

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for all matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of all staff employed by the County Council and for ensuring that members of the public who may be affected by any of its activities are not exposed to risks to their health or safety. The Chief Executive is charged to review the corporate statement of policy on health and safety at work and to sign an amended safety policy statement on at least a five yearly basis

Health and Safety Champions

The implementation of strategic health and safety arrangements is coordinated and promoted by an Officer Champion, who is the Director of Local Services and Housing Delivery. The key duties of the Officer Champion are to Chair the Corporate Health and Safety Group and present six monthly reports on corporate health and safety performance to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). A Member Champion, who is also the Deputy Leader of the Council, is charged to promote a strong health and safety culture within the council and specifically champion high standards of health and safety performance with other Members.

Directors

Directors have specific health and safety responsibilities in respect of the Directorate they manage, namely to:

- ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to protect, as far as is reasonably practicable, all employees and persons affected by the activities of the Directorate with regard to their health, safety and welfare. This duty is to be fully implemented in accordance with Northumberland County Council's general statement of policy on health and safety at work.
- nominate competent officers to be responsible for the various aspects of health and safety arrangements within the Directorate.
- Maintaining the routes for communication of health and safety issues e.g. safety groups. Maintaining the written communication routes for safety issues, for example distribution of minutes of meetings, updating safety manuals and safety policies
- evaluate the safety performance of the Directorate so that appropriate action may be taken as necessary and resources may be targeted in priority areas.

- implement appropriate disciplinary procedures in the event that employees transgress health and safety requirements and procedures.

Heads of Service

Heads of Service are responsible for establishing a structured system of safety management within their own spheres of responsibility in accordance with guidance and Northumberland County Council's safety policy. This will comprise:

- identifying and prioritising service safety requirements and objectives.
- regularly monitoring and reviewing safety performance and progress against set objectives in their designated areas of responsibility and ensuring that information is fed back into the planning process through the agreed mechanisms.
- giving special consideration to the provision of safe plant and equipment, safe working practices and safety training requirements.
- conducting accident investigations (in conjunction with the Corporate Health and Safety Team, if necessary). This is a matter of course for significant injury, a higher risk activity or if an incident should give rise to a civil claim.

General Managers/Line Managers

The above managers are responsible for ensuring that the Health and Safety Policy is adhered to within the services under their control. They will also co-operate with the appropriate Head of Service and his/her nominated officers in order that they may discharge their responsibilities and fulfil the duties of the Council, as an employer, as laid down in the Health and Safety at Work Act.

In particular, Managers are responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for:

- Ensuring that all full and part-time employees under their control, carry out their work so as to avoid, so far as is reasonably practicable, risk to the health or safety of employees, pupils, students or any member of the general public.
- Ensuring that health and safety is an integral part of their management. This will include setting of objectives as part of a planned approach to full legislative compliance.

- Ensuring that all members of staff are aware of guidance relating to health and safety published by the County Council and follow instructions or procedures that it issues.
- Where appropriate, nominating staff to be responsible for specific aspects of health and safety and ensuring that all staff are aware of such delegations.
- Ensuring that only appropriately qualified and experienced members of staff supervise potentially hazardous activities.
- Ensuring that adequate arrangements exist for the reporting of accidents and hazards, and that such reports are forwarded to the Corporate Health and Safety team and relevant statutory authorities (HSE), where appropriate.
- Ensuring that adequate arrangements exist to deal with emergency situations including evacuations and that all staff and others are aware of such arrangements.
- Ensuring that fire safety advice forwarded by the Council is adhered to, and that all reasonable precautions are taken by staff to minimise the risk of fire. Fire Risk Assessments should also be completed for each site.
- Implementing procedures to ensure that only competent contractors are brought onto sites to carry out works.
- Making adequate arrangements for the induction of any contractor brought onto the site in order to minimise the risks to the safety of staff and others on site.
- Immediately informing the Council of any unsafe practice or condition arising from the work of a contractor on the site, which may endanger the health or safety of staff or members of the general public.
- Ensuring that all defects and unsafe conditions are reported to the Property Services Help Desk.
- To consult with safety representatives on all matters that arise relating to the health, safety or welfare of staff under their control and take appropriate action in response to reports received.
- Ensuring that members of staff receive adequate health and safety information, instruction and training with respect to their work activities. To ensure that induction and any training identified as part of the risk assessment process are included.

- Ensuring that risk assessments have been completed and are regularly reviewed for all activities on site as required by health and safety legislation.
- Maintaining appropriate safety records in accordance with County Council policy.
- Ensuring that all purchases have been assessed for suitability and compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.
- Making suitable arrangements to ensure that all plant and equipment is maintained in safe and serviceable condition.
- Ensuring adequate liaison with the Corporate Health and Safety Team and the Occupational Health Team, as required.
- Ensuring that the health and safety standards and compliance with procedures are adequately monitored.
- Reviewing the health and safety performance on a regular basis.

Employees

Employees also have responsibilities under health and safety law. These are detailed below:

- To take care of the health and safety of themselves and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- To ensure there is no interference or reckless abuse of anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.
- To comply with the provisions of specified statutory regulations so far as they relate to matters within an employee's control.
- To report to their line manager any hazard, accident or dangerous occurrence that has or might have caused injury or damage to persons or equipment and to co-operate in any investigation of an accident or dangerous occurrence.
- To notify their line manager if they have any of the notifiable diseases.
- To adhere to the agreed procedures for safe working, observe any safety rules or instructions relevant to particular work or locations and to use protective clothing and safety equipment provided.

- To notify their line manager when personal protective equipment requires renewal or repair.
- To assist officers of the Council in their audits, inspections and investigations.
- To assist Inspectors of the Health and Safety Executive to carry out inspections and investigations.

Safety Representatives

Within the County Council, Safety Representatives are essentially Trade Union appointments which are entirely voluntary. Safety Representatives have the function of representing their fellow trade union members in consultations with their employer regarding health and safety, and may represent other trade union members by agreement between the Trade Unions involved. To this end there is an entitlement to carry out safety inspections of the workplace, receive information from visiting Inspectors of the Health and Safety Executive and to examine the cause of accidents.

The employer is obliged to allow such time off as is necessary, with pay, to allow Safety Representatives to fulfil their functions and to receive appropriate training.

Corporate Health and Safety Team

The Health and Safety Team has a corporate role with respect to the provision of health and safety advice. It has the following responsibilities:

- To advise the Directors and other Senior Managers on the demands of existing and proposed legislation with respect to health and safety issues.
- To support management in the effective implementation of health and safety legislation, through assistance in the following areas:
 - workplace inspection
 - risk assessment (both workplace and personalised)
 - devising safe systems of work
 - sampling and measurement of workplace hazards, such as noise, vibration and fumes
 - control of contractors
 - health surveillance (in conjunction with the Occupational Health Team)

- To liaise with the Learning and Organisational Development Team to develop and provide health and safety training courses to support managers and staff in complying with their health and safety responsibilities.
- To assist Directors and Senior Managers to identify priorities to enable them to fulfil their Health and Safety obligations.
- To assist managers in the thorough investigation of accident and violent incidents and to advise on the appropriate course of remedial action to prevent recurrence. This is undertaken by scrutinising reports submitted through the corporate accident reporting systems or by carrying out full accident investigations, as appropriate.
- To liaise with the Council's Insurance Team regarding any claim for compensation arising from accidents to employees or members of the public in the course of work activities.
- To compile the corporate safety policy documentation and review the contents on an ongoing basis.
- To advise Directors and Senior Managers on priorities relating to any budgets allocated for the provision of health and safety equipment.
- Liaise with the Health and Safety Executive on all matters regarding health and safety at work, as required
- To assist in the establishment and operation of safety forums. To attend any meeting that has been set up as a forum to communicate health and safety information and to give advice, as appropriate.

Occupational Health Team

The role of the Occupational Health Team, in relation to Health and Safety, is to contribute to the prevention of occupationally related diseases and to monitor the health of the workforce.

Occupational Health Staff are responsible for:

- The assessment of all prospective employees on their fitness for work.
- Liaising with Managers and Health and Safety Advisers with respect to work activity risk assessments and personalised risk assessments.

- Assisting Managers and their staff with the management of sickness absence, offering advice on ill health and a person's medical capability to work.
- Carrying out health surveillance, required by health and safety legislation, upon request by Managers.
- Working closely with Managers, trade unions and personnel, to develop and implement the policies and guidelines that may have influence on the health and/or welfare of employees.

The Occupational Health Team maintains health records on all Northumberland County Council's employees. The Occupational Health Practitioners have in the course of professional practice a legal and ethical duty to maintain confidence with respect to this information.