

GWYNEDD COUNCIL – Report to Gwynedd Council's Cabinet

Item title:	Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Llio Elenid Owen
Relevant Officer:	Gail Warrington, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager
Meeting date:	16 th December 2025

1. The reason why Cabinet needs to make the decision:

The presentation of this report to Cabinet annually is part of health and safety management arrangements within the Council. It is vital that Cabinet members have a full overview of the Council's position in this important area.

2. Resolution Sought:

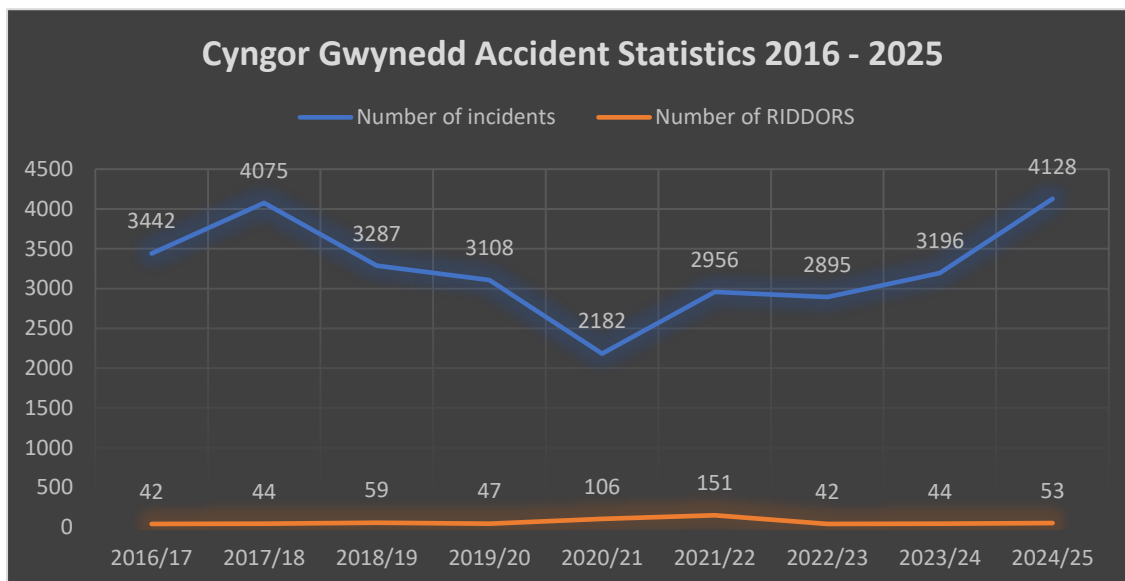
No specific decision required. Instead, this report is presented as Cabinet members need to be aware of matters outlined in this report and have a strategic overview of the current situation for the purpose of effectively managing health and safety within the Council.

3. Introduction and Logic

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service has continued to demonstrate a positive and ongoing commitment to supporting the workforce through a period of change and adaptation. During the year, the promotion of Safety Models has reached all managers, strengthening understanding and collaboration across the organisation. In addition, concrete steps have been taken within the well-being plan, with ongoing activities and training contributing directly to fostering a more supportive and inclusive culture. This training is a key part of the cultural change taking place across the Council, ensuring that health, safety and wellbeing are an integral part of the way we work. In addition, key policies have been reviewed – including the Alcohol and Drugs policy – to protect everyone involved in our services, whether they are employees or members of the public. This work is part of an ongoing effort to ensure lasting improvement, with a clear focus on building a safe, healthy and sustainable working environment.

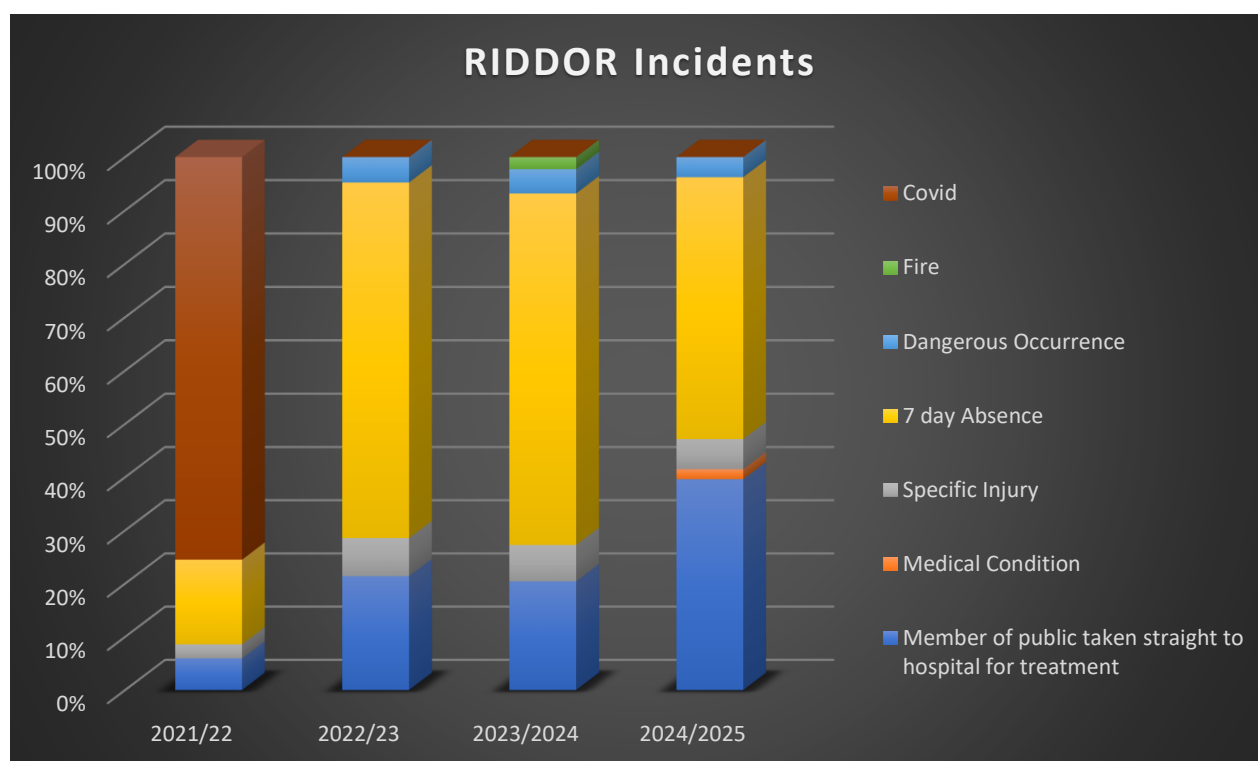
Accident Statistics 2024/25

During 2024/25, there were a total of 4,128 incident reports to the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Service, of which 53 were reportable incidents under RIDDOR regulations. Of these, 26 were absences of over 7 days, 21 members of the public transported to hospital for treatment, 2 were hazardous incidents, 1 was a medical condition, and 3 specific injuries to staff members.



Number of incidents (including accidents and close incidents) / Number of RIDDOR

While the overall number of reports has increased significantly compared to the previous year, the number of serious incidents (i.e. RIDDOR) has not increased to the same extent. The most noticeable increase has been in the "Violent Incidents" category, with 1,811 reports in 2024/25 compared to 1,041 in 2023/24. This increase has mainly been found in the Department of Education, where the number of reports has doubled from 777 to 1,605. This reflects the ongoing encouragement for school staff to report all incidents via the HS11 incident report form, ensuring that documentary evidence is available to support further action. A specific group now meets regularly with the Department of Education to monitor and discuss the situation.



Events reported under RIDDOR regulations 2021/22-2024/25

Looking ahead, the introduction of a new digital system for recording incidents will enable the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service to identify trends across the Council more effectively. In addition, managers will have direct access to live data, enabling them to

immediately implement appropriate management measures where necessary. This development is a positive step toward improving operational response and strategic planning, strengthening safety and well-being across the organization.

Enforcement and Compliance

During 2024/25, the Service continued to work with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which is responsible for health and safety law enforcement across the UK. Following previous visits as part of HSE's national campaign to review asbestos control in schools, no further visits related to asbestos have taken place as of April 2025. However, the Council has completed all the recommendations received in 2023/24, with the Health and Safety Unit and Property Service continuing to monitor and update the arrangements where necessary.

In 2024/25, the HSE contacted the Council in relation to two residential homes. In the first incident, there was an accident in which a resident suffered a fall, and the HSE visited the site to review the arrangements and paperwork. Following the visit, recommendations were received to improve paperwork processes and to strengthen falls prevention training. There was a cost of £1,044 for the fee for intervention from the HSE. These recommendations have now been fully implemented, including the introduction of a new falls risk assessment template as part of care plans. In addition, arrangements are in place to ensure that a training package is available to staff, a combination of training from the Health Board and internal information.

The second contact was via email, following a moving and handling accident in which a resident was injured. In this case, an Improvement Notice was received from the HSE. All recommendations have been implemented, including reviewing, updating risk assessment templates, and ensuring that the risk assessments at that specific care home are up to date.

These responses reflect the Council's commitment to complying with statutory requirements and to ensuring robust procedures are in place to protect the health and safety of residents and staff.

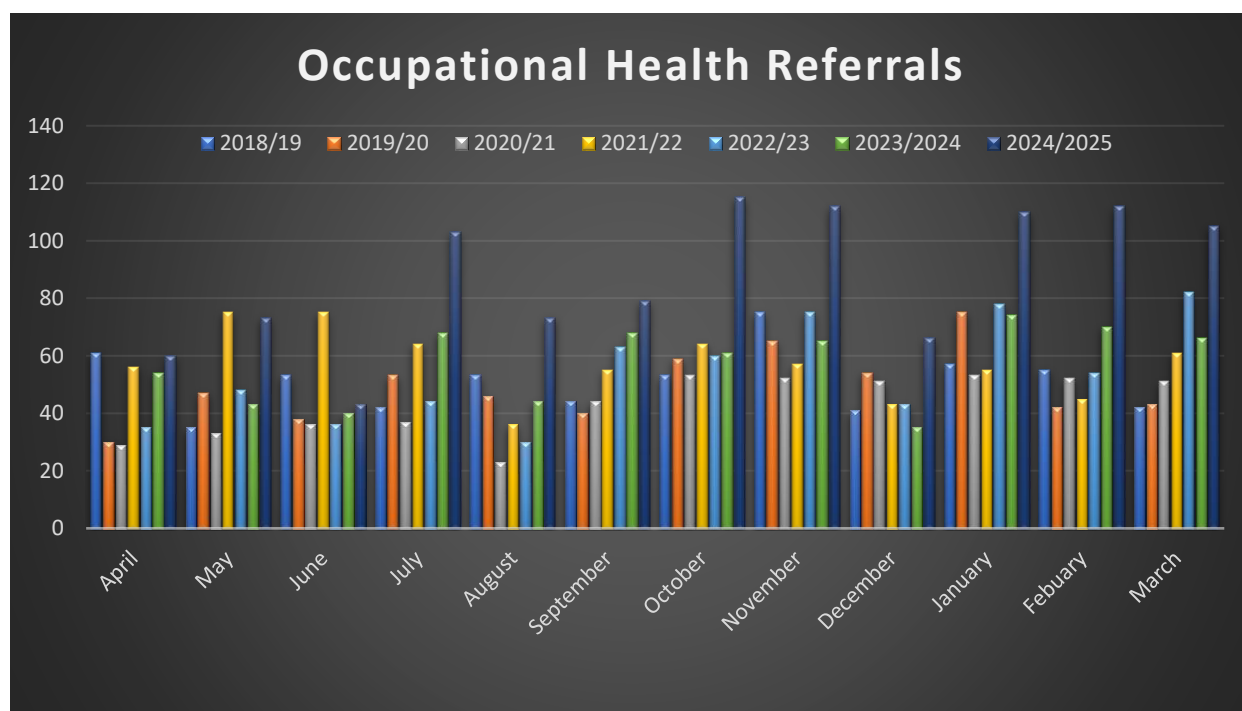
The Service's Work Programme

During 2024/25, the Health and Safety Unit and the Occupational Health Unit have continued to work closely together on strategic and operational projects, ensuring that health, safety and wellbeing are comprehensively supported across the Council. The collaboration includes the development of key policies such as the Alcohol and Drugs Policy and the Well-being Procedure, where both units contribute expertise to ensure managers have the necessary skills, knowledge and support to respond to complex situations in the workplace. The two units also collaborate on training, communication and awareness, ensuring an integrated approach to supporting the workforce.

From the perspective of the Health and Safety Unit, there has been a particular focus on strengthening managers' skills through structured training. Nine IOSH Managing Safely courses, and five refresher courses were undertaken, meaning that 72% of managers now have a currently qualified. A Site Management refresher course is now available, with 40% of site managers having completed the training. In addition, 100 days of moving and handling training, including specialist courses such as use of Ski-Pad and Mangar equipment, were held to support staff working with people and objects in high-risk situations.

The Health and Safety Unit has also led on the review and renewal of policies and procedures, including the Fire Management Policy and Plan, the RADON Management Plan, and the Personal Safety and Lone Working Procedure. The Personal Safety and Lone Working Procedure received specific attention through a group deriving from the Corporate Forum, ensuring that risk assessments and practical management measures were updated to reflect changes in the workforce and services. All policies and procedures are submitted to the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Panel for approval, with the Panel meeting twice a year and made up of union representatives, council members, chief officers and any officer who submits relevant work.

From the perspective of the Occupational Health Unit, there has been a focus on responding to a significant increase in referrals – with 1,051 referrals received during the year, 464 of which related to mental health. The new staff sickness system has contributed to improved case identification and led to more timely referrals. Counselling provision has expanded significantly, with 451 members of staff receiving support – an increase of over 180% on the previous year, partly due to changes to the referral procedure and the growing awareness of the service.



Health surveillance testing continues to be an essential element of the Unit's statutory work, ensuring that the Council complies with legal requirements and protects the health of the workforce. During the year, the Occupational Health Unit has been successful in securing funding through a bid application for 2024, enabling the work to continue uninterrupted over the past year and for an additional year. The intention is that if the new bid is approved, it will be possible to establish the post on a permanent basis, giving stability to the programme and enabling longer-term planning.

This work includes arranging and reviewing routine health checks for staff in high-risk roles, with a particular emphasis on hearing tests, as recent changes by the HSE have meant that individuals need to be called back sooner for further testing – currently, 85% of individuals require a second test. During HSE's last visit, the importance of ensuring robust arrangements in this area was specifically highlighted, as failure to comply can lead to a risk of prosecution and significant costs to the Council. The Unit has responded by strengthening processes, improving recording and increasing capacity to ensure that the programme is implemented effectively and continuously.

In addition, the Unit has contributed directly to the implementation of the Well-being Plan, which was presented to management during the Autumn term network meetings. The plan brings together services the Human Resources, Learning and Development, and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service, and has resulted in a roadshow to reach staff in care homes and depots, offer health checks, and collaborate with partners such as Byw'n Iach and Budd i Bawb. I-Act training has resumed, with 40% of managers and team leaders having attended, and a new module about referrals to the Occupational Health Unit being introduced in the Autumn 2025 term.

This work programme reflects an integrated and practical approach to supporting the workforce, ensuring that all aspects of health, safety and wellbeing are addressed. The

collaboration between the units is key to the success of the service and continues to evolve in response to the changing needs of the Council.

Health and Safety Systems within Gwynedd Council – including ISO 45001

ISO 45001 accreditation continues to be an important recognition of health, safety and well-being management standards within Cyngor Gwynedd. Currently, the system is operated within the Department of Highways, Engineering and YGC, with an external company (BSI) carrying out audits and monitoring the system every six months. During 2024/25, no significant issues were raised during these audits, and the department has continued to conduct internal audits and a discussion forum, and a review of the department's risk register on a regular basis.

During the audit period, some areas were identified where existing arrangements could be strengthened. The department has implemented appropriate actions to address these, reviewing the relevant methods and processes to ensure continuous improvement and prevent recurrence. This work is part of an ongoing effort to maintain high standards of internal control and to support the external accreditation process.

Due to changes in structure, Highways and YGC is currently running two separate ISO 45001 systems, but discussions are ongoing with BSI and within the Department to consider incorporating the two systems in future. The ISO 45001 system is internationally recognised as the industry standard, and the Council's new electronic system for health and safety is being developed based on the principles of this standard.

More broadly across the Council, significant work has begun to support a change in health, safety and wellbeing culture. A gap analysis was carried out in which managers were asked to review their services and identify which elements of health and safety management have been completed, which are in the process of being completed, and any areas that need to be included in a programme of work. This analysis is now being compiled and scrutinised by the Corporate Health and Safety Forum and forms the basis of a new corporate audit program.

In addition, a new digital health and safety system is being developed jointly between the Information Technology Service and the Health and Safety Unit. For the first time, employees will be able to report accidents, incidents or near misses directly to the system, using a QR code to facilitate the process. Management training will include an instructor training package, with a pilot to be run during Autumn 2025. Managers and the Health and Safety Unit will also have access to a live dashboard, enabling real-time identification of trends, numbers and concerns, and prompt implementation of appropriate management measures. This will make health and safety management more effective, responsive and data driven.

4. Statutory Officers' Comments

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

"The report conveys information to the Cabinet and the decision sought does not create a spending commitment. No comments from the perspective of financial propriety."

4.2 Monitoring Officer

"The report explains the role of the Cabinet within our health and safety arrangements. It is appropriate that it receive this information which gives assurance in relation to our arrangements in this important area."

Attachment List

None

Background Document List

None