

# **Corporate Health, Safety, Wellbeing & Fire Safety Policy**

## **1. Aim**

The aim of this policy is to enable the council to: -

- Protect and enhance the health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) of its staff, and others affected by the council's premises, services and activities;
- Comply with the statutory obligations required by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and its subordinate legislation, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any other relevant Acts and Statutory Instruments;
- Minimise the council's costs for failure to properly manage its statutory obligations.

## **2. Objectives**

To achieve its aims, the council will: -

- Provide and maintain safe and healthy workplaces for employees and visitors to council premises;
- Ensure this policy is reviewed every 2 years and that all council staff have access to and are aware of this policy;
- Provide and maintain safe plant, tools and equipment;
- Ensure safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances used or associated in the provision of council services or activities;
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision in health and safety to employees to enable them to avoid harm and contribute to their own HSW at work;
- Provide and maintain where appropriate, personal protective equipment and ensure that employees are informed of their obligations in respect of its use;
- Undertake risk assessments of council activities, assets and functions and implement appropriate risk control measures;
- Inform employees of the risks associated with their workplaces and work activities and the measures necessary to minimise the risk of harm;
- Ensure emergency provision, as necessary, to ensure the HSW of all employees and, where necessary, others using council premises and facilities;
- Provide procedures for the reporting, recording and, where necessary, investigation of harmful or potentially harmful events and instances of ill-health relating to council work activities;
- Advise employees of their HSW obligations and their need to co-operate with the council to enable it to discharge its responsibilities;
- Ensure mechanisms are established and used for consultation with trade union representatives and / or representatives of employee's safety; the council will

- provide them with assistance and facilities to train / retrain Union staff to maintain accreditation to enable them to carry out their functions;
- Ensure the proper control of people other than employees who access council premises to ensure they are not put at risk by council work activities or council assets;
- Control contractors and co-operate with partners working for the council, on council premises or delivering council services, by proper co-ordination, selection, agreement, and monitoring of their activities;
- Ensure directorates make continuing improvements in the management of HSW by integration into directorate activities;
- Ensure that a programme is in place to monitor and measure the achievements of this Policy.
- Provide an annual report on the council's HSW performance and ensure the annual review contains appropriate proposals to improve the management of HSW;
- Include HSW in employee performance management and development conversations, and as part of regular on-going conversations (1-1's or personal supervision);
- Ensure all staff complete the annual mandatory refresher training and new staff complete induction training;
- Meet the workplace health and wellbeing needs of employees and commit to making it everyone's responsibility.

### 3. Scope

This policy covers the council's requirements to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and its subordinate legislation, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and any other relevant Acts and Statutory Instruments.

This policy applies to all the council's elected members, the Chief Executive, Directors, managers at all levels, staff, and volunteers and, where relevant, contractors working for the council.

There are two policies supplementary to this one: -

- The West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's health and safety policy statement; and
- The health, safety and welfare at work policy for community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and alternative provision colleges.

### 4. Who can help?

Email the [healthandsafety@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@westsussex.gov.uk), or call on 01243 752025.

### 5. Change Control

Version	Date	Author	Summary
1.0	June 2020	Amanda Rablin	Original
2.0	July 2022	Amanda Rablin	Reviewed and updated

3.0	January 2023	Amanda Rablin	Policy statement of intent reference to CMT changed to ELT
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## 6. Policy Statement of Intent

This Policy explains the strong commitment of West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) to ensure the positive management of HSW and fire safety risks that may be faced by our staff, customers, and all others who are affected by what we do. The Policy is a requirement of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and explains how roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are delegated throughout the Council.

The County Council's elected members and the Chief Executive, believe HSW must be considered when we are planning and delivering our services to the community, customers and each other. HSW has a vital role to play in the overall success of the County Council and we must encourage and support a positive attitude towards our HSW.

This Policy is supported by Corporate Guidance that set the standards and arrangements for implementing and achieving this Policy.

Whilst the final responsibility for implementing this Policy rests with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), every employee must take an active role in implementing this Policy effectively and to act with reasonable care for their own HSW and that of others, who may be affected by what they do or fail to do at work.

Becky Shaw, Chief Executive  
January 2023

Steve Waight, Cabinet Member for Support  
Services and Economic Development  
January 2023

## **7. Organisation - Responsibilities and accountabilities of County Council staff and elected members**

### **Elected Members**

The Cabinet Member with the portfolio for Support Services and Economic Development is the lead Councillor for HSW, and will

- Work closely with the Chief Executive and Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR&OD) to monitor the Council's overall performance and compliance with HSW legislation and ensure that decisions taken when developing Council policies and services reflect the Council's HSW commitment.
- Receive a copy of the annual report on HSW from the Health & Safety Manager considering trends and matters affecting the council and schools.

### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and is accountable to the elected members for ensuring that the council is fully compliant with all HSW and fire safety laws.

The Chief Executive will fulfil the Council's commitment for the implementation and achievement of the objectives and arrangements referred to in this policy and will: -

- Promote a positive culture and attitude, among all council staff and contractors, toward HSW risks and initiatives;
- Ensure suitable resources are available and strategic direction is set for the council to discharge its HSW responsibilities;
- Ensure HSW and fire safety arrangements are set through the arrangements section of this Policy and Corporate Guidance covering compliance with laws and best practice;
- Require Directors to account for HSW management and resource in their areas of control.
- Ensure appropriate priority is given to HSW in all council strategic planning.
- Ensure that the council has competent HSW advice to enable it to meet its statutory duties.

### **Directors and Assistant Directors**

Directors and Assistant Directors are responsible for and accountable to the Chief Executive for ensuring that there are adequate HSW arrangements in place for their Directorate and adequate resource to fulfil the Council's commitment for the implementation and achievement of the objectives and arrangements referred to in this policy and for compliance with HSW and fire safety laws, within their areas of control. Directors and Assistant Directors will:

Promote the ownership of HSW risks and a positive culture and attitude to its management, among all managers, staff and customers.

Ensure that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) in their respective directorates implement and achieve this policy and account for HSW management within their service.

Establish HSW as a standing agenda item at quarterly Directorate Leadership Team meetings with the function of leading on the planning, monitoring and reviewing of HSW within the Directorate and refer any issues that cannot be resolved within their Directorate to the HSW Governance Board for resolution.

Appoint a Senior Manager to attend the HSW Representatives Committee who will become the ambassador for HSW in the Directorate.

Agree using a risk based approach with the Health and Safety Manager the Directorates' HSW priorities and the action to resolve these.

### **Corporate Management Team (CMT) for example Business Unit Managers and Heads of Service)**

CMT is responsible for and accountable to their ~~Executive Directors and~~ Directors and Assistant Directors for ensuring adequate arrangements for HSW of their staff, volunteers, customers, contractors, and others affected by their unit /service and the implementation of the objectives and arrangements referred to in this policy in their respective service areas. CMT will:

Include HSW issues in service meeting agendas and to refer any issues that cannot be resolved to the Directorates ambassador to escalate through the corporate governance structure for HSW for resolution.

Monitor HSW performance within their service areas.

Ensure that, where necessary, there are nominated senior staff to oversee buildings occupied by their staff and that all occupants, including any hosted organisations fully co-operate with Facilities Management for fire safety, emergency evacuation and other building-related health and safety arrangements.

Support the Health and Safety Manager and Health and Safety Service if activities or service (by staff or contractors) are suspended where there is imminent risk of serious harm to staff or others.

### **Managers and Supervisors<sup>1</sup>**

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for and accountable to their Business Unit Manager and Head of Service for the implementation of their unit / service HSW arrangements for the activities under their control and the implementation of the objectives and arrangements referred to in this policy in their respective team areas.

Managers and Supervisors will include HSW issues in team meeting agendas and escalate to their Business Unit Managers / Head of Service, any issues that they cannot resolve.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Managers and Supervisors' includes all managers and supervisors at any level who have responsibility for staff / volunteers, premises, assets, equipment or activities involving staff, volunteers, contractors, customers etc.

Managers and Supervisors will monitor health and safety performance within their team areas.

### **Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development**

The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD) on the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) will be nominated to support the Chief Executive, provide strong leadership, and champion HSW. The Director of HR&OD will:

Manage the implementation of the aims and objectives of this policy and promote ownership for the management of risks created by council undertakings and ensure that all officers are aware of and discharge their responsibilities under the Policy.

Chair the HSW governance board to drive and monitor the effectiveness of HSW at a strategic level and, where issues cannot be resolved, escalate to the Executive Leadership Team to agree actions to resolve matters.

### **Health and Safety Manager**

The Health and Safety Manager is accountable to the Director of Human Resource and Organisational Development and will act as the council's statutory competent person and provide advice and guidance throughout the council on compliance with HSW and fire safety laws.

The Health and Safety Manager is responsible for leading and directing the council's HSW strategy, developing the structures for planning, implementing and monitoring HSW performance and enable the pursuit of the aims and objectives of this policy.

The Health and Safety Manager will liaise with the enforcing authority and other lead bodies regarding health, safety, welfare and fire safety matters and investigations, and ensure proactive links with the trade unions and senior management to secure consultation and make sure that key information is exchanged to enable best practice in health, safety, welfare and fire safety management.

The Health and Safety Manager (and health and safety officers) has authority from the Chief Executive to suspend activities and service (by staff and contractors) where there is imminent risk of serious harm to staff or others.

### **Consultation with Unions and Staff Representatives**

The council has a duty to consult with staff on any matters that affect HSW at work. This consultation will be conducted through the HSW Representatives Committee and where relevant Business and Service Unit Focus or Sub group meetings.

The relevant trade union(s) will be invited to provide a Unison representative to attend the HSW Representatives Committee.

The Health and Safety Manager will consult with Unison at regularly agreed intervals as necessary, no fewer than quarterly.

### **Individual Employees<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'employee' refers to full-time and part-time staff, agency staff, casual staff, volunteers and work experience students working for the council.

All employees will co-operate with his/her line manager in the implementation and achievement of the objectives and arrangements of this policy of this policy. In particular, employees must: -

- Act with reasonable care for their own HSW and that of others, who may be affected by what they do or fail to do at work;
- Co-operate to enable the council to comply with any applicable health, safety, welfare and fire safety legislation;
- Use all work equipment and substances in accordance with instructions and training provided to enable them to use such things safely;
- Remedy unsafe situations within their competence or report such to their line / team manager or supervisor, to ensure that appropriate action is taken. This includes reporting: -
  - All hazards, defects or other shortcoming;
  - Any accident or dangerous occurrence;
- Use personal protective equipment when carrying out a task where it is a requirement;
- Not misuse or interfere with anything that is provided for health, safety, wellbeing and fire safety.

### **Heads of Educational Establishments and Governing Bodies**

The County Council, as the employer for community schools, community special schools, and voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and alternative provision colleges, is responsible for HSW.

Heads of Educational Establishments and Governing Bodies discharge these responsibilities on behalf of the council and their duties for are set out in a supplementary council policy - *'The health, safety and welfare at work policy for community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and alternative provision colleges'*; this is available on the West Sussex Services for Schools (WSSfS) website?

Where the council finds a deficiency in standards of HSW at an educational establishment, the Director of Education & Skills may direct the governing body and head teacher to remedy the deficiency to comply with this policy.

**Note:** Head teachers of other types of school must refer to their employer's HSW Policy(s). The council will co-operate with head teachers to maintain good standards of HSW where the council has employees working at these other types of school.

### **Occupational Health Arrangements and Health Surveillance**

The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development will maintain a contract for the provision of general occupational health and hygiene advice and support, for pre-employment health screening and for the health surveillance for staff identified as being at-risk from harmful agents.

## **8. Arrangements – for the implementation and achievement of the policy**

### **Managing Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Fire Safety**

Health, safety, wellbeing and fire safety in the council will be directed and managed according to more detailed Corporate Guidance which will be published on The Point, to assist those responsible to carry out their duties under this Policy.

Owing to the size and complexity of the council, it is not practicable to detail all the specific arrangements within this document.

Council directorates, business units, services and teams may adopt their own specific procedures in addition to the corporate guidance and, where it is required, those additional procedures must not be less onerous than the corporate guidance.

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