

Health and Safety Policy

A. Statement of Intent

Demonstrating commitment

1. The Council is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees, service users, other members of the public and contractors on a risk assessed basis. To do this, we will take all reasonable steps to make sure that:
 - our activities, premises, land and equipment meet current legal requirements, standards and best practice;
 - adequate resources are made available for health and safety;
 - health and safety is accepted as a core management activity, and is given at least equal priority with other service objectives;
 - a competent advisor is employed to give guidance and assistance on health and safety issues;
 - specialist advice on technical, medical or other matters, is available when needed;
 - adequate and clear health and safety information is effectively communicated to all employees, contractors and those who use our services and facilities;
 - all employees are competent to carry out their work safely and with minimal risk to themselves or others;
 - employees receive the instruction, training and supervision they need to work safely and to understand their responsibilities;
 - all contractors used by the Council are competent and are selected, monitored, managed and supervised as appropriate to ensure that they carry out their work safely and with minimal risk to themselves, Council staff and the public who may be affected by their work; and
 - those persons and organisations using Council land for their own activities are competent and have demonstrated their commitment to minimise risk to themselves and to members of the public attending or who otherwise may be affected by those activities.

Supporting continuous improvement

2. The Council believes that continuous improvement in health and safety is a shared objective for everyone to work towards. This links to the Council's commitment to deliver excellent services and provide value for money.

2.1 To achieve this, we will:

- develop and implement an effective health and safety management system based on risk assessment principles;
- systematically and regularly review and refine our policies, procedures and arrangements;
- set minimum standards and performance indicators for health and safety;
- measure our performance and compare it to that of similar councils and other organisations;
- carry out periodic reviews on the adequacy of health and safety performance throughout the Council;
- annually carry out a review of the health and safety management system to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness;
- publish regular reports on our findings;
- use the information actively to improve performance; and
- work with our contractors and other partners to improve standards of health & safety.

Promoting employee participation

3. The Council supports and encourages employee participation in health and safety. This is because we recognise that active employee involvement helps to:

- promote a positive health and safety culture;
- develop effective risk control measures and safe systems of work; and
- reduce accidents and work-related ill-health.

3.1 To achieve this participation, we will:

- promote open, frank and constructive consultation with employees and their elected representatives;
- make sure employees have the information they need to make an informed contribution;
- hold a regular dialogue with the representatives of all trade unions recognised by the Council;
- report regularly on health and safety issues to the Joint Employee Consultative Committee; and
- encourage all staff to take an active interest in health and safety.

Signed
Chief Executive

Dated.....

B. Responsibilities

Members of the Council

1. Members have responsibilities for supporting the health and safety direction and policy of the Council. They have influence on health and safety standards through their budgeting and policy decisions.
2. This responsibility includes:
 - providing support for the direction for health and safety having regard to the government's revitalising health and safety strategy, ensuring that the Council leads by example and that it demonstrates best practice in health and safety management;
 - ensuring that all strategic decisions they make have considered relevant health and safety considerations; and
 - committing adequate resources and organisational arrangements for effective health and safety management.

The Chief Executive

3. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for managing health & safety and in particular for making sure that:
 - effective arrangements and structures are in place to manage health and safety including measures to fully consult staff on significant health and safety issues;
 - effective health and safety policies are developed, reported and implemented consistently across the Council;
 - effective monitoring of health & safety performance is carried out throughout the Council and is reported to Management Team and Council on a regular basis; and
 - effective management review of the health and safety arrangements takes place on a regular basis which informs the development of those arrangements.

The Director of Health & Housing

4. The Director of Health & Housing is responsible for ensuring that:
 - competent advice on health & safety is available to the Council from the Corporate Health and Safety Officer (HSO) who is suitably qualified and experienced and has the right skills and knowledge;
 - the annual work plan of the HSO includes the necessary action to assist Services to achieve the objectives of the Health and Safety Policy Statement;
 - a comprehensive programme of audits and inspections is implemented to monitor health and safety performance;

- the Council's Fire Procedure and other emergency procedures are maintained, tested and updated on a regular basis;
- adequate arrangements are in place and communicated to Services aimed at minimising the risk posed by potentially violent persons; and
- positive action is taken to improve health and safety performance where problems are identified.

Directors

5. Each Director is responsible for managing health and safety within their Service. This includes:

- making adequate resources available for managing health and safety;
- making sure health and safety is given at least equal priority within management functions and is considered during Service performance planning;
- supporting continuous improvement by demonstrating a proactive, positive attitude to health and safety matters;
- making sure corporate health and safety policies are implemented promptly and fully;
- ensuring that adequate risk assessments have been undertaken, communicated and kept up to date;
- making sure relevant departmental policies, procedures and arrangements are developed, implemented and publicised;
- monitoring the effectiveness of Service health and safety arrangements and making sure positive action is taken to deal with any problems; and
- promoting employee participation in health and safety by supporting consultative arrangements.

Managers

6. The Council believes that health and safety is a basic management function. This means anyone who has responsibility for managing employees has health and safety duties. All managers are responsible for:

- promoting a positive and proactive approach to health and safety;
- communicating their personal commitment to health and safety by setting a good example;
- implementing and communicating health and safety policies, standards and procedures through regular team briefings and training sessions;
- carrying out and regularly reviewing risk assessments for the work activities they control, in consultation with their employees;

- devising, implementing and reviewing safe working procedures for all work activities under their control;
- monitoring health and safety performance by carrying out regular workplace inspections, spot checks and safety audits;
- identifying their employees' health and safety training needs through risk assessment and task monitoring;
- making sure all employees are adequately supervised while at work;
- encouraging their employees to participate actively in health and safety initiatives and to report any health and safety concerns;
- co-operating and communicating with other employees in shared workplaces, to allow a coordinated approach to health and safety arrangements; and
- making sure all work-related accidents, incidents and ill health are reported, investigated and any necessary remedial action taken.

Corporate Health and Safety Officer

7. The HSO is responsible for:

- providing an effective, proactive and objective advisory service to managers and employees on all aspects of health and safety law and best practice;
- developing, promoting and reviewing health and safety strategy, policies and procedures;
- developing, promoting and monitoring the Council's health and safety management system, based on the latest guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE);
- monitoring health and safety performance against agreed standards and advising on any necessary improvements;
- reporting regularly on health and safety performance to the JECC, Management Team and Members;
- developing and maintaining health and safety information and performance management systems;
- promoting a positive health and safety culture throughout the council, which encourages active employee participation in health and safety;
- advising managers on health and safety risk assessment and risk control;
- carrying out audits, inspections and investigations, advising on any necessary remedial action and formally reporting those accidents which require notification to the HSE;
- advising on health and safety training and competence requirements;

- delivering internal health and safety training on key issues and advising on the need for specialist training where this is appropriate; and
- preparing an annual report on health & safety management and performance and on proposals to assist Services to achieve the objectives of the Health and Safety Policy Statement in the following year;

Employees

8. Every employee has health and safety responsibilities, including:

- taking reasonable care of their own health and safety;
- making sure others are not put at risk by what they do, or fail to do;
- telling their manager **immediately** about any accidents or “near misses” and about any equipment, situation or working practice that might cause harm to staff, contractors or those affected by the Council’s activities;
- following all health and safety policies, instructions and procedures, such as reporting work-related accidents, ill health and incidents of aggression;
- using any equipment provided properly, as trained and instructed;
- reporting any problems or shortcomings they identify with the council’s health and safety arrangements; and
- being co-operative and proactive in all matters that involve health and safety and supporting the Council’s commitment to continuous improvement.