

Corporate Health & Safety Policy



Corporate Health & Safety Policy (CSG-HS-04)			
Issue Date	Draft TBC	Review Schedule	3 yearly (or sooner if there has been a significant change)
Approvers	Cabinet	Cross Reference Applicable Documentation	Corporate Health & Safety Strategy
Group	Corporate Services & Governance	Service	Human Resources/ Workforce Development/ Health & Safety
Target Audience	All staff employed by Gateshead Council	Compliance	Health & Safety at Work Etc Act 1974

This document forms part of the Corporate Health and Safety procedural arrangements

Change Record			
Date	Controller	Version	Changes
13-08-24	S. Foggin	Draft	Inc. new headings added. Policy Statement content changed to give added detail which references culture change, Responsibilities – new sections added to include the responsibilities of the Building Safety Team; Principal Accountable Person (Building Safety Act); Corporate H&S Committee; Overview and Scrutiny Committee. H&S Arrangements – links to H&S Vision and Strategy and additional documented H&S arrangements

Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Guidance in Gateshead Council

Gateshead Council's Occupational Health and Safety policies/procedures consider current legislation, rules, regulations and best practice guidance from a range of professional and public bodies.

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Our aims

The council is required by law to have in place a health and safety policy.

This policy is the council's principal health and safety document. It sets out our general approach to health and safety management.

It is divided into the following three areas:

1. Statement of Intent

The policy statement (or 'Statement of Intent' as it is commonly known) sets out the council's commitment to managing health and safety effectively and aims for what it wants to achieve. The statement is signed by the Chief Executive and the Council Leader.

2. Responsibilities for health and safety

This section details the positions and roles of those within the council who have specific responsibilities for health and safety.

3. Arrangements for health and safety

This section explains the practical arrangements in place for achieving the aims set out within the policy.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff working for or on behalf of Gateshead Council. Temporary and agency staff, volunteers, contractors, and work experience personnel are also expected to follow the requirements contained within this policy

All other health and safety documents at a corporate, group or service level will meet or exceed the principles set out here.

Everyone who works for the Council must be aware of this policy and consider how they can contribute to achieving its aims.

Managers must ensure that the policy is effectively communicated to all staff including those who may have trouble accessing it, reading it themselves and/or understanding it.

Equality Statement

Gateshead Council are committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion as we believe it is fundamental to ensuring that our people, the community we serve and our future workforce know that we respect and embrace a culture which is supportive, where everyone is treated equally and fairly and where our people are empowered to be the best version of themselves and truly respected.

We continue to build an inclusive environment where opportunities are open to all, diversity is valued, and where everybody can reach their full potential without fear of harassment, prejudice, or discrimination. Every person in our organisation has a responsibility for making it a safe and inclusive environment where our people feel welcome and are able and supported to be who they want to be.

We want to help all our employees to not just thrive, but to flourish, prosper and succeed by putting people at the heart of everything we do. We'll recognise great behaviours and challenge poor ones to ensure that we continually build a culture which we're proud of and others want to be like.

Health & Safety Policy Statement of Intent

Gateshead Council recognises that good health and safety management supports the delivery of quality services to the people of Gateshead.

The Council is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees and will ensure that their work does not adversely affect the health and safety of other people, such as service users, visitors and contractors.

In order to deliver this, the Council aims to achieve the following:

Legal compliance - Comply with requirements of the relevant health and safety legislation.

Continuous improvement – Monitor and review the effectiveness of the safety management system and arrangements. Health and safety performance will be measured and reported on, in a way that targets areas for improvement.

Promotion of a positive health and safety culture – Set a clear vision and strategy for building a positive health and safety culture and for managers and leaders to champion and direct health and safety. Health and safety is integral part of the management of the Council's activities, and a critical part of developing the professional culture within the council.

Communication and consultation – Involve and consult effectively with key stakeholders including employee representatives, tenants, and trade unions on matters affecting health and safety.

Provision of resources – Sufficient financial and physical resources will be provided to ensure that proper provision can be made for health and safety. The allocation of resources is necessary through all areas of the management system.

Risk management – Workplace hazards will be identified, risks assessed, and measures will be taken to manage those risks to reduce the potential for incidents, accidents and ill health.

Learning and Competence – Ensure our workforce and contractors are suitably competent to carry out their roles. We will provide learning that impacts positively on people's motivation, knowledge, behaviour, and perceptions.



Councillor Martin
Gannon
Leader of the Council

Dale Owens
Chief Executive

Responsibilities

Councillors

Overall responsibility for considering proposed changes to the Council's health and safety policy and strategy within which Cabinet, individual committees and their officers will operate.

Chief Executive

Responsibility for ensuring that the Council's health and safety policy and strategy are implemented effectively by strategic directors.

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Responsible for reviewing the Council's annual health and safety performance report. This will summarise the results of the health and safety monitoring activities carried out across the Council, review the injuries/incidents reported and recommend any actions for improving performance

Corporate Management Team

- Provide strategic direction by endorsing and enabling implementation of corporate health and safety strategies;
- Ensure that robust health and safety management systems, arrangements and organisations exist in each group; and
- Support the Chief Executive in meeting his safety responsibilities for the Council as a whole.

Strategic Directors/Directors together with their Group Management Teams

Responsible for establishing their own arrangements for:

- Producing a health and safety policy for their group that supports the corporate health and safety objectives, bringing this to the attention of employees and revising as necessary to ensure that it remains valid;
- Identifying the hazards and relevant legislation applying to their activities and assessing the associated risks;
- Planning and implementing arrangements to eliminate or control significant risks and to comply with the relevant legislation;
- Ensuring their managers are competent in health and safety management techniques;
- Ensuring that staff are involved and consulted on relevant health and safety matters in good time and ensure that their views are considered;
- Obtaining assistance from the Health and Safety Team where necessary;

- Ensuring adequate resources are provided for health and safety;
- Undertaking workplace 'safety tours' to ensure health and safety risks are managed;
- Ensuring that the H&S policy is effectively communicated to their staff including those who may have trouble accessing it, reading it themselves and/or understanding it
- Monitoring and consulting on the above arrangements to ensure that they are working effectively;

Service Directors, head teachers, managers and supervisors

Have specific responsibilities which will be set out in their group/school health and safety policy, and are required to:

- comply with the requirements of their group/ school health and safety documentation;
- ensure all work related hazards are identified and suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken and recorded;
- develop local procedures and safe working practices in line with corporate and service specific documentation and risk assessments;
- ensure that they and their staff have adequate levels of competency to complete their work tasks safely;
- ensure that health and safety systems are maintained;
- report and investigate incidents as required; and
- develop and implement an effective health and safety management action plan, monitored and revised on a regular basis.
- ensuring adequate resources are provided for health and safety

All employees (and volunteers)

- taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others affected by their acts or omissions;
- co-operating with the management of their service / school so far as is necessary to enable the risks to be controlled and achieve compliance with relevant legislation;
- using all work equipment and substances in accordance with the instruction and training received;
- not intentionally misusing anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare; and reporting to their supervisor or manager any health and safety problem which they cannot deal with themselves or any shortcoming they consider to be in the health, safety and welfare arrangements.

Health and Safety Team

In order to assist the Council, the health and safety officers will provide competent advice and make recommendations to Corporate Management Team on the development of the health and safety strategy, policies, procedures and implementation plans. They will also:

- provide competent advice and support to managers on health and safety matters;
- keep up to date on developments in health and safety legislation and practice;

- monitor on behalf of the Council the implementation of health and safety policies and procedures;
- stop any unsafe activity;
- provide health and safety training and instruction;
- receive accident and incident reports, investigate as appropriate, compile and analyse accident and incident data; and
- liaise with recognised trade unions and their appointed workplace representatives on issues relating to the health and safety of their members.

Corporate Health & Safety Committee

Provide a strategic forum for continuous improvement in standards of health, safety, welfare and wellbeing in the Council, in line with the constitution/ terms of reference.

Building Safety Team

Accountable for building safety, ensuring relevant and statutory compliance for the Council's homes and wider building portfolio across:-

- Fire
- Asbestos
- Fixed electrical
- Gas
- Water
- Lifts

Property & Assets Team

- Provide corporate assurance for the Council's overarching compliance process and commissioning of activities.
- Assist with the development of systems and processes and support the management and verification of data.
- Support the development and testing of new and existing compliance systems and the validation of key data within them.

Principle Accountable Person (PAP)

The council has responsibility for several 'higher-risk buildings' defined under the Building Safety Act 2022.

A high-rise residential building has at least:

- 7 storeys or is at least 18 metres high
- 2 residential units

Each building which meets the above criteria must have one clearly identifiable Accountable Person (AP), known as the Principal Accountable Person (PAP).

The Service Director for Repairs and Buildings Maintenance is the council's designated single point of contact for the Building Safety Regulator and has responsibility for making sure that the structural and fire safety risks are managed properly for each applicable building (as per the requirements of the Building Safety Act).

Health & Safety Arrangements

Health & Safety Strategy

The Council's [Health and Safety Strategy](#) sets out our vision for improving the health and safety culture and how we intend to deliver this

Procedural documents

The council has a set of procedural documents that serve to support the health and safety policy.

These are located within the [Corporate Health & Safety Procedures](#) section of the council Intranet. Schools can access to this information through the Services for Schools website.

Significant changes to the documents contained within the arrangements section are firstly consulted with the workforce and trade unions then submitted to the Corporate Health & Safety Committee for approval.

Documents are reviewed every three years or sooner if there is a major change. Once revised and approved, they are uploaded to the Intranet and the changes are communicated to the relevant services via the health and safety team.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually unless there is a requirement to review it earlier, for example, in line with changes in legislation to ensure that the most relevant and up to date policy can be relied upon by Council employees and is an effective tool for managers.

Any significant changes to the statement of policy and responsibilities section are submitted to Cabinet for comment and approval. Changes are deemed to be significant if there are any fundamental changes to the content of the policy documentation.

The content of the policy must be formally explained to employees upon their induction.

Associated policies

- Wellbeing Policy
- Stress Policy
- Violence at Work Policy