



St. Helens
Council

Health & Safety

Policy Statement



Health and Safety Policy Statement

General Statement of Intent

1.0 St.Helens Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees. The Health & Safety Policy Statement applies to all employees of the Council and School Governing bodies. The Policy Statement applies to employees who are seconded to other organisations and will be applicable to individuals seconded to the Council. Agency staff, consultancy staff, volunteers and work placements or staff engaged under partnership arrangements, will be expected to be familiar with the content of this Policy Statement and undertake their duties in compliance with it. For the purpose of this document the term 'employees/ personnel' is inclusive of these individuals.

So far as is reasonably practicable, systems and procedures will be implemented to ensure that all equipment, plant, substances and premises are safe and free from adverse effects to health. It is a key objective of this policy to ensure that employees, pupils, service users, and the public, who may be affected by our activities, are exposed to the lowest practicable level of risk.

St.Helens Council has adopted a risk-based approach to health and safety whereby resources will be targeted at hazards from which most accidents arise, or there is a potential for significant impact. As a minimum, St.Helens Council will take all necessary steps to comply with health and safety legislation and Approved Codes of Practice, with due regard to HSE Guidance and relevant British, European and International Standards.

St.Helens Council recognises the key role of employees in establishing and maintaining safe and healthy working procedures and conditions. All employees are required to avoid any actions which may adversely affect the health, safety and welfare of themselves, their colleagues and others. The policy will be brought to the attention of all employees.

This policy has been fully endorsed by the Council's Senior Management Team and will be implemented by management throughout all departments of the Council. The Health & Safety Manager will play a lead role in ensuring that the Senior Management Team is kept informed of current and future legislation and that management systems are in place to ensure effective communication, information and training in health and safety matters.

This policy requires that all St.Helens Council activities, in each case, meet the health and safety requirements of a relevant external standard. It is anticipated that in most cases the defined standard will be provided directly by legislation or an Approved Code of Practice, Guidance Note or British/ European Standard.

The Council will continue to review our health and safety policy, as circumstances change, to ensure its continuing relevance to the structure and needs of St.Helens Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Palin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Mike Palin
Chief Executive

April 2015

Organisation of Health and Safety in St.Helens Council

2.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for health and safety within St.Helens Council and will ensure that the policy is fully implemented. Through the consultative mechanism of the Safety and Risk Management Forum, the Chief Executive will ensure that the health and safety standards required by this policy are being delivered in all Council departments. The Chief Executive, with the support of the Health & Safety Manager, will initiate a review of this policy on a regular basis.

2.2 Chief Officers/Headteachers

Are responsible and accountable for:

- the health and safety of personnel under their control;
- service users and members of the public who may be affected by their activities; and
- risks arising from contracts for which they are responsible.

Are expected to lead by example and to follow St.Helens Council Policy. Although Chief Officers and Headteachers delegate specific duties to others, they will remain responsible for the safety of their personnel.

Must ensure that:

- written safe working procedures are in place for all services or significant tasks undertaken in their department. Safe working procedures must, in each case, conform to a defined external standard and have been issued on a recorded basis to relevant personnel.

- a programme of risk assessment, as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 has been carried out for all services under their control.
- risk assessments are recorded on the St.Helens Council assessment form which conforms to the HSE guidance 'Risk Assessment: A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace' INDG 163 (rev 4).
- a procedure is in place for the recording of all personal injuries, accidents and near-misses. In accordance with the Assault at Work Code of Practice, an incident report form should be completed reporting assaults or verbal abuse within their department.
- emergency procedures to deal with fire and terrorist action are in place for all premises under their control.
- for each premises, the following information is available:
 - regular premises inspection checklists
 - asbestos surveys and staff/contractor record sheets
 - legionella control files
 - record of fire drills, alarm tests and equipment checks
- adequate resources, financial or otherwise, are allocated for health and safety.

Additionally, Headteachers will develop a site specific Health and Safety Policy for their school, using the framework document provided by the LA.

2.3 Heads of Service

Must ensure that:

- a programme of risk assessment has been undertaken which effectively controls the risks associated with the significant tasks or services for which they

are responsible. Risk assessments will be subject to ongoing monitoring at management meetings in order to ensure their continuing effectiveness.

- written safe working procedures have been developed, implemented, and regularly reviewed, for the significant tasks or services for which they are responsible.
- adequate arrangements are in place so that contracts are procured and monitored to ensure that health and safety risks to service users and the public are adequately controlled.
- health and safety matters are addressed as a regular item at management team meetings. They will also ensure that regular consultation takes place with relevant Trades Union regarding health and safety matters.
- adequate resources, financial or otherwise, are allocated for health and safety and inform their Director of any likely shortfall.

2.4 Senior Managers

With support from the Corporate Health & Safety Section, as required, must:

- develop written safe working procedures for all significant tasks or services for which they are responsible. It must be ensured that written safe working procedures conform to a relevant external standard.
- complete a programme of risk assessment for the significant tasks or services for which they are responsible as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which will be recorded and retained on a St.Helens Council Risk Assessment form.

- ensure that a comprehensive programme of assessment has been completed under legislation, including:
 - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)
 - Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended)
 - Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)
 - Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
 - Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005
 - Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended)
 - Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)
 - Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998
- ensure that a record of assessment is kept and copies are provided to their management team. In order to ensure their continuing effectiveness, assessments will be reviewed as a regular item at management meetings.
- ensure that all contracts under their control are procured and subject to appropriate monitoring so as to ensure that health and safety risks from those activities to service users and the public, are adequately controlled.
- ensure that a suitable workplace inspection regime is in place for all premises under their control, based upon the relevant Corporate Health & Safety template, and that records are retained.

2.5 Middle Managers/First Line Managers

Must:

- ensure that relevant safe working procedures have been issued to all personnel for whom they are responsible on a recorded basis, and monitor, on an ongoing basis, that safe working procedures are being followed.
- take all necessary steps to ensure that personnel for whom they are responsible are familiar with the control measures, identified by assessment as necessary for safe working, and that they are used at all times. They will report any problems with identified control measures to their Senior Manager.
- ensure that all personnel for whom they have responsibility are provided with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). A record of PPE issued will be maintained and employees who consistently misuse or fail to use equipment will be reported to the Senior Manager.
- ensure that all personnel for whom they are responsible are familiar with the corporate accident reporting procedure. They will also carry out an initial investigation following a personal injury accident, ensure that a report is recorded on the Council's Corporate Accident Reporting System, and take any necessary steps to prevent a recurrence.
- ensure that personnel are competent, by virtue of appropriate safety training, assessment and observation, to carry out their work tasks. A record of employee safety training will be maintained on the Corporate Training Database and updated as necessary.

- be alert to any ill-health which may be attributable to working conditions. They should investigate and report those found to be of a serious nature and, where necessary, take practical steps to prevent recurrence. Consultation must take place with the Occupational Health Advisor and the Corporate Health & Safety Section.

2.6 Employees

All employees:

- must read this policy, follow its advice and act in accordance with its requirements as set out below.
- have a legal responsibility to ensure their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions.
- have a legal duty to follow any procedures issued by the Council which are designed to protect their health and safety. Employees must follow the guidance contained in written safe working procedures particularly with respect to the use of machinery, equipment and substances. If you are unsure about the procedures that apply to your job, contact your supervisor immediately.
- must follow the safe systems of work put in place to minimise the risks associated with work place hazards.
- must report accidents and potential hazards of which they are aware, no matter how trivial, to their supervisor.
- must report defective equipment, defects in premises, hazards, defective safety devices or damaged equipment to their supervisor immediately. All electrical equipment must be visually checked for obvious damage prior to usage. Any items of Personal Protective Equipment that become lost or damaged must be reported to your Line Manager immediately.

- must report to their manager any changes in their health which may impact on their ability to safely undertake their role.

Failure to follow the guidance contained in this policy may mean that you are committing a criminal offence under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

If you have any concerns relating to health and safety, that you feel have not been adequately dealt with by your Line Manager, you may wish to contact your Union Safety Representative. If you feel that you have become ill due to your work, advice can be obtained by contacting the Council's Occupational Health Unit or Health & Safety Section.

2.7 Health and Safety Advisors

The key tasks of the Corporate Health & Safety Section is to provide timely and accurate advice to the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team concerning their Health and Safety responsibilities.

The Health & Safety Manager will co-ordinate the work of the Safety Advisors in order to ensure a consistency of approach in the development of safe working procedures and the completion of risk assessments.

The Corporate Health & Safety Section will maintain a record of all accidents, identify trends, investigate all notifiable accidents and provide an annual statistical summary for Chief Officers.

The Health & Safety Advisors will provide technical assistance to Senior Managers to enable them to complete a programme of assessment as required by legislation.

The Health & Safety Advisors will carry out regular workplace and service inspections in order to monitor the effectiveness of the control measures identified by assessment

and that safe working procedures have been implemented. They will report any non-conformance to the relevant departmental management team.

The Health & Safety Advisors in conjunction with managers will ensure that appropriate Health & Safety training records are maintained by managers for all personnel within their departments.

2.8 Occupational Health

St.Helens Council's Occupational Health Unit comprises an Occupational Health Advisor and an Occupational Health Technician, with a Consultant attending on a sessional basis.

The objectives of the Occupational Health Unit are to promote and support a culture where the physical and psychological health and well-being of staff is respected, protected and improved whilst at work, providing advice to facilitate a person's ability to work based upon their capabilities pre-placement and throughout their employment.

The key priorities for the service reflect those set out in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) document 'Working for a Healthier Tomorrow', focusing on early intervention, musculo-skeletal disorders, physical agents such as noise and vibration, and managing attendance.

Information on the range of services provided by Occupational Health will be promoted to employees through internal media such as: Council at Work, the Corporate Intranet and Posters, this will include the opportunity for self-referral.

2.9 Consultative Procedures

St.Helens Council practices full and effective consultation with recognised Trades Unions on matters of Health

and Safety.

Managers will be available to any Trades Union appointed Safety Representative and will co-operate with them so far as is reasonable in their efforts to carry out their function. They will also receive written reports from any such Safety Representatives and respond in writing within a reasonable time.

St.Helens Council welcomes the appointment of Safety Representatives and the setting up of Departmental and Central consultative groups where health and safety issues are an agenda item.

Arrangements for implementing the Health and Safety Policy

3.1 Consultation and Communication

This Policy will be communicated to all Council employees, using the IT compliance system or a personal issue hard copy. The policy will be supported by corporate and departmental risk assessments and safe working procedures, which relate to specific departments, sections or functions of the Council. It is intended, whenever possible, to bring forward safe working procedures and policy documents on a corporate basis through the mechanism of the Safety and Risk Management Forum. All of these documents are available on the Council intranet.

The Safety and Risk Management Forum, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Council's Senior Management Team, Health & Safety Advisors and Trades Union, will meet on a regular basis in order to monitor the effectiveness of this policy and current health and safety arrangements. The Safety and Risk Management Forum will also provide a consultative framework for the consideration of corporate and departmental safety policies.

3.2 Training

St.Helens Council will ensure the competence of its personnel by the provision of training to all managers and employees appropriate to their responsibilities for health and safety. All new personnel will receive a planned induction, which includes details of the St.Helens Council Health and Safety Policy, relevant safe working procedures, first aid provision and emergency procedures.

A record will be kept of the safety training received by each employee.

St.Helens Council is committed to ensuring that all its Senior Managers, Headteachers and Designated Managers achieve IOSH accredited management safety training.

3.3 Accident Prevention

Hazardous conditions, arising out of St.Helens Council activities, which present a significant health and safety risk will be controlled by a programme of risk assessment undertaken using the St.Helens Council risk assessment template. Control measures and remedial action identified by the assessment process will form the basis of written safe working procedures.

Risk assessment for a particular task or function will normally be carried out by the relevant Senior Managers with technical assistance provided by the Corporate Health & Safety Section. On a day-to-day basis, it will be the responsibility of Middle Managers/First Line Managers to ensure that the measures identified by the risk assessment are implemented. Review of assessments will take place on an annual basis, or more frequently if circumstances change.

3.4 Accident Investigation and Reporting

All personal injuries, accidents and near-misses must be reported. They will be investigated to determine the cause and, where appropriate, remedial action will be taken to prevent a recurrence. The accident reporting procedure and database is contained on the Council's intranet system. The Corporate Health & Safety Section will review these, and will notify the Health and Safety Executive where necessary under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

3.5 First Aid

First Aid facilities within St.Helens Council will meet the requirements of the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981. All premises will have sufficient trained first aiders and/or appointed persons in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice: First Aid at Work.

The names and locations of trained first aiders will be displayed in a prominent position in all St.Helens Council premises.

3.6 Premises

In all St.Helens Council premises, in which personnel are habitually employed, the welfare facilities and environment will meet the requirements of the Health and Safety etc Act 1974 and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

Chief Officers will have responsibility to ensure that standards are maintained in premises for which they are responsible, including a regular workplace inspection regime.

A programme of surveys to detect asbestos containing materials has been completed in Council premises in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. Copies of the survey reports will be held by Asset Management and Construction Procurement, Corporate Health and Safety and Site Managers.

Health & Safety Advisors will undertake periodic workplace inspections covering all Council premises.

In accordance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, a fire risk assessment will be completed for all relevant sites.

3.7 Emergency Procedures

Chief Officers will ensure that adequate emergency procedures have been developed for the premises for which they are responsible.

The Responsible Person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order will ensure that there are a sufficient number of Fire Wardens in each of their premises to meet the needs of emergency procedures.

The Health & Safety Manager, with the assistance of the Public Buildings Manager, will ensure that a programme of regular fire drills is in place in all public buildings.

Fire drills will take place once a term in all St.Helens Council Schools.

A Fire Safety Log Book will be maintained at all St.Helens Council sites.

3.8 Monitoring and Record Keeping

Senior/Middle/First Line Managers will ensure that a record is kept of assessments required under health and safety legislation for the significant tasks or services for which they are responsible.

The Corporate Health & Safety Section will keep a record of all corporate level assessments and safe working procedures. They will carry out a regular review of assessments in order to ensure that they remain valid to the changing needs and structure of St.Helens Council.

Copies of assessments will be made available on request to Trade Union Safety Representatives.

The Corporate Health & Safety Section, in conjunction with Managers, will ensure that health and safety training records are maintained for all personnel within their departments.

3.9 Equipment, Material and Substances

All new equipment used by St.Helens Council must be appropriately CE marked where required, and conform to a relevant British, European or International Standard.

All substances that come under the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) will be subject to an assessment prior to use. It is the policy of St.Helens Council to purchase, whenever practical, the least harmful materials and substances.

All equipment and plant will be fit for the purpose for which it is to be used and will be maintained in accordance with suppliers' instructions. Middle Managers/First Line Managers will monitor the use of plant and equipment, reporting any defects or problems to their Senior Manager.

Senior/Middle/First Line Managers will ensure that all electrical equipment used by the service is subject to regular electrical test and formal visual inspection in accordance with the requirements of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and the advice contained in the HSE publication INDG236 (rev 3): 'Maintaining portable electrical equipment in low risk environments'.

3.10 Procurement and Management of Third Party Services

Every effort will be made to identify and use competent contractors.

No contract may be tendered or awarded without an assessment of health and safety implications to the public, service users, contractor staff and Council employees.

Contracts consequently identified as higher risk may require the tender documentation, and in some cases the individual tenders, to be reviewed by the Corporate Health & Safety Section prior to award.

No construction or maintenance contractor will be accepted onto the Council's approved list until they have been approved by the Corporate Health & Safety Section.

All relevant contractors will be provided with a copy of the Council document: 'Safety Guidelines for Contractors', prior to the commencement of work.

The performance of contractors must be monitored by the relevant Contract Manager, and any issues concerning health and safety reported to the Corporate Health & Safety Section.



St. Helens Council

Contact Centre

Wesley House
Corporation Street
St. Helens
WA10 1HF

Tel: 01744 676789

Minicom: 01744 671671

Fax: 01744 676895

Email: contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk

→ www.sthelens.gov.uk



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