

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL GENERAL STATEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Council recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc.1974 and will seek to implement the act and supporting legislation in all activities within its control.

The Council identifies health and safety as a primary objective of its activities and an integral part of service delivery. It will endeavour, so far as is reasonably practicable to conduct its activities without risk to the health and safety of its employees, volunteers, agency workers, or the general public and provide resources to do so in accordance with the statutory requirements and Approved Codes of Practice.

AIMS

The aim of this policy is to lay down a framework for the organisation and arrangements allowing the management of this Authority to meet its statutory duties to manage health and safety and to support and maintain a positive safety culture within the Council.

The following areas will be developed throughout the structure of the Council:

- ◆ Management of Health & Safety

Effective health and safety management is based on a common understanding of risks and how to control them brought about through good management. The Corporate Risk Management Steering Group will assist the Management Team to manage health and safety throughout the Council.

- ◆ Commitment

The success or failure of a health & safety policy is dependant on commitment from all levels of the organisation. A high profile positive health & safety culture, which results from this commitment, is the most fundamental factor affecting health and safety performance.

- ◆ Assessment of Risk

The Council is required by statute to carry out assessments of risk to their employees / third parties and the hazards to which they are exposed. It is accepted that each Service will have to identify the hazards and assess risks to their employees, volunteers, agency workers and third parties. Each Service will carry out these assessments and put in place systems and arrangements to reduce and control the hazards.

- ◆ Consultation

The Council recognises the rights of Trade Union appointed Safety Representatives and will encourage their appointment and support their activities by providing time and facilities for them to operate effectively.

In line with the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations, and the regulations covering consultation with non-unionised employees, health & safety / risk committees or consultative groups will be set up, meeting regularly to further enhance the consultation process. Working together with Trade Unions promotes co-operation between employers and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure the health and safety of employees at work.

- ◆ Contractors

The Council will require Services to develop policies to ensure that contractors for the Council are competent to undertake the designated activity and comply with health and safety legislation (this should include vetting procedures and information on contracts). Any major failings of a Contractor should be reported through the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group.

- ◆ Training

The Council's policy on training will develop the commitment to health and safety. Identification of training needs is supported by employee development and review schemes, which feed into Service action or training plans, ensuring that employees within the Council understand their responsibilities.

The Council will ensure adequate resources, so far as is reasonably practicable, to carry out this training. The Corporate Health and Safety training budget is controlled by the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group.

- ◆ Monitoring & Review

The effectiveness of the Council's policy will be monitored in the following way:

- Safety Audits / Inspections and Self Assessments

A proactive approach to safety auditing will be adopted in Services. Not only is it expected that management will carry out regular inspections and self assessments of the workplace but a programme of health and safety audits will be carried out by the Health and Safety Team indicating the level of achievement within Services.

- Work related accident, ill-health, violence and near miss analysis

Reports of work related accidents, ill-health, violence and near misses throughout the Council will be analysed by the Health and Safety Team with a view to determining and eliminating their causes. This analysis will be discussed with Services and distributed through the agreed consultation process. These instances will be reported to the Health and Safety Team as laid down in the Council policy and guidance for accident & incident reporting.

- Monitor & Review

The Health and Safety Team will carry out a programme of safety sampling and audits to assist Services to monitor the level of compliance and commitment to the management of health and safety. Reports will be monitored and reviewed by appropriate Health & Safety Committees and the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group on an annual basis.

RESPONSIBILITIES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- ◆ The Chief Executive, is responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees, volunteers, agency workers and third parties who may be affected by the activities of Aberdeenshire Council, detailing the organisational structure of the Council through which the policy will be implemented and delegating the responsibility for implementation of the policy to the Director of each Service. See Appendix A

- ◆ He will also take on the same responsibilities as detailed in the Director section of this document for his own Service.
- ◆ He will ensure that adequate resources are made available to enable the Council's policy to be implemented, ensuring all employees are sufficiently trained and competent in their health and safety responsibilities.
- ◆ He will demonstrate the Council's commitment by ensuring health and safety is an integral part of the overall management culture.
- ◆ He will appoint competent persons to advise the Council on health and safety matters.
- ◆ He will appoint a Service Director as Director for Health and Safety. See Appendix B *(in specific circumstances, or as an interim arrangement, he may nominate a Senior Officer for a specified period of time)*
- ◆ He will ensure that health & safety is regular item on his Management Team agenda and that a review of health & safety performance is carried out at least once a year (linked to performance indicators)

DIRECTORS

Directors are responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees, volunteers, agency workers and third parties who may be affected by the activities of Aberdeenshire Council in their respective Services. In particular they will arrange to:

- ◆ Have a thorough knowledge of the Council's health and safety policy and the responsibilities it places on them.
- ◆ Prepare and revise, as often as necessary, a Service health and safety policy, which will be communicated effectively to all employees and a copy lodged with the Health and Safety Manager.
- ◆ Set out the organisational structure within their Service through which the policy will be implemented.
- ◆ Set out the arrangements, which detail the means by which the aims listed in their Service safety policy statement will be met.
- ◆ Ensure that adequate resources are made available to enable the Service policy to be implemented; particularly in the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision, safe handling and use of substances and the provision and maintenance of equipment, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of all employees.
- ◆ Visibly demonstrate commitment to achieving a high standard of health and safety performance within their Service and develop a positive attitude to health and safety among employees.
- ◆ Ensure that Health & Safety is an item at Service Management Team meetings.
- ◆ Ensure effective consultation with all employees and their representatives under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 (as amended) and the Health and Safety (Consultation of Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended). Services will consult at an appropriate management level through the Health & Safety / Risk Committees or consultative groups.

- ◆ Ensure implementation of health and safety management systems by the development of a Service health & safety action plan, which will ensure the assessment of risks and effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the protective and preventative measures necessary to eliminate or control the risks.
- ◆ Ensure operational risks are addressed and continuity plans are developed, maintained and tested.

AREA MANAGERS / HEADS OF SERVICE

- ◆ Ensure compliance of all Council and Service policies and procedures for the part(s) of the service they have operational responsibility for.
- ◆ Co-operate with other Heads of Service / Area Managers where required to manage health and safety within the service.
- ◆ Implement health and safety management systems by the development of a Service health & safety action plan, which will ensure the assessment of risks and effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the protective and preventative measures necessary to eliminate or control the risks.
- ◆ Ensure operational risks are addressed and continuity plans are developed, maintained and tested.
- ◆ Visibly demonstrate commitment to achieving a high standard of health and safety performance within their Service and develop a positive attitude to health and safety among employees.
- ◆ Allocate appropriate resources to enable employees to comply with statutory duties.
- ◆ Where required by Directors, carry out Self Auditing.
- ◆ Regularly review Service health & safety policies and procedures.
- ◆ Ensure that where changes in work practices have significant implications for health and safety that this is brought to the attention of the Service Health & Safety / Risk Committees and the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group.
- ◆ Ensure that Health & Safety is an item at Management Team meetings.
- ◆ Ensure effective consultation with all employees and their representatives under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 (as amended) and the Health and Safety (Consultation of Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended). Services will consult at an appropriate management level through the Health & Safety / Risk Committees or consultative groups.

SERVICE MANAGERS

Service Managers of the Council are responsible for the implementation of health and safety. Their duties include:

- ◆ Ensure compliance of all Council and Service policies and procedures for their part of the service.

- ◆ Co-operate with Heads of Service where required to manage health and safety within their part of the service.
- ◆ Visibly demonstrate commitment to achieving a high standard of health and safety performance within their Service and develop a positive attitude to health and safety among employees.
- ◆ Where required, allocate appropriate resources to enable employees to comply with statutory duties.
- ◆ Implement health and safety management systems by the development of a Service health & safety action plan, which will ensure the assessment of risks and effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the protective and preventative measures necessary to eliminate or control the risks.
- ◆ Ensure operational risks are addressed and continuity plans are developed, maintained and tested.
- ◆ Where required by Heads of Service, carry out Self Auditing.
- ◆ Ensure that where changes in work practices have significant implications for health and safety that this is brought to the attention of the Service Health & Safety / Risk Committee and the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group.
- ◆ Ensure that Health and Safety is an item at Team meetings.
- ◆ Regularly review Service safety policies and procedures for their part of the service.
- ◆ Being responsible for the safety of employees who they manage.

EMPLOYEES

A duty is imposed on employees at all levels (similarly this duty applies to volunteers and agency workers) and third parties who may be affected by the activities of Aberdeenshire Council. The more senior the employee the more onerous this will be:

- ◆ Acting in the course of their employment with due care for their own safety and that of others, who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- ◆ Co-operating, as far as is necessary, to enable the Council to perform any duty or to comply with any requirements, as a result of any health and safety legislation which may be in force.
- ◆ Using correctly all work items provided by the Council in accordance with the training and the instructions they receive to enable them to work safely.
- ◆ Carrying out all instructions and safe systems of work prepared by the Council and departments.
- ◆ Notifying their line management of any health and safety problems and hazards they have identified.
- ◆ Being responsible for the safety of employees who they manage.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT STEERING GROUP

Each Service will appoint a senior member of staff to sit on the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group. The group will be chaired by the Chief Executive (*or nominated Senior Officer as an interim arrangement*). See Appendix B

This group supported by its sub groups, will support the corporate strategies for the management of health, safety, well-being and risk within Aberdeenshire and will monitor the development and implementation of service risk registers and health & safety action plans. The results will be communicated by the chair of this group to Senior Management Team on an annual basis. Where appropriate targets for improvement will be set and performance benchmarked with other public bodies.

Service Directors or their representatives may be asked to attend the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group to clarify service risk registers or health & safety action plans.

Members of the group will report back to Service Management Teams after each meeting. They will also ensure that minutes of this meeting are copied to the chair of their Service Health & Safety / Risk Committees. Similarly Service Health & Safety / Risk Committees should ensure that any competent corporate items are raised directly with the chair of the appropriate Corporate Risk Management Steering Group sub group.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE

Regulation 6 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 sets out specific requirements on employers to appoint one or more competent persons to provide health and safety assistance and advice. This statutory duty will be carried out by the Health and Safety Team based within Corporate Services.

◆ Health & Safety Advice

The role of the Health and Safety Team is to provide Services with advice and support in compliance with health and safety legislation and implementing the policies of the Council.

Part of this support is to provide advice to help Services assess risk, implement safe systems of work, develop policies, understand new legislation and the implications of this to their work, as well as answering any other queries on health and safety matters which may arise. This will also include participation in the consultation process through attendance at their Service Health and Safety / Risk Committee(s) and other groups as appropriate.

◆ Risk Assessment

The Health & Safety Team will guide Services through the risk assessment process and where appropriate provide support or attend project groups enabling Services to meet their statutory duties.

◆ Policy Development

The Health & Safety Manager will advise the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group and Management Team on policy development for the Council with regard to health, safety, well-being and risk. These policies, after consultation will be implemented by Services as appropriate.

◆ Auditing / Monitoring / Safety Sampling

The Health and Safety Team will carry out a programme of auditing and safety sampling of Services' establishments / organisations. The frequency of audits will depend on the degree of risk identified in each establishment / organisation. The results of audits will be communicated in the first instance to the appropriate Service Manager(s).

Where action is necessary Services should identify who requires to action the point(s) and timescales for implementation.

The Team will also carry out a proactive role of visiting sites on a regular programme. It is not the intention of Health & Safety Advisers to act in a policing or enforcement capacity, but rather advising Managers of any corrective measures required to comply with their statutory duties.

◆ Investigation

Reports of work related accidents, ill-health and near misses will be investigated by the Health & Safety Team as appropriate with advice or recommendations being made on prevention of recurrence.

◆ Health & Safety Training


The Health and Safety Team and/or Wellbeing Team will provide training in specific areas, which may be identified by the audit programme, a training needs analysis or by legislative requirements and will work with the Head of Service and Manager responsible for learning and development to promote health, safety, well-being and risk education.

◆ Emergency Planning & Business Continuity

The Risk Manager will provide advice to Services with regard to the identification and control of operational risks and the development, implementation and testing of emergency & business continuity plans.

This statement of aims and responsibilities forms the initial part of the Council's health and safety policy. It is supported by council-wide policies and procedures on specific arrangements and by Service health and safety policies.

This policy, and any revision of it, will be drawn to the attention of every employee of the Council, as will any policy or procedural documents produced to support this policy. This policy and any supporting documentation will be revised as is necessary and will be reviewed regularly.



Colin D Mackenzie
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Date: January 2014