

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10am, Tuesday 8 March 2022

Whistleblowing Annual Report 2021

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

1.1 To note the report.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Whistleblowing Annual Report

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report covers the seventh full year of operation of the Council's whistleblowing service for the period 1 January – 31 December 2021.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's whistleblowing service, including telephone, email and online reporting; disclosure management; investigations and training, continues to be provided by an independent company, Safecall Limited.
- 3.2 The Council's Whistleblowing policy (section 4.3.2) requires that an annual report on whistleblowing activity is presented to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for information and scrutiny.

4. Main report

Disclosures

- 4.1 During the reporting period Safecall received 48 disclosures in total, this is a slight increase from the 43 reported in the previous year and a significant increase on the 20 reported in 2019. The majority of cases for 2021 were reported in the final quarter, with 21 disclosures received during that period. The total number of disclosures received is slightly higher than the average for Safecall's client base (both public and private sector) of approximately 1 per 500 employees per annum, which equates to 37-38 referrals for the Council's staff group.
- 4.2 The total for the year includes several disclosures relating to the same issue, as has happened in previous years and has an impact when making comparisons and looking at Safecall's average.

Category of disclosure	Number of disclosures			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Major/significant	0	2 (1)	6 (2)	1 (1)
Minor/operational	21 (1)	17 (6)	32 (4)	39 (7)
Still to be determined	-	-	2 (1)	2 (1)
Non-qualifying	5 (0)	1 (0)	3 (0)	6 (0)
Total	26	20	43	48

Number of management referrals in brackets

Investigations

- 4.3 Twenty-six investigations (relating to thirty-one disclosures) were completed during the reporting period with outcomes and management action reported quarterly to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.
- 4.4 Twenty-four investigations, relating to thirty-nine disclosures, are ongoing and will be reported to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee upon completion.
- 4.5 There were six reports that did not qualify as disclosures under the Whistleblowing Policy but, where necessary, checks were carried out to establish that the issue raised was not one of significant concern.
- 4.6 Recommendations resulting from investigations have continued to result in amendments to policy, improvements to procedures and processes, the development of best practice and improved service delivery, as set out in the individual reports.
- 4.7 Where the service provider has an open line of communication with the whistleblower, feedback on the outcome of an investigation has been provided. Where this has not been possible, information has been recorded for dissemination to the whistleblower should they make further contact. This practice will be enhanced in line with the findings of the Tanner Inquiry and Review.

Review of Operational Arrangements

- 4.8 A planned review of operational arrangements that had started in the summer of 2020 and paused while staff dealt with the pressures of a significant increase in caseload and investigation support requirements alongside the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic, was further paused pending the outcome of the Susanne Tanner QC led review of whistleblowing culture at the Council. This work has been overtaken by

the recommendations of the review and will be consolidated into the action plan to follow.

Resources

- 4.9 In May 2021 the Executive Director of Resources (now Corporate Services) approved a temporary increase in resource for the Governance team of one GR8 Governance Officer post, for a period of 12 months, to address the pressures outlined at 4.8. Further permanent resource has now been requested as part of the response to the Tanner Inquiry and Review.

Policy Review

- 4.10 The scheduled 2020 review of the Whistleblowing Policy was impacted initially by Coronavirus restrictions and then by the capacity issues described at 4.8. It was agreed with the Trade Unions to pause consultation on amendments to the policy pending the outcome of the Tanner reviews, in order that all proposed amendments and improvements to the policy could be captured in one review exercise and thereafter rolled-out through a training programme.
- 4.11 Significant amendments to the policy and processes have been recommended by Ms Tanner and this work and the resource implications were included in the Chief Executive's response report to Council on 10 February 2022.
- 4.12 Formal Trade Union consultation will be undertaken on the new policy in due course, with Policy and Sustainability Committee approval sought thereafter.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Following Council agreement on the Chief Executive's response to Ms Tanner's report, including allocation of resources, the Monitoring Officer will work with the Service Director for Human Resources to progress that work, with regular updates provided to Committee.
- 5.2 In the meantime, the interim improvements to process and reporting will be sustained.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The cost of the whistleblowing service, including investigation costs, for the year 1 January to 31 December 2021 was £45,250.00 (exclusive of VAT).

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The whistleblowing policy was developed and agreed in order to complement management reporting arrangements and to ensure all matters at the Council are fully transparent and officers are accountable.
- 7.2 The aim of the policy and the appointment of an independent service provider is to empower employees to report suspected wrongdoing as early as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately; that they will be protected from victimisation and other forms of detriment; and that their confidentiality will be maintained.
- 7.3 The whistleblowing policy, and subsequent reviews, have been consulted on with the trades unions to secure a local agreement.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Finance and Resources Committee 23 May 2019: item 7.20 Whistleblowing Policy](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Safecall Annual Management Information Report 2021

Safecall Annual Report

The City of Edinburgh Council
2021



Annual report for The City of Edinburgh Council

Period

1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021



Tim Smith

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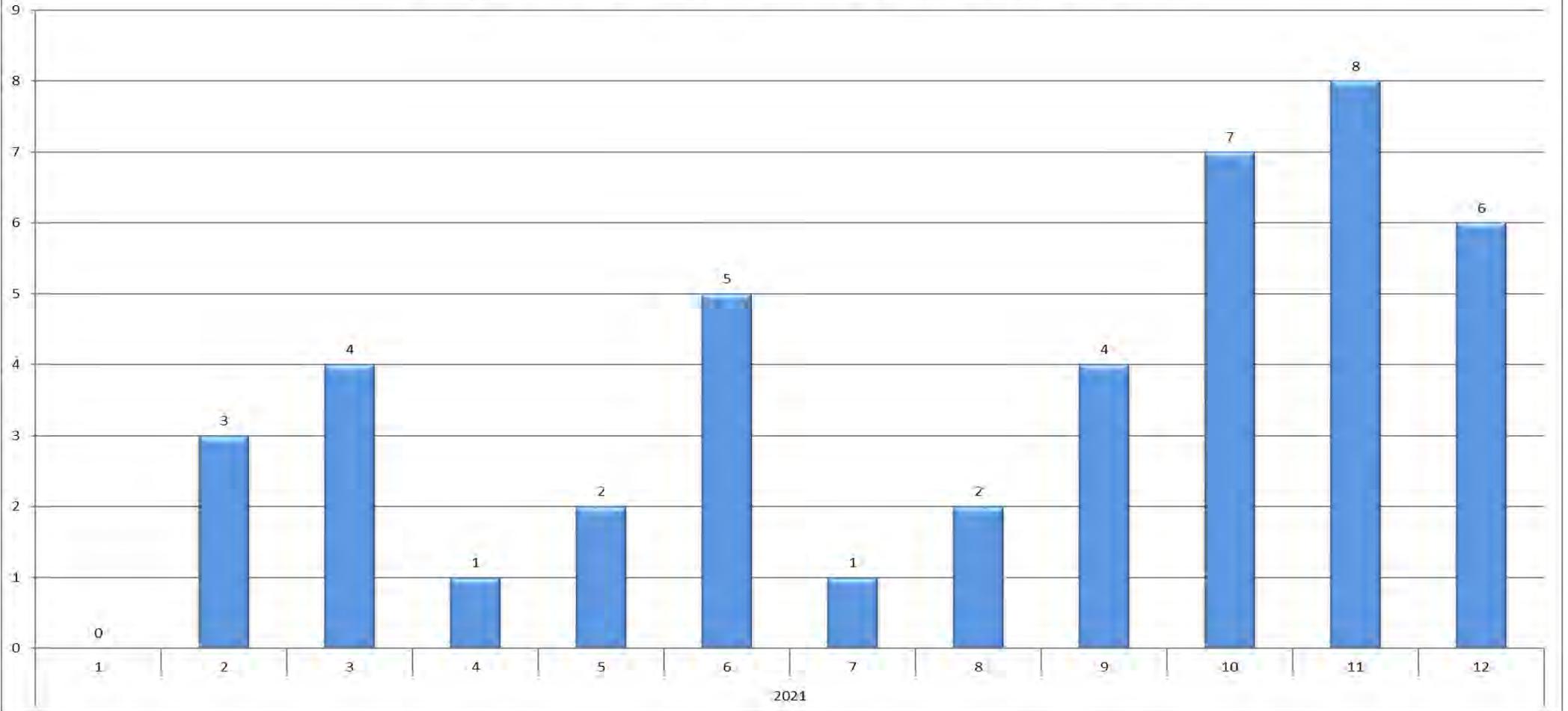
Appendix A

Management Information

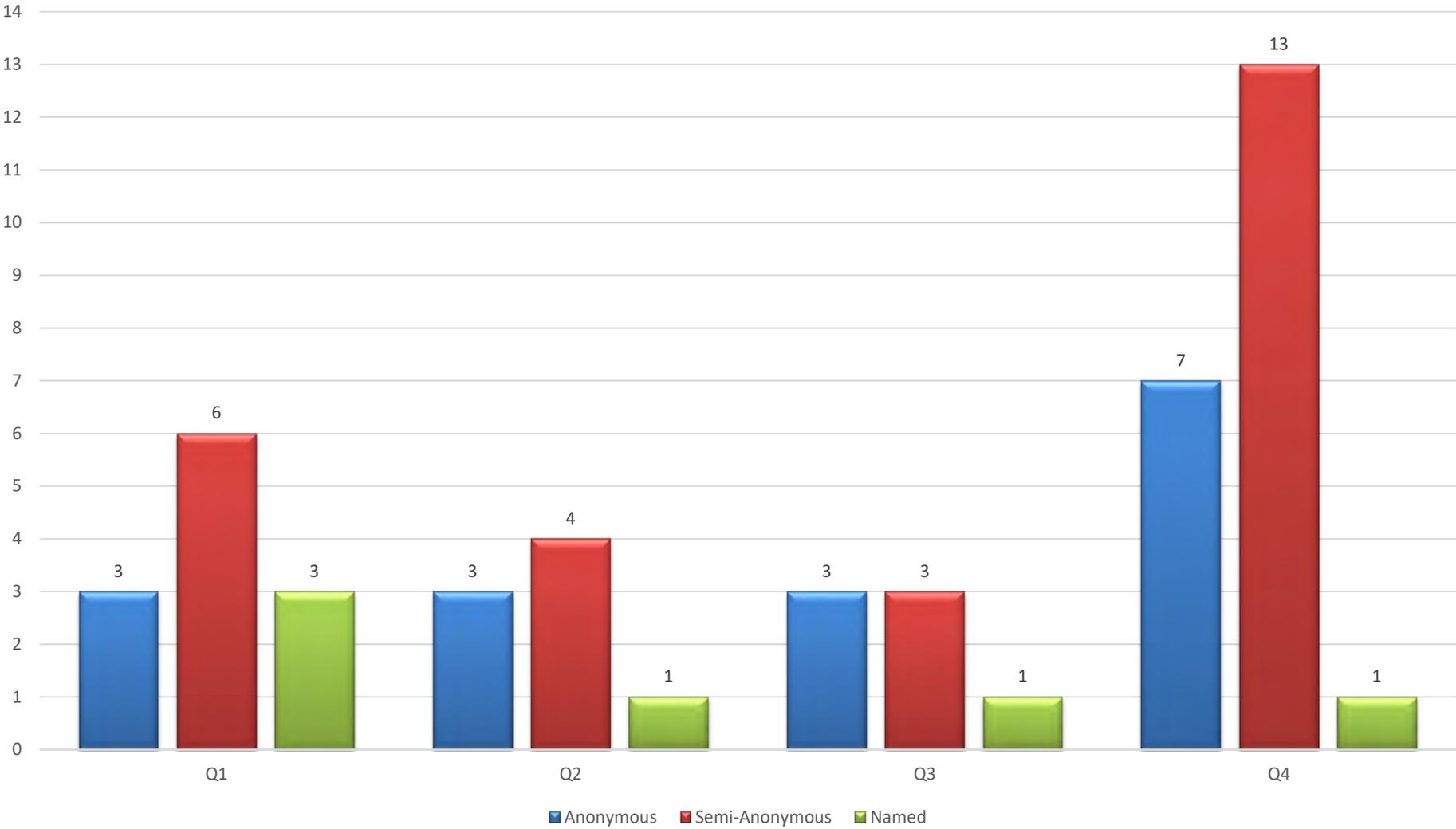


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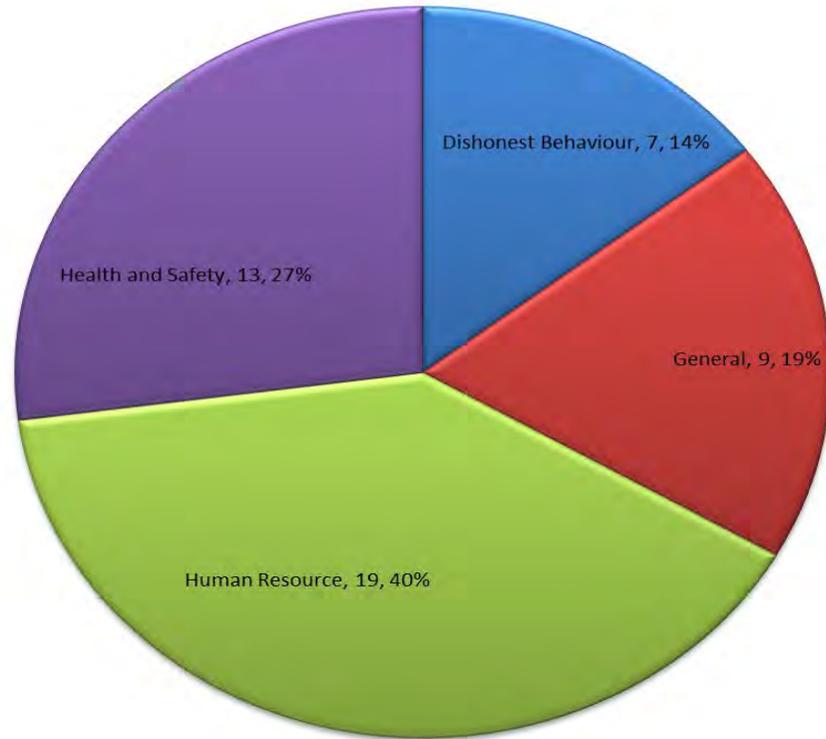
Edinburgh Council - Reports per Month from Jan 2021 to Dec 2021



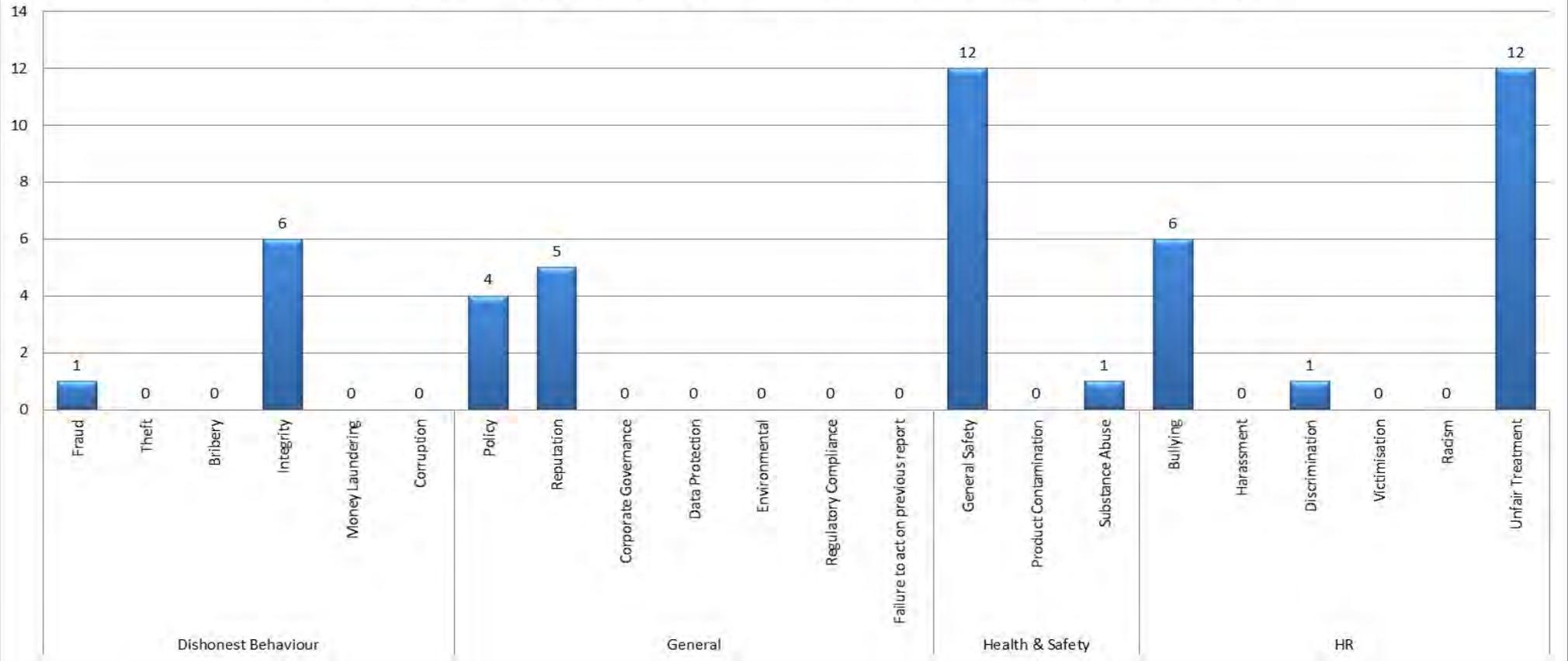
Edinburgh Council - Anonymous Reports per Quarter from Jan 2021 to Dec 2021



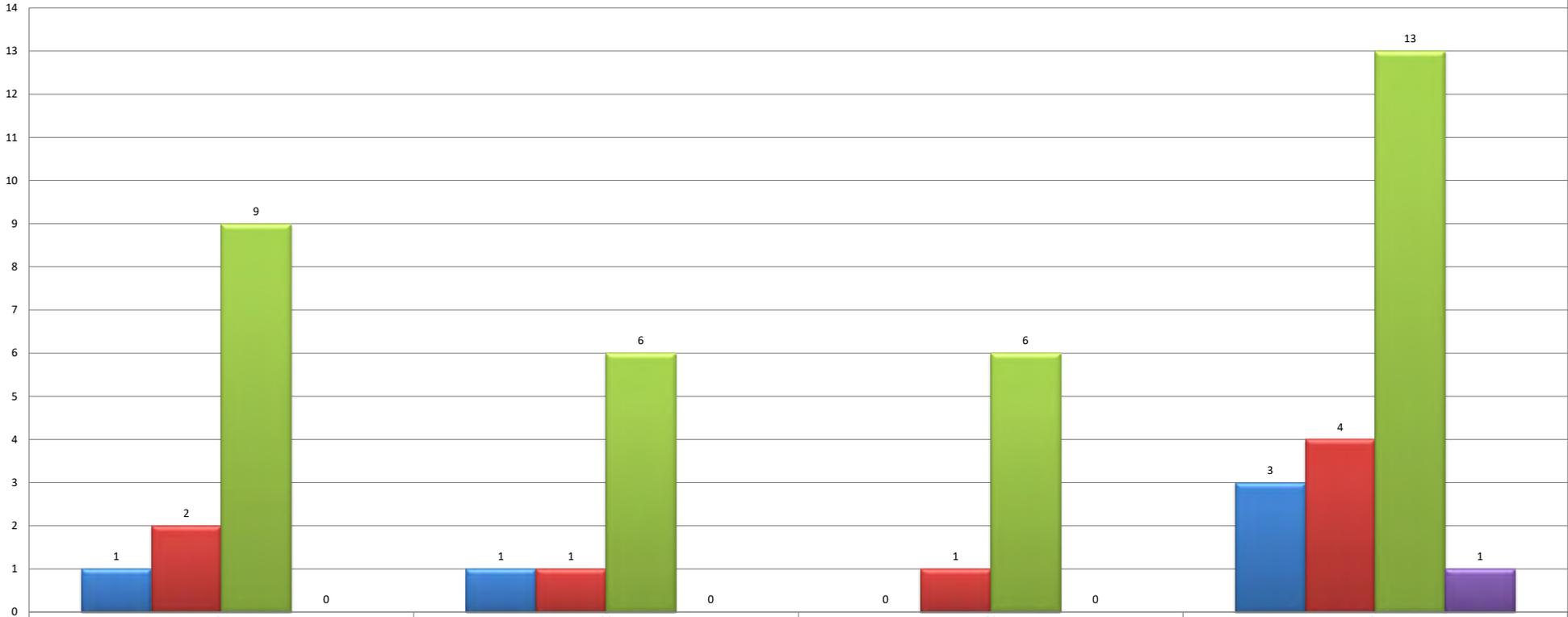
Edinburgh Council - Reports by Classification from Jan 2021 to Dec 2021



Edinburgh Council - Reports by Subclassification from Jan 2021 to Dec 2021

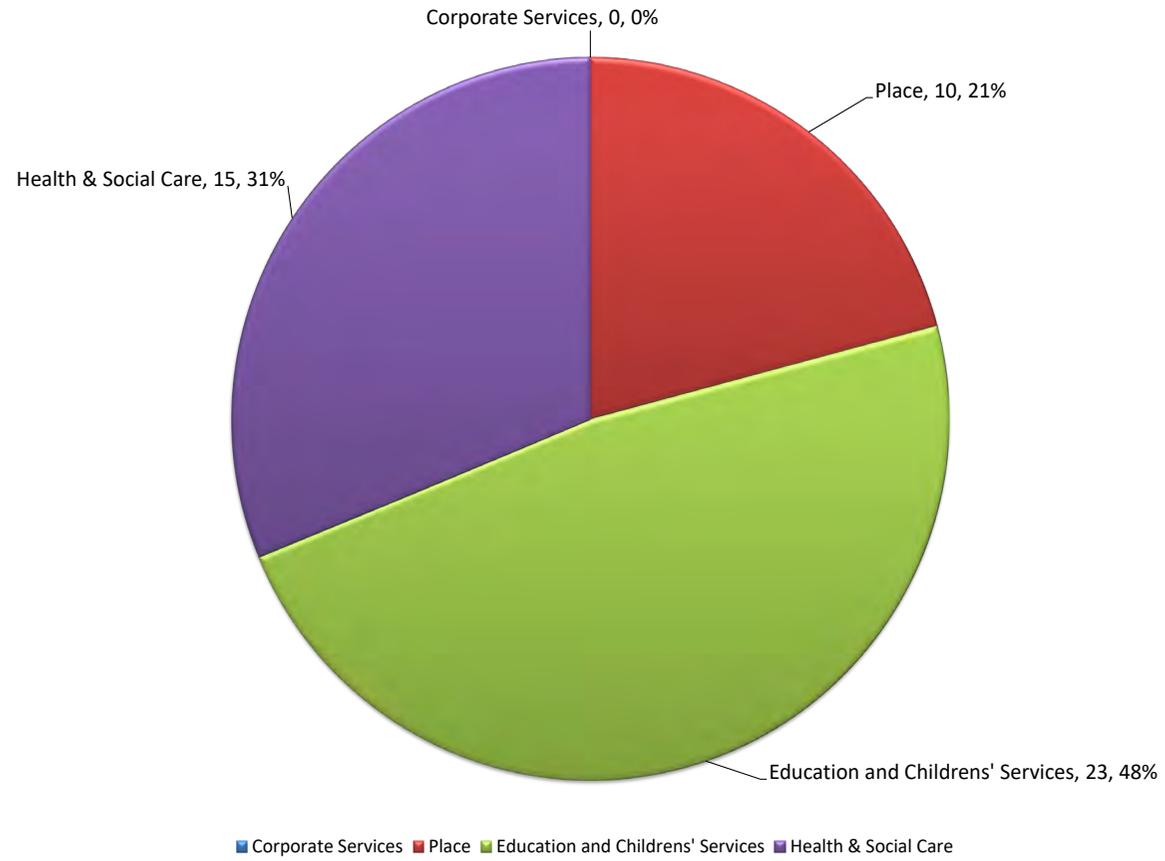


Major or Minor Reports from Jan 2021 to Dec 2021



To be determined	1	1	0	3
NQD	2	1	1	4
Minor	9	6	6	13
Major	0	0	0	1

Reports by Directorate from Jan 2021 to Dec 2021



Date	Month	Year	Quarter	Classification	Sub classification	Ref	Major / Minor	Directorate
07/01/2021	Jan	2021	Q1	General	Reputation	CEC 0121	Minor	Place
07/01/2021	Jan	2021	Q1	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 0221	Minor	C&F
21/01/2021	Jan	2021	Q1	General	Reputation	CEC 0321	TBD	C&F
27/01/2021	Jan	2021	Q1	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 0421	Minor	H&SC
27/01/2021	Jan	2021	Q1	Dishonest Behaviour	Fraud	CEC 0521	Minor	Place
17/02/2021	Feb	2021	Q1	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 0621	NQD	H&SC
22/02/2021	Feb	2021	Q1	General	Reputation	CEC 0721	Minor	H&SC
23/02/2021	Feb	2021	Q1	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 0821	Minor	H&SC
08/03/2021	Mar	2021	Q1	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 0921	NQD	Place
23/03/2021	Mar	2021	Q1	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 1021	Minor	C&F
27/03/2021	Mar	2021	Q1	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 1121	Minor	C&F
30/03/2021	Mar	2021	Q1	Human Resource	Bullying	CEC 1221	Minor	C&F
01/04/2021	April	2021	Q2	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 1321	Minor	H&SC
21/05/2021	May	2021	Q2	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 1421	Minor	Place
28/05/2021	May	2021	Q2	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 1521	Minor	C&F
02/06/2021	June	2021	Q2	General	Policy	MCEC 1621	Minor	C&F
10/06/2021	June	2021	Q2	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 1721	TBD	C*F
30/06/2021	June	2021	Q2	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 1821	NQD	H&SC
30/06/2021	June	2021	Q2	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 1921	Minor	H&SC
30/06/2021	June	2021	Q2	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 2021	Minor	H&SC
19/07/2021	July	2021	Q3	Dishonest Behaviour	Integrity	CEC 2121	Minor	E&CS
23/08/2021	August	2021	Q3	Unknown	Unknown	CEC 2221	NQD	Place
24/08/2021	August	2021	Q3	Dishonest Behaviour	Integrity	CEC 2321	Minor	E&CS
09/09/2021	Sept	2021	Q3	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 2421	Minor	E&CS
15/09/2021	Sept	2021	Q3	Human Resource	Bullying	CEC 2521	Minor	E&CS
07/09/2021	Sept	2021	Q3	Human Resource	Bullying	MCEC 2621	Minor	E&CS
28/09/2021	Sept	2021	Q3	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 2721	Minor	Place
12/10/2021	Oct	2021	Q4	Dishonest Behaviour	Integrity	CEC 2821	Minor	Place
13/10/2021	Oct	2021	Q4	Dishonest Behaviour	Integrity	MCEC 2921	TBD	E&CS
21/10/2021	Oct	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Bullying	MCEC 3021	Major	E&CS
24/10/2021	Oct	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 3121	NQD	E&CS
25/10/2021	Oct	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Discrimination	CEC 3221	Minor	E&CS
27/10/2021	Oct	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 3321	Minor	E&CS
28/10/2021	Oct	2021	Q4	Health and Safety	Substance Abuse	CEC 3421	Minor	Place
05/11/2021	Nov	2021	Q4	General	Reputation	CEC 3521	Minor	E&CS
08/11/2021	Nov	2021	Q4	General	Policy	CEC 3621	Minor	Place
10/11/2021	Nov	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 3721	TBD	E&CS
14/11/2021	Nov	2021	Q4	General	Policy	CEC 3821	NQD	H&SC
14/11/2021	Nov	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 3921	NQD	H&SC
17/11/2021	Nov	2021	Q4	Dishonest Behaviour	Integrity	CEC 4021	Minor	E&CS
28/11/2021	Nov	2021	Q4	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 4121	Minor	E&CS
30/11/2021	Nov	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 4221	Minor	E&CS
01/12/2021	Dec	2021	Q4	Health and Safety	General Safety	CEC 4321	Minor	E&CS
02/12/2021	Dec	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Unfair Treatment	CEC 4421	NQD	Place
07/12/2021	Dec	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Bullying	CEC 4521	TBD	E&CS
09/12/2021	Dec	2021	Q4	General	Reputation	MCEC 4621	Minor	E&CS
12/12/2021	Dec	2021	Q4	Dishonest Behaviour	Integrity	CEC 4721	Minor	E&CS
24/12/2021	Dec	2021	Q4	Human Resource	Bullying	CEC 4821	Minor	E&CS

An aerial photograph of Edinburgh, Scotland, showing the city's dense architecture and the prominent Edinburgh Castle on a hill. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The text 'Appendix B' and 'Key Performance Indicators' is centered in white.

Appendix B

Key Performance Indicators



KPI

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
KPI 1	Full Compliance	Full Compliance	Full Compliance	Full Compliance
KPI 2	Full Compliance	Full Compliance	1 Failure	Full Compliance
KPI 3	Full Compliance	Full Compliance	Full Compliance	Full Compliance
KPI 4	Full Compliance	Full Compliance	Full Compliance	Full Compliance
KPI 5	Full Compliance	Full Compliance	2 Failures	Full Compliance

