

Annual Report 2021-22

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Foreword

There are many aspects of Health and Safety Law that place statutory responsibility on all employers (with more than five employees), to ensure the workforce and those affected by their activities, remain safe, and the health of which, is not adversely affected as a result.

Responding to this legal requirement our Health and Safety Policy and Management plan is extremely well established and embedded as part of our safety culture. This is referred to as the Council's Safety, Health, and Wellbeing (SHAW) arrangements.

These SHAW arrangements have been in place for many years, they are robust, adequate, and proportionate to the level of known risk. There is, however, a requirement to constantly review the work undertaken across the organisation to ensure we maintain the appropriate level of assurance and where identified, take steps to drive improvement.

We achieve this through appropriate performance monitoring, review trends and subsequently implement or adjust our control measures accordingly.

Work activities change, and associated hazards and risk evolves, we must have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure all staff, councillors, visitors, and contractors alike remain safe and well, thus aligning to our Corporate Safety Message of 'Everyone home, safe and well'.

This year's Safety, Health, and Wellbeing (SHAW) Annual Report conveys the ongoing efforts of the Staff and Councillors to continue to recognise the importance of robust SHAW arrangements, to drive continuous improvement through sufficient communication, training, engagement, and SHAW performance monitoring.

The SHAW key priorities set out the development to date and the action plan provides detail on the work still to be undertaken as part of the continuous improvement methodology through 2022-23. This SHAW performance continues to develop and forms part of the plans to review and monitor the activities as part of the overarching SHAW Strategy Plan for 2022-2025.

These actions underpin the recognition and importance of maintaining a safe and healthy workforce as part of our delivery of services for the people of Suffolk.



Mike Leake Head of Corporate Health and Safety, Suffolk County Council

Scope of Responsibility

Suffolk County Council is responsible for ensuring that all activities undertaken by staff, councillors and contractors are done in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the subsequent associated Health and Safety Management Regulations that affect all workplace activities, examples of some of these are; Asbestos, Welfare arrangements, Personal Protective Equipment, Electrical Safety, Display Screen Equipment, Ventilation, Heating and Work Equipment to name just a few.

In discharging this statutory obligation, the Council has developed the SHAW management arrangements and as such, consistently reviews and adopts best practice and guidance against the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Codes of Practice, and external governance frameworks such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA).

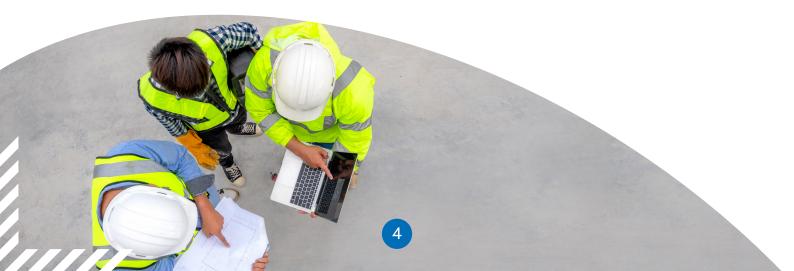
This positive work is reflected through our own internal governance assurance framework as highlighted in the most recent SHAW Audit.

These SHAW arrangements are in part, replicated in the Council's owned companies within the Vertas Group. Monitoring of their arrangements remain part of the overall assurance priority within the SHAW management plan.

What is Health and Safety?

Good Health and Safety should not be seen as a regulatory burden, it offers significant benefits to staff, customers, visitors, and the organisational reputation. Some of these are:

- Reduced sickness and absence resulting in increased productivity.
- Reduce costs in training, sick pay, and potential litigation due to injury.
- Reduced risk and fewer accidents at work.



The purpose of the SHAW Framework

Principle A: Managing Risk

- Effective risk management as part of identifying the risks, and communicating the control measures to eliminate it, or reduce it as far as reasonably practicable.
- Share and develop staff engagement on specific areas of risk to create improved outcomes of risk mitigation.

Principle B: Defining Outcomes

- Having a clear SHAW Strategy and intended outcomes as part of the four key SHAW priorities.
- Regular monitoring of these key priorities and make appropriate adjustments as part of economic, social, and environmental impacts including reviews of our internal SHAW strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats.

Principle C: Leadership and Ownership

- Having effective SHAW Leadership through the Chief Executive and the Corporate Leadership Team.
- All Staff and Councillors leading by example in terms of their own actions and behaviours to achieve improved Health and Safety culture in SCC.
- Identifying and reporting bad practice to drive awareness and reduce occurrence.

Principle D: SHAW Accountability

- Maintaining effective internal assurance of SHAW through suitable audit processes and develop SHAW accountability of external contracts and commissioning services.
- Publish and share SHAW data as part of our plans and decisions.

Principle E: Capability

- Define and deliver SHAW support across the Council's Leadership, Directorates and Services through competent Health and Safety Staff providing guidance and support to all.
- Provide and update SHAW training to all staff and Councillors on associated risks and subsequent control measures and best practice.
- Review the training provided by external organisations as part of assurance.

This framework is used to underpin the expectations and behaviours as part of our statutory requirements to 'good' Health and Safety Management as defined by the HSE.

How Our Safety, Health and Wellbeing (SHAW) Works?

- 1. The SHAW Board consists of representation from across the Senior Leadership Community, Directorates and Union representation. The Board is chaired by the Health and Safety lead on CLT.
- 2. The SHAW Board meets three times a year and reviews the monitoring arrangements and continuous improvement across both the agreed SHAW key Corporate Priorities and the identified Directorate Risks.

The four Corporate Priorities are:

- I. **Procurement and Contract Management** A considerable proportion of the Council's overall spend, and activities are conducted by external contractors. The Council therefore must ensure, through effective monitoring, that these providers retain good levels of Health and Safety compliance.
- II. **Schools** Many maintained school sites are older buildings with aging infrastructure. This can impact on children's and young people's behaviours, staff stress and wellbeing and the general safety of all occupants. The Council must identify Health and Safety concerns quickly and work with others in prioritising remedial works to rectify them.
- III. **Supporting Health and Wellbeing within SCC** A healthy, motivated, and supported workforce is essential to ensure the organisation can deliver its services particularly as demand increases whilst resources reduce.
- IV. **Assurance** The Council must ensure its SHAW arrangements remain aligned to current legislation, guidance, and best practice. Suitable monitoring arrangements must be in place to drive the continuous improvement as required.
- 3. Performance measuring and continuous improvement is established using a 'live' SHAW Dashboard which provides significant level of detail to areas of compliance and non-compliance. This also provides a platform for data sharing across directorates to establish further collaboration to aid increased positive actions / outcomes. This dashboard is updated monthly and can be used as part of directorate SHAW Steering group events.
- 4. The SHAW Terms of Reference specifies the roles and responsibilities of its members and appropriate level of SHAW competence. It also sets out the reporting / communication arrangements through directorate SHAW Steering groups to ensure Staff / Councillor engagement is achieved.
- 5. The Corporate Safety, Health and Wellbeing team provide assurance to each Directorate offering specific advice, guidance, training, and support on all aspects of SHAW.
- 6. Where appropriate and to enhance positive outcomes, specific cross directorate focus groups are created to support the work undertaken relating to the Health and Wellbeing theme and the Procurement and Contract Management theme. This will see collaborative working between the directorates, but also specific specialist services supporting the activities being undertaken.

Key Roles

The key roles of those responsible for the development and monitoring the SHAW Framework are:

Header	Header			
Corporate Leadership Team	 The Chief Executive has overall accountability for the SHAW framework Accountability for the Health and Safety Policy and Framework 			
Deputy Chief Executive	Chairs the SHAW BoardHealth and Safety lead in the CLT			
Head of Health and Safety	 Leads and directs the SHAW Strategy As the competent person, ensures the Council's SHAW arrangements are fit for purpose and aligned to the statutory requirements Accountable for developing and maintaining the Council's internal and external SHAW assurance arrangements 			
Corporate Theme Leads	Responsible for the action plans specific to their theme Responsible for data sharing and continuous improvement Provide written and verbal updates to the SHAW Board			
Directorate SHAW Leads	 Be the conduit between corporate SHAW whilst representing their directorate on all SHAW matters through their directorate leadership forums and the SHAW Board Provide clear SHAW communication to their directorate staff and services 			
SHAW Advisors	 Provide specific SHAW advice and guidance as part of regular engagement to support all staff and Councillors Provide support and assistance to the SHAW theme leads Provide support and assistance to the Directorate SHAW leads Work collaboratively with other directorates, services, and other SHAW advisors 			
Internal Audit	 Provides independent assurance and opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Councils SHAW arrangements Undertakes an annual audit of the SHAW Framework 			
External Audit	 Conducts a review of our annual submission against their competency / standards framework and provides feedback on our SHAW Governance. If deemed appropriate and warranted a subsequent award is achieved in recognition 			

Review of Effectiveness

As part of continuous improvement modelling, a review of the Council's SHAW arrangements, SHAW Action Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) has been undertaken. This was in part due to the COVID Pandemic and the recognition that certain areas of compliance had not been undertaken or even, in many cases achieved in line with the pre-determined SHAW KPI's.

This also presented a suitable opportunity to conduct a review of how the Council can focus and drive improvement in all areas of SHAW and not just through pre-determined indicators that historically did not necessarily provide the level of detail needed to create influence, ownership, and collective responsibility to developing good SHAW management.

This intervention has led to the development of a 'live,' accessible SHAW Dashboard which focusses on the two specific areas aligned to the SHAW Strategy 2022-25:

- SHAW Corporate Priorities
- Directorate Risk

Whilst accepting its infancy, this change in performance monitoring has provided increased level of detail to the CLT, SHAW Board and directorate management teams and forms part of a data trend analysis looking for positive trends and areas for improvement and development. Using a directorate 'signs of safety' submission and verbal update to SHAW Board, meaningful information with specific examples of good practice is now shared and communicated within the Council.

This monitoring of performance also enables the Council to flex and adjust specific SHAW activities to meet the need due to both external and internal influences that could have an adverse effect on both Staff and Councillors alike.

The level of detail and actions conducted to date as part of this development is outlined under the specific corporate themes on the following page.

Procurement and Contract Management

Lead Officer - Tina Hines, Head of Commissioning and Partnerships, Children and Young People's Directorate

It is recognised that this is a key risk for an organisation that spends about 70% of its funds on contracted services. During 2021/22 work continued in developing awareness of health and safety assurance requirements through the already established corporate offer to support the Council's network of contract managers.

As part of the review of SHAW performance monitoring, early indications were that significant development of the theme could be achieved by the creation of a cross directorate focus group, ably supported with the already established work of Corporate Procurement and Contract Management team to drive improvement in assurance to not only health and safety, but all other aspects of contract management activities.

This work has started as part of the quarterly Contract Management network sessions to share best practice, but also through inviting contractors to provide assurance sessions to the Council on the work that they do as part of their own health and safety management. Recent examples are the Gull Wing project and FCC waste management transfer stations. Further events within other contractors / directorates are planned as part of this

The intention as outlined in the SHAW Action Plan for 2022-23 is that each directorate will prioritise the audit monitoring plan of their contracts based on contract value, contract size and more importantly the perceived level of risk by not doing so.

work.



Schools

Lead Officer - Pete Mumford, Head of Schools Infrastructure, Children and Young People's Directorate

The introduction and roll out of a health and safety schools self-audit has gone well with a substantial number of LA maintained sites completing it as part of the nine-term plan. This work will be embedded into the assurance theme in line with other audit work across the organisation with a full review of additional actions will be undertaken as part of the future SHAW Action Plan 2022-23.

Throughout the COVID Pandemic there was a specific focus on mental health and wellbeing support offered to school staff as part of the 'schools' theme. Post pandemic and in recognition of the other theme of 'Support Health and Wellbeing in SCC' the Schools theme will switch focus and deliver improved outcomes relating to building safety.

Much of the LA maintained schools' estate is aging and there continues to be a requirement to the prioritisation of Schools infrastructure projects. The link and alignment to data captured as part of the School's Health and Safety self-audits will create opportunity to make timely intervention and planned works as part of future cost savings around the maintenance of the LA maintained schools' infrastructure. The review of the self-audits will continue and where building Health and Safety concerns are identified they will be reviewed, prioritised, and actioned accordingly.



Support Health and Wellbeing in SCC

Lead Officer - Tim Jermyn, HR Operations Manager, Corporate Services

In previous years, the work supporting this theme has been led by Public Health colleagues as part of the Council's 'Healthy Workplace Group' focusing on four key priorities:

- Self-care and working from home
- Support to staff when returning to the office environment
- Raise awareness to all support available
- Support managers to support others

As part of the review of the SHAW Strategy 2022-25 and the restructure within the Public Health directorate, the ownership of this key theme moved into a collaboration with Human Resources and Health and Safety teams within Corporate Services.

Whilst recognising we are post pandemic, it is important for the Council to reassess our plans to drive improvements in this area. For increased engagement, the group will develop a cross directorate forum and continue to work with all staff network groups as part of identifying a suitable framework and strategic action plan to drive forward improvement and engagement.

This links to the aspirations to align our health and wellbeing offering to the external awards of the 'Healthy Workplace Awards' scheme which focuses on eight standards. The support offered will be adjusted to meet the need at the time, an example being improved signposting and mental health support as part of the financial cost of living crisis that is likely to develop in the coming months.

- 1. Absence Management
- 2. Alcohol and Substance Misuse
- 3. Health and Safety
- 4. Healthy eating and physical exercise
- 5. Inclusive employment
- 6. Leadership in health and wellbeing
- 7. Mental health and wellbeing
- 8. Smoking and tobacco related ill health

Plans for this theme are also embedded in the SHAW action plan for the remainder of 2022-23.

The Public Health Infographic entitled 'Managing Health at Work for Employers' goes some way in correlation to the type of management referrals seen in the Council's Occupational Health referrals Annual report 2021-22.

Managing Health at Work for Employers



Every year in the UK,

131 million working days

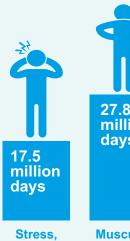


are lost to sickness absence

are lost on average for each worker due to sickness absence



Main reasons for sickness absence in the UK



depression & anxiety



Musculoskeletal problems



illnesses (including coughs and colds) In the UK,



with a long term health condition have not discussed it with their employer

Office for National Statistics (2018) absence in the UK labour market | Department for work and pensions (2015) Health and Wellbeing at work: survey of employees

Occupational Health

Occupational Health (OH) is a specialist branch of medicine focusing on the health of staff in the workplace. OH practitioners will offer clinical and general advice and guidance on a range of subjects, including making reasonable adjustments, reducing sickness absence and supporting employees struggling with their physical or mental health.

Health Partners Limited, previously Duradiamond Healthcare, have been SCC's OH provider since October 2017. They deliver a range of health surveillance services to the authority, alongside supporting management referrals. A referral will be made by a manager to OH when it is of benefit to do so. This will generally be where an employees sickness absence has reached one of our trigger points; a Bradford Factor score of **150**, a continuous period of absence of **20** or more working days or where there is an unacceptable pattern of absence, where specific advice is required on making a reasonable adjustment for or providing additional support to an employee or where the individual has a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

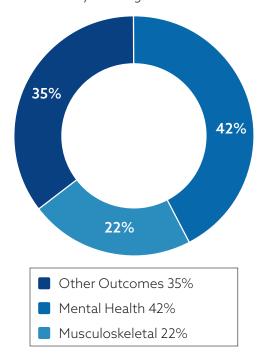
Between 2017/18 and 2020/21 we saw a **35%** reduction in the number of management referrals, in part linked to changes to the SCC's sickness absence policy which removed the mandatory requirement for a OH referral in several instances, but also the impact of COVID-19. There has been a **16%** increase in management referrals from last year to this.

Each management referral will be allocated an International Classification of Diseases (ICD) code, which are summarised for reporting purposes as either; Mental Health, which would include stress, depression and anxiety, Musculoskeletal, which would include conditions affecting the joints, bones, muscles and back pain and other outcomes which captures everything else not covered in the first two categories such as, Infections, Neurological and Respiratory Diseases.

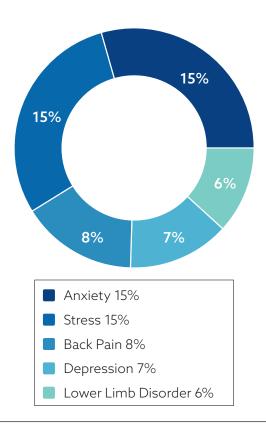
Since 2017 there has not been a significant variation in the split between the three categories; Mental Health always being the largest, **45%** of cases on average, Other Outcomes second, **35%** on average and Musculoskeletal the smallest, **20%** on average. The data below, taken from the Annual Report from Health Partners Limited, illustrates the current split of management referral categories, the trend continuing this year, but also details the Top 5 management referral ICD classification and some more granular details about the split between directorates which shows the fluctuation within different services based on the nature of the role employees have.

Extracts from the Occupational Health Referral Annual report 2021-22

Mental Health & Musculoskeletal Outcome Summary - Management Referrals



Top 5 Disease Code Outcomes



	Mental Health		Musculoskeletal		Other		Total Diagnosed	
Suffolk County Council Group	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	
Adult & Community Services	98	48%	46	22%	61	30%	205	
Chief Executive		-		-		-		
Corporate Services	11	46%	4	17%	9	38%	24	
Growth, Highways & Infrastructure	20	63%	2	6%	10	31%	32	
Health, Wellbeing and Childrens Services	160	47%	53	16%	124	37%	337	
Public Safety (excluding SFRS)	3	-		-		-	3	
Total	292	49%	105	17%	204	34%	601	
	Mental Health		Musculoskeletal		Other		Total Diagnosed	
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Services Group	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	
Suffolk Fire & Rescue Services	27	21%	54	42%	49	38%	130	
SFRS Subtotal	27	21%	54	42%	49	38%	130	

Assurance

Lead Officers - Mike Leake, Head of Corporate Health and Safety and Tim Ryder, Assistant Director, Governance, Legal and Assurance, Corporate Services

The performance monitoring arrangements provide information both corporately and by each directorate. This will develop and evolve to include other useful data sets, example of which is the number of completed managerial safety audits / inspections including areas for improvement.

The data sets on the following page are purely an extract of the SHAW dashboard focussing on the Assurance performance, this is a 'snapshot' of the dashboard taken at the time of the report production. As part of developing our trend analysis and continuous improvement, it is updated on a monthly basis, shared through the SHAW Board and used to aid Directorate SHAW awareness and engagement.

The trend analysis detail in part, is granulated to Directorate / Service level and this will be utilised as part of the SHAW Board awareness to overall corporate compliance. It will provide further opportunities to enhance ownership of risk, improved control measures as a result, and improved information sharing of good practice with the Council.

The SHAW Dashboard encompasses all of the four key properties and will evolve and develop to provide further data sets to drive improvements in engagement, awareness and the Council's safety, health and wellbeing culture. An extract of the dashboard is overleaf.



An extract of the SHAW dashboard

No. of RIDDORs 6

to slip in kitchen

1 GHI accidents over 7 days

3 CYP accidents: Both fractures

1 due to fall coming out of car 1 School incident: fracture due

- absence due to sprained ankle
- Percentage of incidents closed

OPEN / CLOSED Health

and Safely Reports

- **53%**
- Percentage of incidents closed
- 36%
- No. of incidents open after 1 month 2%

Total number completed mandatory SHAW Training

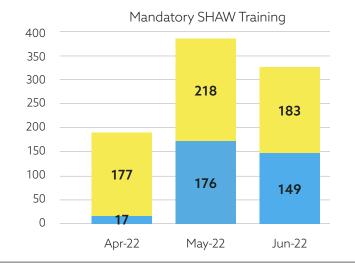
SHAW for All

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Setting up your computer workstation

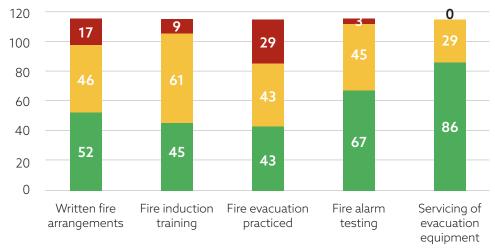
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Fire Risk Assessment reviews key data July 21 till June 2022 (CYP, CS and Schools only)





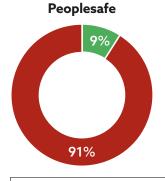
Personal Safety Devices usage in June 2022

Total Mobile 34% 66%

Device not used 34%

Device used at least once 66%

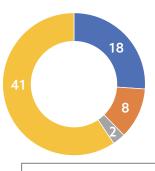
Personal Safety Devices usage in June 2022



Device not used 9%

Device used at least once 91%

Types of Health and Safety Reports



Injury/Harm (41)

Property Damage (2)

Safety Concerns (8) Near Miss Incident (18)

Accidents / Incidents and Near-Miss Information

The reporting of accidents, incidents and near-misses is collated through the Oracle Fusion Health and Safety Incident reporting system. This enables the Council to review the frequency and type of accidents/incidents that occur, and where possible put in place control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk of it reoccurring.

The main types of accidents recorded are slips, trips and falls and the main types of incidents recorded are verbal abuse and online abuse. There has been an increase in the number of reports being submitted, this may be because of changes made to make the process of reporting easier, rather than an actual increase in the actual number of accidents / incidents taking place.

SHAW Mandated e-learning

In early 2022 the Council agreed that SHAW training should become mandated. A review of the content offered was undertaken and a new programme of e-learning was created. The 'SHAW for all' e-learning was launched in April 2022 and focuses on five specific key modules:

Th	e legal framework and Health and Wellbeing
	Health and Safety Legislation
	Wellbeing and Mental health
W	here you work and your safety
	Working from home
	Working in the office
	Our emergency arrangements for fire, bomb threat and lockdown procedures
Dr	iving for work
	Risk Assessments
	Policy Guidance
Ris	sk Assessments and Health and Safety reporting
	The basics of what you need to know about Risk Assessments
	How to spot potential accidents and how to report them

Setting up your computer workstation

☐ Workstation self-assessment

☐ Introduction and what does good look like

A review of compliance to this mandated training will be conducted throughout the year with the expectation that all staff (including non-operational SFRS staff) will have completed it before the end of year Personal Development Reviews (PDR's) in March 2023.

Personal Safety / Personal Safety Devices

Personal Safety training events are available to Staff and Councillors and additional training events specifically for Councillors are provided through the LGA website. Further ongoing internal Councillor training sessions led by the Council will be offered as part of the known risk management around personal safety.

It is recognised that further work is still required around the engagement with staff who have a personal safety device and for numerous reasons, do not use it as frequently as perhaps they should. This has been evidenced through staff potentially putting themselves at greater risk whilst providing front line services. The learning accounts regarding this incident have been shared corporately through directorate SHAW leads and communicated to all staff.

Additional work as part of the SHAW assurance ongoing action plan will see a switch over to a sole provider of safety devices and with that contract, see significant enhancement around usage / non usage data by directorate which will be used as part of lone working engagement / support.



Fire Risk Management

Historically as part of the Assurance KPI's the SHAW Board would report on the amount of non-compliance to fire management and not provide any supportive evidence to create the management improvement required.

The SHAW Dashboard provides significant granularity of the Council's property portfolio and more importantly, identifies the areas of fire safety management noncompliance, which can be used to drive intended positive engagement and outcomes.



Internal Assurance

In recent months the Council's SHAW framework was subject to the annual internal audit and because of the continued improvements to our arrangements, I am pleased to report positive improvements to our level of assurance. That said, we recognise where there remain opportunities to continue to drive appropriate improvements and attain substantial assurance across the framework in future audits.

Overall assurance opinion		Number of actions		
	Assurance definition:	Priority	Number	
Limited Reasonable	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, noncompliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	High	0	
assurance assurance		Medium	0	
Substantial		Low	0	
No assurance assurance		Total	0	

Areas covered	Assurance level
Plan	Substantial assurance
Do	Reasonable assurance
Check	Reasonable assurance
Act	Reasonable assurance

External Assurance (Industry Awards and Recognition)

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Occupational Health and Safety Achievement Awards are non-competitive and are based on an organisation's individual occupational health and safety performance which is assessed against their judging criteria.

The submission must provide evidence of a good health and safety management system by answering questions and supporting the answers with a concise portfolio of relevant documentation. As a result of the submission, we await the detailed feedback and will work through any subsequent recommendations as part of our ongoing development.

This year the council received its third 'Gold Medal' award in recognition of its ongoing continuous improvement as an organisation. This is a clear recognition of the ongoing challenging work being done across the council to improve how we manage our risks and support our staff, clients, and partners. It clearly fits with our Corporate Safety Message of 'Everyone home safe and well'.

SHAW Action Plan 2022-23

As part of continuous improvement there remains several ongoing $\!\!/$ outstanding SHAW actions that are planned for 2022-23.

Area	SHAW matters identified	Lead Officer
Corporate Assurance	Continue to develop performance monitoring through the increased engagement across the Council	Chris Bally
Corporate Assurance	Develop data sharing through the SHAW dashboard.	Mike Leake
Contract management	Track the progress of assurance of Health and Safety arrangements in the Contracted / commissioned services.	Tina Hines
Schools	Conduct a full review of the school's self-audit process	Mike Leake
Schools	Develop and prioritise the action plan for schools' infrastructure / maintenance.	Pete Mumford
Health and Wellbeing	Review and update People Strategy and review the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offer	Tim Jerymn
Health and Wellbeing	Develop the framework and strategy aligned to the Healthy workplace Awards.	Tim Jerymn
Health and Wellbeing	Deliver appropriate awareness / training events to highlight the Health and Wellbeing arrangements in the Council.	Tim Jerymn
Assurance	Ensure all staff complete relevant mandatory training programme for 2022-23	Mike Leake
Assurance	Continue to improve assurance through internal and external audit and through inspections and reviews.	Mike Leake
Assurance	Share best practice and continue to benchmark against others LA's and Governing bodies such as the HSE.	Mike Leake

Thank you for reading our document.