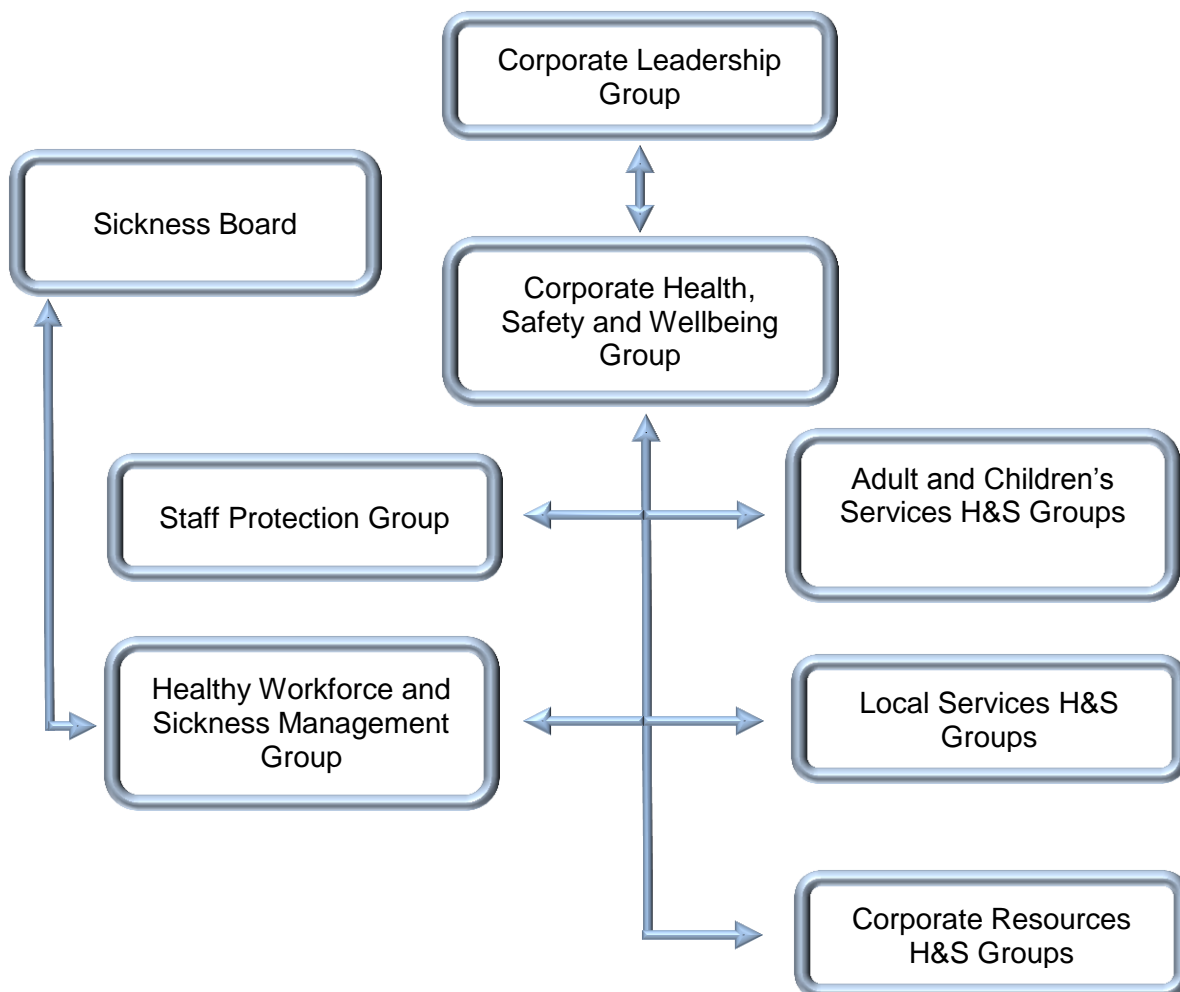


Relevant Legislation

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

This Section of the Policy sets out the responsibilities and means for ensuring effective communication systems are in place within each Group to assist in the promotion of health and safety standards.

Corporate Strategic Mechanisms for Discussion of Health and Safety Issues



Corporate Health and Safety Groups Calendar

The Strategic Management Team (SMT) has previously agreed that Health and Safety reports are submitted to it every six months, in June and December. The date of the report is designed to coincide with the availability of accident data. This allows sufficient time to analyse the accident statistics and agree associated targets and objectives at each of the Service H&S Groups.

The table below shows key dates when accident data becomes available and when SMT reports are due. In order to finalise the detail required for performance assurance, such as accident benchmarking and accident reduction targets and objectives, it is necessary for Health and Safety groups to align their H&S meeting dates with corporate performance requirements. It also allows the proposed content of SMT reports to be discussed and agreed at the Corporate Health and Safety Group. The table below should assist chairs of H&S Groups to decide on a suitable meeting timetable.

It should be noted that once set, dates should not be allowed to slip and fall out of synchronisation due to staff unavailability. Where staff cannot attend they must send a deputy.

Health and Safety Group Calendar				
Month	Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four
April				
May				Annual accident data available
June	Accident targets and objectives set	Accident targets and objectives set	Accident targets and objectives agreed	Annual SMT report due
July				
August			Quarterly statistics issued	
September	Quarterly review	Quarterly review	Performance update	
October				
November				Six-monthly update of accident data available
December	Six-monthly review	Six-monthly review	Six-monthly update	Six-monthly SMT update report due
January				
February			Quarterly statistics issued	
March	Quarterly review	Quarterly review	Quarterly update	

Key	
Accident statistics available	
Report to SMT due	
Corporate H&S Group meets	
Directorate/Service Groups meet	
Service Sub-Groups meet	

Functions of Health and Safety Groups

The Corporate Groups offer a communication mechanism which enables employees to raise queries in relation to health and safety. They also provide a forum for discussing health and safety initiatives and a consultative mechanism for reviewing risk assessments, policies and procedures. The Model Health and Safety Group Remit provided in appendix 1 should be modified as appropriate, agreed by each Health and Safety Group and reviewed at least annually. Sub-groups are also appropriate within higher risk services.

In order to facilitate good upward and downward communication each member of the Corporate Health and Safety Group should chair a meeting at Group level. This principle should also be applied to other groups at service and department level.

The chair of each group is responsible for:

- Taking up any issues agreed at lower groups with the strategic group
- Monitoring actions assigned to group members or others using the Action Log
- Prompting the setting of objectives and incident reduction initiatives
- Ensuring that minutes of meetings are recorded and circulated to participants

All group participants are required to:

- Convey information, such as meeting outcomes and items of interest, with their management team and colleagues as appropriate.
- Cascade objectives and other requirements agreed at strategic meetings to lower level groups where appropriate, including sharing minutes

Staff Protection Group

The functions of the Staff Protection Group are primarily concerned with the contents and implementation of the Corporate Violence at Work Policy, F2. The group comprises Staff Protection Officers nominated by each Head of Service (sometimes collaboratively). The remit of the Staff Protection Officer is to:

- Assist other managers within their own service or sector to manage incidents at team or service level

- Liaise with the Corporate Staff Protection Coordinator on all incidents which are rated amber or red (in accordance with the 'credible risk' determinations detailed in F2).
- Attend the Staff Protection Strategy Group to ensure that corporate arrangements are updated regularly and applied uniformly across the organisation
- Contribute to Staff Protection meetings when the response to a particularly violent incident needs to be escalated to Directorate or Corporate Level.
- Contribute to the process of controlling personal data relating to violent incidents to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Healthy Workforce & Sickness Management Group

The above group is primarily concerned with the promotion of health within the workforce and, to some extent, the health of the general population of Northumberland. The group is comprised of key members of staff who have a specialist role in promoting health or in supporting staff who experience ill health.

The group remit includes:

- Maintaining the three year Strategy of the Healthier Together Workforce Group, whose vision is to promote "*A healthier, motivated and valued workforce which in turn influences the wider community to be healthier*".
- Contributing to the maintenance of a suite of health-related Corporate Policies.
- Attending meetings and contribute to the preparation of reports to SMT
- Organising a programme of events, including activities which increase fitness, as well as holding health monitoring events, such as blood pressure and cholesterol testing.
- Promoting the health of the workforce by publicising national and local initiatives with NCC workplaces, as well as working with a team of volunteer health advocates.

Sickness Management Sub-group

This is a sub-group of the Healthy Workforce Group comprising those key members of staff who have a specialist remit to analyse sickness data. Where necessary, other specialist officers may attend, such as HR Business Partners. The primary function of the is to analyse corporate sickness performance data and recommend sickness reduction strategies within each service based on current trend analysis.

Sickness performance is monitored on an ongoing basis by Sickness Board which reports to the Heads of Service Business Group and SMT as part of the Annual Health and Safety report, which is supplemented by an interim six monthly update report. The Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group ratifies reports which are then submitted to SMT.

Mechanism for Written Information

The Corporate Health and Safety Manual

This document is the main conduit for informing managers of new developments in legislation and best practice. It is written in the form of general guidance for both staff and managers. The Manual is now electronic in line with corporate requirements, and is accessible via the Corporate Health and Safety Team webpage.

Communicating Health and Safety Issues

There are several means by which health and safety issues and subsequent actions arising from them are communicated across the authority. Each is discussed separately below.

'Staff Room'

The Communication Team produces a regular electronic bulletin called 'Staff Room' which is communicated to all members of staff that use Outlook via the email network. Though Staff Room covers a wide range of subjects, on occasion it may include health and safety messages.

Emails to Heads of Service

Frequently, information is conveyed via email to individual Heads of Service for sector-specific subject matters, or to all of them in the case of any corporate initiatives.

Safety Bulletins

Safety Bulletins are occasionally produced and circulated via relevant Heads of Service, as appropriate.

Notice Boards

There are designated Safety Notice Boards appropriately placed around County Council buildings. It is the responsibility of the appropriate Safety Group to ensure that displays are monitored and kept up to date. The Health and Safety coordinator for each department/service may audit these to ensure the currency of the information displayed.

Building User Groups (BUGs)

Generally, the most senior officer based within the premises is assigned the responsibility of Building Steward. Stewardship is a coordinating role; the main responsibility is to ensure that building-related health and safety functions are delegated to each occupying service and to monitor compliance and performance. Building Stewards should also ensure that BUGs are established within larger establishments or those which house multiple services. Often such groups will discuss safety issues and there may be a need for liaison between BUGs and Group or Service Health and Safety Groups.

Further advice for Building Stewards is provided by the Corporate Landlord function within Property Services. All managers have a role to play in ensuring that their members of staff have a safe working environment. The need for cooperation and coordination between managers and their Building Stewards is extremely important. It is essential that all senior officers ensure that service managers contribute positively to this process. Property Services have devised a table detailing a wide range of stewardship functions and this is reproduced in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 - Model Group/Service Health and Safety Meeting Remit

Membership

- The Safety Group will be chaired by the nominated senior manager from within the Group, Department or Service.
- The Safety Group should nominate from within its membership a Vice-Chair to substitute should the Chair be unavailable.
- The total number of members should be commensurate with the size and diversity of the Group, Department or Service. It should not be so large as to be ineffectual. The Safety Group membership should be representative of each function
- The relevant service Health and Safety Adviser or substitute from the Corporate Health and Safety Team will attend the appropriate level of meeting in an ex officio capacity.
- Other specialists may be called upon in an ex officio capacity, as required, to give advice and guidance on specific topics, such as training or property advice.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Safety Group will:

- Be appointed by the relevant Chair.
- Ensure that all members are notified of the Safety Group's meeting date, together with a request for the submission of items for the agenda, at least ten days prior to the date of the meeting.
- Ensure that the agenda is prepared and circulated to all Safety Group members at least seven days prior to the date of the meeting.
- Be responsible for the preparation of the minutes and for ensuring that they are approved and signed by the Chair before they are circulated and filed.
- Record actions arising from each meeting in a separate Action Log. The Log should be used to monitor performance on an on-going basis, adding new actions after each meeting and indicating when previous actions are complete.
- Be responsible for the circulation of the minutes of meetings to all relevant parties and request that they are posted on any relevant notice boards.
- Be responsible for the preparation and circulation of reports and publications, as directed by the Chair, and refer to the Chair any matters of difficulty or importance requiring immediate action.

Remit

At the first meeting of the Safety Group this remit document will be agreed by the members for a specified period of time, after which it will be reviewed. The Group will:

- Facilitate upward and downward communication between the XX Safety Group and the YY Safety Group(s)
- Consider new or amended health and safety legislation and assess its impact on the current working practices within the Group, Department or Service.
- Review any accidents, violent incidents or “near misses” which have occurred within the Group, Department or Service and identify if any further action is needed.
- Consider any health and safety matter referred to the Safety Group by the staff within the Group, Department or Service and to report back accordingly.
- Engage the workforce in the promotion of a safe and healthy working environment.
- Promote the continuous improvement of health and safety management systems to reduce injuries and ill health
- Consider and, where appropriate, set objectives in addition to those produced by the Corporate Health and Safety Group and, additionally, monitor progress and performance

Arrangements

- Meetings of the Safety Group will normally be held at least once every three months. Additional meetings may be convened, if necessary. The procedure for calling additional meetings will be via the Chair
- When a meeting is cancelled or postponed an agreed alternative time and date should be announced as soon as possible and within 10 working days of the cancellation.

Model Agenda

The standard agenda for a Safety Group is given below. This can be amended to reflect the requirements of different Safety Groups.

- Apologies/names of attendees
- Matters arising
- Current issues raised by representatives
- Accidents and incident details, statistics and trend analysis
- Inspections and audits
- Claims
- Objectives
- Risk assessments and other documentation

- Training
- Feedback from the Corporate H&S Group, Healthy workforce Group or other strategic groups
- New legislation and guidance
- HSE or Local Environmental Health activity
- Any other business
- Date of next meeting

Appendix 2 - Stewardship of Premises – Functions and Organisation

This form enables managers (including those new to a building) to make an assessment of the required arrangements. It is designed to identify building issues, highlight those persons nominated to manage or coordinate them and detail the procedural arrangements to be followed. As well as this initial assessment the form should be used to reassess circumstances, if and when they change. **The roles listed are likely to require appropriate training, including refresher training.**

Establishment Name	
Address	

No	Role	Name, Position & Contact Details
1.	Establishment Lead Officer	
2.	Establishment Deputy Officer	
3.	Key Holder:	
4.	Fire Warden(s)	
5.	Evacuation Chair Operator(s) (Where applicable)	
6.	First Aider(s)	
7.	Safety Co-ordinator	

Stewardship of Premises – Details of Issues and Procedures

No	Issue	Is there a procedure in place?	Details of Procedure and Summary of Further Action Required
8.	Induction of New Starters		
9.	Receiving and Dealing with Visitors		
10.	Receiving and dealing with Contractors: (including completion of HSC1 forms)		
11.	Plant and Equipment Checks (Required as part of a statutory inspection & testing programme, such as water hygiene, fire extinguishers, lifting equipment etc)		
12.	Lone Working (refer to risk assessments or safe working procedures)		
13.	Safe Access and Egress (including parking, traffic management arrangements, gritting plans etc)		
14.	Emergency Preparedness (including fire procedures, first aid and use of evac chairs)		
15.	Receipt and Storage of Bulk Deliveries		
16.	Membership of the Building User Group (Where applicable)		(Identify names of Chair and members)