



## Health & Safety Policy

### 1. Introduction

Safety, as with all other aspects of the Council's undertakings, must be properly and cost effectively managed.

It is the policy of Ashington Town Council to comply with both the letter and spirit of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act. 1974 and all other relevant legislation, and to regard the provisions of this legislation as minimum requirements.

Employees of Ashington Town Council have a right to work in safe and healthy conditions, these conditions will be created and maintained by the preparation of, and adherence to, this Health and Safety Policy.

The Council, and its Managers, fully appreciate that responsibility for Health and Safety is an integral function of management, on a par with responsibilities for all other business operations. Details of management and employee responsibilities are to be found elsewhere in this policy.

The Council will undertake to provide adequate Health and Safety training and information to all employees to enable them to improve their knowledge and awareness of Health and Safety and to discharge their own Health and Safety responsibilities.

It is important for all personnel, whatever their position in the Council, to accept their personal responsibilities as detailed in this policy and we expect active co-operation to promote a safe and healthy environment for ourselves and for those who avail themselves of our facilities.

This policy statement lays down the Council's aims and objectives in the important area of health and safety. It sets out, in broad terms, how to implement these aims and objectives.

All employees have a responsibility to promote a safe and healthy working environment.

The policy statement will be issued to all employees. It incorporates the Council's general approach towards compliance with all health and safety legislation (including any new European Community led legislation that may come into force during the life of this policy).

### 2. Aims of the policy

2.1 To conduct all of the Council's undertakings so as to avoid, or control to an acceptable level, risks to the health or safety of all of our employees, all users of our services, all members of the general public who are exposed to our activities, and all other people who work on, or visit, our premises.

2.2 To create and maintain a positive health and safety culture within all of our departments, so that there is a continuous improvement in our health and safety performance.



## Health & Safety Policy

2.3 These aims will be pursued regardless of whether the particular services which form part of the Council's undertakings are performed by our own employees, or by outside contractors acting for us.

2.4 These aims will be regarded in all policy and operational decisions made by the Council, especially in relation to the adequate provision of resources.

2.5 The aims will also be borne in mind by all individual Councillors in their dealings with the Council's officers and other persons. It is recognised that individual Councillors, and Managers may render themselves liable under criminal health and safety law should they place requirements upon staff that are contrary to this policy, or conflict with the decision of the Council on health and safety or operational matters. Actions by Councillors and Managers that are ultra vires are not covered by the Council's insurance.

### 3. Objectives of the policy

The Council expects, and requires, everyone to work towards achieving the following objectives in the field of health and safety.

- ✓ To comply always with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and all other relevant statutory provisions, Health and Safety Executive codes of practice and guidance, and relevant fire safety legislation and Home Office guidance.
- ✓ To effectively identify all significant hazards arising from our activities, to assess all the resultant risks to the health and safety of our employees, service users, and other people, and to develop the appropriate preventive and protective measures necessary to control these risks.
- ✓ To effectively plan, organise, implement, control, monitor, and review the preventive and protective measures.
- ✓ To establish, and where necessary implement, appropriate emergency procedures to be followed in situations of serious and imminent danger. In this respect to co-operate and co-ordinate with the emergency services.
- ✓ To provide and maintain suitable and safe vehicles, plant, equipment, and systems of work.
- ✓ To provide employees with adequate health and safety training and supervision, and to take account of employees capabilities as regards health and safety matters when assigning tasks to them.
- ✓ To provide employees with comprehensible information on health and safety risks identified by assessments and on the preventive and protective measures necessary to control these risks.
- ✓ To avoid safety, health, and fire risks in connection with the use, handling, and storage of articles and substances.
- ✓ To provide a safe place of work and a healthy working environment.
- ✓ Where appropriate on health and safety grounds, to ensure that employees are provided with, and use, suitable personal protective clothing or equipment. Also to make adequate arrangements for the storage and maintenance of such personal protective clothing and equipment.
- ✓ Where beneficial to the prevention of work related illnesses or ill health conditions, to provide employees with appropriate health surveillance.



## Health & Safety Policy

- ✓ With respect to outside contractors engaged to undertake work or services on behalf of the Council to:
  - (a) vet their health and safety competence before engaging the contractors, and
  - (b) apply appropriate specifications and/or contract conditions with a view to ensuring that the contractors develop and implement preventive and protective measures that will maintain an acceptable level of health and safety performance during the performance of the contract, and
  - (c) provide contractors with all relevant health and safety information and guidance about the Council premises, land, and projects on which they will be working, and
  - (d) monitor and exercise appropriate control over the health and safety performance of the contractors. Also, where relevant, to co-ordinate the health and safety performance of more than one contractor.

### 4. Responsibilities

#### The Council will:

- ✓ Ensure that there is an effective policy for health & safety within the Council.
- ✓ Periodically appraise the effectiveness of the policy and ensure that any necessary changes are made.
- ✓ Ensure that relevant risks are assessed within the Council, and will make available sufficient funds to allow for the appropriate control of these risks.
- ✓ Ensure that liability is adequately covered by insurance.
- ✓ Ensure the implementation of such a policy and fully support all persons who carry out that policy.
- ✓ Ensure that the Health & Safety Policy of the Council is understood at all levels.

#### Managers will:

- ✓ Be responsible for the establishment and operation of the Health & Safety policy within their department and, where appropriate, will supplement this Policy document with further statements relating to the work of their department or that of particular groups of workers.
- ✓ Have the responsibility of discharging the Council's duty, under Section 2 (3) of the Act, of bringing the General Statement of Health & Safety Policy and the Organisation and Arrangements for the carrying out of that policy to the notice of the employees in their departments.
- ✓ Co-operate fully in the training of Safety Representatives and arrange for consultation on Health & Safety matters as appropriate.
- ✓ Will ensure that he/she is fully familiar with the Safety Policy of the Council and ensure that all people in his/her charge comply with the Safety Policy at all times.
- ✓ Ensure that all accidents are recorded in the accident book (BI 510), that they are investigated, and accident reports are completed promptly and made known to the Executive Officer.
- ✓ Ensure that people in their charge are aware of the procedures to be adopted in the event of fire.



## Health & Safety Policy

- ✓ Ensure that people in their charge know the whereabouts of First Aid facilities.
- ✓ Ensure, where reasonably practicable, that adequate supervision is available at all times for employees in their charge.
- ✓ Devise safe working practices for tasks under their control and will ensure that only safe working practices are used, in order to provide maximum safety for all people in their charge
- ✓ Liaise with Safety Representatives on all matters concerning Health, Safety, and Welfare at work, inform their superior concerning such matters and attend Safety Committee meetings when required.
- ✓ Ensure the maintenance of good housekeeping standards at all times.
- ✓ Ensure that any health & safety problem, which cannot be resolved by them, is raised quickly with the Executive Officer.

### **Executive Officer will:**

- ✓ Advise Councillors on their responsibilities for Health, Safety, and Welfare under any relevant legislation.
- ✓ Advise on the certificates and registers required under any relevant legislation.
- ✓ Investigate serious accidents, dangerous occurrences and similar incidents and prepare reports for file, or for submission to the Council, and the Health & Safety Executive, as necessary, and make recommendations to prevent recurrence.
- ✓ Provide advice to all staff on sound Health & Safety practice and will advise upon the Health & Safety content of all tender specifications and contract documents.
- ✓ Advise on necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- ✓ Be consulted at the planning and subsequent stages of any construction of new property and the revitalisation, adaptation or extension of property, where such property is to be used as a place of work by the Council's employees, to ensure that any proposals fully comply with the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and any other relevant legislation.
- ✓ Attend Safety Committee meetings when so requested.
- ✓ Recommend, in consultation with the Assets and Facilities Manager, appropriate training of employees and assist with its implementation.
- ✓ Advise on the display of material and publicity regarding health & safety.
- ✓ Undertake risk assessments and, as a result of those assessments, will draw up Safe Systems of Work.
- ✓ Brief employees on Health & Safety procedures and policies.
- ✓ Monitor both employees and contractors in compliance with this Policy.

### **All Employees will:**

- ✓ Make themselves familiar with the Safety Policy of the Council.
- ✓ At all times make full and proper use of the appropriate safe systems of work, safety equipment and protective clothing and make full use of appropriate safety devices.
- ✓ Report to their line manager any unsafe systems of work which develop contrary to instructions, unsafe working conditions, damage to plant, machinery or equipment, and will report accidents immediately in accordance with Appendix A of this policy.
- ✓ Take reasonable care for the health & safety of themselves and of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions.



## Health & Safety Policy

- ✓ Co-operate with the Council so as to enable it to carry out its own duties and responsibilities.
- ✓ Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety, or welfare by the Council. Anyone found so doing will be subject to disciplinary actions as set out in the Council Disciplinary Policy.

### **New Employees will (in addition to the above):**

- ✓ Make themselves familiar with at least two means of escape from their place of work in the event of fire or other serious or imminent danger.
- ✓ Ensure that they have read and fully understand the Council's instructions in the event of fire or other serious or imminent danger.
- ✓ Familiarise themselves with the Council's accident reporting procedure.

### **5. First Aid**

5.1 A First Aid box will be provided and will be reasonably accessible to all employees and will be kept suitably stocked at all times by the nominated First Aider.

5.2 The names, work places and telephone numbers of those persons responsible for First Aid boxes and/or qualified in First Aid will be displayed at each workplace.

5.3 The standard injury record book (BI 510) referred to in Appendix A, will be maintained, and this record book is to be made available to the Health & Safety Advisor and any other authorised person.

5.4 Serious cases of injury should receive qualified medical attention and the Executive Officer to the Council informed, as indicated in the accident reporting procedure (see Appendix A).

5.5 First Aid treatment should ideally be carried out only by qualified persons. Training courses will be arranged as required to ensure that there are sufficient people qualified to meet the Council's needs and to satisfy the legal requirements of the relevant statutory provisions.

### **6. Protective Clothing & Equipment.**

6.1 Personal protective clothing and equipment, which satisfies the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work regulations 1992, will be provided by the Council when a risk assessment, carried out in compliance with the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, has shown that there is a risk that cannot be controlled by any other practicable means. All Personal Protective Equipment will be issued centrally via the Executive Officer.

6.2 Requests for non-statutory protection will be considered.

6.3 Managers are authorised on behalf of the Council to insist that all employees wear protective clothing and/or equipment when required to do so.

6.4 In compliance with the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992, the Council will provide all employees with suitable accommodation for the storage of Personal Protective Equipment when it is not in use.



## Health & Safety Policy

6.5 In accordance with Regulation 11 of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992, all employees are required to:

- a) Take reasonable care of all Personal Protective Equipment issued to them by the Council;
- b) Report any loss of, or defect in, such Personal Protective Equipment to their Line Manager immediately;
- c) Ensure that all Personal Protective Equipment issued by the Council is maintained in good condition and is returned to the accommodation provided when not in use.
- d) May be required to reimburse the cost of replacements if abused, lost, or broken.

### 7. Evacuation Procedure.

The Council has adopted an evacuation procedure for its premises, please refer to the Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Plan/Procedure for full details, provided by NCC for the main office on Station Road, and Advance Northumberland at Green Lane.

### 8. Maintenance of Safe Working Conditions

8.1 Management will take action to ensure a safe and healthy working environment and will give full support to all those with a responsibility to implement the Health & Safety Policy of the Council.

8.2 Any persons with supervisory responsibilities will ensure that only safe systems of work are used at all times.

8.3 The Executive Officer will be readily available to make safety inspections.

8.4 Fire fighting equipment will be provided and regularly maintained.

8.5 Fire doors/smoke stop doors will be maintained in a good and serviceable condition. Such doors **must not** be wedged in the open position or obstructed at any time.

8.6 Fire exit doors will be provided and maintained in good condition. These exits will be clearly identified as such and will be kept free of obstruction at all times.

### 9. Safety Records.

The Executive Officer will receive copies of records of all accidents which have occurred as per the Accident Reporting Procedure. From such copies an annual report will be made and submitted to the Council in order that the effectiveness of this Health & Safety Policy may be reviewed.

### 10. Legal Implications.

10.1 Section 7 of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, places general duties upon all employees of the Council. All employees are required to take reasonable care for the health & safety of themselves and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

10.2 Also as regards any duty or requirements imposed on the Council or any person carrying out such duty or requirements on behalf of the Council all employees are



## Health & Safety Policy

required to co-operate with that person so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.

10.3 Any employee who behaves in a way that endangers the health & safety of themselves or others, or who does not co-operate as is necessary to enable a duty or requirement to be performed or complied with may be prosecuted.

10.4 In addition, employees will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council Discipline Procedure.

10.5 Employees are warned that the commission of an offence under the Act carries a penalty of an unlimited fine and/or a term of imprisonment of up to two years.

### **11. Improvement & Prohibition Notices.**

11.1 Section 21 of the Act empowers a Health and Safety Inspector to serve on any person an "Improvement Notice" stating that he is contravening or has contravened one or more of the relevant safety laws . This notice will require action to be taken to remove the contravention.

11.2 Section 22 of the Act empowers an Inspector to serve a "Prohibition Notice" upon any person in control of work activities which will involve a risk of serious personal injury. This notice will require the immediate suspension of the activity.

11.3 Any person receiving an Improvement Notice or a Prohibition Notice must immediately inform the Clerk to the Council.

11.4 A person on whom a Notice is served may appeal to an industrial tribunal. The tribunal may either confirm the notice in its original form or modify it.

### **12. Notice of Prosecution.**

Any person receiving notice of prosecution by a Health & Safety Inspector will immediately notify the Executive Officer.

### **13. Index to Health and Safety Arrangements Section**

- a) Accident Prevention
- b) Contractors
- c) Power and Hand Tools
- d) Eye Protection
- e) Electrical Equipment and Fittings
- f) Manual Handling of Loads
- g) Electricity at Work.
- h) Gas Safety.
- i) Personal Protective Equipment

### **13a Accident Prevention**

It is the intention of the Council that all reasonable measures will be taken for the prevention of accidents. The Council considers that accident prevention can only succeed if all employees co-operate at all times in identifying hazards that arise during their work, and bringing them to the attention of their manager.



## Health & Safety Policy

### **13b Contractors**

It is an obligation of all Contractors to comply at all times with the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and all other relevant legislation.

The Council will not be responsible for any sites or buildings where the work activity is controlled by Contractors. The Contractor will be responsible for the health, safety, and welfare of their own employees and provision will be made in the contract, by the Director responsible for letting the contract, requiring contractors to comply in all respects with the Act.

Notwithstanding the provisions above, the Executive Officer or Assets and Development Manager will visit all sites and buildings under the control of Contractors to ensure that the works are being carried out with due regard for the safety of employees of the Council and members of the public. Contractors will be expected to comply with all lawful requests of the Council's Safety Advisor at all times.

### **13c Power and Hand Tools**

Any power or hand tools which are supplied by the Council for employees to carry out their work activities must be used correctly, and in accordance with the Safe Working Practice Policy.

Any faulty tools must be immediately reported by the employee to their supervisor and the faulty equipment taken out of service until satisfactory repairs have been effected.

No employee shall attempt repairs on any faulty equipment unless he is suitably qualified so to do.

If an RCCD is supplied for use with portable power tools it shall be used at all times. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that planned maintenance is carried out in order to ensure that tools are in a good state of repair and safe to use.

It is the responsibility of the employee to carry out regular visual inspections of the tool to ensure that the casing, power cord and plug are in good condition and safe to use.

### **13d Eye Protection**

Where necessary, the Council will supply eye protectors, manufactured to the prescribed standard, to employees who undertake any specified process where a risk assessment carried out according to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 has shown that there is a risk of injury to the eyes.

### **13e Electrical Equipment and Fittings**

No employee will interfere with, or otherwise misuse, any electrical equipment or fittings.

Any faulty equipment must be taken out of service and the fault reported immediately to management.

Under no circumstances must any employee attempt to adjust or repair any item of electrical equipment or other electrical fitting. Any such repairs or adjustments are to be carried out only by a competent person qualified in such work.





## Health & Safety Policy

In compliance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, all portable electrical appliances will be maintained in a safe condition. The Council has made provision for the regular testing and inspection of all portable electrical equipment by a competent person. Such testing of equipment will be carried out at intervals recommended by that competent person.

The competent person carrying out the above test and inspection shall supply the Council with copies of the test and inspection results so that the Council may use them as the record required by the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

Personal electrical equipment shall not be brought onto the Council's premises without authorisation, and unless it has been inspected, tested and passed as safe.

No work shall be carried out on any electrical installation by any person unless that installation has been made dead. Live working will only be permitted if there is no other alternative method, and the employee is fully competent for the work.

### **13f Manual Handling of Loads**

Manual handling is defined in the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 as the movement or supporting of loads by use of human effort. A load may also include another human being or an animal.

The Council will take steps to eliminate the manual handling of loads wherever practicable. Where such elimination is not possible, each activity involving manual handling will be assessed in accordance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. If the results of the assessment show a significant risk of injury arises out of the operation or activity, consideration will be given to mechanising the operation where this is possible and cost effective.

The Council will provide training for all employees whose work activities involve manual handling.

### **13g Electricity at Work**

Electrical work must only be carried out by competent persons.

In compliance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, no work is to be carried out on any electrical installation unless that installation has been made dead and measures taken to prevent it from becoming electrically charged whilst work is being carried out.

Whenever work is to be carried out near overhead power lines, reference will be made to Northern Electric as to the need for protection of or from that cable.

### **13h Gas Safety**

In compliance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 no person shall carry out any work on any gas appliance or installation, and no person shall be employed to carry out such work, unless they are members of the Gas Safe Register.

### **13i Personal Protective Equipment**

Personal protective equipment such as safety helmets, eye and ear protection, foul weather clothing etc., will be issued as necessary and must be worn when carrying out specific tasks.



## Health & Safety Policy

All Personal Protective Equipment will be issued centrally from the office and records of issue will be maintained.

Safety footwear must be worn at all times when on site, there will be NO exceptions to this rule.

You should remember that injury can result if safety equipment is misused or abused.

Individuals are responsible for the safe keeping and maintenance of any PPE that is issued to them.

Remember – intentional misuse or abuse of safety equipment, including PPE, is a criminal offence. Any breach of the above may lead to disciplinary action by the Council and / or prosecution by the Enforcing Authority. Conviction of such an offence can lead to large fines and / or imprisonment together with a criminal record.



## Health & Safety Policy

### APPENDIX A

#### Accident Reporting Procedure

For many reasons it is essential that all accidents, however slight, are reported to your line manager **without delay**. In addition to reporting accidents, all dangerous occurrences, "near miss" accidents, and certain specified diseases must be reported.

The Council, as an employer, has a legal duty to report certain types of accident, injury, disease, and dangerous occurrence to the Local Authority and / or the Health and Safety Executive.

If the Council fails to do this it may be prosecuted and fined.

In the event of any accident or dangerous occurrence it is **your** duty to ensure that the details are recorded on the Councils accident report form (AR1) and also entered into the Accident Book (BI 510), failure to do so may result in any claim for sick pay or disablement benefit being refused.

It is a legal requirement that **you** inform your manager of any accident as soon as possible - if you are unable to do so then another person may do so on your behalf.

Another person may also make an entry into the Accident Book for you if you are unable to do so.

Even if you have not been affected by the accident you should report it, and ensure that the appropriate forms are completed, doing so will protect your right to future benefit if the accident does have an effect on you at a later date.

By reporting accidents you enable the Council to investigate the accident and determine the probable cause. This allows trends to be identified, and deficiencies in plant and equipment, systems of work, etc. to be corrected. If accidents are not reported and subsequently investigated, then these deficiencies may go unnoticed, and therefore uncorrected, for some time or until a serious accident occurs.

**Remember - report ALL accidents and injuries, no matter how slight, to your line manager immediately**