

Statement of General Policy for Health, Safety and Well- being at Work



Dorset Council

Improving the quality of life for people in Dorset,
now and for the future



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Statement of General Policy for Health, Safety and Well-being at Work

1. Scope

This policy applies to all officers and all members of Dorset Council.

1.1 Health, Safety and Well-being at Work Policy (referred to Hereafter as “The Policy”)

1.2 The Elected Members and Officers of Dorset Council (The Council) accept and will meet their obligations under all relevant health, safety and well-being legislation that affects its activities by making every effort, so far as is reasonably practicable, to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees and will ensure that all reasonably practical steps are taken to protect the health and safety of those who come into contact with services and premises.

1.3 In order to achieve this, the Council will provide necessary information and training and make adequate budgetary provision within the limits of the finances available to it.

1.4 The Council believes in actively involving the management and the workforce in its efforts to achieve a safe and healthy working environment.

1.5 The Council will consult and co-operate with safety representatives appointed by the recognised Trade Unions and employee representatives of those employees not in unions. It will provide appropriate facilities to enable them to carry out their duties in accordance with the relevant legislation and Codes of Practice.

2. The Council will ensure that: -

2.1 Managers conduct suitable and sufficient assessments of risk to the health, safety and well-being of their employees and others who may be affected by their operations.

2.2 All significant findings from the risk assessments are recorded.

2.3 Written arrangements are in place to plan, organise, control, monitor and review any measures needed to deal with the significant findings resulting from the risk assessments undertaken.

2.4 Competent persons are available to assist managers in fulfilling their health, safety and well-being obligations.

2.5 For shared workplaces, managers co-operate and co-ordinate their activities on health, safety and well-being issues.

2.6 Emergency action procedures are in place to deal with serious and imminent danger should the need arise.

2.7 An appropriate Occupational Health and Counselling service for its employees is provided.

2.8 Appropriate information, instruction and training for its employees in the identification and control of health, safety and well-being risks are provided. Particular attention will be given to the training on safety issues for new employees as part of induction courses. Refresher courses will be provided for existing employees.

2.9 Where risks cannot be controlled by means which are equally effective, suitable personal protective clothing and equipment will be provided.

2.10 Arrangements exist for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of employees and others who come into contact with the Council's services.

2.11 Amendments to this Policy, codes of safe working practice appropriate updates will be circulated as necessary.

3. Employees will be required: -

3.1 Take reasonable care to ensure their own health, safety and well-being and that of any other person or persons who may be affected by their actions or omissions at work.

3.2 To use work equipment and machinery in accordance with the instruction and training they have received.

3.3 To report serious dangers, or health, safety and well-being shortcomings (which a trained employee would reasonably consider to be so) to their managers.

4. Authorised persons on the authority's premises: -

4.1 Will be required to observe the Council's health and safety rules and instructions given by persons implementing the Council's safety policies.

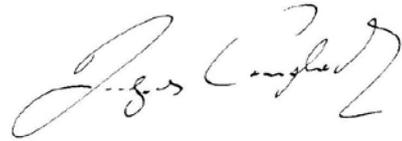
4.2 Should comply with all related health and safety obligations, local safety rules and codes of safe working practice whilst working on Council premises or undertaking work for or on behalf of the Council.

5. The Staff Consultative Panel/Joint Consultative Committees

5.1 The Staff Consultative Panel is responsible for reviewing matters relating to the health, safety and well-being for all Council employees. At Directorate level, local Joint Consultative Committees have responsibility for taking appropriate action to ensure that health and safety matters are managed so as to protect Council employees and users of our services.

Handwritten signature of David Jenkins in black ink, with a long horizontal line underneath.

David Jenkins
Chief Executive
October 2009

Handwritten signature of Angus Campbell in black ink.

Angus Campbell
Leader of the County Council
October 2009

Arrangements for the implementation of “The Policy”

1. Key Terms:

For the purpose of this document: -

Delegation: - is about entrusting authority to others. This means they can act and initiate independently; and that they assume responsibility with you for certain tasks.

Responsibility: - The obligation to answer for actions, this often means answering to some specified authority. It is also the recognition that in order to achieve one’s purpose, one must act oneself (‘take’ responsibility) rather than expecting others to do something.

Accountability: - Refers to the liability for any acts and omissions in connection with the exercise of legal authority and execution of practical duties that are borne by an individual or post. This accountability may remain with that person regardless of whether they actually carry them out, i.e. whether their practical duties have been delegated or not. Any individual who remains accountable for a duty retains authority for it. They should therefore when delegating practical tasks to others, take steps to ensure the proper execution of these tasks.

Allocation of responsibility

2. Dorset Council

The Council will, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- 2.1** Ensure that there is an effective policy for health, safety and well-being for their employees.
- 2.2** Ensure that adequate provision is made so that the requirements of current health, safety and well-being legislation and codes of safe working practice are observed by all employees and those working on behalf of the Council.
- 2.3** Regularly appraise the effectiveness of the Policy by means of a report to the Staff Consultative Panel. The report will identify whether the organisation and arrangements of the policy are still applicable and appropriate to the needs of the Council.
- 2.4** Ensure that such information; instruction, training and supervision are provided as is necessary to ensure the health, safety and well-being at work of all employees of the Council.
- 2.5** Provide adequate resources to meet the Council’s health, safety and well-being obligations.
- 2.6** Ensure the maintenance of a safe and healthy working environment in all the Council’s varied activities.

2.7 Consult and co-operate with appointed safety representatives and employees on health, safety and well-being issues.

2.8 Ensure through its officers that a copy of this policy statement, and any subsequent amendments, are brought to the attention of all employees.

3. The management structure of Dorset Council

The County Management Team consists of the Chief Executive and Directors of four individual Directorates.



4. The Chief Executive

In addition to the duties and responsibilities assigned to each Director, the Chief Executive will so far as is reasonably practicable:

4.1 Be responsible for the overall implementation of the Policy and compliance with health, safety and well-being legislation.

4.2 Ensure the Directors are aware of, understand and fulfil their duties and responsibilities in relation to the requirements of current health, safety and well-being legislation.

4.3 Regularly review the performance of the Council in relation to health, safety and well-being.

5. Directors

Directors are responsible for implementing the requirements of all relevant health, safety and well-being legislation within their directorates. In addition, they will so far as be reasonably practicable: -

5.1 Be directly responsible to the Chief Executive for the effective implementation of the Policy and compliance with health, safety and well-being legislation in their functional areas of responsibility.

5.2 Ensure that all responsibilities allocated to managers or other officers within the directorate are properly and effectively carried out and employees are supported when implementing the requirements of the Policy and relevant health, safety and well-being legislation.

- 5.3** Provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health, safety and well-being of employees.
- 5.4** Take account of the advice of employees within the Health and Safety Team to ensure that the Policy is implemented.
- 5.5** Review accident/incident trends and take any remedial action necessary without undue delay. Ensure all incidents are reported to the Health and Safety Team as soon as possible.
- 5.6** Ensure that there are adequate resources available to meet the health, safety and well-being requirements of their directorate.
- 5.7** Where appropriate, inform and seek the advice of the Health and Safety Team and safety/employee representatives at the start of any project or introduction of new machinery, substances or processes.
- 5.8** Ensure that the provision and maintenance of a safe and healthy working environment forms a key result area for their managers. The behavioural competence framework for the PDR process gives greater detail to support this duty.
- 5.9** Ensure that employees are made aware of the Occupational Health Service, the Staff Counsellor, and the Contact Officers and the facilities they provide.

6. Head of Human Resources

The following areas of responsibility are delegated to the Head of Human Resources in addition to the normal responsibilities delegated to him by the Chief Executive.

The Head of Human Resources will so far as be reasonably practicable: -

- 6.1** Provide a consistent framework of health, safety and well-being information and ensure policies and procedures are fully implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- 6.2** Through the Health and Safety Team, the Occupational Health Service and Staff Counsellor, provide an advisory, consultancy, information and monitoring service on health, safety and well-being issues across the Council.
- 6.3** Ensure strong consultation links are made with individual Directorates, employee and safety representatives via day to day contact, Directorate Joint Consultative Committees and the Staff Consultative Panel.

7. Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors will so far as is reasonably practicable: -

- 7.1** Be responsible within their directorates for the health, safety and well-being of their employees and other persons who may come into contact with their premises and functions.
- 7.2** Ensure that the Policy is brought to the attention of, and is implemented by all employees and contractors, and that all employees and contractors are aware of their duties

under the requirements of current health, safety and wellbeing legislation and are competent to carry them out.

7.3 Conduct assessments of risk and take any appropriate remedial action necessary to deal with problems highlighted by the assessments.

7.4 Ensure all persons under their supervision are provided with such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure their health, safety and well-being at work.

7.5 Monitor the competence of employees by using the behavioural framework and the PDR process relating to health, safety and well-being.

7.6 Inform employees, and other persons (e.g. contractors) of any potential safety hazards that may be encountered in the course of their work and the measures that have been taken to protect them.

7.7 Ensure the safe use, handling, storage and transport of all articles and substances under their control.

7.8 Ensure the completion of accident/incident/dangerous occurrence reports in accordance with the Council's reporting arrangements.

7.9 Investigate all accidents promptly to discover their cause and take action where appropriate to prevent recurrence.

7.10 In the event of a serious accident/incident/dangerous occurrence, inform the Director, and the Health and Safety Team (telephone number 01305 224296) by the quickest practicable means. Once the casualty (if any) has been removed, make the site secure so that detailed investigation may be made by the Health and Safety Team and/or the Health and Safety Executive.

7.11 Accompany employees from the Health and Safety Team and/or the safety representative on planned health and safety inspections/audits.

7.12 Ensure that their employees are issued with suitable protective clothing/equipment and that it is maintained in good order and used as required.

7.13 Ensure that all safety rules are observed, particularly by contractors and members of the general public, and that all defects or damage to plant/premises are promptly reported and rectified.

7.14 Where necessary, obtain advice on aspects of health, safety and well-being from the Health and Safety Team, the Occupational Health Service or the Staff Counsellor.

7.15 Not issue any management instruction to employees that has the effect of conflicting with the requirements of the Policy and or relevant codes of safe working practice.

7.16 Ensure all proposed new buildings, plant, equipment, layouts, processes or substances are assessed to ensure health, safety and well-being compliance.

7.17 Ensure that volunteers and members of the public are aware of and understand local safety rules and comply with them.

7.18 Ensure appropriate delegation of their responsibilities when they are absent.

7.19 Consult and co-operate with appointed safety representatives and or employee representatives on health, safety and well-being issues.

8. Health and Safety Team

The Health and Safety Team is available to provide advice and guidance on all health, safety and well-being matters. The Health and Safety Team is responsible for: -

8.1 Providing advice and guidance on the implementation of the Policy, and relevant health, safety and well-being legislation and associated codes of safe working practice to managers and employees.

8.2 Liaising with officers of the Health and Safety Executive, Fire Authority, other enforcing authorities and relevant agencies.

8.3 Providing health, safety and well-being advice in relation to current or proposed sites, premises work practices, plant and equipment, owned by the Council or where the Council has a responsibility including work being undertaken on behalf of the Council. They will assist managers to ensure compliance with current health, safety and well-being legislation and the requirements of the Policy. Where necessary they will make recommendations for the improvement of existing methods of work by the introduction of safer systems.

8.4 Drawing local manager's attention to contraventions of relevant statutory requirements, the Policy, codes of safe working practice, accidents, dangerous occurrences and unsafe practices.

8.5 Ensuring that Directors are informed if conflict occurs over any advice given.

8.6 Investigating all accidents/incidents and dangerous occurrences that they deem necessary and preparing reports on them; co-ordinating the collection of accident/incident statistics and reporting on these to the Health and Safety Executive, Directorate Joint Consultative Committees and the Staff Consultative Panel.

8.7 Ensuring that all reports of accidents/incidents, dangerous occurrences, inspections of plant, equipment, premises, places, processes or practices are co-ordinated, and that these records or reports are received, maintained and brought to the attention of relevant managers and Directors.

8.8 Organising and delivering any necessary training in aspects of health, safety and well-being for employees.

8.9 Issuing a 'Notice to stop' any job or process, where they believe there is immediate peril to person or plant where the job or process is being carried out by or on behalf of the Council, or where the Council has a responsibility under relevant legislation.

8.10 Liaising with Trade Unions and other representatives on issues relating to health, safety and well-being.

8.11 Monitoring the effective implementation of health, safety and well-being policies and practice.

In addition: -

8.12 The Health and Safety Team have the right of access at all reasonable times to all the Council's premises and workplaces without prior arrangement.

9. The Occupational Health Service

The Occupational Health Service will: -

9.1 Provide advice and information on all work-related matters affecting the health of the Council's employees.

9.2 Provide advice to line managers on how to identify and successfully manage potential health risks in the workplace. The Occupational Health Service will advise managers on how they could assist and support their employees to undertake their duties particularly if they have experienced an accident or prolonged ill health.

9.3 Conduct assessments of work-related health issues and help to prevent ill health by looking at all material, operations and processes in which employees may be involved or come into contact with at work and advise managers accordingly.

9.4 Co-ordinate the pre-employment health screening of successful candidates for Council posts.

9.5 Co-ordinate access to specialised medical expertise and maintain regular contact with the Health and Safety Team.

9.6 Work with other officers and agencies as appropriate, promote and develop policies that lead to a healthy workforce.

9.7 Where appropriate assess health related risks before decisions are taken on investment in new plant, processes and working areas.

9.8 Develop control measures, including health surveillance, where required.

9.9 Advise employees on health-related issues.

10. The Staff Counsellor

The Staff Counsellor:

- Will co-ordinate a confidential counselling service for all employees in relation to work or personal issues.

- Will ensure that all employee consultations shall remain confidential.

11. Employees

All employees who knowingly contravene the safety policies which affect the place of work where they are currently employed or disobey or cause others to disobey safety instructions issued by the manager or persons delegated by the manager of that workplace, will be liable to disciplinary action, which in serious cases may result in dismissal.

Every employee will so far as be reasonably practicable: -

11.1 Co-operate with managers to ensure the implementation of this Policy and other health, safety and well-being related policies and procedures.

11.2 Report all accidents/incidents and dangerous occurrences, whether persons are injured or not.

11.3 Report all dangerous actions and work practices by fellow employees to their supervisors.

11.4 Report all hazards to line managers and accept their responsibility for removing any such hazard where it is safe and reasonable for them to do so and inform their manager accordingly.

11.5 Use appropriate protective clothing and equipment when and where there is a requirement to do so.

11.6 Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and well-being.

11.7 Make suggestions to their managers to improve health, safety and well-being in their work place.

All employees have the right to consult with the Occupational Health Service, the Health and Safety Team and the Staff Counsellor. These consultations shall be confidential.

12. Safety representatives and safety committees

The committee structure within the County Council that attends to health, safety and well-being functions will be as set out below.

12.1 The Staff Consultative Panel comprising of Elected Members and representatives of all Trade Unions and Staff Associations recognised by the Council has been formed. This will be the forum where free and frank discussion on health, safety and well-being issues may be conducted for the mutual benefit of the Council and its employees. The Panel will be advised by appropriate officers of the Council and other seconded specialists. The Panel will meet quarterly.

12.2 The Panel will receive reports and make recommendations on matters affecting health and safety of the Council's operations and the well-being of its employees.

12.3 At Directorate level, local Joint Consultative Committees have responsibility for taking appropriate action to ensure that health, safety and well-being matters are monitored and managed so as to protect employees and users of our services.

12.4 The Council accepts that safety representatives and employee representatives are a valuable asset and so welcomes their contribution to improve health, safety and well-being standards.

12.5 The County Council will consult safety representatives and other appropriate employee representatives with regard to all significant health, safety and well-being matters and in particular the following:

- the introduction of any measure at a workplace which may substantially affect the health, safety and well-being of the employees;
- any health, safety and welfare information the Council is required to provide to employees;
- the planning and organisation of any health, safety and well-being training the County Council is required to provide to the employees that the safety/employee representatives concerned represent.

12.6 Safety representatives and employee representatives

Duties of safety representatives are varied but can include workplace inspections and investigations as well as the wider consultation responsibility.

Safety representatives nominated by recognised Trade Unions and those persons representing employees not in a Trade Union, will be recognised by the Council and afforded appropriate facilities in accordance with the safety representatives and safety committee regulations.

Note: The matters listed above are specified in the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 (as amended) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended)

13. Additional Health and Safety policies and guidance

13.1 In addition to this General Policy for Health, Safety and Well-being are the following related Council policies:

Accident Reporting

Lone Working

Manual Handling

Risk Assessment

Violence at Work

13.2 Supplementary guidance on health, safety and well-being is available through staffnet on the following link: <http://staffnet/index.jsp?articleid=183903>

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