

Agenda Item	9
Report No	RES/07/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Corporate Resources

Date: 19 March 2026

Report Title: Corporate Occupational Health, Safety, Welfare and Wellbeing Policy

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate)

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This policy updates the 2020 Corporate Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy. It ensures compliance with duties placed upon the Council under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 1.2 While minor amendments to job titles etc can be made without revisiting the Policy, recent changes to both the senior management structure and the structure of the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team are significant enough to merit the Policy being reconsidered by Committee.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
 - i. **Approve** the Corporate Occupational Health, Safety, Welfare and Wellbeing Policy.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – There are no immediate resource implications arising from this policy.
- 3.2 **Legal** – This policy has been developed with reference to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The Council has a duty to produce a policy, and to effectively implement and comply with it.
- 3.3 **Risk** - A clear and consistent policy mitigates the risk of non-compliance and ensures all employees are aware of their responsibilities.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – A clear and consistent policy mitigates the risk of non-compliance with health and safety guidelines and ensures all employees are aware of their responsibilities.

3.5 **Gaelic** - No implications.

4 Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 As this is an update to structures and responsibilities only, no impact assessment is required.

5 Introduction

5.1 Highland Council has implemented a restructure of senior leadership, replacing the Depute Chief Executive, Executive Chief Officers (ECOs) and Heads of Service with Assistant Chief Executives (ACEs), and Chief Officers COs).

5.2 The policy has been updated to clarify the responsibilities of senior leaders and managers under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

6 Updates to responsibilities

6.1 Responsibilities previously assigned to the ECOs are now assigned to ACEs and COs. Responsibilities previously assigned to Heads of Service are now assigned to Strategic and Service Leads.

6.2 Responsibilities of Team Managers, Area Managers and Head Teachers remain the same, with the addition of 'ensure all staff under their control receive and maintain training commensurate with their jobs and responsibilities'.

6.3 Following the amalgamation of Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing (OHSW) and Emergency Planning teams and the creation of a joint Service Lead for these services, some of the responsibilities of the OHSW Manager are shared with the Safety, Health and Emergency Planning (SHEP) Service Lead. The Service Lead SHEP will be the main point of contact between the Council and the Health and Safety Executive.

7 Additional updates

7.1 The guidance section, which previously included summaries of some associated policies and guidance, has been updated to include links to the full documents in each case, for clarity and consistency. A section on emergency planning has also been added.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

Date: 23 February 26

Author: Ruth Fry, CO HR and Communications
David Cowie, Service Lead SHEP

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Draft Corporate Occupational Health, Safety,
Welfare and Wellbeing Policy

Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Slàinte, Sàbhailteachd is Sunnd Dreuchdail

Corporate Occupational Health, Safety, Welfare and Wellbeing Policy

**Poileasaidh Slàinte, Sàbhailteachd, Sochair is
Sunnd Dreuchdail Corporra**

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Document Control

A: Version History

Version	Date	Author	Change
1.0	February 2026	David Cowie	Updated to new layout and to reflect new senior management structure. Update to reflect new SHEP service/ competent persons roles

B: Document Approval and Roles

Name	Title	Role
David Cowie	Service Lead - SHEP	Author
Ruth Fry	Chief Officer HR and Communications	Owner
David Cowie	Service Lead- SHEP	Initial review prior to consultation
CMT	CMT	Consultation/ Reviewer
Central Safety committee	Central Safety Committee	Consultation/ Reviewer
Resources Committee	Resources Committee	Final Approver

Final approval date -

Introduction

This Corporate Health, Safety, Welfare and Wellbeing Policy sets out clear commitments and assigns specific responsibilities to Officers and managers at all levels and employees of The Highland Council.

It follows a recognised principle for managing health and safety at work set by HSE (PLAN, DO, CHECK, ACT).

The policy is an overarching policy and should be considered alongside other policies and when making judgements that may affect people's health, safety, welfare or wellbeing at work.

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure legal compliance with the duties placed upon The Highland Council under section 2 (3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and to ensure we have a clear policy and commitment from the top of the Council clearly stating our intent and commitment to ensure the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of our employees and others affected by our work activities.

The legal requirement is not only to produce this policy but to effectively implement and comply with it. Failure to achieve the above can be considered as a breach of law.

Policy

Section 1: Occupational Health, Safety, Welfare and Wellbeing Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Highland Council to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and others who may be affected by its undertakings. In addition, the Council is committed to ensuring that all reasonable measures are in place to maintain and enhance staff wellbeing so that staff can lead productive and healthy working lives.

The Council fully accepts the aims and provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and delegated legislation relating to health safety and welfare at work and aims to comply with all statutory obligations imposed within them. A high standard of health and safety performance is one of the Council's primary objectives and is an integral part of service delivery.

Compliance with health and safety legislation will be considered the minimum standard to be met: the aim is to seek a culture of continuous improvement in health, safety, welfare and wellbeing.

This standard will be achieved by:

- a. Creating and maintaining a positive health and safety culture which secures the commitment and participation of all employees at all levels.
- b. Meeting its responsibilities to employees, to other people and the environment in a way which recognizes that legal requirements are the minimum standard.
- c. Adopting a planned and systematic approach to implementation of this policy, to ensure:
 - i. the provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health;
 - ii. arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
 - iii. the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of employees;
 - iv. so far as is reasonably practicable, as regards any place of work under the Council's control, the maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without risks to health, and the provision and maintenance of means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks; and

- v. the provision and maintenance of a working environment for employees that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare and wellbeing at work.
- d. Identifying and assessing the risks associated with all activities of the Council, with the aim of eliminating or controlling these risks, so far as is reasonably practicable. In this respect, particular attention will be paid to the protection of higher risk groups which include disabled workers (physical, mental and sensory), young persons and to new or expectant mothers.
- e. Allocating adequate resources to meet the requirements of this Policy.
- f. Establishing a health and safety management system, in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive's 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' (PDCA) model. This PDCA model reflects the structure of the BS OHSAS 18001 standard and management systems associated with it including planning for health and safety, the setting of realistic short- and long-term objectives, deciding priorities and establishing adequate performance standards.
- g. Monitoring and reviewing performance on a regular basis to ensure that high standards are maintained.
- h. Fostering positive working relationships with employee representatives, encouraging full engagement and consultation on health and safety matters at all levels and requiring health and safety to be a standing item on all relevant management and staff meeting agendas.
- i. Maintaining arrangements for coordination and co-operation with other employees where Council employees or clients share premises, facilities or activities with persons working in other organisations.
- j. Ensuring the demands of work activities do not exceed the capability of employees to carry out the work without risk to themselves.

As a major employer and procurer of goods and services, the Council will seek to influence the health and safety performance of its contractors through the appointment of competent contractors and the subsequent service delivery process. Health and safety issues will be considered during the procurement of all services, vehicles, plant, equipment and supplies. Whilst considering health and safety issues specific legislation /guidance should be used when considering the selection of work equipment fulfilling legal requirements to reduce exposure to noise, vibration, dust, etc. and promote positive safety including ergonomic designs etc.

The Council is committed to the provision of access to competent occupational health services, providing health surveillance, and to the promotion of physical and mental good health and wellbeing.

The Council is committed to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offering support to employees and their immediate family members.

The Council is a trauma informed organisation and will consider trauma impact and reduction when reviewing or producing policies and guidance, delivering training and all other procedures that will have a trauma impact.

Where any Service enters an arrangement on Partnership Working, agreement must be reached, prior to commencement, with all partners to determine how health and safety will be managed and the standards met. As a minimum standard, the Council's policies and arrangements for securing health and safety will be maintained.

A copy of this policy statement which has been signed by the Chief Executive and will be made available to all employees at its adoption and to all new staff at their induction. Where staff do not have access to council devices this policy should be displayed on noticeboards or other prominent places where employees can see and read it. An up-to-date copy of this policy will be available on the Council's Intranet and internet. Managers are required to keep records verifying they have effectively implemented the policy in their service areas and within their teams.

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager and amended when necessary.

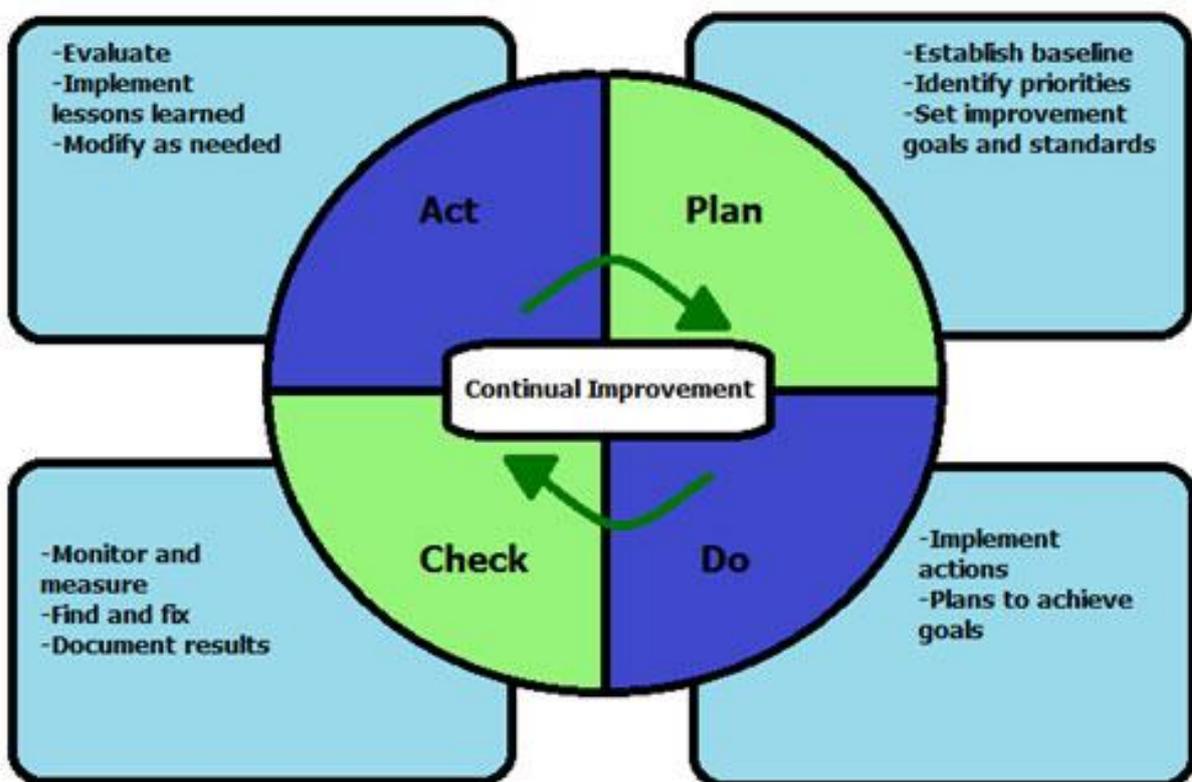
Derek Brown
Chief Executive

Date

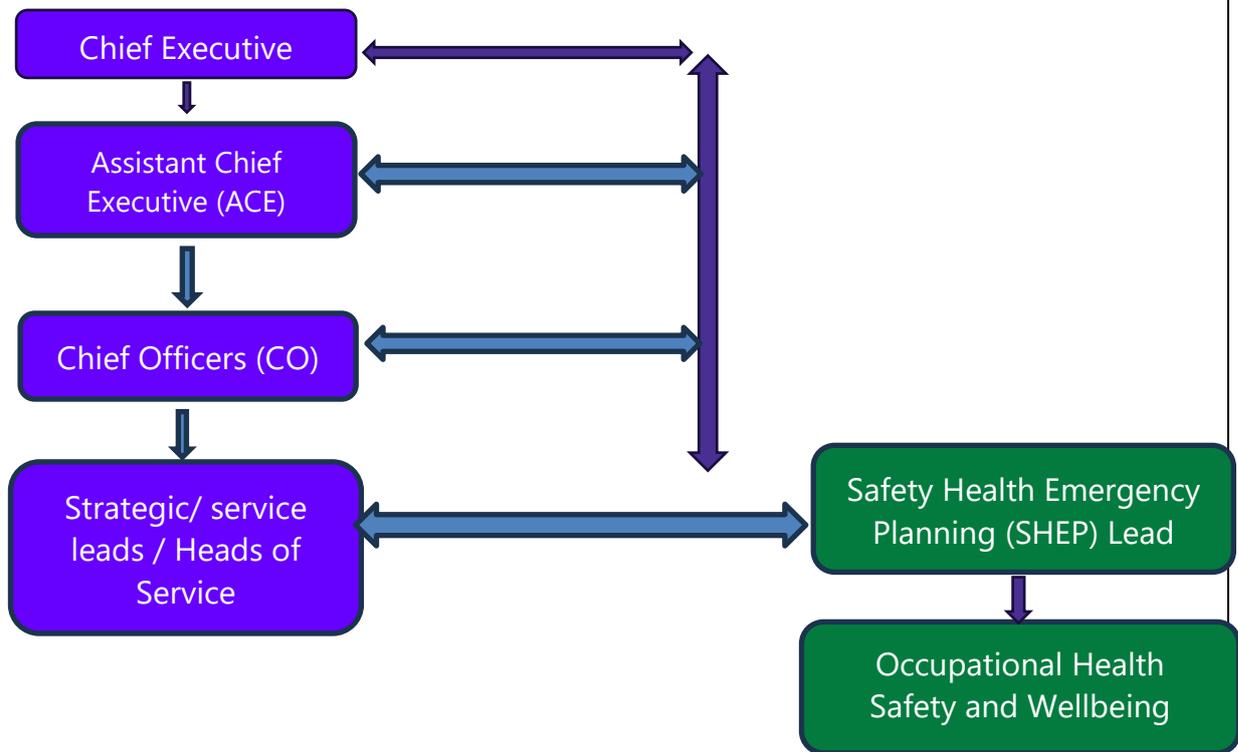
Section 2: Occupational Health, Safety, Welfare and Wellbeing Responsibilities

The key elements of the OHSW management system are:

Plan	Corporate/Service policies and plans in place
Do	Service risk profiles. Service arrangements for health and safety. Health and Safety policies and plans implemented.
Check	Measuring performance (proactive and reactive)
Act	Review performance, act on lessons learnt



Occupational health, safety, welfare and wellbeing responsibilities are set out in this policy and the alignment between responsibilities and Plan-Do-Check-Act are illustrated in the diagram below:



The Chief Executive is responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for ensuring the health and safety welfare and wellbeing at work of all Council employees. He is accountable to The Highland Council for ensuring compliance with The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and all other subordinate legislation. This is achieved by:

- a. Detailing the organisation in the Council through which this policy will be implemented;
- b. Ensuring that adequate resources are made available to enable this policy is effectively implemented;
- c. Ensuring that health and safety is an integral part of the overall management culture and developing a positive attitude to health, safety, welfare and wellbeing among employees by visibly demonstrating commitment to achieving a high standard of performance in terms of health, safety, welfare and wellbeing;
- d. Ensuring that health and safety is a regular agenda item at senior management meetings;
- e. Appointing and supporting a competent person(s) to assist the Council to apply the provisions of health and safety legislation;
- f. Ensuring that health, safety, welfare and wellbeing objectives are defined annually and that success in meeting these objectives is formally measured

- and reported;
- g. Ensuring that Elected Members are kept informed of health, safety, welfare and wellbeing issues as appropriate.

Whilst the Chief Executive retains responsibility for the matters set out above, practical responsibility is delegated to Assistance Chief Executive Officers (ACE), Chief Officers, Heads of Service, Strategic/ Service Leads and line managers in respect of the areas under their control.

Below is the current structure (January 2026)



Senior Leadership Team



Assistant Chief Executive Officers (ACE) are responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for:

- a. The implementation and monitoring of this policy within their own cluster, and ensuring good communication with employees at all levels;
- b. Compiling a risk profile for their cluster;
- c. Ensuring that sufficient resources are available to ensure compliance with all health, safety, welfare and wellbeing requirements;
- d. Developing and maintaining a health, safety, welfare and wellbeing policy which is specific to the tasks and responsibilities of their cluster. This must detail the service health and safety management system which will include arrangements for assessing, planning, organising, monitoring, and reviewing the measures required to eliminate, reduce or control local risks;
- e. Setting up and chairing a health and safety committee in their cluster;

- f. Establishing arrangements for health and safety consultation within their service;
- g. Bringing to the attention of Chief Officers, HOS/ Strategic/ Service leads and line management that health and safety responsibility is shared and that they will be accountable for the health and safety of employees, or others who may be affected by the work of the Service;
- h. Ensuring annual health and safety report to the Central Safety Committee and any other appropriate Council Committee are submitted;
- i. Ensuring their actions or inactions do not undermine or compromise health, safety, welfare or wellbeing compliance or cultural development;
- j. Ensuring health, safety, welfare and wellbeing requirements are considered as a key factor in the purchasing of goods and services and there are effective procedures in place to ensure where services and goods are purchased they do not compromise health safety welfare or wellbeing; and
- k. Ensuring arrangements for emergency planning and business continuity are in place and tested.
- l. Ensuring they keep the Chief Executive Officer and elected members informed of health, safety, welfare and wellbeing threats, successes or challenges where their input or knowledge is required.

The Chief Officers (CO) are responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for:

- a. Ensuring that all structures, equipment, and systems of work are properly maintained to safeguard the health and safety of all individuals who may be affected. This includes maintaining up-to-date asset registers and implementing robust arrangements to guarantee that all statutory and recommended inspections are carried out promptly by competent and qualified personnel where this is within their area of control.
- b. Ensuring arrangements are in place to manage emergency situations, that sufficient resources are available, and that staff participate in training and exercising in relation to this. Business Continuity Plans must be completed and tested to ensure the delivery of key services in the event of a major incident. CO must ensure that adequate resources—including personnel, time, and financial support—are allocated and sustained to achieve legal compliance and effectively minimise risk within their areas of responsibility.
- c. Ensuring that, where there are shared services with other council service providers or third parties, clear management of processes are in place and that Highland Council and third parties' policies and risk assessments are compatible to enable the most compliant outcomes.

- d. Ensuring there are competent people to oversee and manage specific risks including (but not limited to) out of normal workplace trips, use of equipment and machinery, vehicle safety, chemical safety, fire safety, asbestos, gas etc. Where risks are not being effectively managed, CO must take all reasonably practicable measures to bring them under control and reduce them to an acceptable level.
- e. Ensuring an effective Safety meeting is scheduled and attended by senior officers, SHEP service member(s), Trade Unions and property representatives as well as other relevant parties.
- f. Ensuring effective training and processes are in place to minimise the risk of violence and/ or aggression and to support staff where they raise concerns in relation to violence and/ or aggression. This also includes a suitable system and process for recording violent and/ or aggressive incidents and to record warning markers to be shared with all relevant staff within their service and other relevant services.
- g. Ensuring compliance with this policy, as well as all other relevant health and safety policies and guidance applicable to their service area, and that all individuals under their control do the same. Where compliance is not being achieved, appropriate action must be taken.
- h. Working collaboratively with the SHEP service and other key services to enable the implementation and maintenance of an effective health and safety culture.
- i. Ensuring they keep the Assistance Chief Executive Officer(s) and elected members informed of health, safety, welfare and wellbeing threats, successes or challenges where their input or knowledge is required.

In addition to the above, **The Chief Officer - Property and Assets** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a member of the Property Team attends each Service and Area Health and Safety meeting to feedback on property-related issues.
- Ensuring suitable arrangements are in place for the appointment and effective performance of Responsible Premises Officers (RPO's) and is required to take action when this is not working effectively.
- Ensure subject risk specific meeting are convened and chaired by senior property officers in relation to highest risk work activities including (but not limited to) gas safety, asbestos management, confined spaces, structure/ physical safety.

The Chief Officer(s) - Education are responsible for:

- Ensuring all indoor and outdoor play structures and playing surfaces meet with legislative standards and British and European Standards; BS EN 1176 and 1177.
- Ensure they have a robust system in place to ensure any play structures and/ or equipment is properly procured and is installed by a competent person to relevant standards giving due consideration to the positioning of the equipment and suitability in relation to the age, size and development of the pupils using it.
- Ensure all non-bespoke play equipment is assessed taking into consideration risks associated with the equipment and impact on risk due to deterioration of the equipment and as required remove equipment when it is deemed not to be safe or offers unacceptable levels of risk

Heads of Service/ Strategic Leads/ Service Leads are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that sufficient numbers of competent risk assessors are available in the Service.
- b. Ensuring that appropriate, valid risk assessments are available, and regularly reviewed, for activities conducted by the service.
- c. Ensuring proper control, including monitoring, of contractor activities.
- d. Nominating a responsible person in each premises for dealing with health and safety property matters. Where premises are shared, the relevant Heads of Service/ Strategic Leads/ Service Leads should ensure that one RPO is appointed and that pertinent information is shared. RPO training is available from Traineasy.
- e. Ensuring effective management and implementation of all policies and guidance.
- f. Ensure they have sufficient arrangements for welfare and wellbeing and ensuring they support and develop a culture to ensure peoples wellbeing is protected and enhanced.
- g. Ensure they implement this policy and enforce the provisions of this policy in the areas of their control.
- j. Working collaboratively with the SHEP service and other key services to enable the implementation and maintenance of an effective health and safety culture.
- k. Ensuring they keep the Chief Officers, Assistance Chief Executive Officer(s) and elected members informed of health, safety, welfare and wellbeing threats, successes or challenges where their input or knowledge is required.

- i. The Heads of Service/ Strategic Leads/ Service Leads will either appoint themselves or other such senior manager within their service area to be the service safety coordinator.

Team Managers, Area Managers and Head Teachers are responsible for:

- a. Implementing this policy in their area of responsibility.
- b. Ensuring compliance with all legal requirements and relevant Council health, safety, welfare and wellbeing documents.
- c. Ensuring that new employees receive a health and safety induction which must include an awareness of all precautions and procedures applicable to the job activity, and any emergency procedures.
- d. Ensuring that any health and safety responsibilities delegated to staff are known to them.
- e. Ensure that staff are advised of the pertinent findings of risk assessments and any changes to work practices.
- f. Ensuring that all staff are, and remain, competent to carry out any activities as part of their duties and responsibilities.
- g. Motivating and empowering employees to work in a safe and healthy manner to encourage a positive attitude to health, safety, welfare and wellbeing in the workplace.
- h. Ensuring that staff who do not have access to the Council's Intranet are made aware of changes to the safety management system as it affects them.
- i. Ensure all staff under their control receive and maintain training commensurate with their jobs and responsibilities

Service Health and Safety Coordinator

Each Service will appoint a senior member of their team to act as Health and Safety Coordinator for the Service. The appointment of the Service Health and Safety Coordinator will be made by the Head of Service/ Strategic/ Service Lead. They will either appoint themselves and fulfill the role or appoint a senior member of their team to perform the role. The Coordinator will coordinate health, safety, welfare and wellbeing issues within the Service; chair the Service Health and Safety group; and champion health, safety, welfare and wellbeing issues within the Service.

The Coordinator will also work with other Health and Safety Coordinators from other services, the Service Lead- SHEP and the Occupational Health Safety and

Wellbeing Manager where there are issues affecting wider than their own service area.

Safety Health Emergency Planning (SHEP) Lead will:

- act as the Council's competent person as required under the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations;
- develop and implement the health and safety and wellbeing strategies and assist in developing delivery plans; and
- support ACEs, Chief Officers, Heads of Services and Leads as well as managers to ensure effective collaboration and compliance with this policy and legislative requirements.
- Will ensure there is adequate resources to deliver an effective support service in relation to occupational health, safety, welfare and wellbeing as well as emergency planning.

Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager is responsible for:

- a. Directing and assisting the Chief Executive, members of the Senior Management Team and other managers on health, safety and wellbeing matters;
- b. Acting as the Council's competent person in health and safety deputising for the SHEP lead in their absence;
- c. Providing up to date information and advice on changes in legislation;
- d. Ensuring that health and safety performance is monitored;
- e. Ensuring, through a process of monitoring, inspection and auditing, that health and safety policies and guidance are being consistently applied across the Council;
- f. Managing the occupational health service;
- g. Monitoring compliance with this policy;
- h. Managing the accident reporting system and analysing data from accidents to identify trends and patterns and required interventions; and
- i. Managing violence and aggression reporting systems.

Employees are responsible for their own acts or omissions and the effect that these may have upon the safety of themselves or anyone else. Whilst the Council accepts the main responsibility for the implementation of this policy, individuals are legally obliged to cooperate to ensure a healthy and safe working environment.

In addition, all employees must:

- a. Avoid taking unnecessary risks.
- b. Set a good example to others, especially young or inexperienced workers.
- c. Work in accordance with any health and safety instruction or training that has been given.
- d. Wear required and most appropriate PPE correctly and maintain it in good condition.
- e. Promptly report accidents, incidents, near misses and violence and aggression on the approved reporting forms.
- f. Bring to the attention of a responsible person any health and safety issues they may have.
- g. Familiarise themselves with this Policy and all local arrangements.
- h. Work with management to achieve high standards of health and safety compliance.

Safety Representatives

Through its health and safety charter and partnership agreement with the recognised Trade Unions, the Council encourages the development of an effective network of trained safety representatives. The appointment of safety representatives is the prerogative of accredited trade unions in accordance with the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977(as amended) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 for non-trade union safety representatives.

The Council will ensure that recognised safety representatives are consulted and provided with reasonable facilities and time off to fulfil their duties.

In keeping with this policy, the Chief Executive regards the promotion of Health and Safety measures as an objective shared by management and employees at all levels and seeks to achieve this by consultation with all staff. This will be carried out corporately through the normal consultation channels (the Partnership Forum, the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers and the Central Safety Committee) and by local health and safety groups.

Trade Union safety representatives will be encouraged to undertake the full range of their functions in accordance with the terms of the established Safety Representatives Charter.

Safety representatives appointed by recognised Trade Unions are entitled to inspect work places every three months and, if necessary, more frequently. Inspections should be accompanied by an appropriate management representative.

Safety representatives should attend relevant Service and Area health and safety groups.

Elected Members

All Elected Members should be aware of and accept their individual and collective responsibilities in the care of health and safety of themselves and others.

Elected Members will take strategic responsibility for setting the health and safety direction and policy for the Council and will ensure effective strategic health and safety governance.

Corporate Resources Committee

The Corporate Resources Committee is responsible for developing health and safety policy, overseeing its implementation, and ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to enable the Council to meet its statutory health and safety obligations.

Central Safety Committee

The Central Safety Committee has been established as a subcommittee of the Corporate Resources Committee. It will ensure that formal consultation on health, safety, welfare and wellbeing issues takes place and provides a vehicle for joint participation in health and safety matters to enable Elected Members, management and employees to exchange views and to reach a better understanding on all matters and procedures related to health and safety. The Central Safety Committee will appoint a Chair and Vice Chair from the Elected Members and Trade Union representatives who are members of the Committee.

General Arrangements

This document is the overarching policy for health and safety management within the Council. It will be supplemented by other guidance and procedures on specific issues such as risk assessment, accident reporting, manual handling etc. which will be available on the Council's Health and Safety hub and Mental Health and Wellbeing hub (see Section 3).

The following requirements must be incorporated into Service health and safety arrangements as necessary. They should be expanded or altered to meet the specific requirements of the Service concerned and developed with the support of the health and safety team.

Safety Culture

A positive safety culture helps to ensure not only a low accident/incident rate but improves employee engagement and co-operation. The following elements will contribute to the Council's safety culture:

- **Communication.** The Council recognises that employees have an important contribution to make to the overall organisational health and safety culture. The Council will ensure that health and safety is an integral part of its management system and seeks to develop a positive attitude to health and safety among employees by:
 - a. Visibly demonstrating a clear commitment to improving health and safety performance;
 - b. Promoting co-operation and consultation across Services;
 - c. Ensuring the communication of necessary information throughout the Council; and
 - d. Securing the competence of employees by including health and safety within the recruitment process and systematically identifying health and safety training needs.
- **Competencies.** Health and safety competencies have been developed to assist in the implementation of health and safety (and security) practices across the Council.

Level 1 – relates to all staff.

Level 2 – relates to supervisors, team leaders, managers.

Level 3 – relates to Tier 3 managers (including Principal Teachers/Senior school staff).

Level 4 – relates to Chief Officers, Heads of Service, Strategic Leads, Service Leads, Head Teachers, Area Managers.
- **Health and Safety Advice.** The health and safety team will actively monitor the implementation of this policy and provide advice on action necessary to ensure the health and safety of Council employees and anyone who may be affected by the Council's undertakings.
- **Health and Safety Training.** Health and safety training is an important factor in the reduction of accidents and prevention of ill health. Services should actively support training by providing the necessary resources and organisation to carry out such training. All new employees should receive a Service-specific Health and Safety induction, in addition to the Corporate Induction. This should be recorded and retained in the employee's personal file. Where Health and Safety

training needs are identified by Services, suitable training can be arranged through the Learning and Development team.

- **Leadership.** A positive safety culture must be led by management. Managers can work towards this by:
 - a. maintaining attention on the significant risks and implementation of adequate controls;
 - b. demonstrating their own positive health and safety behaviours;
 - c. encouraging employees to raise concerns/discuss health and safety issues;
 - d. making regular visits to workplaces under their control; and
 - e. addressing behaviours that create unacceptable risks.

Raising Health and Safety Concerns

The normal reporting line for health and safety matters is via line management. However, given that staff may work at a number of sites and that their line manager may be in another area, there is a need to ensure that health and safety matters can be, and are, referred to the service Health and Safety coordinator. Should an employee need to raise a health and safety concern, the process detailed below should be followed.

STAGE 1. Raise concern with Supervisor. If not resolved:

STAGE 2. Raise concern with Manager. If not resolved:

STAGE 3. Raise the concern with Safety Representative. If not resolved:

STAGE 4. Safety Representative can raise concerns at the relevant health and safety consultative groups. If the matter is not resolved after three meetings:

STAGE 5. Matter is referred to the Central Safety Committee.

At any stage during this process, the employee may ask their Union's safety representative to act on their behalf. The employee/ safety representative can contact the health and safety team for further guidance at any stage.

Liaison with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

The Service Lead – SHEP or the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager will be the main point of contact between the Council and the HSE. Where the HSE makes direct contact with the Council the agreed [Monitoring Protocol](#) should be followed.

Where HSE makes contact with services directly, The Head of Service/ Strategi/Service Lead must contact the Service Lead- SHEP or in their absence the Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager to allow them to take the lead in dealing with HSE.

Planning and Implementation

Corporate Health and Safety Plan

The Chief Executive will ensure, through The Chief Officer -HR and Communications, that a Corporate Health and Safety Plan is in place which will achieve and support effective health and safety management systems across the Council.

Services will also prepare a Health and Safety Plan outlining service-specific health and safety objectives with realistic timescales for their accomplishment. These objectives will be developed in consultation with the health and safety team and recognised trade unions.

All Health and Safety Plan must be regularly monitored by the Services' senior management teams at Health and Safety Planning groups. Updated Health and Safety Plan must form part of the Services' annual health and safety report.

Health and Safety Planning Groups

Each Chief Officer and nominated Strategic/ Service lead are required to establish a Service Health and Safety Planning group to assist in the formulation and the implementation of their Health and Safety policy and plan. Planning for health and safety is suitable for inclusion as a standing agenda item within the remit of the Service senior management team meetings.

The planning group should identify and prioritise actions and agree key performance indicators including achievable targets for implementation of the various elements of the health and safety plan. The group should also monitor implementation of the health and safety plan.

The operational planning group is not an alternative or substitute for local liaison meetings, safety groups or health and safety committees involving employee representation.

In terms of the Plan-Do-Check-Act model, Service Senior Management Teams shall ensure, as part of their planning for health and safety, that the following actions are taken:

Plan

- Think about where you are now and where you need to be.
- Say what you want to achieve, who will be responsible for what, how you will achieve your aims, and how you will measure your success. Write down this policy and your plan to deliver it.
- Decide how you will measure performance. Think about ways to do this that go beyond looking at accident figures. Look for active indicators as well as

reactive indicators.

- Consider fire and other emergencies. Co-operate with anyone who shares your workplace and co-ordinate plans with them.
- Remember to plan for changes and identify any specific legal requirements that apply to you.

Do

- Identify your Service risk profile. Assess the risks, identify what could cause harm in the workplace, who it could harm and how, and how you will manage the risk.
- Decide what the priorities are and identify the biggest risks.
- Organise your activities to deliver your plan. In particular, aim to:
 - Involve workers and communicate, so that everyone is clear on what is needed and can discuss issues – develop positive attitudes and behaviours.
 - Provide adequate resources, including competent advice where needed.
- Implement your plan. Decide on the preventive and protective measures needed and put them in place.
- Provide the right tools and equipment to do the job and keep them maintained.
- Train and instruct, to ensure everyone is competent to carry out their work. Supervise to make sure that arrangements are followed.

Check

- Measure your performance. Make sure that your plan has been implemented. Paperwork on its own is not a good performance measure.
- Assess how well the risks are being controlled and if you are achieving your aims. In some circumstances formal audits may be useful.
- Investigate the causes of accidents, incidents or near misses

Act

- Review your performance. Learn from accidents and incidents, ill-health data, errors and relevant experience, including from other organisations.
- Revisit plans, policy documents and risk assessments to see if they need updating.
- Take action on lessons learned, including from audit and inspection reports.

Health and Safety Annual Reports

Services will prepare annual Health and Safety reports that review and evaluate their health and safety performance. Such reports will be reported to Central Safety Committee and should include information on the following issues:

- a. Profile of the Service and its main functions and activities;
- b. Management of health and safety within the Service. This should include a

- report detailing the progress of the health and safety plan objectives from the previous year;
- c. Occupational health and safety risk management, planning and progress;
 - d. Information on accident and incidents, including trends and lessons learnt;
 - e. Health and safety training;
 - f. Service health and safety objectives for the coming year.

Risk Identification

The Council recognises that Services are required to implement an effective risk control strategy to minimise employees' exposure to significant risks.

Services must identify all significant local risks and ensure that these, and their associated controls, are communicated to staff.

Services should maintain a risk register and legal register and these should be reviewed and commented on during service health and safety meetings and in annual reports.

Project Management

Project managers should ensure that a health and safety risk assessment is completed at each stage of projects with an impact on staff, equipment or processes.

Where The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) regulations apply the project manager must be satisfied required appointments are in place and there is a structure including documentation to ensure compliance with CDM Regulations 2015.

Accident and Incident Analysis

Every accident, incident and near miss will be investigated by the injured person's supervisor or line manager to a degree commensurate with its potential severity. The completed report should be submitted to the Manager in the first instance.

All forms completed must contain recommendations to prevent a recurrence.

Accidents and incidents resulting in **major injury/dangerous occurrence, lost time accidents of 7 days or more** (this includes those who are fit to return to work but cannot fulfil their normal range of duties) and **work-related ill health and disease** should be analysed by Services' management, the health, safety and wellbeing team, and health and safety groups with a view to determining and where possible, eliminating the causes of such events.

Proactive monitoring

At least six monthly workplace safety inspections, in line with the [Monitoring Protocol](#), shall be undertaken within all Services as part of their health and safety plan. This should be undertaken in conjunction with TU Health and Safety Representatives where possible. In addition, occupational health and safety advisers will undertake compliance monitoring and physical verification exercises on a regular basis.

Premises managed by 3rd Parties

Services who occupy premises not managed by the Council should satisfy themselves that the management of the property meets standards and arrangements as described in Health and Safety/ Property Management Policies and Guidance.

Legal responsibilities must be clearly laid out and agreed especially in relation to managing asbestos, fire and other such statutory requirements.

Arms' Length Organisations (ALEOs)

All contracts with ALEOs must include clear provisions for health and safety management and reporting.

Guidance

Section 3. Corporate Occupational Health, Safety, Welfare and Wellbeing Guidance

Below are a list of of the Highland Council's health and safety policies and guidance which address the main health and safety risks to the Council. These policies and guidance documents require the full cooperation of Service management and staff at every level.

Below is the list and links to occupational health, safety and wellbeing policies and guidance. For ease of reference it is listed A-Z.

Further below is extracts from key policies and guidance and all pollicises and guidance documents should not be considered as stand alone but linked to this as the overarching policy.

Health and Safety Policies and Guidance

- [Accident Reporting Policy and Guidance](#)
[Guidance - Accident Investigation](#)
[Accident Investigation Form](#)
- [Asbestos Management](#) (Procedures and arrangements)
- [Competencies \(Health and Safety\)](#)
- [Consultation](#)
- [COSHH - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health](#)
[Guidance on Control of Substances Hazardous to Health](#)
- [DSE - Display Screen Equipment](#)
- [Electricity at Work](#)
[Guidance on Electricity at Work](#)
[Appendices](#)
[Arrangements and Procedures for Fixed Electrical Systems \(draft\)](#)
- [Fire Safety](#)
[Appendix 1 - Fire Safety - Premises \(template\)](#)
[Appendix 2 - Evacuation Plans](#)
[Appendix 3 - PEEP Guidance](#)
[Appendix 4 - PEEP Employee Questionnaire \(working draft\)](#)
[Appendix 5 - PEEP Guidance for Head Teachers](#)
[Appendix 6 - PEEP for Visitors](#)
[Appendix 7 - Fire Drills](#)
[PEEP Template](#)
[Guidance notes on completion of PEEP](#)
- [First Aid](#)
- [Food Safety \(draft\)](#)
- [Gas Safety \(Development and Infrastructure\) - arrangements and procedures](#)
- [Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome \(HAVS\)](#)
- [Health and Safety Consultation](#)
- [Health and Safety Training](#)
- [Inspection frequencies for equipment \(HSE recommendations\)](#)
- [Long Term Conditions](#)
- [Long Term Conditions - contacts and further support](#)
- [Lone Working](#)
- [Management of Contractors](#)
[Guidance on Managing Contractors \(HSE\)](#)
- [Manual Handling](#)
- [Menopause \(Supporting staff going through the menopause\)](#)
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing in the workplace](#)
- [Monitoring Protocol](#)
- [New and expectant mothers](#)
- [Noise](#)

- [PPE \(Personal Protective Equipment\)](#)
- [Purchasing and hiring of plant and equipment](#)
- [Radon](#)
- [Risk Assessment](#)
[Risk Assessment form](#)
- [Smoking](#)
- [Stress](#)
- [Violence and Aggression at Work](#)
- [Working at Height](#)
- [WRAP - Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan](#)

Occupational Health

- [Occupational Health \(General Guidance & Referrals\)](#)
- [Policy and Guidance on Health Surveillance](#)
- [Guidance on Vaccination and Infection Control](#)
- [Hand hygiene](#)

Service Specific Policies

- [Education and Learning - Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Corporate Resources - Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Community and Place - Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- Development and Infrastructure:
[General Policy Statement](#)
[Policy](#)
[Appendix](#)
[Action Plan](#)

Accident/ Incident Reporting and Investigation

All accidents, incidents and near misses must be reported using the Council's accident reporting system Asure. Service Management has the responsibility to investigate all accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses with the objective of identifying the cause and the appropriate steps needed to prevent a recurrence.

Specified injuries, injuries resulting in absences of 7 or more days, accidents in connection with work resulting in a non-employee (pupil, visitor etc) taken from the scene to hospital for treatment and notifiable dangerous occurrences must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive. The health and safety team should be notified at the same time. In addition to management investigations, the health and safety team will investigate all RIDDOR reportable accidents to a level commensurate with their potential severity.

Asbestos

The Highland Council recognises the health risks associated with breathing in air contaminated with asbestos dust/ fibres. Arrangements will be made therefore to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees and others who use or work in Highland Council premises are not at risk from exposure to hazardous forms of asbestos. Exposure will be minimised by the use of proper control measures and work methods supported by training of employees, as detailed in the Guidance on Managing Asbestos document.

Asbestos surveys will be completed in all public buildings and Asbestos Management Plans (AMP) prepared. RPOs will be expected to manage and update the AMP as required.

No work shall commence on asbestos material or materials thought to contain asbestos until it is sampled and an assessment of the potential exposure of employees and others, as a result of that work, is undertaken. A suitable plan of work shall be made before the work commences.

Consultation

The arrangements for consultation with employees on health and safety matters are:

- a) Central Safety Committee. As a sub-committee of the Councils Corporate Resources Committee's Partnership Forum, the Central Safety Committee provides a forum for formal consultation with the recognised Trade Unions on health and safety issues.
- b) Area Health and Safety Groups. Health and Safety groups have been established in the Council's main administrative centres. These groups ensure that consultation with all staff (Union, and non-Union) takes place at a local level in the Areas.
- c) Service Health and Safety Groups. Each Service is required to establish a consultation group to ensure that Service-specific health and safety issues are discussed with staff involved in all aspects of Service delivery.
- d) Management and Staff Meetings. Health and safety should be included as a regular item on the agenda of all Management and Staff meetings. This will ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to raise health and safety concerns and participate in the overall consultation process.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

Chief Officers shall have arrangements in place to ensure that no work is carried out which is liable to expose any employees or others to any product, chemical or substance hazardous to health unless a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks created by that activity and of the steps needed to reduce the risks has been made.

Exposure to hazardous products, chemicals or substances will either be prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled. Measures introduced to control exposure will be maintained, examined and tested to ensure their continued effectiveness. Personal protective equipment will be provided only as a last resort as a means of controlling exposure to substances. Information, instruction and training will be given to employees exposed to substances hazardous to health.

Display Screen Equipment

The Highland Council will take all reasonable steps to secure the health and safety of employees who work with display screen equipment (DSE) including computers, laptops, and PDAs. Arrangements will be made to:

- a. Identify all users of DSE in accordance with the regulations and maintain records of those.
- b. Plan for the assessment of each workstation considering the DSE, the furniture, the working environment, and the worker.
- c. Take appropriate control measures in respect of risks identified because of the assessment process.
- d. Ensure that eye and eyesight tests are available for users of DSE.
- e. Ensure the supply of any corrective appliances (glasses or contact lenses) where required, specifically for use with DSE.
- f. Advise employees of the risks to health associated with DSE and how these are to be avoided.

Electricity at Work

The Electricity at Work Regulations requires the employer to maintain safe and efficient electrical systems, to prevent the harmful discharge of energy, assess the work activities which utilise electricity or which may be affected by it, and to define all foreseeable associated risks. To reduce the risks associated with the use of electricity at work, the Council will ensure that:

- a. electrical equipment is installed in accordance with the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) Wiring Regulations/BS7671 and associated guidance.
- b. all electrical installations to be periodically inspected and tested by suitably competent persons in accordance with BS7671 and a report prepared listing any defects and any non-compliances found.
- c. fixed installations are maintained in a safe condition by carrying out routine safety testing and ensuring staff report defects and concerns.
- d. portable and transportable equipment is inspected and tested frequently as required (the frequency will depend on the environment in which the equipment is used and the conditions of usage).
- e. suitable test equipment is issued to staff involved in electrical testing.
- f. safe systems of work for maintenance, inspection or testing are promoted and implemented.

- g. live working is forbidden unless it is absolutely necessary, and suitable arrangements have been made to prevent injury to the persons carrying out the work and anyone else who may be in the area.
- h. those who carry out electrical work are competent to do so; suitable personal protective equipment is provided if required to include special tools, protective clothing and insulating screening and such equipment is maintained in good condition.
- i. safety information is exchanged with contractors ensuring that they are fully aware of (and prepared to abide by) the Council's health and safety arrangements.
- j. detailed records in relation to the above are maintained.

Emergency Planning/ resilience and preparedness

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2005, The Highland Council is legally required to assess and plan for emergencies, ensure essential services continue, provide public information, and cooperate with other agencies to coordinate responses. Preparedness activities are prioritised by the North Of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership (NoSRRP) Risk Preparedness Statement and Work Plan, which in turn are informed by the National Security Risk Assessment and the Scottish Risk Assessment. The Council's [Corporate Risk Management Framework](#) also identifies key strategic risks which require action across all services to maintain delivery of essential services should disruptive events occur. The [Council's Business Continuity Management Policy](#) provides the framework within which The Highland Council will ensure compliance regarding its duties in relation to Business Continuity.

Fire Safety

The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to provide and maintain an environment that is safe from the effects of fire for all its employees, clients, and any other people who may be affected by its activities.

Managers must ensure that, as a minimum, the following arrangements are in place:

- the provision and maintenance of passive and active fire safety measures which allows persons to escape if a fire occurs.
- a. the provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work so that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the chances of a fire starting are kept as low as possible;
- b. suitable arrangements to allow, so far as is reasonably practicable, for fire safety measures connected with the use, handling, storage and transport of flammable articles and substances;

- c. the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary so that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the fire safety of its employees and other persons;
- d. provision of fire risk assessments and a means of addressing any identified recommendations;
- e. the allocation of sufficient resources to meet the requirements of outcomes of the fire risk assessment;
- f. Maintaining arrangements for co-ordination and co-operation with other employers where Council employees or clients share premises, facilities or activities with persons working in other organisations.

The minimisation of property damage is important but not if it jeopardises the safety of staff or members of the public. The safety of life must override all other considerations at all times.

First Aid

The Council will ensure that adequate equipment and facilities are provided to enable first-aid to be rendered to its employees if they are injured or become ill at work. Each workplace should be assessed in relation to its size and location, the nature of the work undertaken and the number of employees to determine the appropriate provision of first-aid facilities.

Food safety

The Council is committed to the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and Assured Safe Catering and will endeavour to identify and control potential hazards in all food handling operations. It will implement the controls identified as critical to food safety and monitor that these controls are being implemented at each Critical Control Point in the process of food production. Service management must ensure that they have in place arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with incoming supply, storage, handling, preparation, use and transport of food and of articles and substances in contact with food.

Gas safety

All reasonable steps will be taken to secure the health and safety of employees, tenants, and others who use or operate gas appliances. In this respect the term gas refers to mains gas, liquefied natural gas and liquefied petroleum gases, i.e. propane and butane.

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)

The use of vibrating tools can cause a range of conditions known collectively as Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS), as well as specific diseases such as carpal tunnel syndrome. The effects include impaired blood circulation, damage to nerves, muscles, and loss of ability to grip properly. Without effective controls employees regularly using

vibrating equipment could suffer from long term harm. The Council seeks to manage the risks to workers by:

- Assessing the risks from vibration exposure;
- Taking steps to reduce vibration exposure;
- Taking into account such risks when hiring/purchasing equipment;
- Providing training and information to employees; and
- Providing health surveillance

Health and Wellbeing at Work

The Council recognises the importance of employees being better able to perform effectively at work and enjoy an active life away from work when they are in good health. Preventing or reducing work related ill health ensures employees do not experience injury or harm and the Council complies with its legal requirements.

Specific arrangements concerning work related ill health are dealt with in policy arrangements such as manual handling, display screen equipment, risk assessment, stress and occupational health.

Both work activities and lifestyle factors can affect employee health, so consideration must be given to promoting health related topics not arising from the work place or work activities. Lifestyle factors such as physical inactivity, smoking and poor diet can lead to major causes of ill health and be detrimental to work performance. Therefore, the Council accepts that to promote positive employee health is a benefit for employees and the Council. It is committed to developing an integrated approach to employee health, which includes:

- a. Provision of relevant information on a variety of health-related topics.
- b. Support and advice on how to improve health.
- c. Identification of links between work activities, workplaces and employee health and, where necessary, implement suitable measures to reduce work related and non-work-related health risks.

This will be achieved through shared knowledge and experience of relevant functions within Services and participation of employees and their Trade Union representatives. Where necessary, assistance will be sought from external agencies or partnerships established to ensure current information and advice is available for employees.

Health Surveillance

The Council is committed to a proactive approach to managing occupational health and safety. A programmed approach to health surveillance will help to meet this commitment as well as protecting the health of employees and evidencing compliance with statutory requirements.

Infection Control

This guidance aims to assist managers who have to manage health hazards where work activities expose, or have the potential to expose, workers to communicable diseases. It applies to both the blood borne viruses (Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)), and the communicable diseases (such as Tuberculosis, Hepatitis A, Tetanus and Influenza).

Legionella

The Council recognises the risk of infection from Legionella bacteria and will take all reasonable steps to implement an effective health and safety management system for water systems within Council premises. This is to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to prevent or adequately control exposure to Legionella bacteria, thereby minimising the associated risks. This management system will:

- a. Identify and assess sources of risk – including checking whether conditions are present which will encourage bacteria to multiply; whether there is a means of creating and disseminating breathable droplets and if there are susceptible people who may be exposed to the contaminated aerosols.
- b. Prepare a scheme for preventing or controlling the risks.
- c. Appoint a responsible person to manage the scheme.
- d. Implement, manage and monitor precautions.
- e. Keep records of the precautions.

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment

The Council recognises that it has a duty to reduce the risks to employees and others from lifting operations. In order to assist the Council in discharging this duty, Services must ensure that all lifting equipment provided for use at work is:

- strong and stable enough for the particular use, and marked to indicate safe working loads;
- positioned and installed in such a way as to minimise any risks;
- used safely, i.e. the work is planned, organised and performed by competent people; and
- subject to ongoing thorough examination, maintenance and where appropriate, inspection by competent people.

All lifting equipment must have a valid Report of Thorough Examination. Each Service shall implement suitable measures to identify any lifting items without a Report of Thorough Examination and remove from service.

Each Service shall also have a process in place to ensure that when the competent person arranges a site visit all lifting items are available and presented for a thorough examination.

Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) (See also COSHH)

The Council recognises the need to assess the risk as to:

- a. how gasses, vapours, dusts and mists may arise or affect employees or others from work activities or processes managed by the Council.
- b. how contaminant clouds move with the surrounding air.
- c. the processes in the workplace which may be sources of airborne contaminants.
- d. the needs of the operators working near those sources.
- e. how much control will be required.
- f. how to prepare a specification for the LEV designer.
- g. what to tell the LEV provider.

A user manual, a log book and the requirement of thorough examination and test of LEV must be provided, on site, for each LEV system. Staff carrying out routine checks of LEV equipment should be suitably trained and competent.

Lone working

The Council recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves in the community without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or during out of office hours. Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and Managers have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

New and expectant mothers

Health and safety implications for expectant and new mothers can be addressed by implementing normal health and safety management procedures and risk assessment practices

The term 'new or expectant mothers' includes:

- those who are pregnant;
- those who are breast feeding; and
- those who have recently given birth (up to 6-12 weeks post-delivery or longer if breast-feeding).

Management of Contractors

The Council recognises the need for an effective management control system to ensure the health and safety of all persons affected by contract works. In this respect the Council will commit to:

- a. select only contractors who can demonstrate they have effective safety management systems in place, and particularly those who:
 - use only competent and adequately trained employees;
 - use only equipment, tools and materials that are maintained, stored and operated in a safe manner.

- have health and safety responsibilities clearly defined and appropriate systems in place for communication on health and safety matters;
 - undertake adequate supervision and monitoring of their own health and safety performance.
- b. Produce specifications, exchange information with and acquire plans from contractors which deal with the health and safety issues as they develop at each phase of the work, and which deal effectively with the risks involved.
 - c. Maintain regular effective two-way communications which accommodate changes and unforeseen problems promptly.
 - d. Monitor the health and safety performance of contractors
 - e. Maintain lists of Approved Contractors taking into account the factors referred to above.

Management of Occupational Road Risk

The Council recognises the need to protect employees and others from the hazards associated with work related driving, and as such the objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- a. the principles of risk assessment are applied to work related driving;
- b. the recognised hierarchy of control measures is considered with particular reference to eliminating the need for work related driving wherever possible;
- c. where work related driving cannot be avoided appropriate controls are introduced to reduce risk to an acceptable level;
- d. when assessing risks, factors such as driver competency, vehicle suitability and journey planning and scheduling are all considered; and
- e. procedures are in place for checking licence and insurance documentation.

Manual Handling

The Council recognises that manual handling is one of the most common causes of absence through injury in the workplace and must be avoided, so far as is reasonably practicable. Where it is not possible to eliminate manual handling, assessments will be undertaken to determine the level of risk. Suitable controls will be introduced to reduce the risk of injury, including the risk of repetitive strain injury, training, use of mechanical aids, automation, redesigning the system of work or even the workplace itself. In most cases, manual handling assessments will be incorporated into generic risk assessments, however, a specific manual handling assessment should be carried out when required.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Council is committed to developing a work environment and culture where employees can be open about their mental health without fear of stigma.

Additionally, the Council aims to provide a supportive working environment to those experiencing or recovering from mental ill-health. It is recognised that mental ill health

need not be a barrier to effective working and that a positive working environment and appropriate support at work has a significant impact on reducing stress-related sickness absence and improving long-term outcomes for employees experiencing mental health problems.

Noise at Work

The Council will put in place measures to protect employees from the risks of noise induced hearing loss and tinnitus, which can be caused by exposure to excessive noise. These measures will include:

- assessing the risks from noise exposure;
- taking measures to reduce noise exposure where a risk assessment shows that this is necessary;
- ensuring the level of noise generated is taken into account when a new piece of equipment is purchased or hired
- providing hearing protection where necessary if risks cannot be adequately reduced by other means;
- Providing training and information for employees on the risks from noise and the measures in place to reduce these; and
- providing health surveillance where the risk assessment shows that this is appropriate.

Occupational Health

The Council recognises the importance of Occupational Health for the health, safety and welfare of its employees. A comprehensive occupational health service is an integral part of the Council's policy to assist employees with health problems at an early stage and in responding to service delivery problems due to absence.

Pressure Systems Safety (PSSR)

The aim of PSSR is to prevent serious injury from the hazard of stored energy as a result of the failure of a pressure system or one of its component parts. To ensure compliance all relevant items of plant must have a written scheme of examination (written by a competent person). All items of plant will be examined by a competent person in accordance with the written scheme of examination. The RPO should ensure that a written scheme is available, and the pressure system is being examined in accordance with the written scheme and a report of examination is obtained.

Pressure systems are also PUWER items therefore these requirements also apply. The need for maintenance should not be confused with the requirement for examinations under the written scheme. They are two separate issues although problems identified during an examination under the written scheme may require maintenance to correct.

Where the manufacturer/supplier has provided maintenance instructions for all or part of the system, these should form the basis of the maintenance programme. They should be supplemented as appropriate where they are not sufficiently comprehensive to cover the particular installation. In assessing whether the manufacturer's/ supplier's instructions are sufficient, account should be taken of the complexity of the system, whether they cover the particular installation and reflect the on-site operation conditions.

Purchasing/Hiring Equipment

The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 places a duty on employers to ensure that plant, articles and substances used at work are safe and without risks to health. This guidance will assist those who purchase or hire equipment so that the health and safety of employees is maintained.

Radon

The Council recognises that where radon occurs in high concentrations (i.e. above 400 Bq/m³ in a workplace and 200 Bq/m³ in homes) it can present a foreseeable health risk. Exposure to high concentrations of radon over a period of time may increase the risk of developing lung cancer.

Risk Assessment

The Council acknowledges the importance of risk assessment in terms of its overall management of health and safety. Arrangements will therefore be made to ensure that risk assessments are carried out throughout the range of the Council's work activities and premises. In particular, the risk assessment process will:

- identify hazards;
- determine who might be harmed and how (e.g. employees, clients, pupils, contractors);
- determine the likelihood of harm occurring;
- identify appropriate measures necessary to control or eliminate the risk;
- record findings; and
- arrange for monitoring and review.

Smoking at Work

The Smoke free workplace policy seeks to guarantee to employees the right to work in air which is free from tobacco smoke and/ or vapes. There is a complete ban on smoking in all Council premises and their grounds. This includes the use of e-cigarettes and any recharging of such equipment. This ban also extends to Council owned vehicles and to vehicles used for carrying passengers on Council business.

Stress Management

The Council recognises that, whilst a degree of pressure can be a positive force at work, excessive pressure can have a negative effect on health and on performance. To manage stress effectively, managers will promote and maintain systems of management and behaviour at work consistent with the principles and of the various strategies outlined in the stress management policy.

Stress training is provided to managers and staff and there is assistance in managing stress via our employee assistance program app.

Training

The Council is committed to protecting its employees' health, safety and well-being and believes that the best way to do this is through a proactive health and safety management system backed by the continuous development of all employees. The Council requires health and safety training to be a priority for employees at all levels throughout the organisation. Completion of specified health and safety training will be mandatory.

Trauma Informed

The Highland Council is actively working towards being a trauma informed organisation.

To achieve this trauma impacts need to be considered in all publications, communications and actions we take. Where developing policies and or guidance trauma impacts and reductions must be a key consideration for the words, pictures etc used.

Violence

In order to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees exposed to the risk of violence at work, the Council shall:

- a. Ensure that risks of violence are identified, assessed, reported and controlled as necessary.
- b. Establish a comprehensive recording system for acts of violence occurring throughout its range of Services.
- c. Provide support for employees who are the victims of violence.
- d. Provide training for employees to enable them to avoid and/or deal with actual and potential violence.
- e. Work in partnership with other agencies to develop strategies to reduce the incidence of violence at work.
- f. Ensure sufficient resources are available for the provision of appropriate control measures.
- g. Ensure that the arrangements for dealing with violence at work are reviewed at suitable intervals

Violence also includes gender based violence and harassment both of which wont be tolerated and may lead to criminal and disciplinary actions

Work equipment

Managers shall have in place measures to ensure:

- All staff are suitably trained on the safe use of work equipment that they may be required to use as part of their normal duties.
- All work equipment supplied by The Highland Council is suitable for the task required of that equipment.
- All staff that use work equipment are instructed to perform pre use checks of equipment they are trained to use, so that the equipment remains safe and suitable for continued service.
- If faults are found on work equipment (including gym equipment in schools) each service shall implement suitable measures to remove the faulty equipment from service.
- User guides and instruction manuals are available for users of work equipment.
- All controls on work equipment are clearly marked with their mode of operation.
- All capacities of work equipment are clearly and permanently marked in units understood by the user.
- Arrangements are made for all work equipment to be suitably maintained, inspected and examined as applicable by the manufacturer and other statutory regulations.

Any work equipment brought in or paid for by third parties must meet The Highland Councils safety standards and comply with our policies.

End

