



Health and Safety

Report

1st April 2019 – 30th September 2020

Introduction

1. The period covered by this year's report has been extended to 18 months due to the impact of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently this report covers the date range from 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2020.
2. The Shared Health and Safety Service continues to develop to support both York and North Yorkshire as working arrangements are refined to make sure the service can respond to organisational requirements and ensure service resilience. There is no better example than the response to the pandemic. The service, collaborating with other colleagues particularly in public health, has worked throughout to provide support to schools, care settings, service and property managers to provide practical health and safety advice and guidance in what has been an unprecedented period.
3. This has included regularly supporting managers, service leaders through to Head Teachers, governors and members of the school leadership team. It also involves liaising with trade union representatives and working with staff in order to ensure that risk assessments are done, premises are covid-secure, controls are in place and that these are followed. This also involved adapting to rapid changes following the latest government guidance which is amended frequently and in some cases repeatedly as more becomes known about the virus.
4. Delivery of services has not all been associated with the pandemic as the service has continued to provide health and safety support and guidance, including to a number of major council lead construction projects across the city including Guildhall, Lowfield Green, Marjorie Waite Court and Lincoln Court.

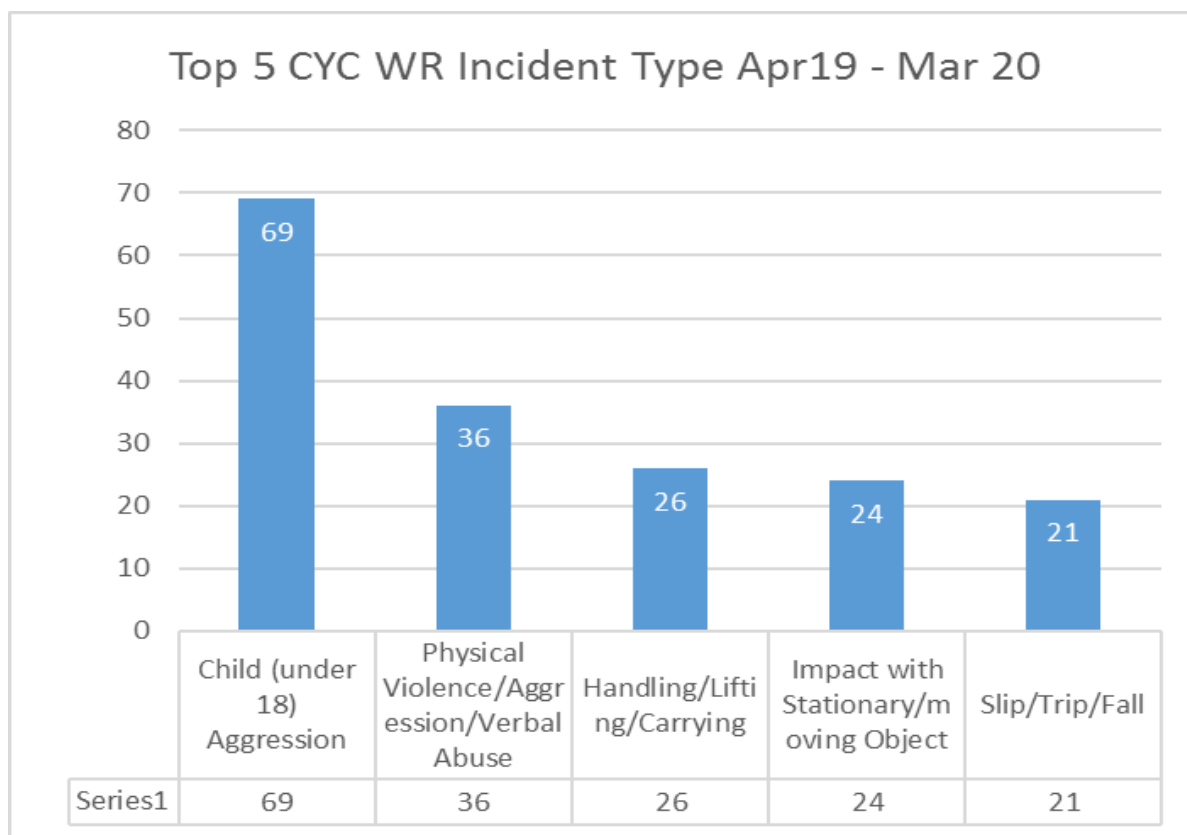
Key areas of Health and Safety Work in 2019/20

5. The Corporate Health and Safety Policy was reviewed and revised to recognise the risks from COVID-19 and approved by the then Interim Head of Paid Service supported by the Corporate Management Team. This policy will be revised once the new management structure, which is currently being consulted upon, is implemented to ensure it reflects the necessary changes and areas of risk.
6. COVID-19 has dominated the work of the service for most of 2020 in the main. This has involved developing council practice, including risk assessments and associated controls, in response to government guidance which has been constantly changing. This also involves working with trade union representatives and other colleagues so such controls can be practically implemented.

7. Following implementation of the controls the service has further supported operational services by undertaking monitoring visits, responding to complaints and queries to ensure a visible presence. This also involves responding to any requests for information from the Health and Safety Executive.
8. Where team members have undertaken visits this is in accordance with the current COVID controls to avoid any exposure to the team but also to avoid any inadvertent spread. These visits have been welcomed as they have provided reassurance to managers and staff as some of the controls have out of necessity been implemented rapidly.
9. The service has also been supporting a number of significant construction projects across the council. This involves working closely with procurement to ensure health and safety has been included in any project tender documents, thereby ensuring health and safety is considered at the design stage to minimise risk not only during the construction phase but once the facilities become operational.
10. Construction activities, including designing and planning, continue to be a priority. This includes providing in-house training to those teams involved in this work. It also included during this reporting period, hosting a regional event in conjunction with the HSE, for schools leaders (in addition to supporting other events across Yorkshire). This was to ensure they fully understand their health and safety responsibilities when it comes to managing construction projects in their schools. These events were well attended and appreciated.
11. The corporate Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy is now embedded following its full implementation from 1st April 2019 and its it pleasing to note that to date test carried out have been negative.

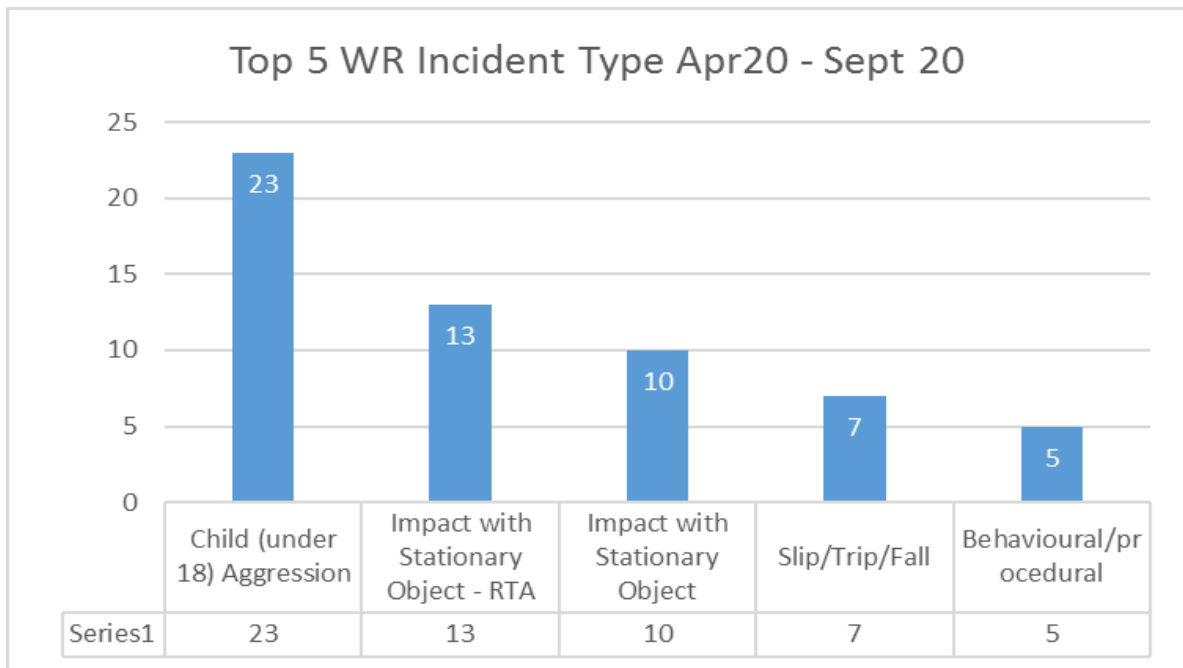
Accidents and Incidents

Table 1 - Top 5 Work Related Incidents by Type Apr 19 – Mar 20



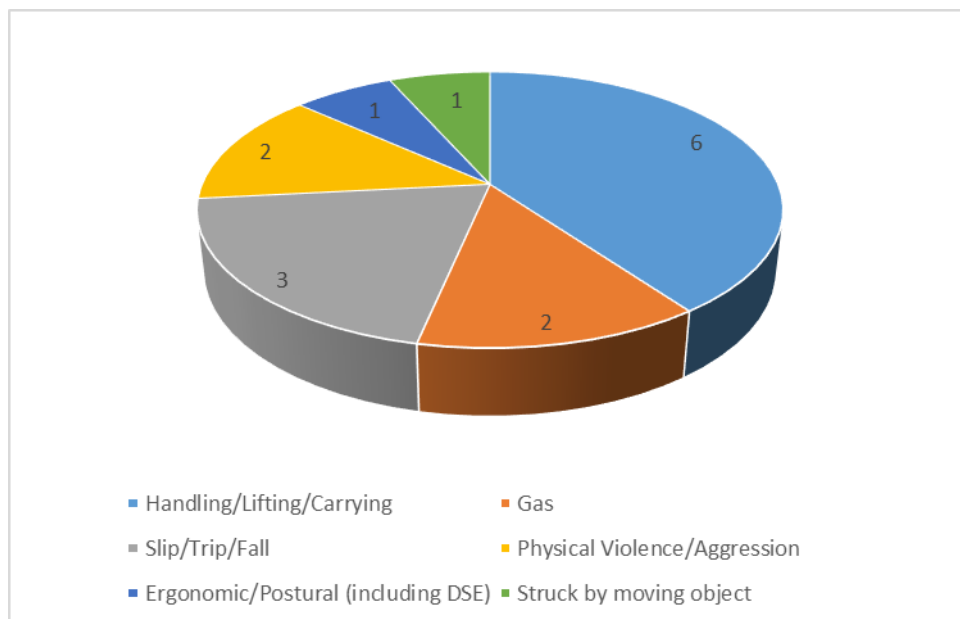
12. Table 1 shows the top 5 accidents by cause across CYC over the last financial year. Verbal and violent aggression still continues to be a major cause of incident reported (down from 48 in 2018/19) and child aggression (up from 49 in 2018/19). This is an area the council is focussed upon in providing care and support to a variety of groups some of which do act in a violent and aggressive manner. In addition a number of services undertake enforcement work which can result in an aggressive and occasionally violent assault.
13. There has been a lot of work on this issue to ensure staff report these incidents to ensure it is not considered to be simply part of the job. Where such incidents do occur it is expected to be thoroughly investigated, workplace practices reviewed and mitigating measures considered and where this is practicable embedded. The council has just finalised post incident guidance to managers in order to further support staff following incidents not only of this nature but also of any other /incident or near miss. This guidance has recently been endorsed by the Joint Health and Safety Committee which is the council’s formal health and safety liaison committee between senior managers and trade union representatives.

Table 2 - Top 5 Work Related Incidents by Type Apr 20 – Sept 20



14. Table 2 shows the incident statistics for the first 6 months of the current financial year which shows the results of active campaigning across a number of services to encourage incident and near miss reporting, which explains why Road Traffic collisions are starting to come through on the system. It should be noted that from September 2020 new reporting software has been introduced. It is hoped that this new software will not only improve data reporting but drive any health and safety improvement actions. The software will be refined over time to support the council’s commitment drive forward the health and safety culture.

Table 3 RIDDOR Notifiable Incidents by cause for the period covered by this report



15. Some incidents have been particularly serious and as such there were 15 incidents notifiable to the HSE (during the period covered by this report) under the provisions of the RIDDOR. This was a significant decrease from the previous year's reports – there were 34 in 2018/19. This is a positive position however due to the way operational practices have significantly changed in response to COVID-19 it is not possible to compare the data at this time. This will be monitored over the longer term to determine if this is an accurate trend.
16. From the incidents reported 11 were 'over 7 day' injuries of which 6 were caused by handling, lifting and carrying. There was also one notifiable occupational disease again attributable to this activity. This indicates that whilst the numbers of RIDDOR incidents is falling employees continue to undertake manual work which can result in significant injury so there is no room for complacency in ensuring staff follow procedures and that controls are implemented where practicable.
17. As outlined above physical violence and aggression is still a significant area of concern as 2 incidents result in a RIDDOR notification. One of these incidents was a very serious assault.

Performance of the Health & Safety Service

18. The Shared Health and Safety Service continue to monitor council activities and undertake formal inspections to identify any areas of concern. This work has been severely affected by COVID-19. However work in areas of high risk have continued with over 62 Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) completed across the corporate workplaces during the period of this report (see Table 4). Due to their risks some buildings have a FRA each year so will have had more than one assessment during the period covered by this report.

Table 4 - Summary of inspections and audits of CYC Properties

Type of Visit	Number of Visits*
School H&S Inspections	45
School Fire Risk Assessment Review	17
Corporate formal H&S visits	4
Corporate Formal Fire Risk Assessments	62

*Nature of inspection/visit changed due to COVID-19 as some visits brought forward and some delayed depending upon risk

National Issues

19. In the last report the government response to the Grenfell tragedy was outlined and this has now significantly progressed as the Fire Safety Bill which is expected to receive Royal Assent at some point in 2021 following further consideration in the House of Commons. This legislation will lead to a significant

period of change of fire safety standards particularly targeted (at least initially) to those residential buildings more than 18 metres high (that is 6 storeys or more) but will also impact other high risk sectors such as houses of multiple occupation and potential elderly persons homes. There are also plans to amend the requirements for buildings, particularly in relation to fire through the Building Safety Bill.

Looking forward to 2021

20. Although, as explained earlier in the report, some construction projects have commenced or continued throughout the pandemic, more routine works have been delayed. Early indications are that there may be many projects going ahead across the city in 2021 which will not only put pressure on supply chains but will also put pressure on the Shared Health and Safety Service to be able to effectively monitor these projects. Planning is well underway for this with specific priority focussed on those projects where the risk are significant e.g. roof works.
21. Other organisations, such as schools, will also be encouraged to ensure construction works are properly planned and resourced to minimise risks of poor practice on site or projects over running. Schools prefer the projects to be undertaken in the summer holidays whilst pupils are off site which again puts pressure on supply chains as their staff are also trying to take leave at the same time.
22. Fire risks continue to have a high profile following Grenfell and the ongoing public inquiry as outlined in the national issues section above. The Shared Health and Safety Service is currently reviewing, in consultation with other key council services, fire safety management arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate and consistent for the council going forward. This is targeted to be ready for implementation by May 2021. This will ensure the council is in a good position to adapt and implement, where necessary, any requirements in response to the new legislation.
23. One risk the team are specifically targeting is 'hot works' which can involve welding, flame cutting, soldering, brazing, grinding and the use of other equipment incorporating a flame, e.g. tar boilers. These are particularly common in roof works where there is a substantial risk of fire. Zurich Insurance has claimed that 15% of all fires in commercial and industrial properties are caused by hot works. This can result in significant damage to buildings and in some cases the complete loss of the building and the associated costs of replacement. A revised Compliance Note and associated Hot Work Permit has recently been completed and is currently being consulted upon with the members of the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

24. In addition to the plans outlined above the service is also supporting Property Managers by reviewing Asbestos Management arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Asbestos has been a risk for some time and in 2018 there were 2,446 mesothelioma deaths due to past asbestos exposures nationally.
25. The B-Safe Health & Safety software continues to be rolled out which allows managers and staff to not only report incidents but will also allow them to undertake other activities such as Display Screen Equipment self-assessment, risk assessment and monitor actions. The next 12 months will see this software refined so it delivers all the Health & Safety system requirements of CYC, including effective reporting facilities.