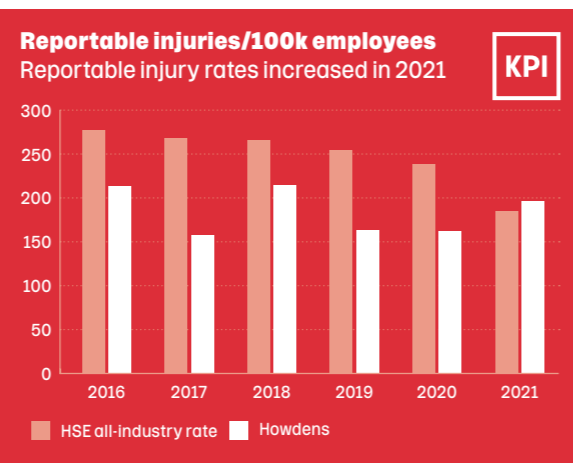


## Our people

### Keeping our people safe and healthy

#### 2021 highlights

- Our safety KPI has increased from 162 RIDDOR<sup>1</sup> reportable injuries per 100,000 employees in 2020 to 196 in 2021. This is also above the 2020/2021 HSE All-Industry rate of 185, although the HSE have publicly said that their rate in 2020/21 is likely to be an underestimate and will not give a meaningful comparison.
- Despite the increase in RIDDOR-reportable injuries, our injury severity rate has remained flat from 2020 to 2021 at 33.4 hours lost per 100,000 hours worked.
- Our working practices were significantly disrupted in 2021 by COVID-19 working restrictions on social distancing, COVID-19 fatigue and the "Pingdemic". These factors all reduced operating capacities in a year of record demand. We were busier than ever and we employed more people than ever - all of whom were fully trained but were gaining experience. These factors were key contributors to the unwelcome rise of injuries that we reported as RIDDORS because they resulted in absences from work for more than 7 days.
- Our priority for 2022 is to return to pre-COVID standards, to reduce reliance on modified working conditions and to ensure that all of our colleagues are able to work consistently safely.
- We actively promote employees to report all injuries and incidents, no matter how minor, because we know that a mature health and safety culture is built on full, open and blame-free reporting.
- In 2021 we also supported our employees' mental health and wellbeing through our "Safe to talk" programme. Sponsored by Andy Witts, the Chief Operating Officer of our Trade division, the programme was launched with a video message from Andy emphasising that it's "OK not to be OK", encouraging staff to seek help and reminding them of the confidential independent helpline, available to all staff, to help them with a range of health and wellbeing issues.
- We were awarded Highly Commended status by the Institute of International Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM) in the 'Outstanding risk management practice' category, recognising our approach to managing safely through COVID-19.



#### Results of our 2020 ESG Strategic Review - Future commitments, targets and ongoing work

**COMMITMENT:**  
Achieve ISO 45001 across our UK depot network by the end of 2021.

**2021 update:** See page 51. We have completed our work, passed the Stage 1 audit, and are awaiting the results of the final audit which was delayed by the pandemic but is taking place in early 2022.

**TARGET:**  
Achieve the British Safety Council's "5-Star" safety standard at all manufacturing and logistics sites by the end of 2023.

**2021 update:** This target is under review. The impact of COVID-19 has meant that we haven't been able to schedule an external audit of our progress for almost two years, which has caused significant upset to our project plan. We still aim to achieve 5-Star standard, but we are currently reviewing our timescales.

**ONGOING WORK:**  
Continue with our behavioural safety and safety culture approach across the Group.

**2021 update:** We have continued to focus on personal safety responsibility & safety leadership. All our manufacturing and distribution senior leadership team attended the NEBOSH "Excellence in Safety Leadership" course in 2021.

We have an HSE survey planned for Q1 2022, which will help us to measure progress and identify next steps.

**ONGOING WORK:**  
Develop a Group wellbeing strategy in 2021.

**2021 update:** We have begun work in this area. See above for our "Safe to talk" programme. We have also introduced trained Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Representatives and delivered training on managing mental health.

<sup>1</sup> 'RIDDOR injuries' are injuries reportable to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

### Rewarding careers, opportunities to develop and thrive

#### 2021 highlights

- We've continued to invest in people. Much of our 2021 development activity has had to take place online but we still delivered 112,000 hours of training.
- We've got an apprentice programme to be proud of. We currently have 570 apprentices on a range of tailored programmes throughout all areas of the business. They are a mixture of new starters, recruited into apprentice positions and training at a foundation level, and existing employees who are taking an apprenticeship route to gain higher level skills and professional qualifications. We recruited 250 apprentices in 2021, and we were pleased to celebrate the success of our 150 employees who successfully completed apprentice programmes in the year.
- We understand the value that apprentices can bring to our business, and we try to offer as many in-house apprenticeship programmes as possible. Where we are not able to use all of our Apprenticeship Levy credit we have partnered with EN:Able Futures, passing on surplus Levy credits to them so that they can offer apprenticeships in building and construction trade skills, including kitchen fitting. In this way, we are helping to address the demand gap for skills in the trade and also help to train the next generation of Howdens customers.
- We improved employee benefits in 2021. This included increasing company pension contribution levels and launching a "Buy as you Earn" share scheme to encourage colleagues to benefit from our future success. Under the scheme, colleagues can buy shares out of pre-tax pay, and we also give them free matching shares. We also improved how we communicate with colleagues about their benefits, supporting them to make informed choices.
- Employee engagement is critical to our success. We continue to use employee forums and our union reps to get feedback on a wide variety of topics, and our Executive remain connected to our employees through regular site visits and hosting regional board meetings, where feedback is acted upon and leaders held to account.

#### The fast track for Vicky

Vicky Cuff joined Howdens as a Fast Track Assistant Manager Apprentice at the end of 2019. The apprenticeship programme involved a 12-15 month mix of on the job experience and study. Vicky was only 8 months into her role when the position of Depot Manager was advertised, but her manager encouraged her to apply. Vicky had made such a positive difference in her role that she was offered the position. She went on to complete her apprenticeship with distinction and has already delivered the depot's best ever year. Not only that, Vicky is already demonstrating her leadership qualities supporting her own apprentices to develop and progress.



#### Results of our 2020 ESG Strategic Review - Future commitments, targets and ongoing work

**ONGOING WORK:**  
Equality Diversity and Inclusion: Building on our 2020 pilots, we will roll out initial EDI introductory training to all line management in 2021. We will also further develop our EDI roadmap and strategy for 2021-2025.

**2021 update:** We have Executive Committee sponsors for each strand of our EDI project: Theresa Keating leads on ethnicity; Andy Witts leads on disability and Julian Lee leads on gender. We have also set up an EDI subcommittee with employees at different levels from across the Group who are working with the sponsors.

Our focus is to develop action plans to address the areas where we can make the biggest difference. To do this, we're engaging with employees, listening to their experiences and priorities, and looking at what data we already have and what new data we need to be able to set targets and measure progress.

We have also developed bespoke EDI training sessions and have begun to roll them out across the Group.

**ONGOING WORK:**  
Social Mobility: In 2021 we will begin our investigation and data-gathering phase to see what contribution we can make to improve social mobility through the career development opportunities we offer our people.

**2021 update:** Subjectively we know that people can thrive with Howdens. For example, many of our current depot managers joined us with few formal qualifications in an entry-level position and are now running their own businesses, selling millions of pounds worth of kitchens and being responsible for teams of staff and hundreds of customer accounts.

The challenge when we began the investigation phase of this project this year was that many objective measures of social mobility require data on employees' history and background which is not part of the recruitment process. We are considering ways to gather objective data for the future whilst continuing to encourage our employees to grow with us and to support them in their development with a range of tailored programmes across the business. Kirsty Homer is the Executive Committee sponsor.