



Shropshire
Council

Health & Safety

Annual Report 2024-2025



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Key results

This report will cover what Health & Safety activities have been undertaken, as well as highlighting any risks and identifying objectives.

	The HSE (Health and Safety Executive) issued a Notice of Contravention against Shropshire Council this year in relation to a reported Employee exposure to Hand Arm Vibration. Upon review of the Council's follow-up actions, the HSE were content that remedial measures were in hand.
	3050 staff completed courses this year – increase on last year. Course content on Leap has been reviewed and enhanced and new modules added covering Fire Safety in buildings. Additionally, Leap was rolled out to our maintained schools, which has helped enable staff training to be completed more effectively and reduce need to travel. It should be noted that a blended approach of both face-face and e-learning is needed to best deliver all required training elements.
	'Healthy Working' is a module used for the online training and assessment programme for DSE users. This has now been "rolled out", along with Single Sign On, and is actively being used. Risk levels are reducing based on the training and programme being followed. Work has been done to signpost managers to guidance and best-value procurement options whereby staff require DSE equipment as a result of assessment. Uptake and completion across directorates has been good. We are improving our reporting mechanisms so that service area specific reports can be provided in future.
	Continued to implement our Wellbeing Plan – "looking After Our People", which is based on 5 key pillars of wellbeing: 1. Enablers of Health (senior management/line management engagement and support, policies and procedures, and social value) 2. Mental Health 3. Musculoskeletal health 4. Lifestyles 5. External risks to health (financial health, domestic abuse, caring responsibilities) Through delivering on: - Policies, procedures and guidance - Targeted support - Training and development - Communication and information
	Audits continue to be carried out across all Service Areas with follow-up support and advice where this is needed. Audits of radioactive sources continue to be carried out in schools held within the science department.

Key results, continued

We are confident that the arrangements, policies, training, and support that we provide ensure that Shropshire Council is compliant and most importantly focused on keeping our staff and the public safe. We are always looking for ways to improve, and this is just some of what we have done over the past year:

Actions identified/undertaken

Reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Health, Safety and Welfare Group, with Trade Unions and service areas. This process will need undertaking again next year to reflect the new operating model and fundamental changes within structures.

The Health & Safety Team, work with Service Areas to produce and implement **Health & Safety management systems** including policies, procedures, and local arrangements. This is regularly discussed and monitored at quarterly Directorate meetings where targeted work specific to that Directorate is agreed.

Enhanced training offer for Council services and some partner agencies e.g Housing provider/Town and Parish councils and we now deliver all Social Care First Aid training including new course to Foster Carers which has helped drive down third-party spend.

Due to training vacancy, we have not been offering management of Health & Safety training for part of the year and plan to procure a new and streamlined CIEH package in 2025 to fill this gap. This is more cost-effective financially than the former IOSH course and less time intensive as a shorter course.

Engaged with Service Areas to ensure that health and safety compliance is in place with each service area allocated a link officer to support and monitor. This is regularly discussed and monitored at quarterly Directorate meetings where targeted work specific to that Directorate is agreed.

Policies and arrangements continue to be updated on a rolling programme. These are approved and scrutinised if significant changes are made at the Bi-Annual Health, Safety and Welfare Group.

Updated Accident Reporting procedures and enhanced categories to include hate crimes including racism, sexual harassment and homophobic abuse.

209 Asbestos management and re-inspection surveys **completed**.

271 sites monitored monthly for Legionella in April 2024, reducing to **261** by March 2025 and **161** sites had water risk assessments completed on a rolling programme.

Input from Health & Safety team to Stress Working Group led by Occupational Health and including Wellbeing and HR to look at policies and actions to impact positively on the absence figures in this area.

Input to working group around Elected Member Bullying and Harassment issues.

Wellbeing



Wellbeing Activities

A [Wellbeing Support for employees during resizing](#) section was published (April 2024) on the wellbeing pages to support employees through consultations, restructures, and redundancy.

Self-Care Week (w/c 18th November): activities were organized to highlight the importance of self-care, including a webinar on the Healthy Lives Stop Smoking Service, mini health checks at various sites, and the publication of a self-care guide.

Techtimeoutuesday (3rd December): approval was sought from Executive Directors to engage the workforce in this initiative by encouraging colleagues to take an hour offline for digital wellbeing. Activities included organized walks and the publication of a digital wellbeing in the home guide.

Progression of SharePoint Wellbeing Site: the Wellbeing Corner was migrated over to a new [Wellbeing Corner SharePoint](#) site, going live in December 2024. Work continues to migrate over all the intranet Wellbeing Pages.

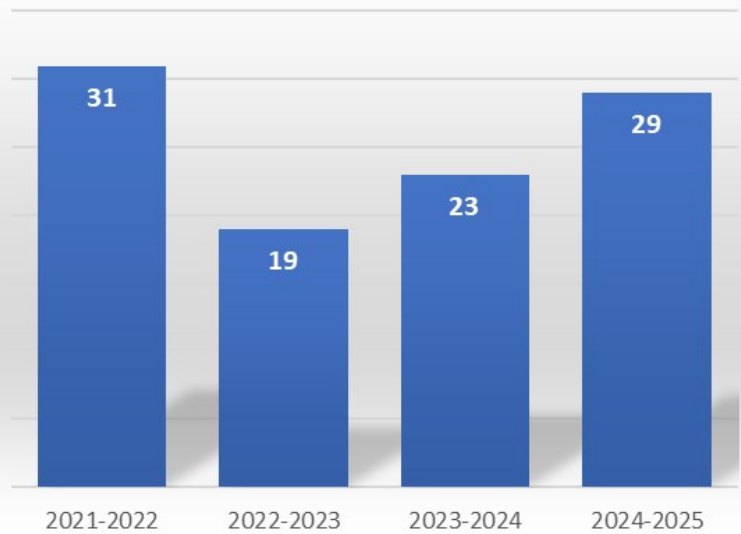
Copilot Neurodiversity and Physical Disability Working Group: a business case was approved for testing Copilot 365 with neurodivergent and physically disabled colleagues in January 2025 and a working group formed. The group has started to meet to feedback their experiences of Copilot across the 365 tenants.

Stress Management Task and Finish Group: this group, set up in October 2024, is reviewing support and resources related to stress management, including e-learning modules and the Stress Management Policy and toolkit.

[Vivup Employer Assistance Programme \(EAP\):](#) Vivup were approved at Resources Directorate Leadership Team (December 2024) to replace our previous counselling provider, Optima Health (whose contract was ending), with significant savings. The EAP comprises a 24/7, 365 days a year telephone helpline, a structured telephone counselling service, and an online health and wellbeing platform – Your Care.

Occupational Health

IHR Requests Processed



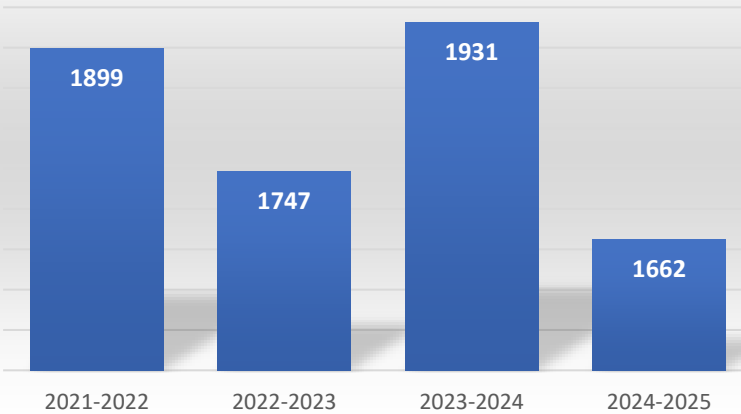
Requests for ill health retirements for the period 1st April 24- 31st March 25 have shown an increase compared to 23/24.

Management Referrals Processed



828 management referrals were processed during the period of 1st April 24 – 31st March 25, compared with 855 in the previous year. This provides both the manager and employee with support regarding the physical or mental health of an employee and supports them to remain or return to work.

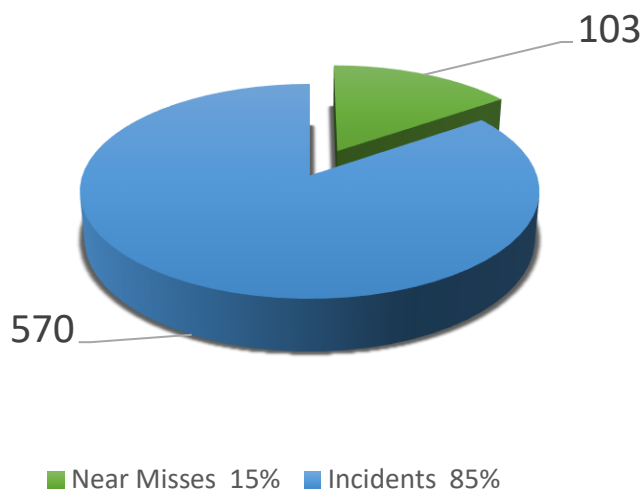
Medical Questionnaires processed



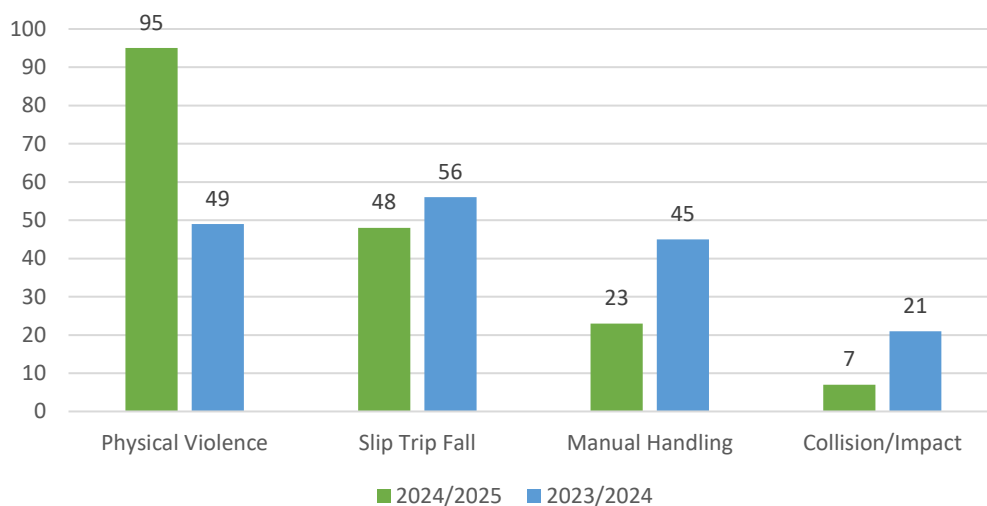
Occupational health processed 1662 pre-placement questionnaires for employment clearance from 1st April 24– 31st March 25, compared with 1931 in the previous year. This process ensures any health conditions or equality issues are raised and supported through risk assessment and reasonable adjustments.

Safety Data

Total Reported incidents

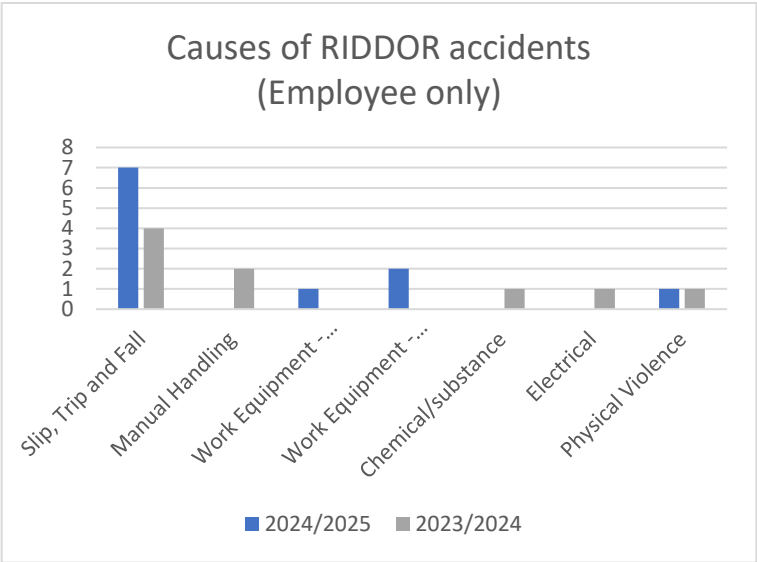
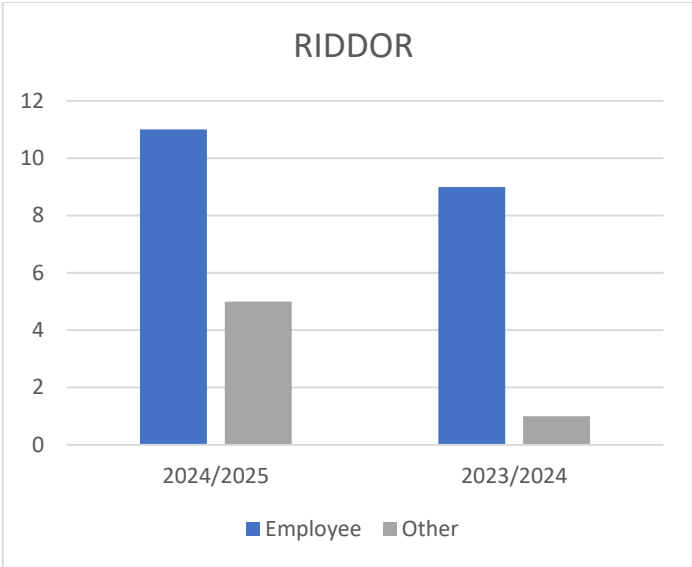


Main causes of minor injuries to employees

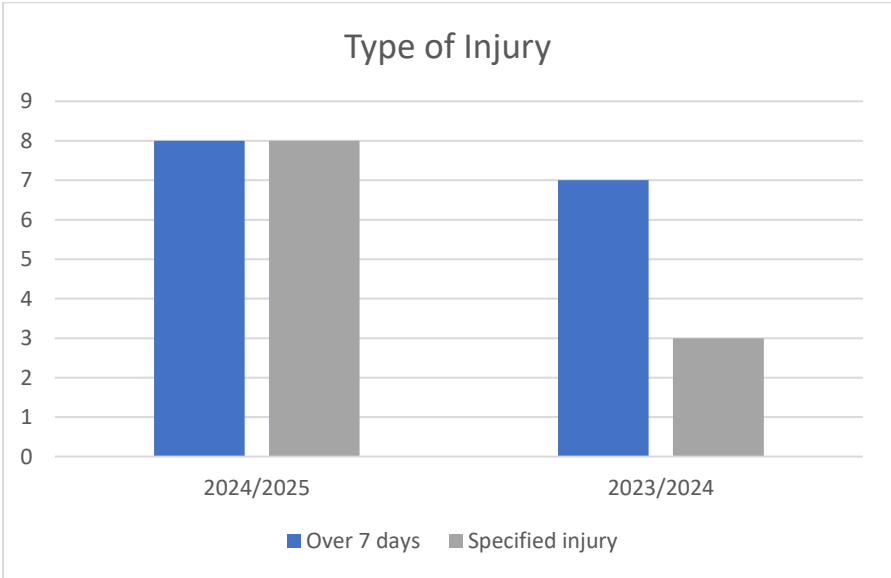


Safety Data - RIDDOR

RIDDOR – The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations



All RIDDOR reportable incidents are fully investigated by the Health & Safety Team.



All Workforce Absences

Sickness absence overall has increased this year by approximately 6% in terms of total number of lost days, however in terms of average lost days per fte the increase is greater at just over 11.5%. The greater increase in average lost days per fte is down to the fact that headcount has reduced creating a higher proportionality decrease when looking at average lost days per fte.

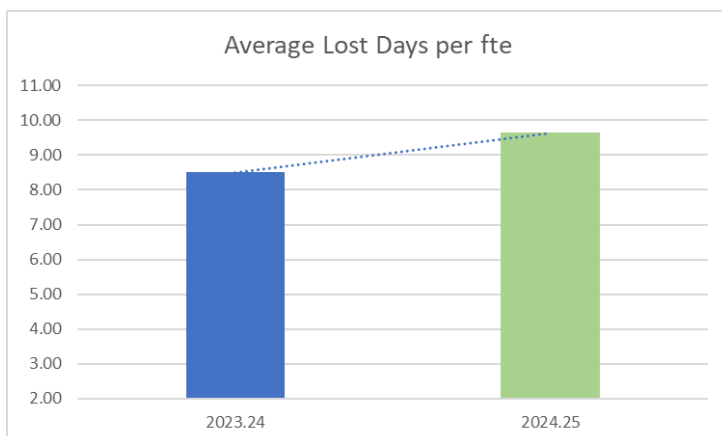
The top 3 reasons for absence for 2024.25 are Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses as the greatest reason for absence, Musculoskeletal injury as the second highest reason for absence and Benign and Malignant tumours, Cancer as the third highest reason for absence and this particular absence provides a cause for focus with the total number of lost days due to this particular reason rising by 15% from last year.

Absences due to Anxiety, Stress, Depression and other Psychiatric illnesses makes up for just over a quarter of all absences with a 13% overall increase when compared to last year in terms of total lost days.

Benchmarking data from last year place Shropshire around the middle mark with regards to average lost days per fte when comparing against other Local Authorities that said year end figures for the organisation come in above average and so it is recognised that there is work that needs to be done to reduce our absence rates

Focus remains on working to reduce stress and mental health related absences and absences related to musculoskeletal injury however absences due to benign and malignant tumours and cancer are receiving heightened attention. Various initiatives are currently being explored to support our employee's undergoing treatment for cancer. These include utilising resources from Macmillan Cancer Support and directing employees to the iCan rehabilitation programme through our wellbeing pages.

In April of this year Shropshire Council launched a new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which offers a telephone helpline and counselling service, along with an online health and wellbeing platform called offering blogs, videos and a personalised (confidential) dashboard. The new EAP will provide employees with practical advice on a wide range of work, family and personal issues and health guides providing our employees with tailored support where needed.



*NB Benign and malignant tumours, cancer was the 5th reason for absence in 2023.24, the 3rd reason for absence in 2023.24 was Coughs, Colds and Influenza

Key actions – What have we done?

Actions identified/undertaken

Ongoing programme of engagement with service area management teams to discuss health and safety management issues and concerns on a quarterly basis. As examples of specific work across areas, in the past year we have worked on topics ranging from supporting Care Home managers, school liaison on HSE Asbestos enforcement visits and the Council's stance towards compliance with Martyn's Law. Additionally, any pertinent issues arising from audits and inspections undertaken by the team are presented to the Directorate Management for their input.

Led a working group on management of Events Safety and also contributed to an on-going working group on Martyn's Law and its application across council premises.

Liaison with HSE who investigated and issued a Notice of Contravention relating to staff affected by Hand Arm Vibration through their use of work equipment. Ongoing service area support on the appropriate management and control measures for Noise and Vibration in these and other operational areas.

Final year delivering **Safer Schools accreditation** scheme to ensure appropriate security and safety measures are in place. This scheme was not a statutory requirement and as part of the Resizing programme at the Council, the officer requested Voluntary Redundancy and departed part-way through the year. Health & Safety advice remains available from the team.

Scheduled quarterly briefing meetings with the Portfolio Holder for Health & Safety.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) – Ongoing work and monitoring on the single premise of concern within the Council's remit.

LEAP Into Learning - We have also launched an E-Learning course platform to our maintained schools to enable them to undertake some refresher training online as well as accessing our face-to-face sessions.

HSE again ran a national inspection programme across schools looking at Asbestos management. As well as our standard regular training programme, we arranged and ran extra training sessions with targeted support for schools for these visits. Five maintained schools were visited by HSE as part of this inspection programme and no significant recommendations for improvements were made.

Power BI – Replaced previous reporting mechanism with a Power BI solution that has enabled simpler and faster real-time data reporting and analysis on KPI's across the three areas within Occupational Health & Safety and Wellbeing. However there are some ongoing technical issues with system performance.

Key actions — Who have we worked with?

Collaborative working with:

- Fire Safety with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Health & Wellbeing, Emergency Planning and Risk Management Team – working on strategy around Martyn’s Law, in relation to safety and security of public venues.
- West Midlands Health and Safety Group – chaired by Occupational Health & Safety Manager.
- Local Government Association - National Health and Safety Practitioner Panel meeting to share and discuss best practice with other local authorities.
- West Midlands Wellbeing Group regional lead.
- West Midlands Health & Safety Group for Education.
- Regular meetings with Union colleagues.

Key challenges - 2025/26

A summary of potential Health & Safety challenges to the council:

Challenge		Mitigating actions
Slips, trips, and falls		Ongoing audits, site inspections and awareness training available for all staff. Ongoing review of incident data to identify any trends or premises of concern.
Verbal and physical violence		Review of incident data to identify any specific service areas of concern, availability of suite of training to upskill staff in awareness and coping mechanisms. Liaison with premise management and, if appropriate, utilise security company support.
 Mental health and Wellbeing of staff		Regular communication of availability of wellbeing initiatives and counselling support.
Fire Safety compliance		Ongoing training with staff, regular liaison, and meetings with PSG and Fire Service, monitoring of Fire Risk Assessment completion and progress with action plans. Fire strategy under review with work to implement in 2025/26 planned.
Supporting schools with their Radiation risk		Our Radiation Protection Officer carries out bi-annual audits to ensure the amount of radioactive services held on site is appropriate, and that sources are managed and monitored according to L93, to meet standards of the Ionising Radiation Regulations.
Asbestos/Legionella compliance		Ongoing training with staff, programme of risk assessment and monitoring. PSG Compliance Officer in post to support monitoring and compliance.
Radon compliance		Work planned with PSG colleagues to identify areas where Radon gas occurrence may exceed recommended levels and what remedial work is thus required in Council premises affected.
Stress		Health & Safety Team to take a key role in the council's working group led by Occupational Health looking at reported stress related absence and appropriate support mechanisms for managers and colleagues.

Noise and Vibration	Ongoing work to advise and support services on managing these areas in terms of risk assessing, record-keeping, training staff, arranging appropriate Occupational Health surveillance and procuring the correct equipment and maintaining this appropriately.
Council Resizing	Ongoing support to service areas as the council reduces in size in line with financial challenges. The Health & Safety team need to take a key role in ensuring Health & Safety responsibilities are recognised and understood and that staff at all levels receive the appropriate training in line with their roles, so that compliance can be maintained in these challenging circumstances. The planned procurement of the CIEH management courses and recruitment to the vacant Training post will be key to delivering this and closing the current gap.
Resizing and implementation of staffing changes within Occupational Health Safety & Wellbeing service.	Financial situation and Service Reviews held in July 2024 highlighted the need for consideration of pausing and stopping some functions. As part of this review and Resizing process, all structures were reviewed, and the following changes were agreed: • Senior Occupational Health Adviser post paused. • Full-time Occupational Health Adviser post deleted. • Occupational Health & Safety Manager post scheduled for deletion in June 2025. • Health & Safety Crime Prevention Officer post deleted. • Health & Safety Assistant Trainer post paused until 2025/26.
Resizing and reshaping of Occupational Health Safety & Wellbeing service.	Along with the staffing changes above, with the departure of the Occupational Health & Safety Manager in June 2025 the services are being separated and will sit as component services under different management within Enabling Services. The Health & Safety team is not currently operating at full-strength, but it is hoped that recruitment will resolve this by November 2025. While synergies clearly remain between the work of the Health & Safety team and the Occupational Health team, these teams will be separate entities.

Key priorities - 2025/26

Key priorities	Timescales
Auditing/compliance Identification of weaknesses or gaps in arrangements and review of whether appropriate management arrangements are in place and confirmation that adequate risk control systems exist for work activities and working environments.	Ongoing
Staffing Recruitment of Assistant Training post to enable delivery of full suite of courses and resilience on delivery options. Recruitment of Health & Safety Support Officer following retirement in March 2025.	Ongoing
Management of change Liaison with service areas in line with new structure and New Operating Model so that known changes are reflected in support provided by the Health & Safety Team and key risk areas monitored appropriately.	Ongoing
Staff Protection Register (SPR) – implementation of corporate system to coordinate and collate risk information relating to Potentially Violent Persons and premises of concern relevant to service areas.	Nov 25
Review of council's Management Training courses for Health & Safety to enable managers to undertake training more simply and in a time effective way. Procurement of CIEH course and recruitment to Training vacancy are key to this.	Dec 25
Hybrid/homeworkers have suitable and sufficient workstations and environments. Cardinus re-assessments will enable and support this.	Ongoing

Our objectives - 2025/26

Shropshire Council is committed to the health, safety, and wellbeing of our employees, whilst ensuring that their work does not adversely affect the health and safety of others i.e., pupils, public, service users, contractors. In line with the Shropshire Plan our key objectives are:



- Providing professional and effective advice, guidance, training and monitoring on safe working practices and environments to all service areas considering new ways of working, changes in guidance and incident data.
- As the Council continues its Resizing programme, the team continue to work with services to monitor effects this downsizing may have on Health & Safety roles and responsibilities and advise and support services to continue to embed appropriate health and safety culture and processes.
- Implementing new Management Training programme with the CIEH course.
- Prevent and remove health risks arising in the workplace – ensuring Council meets its statutory responsibilities.
- Provide screening and surveillance services when early stages of ill health arise. We will work to support managers.
- To enable employees with health issues to remain at work.
- Give independent and professional advice on staff unable to work due to long-term or short-term intermittent health problems.
- Lifestyle and wellbeing services increasing productivity and staff retention.
- We will continue to provide supportive health, wellbeing, and resilience interventions to our employees through our Wellbeing Plan. This will be critical as the Council downsizes and staff remaining may have wider remits than at present, so it is important a focus on their capacity and wellbeing is maintained.



- Streamlined teams following Resizing and loss of posts to focus on compliance and support with reduced staff levels contributing to lower salary burden.
- Strengthen our Health & Safety training offer to deliver an enhanced range of H&S and First Aid courses to deliver best-value and support team budgets.
- Deliver Radiation Protection Support to schools and colleges on a fee-paying basis.



- Health and safety premises audits/inspections/interventions
- Undertaking health surveillance for meeting legislation – Noise, Hand Arm Vibration, Spirometry, night workers, food handlers.

- Training and advisory support on the appropriate management of key risk areas such as Fire, Asbestos, Legionella and Radon gas.



- Support the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce to enable the Council to maintain compliance and provide appropriate advice and support to the workforce as the Council reduces in size. Ongoing engagement with management and staff is key to monitoring and supporting the health and safety compliance and the wider wellbeing agenda.
- Ongoing rollout of mandatory DSE Workstation Assessment training for office, home, and hybrid workers.
- Continue membership and engagement with regional Health & Safety groups so that shared best practice is in place working with colleagues from other Local Authorities.
- Provide access for staff to Occupational Health support.
- Consult and engage with Trade Union colleagues.
- Promote and revise H&S Intranet pages and Shropshire Learning Gateway.
- Ensure that staff with responsibilities for Health and Safety are competent using the CIEH course framework planned for 2025/26.