

Appendix 1

Corporate Health and Safety

Annual report to Corporate Governance.

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Glossary

DCC	Denbighshire County Council.
H&S	Health and Safety.
CH&S	Corporate Health and Safety team.
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.
HSE	Health and Safety Executive.
HAV	Hand Arm Vibration.
HAWS	Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome.
ACM	Asbestos Containing Material.
PQQ	Pre-qualification questionnaire
PHW	Public Health Wales
ADEW	Association of Directors of Education in Wales

Assessment of DCC safety standards 2019-2020

To maintain consistency with previous years reporting measures, the assessments in this document are based on the assurance ratings outlined below.

Green	High Assurance	H&S management systems are fully developed and recorded. Significant hazards are identified and managed to minimise risk to an acceptable level. All employees are involved in the development and use of H&S management systems.
Yellow	Medium Assurance	H&S management systems are generally developed and recorded. Significant hazards are generally identified and managed to minimise risk. Employees are generally involved in the development and use of H&S management systems.
Amber	Low Assurance	Some H&S management systems have been developed and recorded. Some significant hazards have been identified and these are sometimes managed to minimise risk. Employees are generally not involved in the development of H&S management.
Red	No Assurance	Few H&S management systems have been developed and recorded. Risk is not properly managed. Employees are not involved in the development and use of H&S management systems.

The assessments are based on first-hand knowledge gained during:

- Monitoring activities.
- Face to face meetings.
- Accident \ incident investigations.
- Reactive work.
- Attendance at H&S committees and local meetings.
- Training and training feedback.

The overall assessment of DCC’s implementation of H&S systems is **medium assurance**.

The overall assessment of employee involvement in H&S is **medium assurance**.

The overall assessment of DCC’s compliance with Covid – 19 regulations and the delivery of “Covid secure” workplaces is **high assurance**

These assessments are qualified in that they are made with information from workplaces that the CH&S team has had any involvement with.

Summary.

The Safety Health and Welfare culture in DCC has been on a continuous improvement path for a number of years. The most recent improvement is in employee involvement, this has the potential for a significant positive impact on “safety culture”.

The overall assessment of DCC’s implementation of H&S systems and of employee involvement in H&S are both medium assurance (yellow). This means that H&S management systems that we have encountered are generally developed and recorded. Significant hazards are generally identified and managed to minimise risk. Employees are generally involved in the development and use of H&S management systems.

Since March 2020 the Covid – 19 pandemic has driven the organisation to operate in a different way with much more focus on providing essential services in a “Covid secure” way and working from home. DCC responded rapidly to government regulations and guidance. Risk assessments and safe working procedures were developed as soon as practicable and reflect the rapidly changing position. DCC’s approach to managing the risk from Covid - 19 is assessed as high assurance

The accident \ incident count for the year shows an increased level of accident reports over previous years. This increase is due to the drive to improve accident reporting rather than the superficial indication of an increased accident rate.

Throughout the financial year 2019\2020 and to date, a number of our RIDDOR incidents were formally investigated by the HSE. In all but one case the HSE were satisfied with the response they received from DCC and took no action. In one case where there was an asbestos release the HSE imposed a “Fee for Intervention” of £123. The identified “Material Breach” that caused this has since been rectified by the housing management team.

Hand Arm Vibration monitoring has continued through the reporting period with five diagnoses being reported Under RIDDOR. There is a continuing need for employees to use

the monitoring process and for managers to robustly ensure that this occurs to help minimise the risk of harm to employees and enable the organisation to fulfil its legal duties.

An anonymous email was received in February 2020 raising concerns about alleged malpractice within areas of the Highways, Facilities & Environmental Service. These concerns were raised under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy. Corporate Health and Safety were tasked with carrying out a review. Although no malpractice was uncovered during the review some improvement points were identified.

New ways of carrying out the CH&S roles of monitoring activities and providing training are being developed to ensure that the focus on general safety management is not lost in the Covid focussed world.

Points of note during 2019 – 2020

Whistle blowing investigation

An anonymous email was received by the Chief Executive dated 15 February 2020 raising concerns about various alleged malpractice within areas of the Highways, Facilities & Environmental Service. These concerns were raised under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy. Corporate Health and Safety were tasked with carrying out a review by the Chief Internal Auditor that would primarily focus on:

- Powered pole pruners and similar equipment – review of the equipment, inventories and maintenance records.
- Employees' competence – evidence of requisite training and certification for handling such equipment and conducting highway safety inspections.
- Risk assessments and systems of work (linked to such equipment).
- Supervision and monitoring of employees using such equipment.
- Highway safety inspections process - review of documentation and sign off.
- Robustness of arrangements within Street Scene for managing staff when carrying out grounds maintenance work at schools and other sites to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults.

During the review process, access to documents and meetings with front line employees and other officers both as a group and on an individual basis took place. Anonymity of all personnel has been safeguarded.

Although no malpractice was uncovered during the review some improvement points were identified. The full report is available as Appendix 3 to this report.

Asbestos releases

Asbestos is well managed in DCC properties but there have been three asbestos releases in the report period that had to be reported to HSE under RIDDOR. The incidents all occurred during housing maintenance and repair activities.

- The first incident occurred when an electrical test engineer was working on a light fitting and disturbed asbestos. This incident resulted in a small release of asbestos that was investigated by CH&S and then reported under RIDDOR. The HSE carried out their own investigation of the incident and identified a “material breach” of regulations in that the employee was not fully trained in the DCC asbestos management process. The investigation resulted in a “Fee for Intervention”, the fee was £123. HSE took No further action. Following the incident the housing management team tightened up their employee asbestos management training program.
- The second incident related to a contractor removing a wasp’s nest from a residential property. CH&S investigated the incident and identified that it was impossible to carry out this activity without damaging the asbestos facia. HSE did not follow up on this incident indicating their acceptance of the internal investigation findings.
- The third incident related to housing contractors disturbing asbestos containing material during a housing refurbishment. The CH&S investigation identified that a DCC officer had made a genuine mistake in allocating extra work without additional asbestos surveys. The incident was reported under RIDDOR. The HSE did not follow up on this incident indicating their acceptance of the internal investigation findings.

Hand Arm Vibration (HAV)

In 2016 DCC procured electronic equipment that enables us to monitor employee exposure to Hand Arm vibration whilst using powered tools and equipment. An employee welfare follow procedure with Occupational Health was put in place around the monitoring process. The monitoring has identified a number of employees showing symptoms of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) or Carpel Tunnel Syndrome (CTS).

In this reporting period five reportable cases were identified and reported under RIDDOR. Of the five cases only one was followed up by HSE and following the provision of additional information they indicated that no action would be taken as DCC was able to demonstrate a suitable and sufficient process.

Although we have been able to clearly demonstrate the validity of our process to the regulator, we should not underestimate the difficulties in maintaining the effectiveness of what we do. There is a constant challenge to get identified employees using the monitoring equipment consistently. Although the equipment is simple to fit and use there is a need to constantly drive the process forward. The difficulties emanate from human beliefs and behaviours, and therefore requires robust management support to ensure that we maintain an effective monitoring process to support and protect our employees and protect the organisation.

Covid – 19

DCC responded rapidly to the Covid – 19 pandemic. With the onset of lockdown, work immediately commenced on preparing for the new and continually changing “normal”.

Many activities have been carried out to ensure that DCC is Covid compliant.

- Daily review of national guidance from UK government, Welsh government, PHW, HSE and other bodies.
- Covid – 19 generic risk assessment for DCC workplaces based on UK government and Welsh government regulations and guidance
- Guidance documents
- Supporting all schools and reviewing their risk assessments and operational plans for the different stages of opening
- DCC developed a school transport risk assessment for all Wales local authorities at the request of ADEW

- DCC developed a school peripatetic worker risk assessment for use by the six North Wales local authorities.
- Support in the development of risk assessments and working procedures for libraries and the registrars service. This required site visits from CH&S officers.
- Corporate policy and guidance on the use of face coverings in the workplace.

CH&S investigations, reports and significant project involvement examples

- All RIDDOR reports, Accident \ incident investigations
- Whistle blowing
- Asbestos incidents
- Children's village structural integrity
- Clawdd Poncen children's outdoor play equipment
- Lon Parcwr welfare facilities
- Tym Dyffryn Clwyd
- Waste management project
- Hand Arm Vibration monitoring
- Contractor PQQ
- Cefndy Healthcare
- School traffic management
- Henllan sports ground
- Workplace environmental monitoring

Accident \ incident statistics.

During the reporting period we have seen a marked increase in the number of recorded accidents and incidents from previous years. It is believed that the increase should be seen positively rather than the obvious initial thought that DCC's performance has deteriorated. The increase is due to two specific drivers. 1) Our sustained effort to get all operational areas in DCC to record all accidents and incidents. 2) The opening of SC2 and the request that they record all accidents and incidents however minor to enable us to gauge the range of incidents and customer perception and feedback.

A breakdown of accidents and incidents is available in Appendix2.

All major accidents \ incidents that result in a RIDDOR report are subject to an internal investigation by CH&S. This can range from simple communication to a thorough and extensive investigation depending on the circumstances.

	2018\2019	2019\2020
• The total number of recorded incidents	1601	3739
• The number of RIDDOR incidents	23	32

CH&S team approximate time allocation excluding admin officer role

	Previous years	2020 to date
• H&S training (development and delivery)	15%	3%
• Driver and plant training	15%	15%
• Monitoring	20%	2%
• Reactive work	25%	10%
• Back office and admin	10%	10%
• **Fire assessments**	15%	**0%
• Covid - 19 systems development and support	0%	60%

** Fire safety is no longer in the remit of CH&S

Taking it forward into 2020 – 2021

Work plan for 2020 – 2021

The CH&S team work plan picks up on the significant areas needing support that have been identified during previous activities.

Covid - 19	This is a fluid situation. We will continue to monitor the pandemic and provide guidance and support as needed
Accidents \ incidents	Monitor and review reports, investigate RIDDORS, drive reporting of all accidents in timely manner

<p>Hand arm vibration (HAV) monitoring programme</p>	<p>Continuing providing monitoring support to operational teams that use powered tools.</p>
<p>Schools monitoring</p>	<p>School Traffic management.</p> <p>The rest of this program is yet to be devised as it will be impacted by the Covid situation</p>
<p>Ionising radiation management in secondary schools</p>	<p>A continuous process (can mainly be done from a distance)</p>
<p>Driver training and assessment (Covid secure training)</p>	<p>Professional driver certificate of professional competence (CPC) training.</p> <p>D1 assessments and plant machinery assessment</p> <p>Rolling program</p>
<p>Meifod wood products</p>	<p>Assess management systems (Covid permitting)</p>
<p>H&S training programme</p>	<p>The number of delegates will be reduced per session to ensure Socially distanced training.</p> <p>E. learning has been considered but it is not ideal for H&S training as it is difficult to pass on the behavioural and passion aspects</p> <p>Continued focus on managing safely in DCC, lone working, risk assessment</p>

	<p>Working safely in DCC.</p> <p>Subject specific short awareness courses</p>
<p>H&S committees and local meetings</p> <p>Key to employee engagement in H&S</p>	<p>(Currently by Webex)</p> <p>An opportunity for management and employee representatives to discuss H&S in a number of forums. Supported by CH&S</p>
<p>Service management team meetings</p> <p>(Each service at least one team meeting)</p> <p>Key to employee engagement in H&S</p>	<p>(Currently by Webex)</p> <p>Provides an opportunity to discuss service H&S standards</p>
<p>Development of action tracking process</p>	<p>Continuing work with ICT</p>
<p>Continuing development of targeted guidance</p>	<p>Standard guidance now in place but there is always something new to add or review</p>
<p>Continuing professional development and succession planning</p>	<p>All advisors required to maintain professional</p> <p>Develop staff for role continuity and cover</p>

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