The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

The Highland Council

Corporate Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

V5 July 2020

Section 1 – Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Highland Council to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health and safety 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 accepts the aims and provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and also aims to comply with all other health and safety statutory obligations. A high standard of health and safety performance is one of the Council's primary objectives and is recognised as an integral part of service delivery.

Compliance with health and safety legislation/regulations will be considered the minimum standard to be met: the aim is to seek a culture of continuous improvement in health, safety 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 employees;

    b) Meeting its responsibilities to employees, to other people and the environment in a way which recognises 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 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;

        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 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 young persons and to new or expectant mothers;

    e) Allocating 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 guidance 'Successful Health and Safety Management Systems' (HSG65), 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 co-ordination 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 taken into account during the procurement of all services, vehicles, plant, equipment and supplies.

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.

Where any Service enters into 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 to be 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 will be made available to all employees at its adoption and to all new staff at their induction. Managers should retain signed records to show that the policy has been received. An up to date copy of this policy will be available on the Council's Intranet.

This Policy will be reviewed annually and amended when necessary.

Donna Manson   Date 30 July 2020
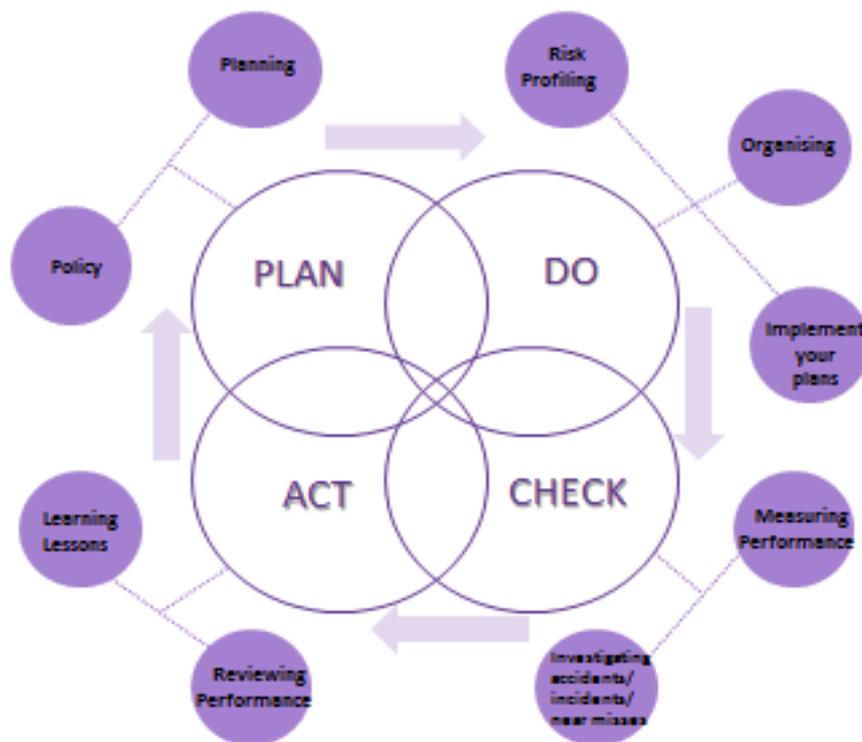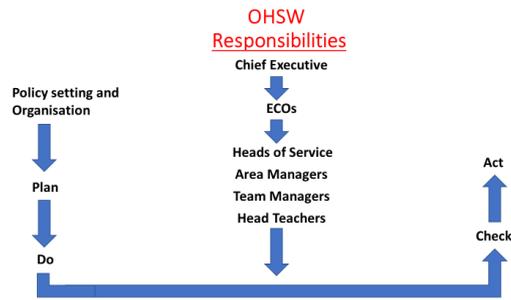Chief Executive

Section 2 Organisational Responsibilities

The key elements of the OHSW management system are:

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

Occupational health, safety 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:

OHSW
Responsibilities

Chief Executive

Policy setting and
Organisation

ECOs

Heads of Service
Area Managers
Team Managers
Head Teachers

Plan

Act

Do

Check

The **Chief Executive** is responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for ensuring the health and safety at work of all Council employees. She 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 will be 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 to be implemented,

c) Ensuring that health and safety is an integral part of the overall management culture and developing a positive attitude to health, safety and wellbeing among employees by visibly demonstrating commitment to achieving a high standard of performance with regard to health, safety and wellbeing,

d) Ensuring that health and safety is a regular agenda item at senior management meetings,

e) Appointing a competent person to assist the Council to apply the provisions of health and safety legislation,

f) Ensuring that health, safety and wellbeing objectives are defined annually and that success in meeting these objectives are formally measured and reported,

g) Ensuring that Elected Members are kept informed of health and safety issues as appropriate,

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

ECOs are responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for:

a) The implementation and monitoring of this policy within their own Service, and ensuring good communication with employees at all levels;

b) Compiling a risk profile for their Service

c) Ensuring that sufficient resources are available to ensure compliance with all health and safety requirements;
d) Developing and maintaining a health, safety and wellbeing policy which is specific to the tasks and responsibilities of their Service. 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 a health and safety planning group in their Service
f) Establishing arrangements for health and safety consultation within their service
g) Bringing to the attention of 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) Submitting a service annual health and safety report to the Central Safety Committee and any other appropriate Council Committee.

The ECO – Resources and Finance has been nominated as the member of the council's senior management team with specific responsibility for health and safety issues, including the production of an annual report detailing the council's health and safety performance.

The ECO – Communities and Place is responsible for ensuring the implementation, and subsequent monitoring of corporate health, safety and wellbeing policies within the Council's Administrative areas through the Senior Ward Managers. In particular, the Senior Ward Managers should convene and chair Area health and safety groups which will identify actions to be addressed by responsible Service managers. This will help ensure effective consultation and communication with all staff in their operational areas.

The ECO - Property and Housing is responsible for maintaining a Corporate Property Safety Management System to monitor and ensure that property related statutory inspections are carried out in respect of all Council occupied premises.

The ECO should ensure that a member of the Property Team attends each Service and Area health and safety meeting to feedback on property-related issues.

Heads of Service and **Area Managers** 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 should ensure that one RPO is appointed and that pertinent information is shared. RPO training is available from Learning and Development.

Heads of Service, 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 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
e) Ensuring that all staff are, and remain, competent to carry out any activities as part of their duties and responsibilities, and
f) Motivating and empowering employees to work in a safe and healthy manner in order to encourage a positive attitude to health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace
g) 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.

Service Health and Safety Co-ordinator
Each Service will appoint a Head of Service to act as Health and Safety Co-ordinator for the Service. The Co-ordinator will co-ordinate health, safety and wellbeing issues within the Service; chair the Service Health and Safety group and champion health, safety and wellbeing issues within the Service.

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 as required by legislation;
c) Providing up to date information and advice on changes in legislation;
d) Ensuring that health and safety performance is monitored;
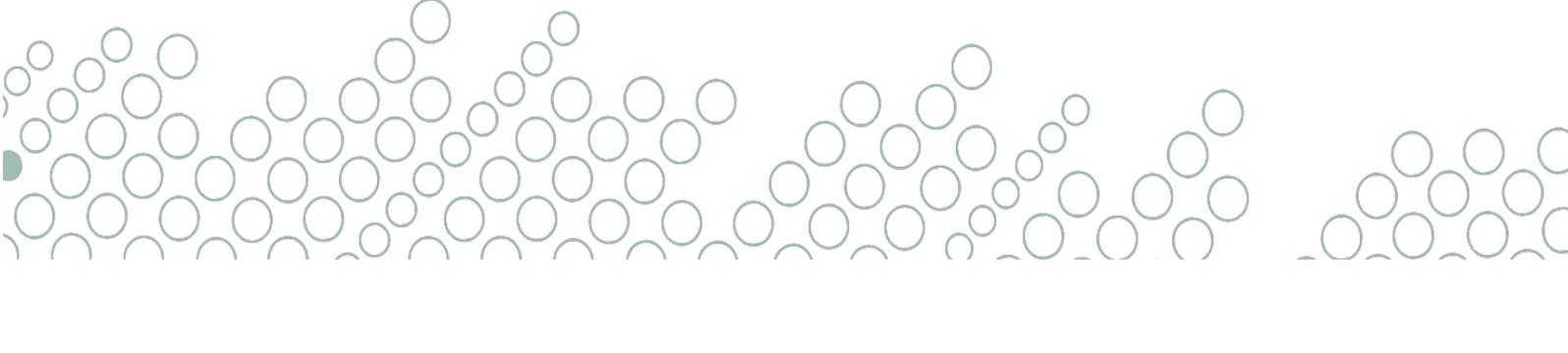
e) Developing a health, safety and wellbeing strategy;
f) Ensuring, through a process of monitoring, inspection and auditing, that health and safety policies and guidance are being consistently applied across the Council;
g) Managing the occupational health service;
h) Monitoring compliance with this policy.

Employees

Each employee is 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 co-operate 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) Bring to the attention of a responsible person any health and safety issues they may have; and
e) Familiarise themselves with this Policy and all local arrangements.

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) Regulations1996.

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 statutory duties in accordance with the terms of the established Safety Representatives Charter.
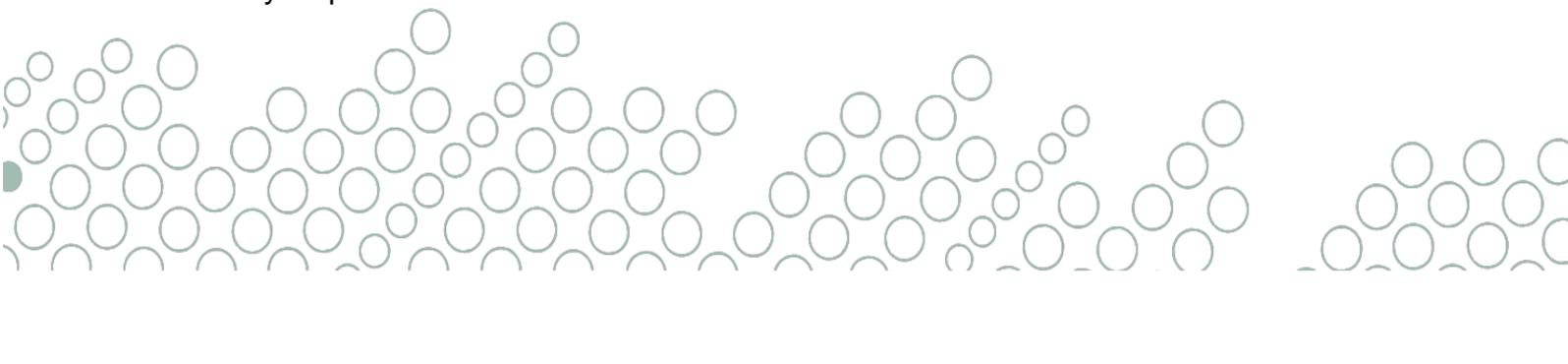
Safety representatives appointed by recognised Trade Unions are entitled to inspect work places every three months and if necessary more frequently: inspections should be accompanied by an appropriate management representative .

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.

The Council will appoint an Elected Member as Health and Safety Champion with the specific remit of promoting workplace health and safety in line with this policy.

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.

Resources Committee
The Resources Committee is the vehicle responsible for formulating health and safety policy, monitoring its implementation and ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated to ensure that the Council meets its statutory health and safety obligations.

Central Safety Committee
The Central Safety Committee has been established as a subcommittee of the Resources Committee. It will ensure that formal consultation on health, safety 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.
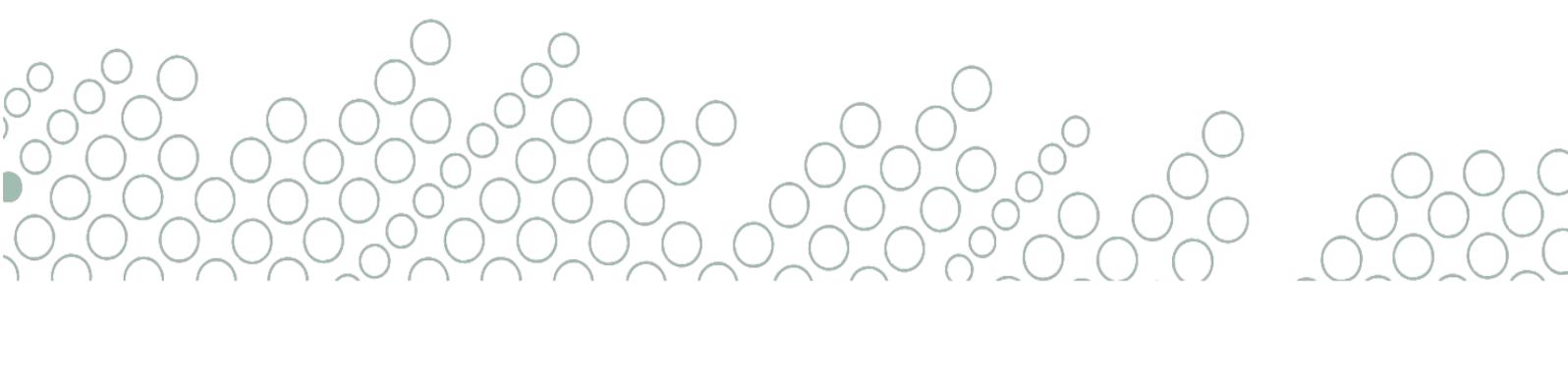
General Arrangements

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 Intranet (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 recognise 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.

A flow chart showing the main formal communication channels is attached in Appendix 1.

Competencies

Health and safety competencies have been developed to assist in the implementation of health and safety (and security) practices across the Council. These are attached in Appendix 2.

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 ECOs, Heads of Service, Heald Teachers, Area Managers
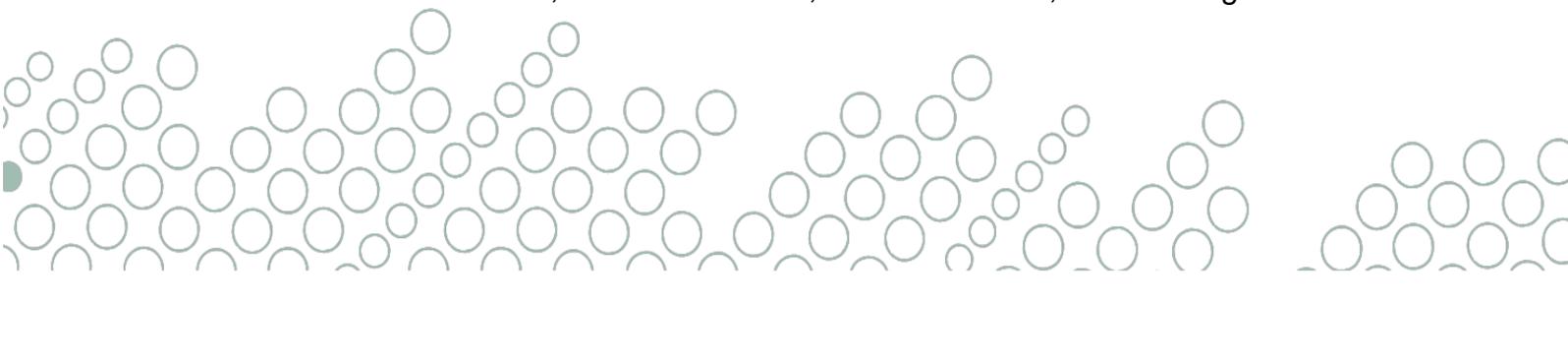
Health and Safety Advice

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
      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 appropriate Head of Service. 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 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 [Management Protocol](#) should be followed.

Planning and Implementation
Corporate Health and Safety Plan
The Chief Executive will ensure, through the Head of HR 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 specific Service 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 plans must be regularly monitored by the Services' senior management teams at Health and Safety Planning groups. Updated health and safety plans must form part of the Services' annual health and safety report.

Health and Safety Planning Groups
Each ECO and nominated Head of Service 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.
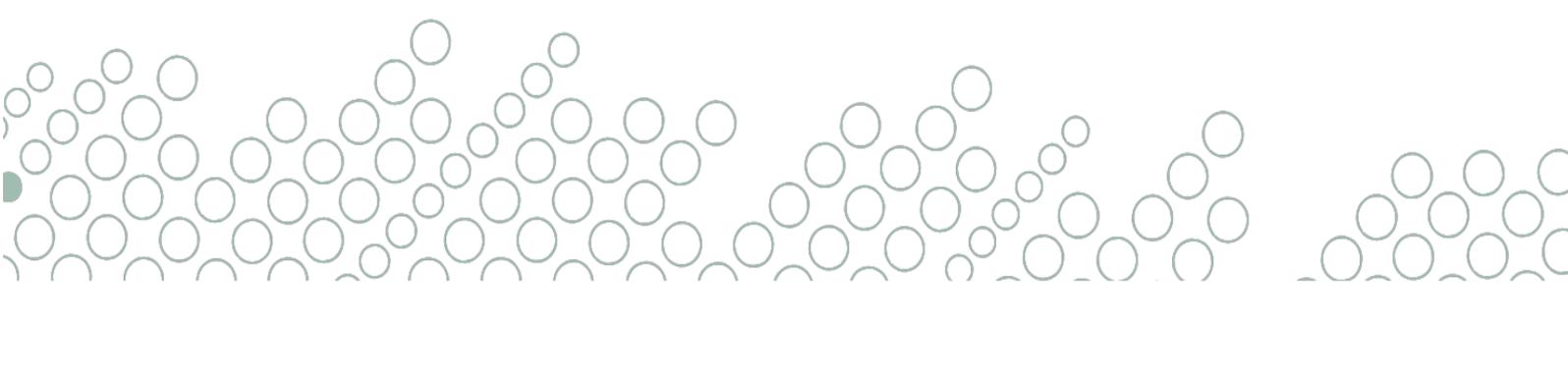
The operational planning group is not an alternative or substitute for local liaison meetings, safety groups or health and safety committees involving employee representation.

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.
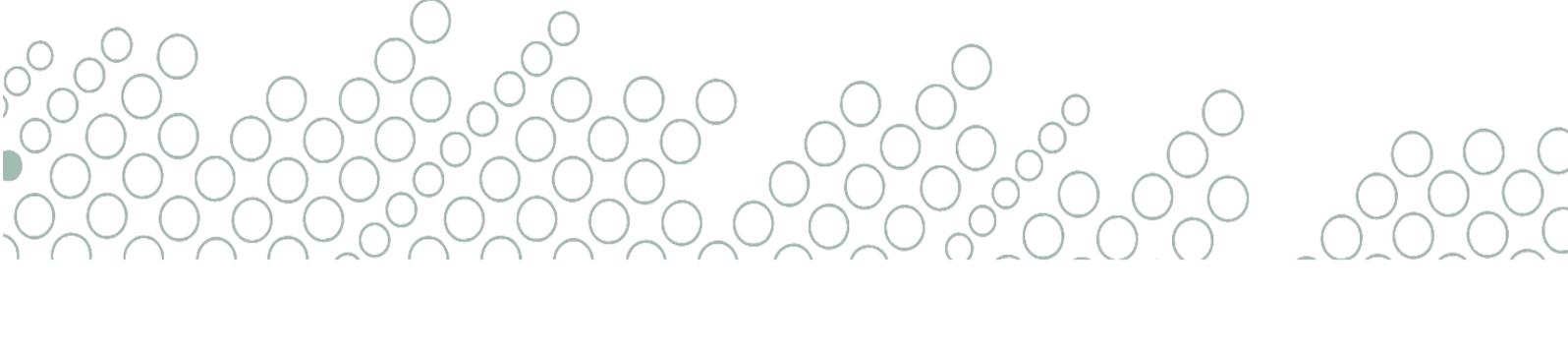
Plan
- ✓ Think about where you are now and where you need to be.
- ✓ Say what you want to achieve, who will be responsible for what, how you will achieve your aims, and how you will measure your success. Write down this policy and your plan to deliver it.
- ✓ Decide how you will measure performance. 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:
  - o Involve workers and communicate, so that everyone is clear on what is needed and can discuss issues – develop positive attitudes and behaviours.
  - o 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 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.

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.

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)
- 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/arrangements as described in Health and Safety/Property Management Policies and Guidance.

Arms' Length Organisations (ALO)

Contracts setting up agreements with ALOs must set out the arrangements for managing and reporting on health and safety.
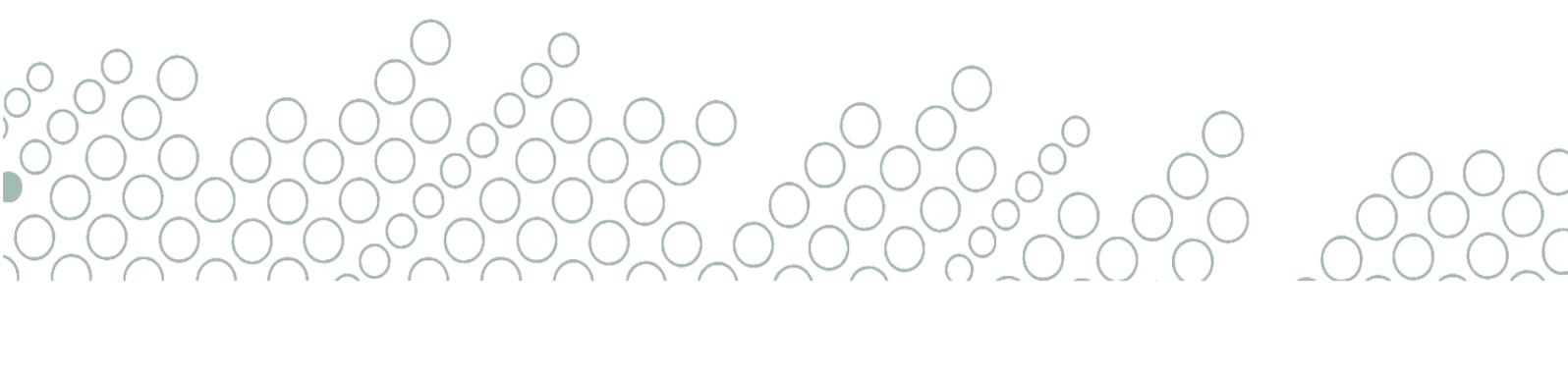
Section 3 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Guidance

Below are descriptions of the Highland Council's health and safety guidance which address the main health and safety risks to the Council. These guidance documents require the full co-operation of Service management and staff at every level. Specific procedures, guidance and information will be developed to assist managers applying these policies appropriately.

Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation
All accidents, incidents and near misses must be reported using the Council's accident report form. 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.

Major injuries, injuries resulting in absences of 7 or more days 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 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 through 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 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

ECOs 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. In particular arrangements will be made to:

a) Identify all "users" of DSE in accordance with the regulations and maintain records of the same.

b) Make arrangements for the assessment of each workstation taking into account the DSE, the furniture, the working environment and the worker.

c) Take appropriate control measures in respect of risks identified as a result 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
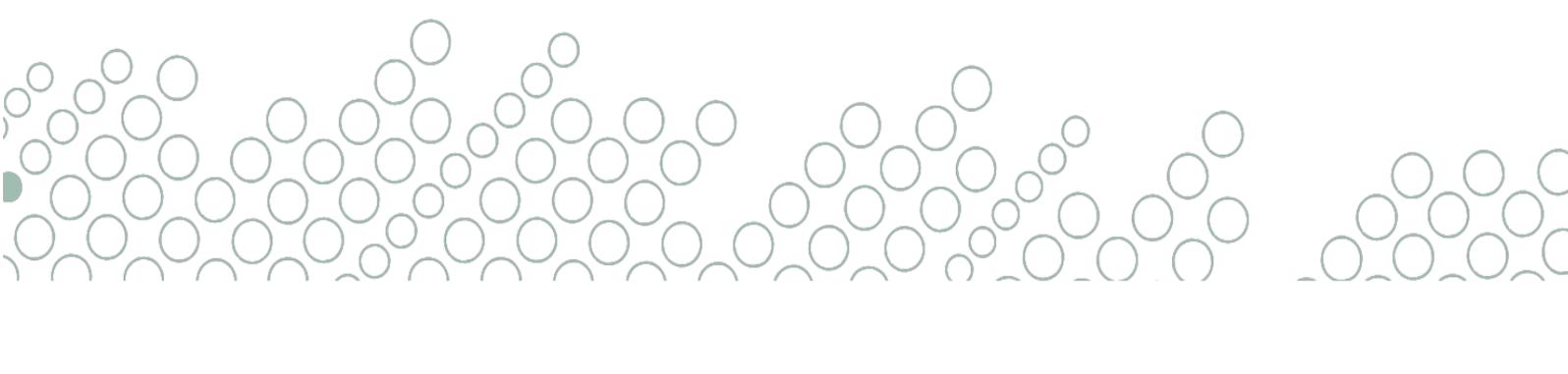
Electricity at Work

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. In order to reduce the risks associated with the use of electricity at work, the Council will ensure that:

a) electrical installations and equipment are 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.

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:

a) The provision and maintenance of arrangements which allows persons to escape if a fire occurs.

b) 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;

c) 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;

d) 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;

e) provision of fire risk assessments and a means of addressing any identified recommendations;

f) the allocation of sufficient resources to meet the requirements of outcomes of the fire risk assessment;

g) 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
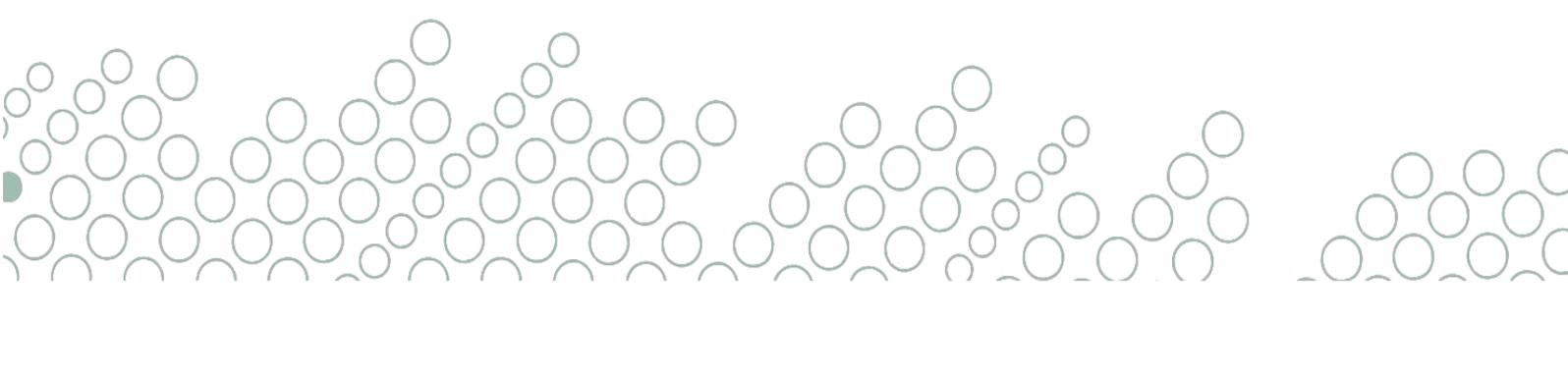- Providing health surveillance

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 l inks 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 the blood borne viruses Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and also the communicable diseases 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 appropriate health and safety management system for water systems within Council premises to ensure that the necessary measures to prevent, or adequately control, the risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria are minimised.   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, all Services must ensure that all lifting equipment provided for use at work is:

a) Strong and stable enough for the particular use, and marked to indicate safe working loads;
b) Positioned and installed in such a way as to minimise any risks;
c) Used safely, i.e. the work is planned, organised and performed by competent people; and
d) 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 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 make arrangements to:
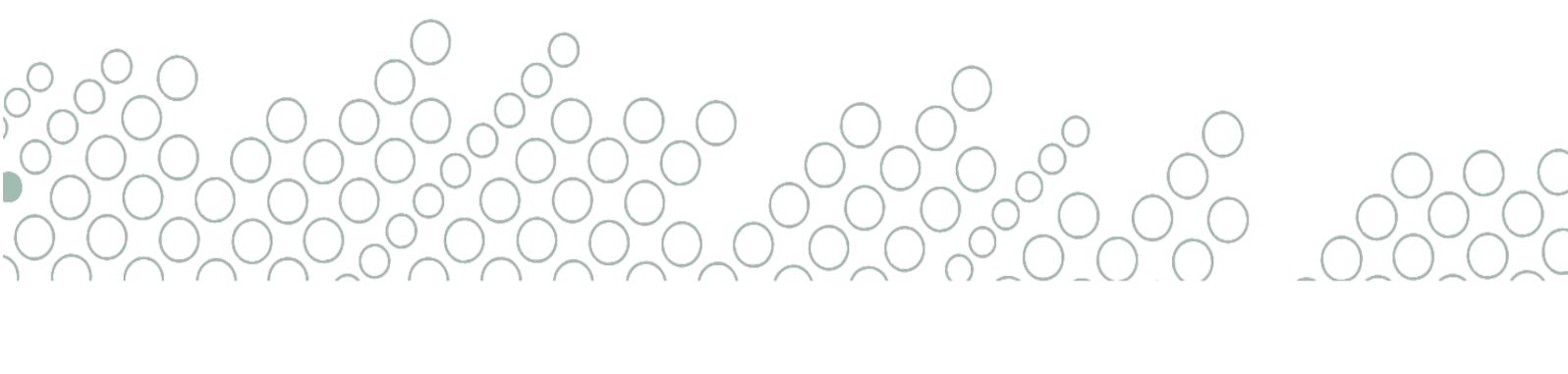
a) Select only contractors who can demonstrate that they have effective safety management systems in place and in particular those who:
   i)   Use only competent and adequately trained employees.
   ii) Use only equipment, tools and materials that are maintained, stored and operated in a safe manner.
   iii) Have health and safety responsibilities clearly defined and appropriate systems in place for communication on health and safety matters.
   iv) 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 then 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.
   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
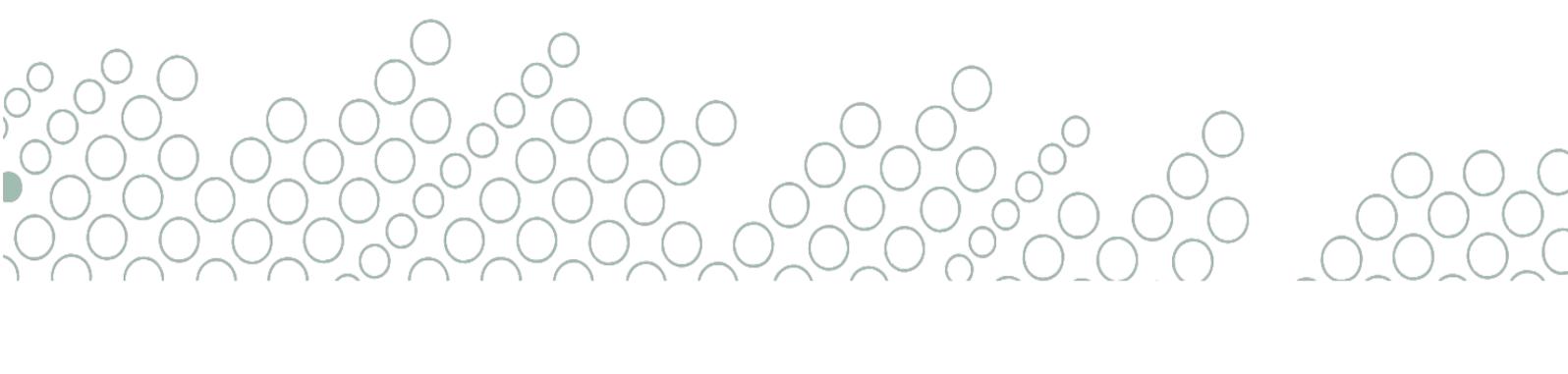
Mental Health and Wellbeing

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:

    a) Assessing the risks from noise exposure
    b) Taking measures to reduce noise exposure where a risk assessment shows that this is necessary
    c) Ensuring the level of noise generated is taken into account when a new piece of equipment is purchased or hired
    d) Providing hearing protection where necessary if risks cannot be adequately reduced by other means.
    e) Providing training and information for employees on the risks from noise and the measures in place to reduce these
    f) 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 provide assistance to 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 the 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:
   a) Identify hazards
   b) Determine who might be harmed and how, for example employees, clients, pupils and contractors etc.
   c) Determine the likelihood of harm occurring
   d) Identify appropriate measures necessary to control or eliminate the risk
   e) Record findings
   f) Arrange for monitoring and review

Smoking at Work

The Managing Smoking at Work policy seeks to guarantee to employees the right to work in air which is free from tobacco smoke. 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.

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 continuing 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.

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

Work equipment

ECOs shall have in place measures to ensure:

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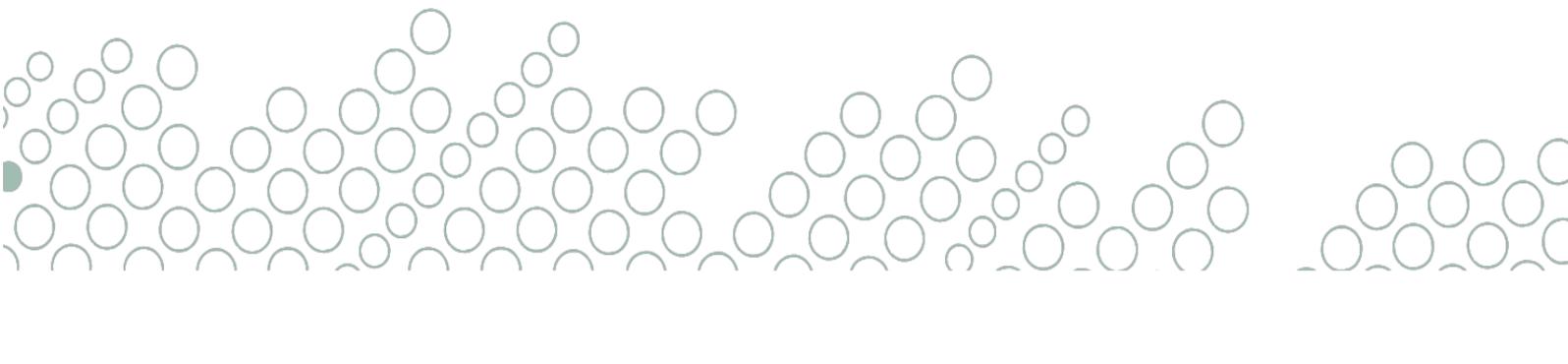
If faults are found on work equipment (including gym equipment in schools) each service shall implement suitable measures to remove the faulty equipment from service. User guides and instruction manuals should be available for users of work equipment. All controls on work equipment should be clearly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

Health Safety and Wellbeing Consultation

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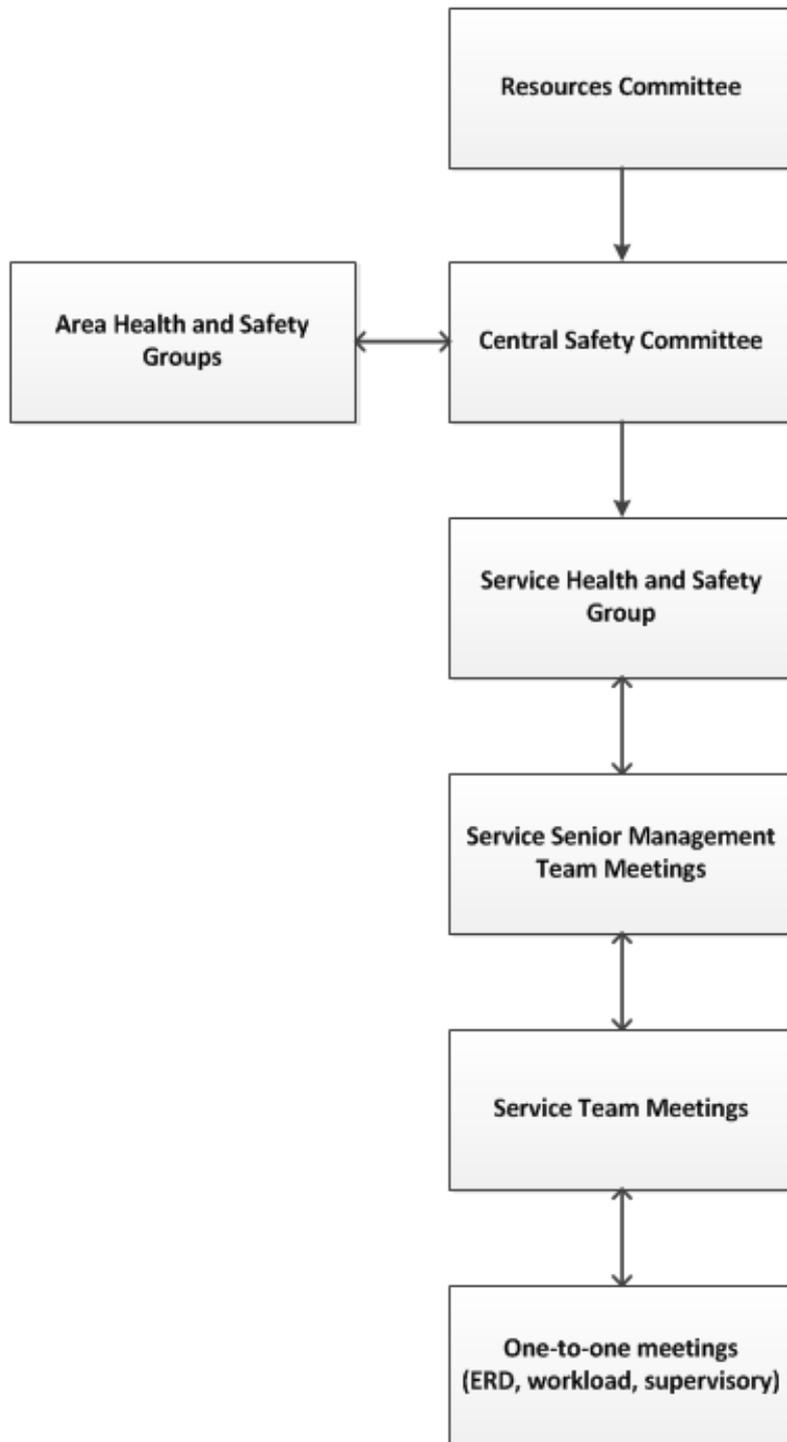
Health and Safety Competencies: Overview

Status	Core: this is a key aspect of all jobs, as it is essential that everyone takes responsibility for promoting the health and safety of all staff, service users, pupils, clients, the public, and themselves.
Levels	1. Assist in maintaining own and others' health and safety (and, by extension, security) 2. Monitor and maintain health, safety and security of self and others 3. Promote, monitor and maintain best practice in health, safety and security 4. Maintain and develop an environment and culture that improves health, safety and security
Description	Progression through the levels in this competency is characterised by: • an increasing number and range of people and work areas for which one is responsible • greater proactivity and focus on good practice going from following set procedures to identifying the need for improvement • increasing responsibilities for risk management and contingency management • greater involvement in investigation and follow-up of breaches to health, safety and security.
Examples	The others for whom a worker has responsibility for their health, safety and security might be: • service users • communities • the wider public • colleagues in immediate work team • other colleagues • contractors • visitors to the organisation • workers from other organisations. Risks to health, safety and security might be related to: • the environment (e.g. issues related to ventilation, lighting, heating, systems and equipment, pests, work-related stress) • individuals (e.g. personal health and wellbeing) • information and its use (e.g. sharing passwords, sharing information with other agencies) • physical interactions (e.g. abuse, aggression, violence, theft) • psychological interactions (e.g. bullying, harassment) • social interactions (e.g. discrimination, oppression, lone working).

Level 1: Assist in maintaining own and others' health, safety and security

Indicators	Examples of behaviours
The worker: - ✓ acts in ways that are consistent with legislation, policies and procedures for maintaining own and others' health, safety and security - ✓ assists in maintaining a healthy, safe and secure working environment for everyone who is in contact with the organisation - ✓ works in a way that minimises risks to health, safety and security - ✓ summons immediate help for any emergency and takes the appropriate action to contain it - ✓ reports any issues at work that may put health, safety and security at risk.	Assisting in maintaining a healthy, safe and secure working environment might include: - ✓ appropriate and secure use of information technology - ✓ appropriate use of security systems and alarms - ✓ checking the safety of fittings and fixtures - ✓ disposing of waste - ✓ maintaining appropriate levels of heating, lighting and ventilation Works in a way that minimises risks to health, safety and security might be: - ✓ driving safely - ✓ moving and handling people and/or goods using equipment as appropriate - ✓ reducing noise - ✓ taking appropriate breaks from using equipment - ✓ adhering to Council security measures. Emergencies might be related to: - ✓ the environment - ✓ safety - ✓ information (e.g. breaches of confidentiality, lost/stolen records) - ✓ security.

Level 2: Monitor and maintain health, safety and security	

Indicators
 	
The worker:
  ✓ identifies and assesses the potential risks involved in work activities and processes for self and others
  ✓ identifies how best to manage the risks
  ✓ undertakes work activities consistent with:
      ○ legislation, policies and procedures
      ○ the assessment and management of risk
  ✓ takes the appropriate action to manage an emergency summoning assistance immediately when this is necessary
  ✓ reports actual or potential problems that may put health, safety and security at risk and suggests how they might be addressed
  ✓ supports others in maintaining health, safety and security.
	Examples of behaviours
	
	Supporting others in maintaining health, safety and security might include:
	  ✓ acting as a role model
	  ✓ alerting others when there are specific risks
	  ✓ enabling individuals to learn healthier, safer and more secure ways of working
	  ✓ intervening to protect others from risk
	  ✓ moving and handling people and/or goods with others using equipment as appropriate
	  ✓ offering information and advice on how to reduce risk
	
	Emergencies might be related to:
	  ✓ the environment
	  ✓ safety
	  ✓ information (e.g. breaches of confidentiality, lost/stolen records)
	  ✓ security.

Level 3: Monitor and maintain health, safety and security	

Indicators
 	
The worker:
✓ identifies:
  - the risks involved in work activities and processes
  - how to manage the risks
  - how to help others manage risk
✓ undertakes work activities consistent with:
  - Council policies and procedures
  - The assessment and management of risk
✓ Monitors work areas and practices and ensures
  - They are safe and free from hazards
  - Conform to Council policies and procedures
✓ Takes the necessary action in relation to risks
✓ Identifies now health, safety and security can be improved, and acts to put this into effect
	Examples of behaviours
	
	✓ confirming individuals maintain good health, safety and security practices
	✓ ensuring individuals wear protective clothing and equipment
	✓ monitoring aspects of the environment
	✓ monitoring and reporting on compliance.
	
	Including:
	- accident/incident/near miss reporting
	- challenging people who put themselves or others at risk
	- contributing to maintaining and improving Council policies and procedures
	- evacuating buildings during emergencies
	- maintaining and improving the environment
	- supporting others to manage risks more effectively
	
	Identifying how health, safety and security can be improved might include:
	- acting as a role model
	- identifying the need for expert advice and support
	- identifying training needs
	- negotiating resources for training and development in health, safety and security
	- reporting and recording lack of resources to act effectively
	
	Emergencies might be related to:
	  ✓ the environment
	  ✓ safety
	  ✓ information (e.g. breaches of confidentiality, lost/stolen records)
	  ✓ security.

Level 4: Maintain and develop a culture that improves health, safety and security	
Indicators	**Examples of behaviours**
The worker: ✓ evaluates the extent to which legislation, policies and procedures are implemented in the environment, culture and practices of their Service area ✓ identifies processes and systems that do not promote own and others' health, safety and security ✓ regularly assesses risks to health, safety and security using the results to promote and improve practice ✓ takes the appropriate action when there are issues with health, safety and security ✓ investigates any potential or actual breaches of legal, professional or organisational requirements and takes the necessary action to deal with them appropriately.	Evaluating the extent to which legislation is implemented in the environment, culture and practices would include analysing the whole environment and behaviours within it and recognising risks to health, safety and security. This might relate to: - confirming that the culture is conducive to good health, safety and security practice - confirming individuals maintain good health, safety and security practices - confirming that equipment and estates support health, safety and security - ensuring that appropriate training is offered to the staff who need it - ensuring that information is processed and used securely and legally - ensuring that people are able to feedback on any concerns they have - ensuring that people are aware of their rights and responsibilities - ensuring that people know of factors that may adversely affect their health, safety and security - evaluating the detail of policies, people's access to them, their understanding and use appropriate allocation of resources to support health, safety and security Taking appropriate action when there are issues with health, safety and security might include: - providing support to others to enable them to improve their practice - issuing warnings when there are persistent issues which put health, safety and security at risk - securing appropriate resourcing for education and training - engaging in appropriate exercises, training and investigations to update and extend knowledge and skills.