

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

PROTECTIVE SERVICES  
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

# Intervention Plan

2016-2017

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## **Foreword**

Aberdeen City Council's Protective Services' Health & Safety Intervention Plan has regard to recent developments in Council Policy and the changing Occupational Health and Safety landscape.

In 2016/17 the Service activities will reflect the HSE's national priorities but will also address local matters of concern.

The Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Commercial Team Manager in conjunction with the Principal Environmental Health Officer specialising in Occupational Health and Safety.

## **Introduction and Definitions**

The principal statute regulating standards of health and safety at work is the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA). Numerous subordinate statutory instruments provide detailed specialist regulatory measures. HSWA places a statutory duty on local authorities to enforce the relevant statutory instruments in relation to classes of business determined from time to time and defined by statutory instrument. The Enforcing Authority Regulations 1998 define the classes of activity which come under local authority enforcement and those which fall to enforcement by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has responsibility for overseeing enforcement of health and safety measures across the UK and advising government on policy issues.

The HSE has the statutory power to direct local authorities in the conduct of health and safety enforcement and default powers to take over services where authorities fail to follow relevant directions.

The term 'enforcement' is not restricted to the use of legal sanctions to achieve the aims of the legislation. 'Enforcement' is also taken to include:

- 1 The provision of advice about the application and interpretation of legislation.
- 2 The provision of advice about best practice.
- 3 Encouragement of businesses to achieve compliance and adopt good practice through awareness raising, promotion, education and provision of feedback.
- 4 Raising the awareness of employers, self-employed and employees about safety and health issues and the measures necessary or available to control them.
- 5 Partnership management with the business and voluntary sectors and other agencies.

Formal enforcement options include:

- 1 The use of enforcement notice procedures to require improvements to safety controls or prohibit the dangerous operations.
- 2 The power to seize or render safe dangerous equipment, substances or articles.
- 3 In certain cases the regulation of activities through system of prior approval.
- 4 Reporting matters to the Procurator Fiscal with a view to instigating prosecution.

The circumstances under which these options are judged appropriate are set out in the Health and Safety Enforcement Policy. The actions associated with enforcement are concerned with the monitoring of work activities and safety management in workplaces for which the Aberdeen City Council is the enforcing authority through the following:

- 1 Inspection and audit of work premises, work activities and processes.
- 2 Investigation of complaints from employees or members of the public about workplaces and work activities.
- 3 Investigation of work related accidents, ill health and dangerous occurrences.
- 4 Receipt and, where appropriate, investigation of statutory notifications, for example reports of lifting equipment found to be defective on thorough examination, notifications of proposed asbestos removal and notification of cooling towers and evaporative condensers.
- 5 Provision of advice to businesses and workers on workplace health and safety.
- 6 Review of guidance issued to businesses in the light of technical or legislative developments.

## **Health and Safety Intervention Plan**

### **1 Service Aims and Objectives**

#### **1.1 Aims and Objectives**

The overall aim of the Occupational Health and Safety Service is to work with others to protect people's health and safety by ensuring physical risks in the workplace are managed properly

Officers seek to ensure that the health and safety of members of the public is not compromised by ensuring businesses comply with their obligation to provide safe systems of work.

## 1.1 [contd.]

These aims are passed primarily through the enforcement of relevant legislation by a variety of means but principally through advice given during proactive inspection and audits of work systems. In addition, these aims are also achieved by the provision of advice and promotion of relevant issues to employers, employees and, where appropriate, to the wider public.

The full scope of the Service is set out in Section 2.2 below.

## 1.2 **Key Partnership Agencies**

### **Health and Safety Executive [HSE]**

Alongside local authorities, the HSE is the primary health and safety enforcing authority within Great Britain. The HSE is responsible for enforcing health and safety within the remaining businesses that are not Local Authority enforced.

From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 HSE became the single national regulatory body responsible for promoting the cause of better health and safety at work.

### **Local Authority Unit [LAU]**

The LAU is a free standing Unit within the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). LAU works with the HSE/LA Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) to give national advice, information and guidance to LAs. The Unit is the central focus for the development of LA enforcement policy and also provides LA enforcement officers with training and support.

### **Health and Safety Executive/Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA)**

The HELA Committee deals with major policy and strategic issues concerning health and safety enforcement by LAs. It promotes and protects the interests of LAs in discussion with central government and other stakeholders and develops and monitors the HELA Strategic Plan which sets out LAs' contribution to HSE's continuing aims and key priorities for improved health and safety performance.

### **Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives**

This agency is an occupational health and safety service that provides access to free, confidential information, advice and support on workplace health and safety issues to employees and business operators.

## 1.2 [contd.]

### **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**

This Service has a close working relationship with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and has previously undertaken joint initiatives such as compliance with safety requirements in licensed premises.

### **Police Scotland**

Initiatives in partnership with Police Scotland have previously taken place in regard to preventing violence to staff within retail premises.

### **Care Inspectorate**

The Care Inspectorate is a national organisation set up under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 to regulate and inspect Scottish care services. The Care Inspectorate is working towards putting in place a new, unified and effective system of care regulation that puts the safety and well-being of people who use care services at its heart. The work of the Care Inspectorate impacts on the Health and Safety Enforcement Service of Local Authority enforced care services, particularly care homes and private nurseries, and this necessitates close working.

## 1.3 **Linkage to Corporate Aims and Objectives**

### **Aberdeen - the Smarter City**

The Plan accords with the visions contained within Aberdeen - the Smarter City. The Service assists with the promotion of Aberdeen as a great place to do business and visit, and works with partners to promote the city.

### **Business Plan**

The Service has a flexible, skilled and motivated workforce who makes best use of resources available, delivering improvement in the specific service priorities in the most cost effective manner

### **Links to the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013**

This Health and Safety Intervention Plan contributes to making Aberdeen an attractive, clean, healthy and safe place to live and work; a City that is welcoming to business and values its business community.

### 1.3 [contd.]

#### **Links to the Grampian Joint Health Protection Plan**

This Health and Safety Intervention Plan also contributes to the overall aims of the Grampian Joint Health Protection Plan in terms of the investigation, control and prevention of communicable disease and environmental hazards to human health, specifically in terms of:

- 1 the control of the spread of infection in workplaces where workers and/or members of the public may be exposed to infectious biological agents,
- 2 workers exposure to hazardous substances and harmful levels of noise in the course of their work activities,
- 3 exposure of the public to hazardous substances and harmful levels of noise arising from work activities

## **2 Background**

### **2.1 Profile of the Local Authority**

Aberdeen City Council is a mainly urban authority with a population of around 228,800. The City is the administrative centre for many energy-related businesses. Consequently there is a thriving service sector of hotels, employment agencies, contract cleaning companies, architects, surveying and computer consultancy firms, a variety of retail outlets and a wide range of both indoor and outdoor leisure facilities. Catering for the non-working population, there are also numerous care facilities for the young and the elderly, from day nurseries and crèches to residential care for the elderly and those with disabilities. Within the city boundaries there are numerous industrial estates, encompassing both light and heavy industrial warehousing and transport depots.

### **2.2 Scope of and Demands on the Health and Safety Regulatory Service**

As an Enforcing Authority, the Council has responsibility for the provision of health and safety enforcement services covering a range of businesses, mainly within the service sector, covering approximately 4,000 premises.

The principal activities in regard to these premises are:

- 1 Investigating complaints relating to safety, occupational health and welfare at these workplaces;
- 2 Investigating reported accidents arising in the course of work activities;
- 3 Investigating reports of statutory examination of certain types of work equipment, where the examination has revealed defects;

## 2.2 [contd.]

- 4 Receiving notifications of work involving asbestos that may require to be followed up to ensure adequate controls are in place; and
- 5 Engaging in focussed intervention programmes.

The staff carrying out health and safety inspections also have responsibilities for inspecting premises under food safety legislation as detailed in the organisational structure set out in Section 2.2.1

The business profile for which the service is responsible for health and safety enforcement is detailed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Business Profile for Health and Safety Enforcement in Aberdeen**

Type of Premises	No. in category (15/01/15)
Retail	1043
Wholesale	135
Office	1146
Catering	864
Hotels	96
Residential Care	88
Leisure	151
Consumer Services	464
Other	73
Total	4060

## Organisational Structure

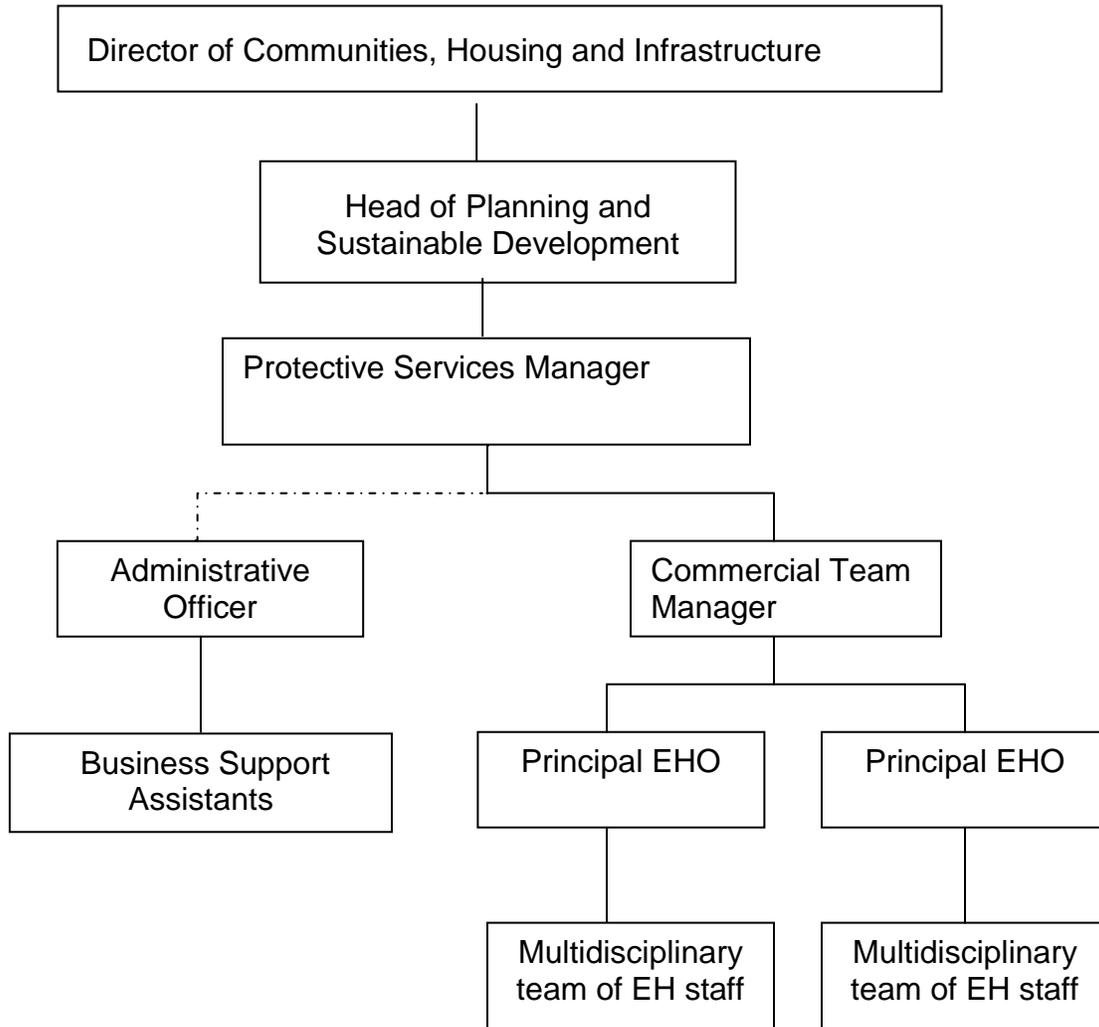
### 2.2.1 The Health and Safety Regulatory Service

The Health and Safety regulatory service is a city-wide service provided from within the Environmental Health Commercial Section of the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Service by a mix of staff that includes Environmental Health Officers, Authorised Officers and administration staff. The staff also

carry out a range of additional activities including food safety, licensing, planning and animal health and welfare inspections which give the opportunity to deal with health and safety concerns at that time.

2.2.1 [contd.]

**ORGANISATION CHART**



### 2.2.2 Committee Structure

The bulk of health and safety related matters are reported to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee. When appropriate, health and safety related matters may also be reported to the Finance, Policy and Resources or the Audit and Risk Committees.

### 2.2.3 Service delivery points

The staff of the Service are based at Marischal College, Broad Street. The service can be accessed by businesses and public by telephone or in person at Marischal College between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday. Telephone calls made outside these hours will be recorded by the telephone answering service. At weekends and evenings an Environmental Health duty officer is on standby for emergencies. The Service can also be accessed at any time via e-mail, although e-mails will only be accessed by the service staff during office working hours. Useful information can also accessed through the Service's webpages.

### 2.2.4 Enforcement Policy

The occupational health and safety enforcement policy will be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect legislative changes and recent developments.

## 3. Service Delivery

Local authorities have a duty to 'make adequate arrangements for enforcement' under Section 18 of the Health and Safety etc. at Work Act 1974.

"The National Local Authority Enforcement Code – Health and Safety at Work" sets out what is meant by "adequate arrangements for enforcement" and concentrates on the following four objectives:

- [a] Clarifying the **roles and responsibilities** of business, regulators and professional bodies to ensure a shared understanding on the management of risk;
- [b] Outlining the **risk-based regulatory approach** that LAs should adopt with reference to the Regulator's Compliance Code, HSE's Enforcement Policy Statement and the need to target relevant and effective interventions that focus on influencing behaviours and improving the management of risk;
- [c] Setting out the need for the **training and competence** of LA H&S regulators linked to the authorisation and use of HSWA powers; and
- [d] Explaining the arrangements for collection and publication of LA data and

peer review to give an **assurance on meeting the requirements of this Code**.

Practically, this Service is guided to achieve this by:

- [a] having a risk-based Intervention Plan focussed on tackling specific risks;
- [b] evaluate the risks that they need to address and use the whole range of interventions to target these specific risks;
- [c] reserving unannounced proactive inspection only for the activities and sectors published by HSE or where intelligence suggests risks are not being effectively managed;
- [d] using national and local intelligence to inform priorities;
- [e] ensuring that officers authorised to enforce the requirements are trained and competent;
- [f] setting clear expectations for delivery;
- [g] having a clear and easily accessible enforcement policy;
- [h] providing easily accessible information on services and advice available to businesses;
- [i] publishing data on our health and safety inspection records;
- [j] having an easily accessible complaints procedure.

Arising from the Enforcement Code is a list produced by the HSE of high risk activities/sectors that may be subject to proactive inspections and which guides the Service's direction in enforcement activity.

Additionally Local Authority Circular (LAC) 67/2 (rev 4) provides LAs with guidance and tools for priority planning and targeting their interventions to enable them to meet the requirements of the Code. In summary, this means the LAs ensuring their planned regulatory activity is focussed on outcomes-primarily working to deliver those national priorities set by HSE, taking account of local issues prioritised by risk, and be accompanied by an inspection programme meeting the requirements of the Code.

The programme has therefore been developed to meet targets that are attainable and meaningful.

Review of activities during 2015/16 will be reported Committee in August.

### 3.1 Work Programme 2016/17

The programme has been chosen to address national priorities but also focus on local concerns. These are identified primarily by analysis of accident and complaint activities but also through potentially risky activities arising from visits/inspections. Care has been taken not set overambitious targets as resources are constrained by other work programmes (primarily food safety) and responding to reactive work. Should time permit, there may be the opportunity to develop and implement other interventions later in the year.

#### Proactive Work

What	Why	How
Control of legionella	National priority and high risk sector	Proactive inspection of registered cooling towers/evaporative condensers
Asbestos awareness	National priority	On receiving intelligence of at risk businesses use appropriate measures to raise awareness of asbestos, including enforcement action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of written advice on maintenance responsibilities</li> <li>• Training of officers to identify Matters of Evident Concern (MEC)</li> <li>• Reactive visits as a result of knowledge of MEC</li> </ul>
Skin piercing	Although skin piercing as a commercial activity has to be licensed, this is on a 3 yearly cycle. There is sufficient concern that standards are not being maintained, considering the health risks associated with the activity and their seemingly increasingly popularity in its various forms	Inspections of licensed premises to ensure appropriate standards are being met.
High risk activities/ sectors	In accordance with the HSE's list of activities/sectors suitable for proactive inspection – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally owned tyre and exhaust fitters and motor vehicle repair associated with car sales.</li> <li>• Steel stockholders and builders / timber merchants</li> </ul>	Proactive inspection based on premises identified from current database and through local intelligence gathering
Safety of pressure systems within coffee machines	Awareness that these systems are not necessarily being maintained and examined as required. Significant safety risk if system fails.	Advisory letter sent to premises likely to have such machines .Enforcement action to be taken if subsequently found to be non-compliant.

## Reactive Work

Accident investigation	In accordance with National Enforcement Code and LAC 67/2-Advice/Guidance to Local Authorities On Targeting Interventions. Primarily meets: Reactive intervention (incident and accident investigation).	Targeting of investigations using HSE Incident Selection Criteria
Service requests (general enquiries/complaints including adverse lift reports)	In accordance with National Enforcement Code and LAC 67/2 Primarily meets: "Reactive intervention (dealing with issues of concern)"	Risk based approach to service requests
Licensing	As consultee on licensing applications with skin piercing and public entertainment having particular significance	Inspection visits
Advice to Businesses	In accordance with National Enforcement Code and LAC 67/2 – Education and awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On receiving intelligence of new business start up, visits scheduled to brief them on their responsibilities</li> <li>• Provision of comprehensive information on Service web pages, primarily to assist small/medium businesses in meeting their responsibilities.</li> <li>• Other opportunities as developed.</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Liaison with Other Bodies

The principal vehicle for inter-authority liaison is the North of Scotland Health and Safety Liaison Group on which this Service is represented by Principal EHO (PEHO) This forum facilitates consistency of enforcement in northern Scotland The PEHO attends the quarterly REHIS (Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland) Health and Safety Co-ordinating Group (HASCOG) meeting. This allows officers from Scottish local authorities to exchange experiences and views with each other and with representatives of the HSE. It is also an important forum for updates on political and strategic developments.

The Service will also continue to develop liaison arrangements with other Council services, including building standards and planning development management for prospective refurbishment of work premises, and with the Licensing Committee for premises licensed for activities such as skin piercing and public entertainment.

## 4. Resources

### 4.1 Staffing Allocation (as of 12/01/2016)

	Full time Equivalent Staff involved in health & safety enforcement
<b>Section Management</b>	
Commercial Team Leader	0.2
Principal Environmental Health Officer	0.6
<b>Admin Support</b>	0.5
<b>Field Staff</b>	
Environmental Health Officer	1.5
Senior Authorised Officer	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.5</b>

The Service will only deploy officers to carry out enforcement tasks for which they possess the appropriate qualifications and experience. Officers who are not accredited operate under the close supervision of the PEHO. Formal enforcement action [service of notices or preparation of reports to the Procurator Fiscal] is subject to the scrutiny of the PEHO or Commercial Team Manager.

### 4.2 Staff Development Plan

The authorisation procedures of the health and safety regulatory service have recently been reviewed to take account of Section 18 guidance which states the requirements for a trained and competent inspectorate.

Currently all the PEHOs and the Commercial Team Manager are fully authorised under the Health and safety at Work Etc Act 1974

Section 18 guidance sets out key competencies for HSE inspectors and Local Authority health and safety enforcement officers. Essentially, officers must have adequate standards of competence in these core areas, or be supervised by other officers who possess them. The HSE says that it is up to individual local authorities how they choose to demonstrate the achievement of standards of competence but have suggested that the level of attainment is to Regulators' Development Needs Analysis (RDNA )core competences.

The current arrangements in place for ensuring a competent enforcement staff are as follows:

[a] Staff involved in health and safety enforcement activities (including safety

inspections, accident investigations, complaint investigations and giving advice) are qualified Environmental Health Officers or hold the NEBOSH certificate in occupational safety and health or other appropriate health and safety qualification.

- [b] The Service has a quality assurance scheme for accrediting enforcement staff who have attained a basic level of competency in health and safety enforcement. Accredited staff have a reduced level of supervision on basic inspection and audit activities.
- [c] All formal enforcement actions [service of Improvement Notices, Prohibition notices and Reports to the Procurator Fiscal] are supervised by either the PEHO or Commercial Team Manager.
- [d] In-house training is provided by the PEHO on procedural and policy matters and new legislation.

The current arrangements comply with the National Local Authority Enforcement Code.

## **5 Quality Monitoring and Assessment**

Documented procedures for quality monitoring and quality assessment of the Service have been established and as part of this joint inspections, where competency is assessed and consistency checks are made are carried out throughout the year. These should ensure adherence to the Service's Health and Safety Enforcement Policy, internal enforcement procedures and the HSE guidance and the Enforcement Management Model.

## **6 Review**

### **6.1 Review of Intervention Plan**

The Service Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis following the end of each financial year.

### **6.2 Identification of any variation from the Intervention Plan**

Review of the Plan will include assessment of performance against the plan, identify areas for improvement and forecast the demands on the service and the appropriate service mix required to meet those demands. The Plan will be revised as appropriate.

### **6.3 Areas for Improvement**

- [a] Ensure that the profile of occupational health and safety is maintained and enhanced, primarily by the interventions detailed in this Plan.
- [b] Continue to establish and partnership agreements for promotional and educational initiatives where possible.
- [c] All field staff to be assessed as to their competency. Ongoing development needs to be addressed therefrom.
- [d] Ensure the publication of data of the Service's health and safety activities.
- [e] Review and where necessary amend the Enforcement Policy and procedures in line with Government requirements/guidance.
- [f] Engage in peer review with other neighbouring local authorities through the North of Scotland Liaison Group.
- [g] Develop and publish a complaints procedure that clearly references the Independent Regulatory Challenge Panel.