damage. This is particularly important in relation to high risk services involving electricity and gas due to the risk of serious personal injury. The cable strikes covered during this reporting period have been thoroughly investigated on behalf of management by the Head of Health and Safety, resulting in specific targeted action. To further support the changes enhanced manager and operative training is planned for 2019.
10. In last year's report the issue of fire risk was highlighted. One of the key projects over the last 12 months, following a successful capital bid for funding, has been the installation of a new fire alarm and some associated fire suppression systems in the council owned parts of The Shambles. The solutions have now been installed. In addition the Health and Safety Service has been supporting the council with identifying and mitigating fire risks following the acquisition of additional properties in Swinegate.
11. Other areas of work undertaken relate to asbestos management and water hygiene control. Issues from these health and safety risks do arise from time to time so regular monitoring is required. In the case of water hygiene the monitoring is undertaken by a contractor and following allegations of poor performance, a thorough investigation was undertaken and any issues promptly addressed.
12. An internal audit report has been undertaken in relation to the operation of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). This multi agency group is tasked with reviewing the proposals of organisations holding events in the city to ensure adequate

contingency and health and safety plans have been made. This is to avoid major incidents and ensure the Event Organiser have undertaken their role diligently. The report has recommended a number of improvements and these are being implemented in the current financial year including resourcing the support to the group.

## Accidents and Incidents

**Table 1 - Top 5 Work Related Incidents by Type**

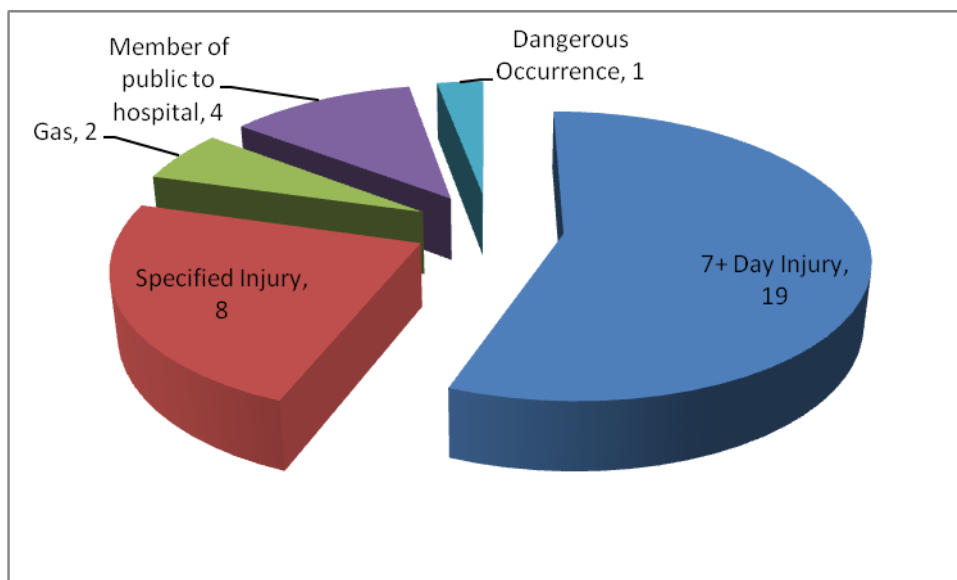


13. The council undertakes many activities to mitigate health and safety risk. Unfortunately accidents and incidents can still occur and when they do they are monitored and investigated. Table 2 shows the top 5 accidents by cause across CYC over the last financial year. Verbal and violent aggression still continues to be a major cause of incident reported and these are steadily increasing. This may, in part, be due to better reporting as the council have tried a number of ways to raise the profile of this issue. This has included incorporating the issue specifically in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy and actively encouraging staff to report incidents (so it is not simply seen as part of the job). However it may also due to the challenging environments in which colleagues work. In one instant at an adult care facility a number of staff were injured during an assault.
14. In addition the number of incidents involving child aggression is also one of the largest causes of incident reported. The causes of this are complex and consequently further work is ongoing to understand these in order to implement possible solutions which are challenging. One of the incidents was reportable to the health and safety enforcing authority under the provisions of Reporting of

Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). This law requires the council as an employer to report certain incidents to the government agency, Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

15. The number of requests to give access to staff and use of the council's Staff Warning Register appears to be increasing. The Staff Warning Register is maintained within the incident reporting system and identifies risks within communities of which staff need to be aware and take mitigating action to address if undertaking visiting duties. The number of entries is increasing alongside the numbers of incidents being reported.
16. From the data available there has been a drop in the number of slips, trips and falls from 105 to 54 so it is no longer the biggest single cause of incidents reported. Conversely handling, lifting and carrying has now become the biggest cause of incidents with an increase in number from 32 to 69. This could be due to council wide activities relating to the active management of sickness absence, so managers are proactively identifying the causes of sickness absence and whether they are associated with specific incidents and reported using the incident reporting system. Manual handling injury is a national issue so it remains essential that tasks involving manual handling activities are risk assessed and avoided if practicable. Staff continue to receive manual handling awareness training and are encourage to raise issues to their line management.

**Table 2 RIDDOR Notifiable Incidents by Reason for Financial Year 18/19**



17. Some incidents are particularly serious and as such there were 34 accidents notifiable to the HSE under the provisions of the RIDDOR. This was a increase from 12 the previous year and area which will be monitored over the current year to identify any long term trend. There may be a number of factors involved in this increase from better reporting by staff through to improved monitoring by managers (post incident) to clearly identify the causes of sickness absence. 8 of the 19 "over 7 day" injuries were due to manual handling activities. These injuries

can be difficult to attribute to a specific incident. It is therefore essential that managers discuss the circumstances of the ill health with the employee at the time of the injury, during keep in touch meetings and post return to work.

18. The 8 specified major injuries (these involving fractures of major bones, amputations etc) have no identifiable trends. The majority, five, being slips and trips (which was the biggest cause of all RIDDOR reportable accidents). However the incidents occurred in a wide variety of locations so no single cause or solution has been identifiable. One incident involved an individual being hit by a moving vehicle in the waste service and this has been subject to a very detailed investigation.
19. Any statistics that involving increases in RIDDOR notifiable incidents needs to be evaluated and addressed. Consequently the council is considering how to address any cultural issues that may have resulted in poor health and safety practice. There is therefore a session with Directors and Assistant Directors planned for October 2019 on health and safety where this will look at any cultural issues that can be addressed to improve health and safety performance. In addition the council's Joint Health and Safety Committee have started to monitor accidents and incidents on a more regular basis in order to ensure the council's Safety Management System is adhered to and Health & Safety practice is improved across the council.

### **Performance of the Health & Safety Service**

20. The shared Health and Safety Service continue to monitor council activities and undertake formal inspections to identify any areas of concern as shown in Table 3. In this current financial year this work is planned to increase, particularly in schools, following the formation of the dedicated schools team. In addition to the table a number of sites are visited, whether this is part of planned detailed complex audits or as part of the enhanced role in supporting the council when undertaking construction activities. The latter activities are governed by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) which is a key area of work. At the moment it is not possible to provide detail of this construction monitoring activity, however this is one of the elements to be included in the new Health and Safety system software (see paragraph 27 below).

**Table 3 - Summary of inspections and audits of CYC Properties**

<b>Type of Visit</b>	<b>Number of Visits</b>
School H&S Inspections	21
School Fire Risk Assessment Review	10
Asbestos Management Inspections/ audits	13
Corporate formal H&S visits	15
Corporate Formal Fire Risk Assessments	15

## **National Issues**

21. Following the Grenfell tragedy and other high profile fires (and the subsequent Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety) the government has released a consultation document; Building a safer future: proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system. This outlines the proposals for the wide ranging reform of fire safety system particularly targeted (at least initially) to those residential buildings more than 18 metres (that is 6 storeys or more) and houses of multiple occupation.

## **Looking forward to the Year 2019 – 2020**

22. The Shared Health and Safety Service has an enhanced role in supporting the council on construction projects. This has involved introducing specific arrangements for the management of the capital programme and funding additional health and safety resource to support this programme. This will then be rolled out across the council. Work has already commenced and will be further enhanced over the coming year. As part of the annual health and safety review undertaken by Internal Audit they will be focussing on compliance with the client duties under CDM Regulations.
23. CYC will also be encouraging partner organisation such as schools who are academies or form part of multi-academy trusts (MAT's) to appoint competent people or organisations to ensure undertake the works are designed and built to health and safety standards. The appropriate implementation of CDM is a national issue and consequently the Shared Health and Safety Service is hosting regional event at Harrogate Pavillions on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 for school business leaders at which the HSE, as health and safety regulator, are the keynote speakers.
24. In order to enhance the health and safety support in schools there has been the creation of specialist school team which provides support to schools across the region. To ensure there is robust reassurance within CYC there will include regular meetings between the schools service leads and senior management. There is also the additional specialist CDM support provided to the major schemes
25. In addition to construction the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have also significant plans across the public sector and are particularly interested in the application of the Stress Management Standards which have been in place for a number of years. Stress is still the leading cause of sickness absence across the public sector as a whole. The HSE are also going to provide direction and guidance to key stakeholders in health and social care on the management of

violence and aggression in the workplace. It will be interesting to see what this looks like as it has been an area that CYC has monitored for a number of years.

26. The HSE also plan to look at the issues posed by the new delivery models across the public sector as they accept that these arrangements no longer form a traditional employer/employee or even client /contractor relationship. In addition to this they plan to look at the use of volunteers particularly in relation to high risk activities. Considering this issue will be welcome as delivery across councils can be highly complex.
27. Finally a key project for the coming year planned from October 2019 will include the roll out of a new comprehensive health and safety information management system. The system is being launched at both CYC and NYCC councils and includes accident/incident reporting, risk assessment, audit and inspection and activity reporting. This will help bring a number of disparate H&S processes into one solution and allow real time reporting. The system will then be made available to schools and other traded service clients. This should address current issues around providing timely and accurate data and assist CYC in learning from incidents and accidents, and addressing health and safety culture issues where they exist.