

Corporate Health and Safety Policy

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<p>24/06/22 – Section 3.1 visuals updated to include Function H & S Groups.</p> <p>24/06/22 – section 3.3 added to explain role of Function H & S groups.</p> <p>24/06/22 – section 3.5, bullet e) added re nomination of H & S champions in each Cluster.</p> <p>24/06/22 – section 3.7 premises responsible person responsibilities amended to reflect new Corporate Landlord procedure.</p> <p>24/06/22 – section 3.10 Corporate Health and Safety Team responsibilities changed to reflect new approved activities.</p> <p>24/06/22 – section 3.12 added to outline responsibilities of Cluster H & S champions.</p> <p>24/06/22 – section 4.2 visual changed to outline CHST (Corporate Health and Safety Team) responsibility to check local high-risk procedures.</p>	

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1 Why does the Council need this Policy?

- 1.1** This policy defines the control environment and key principles adopted by the Council to manage the health and safety of Aberdeen City Council (the Council). It details the general policy statement together with the arrangements required for its implementation. The statement supports the requirements of Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (“the Act”). The purpose of this policy is to set out the responsibilities and arrangements which will allow the Council to mitigate the risks of non-compliance with their health and safety obligations.

2 Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1** This policy applies to every aspect of the Council’s business including all educational, commercial, residential, recreational and management activities. It describes:
- a) the Council’s **commitment** to discharge its duties of care under the Act to anyone potentially impacted by its undertakings.
 - b) the **roles and responsibilities** of specified employees, agency workers and contractors to support the Council’s efforts to provide a safe and healthy workplace; and
 - c) the **arrangements** in place to secure the health, safety, and welfare of all people to whom it owes duties under the Act.

3 Responsibilities

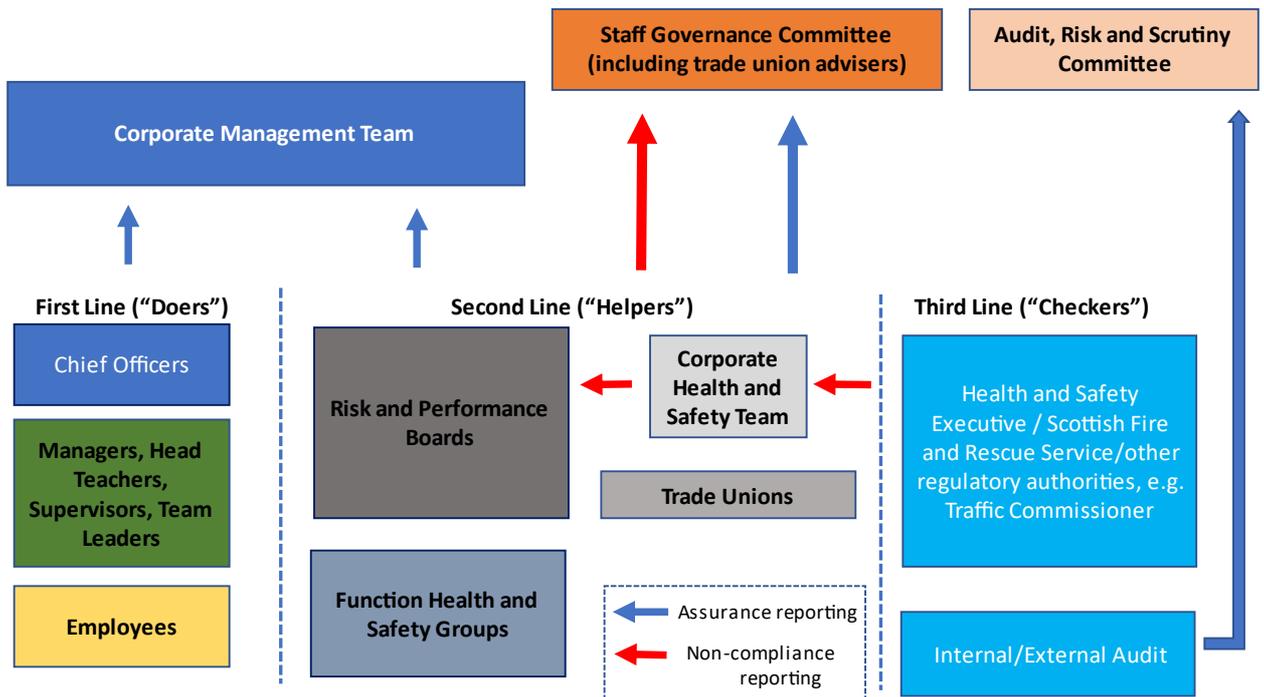
3.1 Health and Safety Management

The Council’s system of risk management recognises that there are three lines of defence in operation to ensure that risk, including health and safety risk, is managed effectively. This allocates responsibility across the first, second and third lines (doers, checkers, and helpers) for controls which protect the Council from threats to health and safety compliance.

1. The **first line of defence** is formed by managers and employees within each Function, Cluster and service area who are responsible for identifying and managing risk as part of their roles. Each Function or Cluster ensures that their own health and safety management system is working effectively. This is done by management levels checking that their direct subordinates are completing their roles effectively. In practice it involves checking that local procedures are developed, risk assessments are completed, incidents and near misses are investigated and any remedial actions implemented.
2. The **second line of defence** provides the policies, frameworks, tools, techniques, and advice to enable health and safety to be managed in the first line. This includes the Corporate Health and Safety Team which sets corporate policy and

corporate procedure that apply to all staff. The Corporate Health and Safety Team also monitors how effectively the first line is operating. This is achieved through a series of agreed compliance and audit checks which provide an evaluation on the effectiveness of governance, risk management, and internal control to the organisation.

3. The **third line of defence** is provided by internal audit, external audit, and other relevant agencies. This line is to ensure that health and safety in the first two lines of defence are operating effectively and advise how they could be improved.



3.2 Role of Elected Members

The Staff Governance Committee is the Council's safety committee as required within section 2 (7) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. This committee acts as a consultative forum for discussion between management, elected members and trade unions to keep under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety of the Council's employees and is a strategic decision-making body within the Council's Scheme of Governance. Trade unions are represented by local appointees from each organisation in an advisory capacity.

Through collective responsibility for providing leadership and direction, elected members have a significant part to play in health and safety matters. Though not responsible for managing health and safety on a day-to-day basis, elected members must understand the impact of strategic decisions they make on operational health

and safety. Through the Staff Governance Committee, they will monitor performance and compliance with health and safety policy and legislation, as well as ensuring implementation of recommendations made by external inspection bodies. The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee receives assurance from internal and external audit that the health and safety control environment is operating effectively.

3.3 Function Health and Safety Groups

Each of the Function Health and Safety Groups are set up to act as Safety Committees in terms of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and provide a channel of communication, co-operation and involvement between the Council, employees and trade union representatives on all relevant health and safety matters. As Safety Committees their remit includes:

- a) To consider matters relating to health, safety, and welfare of all employees of Operations and those who may be affected by the Council's acts or omissions, work activities and/or service delivery.
- b) To help create and maintain a positive health and safety culture which secures the commitment and participation of all employees.
- c) To provide a means of communication and promote co-operation between line management, health, and safety representatives (employee and trade unions) and employees in the effective management of health and safety.
- d) To actively reinforce health, safety and wellbeing roles and responsibilities amongst employees.
- e) To scrutinise, monitor and review health and safety policy implementation, effectiveness of health and safety arrangements, performance, trends, and improvements to determine levels of health and safety legal compliance.
- f) To discuss facts in an impartial way, consider what precautions / controls might be taken, recommend and agree appropriate action.
- g) To review leading and lagging trends and statistics and identify the root causes to identify improvement areas.
- h) To monitor compliance with identified recommendations and actions to close out.
- i) To promote the integration of health and safety and good management practice and procedures in service delivery at an operational and strategic level.
- j) To report to the Staff Governance Committee, as appropriate, enforcing authority intervention and identified actions.

- k) To encourage good health in employees by supporting suitable health and wellbeing promotional activities.
- l) To consider reports of unresolved concerns referred from workplace meetings and make recommendations for action where necessary.

3.4 Chief Executive and Directors

The Chief Executive retains overall responsibility for the Council's Health and Safety Policy and will provide effective leadership and direction for its implementation.

The Directors are accountable to the Chief Executive for ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of everyone affected by the work activities in their Functions and will demonstrate clear commitment to achieving high standards of health and safety management.

3.5 Chief Officers

The Chief Officers are accountable to the Directors for ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of everyone affected by the work activities in their Clusters and will demonstrate clear commitment to achieving high standards of health and safety management.

In this respect, Chief Officers are operating in the first line of defence. Assistance can be sought at any time from the Corporate Health and Safety Team or where relevant service health and safety advisers.

Chief Officers will be responsible for the following within their own Cluster:

- a) Developing a positive attitude towards health and safety by encouraging the participation and involvement of employees in health and safety matters and visibly demonstrating a commitment to the achievement of high standards of health and safety within the Cluster.
- b) Ensuring adequate resources are allocated to achieve a safe working environment, safe equipment and trained competent staff.
- c) Ensuring all foreseeable hazards are identified and risk assessments completed and recorded by line managers. Work is not to take place where a hazard has been noted and where no remedial action has been taken to reduce that risk to an acceptable level. Risk assessments are to be reviewed at regular intervals or if there is a reason to suspect that they are no longer valid and/or if there is a change to the circumstances to which they relate. Method statements recording a safe system of work must also be completed for tasks that pose a significant risk to health and safety.

- d) Ensure that a health and safety management system is implemented and maintained within their cluster to help ensure the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures necessary to eliminate or control risks and prevent accidents and ill health.
- e) Consider nominating a Health and Safety Champion to assist in the coordination of the health and safety management system within their Cluster, including liaising with the Premises Responsible Person.
- f) Ensure that where required, suitable local occupational health and safety procedures are developed and maintained to provide effective implementation of the Corporate Policy and Procedures.
- g) Designate a named officer (Premises Responsible Person) to be responsible for the management of buildings which only their Cluster occupies and to do so in conjunction with other Chief Officers and/or organisations where it is occupied by more than one Cluster or organisation.
- h) Submit to the Chief Officer, Governance and the Corporate Health and Safety Lead, copies of any prosecutions, prohibition notices, improvement notices, notification of intention to serve improvement notices and/or notification of any contravention within 24 hours of their receipt.
- i) Ensure that line managers have arranged for the provision to all employees of the necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision necessary to enable them to discharge their individual safety responsibilities and to carry out their tasks in a safe manner. During the recruitment process, any health and safety responsibilities outlined for the post are to be documented and communicated to the candidates.
- j) Ensure that arrangements for consultation between management, trade union safety representatives and/or representatives of employee's safety are in place for their Cluster. Where it is considered appropriate to have Cluster safety committees, they should meet at intervals appropriate to the needs of the Cluster.
- k) Ensure that their line managers record accidents, incidents and near misses at work in accordance with the corporate system. In such instances, ensure that those reporting managers take steps to ensure an investigation is completed and that any actions resulting within their Cluster are monitored to completion using data provided for this purpose.
- l) Ensure a thorough investigation is carried out, including the development of action plans, where there is a reported breach of health and safety legislation from enforcing authorities, trade unions or employees.

- m) Ensure that contractors carrying out work for the Council comply with their statutory duties and any Council specific requirements.
- n) Ensure that any work carried out within buildings which their Cluster occupy has had the approval of the Corporate Landlord.
- o) Ensure that there are sufficient arrangements including first aid cover, within each of the Cluster locations covering all shifts and activities.
- p) Ensure that line managers have appropriate procedures in place to detect the early signs of work-related ill health of employees exposed to particular health risks in the workplace and that those employees have been included in the health surveillance programme and will receive surveillance to monitor the specific risks they are exposed to, and the control measures that are in place.

3.6 Chief Officer (Capital); Chief Officer (Corporate Landlord)

The Chief Officers for Capital and Corporate Landlord will, within their areas of responsibility, be accountable for approving and overseeing all works by or on behalf of the Council on its building fabric and services.

They will ensure that:

- a) All applications to carry out work on Council owned or managed building fabric or services or infrastructure are considered in a timely manner by a suitably competent person.
- b) All duty holder appointments required by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM Regulations) are made for relevant approved projects (including any approved projects that will be locally managed (i.e., outside of the Capital or Corporate Landlord function) and that the appointed duty holders are competent to fulfil their appointed role.
- c) All projects subject to Capital and/or Corporate Landlord approval are managed by a suitably competent person.
- d) Adequate resources are available to enable the Council to manage construction works in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.
- e) Premises Responsible Persons are provided with adequate information about routine works that Corporate Landlord and Capital contractors will be carrying out in their areas.
- f) Where there is sufficient reason to believe that a project cannot be undertaken safely then the project work should be halted.

3.7 Premises Responsible Persons

A Premises Responsible Person (PRP), who will have sufficient authority and competence to manage health and safety, will be identified for every non-domestic Council premises by the relevant Chief Officer(s). The PRP will:

- a) be the main point of contact for health and safety on the premises and related workplace inspection, the subsequent actions and checking effectiveness of controls.
- b) ensure effective communication of health and safety risks and associated controls, including between occupants.
- c) ensure suitable arrangements for fire evacuation and first aid for the premises are in place.
- d) ensure security of the premises and prevent unauthorised access.

The PRP will also ensure that regular Health and Safety inspections are carried out to ensure that the building occupants are safe from the above risks.

3.8 Managers, Head Teachers, Supervisors and Team Leaders

All managers are responsible for managing health and safety in their area of responsibility and in this respect operate as part of the first line of defence. Support is available from the Corporate Health and Safety Team and service specific health and safety advisers (where appointed) although managers will be ultimately responsible. In particular:

- a) Managers must undertake risk assessments of all identified hazards related to work undertaken. Where reasonably practicable this will result in the elimination of these risks but where this cannot be achieved then suitable and sufficient control measures, based on these assessments, should be implemented to reduce, and manage, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks to our employees and others.
- b) Make sure that all employees under their management are familiar with relevant local health and safety arrangements.
- c) Set up and maintain within their service area safe and healthy working conditions.
- d) Develop and implement safe systems of working, identify and implement significant findings arising from risk assessments, and ensure the necessary control measures are brought to the attention of employees.

- e) Audit and monitor their own health and safety arrangements, verifying control measures are working effectively and taking whatever remedial actions necessary where concerns are identified.
- f) Consider safety procedures when designing, buying, and using all new plant and equipment.
- g) Carry out investigations for incidents and near misses in their area of responsibility and ensure that any remedial actions identified are implemented.
- h) Carry out safety inspections (including housekeeping) to identify hazards.
- i) Make sure that all employees, including health and safety representatives, are able to carry out their responsibilities and encourage them to work with managers to promote an attitude of safe working across the Council.
- j) Review and maintain safe systems of work where corrective actions have been identified in investigations or through safety inspections.
- k) Provide or arrange sufficient training and instruction for employees under their management.
- l) Ensure that all employees are aware of the local arrangements which are in place to implement any corporate policy or procedure and any local procedure.
- m) Ensure the relevant checks are in place for all contractors with regard to health and safety competence so as to minimise the risks to all who may be affected by their activities or omissions. Undertake continuous monitoring and assessment of contractors' health and safety performance.

3.9 Employees

All employees and those operating on behalf of the Council, e.g., agency workers, consultants will be expected to cooperate in the implementation of this health and safety policy within the first line of defence by:

- a) Acting with reasonable care for their own occupational health and safety and that of others who may be affected by something they do or their omissions.
- b) Complying with the relevant policies and procedures, including any risk assessments and safe systems of work which are in place as a result.
- c) Cooperating with and participating in, so far as is necessary, any activity that will assist the Council in complying with any requirements as a result of health and

safety legislation. This includes the need to participate in health and safety training.

- d) Correctly using all work items, equipment, and machinery in accordance with the training and instruction received.
- e) Not intentionally interfering with or misusing anything provided in the interests of health, safety, or welfare.
- f) Reporting any safety concerns to their line manager.
- g) Reporting all accidents, incidents and near misses.

3.10 Corporate Health and Safety Team

The Corporate Health and Safety Team (CHST) will manage the risk of non-compliance with health and safety law and guidance through three activities:

Policies and Procedures	Set the framework and requirements to ensure compliance with H&S (Health & Safety) law and guidance, including roles, responsibilities, and governance.
Training and Comms	Provide the organisation with information on the requirements, including their roles and responsibilities and the part they must play.
Data and Digital	Ensure that the organisation is monitoring its adherence to the requirements and provide end-user capability to increase compliance.

The Team acts within the second line of defence by

- a) Setting the health and safety framework for the rest of the organisation to adhere to. This framework includes this policy, as the overarching corporate health and safety policy, as well as corporate procedures and guidance. The Team also advises Clusters on the requirement for, and content of, local health and safety procedures and audits compliance with this policy and corporate procedures and higher risk local procedures.
- b) Providing guidance and procedures for corporate-wide areas of risk.
- c) Preparing regular reports for Staff Governance Committee and Function Health and Safety Groups that inform and evaluate the Council's health and safety performance. Insofar as possible, this is done using near-live data which takes

advantage of digital methods of data capture and manages demand for continual performance monitoring.

- d) Advising services on their health and safety training requirements and delivering health and safety communications to ensure all services are clear on their responsibilities and how to meet these.
- e) Coordinating all serious incident investigations and liaising with external agencies as and where required.
- f) Reporting to the Risk Board on any areas of non-compliance and to the Performance Board on corporate health and safety performance.

Corporate health and safety advisers will provide advice, support, and guidance to managers and in particular will:

- a) Advise on the interpretation and application of health and safety legislation and guidance.
- b) Assist managers in investigations to identify the cause and circumstances of serious accidents and incidents.
- c) Develop health and safety standards and where required write these into procedures and guidance.
- d) Audit compliance with corporate procedures and higher risk local procedures.
- e) Support and advise Premises Responsible Persons in complying with their duties.
- f) Advise on training requirements and advise and support managers in the risk assessment process.
- g) Liaise with external agencies in respect of health and safety matters.
- h) As required inspect and audit Council premises and activities where the level of risk requires. Where necessary, direct Clusters to take action to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of employees and those who may be affected by the actions of the Council.
- i) Contribute to the development of corporate occupational health and safety arrangements. (outlined at section 6.4 below)

3.11 Cluster Compliance Officers

Where compliance officers are employed by a service, they will work in conjunction with the CHST (Corporate Health and Safety Team) to ensure council objectives are being achieved.

3.12 Cluster Health and Safety Champions

Chief Officers may seek additional support from employees within their Cluster to help them to coordinate some of their health and safety activity, and can include the following:

- a) Assist the Chief Officers to communicate corporate policy and procedures to managers and employees within a Cluster.
- b) Act as a point of contact with the CHST re health and safety matters related to their Cluster, including liaison with Premises Responsible Persons, where appropriate.
- c) Assist the Chief Officer in the coordination of the safety management system within their Cluster.

3.13 Health and Safety Representatives

This policy uses the term 'Health and Safety Representative' to apply to both appointed (Trade Union representatives) and elected representatives (Council staff representatives). They are responsible for:

- a) Promoting a sensible, responsible, and proportionate approach to health and safety.
- b) Joint working with line managers and employees in "championing" health and safety in the workplace.
- c) Undertaking functions as per the [Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 \(as amended\)](#) or the [Health and Safety \(Consultation with Employees\) Regulations 1996 \(as amended\)](#).
- d) Independently of line managers, representing the workforce on health and safety generally, or making representations on potential hazards and dangers.
- e) Attending and actively participating at relevant health and safety consultation groups and committees.

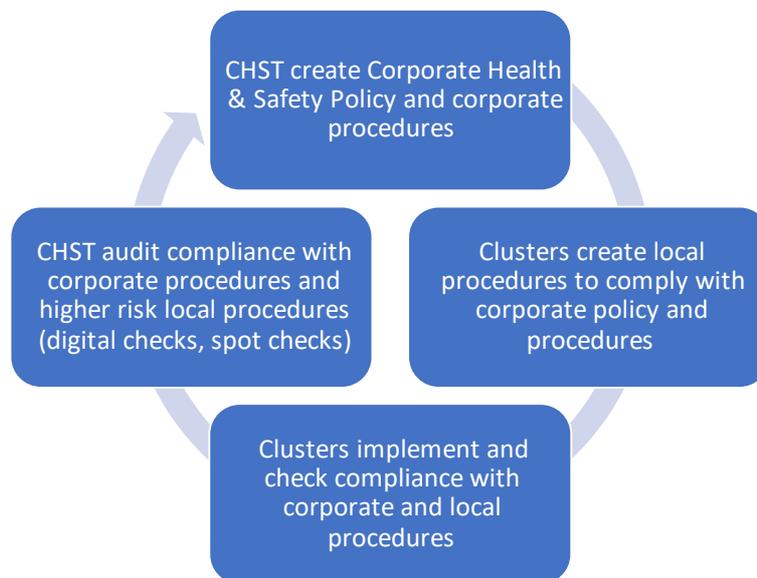
3.14 Commissioned Services

Contractors and suppliers of commissioned services are required to provide evidence of health and safety competence prior to undertaking any work on behalf of the Council. This process identifies that contractors and suppliers will have the correct qualifications, skill set, safe systems of work, risk assessments and insurances in place. Periodic inspections should be carried out on contracted works by the service area

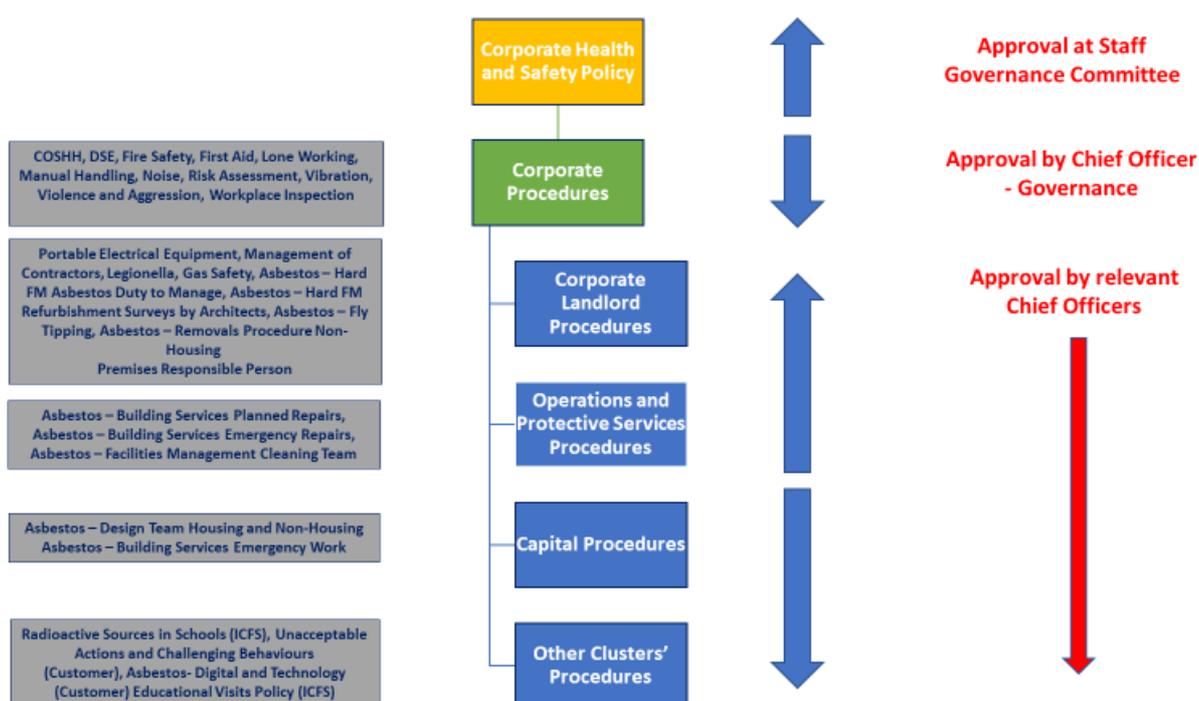
overseeing the work. The commissioning service is responsible for ensuring a competent person is in place to conduct the checks on the documentation and competence and for the periodic inspection of the works to ensure that the health and safety management system is being followed.

4 Supporting Procedures & Documentation

- 4.1** The safety management system for the Council starts with the corporate health and safety policy and below that sit a suite of corporate procedures to implement the commitments made in the policy statement in section 4 of this document. These corporate procedures, developed by the CHST, provide greater detail to assist managers in their understanding of key corporate risks and how to control them. It may be necessary or desirable for Clusters to create their own local procedures to document how they manage these risks at a local level. There may be other risks that are relevant to one Cluster only. Again, in such circumstances, such Clusters may draft their own local procedures to control such risks.
- 4.2** The Clusters and service areas are responsible for implementing the requirements of any policies and procedures. A risk-based periodic audit process is undertaken to ensure that the corporate policy and procedures and high-risk local procedures have been implemented effectively. The figure below shows the process which is followed to ensure that the risk is being managed appropriately.



4.3 The figure below highlights how the key documents in the Council’s health and safety management system fit together and the approval mechanisms in place through the Powers Delegated to Officers. The corporate procedures are those which apply to all areas across the Council. In addition to these, each Cluster will publish supplementary procedures to help control any local risk not covered by corporate procedure and the Cluster must ensure appropriate compliance with these including risk assessments where appropriate. In some instances, corporate arrangements may need to be adapted to suit local needs or to comply with specific external requirements (e.g., Asbestos); however, this should only be with the agreement of the Chief Officer and should not lead to a reduction in the overall standard of health and safety protection.



4.4 General Health and Safety Arrangements

Supporting Corporate Procedures

4.4.1 Risk Assessment

The Council has a corporate procedure which requires managers to undertake risk assessments of all identified hazards related to work to be undertaken. Risk assessments should eliminate these risks wherever possible but where this cannot be achieved, suitable and sufficient control measures must be identified, based on these assessments, to reduce and manage, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks to employees and others. Risk assessments should be completed with the assistance of

employees who undertake the task, and the results of all completed risk assessments must be made known to employees and be available for their reference. Risk assessments should be reviewed annually and updated as required. They are also reviewed whenever circumstances have changed and following the investigation of any accidents or incidents that may occur.

4.4.2 Display Screen Equipment

The Council provides standard Display Screen Equipment (DSE), and all users must be given information about the correct adjustment of their workstation, whether at work or at home, and the correct posture for using it. All staff who are considered as display screen users must complete a DSE self-assessment and where these identify issues, work to resolve them or further advice must be sought. There is an obligation to provide employees with eyesight tests and corrective spectacles for DSE work if necessary.

4.4.3 Working from Home

A risk assessment is carried out in conjunction with the Line Managers for each employee who is regularly working from home to identify any potential risks. A Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment must be completed for all staff regularly home working in accordance with current Council Procedures. Where working from home is temporary it is not necessary to carry out a full risk assessment and employees will be provided with information on working safely at home.

4.4.4 Lone Working

The Council employ people who may, as part of their duties, have to work alone for all or part of the working period. The risks to which these employees are exposed must be identified with the aim of eliminating these risks wherever reasonably practicable and reducing lone working activities to a minimum. Where lone working does take place safe systems and controls must be identified and implemented to ensure that safe working and communication exists between the lone worker and their management. Affected workers must be notified of arrangements for the management of their lone working activities and that they are required to notify management of their concerns in this area so that the ability to make work operations and travel safer for them is improved.

4.4.5 Manual Handling

Where employees must manually handle loads, the risks to their health will be assessed. Where possible the need for manual handling should be eliminated, by providing mechanical handling equipment or by introducing alternative measures. Where this is not possible, work-related training and instruction in manual handling

techniques will be provided including instructions to employees not to attempt to lift items beyond their capabilities.

4.4.6 First Aid

The Council takes action to provide suitable first aid arrangements for employees whilst at work and visitors who may be affected by our activities. Managers must assess the reasonable level of first aid provision required for their business areas and make the appropriate arrangements.

The Council has provision for mental health first aid, as part of the Council's mental health action plan, with trained employees located across every service area within the organisation. These trained employees champion mental health awareness, provide peer support and signpost employees to various existing corporate and external support services.

4.4.7 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

The Council uses a number of potentially hazardous substances during its undertakings. Some are used in such small quantities that they present no risk to health. All the chemicals and substances that are used and where there are potential risks must be assessed, suitable control measures implemented, and clear instruction and information provided to employees.

Where horticultural chemicals and pesticides are used, that must be approved only for professional use. They must be handled and used only by people trained in accordance with the requirements of relevant legislation.

4.4.8 Fire Safety

The Council undertakes a rolling 5-year process of fire risk assessment on all of the Council's property portfolio with the frequency of assessment determined by the overall fire risk.

Based on the results of the Fire Risk Assessment, adequate means of raising the alarm, fighting the fire and means of escape will be identified to ensure the safe evacuation of employees, and others who may be affected in the event that a fire occurs on all domestic and non-domestic property.

Designated Fire Marshalls will be appointed for office premises to assist with the safe and timely evacuation of all Council facilities.

Where the Council office is part of a multi-tenanted building, the relevant Cluster will coordinate and co-operate with the Corporate Landlord and other Premises Responsible Persons within the building to ensure that fire safety regulations are met.

Maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system will be conducted by a competent, specialist contractor under contract through the Council's Corporate Landlord. All fire safety arrangements will be tested to the level required by the relevant statutory provisions and/or British Standard.

Where an employee has difficulty in using the ordinary means of escape, either permanently or temporarily, a personal emergency evacuation plan must be developed with their input and communicated to fire wardens and those that need to know. Any persons required to assist in their evacuation must receive suitable training.

4.4.9 Hand Arm Vibration

The regular exposure to continuous vibration from work activities that have the potential to cause long term ill health due to a range of occupational diseases is collectively known as hand–arm vibration syndrome (HAVS). The risks to health from exposure to continuous levels of vibration must be assessed and effective control measures introduced to ensure levels of exposure to HAVS are eliminated or reduced to its lowest levels.

4.4.10 Violence and Aggression

The Council recognises it has a duty to reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks of violence and aggression that employees may be exposed to in the workplace. The implementation of an effective risk assessment process and appropriate physical security controls, safe working practices and staff training must be in place to significantly contribute to its management and reduce the likelihood and impact of such events.

4.4.11 Asbestos

The Council recognises the health hazards arising from exposure to asbestos and is committed to ensuring that an effective policy and associated procedure is in place in order to manage the risks to employees, pupils, visitors, and other people working in Council properties. In order to meet legal obligations, the Council will conduct or organise a survey to establish whether there is any asbestos in their properties and to determine any action necessary in relation to its removal or regular inspection. Any asbestos requiring removal must be removed by qualified personnel and the inspection routines, as identified within its management strategy must be followed. Information about any asbestos on Council premises will be provided to maintenance staff and any external contractors, as appropriate. The corporate asbestos management plan identifies and lists asbestos procedures, which are in place within the relevant Clusters to ensure that controls are in place to manage the risks from exposure to asbestos.

4.4.12 Noise at Work

The Council acknowledges and accepts its duty under the Noise at Work Regulations to reduce risks to the hearing of our employees and others from noise encountered in the workplace. Risk assessments must be carried out to identify areas where noise is a hazard and if unable to remove the risk, measures must be implemented to mitigate the risk of damage to hearing from excessive noise.

Other supporting arrangements

Several other general arrangements also give practical effect to the Policy and sit with equal importance to the procedures above. In some cases, this will be supported with guidance and written processes. Clusters will have the local procedures identified in the figure at 4.3 where the risk or controls are unique to their Cluster.

4.4.13 Consultation

The Council recognises its duty to consult with its workforce on matters affecting their health, safety, and welfare whilst at work. To meet this obligation managers are required to consult with employees and Trade Unions about work-related health, safety, and welfare issues. There are Function health and safety groups where managers, trade unions and employees meet in a forum created to allow discussion of these health and safety matters.

4.4.14 Incident and Near Miss Reporting and Investigation

The corporate procedure requires all employees to report all personal injury incidents and near misses that happen in the course of their work. All incidents must be recorded in the corporate electronic system and investigated, and where identified by this investigation additional control measures or a safer system of work are implemented.

The Council understands its duties to report incidents under statutory regulations within the appropriate timescales.

4.4.15 Training

For the Council to operate efficiently and effectively a trained and competent workforce is required. Where possible employees with the specific skills and qualifications appropriate for their job should be recruited. On starting work they must be given induction training and be provided with any additional training that is or may become necessary. All training is recorded.

4.4.16 Equipment

The Council endeavours to ensure that all equipment used in the course of its business is maintained in good condition, serviced and is safe to use. The workforce is provided with suitable and sufficient information and training to enable them to use work equipment safely. Employees must not use equipment unless they have been properly trained in its use, including any safety related devices, and guarding.

Employees have been given responsibility for ensuring that equipment issued to or used by them is checked prior to its use to ensure that it is in good order. They have been told to report any defects or problems to their manager. It is our policy that defective equipment will be withdrawn from use until repaired or replaced.

Where equipment, such as pressure vessels and lifting equipment, is used which requires statutory examination at specified frequencies the required arrangements must be made.

4.4.17 Purchasing

When the Council purchases or hires new work equipment and materials, the health and safety implications of its use must be considered.

Safety Data Sheets for substances and similarly, technical data and instructions for work equipment must be obtained. The hazard and risk data that is provided must be considered and employees informed and trained, as necessary.

4.4.18 Personal Protective Equipment

Some of the work the Council undertakes requires use of personal protective equipment (PPE) where identified by the risk assessment. This includes assessing the risk to those employees who work outdoors and are exposed to the sun or inclement weather, as well as staff who are exposed to the risk of respiratory infections. Appropriate PPE and replacements free of charge must be provided. Employees will be instructed and are expected to use any PPE identified, as necessary. Employees are responsible for the day-to-day care of the PPE issued to them, to report damage and to request replacements.

4.4.19 General Ventilation

All Council workplaces will be provided with an adequate supply of fresh air. This will be provided by natural ventilation, from doors, windows etc. or controlled, where air is supplied and/or removed mechanically.

5 About this Policy

5 Policy Statement

- 5.1 The Council attaches the greatest importance to the health, safety, and welfare of its employees and to those for whom it provides a service. The Council's [Risk Appetite Statement](#) states that it is cautious to any risks which may have a negative impact on health and safety, and averse to any risks that will result in non-compliance or breaches in statutory obligations, regulations, and law. The Council also fully accepts its responsibilities not to endanger the employees of other employers or members of the public and is totally committed to the creation and maintenance of a positive health and safety culture throughout the organisation.
- 5.2 The Council will endeavour to ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, its operations and services are conducted in such a manner as to prevent harm, injury or damage to people, plant, materials, property, and the environment, and to promote continuous improvement in health safety and welfare standards.
- 5.3 The Council will take every reasonable measure to discharge its responsibilities by:
- The provision, where reasonably practicable, of the necessary resources to meet the requirements of this policy.
 - Aiming to provide a safe and healthy place of work and working environment, including access and egress, across the entire range of staff occupations.
 - Protecting the safety of members of the public when they are on Council premises or are affected by its activities.
 - Undertaking risk assessments and implementing their controls.
 - Providing and maintaining safe working systems, plant, and equipment.
 - Providing information, instruction, training, and supervision to enable employees and others to work safely, to recognise and minimise risks and to contribute positively to health and safety at work.
 - Co-operating with employees in the appointment of health and safety representatives.
 - Cooperating and engaging with Trade Unions to ensure that a collaborative approach is taken to risk management.
 - Establishing and maintaining an effective health and safety reporting structure.
 - Providing suitable and sufficient welfare facilities.
 - Providing a process where employees can report any health and safety issues.
- 5.4 Health and safety is the direct concern of employees at all levels, and they are charged under the Act to take reasonable care for their own safety, the safety of fellow workers, and of any other person affected by the Council's work activities. Employees also have a duty under the Act to co-operate with the Council to enable it to carry out its health

and safety responsibilities. Therefore, the Council looks to every employee to maintain continuous safety awareness and to be alert to existing and potential hazards and the need to minimise and report them. This is reflected in the Council's Capability Framework for all staff.

- 5.5** The Council recognises that the management of health and safety is an integral part of modern management practice at all levels. Without detracting from the primary responsibility of managers and supervisors for ensuring safe working practices and conditions, the Council provides a Corporate Health and Safety Team. The Team advises line managers and supervisors in their roles and ensures that training needs are identified, and that training is made available to support employees in discharging their responsibilities under health and safety law and guidance.
- 5.6** The Council will provide information and guidance to all employees on its health and safety duties and responsibilities and the organisational arrangements necessary to discharge them. This information and guidance will be brought to the attention of all employees and others to whom it may apply through the corporate and Cluster induction and health and safety training programme.

6. Risk

- 6.1** The policy and supporting documentation specified within Section 4 details how the Council implements its health and safety risk management activities at all levels in order to accept, reduce and/or eliminate risks across the Council.
- 6.2** There are no unintended effects, consequences or risks directly resulting from the introduction or update of the policy.
- 6.3** The risks identified by the Council through its health and safety risk management activities will be managed in accordance with the supporting document specified within Section 6.4.
- 6.4** The health and safety policy and supporting documentation will support the Council's legal obligations for health and safety risk management and compliance by setting out the standards required allowing Council staff and Elected Members to identify and manage risks through effective mitigation controls.

7. Environmental Considerations

- 7.1** When changes/ alterations to working practices/ equipment/ materials/ technologies are considered for health and safety reasons, the impact that such changes/ alterations could have on the environment needs to be considered. These should aim to have no negative effects on the environment and to provide a positive effect wherever possible.

8. Policy Performance

- 8.1** The effectiveness of the policy and supporting documentation will be determined by the reduction or elimination of the negative impacts of unplanned health and safety events which could damage employees, citizens, assets, finances, reputation, or service delivery.
- 8.2** Performance against this policy and associated processes will be monitored in a number of ways, including -
- a) Quarterly reporting of corporate health and safety performance to the Staff Governance Committee.
 - b) Quarterly reporting of health and safety risks, patterns, and trends to Function health and safety groups.
 - c) Periodic reporting to the Performance and Risk Boards to ensure compliance where required.

9. Design and Delivery

- 9.1 This policy and supporting documentation fully support the delivery of the strategic outcomes contained in the LOIP (Local Outcome Improvement Plan). The Council's risk management activities, including health and safety, focus on the risks that may prohibit or hinder achievement of the outcomes.

10. Housekeeping and Maintenance

- 10.1 The supporting documentation specified within this policy will be reviewed and updated as and when required. All corporate procedures are consulted on with Clusters and signed off by Chief Officer, Governance. Any local procedures developed are reviewed by CHST and signed off by the relevant Chief Officer.
- 10.2 Unless otherwise required, this policy will be subject to a planned annual review. Any proposed updates will be presented to the Staff Governance Committee where required.
- 10.3 This policy updates the Health and Safety Policy approved by the Staff Governance Committee on 12 April 2021.

11. Communication and Distribution

- 11.1 This policy and supporting documentation will be shared directly with the Extended Corporate Management Team to enable communication and distribution in accordance with the responsibilities set out in Section (5).
- 11.2 The policy and documentation will be available on the organisation's shared areas on the intranet.
- 11.3 A communication plan will be developed to assist with embedding the policy into the organisation, which will include training on managers' responsibilities.

12. Information Management

- 12.1 Data generated by this policy will be stored and managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and supporting Management Information Handbook. Corporate Health and Safety Procedures which support this policy will set out roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of the data generated by them.

13. Definitions and Understanding this Policy

There are a number of terms which are used across the document which are explained below:

Aberdeen City Council – the Council.

Access and egress - refers to the means of entry and exit to a workplace or work area.

Dangerous Occurrence - one of a number of specific, reportable adverse events, as defined in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Display Screen User – an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment, e.g., computer, in the office or at home, for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time daily.

Hazard - the potential to cause harm, including ill health and injury, damage to property, plant, products or the environment, production losses or increased liabilities.

Incident - an event that results in injury or ill health.

Management Function - It is the responsibility of management to see that essential

activities are done efficiently (in the best possible way) and effectively (doing the right thing). The management process consists of four primary functions that managers must perform: planning, organising, leading, and controlling.

Method statement - documents that detail exactly how to carry out work safely.

Near Miss - an event that, while not causing harm, has the potential to cause injury or ill health.

Policy statement - a declaration of the intention of an employer to safeguard the health and safety of its employees.

Responsibilities – sets out who is responsible for specific actions to achieve the aims set out in the policy statement.

Responsible persons - someone in an organisation who is given the responsibility to carry out a health and safety process within the workplace.

Risk - The level of risk is determined from a combination of the likelihood of a specific undesirable event occurring and the severity of the consequences (i.e., how often is it likely to happen, how many people could be affected and how bad would the likely injuries or ill health effects be?)

Root cause - an initiating event or failing from which all other causes or failings spring. Root causes could be planning or organisational failings.

Safety Management System - a systematic approach to managing safety, including the necessary organisational structures, accountabilities, policies, and procedures.

Safe working systems/safe systems of work –a systematic examination of work to identify the hazards. It defines safe methods of working which eliminate those hazards or minimise the risks associated with them. Simply put a defined method of doing a job in a safe way.

Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 - places a duty on all employers (except those employing fewer than five employees) to prepare and revise, as often as may be appropriate, a written statement of general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of their employees and the organisation and arrangements which are in force to carry out that policy.

So far as is reasonably practicable – judgment exercised in balancing the reduction of risk against what it costs to achieve it.

Supporting Corporate procedures – documents which contains the detail of what the Council are going to do in practice to achieve the aims set out in the policy statement.