

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Report to the Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 13/10/26
Cabinet Member: Councillor Llio Elenid Owen
Contact Officer: Ian Jones
Contact number: 01286 679335
Item Title: Annual Report on Health, Safety and Well-being

1 DECISION SOUGHT

This report is submitted to the Cabinet so that members have an essential overview of the main health and safety matters that arose during 2025/26.

2 THE REASON FOR THE DECISION

There is no need for a specific decision. Instead, this report is submitted because Cabinet members need to be aware of the matters outlined in this report, and have a strategic overview of the current situation for the purposes of managing health and safety effectively within the Council.

3 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the main points that you, as Cabinet Members, need to be aware of in relation to the Council's performance on health and safety matters. The report outlines the main matters raised during the year.

4 ANY CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

Statutory Officers

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."

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."

Introduction and Rationale

The Health, Safety and Well-being Service continues to play a key part in supporting Cyngor Gwynedd workers and managers, promoting a culture where health, safety and well-being are integral to the way that we plan, manage and provide services.

During 2025/26, there was a specific focus on strengthening governance arrangements, improving the use of data and developing a more proactive way in terms of risk management. Although the number of accidents and incidents reports has increased during the year, the number of the most serious incidents has reduced. This suggests a better awareness and more willingness amongst staff to report accidents and near misses, providing more comprehensive information to support improvements.

The work of the Safeguarding Models has continued across the Council's services, with analyses being shared with managers to identify strengths, areas for development and priorities for improvement. This work has contributed to a more consistent understanding of health and safety responsibilities and has helped services to plan their work programmes more effectively.

In addition, a new digital system was introduced to report accidents and incidents, giving better access to management information and to enable the identification of trends and risks in a more timely manner. Also, a random alcohol and drugs tests pilot was conducted as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to ensuring a safe and supportive work environment.

These developments reflect the Council's commitment to ensuring ongoing improvement, strengthening health and safety management arrangements and supporting the well-being of workers to provide safe and effective services to the people of Gwynedd.

Accident Statistics 2025/26

During 2025/26, the Health, Safety and Well-being Service received a total of 4,347 reports of incidents. This continues the trend of a gradual increase in the number of reports seen since 2022/23.

Although this increase appears significant at first, it is likely that it reflects a better reporting culture across the Council instead of an equivalent increase in serious incidents. Over recent years, the Council has significantly invested in raising awareness, developing the skills of managers and promoting the importance of recording incidents and near misses.

Many factors have contributed to this, including restarting IOSH Managing Safely training programmes following the pandemic, ongoing work to encourage the reporting of violent incidents within relevant services, particularly within schools, and the training provided to managers as part of the implementation of the new incident reporting system during the final quarter of the year.

The increase in the number of reports provides a more comprehensive picture of the risks and incidents that happen across the Council, enabling services and leaders to identify trends, target control measures and support ongoing improvements in health and safety.

Chart 1 shows the numbers compared with historical years.

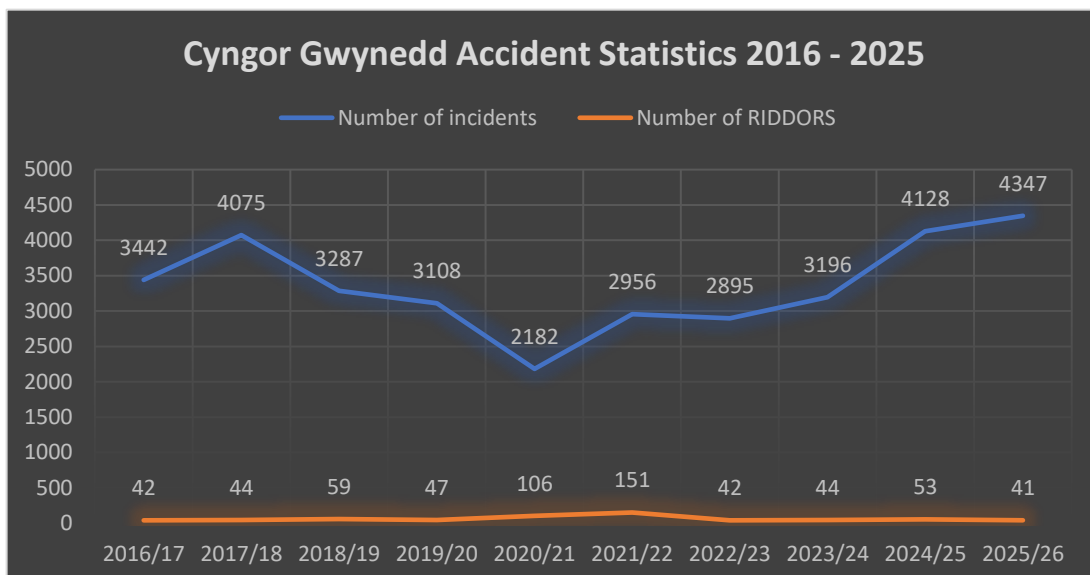


Chart 1: Number of Incidents Per Year

Chart 1 also shows the number of most serious incidents, namely those that are reportable under the Recording Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). During 2025/26, 41 of these types of incidents were recorded.

Although the total number of reports has increased during the year, this increase has not been reflected in the number of the most serious incidents. Indeed, the number of RIDDOR reports has decreased compared with the previous year. This gives some sort of assurance that the increase in reports is likely to reflect a better awareness and a stronger reporting culture across the Council, instead of an equivalent increase in serious incidents.

Following a request by the Cabinet members in the previous annual report, detailed information has now been included about the number of incidents on a departmental level. Chart 2 shows the total number of reports received within each department, whilst Chart 3 shows the number of reportable incidents under RIDDOR. This information helps to identify trends within individual services and support the process of targeting resources, training and control measures where required.

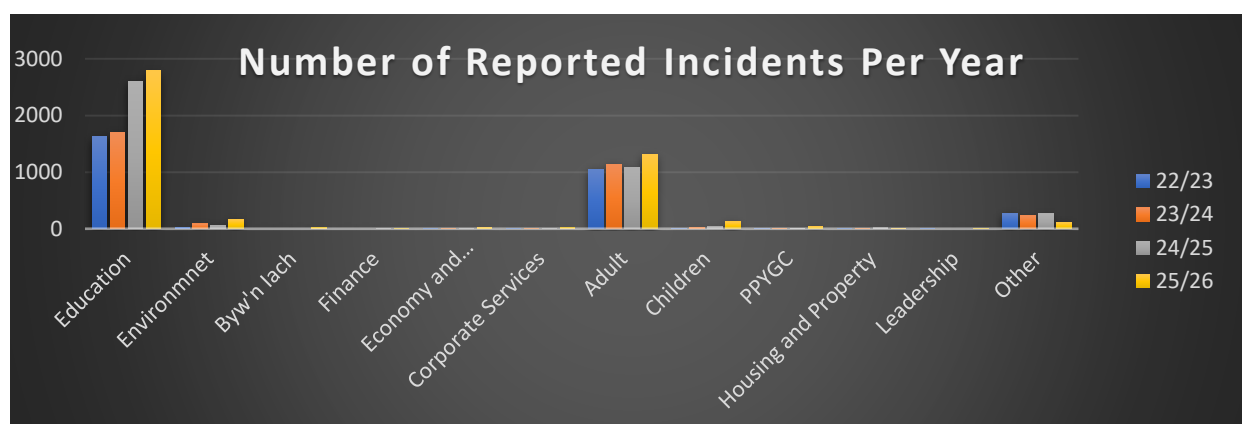


Chart 2: Number of reports per department and year

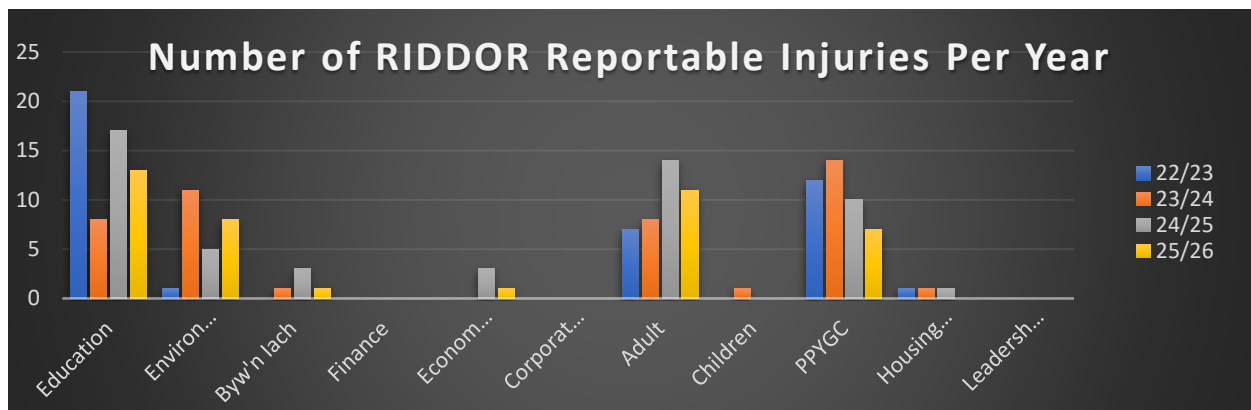


Chart 3: Number of RIDDOR reports per department and year

In terms of the types of incidents reported, see the two following charts. Chart 4 shows the RIDDOR categories used to report incidents during 2025/26, compared with previous years.

Overall, there is no significant change in the pattern from year to year, with the main categories remaining relatively consistent. This suggests that no new risk or unusual trend has emerged during the year, and the nature of the most serious incidents is similar to what was seen historically.

This information helps the Council to ensure that resources, training and control measures continue to focus on the areas of risk that have been consistent over a period of time.

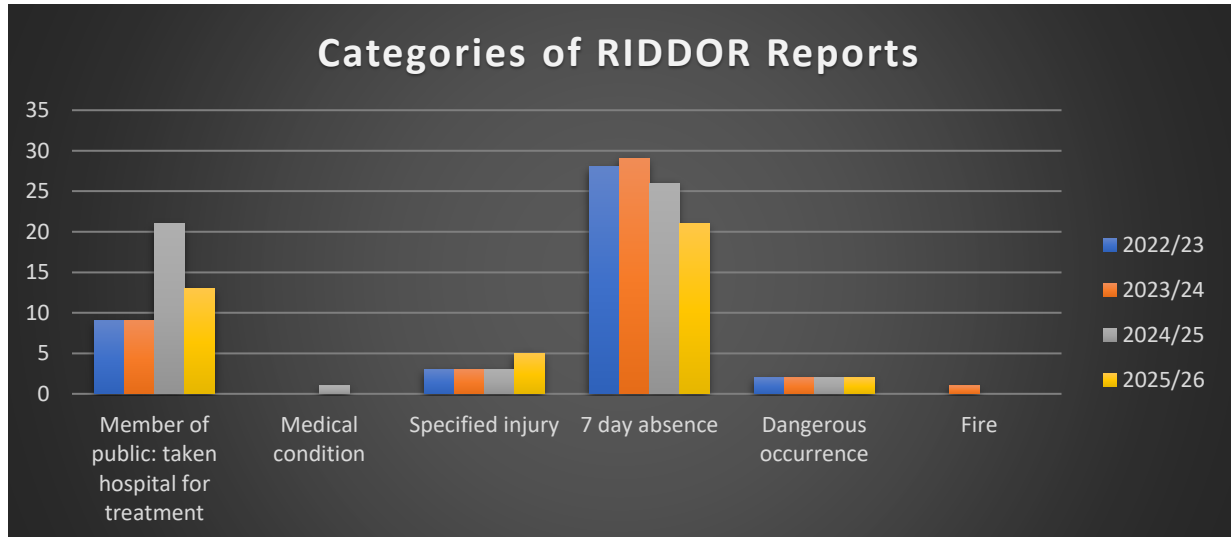


Chart 4: Categories of RIDDOR reports each year

In **Chart 5**, the main categories of incidents that lead to RIDDOR reports can be seen.

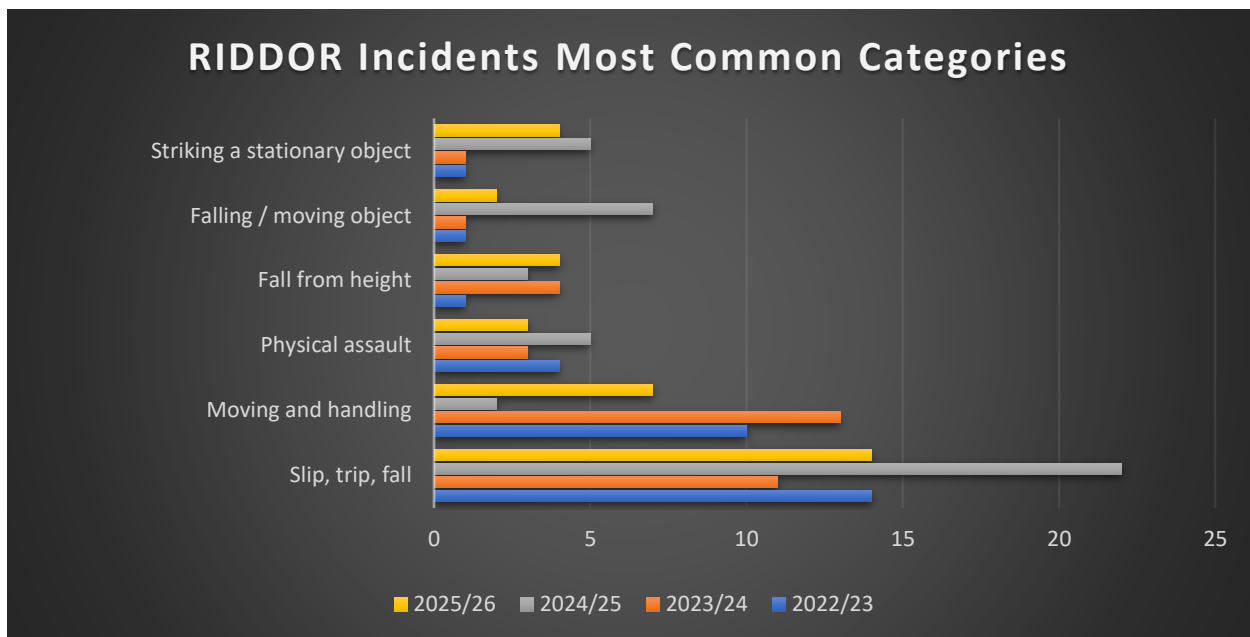


Chart 5: The most common categories of incidents reported under RIDDOR

In November 2025, a pilot was started for the new Health and Safety Incident Reporting System. Following a successful trial period, the system was introduced across every service in January 2026. To support its implementation, the Health and Safety Unit provided training to 449 managers and team leaders, with more sessions arranged during 2026/27.

The new system represents a significant step forward in the way that the Council manages and monitors health and safety incidents. It provides a simpler and more accessible process to report incidents, improves access to management information and enables trends and areas of risk to be identified more effectively.

It is intended to record the training sessions to ensure that the material is available to managers who were unable to attend the live sessions, and the content will also be included in the IOSH Managing Safely programme for new managers. In accordance with the action plan, the intention is to fully transfer to the new system from 1 April 2026, with the paper system and the digital system running alongside until then.

The system includes many features designed to improve incident management arrangements across the Council, including:

- online reporting forms available to every staff member through their Self-service account;
- the ability to report incidents, violent incidents and other incidents that have impacted staff members or the public;
- simpler arrangements to report near misses and dangers, supporting a more proactive method of identifying and managing risk;
- management dashboards that enable managers to monitor incidents within their teams and services;
- standard investigation process for managers; and
- a facility to record and monitor improvement actions following investigations.

Enforcement and Compliance

During 2025/26, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) conducted a visit to Cyngor Gwynedd as part of a national programme of inspections within local government.

The visit focused on compliance with legislation relating to storing and using plant protection products. HSE officers visited Parc Padarn, Parc Glynllifon and the Land Maintenance Service at Cibyn to review pesticide storage, use and management arrangements.

The inspection included reviewing the suitability of storages, the competence of individuals using the products, record-keeping arrangements, the condition of relevant equipment and compliance with associated legislative requirements.

On the whole, the result of the inspection was positive, and no significant matters were raised that meant there was a need for formal enforcement action. Verbal advice was given on a small number of practical and administrative matters to further strengthen arrangements.

The main recommendations related to:

- pesticide storage signs;
- the availability of emergency equipment, including eye wash;
- providing appropriate discharge packages;
- disposing of unlabelled products;
- ensuring consistency in spray records.
- Cyngor Gwynedd has a month to implement the verbal advice as they were only minor findings.

All the relevant actions have been identified and implemented within the timetable noted by HSE. The result of the inspection provides assurance that the Council's arrangements for managing plant protection products are generally effective and comply with the relevant requirements.

Developing the Service's Capacity and Sustainability

During 2025/26, the Health, Safety and Well-being Service continued to respond to capacity pressures and an increasing demand across a wide range of work areas. Despite changes within the workforce during the year, the service has continued to deliver its work programme and develop capacity for the future.

As part of this work, the Service was successful with an application for funding to establish an additional Health, Safety and Well-being Adviser post to support the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department. The new post will strengthen the service's capacity, provide more specific support to services acting in complex environments and with a high level of health, safety and well-being responsibilities.

In addition, the Service continues to invest in developing the workforce by supporting professional trainees within the Health and Safety and Occupational Health teams. This contributes to developing internal expertise, succession planning and ensuring that the service has the necessary skills and information to respond to future requirements.

These developments reflect an ongoing commitment to ensuring that the service has the capacity, the expertise and the necessary resilience to support the Council in managing its health, safety and well-being responsibilities.

The Service's Work Programme: Health and Safety

During 2025/26, the Unit continued to develop and strengthen health and safety arrangements across the Council. The work programme included reviewing policies and procedures, providing training, developing new systems and supporting services to manage risks effectively. The following sections summarise the main achievements during the year.

Review Policies and Procedures

During 2025/26, the Health and Safety Unit continued to review and update key policies and procedures to ensure that they remain up to date, reflect good practice and provide practical guidelines to managers and staff.

The following procedures were introduced to the Corporate Health, Safety and Well-being Panel, which includes trade union representatives, elected members and relevant officers from every part of the Council:

- **Machinery and Equipment:** A new procedure that explains the responsibilities of managers and workers in terms of using, inspecting and maintaining equipment safely, focusing on risk assessment, training and compliance.
- **Mental Well-being:** Existing guidelines were reviewed and combined to create one comprehensive procedure that aligns with the Council's Staff Well-being Plan and strengthens the support that is available to workers and managers.
- **Working from a Height:** The procedure was significantly updated to include more practical guidance, examples and control measures designed to help managers to reduce the risk of serious injuries and deaths.
- **Risk Assessment:** The procedure was reviewed to provide clearer guidelines on conducting risk assessments, using control measures and consider dynamic risk assessments.

As well as the work above, several other procedures were reviewed with minor amendments and updates, including:

- Computer Workstations
- Managing Contractors
- Intervention and Reasonable Force
- PAT Testing

This work ensures that the Council's policies and procedures continue to support effective management of health and safety, providing clear, consistent and current guidelines for managers and workers across the organisation.

Training

Training continues to be a key element of the Unit's work programme, supporting managers and staff to understand and carry out their health and safety responsibilities. During 2025/26, a variety of courses and development sessions were provided across the Council, focusing on strengthening risk management skills, improving compliance and supporting a positive culture of health and safety.

These are the course provided in 2025/26 and the numbers that were trained:

- **IOSH: Managing Safely**

IOSH: Managing Safely continues to be a core course for managers and supervisors, developing their understanding of health and safety responsibilities and their ability to manage risks effectively.

During 2025/26:

- 8 full courses and 4 refresher courses were held;
- 147 managers qualified;
- 70% of relevant managers and staff now have a valid certificate.

One of the main challenges that continues is ensuring that managers can allocate time to attend mandatory and recommended training in the context of operational pressures and service capacity. Although training provision is available, not every course is being run to its full capacity. The Service will continue to monitor attendance levels and work with Heads of Departments to ensure that developing health and safety competence is considered an essential element of effective management and reducing operational risks.

- **I-Act**

I-Act training continues to be an important element of the Council's commitment to supporting mental health and well-being in the workplace. The programme is planned to develop the skills of managers and team members to identify early signs of well-being concerns and maintain supportive discussions with staff when required.

During 2025/26:

- 8 courses were conducted;
- 78 managers and team leaders qualified;

49% of the relevant managers and staff have now completed the training.

The Occupational Health Unit continues to work with the Learning and Development Service to further promote the programme and increase participation levels across the organisation.

This training contributes to developing a culture where mental health and well-being is considered an integral part of managing people effectively, giving managers more confidence when supporting their team members.

- **Site Management**

The Site Management course is provided with the Housing and Property Department and focuses on managing key site risks such as fire, asbestos and legionnaire's disease.

During 2025/26:

- 7 courses were held;
- 41 managers completed the e-learning refresher;
- 142 managers qualified;
- 60% of the relevant managers have completed the training or the refresher within the last three years.

- **Manual Handling**

The Unit continued to provide a comprehensive programme of manual handling training to reduce the risk of injuries to staff and service users.

During 2025/26:

- 42 manual handling of objects courses were held;
- 47 manual handling of people courses were held;
- 1 emergency manual handling course was held;
- A total of 648 staff members qualified.

These numbers continued to show a high level of demand for the training across the Council.

• **Incident Reporting (Accidents and Near Misses)**

Following the introduction of the new Incident Reporting System, a specific training programme was developed to ensure that managers and team leaders can use the system effectively and support their teams to report incidents.

During 2025/26:

- 29 training sessions were held;
- 458 managers and team leaders were trained.

This training has been a key element of the successful implementation of the new system and has contributed to strengthening the reporting culture across the Council.

Generally, the training programme has continued to support the development of skills and competence of managers and staff across the Council. The high level of participation shows a continuous commitment to strengthening health and safety arrangements and ensuring that workers have the necessary information and skills to fulfil their duties safely and effectively.

Health and Safety Digital System

The first stage of the Health and Safety Digital System has now been implemented across the Council. The system enables every staff member to report incidents online through the Staff Self-service, whilst managers and heads of departments can monitor information and relevant trends through purposeful management dashboards.

Following introducing the system in the last quarter of 2025/26, an increase was seen in the number of incidents reported (see Chart 1). However, no equivalent increase was seen in the number of the most serious incidents, with the number of RIDDOR incidents reducing during the year. This suggests that the new system has contributed to strengthening the reporting culture across the Council, making it easier for staff to record incidents and near misses promptly.

The system also provides better access to management information, enabling services to identify trends, monitor performance and respond more effectively to health and safety risks.

The next step will be to develop the second part of the system to provide a central place to manage risk assessments, inspections and other health and safety information. The schedule of this development will depend on the Information Technology Service's wider priorities during 2026/27. However, the foundations have now been established to develop a more integrated corporate system that will support the Council's health and safety management arrangements in the long term.

Lone Working

During 2025/26, the lone working group continued to support the Council's services to identify and manage risks associated with workers fulfilling their duties on their own. A corporate review was conducted across the Council's departments to identify posts where it was not possible to remove or reduce all the risks to an acceptable level through normal management measures.

As a result of this work, it was noted that there was a need to provide 131 personal safety devices across the Council's services. This was decided following a review of the residual risks that remain in some activities, despite appropriate management measures. In a number of cases, the devices will be shared between workers instead of allocated to specific individuals, reflecting the operational needs of the relevant services.

As part of the Council's duty of care, work was done to identify a suitable solution that would enable workers to call for support quickly in an emergency and provide appropriate monitoring arrangements. Following an evaluation of a number of providers, it was decided to work with Conwy Council to implement a system that fulfilled the needs of the two authorities and provide a Welsh-medium service.

The operational arrangements have now been completed, with training for managers arranged and the process of introducing the devices proceeding. It is expected that this development will strengthen the Council's arrangements to safeguard workers facing the most risks when carrying out their duties.

Security Models

During 2025/26, the work of the Safety Models continued as part of the wider effort to strengthen a health and safety culture across the Council. An analysis of the Safety Models questionnaire was conducted, with the results being presented to most of the Council departments by the end of the year.

The work has provided a clearer picture of existing strengths, areas for development and the actions needed to support further improvement. It has also helped services to assess their existing arrangements against the Safety Models standards and note priorities for the future.

Progress against the actions noted is monitored through the Corporate Health and Safety Forum. To strengthen monitoring arrangements and ensure a corporate overview of progress, it was agreed to record the project and associated actions through Microsoft Planner. This will enable services and the Corporate Forum to track progress, share good practice and monitor developments in a more consistent way across the organisation.

It is expected for this work to play a key part when supporting long-term cultural change, helping services to develop more mature and effective arrangements to manage health and safety and reach the standards noted within the Safety Models.

Alcohol and Drugs

During 2025/26, the work of implementing the Alcohol and Drugs Policy continued, which was developed through a collaborative process that included trade union representatives from the early stages of the review. This partnership approach was key when ensuring that the policy reflected the needs of the services, the workforce and the Council's responsibilities as an employer.

Following the policy's approval from the Corporate Health, Safety and Well-being Panel, there was further work to ensure that relevant job categories were reviewed and recorded within the Council's systems. During 2025, a further period of engagement and communication was held with managers to support the consistent implementation of the new arrangements across services.

As part of the implementation process, a pilot of random alcohol and drugs testing was held. The pilot was successful and provided valuable information regarding the implementation of the new arrangements. In addition, the pilot contributed to raising awareness of the policy and created opportunities for workers to have a better understanding of the arrangements established to support health, safety and well-being in the workforce.

Where it was noted that additional support or advice was required, appropriate arrangements were in place to signpost individuals to relevant services, including the Occupational Health Unit. This reflects the policy's core principles, namely promoting a safe work environment whilst ensuring that appropriate support is available for workers when required.

This work has helped to strengthen the Council's arrangements in this field by combining risk management measures with a supportive method that emphasises well-being, awareness and joint responsibility.

Manual Handling of People

In conjunction with the Workforce Development Service in the Health, Safety and Well-being Department, the Manual Handling Trainer has contributed to a project to strengthen the standards of manual handling of people training, focusing specifically on the Residential Service with the intention of rolling out the approach across the Council.

As part of this work, the Adults Department invested in BTEC Train the Trainer training for key workers within residential homes. This was an opportunity to develop local expertise within the services, increasing the ability to support and develop staff in the workplace.

To ensure consistency in terms of the standards and content of the training, the Manual Handling Trainer worked with the Occupational Therapists Team Leader to develop standard guidelines for general manual handling activities. This work provides a consistent framework to train, assess competence and support safe work practices across services.

During 2026/27, it is intended to introduce a standard training folder for these key workers, with the material being developed further over time. This will support the work of providing practical guidance for new staff, conducting competence checks and contributing to developing robust and consistent manual handling risk assessments.

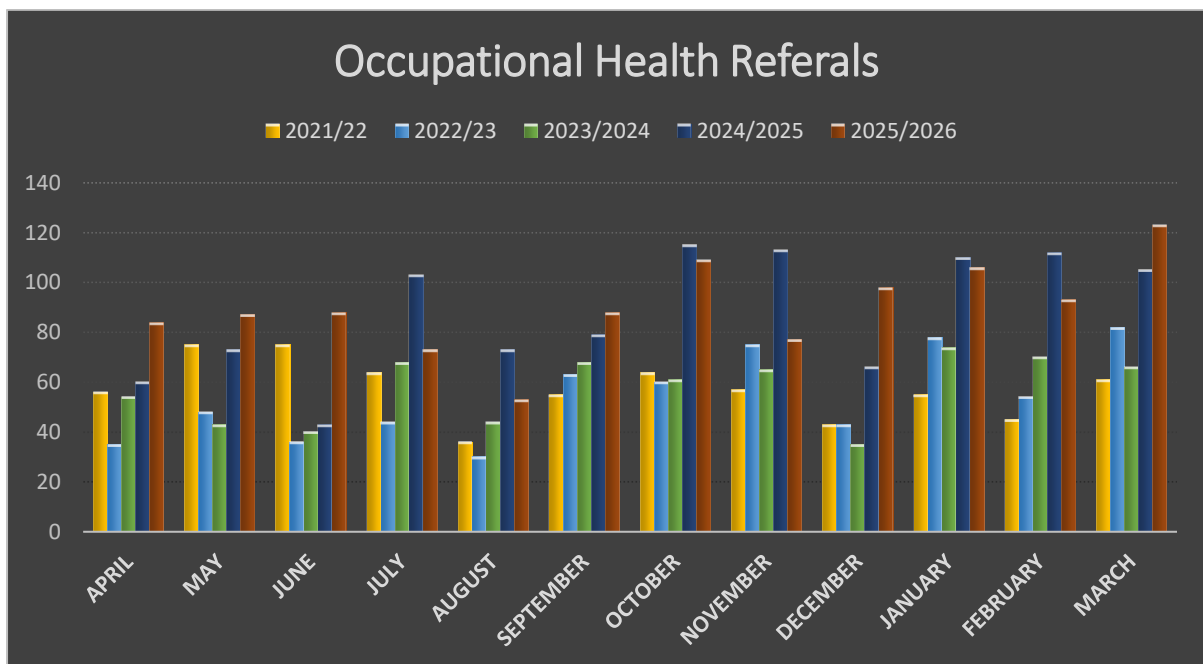
It is expected for this work to strengthen governance arrangements and ensure more consistency in the way that the manual handling of people training is provided across the relevant services.

The Service's Work Programme: Occupational Health

The Occupational Health Unit continues to have a key role in supporting the health and well-being of Cyngor Gwynedd workers.

During 2025/26, the Unit received a total of 1,079 referrals, compared with 1,052 during 2024/25. This represents the second consecutive year of increase in the number of referrals received by the service.

The increase in the number of referrals is likely to reflect an increased use of the service by managers, as well as the implementation of the staff sickness system that encourages and reminds managers to make referrals at appropriate times. This has contributed to ensuring that workers have access to advice and support in a timelier manner.



Occupational Health Referrals 2021/22 - 2025/26

Although the increase in referrals shows that workers and managers benefit from the support available, it also comes alongside an increase in the complexity of some cases. 36% of the referrals related to personal stress and 13% related to work-related stress.

Matters relating to mental health, well-being and stress continue to account for a significant proportion of the Unit's work, with many cases asking for support and intervention over an extended period.

The increase in referrals and the complexity of some cases reflect wider challenges that are experienced by employers across Wales and Britain. National statistics show that work-related stress, depression and anxiety continue to increase and represent the biggest category of work-related stress in Britain.

This trend reiterates the importance of the preventative work that is being done across the Council in relation to staff well-being, developing managers and maintaining effective support arrangements for the workforce.

Health Surveillance

Health surveillance tests continue to be an essential element of the Unit's statutory work, ensuring that the Council complies with legal requirements and safeguards the health of the workforce.

During 2025/26, an important milestone was reached for the service with the decision to establish a permanent Occupational Health Officer post. This provides long-term stability for the service and strengthens the Council's ability to fulfil its statutory responsibility in health surveillance.

During the year, 439 individuals received health surveillance tests. Following changes to the relevant requirements and guidelines, there is a need to call 350 individuals back for additional hearing tests sooner than previously anticipated. This is equivalent to approximately 79% of the individuals that were included in the programme.

Conducting a robust health surveillance programme continues to be an important element of the Council's statutory responsibilities. In response to the increasing demand and the need to maintain effective arrangements in the long term, the Unit has strengthened its monitoring and administrative processes, improved recording arrangements and increased capacity to ensure that the programme is implemented effectively and sustainably.

Establishing the permanent Occupational Health Officer post provides a strong foundation to further develop the service and ensure that the Council continues to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in this field.

Staff Well-being

The Occupational Health Unit has continued to work closely with Human Resources and service departments to support the health and well-being of workers across the Council.

During 2025/26, there was a specific focus on using information about sickness absences to identify services and locations where sickness levels were higher than expected. In response, visits that were targeted by the service were conducted to provide health checks and raise awareness of the support available for workers.

During the year, sessions were held in many schools, including Ysgol Friars, Ysgol Tryfan and Ysgol y Moelwyn, following discussions with the relevant services and reviewing absences data where appropriate.

As well as this direct work, the Unit continued to support the corporate well-being programme by contributing to communication campaigns and staff awareness, including:

- Stress Awareness and Cancer Raising Awareness (April 2025)
- Mental Health Week (May 2025)
- Well-being Champions Awareness (June 2025)
- Promoting the MEDRA service and the new referral arrangements (July 2025)
- "Know Your Numbers" campaign and blood pressure checks (September 2025)
- World Mental Health Day (October 2025)
- Stress Awareness Week (November 2025)
- Dry January and Blue January (January 2026)
- Awareness of national screening programmes (February 2026)

This work is part of a wider effort to support the health and well-being of workers, improve access to information and support, and help services to get to grips with matters that could contribute to sickness absences.

In addition to the work achieved on behalf of Cyngor Gwynedd, the Service managed to ensure a further extension to the service level agreement with Isle of Anglesey County Council during the year. As part of this arrangement, the Unit provides Occupational

Health services to the authority, including holding two weekly clinics at Isle of Anglesey County Council sites. The arrangement reflects the continuous confidence in the quality and professionalism of the service provided by the team.

This work programme reflects an integrated method of supporting the health, safety and well-being of Council workers. The collaboration between Occupational Health, Health and Safety, Human Resources and Learning and Development continues to be a key factor in responding to the ever-changing needs of the workforce and developing a culture that prioritises health, safety and well-being.

Health and Safety Management Systems Inspections

ISO 45001

ISO 45001 accreditation continues to be an important acknowledgement of the health, safety and well-being management standards within Cyngor Gwynedd. Currently, the system is implemented within the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department, with BSI conducting external inspections and monitoring the system every six months.

During 2025/26, the Department managed to maintain its ISO 45001 accreditation, and no significant matters were raised during the external inspections. In addition, the Department continued to conduct a programme of internal inspections, regular reviews of the risk register and discussions through the relevant forums to ensure that health and safety arrangements continued to be effective.

Although the inspections noted some areas where arrangements could be strengthened further, appropriate steps were implemented to address these matters. This work reflects the Department's continuous commitment to continuous improvement and maintaining a high standard of health and safety management.

The ISO 45001 system continues to provide independent assurance that the Department's health and safety management arrangements are implemented effectively, whilst also supporting the wider work of developing and improving health and safety arrangements across the Council.

Residential Site Management

During 2025/26, officers conducted inspections of the site management arrangements within the Council's residential homes. This included reviewing the content of the "blue boxes", which includes key information and relevant documentation to manage site risks such as fire, asbestos and legionella disease.

Overall, the inspections provided assurance that the site management arrangements were effective, with most of the documents, records and statutory checks being up-to-date and conducted as required.

However, it was noted that there was a small number of areas where there was a need to further strengthen arrangements. These related mainly to ensuring that management policies and plans were reviewed and updated promptly, as well as ensuring consistency in the process of completing and recording some fire and legionella disease checks.

Feedback and recommendations were given to the relevant site managers, and a brief report was shared of the findings with the area managers. The results will be used to support ongoing improvement and ensure that site management standards remain consistent across the service.

