

# Health & Safety Policy

## 2025

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# **Health & Safety Policy**

## **Introduction**

### **1. Purpose of the policy**

- 1.1 Folkestone and Hythe District Council, ('the Council') as a local authority and an employer, is required by law to state its policy for managing health, safety and welfare. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council achieves compliance with health, safety and welfare legislation as both an employer and provider of services and facilities to the public.
- 1.2 The Council's Health and Safety Policy is set out in 4 parts:
  - The Introduction
  - Policy Statement
  - Key Controls and Reporting
  - Appendices

### **2. Policy Scope**

- 2.1 The scope of this policy covers all employees of the Council, who are required, as a condition of their service, to comply with the Council's policies, procedures and risk assessments.
- 2.2 In addition, the Council has a responsibility for ensuring that health, safety and welfare arrangements are in place where we share services and contract out services to other organisations.
- 2.3 The Policy does not deal with the operational detail. This is dealt with under individual procedures and risk assessments as they relate to specific work areas. These should be read in conjunction with any work undertaken that falls under the scope of this policy document.

### **3. Legal/Regulatory framework**

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to abide by the responsibilities contained within the following legislation in relation to the management of health, safety and welfare:
  - The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
  - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 3.2 The Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to fulfil its statutory duties under all Health and Safety Legislation, along with the requirements of Approved Codes of Practices and Health and Safety Executive guidance documents.

# **The Policy**

## **4. Policy Statement**

- 4.1 The Council recognises and accepts its statutory responsibility as an employer to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and others who use or may visit Council premises, or those who may be affected by the activities carried out by the Council.
- 4.2 All work activities of the Council will be subject to an assessment to identify hazards and evaluate the level of risk. The process of "Risk Assessment" will be carried out in every service area. This will include the work activities of employees who work remotely.
- 4.3 The Council will also ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, its contractors and partners in service provision conduct their activities in a manner that is safe and without risk to health, safety or welfare.

## **5. Contractors and third parties**

- 5.1 Where the Council occupies a building that is shared with one or more other parties, clear arrangements for health, safety and welfare (e.g. fire safety, first aid, maintenance, emergency procedures etc.) must be agreed between the occupying parties.
- 5.2 It is Council policy that, where it provides services through a contractor or partner in service provision; the standards for health, safety and welfare required by this Policy (including any supporting policies and documents supplied via the third party) be suitable and sufficient, and subject to review and scrutiny.

## **6. Health & Safety requirements**

- 6.1 The Council will maintain high standards for protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees and the health and safety of anyone else who may be affected by any of its activities.
- 6.2 The Council will do this by complying with the requirements of Health, Safety and Welfare legislation and, in particular, the provision and maintenance of:
  - Plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe and without significant risks to health
  - Arrangements for ensuring the safety and the absence of risk to health in connection with the storage, transport, handling and use of articles and substances
  - The provision of information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees

- Opportunities to enable all employees to contribute to their own health, safety and welfare
- Any place of work under the control of the Council in a condition that is safe and without significant risk to health together with adequate means of access and egress
- Working environments that are safe with adequate facilities and arrangements for employee welfare
- Sufficient information to enable contractors and partners in service provision to identify hazards and contribute positively to their own health, safety and welfare at work
- An occupational health programme (including eye tests for Display Screen Equipment users, health checks for any night shift workers, Hand Arm Vibration Occupational Health checks for those operating machinery, needs assessments for new and expectant mothers) to ensure the highest possible level of physical, mental and social well-being amongst all employees
- Measures necessary to ensure that the public are not exposed to health and safety hazards resulting from the activities or omissions of the Council or by the acts or omissions of contractors undertaking work for, or on behalf of the Council
- Arrangements for the participation of employees in the development of measures for promoting health, safety and welfare (e.g. staff/union consultation)
- Arrangements for the effective monitoring of work environments, personnel and systems of work to ensure all work activities are carried out safely and in accordance with relevant legislation, this policy, and good practice

## **7. Responsibilities**

7.1 The Head of Paid Service, Elected members, Employees, Partners and Contractors working for or with the Council all have responsibilities placed on them for ensuring health, safety and welfare at The Council.

### **7.2 The Council as a corporate body**

The elected Members of the Council have a duty to ensure that the Council's responsibilities regarding the health, safety and welfare of its employees and other persons affected by its activities are fully discharged. This duty will include the adequate provision of any resources necessary to achieve this. A Member holding a Cabinet Portfolio will have specific responsibility for health, safety and welfare.

### **7.3 The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive)**

7.3.1 As the Council's most senior officer, the Chief Executive is appointed to take overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and administration of the Council's Health and Safety Policy.

#### **7.3.2 The Chief Executive (through delegation) will:**

- Ensure that Members are adequately advised on health, safety and welfare matters
- Ensure that health, safety and welfare matters are reported to the Council's health and safety committee, the Corporate Leadership Team, and Audit and Governance committee at regular intervals
- Appoint a responsible 'competent person' to monitor the Health and Safety policy, carry out reviews and advise senior management on its implementation
- Delegate the responsibility for complying with the provisions of the Health and Safety policy to individual Heads of Service (Chief Officers)

### **7.4 Heads of Service (Chief Officers)**

7.4.1 The Council's Chief Officers and/or other heads of service are responsible for putting effective health, safety and welfare arrangements in place to ensure, within their respective services, that:

- a) Safe working practice for all activities, functions and locations under their control are based on the principles of risk assessment.
- b) The provision of services by external bodies such as contractors or service partners is based on the principles of risk assessment.
- c) Where such risk assessments identify the need for measures to remove/avoid a hazard or reduce/control a risk, they will ensure they have systems to implement, monitor and review those assessments. They will ensure that the assessments and control measures will be reviewed at least annually or whenever there are changes in working practises.
- d) Specific risk assessments are carried out for vulnerable groups (e.g. people with disabilities, young persons and pregnant women).
- e) Suitable and sufficient records are kept and maintained on the centralised health and safety document matrix.
- f) Contractors and partners working for or with the Council comply with the provisions of health, safety and welfare legislation.
- g) Accidents, incidents, near misses or dangerous occurrences are reported straight away using the relevant form located on the FHDC intranet, this will automatically advise the Corporate Health and Safety Officer of such event.
- h) All plant, workplace equipment and personal protective equipment that is provided, is fit for the purpose. Ensuring that staff are trained in its use, and it is regularly inspected by a competent person.

- i) Staff are provided with adequate information, instruction and training to enable them to safely and competently carry out their duties and protect others.
- j) Appropriate action is taken over any wilful disregard, negligent act or omission by employees or others including contractors and partners in service, if necessary, using disciplinary procedures or other contractual arrangements.
- k) Appropriate measures are in place for the protection of persons (e.g. visitors/ members of the public) who are not employees of the Council.
- l) Fire wardens are nominated and adequately trained, and all staff are made aware of emergency procedures.
- m) Adequate numbers of first aiders are nominated and trained.
- n) Regular workplace inspections are carried out and deficiencies rectified.
- o) There is adequate provision of resources to meet these requirements.

## **7.5 Corporate Health and Safety Officer**

7.5.1 The Corporate Health and Safety Officer (as appointed by the Chief Executive) will monitor the Health and Safety Policy by carrying out regular reviews and advise management on its implementation.

7.5.2 The Corporate Health and Safety Officer (CHSO) is the 'competent person' in accordance with the provisions of the Management of Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1999 (Regulation 7).

7.5.3 The CHSO will assist the Council to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed by all relevant statutory health, safety and welfare provisions together with good practice set out in associated codes of practice and guidance notes.

### **7.5.4 The Corporate Health and Safety Officer (CHSO) will:**

- a) Determine the Council's duties in regard to current health, safety and welfare legislation and provide advice on any changes where this will affect the Council's operations or those of its contractors and partners in service.
- b) Ensuring contractors or partners in service provision supply documentary evidence to confirm that they have a adequate current Health, Safety and Welfare Procedure(s) supported by risk assessments for proposed works or service.
- c) Determining good practice as laid out by the approved codes of practices, industry guides and so on and ensure that these are applied by the Council, its contractors and partners in service provision.
- d) Monitoring and carrying out regular health and safety audits in locations and work activities that the Council controls, either directly or through contractors and partners in service and identify any failings or omissions in the implementation of the Council's policies.
- e) Referring any errors or omissions back to Heads of Service for their intervention and action to resolve them.

- f) Monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's Health and Safety Policy, regularly review and revise it and bring these revisions to the notice of all affected.
- g) Providing advice and assistance on health, safety and welfare issues to the Council.
- h) Advising Heads of Service on the provision of adequate information, instruction and training to enable employees to safely and competently carry out their duties and protect others.
- i) Ensuring that training records are kept and maintained.
- j) Maintaining an accident and incident reporting system, ensuring reportable accidents and incidents are notified within the specified timescales to the Health and Safety Executive.
- k) Investigating the cause of all reported accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences where required, co-ordinate the Councils response to the Health & Safety Executive.
- l) Ensuring that adequate firefighting equipment is available, that training for its use is provided, that employees and others are informed of the procedure to be followed if the alarm is sounded, and regular fire/emergency drills are carried out to test the effectiveness of this system.
- m) Arrange for the nomination, appointment and training of fire wardens.
- n) Arrange for the maintenance of first aid materials and ensure a sufficient number of trained first aiders are nominated and appointed.
- o) Producing where appropriate or requested, documents that identify the current corporate standards required to meet the aims of this procedure.
- p) Maintain a centralised Health and Safety document matrix.
- q) Liaising with the appropriate Head of Service to coordinate and maintain records of maintenance, testing, inspection and assessment as appropriate to provide evidence for the Councils compliance with current health, safety and welfare legislation.
- r) Providing information and advice on health, safety and welfare issues to the Health and Safety Committee.
- s) Liaising with the Health & Safety Executive, the Councils Occupational Health Adviser, Union Safety Representatives and other associated professional and advisory bodies covering health, safety and welfare issues.

## **7.6 Council employees**

7.6.1 In addition to the responsibilities of the Council and its managers, every individual employee must take responsibility for their own health, safety and welfare. This will also include others who may be affected by what they do or fail to do. All employees have a vital role to play in maintaining health, safety and welfare in the workplace by:

- Taking reasonable for the health and safety of themselves, colleagues and others who may be affected by their activities or omissions at work, by co-operating with the Council in meeting its legal responsibilities by always following safe working practices, instruction and training as directed.

- Not intentionally, recklessly interfering with or misusing anything provided in the interests of maintaining health, safety and welfare at work.
- Report all accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences and acts of violence to their line manager and complete the relevant form on the Council's intranet.
- Report any unsafe act or condition including "near misses" to their line manager and complete the relevant form on the Council's intranet, so that remedial action may be taken to prevent injury or loss.
- Inform visitors in their care of any precautions that they need to take, where emergency exits are and what action is to be taken if the alarm sounds.
- Always follow the health, safety and welfare rules of other organisations when visiting their premises.

## **8. Health & Safety Committee**

- 8.1 The Staff Consultation Forum acts (SCF) as the Council's health and safety committee. A dedicated portion of each meeting is given to health, safety and welfare matters, and this forms part of its Terms of Reference, which states:

"At every meeting of the Staff Consultation Forum the first part of the agenda will be dedicated to the Health & Safety Committee.

The Corporate Health & Safety Officer (or nominated representative) will:

- Report accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences and review any action required or taken to prevent re-occurrence
- Raise any health & safety concerns from colleagues via the committee with any actions required or agreed to be included in the minutes
- Share best practice and update colleagues on current health & safety activity, including risk assessments and any other HSE updates or relevant information that may affect working practices at the council.

The Corporate Health and Safety Officer will attend the SCF to give a health, safety or welfare update and discuss any issues."

- 8.2 The SCF is made up of delegates representing both employees and management of the Council. Matters regarding health, safety and welfare can therefore be raised by any employee through representatives of the forum at SCF meetings.

## **Key Controls and Reporting**

### **9. Monitoring**

- 9.1 This policy will be monitored by the Corporate Health and Safety Officer to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties and responsibilities. This policy will be reviewed bi-annually and/or when necessary to take account for any new or changed circumstances that might affect its effectiveness.
- 9.2 Monitoring of health and safety activity will be undertaken through regular reporting to the employee health and safety committee (H&S) with KPIs and statistics included in performance reports. An annual health and safety report will be considered by the Council's Corporate Governance Board, Corporate Leadership Team, and by the Audit and Governance Committee.

### **10. Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 The Council strives to meet its statutory duties in accordance with the Disability Act 2010 and Equality Act 2010. This is carried out by making reasonable adjustments where appropriate which could be the provision of specialist equipment, adjustment of working hours, personalised emergency evacuation plans. All employees undertake mandatory e-learning which includes a training course on equality and diversity.
- 10.2 An equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, showing no negative impacts. There are two positive impacts highlighted in the assessment for expectant and new mothers, as well as people with disabilities.