

Corporate Health and Safety Policy

June 2007

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General Statement of Health and Safety Policy and Intent

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) recognises and accepts its duties and responsibilities as an employer with regard to the health, safety and welfare of each of its employees and all others who may be affected by the Authority's activities.

I, therefore, consider, that the provision of workplaces that are safe and without risks to the health of all NPTCBC employees, sub-contractors, stakeholders and members of the public insofar as they may be affected by our activities, is one of my main priorities. In achieving this, NPTCBC will endeavour to meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and other associated legislation as far as is reasonably practicable.

Whilst I have ultimate responsibility for health and safety within NPTCBC by virtue of my position as Chief Executive, the Corporate Directors and their Heads of Service will ensure that their areas of responsibility are managed and resourced to reduce the risks to the health and safety of their employees and others, as far as is reasonably practicable.

The approach adopted by NPTCBC towards developing an attitude of positive safety behaviour is dependent on the involvement of all employees and stakeholders. I, therefore, require effective methods of monitoring and communication to be in place so that all employees can raise safety and health concerns.

Additionally, the availability of competent personnel at all levels is an essential factor in providing a safe and healthy working environment and, as such, it is the responsibility of all levels of management to ensure that their personnel are trained to work safely.

Whilst I shall endeavour to ensure that a safe and healthy workplace is provided, employees should also be aware of their own responsibilities to comply with the requirements placed on them.

I expect employees to work safely and to have due regard for the safety of others, and to inform their supervisor or manager of any change in their physical or mental condition that may affect their health or safety whilst at work.

This policy is to be reviewed annually and any revisions shall be brought to the attention of all managers, employees and other stakeholders.

Positive health and safety throughout NPTCBC is the responsibility of all managers, employees and other stakeholders and I require the co-operation of all concerned in developing a safety culture that is committed to the pursuit of excellence.

Ken Sawyers
Chief Executive

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Date:

1. ORGANISATION

High standards of health and safety shall be achieved through good management and positive leadership. To achieve this it is necessary to detail the organisational arrangements within which health and safety can be managed and to specify the responsibilities for health and safety management that exist.

1.1 Elected Members

It is the responsibility of Elected Members to promote a proactive approach to health and safety by; -

- Contributing to the formulation of Health and Safety aims and objectives and ensuring that these aims and objectives are mainstreamed into all relevant Council policies.
- Assisting in the provision of Health and Safety direction for the Council as a whole.
- Ensuring that a general Corporate Health and Safety policy is established and communicated to all employees and reviewed as necessary.

1.2 Cabinet Members

It is the responsibility of Cabinet Members to ensure that: -

- A member of the Cabinet has responsibility for Health and Safety.
- The Cabinet is informed of all major Health and Safety issues affecting or likely to affect NPTCBC.
- Adequate financial resources are included in Annual Budget allocations to enable NPTCBC to meet its statutory obligations with regard to Health and Safety at Work.

1.3 Governing Bodies of Schools Maintained by the Council in its capacity as Local Education Authority (LEA)

There is a shared overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare between the Council in its capacity as Local Education Authority, Governing Body and all Headteachers. Governing Bodies and Headteachers must:

- Appoint a suitable member of the Governing Body as a Lead Person in Health and Safety.
- Co-operate with NPTCBC in monitoring the effectiveness of arrangements at each establishment and operations in respect of the functions for which they are responsible:

- Ensure that they are aware of their duties and responsibilities under safety legislation and ensure that the Headteacher of the establishment is aware of and implements the Authority's Safety Policy.
- Ensure that, in implementing this policy, arrangements and organisation for the safety of staff, pupils, visitors and contractors are met.
- Ensure that all premises, plant and equipment for which they are responsible are safe and properly maintained.
- Ensure, in the selection and purchase of equipment, that it is suitable for the use that will be made of it, and account is taken of the working conditions and any hazards in the workplace.
- Ensure that Health and Safety issues concerning the school are identified, discussed and decisions taken, leading to effective action being implemented.
- Ensure that in respect of any project that they initiate, they consider the Health and Safety of all persons at the planning stage and include any necessary measures to control risks.
- Ensure that all employees of their establishment adopt safe methods of work for the activities carried out.
- Consult, whenever necessary, with the designated Corporate Health and Safety Officer on matters relating to safety and the Authority's policies.
- Receive and act upon reports from their Head Teachers which will include any significant accidents and dangerous occurrences.
- Ensure that staff in their establishment are given sufficient time and other facilities to receive the necessary training on Health and Safety matters.
- Receive and act upon any direction from the Authority as regards any matter regarding Health and Safety at their establishment.

1.4 Chief Executive

The person ultimately responsible for health and safety is the Chief Executive, Mr Ken Sawyers. He will establish effective safety policies and procedures for the management of health and safety throughout the Council.

He will ensure that Corporate Directors establish and maintain effective safety management systems and ensure the arrangements for health and safety are followed as appropriate.

To meet these responsibilities he is to be assisted by an appropriately qualified and experienced Corporate Health and Safety Manager, Shaun Burgess.

1.5 Corporate Directors

The Corporate Directors are responsible for ensuring that the general corporate health and safety policy is followed. Where the corporate policy is inadequate in managing their specific health and safety risks, they are to ensure that their Directorate procedures address any shortcoming.

A Directorate health and safety committee will be established where issues affecting the health and safety of employees and stakeholders on a Directorate-wide basis can be raised and resolved.

The Corporate Directors with responsibility for health and safety in their respective Directorates are as follows:

Director of Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	Karl Napieralla
Director of Environment	Will Watson
Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Derek Davies
Director Of Social Services, Health and Housing	Colin Preece

To assist them in managing health and safety, Corporate Directors will be supported by designated Corporate Health and Safety Officers. They have the responsibility for providing competent advice to the Corporate Director and for co-ordinating all aspects of health and safety across the Directorate. These are located within the Corporate Health and Safety Section and are contactable on 01792 512793.

Corporate Directors are responsible for ensuring the following within their Directorates:-

- That resources in terms of time, finance and personnel are available to implement and manage health and safety commensurate to the level of risk.
- That health and safety performance is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis at Directorate and Corporate level.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the corporate safety policies and initiating improvements where appropriate.
- Annual review of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy

- Annual production of a health and safety action plan that outlines targets and objectives to be achieved to reduce accidents and occupational ill health across the Council.

1.6 Heads of Service

Are responsible for, but not limited to, the following considerations:-

- The provision of adequate resources commensurate to the level of risk for the management of health and safety.
- To report any shortfalls in the management of health and safety to their Corporate Director.
- To implement the requirements of the corporate health and safety policy and other supporting documentation and, where necessary, supplement this to ensure safe working practices.
- Ensure all levels of management are aware of their responsibilities concerning safety management and that they receive appropriate training to meet this requirement.
- Set targets and objectives for all levels of management to achieve a reduction in accidents and occupational ill health in accordance with the Directorate's objectives.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the health and safety management system and instigate improvements if it is considered necessary.
- Carrying out periodic visits to a variety of sites, premises and activities to monitor the standards of their employees' health and safety.
- Ensure all employees have the appropriate level of health and safety competence to work safely.
- Ensure the reporting of accidents, occupational ill health and near miss incidents in accordance with Corporate Procedures and where necessary ensure that an investigation is carried out in conjunction with the appropriate Health and Safety Officer.
- Monitor the health and safety performance of all services managed by periodic review of accident and incident data and ensuring that all activities receive a periodic safety audit.
- Support, as necessary, the various safety committees within the Directorates.
- Ensure that health and safety responsibilities are clearly documented in all job descriptions.

1.7 Accountable Managers/ Principal Officers/ Managers/ Headteachers/Team Leaders are to:

- Ensure they are aware of their responsibilities with regard to the management of health and safety in their respective service areas
- Apply the relevant safety management system to all activities under their control.
- Set an example in safe behaviour, good management and positive leadership to others.
- Identify and meet the safety training and development needs of employees under their control to ensure competency.
- Ensure the reporting of accidents, occupational ill health and near miss incidents in accordance with Corporate Procedures and where appropriate ensure that an investigation is undertaken.
- Allocate appropriate resources to the planning of all activities. Ensure all activities are effectively managed and supervised.
- Systematically identify hazards through site visits and, where necessary, obtaining safety information from employees, designers, safety advisors and documented codes of practice.
- Allocate appropriate health and safety responsibilities to line managers and supervisors, ensuring they are understood and effectively implemented.
- Develop and apply the appropriate risk control systems and work place precautions to eliminate or minimise risk.
- Involve and consult with employees on all matters concerning health and safety, encouraging a two way communication on such matters.
- Identify health and safety deficiencies within their area of responsibility and take appropriate remedial action. Ensure the relevant Head of Service and the Corporate Health and Safety Officer is informed of the deficiency.
- Ensure all employees receive corporate and workplace induction as is necessary.
- Ensure all contractors under their control discharge their health and safety responsibilities appropriately.
- Ensure all plant, equipment, personal protective equipment and other safety devices are maintained, repaired and replaced as necessary. In addition, ensure that all statutory and other appropriate tests are carried out on all safety related equipment at relevant intervals.

- Monitor the health and safety performance of employees and contractors.
- Keep up to date with legislative changes, codes of practice, industry best practice, Corporate and Directorate procedures.
- Develop improved safety behaviour and performance through consultation, co-operation and communication.

1.8 All Employees are to:

- Ensure all safety arrangements and procedures are followed at all times.
- Use all work equipment and personal protective equipment properly and in accordance with training received.
- Report any safety deficiencies, accidents, near misses and cases of ill health to their line manager.
- Assist the relevant health and safety officer during investigations of accidents and safety related incidents.
- Work safely at all times giving due consideration for the safety of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Notify line management of their safety training needs.
- Assist wherever possible in improving safety systems and performance through consultation, co-operation and communication.
- Inform their line manager if any physical or mental condition known to them affects their ability to work.

1.9 Volunteers and Trainees are to

- Ensure that whilst they are engaged in any project or are representative of the Authority in anyway that they follow all safety arrangements and procedures so as to minimise any potential risk to themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

2. ARRANGEMENTS

The Corporate Health & Safety Officers will, from time to time, issue procedures and guidance so that Directorates may comply with legislation and safe practices. Corporate Directors are responsible for ensuring that employees and stakeholders are conversant with the contents of this policy and any new procedures or guidance, and that they comply with its requirements.

This policy is further supported by the Safety Management System, sub-ordinate Policies, Corporate Procedures and where appropriate specific Directorate procedures and other relevant documentation.

2.1 Management of Projects

Directorates and employees of those Directorates that commission, design, supervise or carry out building projects (including maintenance) or construction works shall comply with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, and where required seek expert advice through the Corporate Health and Safety Section.

Employees who design work must ensure that the health and safety of those who are involved is properly considered. This includes those who undertake the work and those who will maintain and/or repair the installation or construction in the future. As far as reasonably practicable, employees will:

- design to avoid risks to health and safety;
- reduce risks at source if avoidance is not possible;
- consider measures that will protect all workers if avoidance nor reduction to a safe level is possible;
- ensure that the design includes adequate information on health and safety.

2.2 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Directorates shall comply with the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations. All employees and Sub-contractors' employees shall make full and proper use of personal protective equipment provided for them. This particularly applies when the relevant hazard exists or where the workplace precautions require it and/or regulation stipulated that they do so.

Where PPE has been provided it is the individual's responsibility to keep and take reasonable care of items of personal protective equipment issued to them and maintains them in a clean and serviceable condition. It is each individual's responsibility to report any loss or obvious defects as soon as possible.

2.3 Equipment - Use & Examination

Employees shall comply with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations, the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations, the Electricity at Work Regulations. Each Directorate shall have the responsibility of maintaining all plant items and equipment in a safe condition wherever used, and will ensure that only trained competent persons use them.

The Directorate will ensure that provisions are in place so that all plant and equipment requiring regular and/or statutory examination is tested and/or maintained where this is required.

2.4 First Aid

All Directorates shall comply with the requirements of the First Aid at Work Regulations. This will be done by ensuring that provision for dealing with a first aid emergency is apparent in all workplaces.

Each Directorate will ensure that each workplace is risk assessed for the provision of first aid. The risk assessment must consider the number of employees, types of injury or illness, shift patterns, injuries to the public and the level of training received.

2.5 Fire Prevention

In so far as they apply to their workplaces and sites, the Directorate shall comply with the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations. This will be done by assessing the fire risk and providing fire detection and warning arrangements that enable people to escape safely. Fire safety equipment will be regularly checked and maintained. Each Directorate will ensure that those in their workplaces know what to do if there is a fire. Where appropriate, practice fire drills and alarm soundings will be carried out.

2.6 Vehicles used for Council Business

The safe condition and driving of vehicles that are used in connection with the undertakings of the Council (including the wearing of seat belts) are the driver's responsibility. It is up to that person to constantly monitor the vehicle's safe condition with particular reference to tyres, brakes, steering and lights and to follow the manufacturer's service schedule where appropriate. Notify the appropriate Directorate, as soon as possible, of any safety defect that becomes apparent with an authority used vehicle.

Drivers must pay due regard to the traffic and weather conditions and follow the guidance in the Highway Code at all times. They must never use a hand held mobile phone when driving, or otherwise in control of a vehicle, must avoid driving whilst tired and allow sufficient time for each journey, so as not to speed.

2.7 Stress and Trauma

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act places a duty on employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees at work. This includes their mental as well as their physical health. The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations require that the risk of work-related ill health be assessed.

Corporate Directors, Heads of Service and Managers will promote the principles of good, effective management and respect for individual employees to create and maintain a psychologically healthy work environment, in which pressures are acknowledged and controlled, allowing employees to thrive whilst achieving their goals.

2.8 Welfare Provisions

Managers will ensure that appropriate welfare/ amenity provisions including sanitation, hand washing, shower facilities, clothing storage, rest facilities and facilities for taking meals are provided and properly maintained.

2.9 Safe Working

As far as is reasonably practicable, co-operation is expected between Directorates, employees, stakeholders and others so that improvement in health and safety is a collaborative effort. The effective application of the requirements set out in this policy will ensure that work hazards are identified and that appropriate risk control systems and workplace precautions are implemented. Additionally, they make employees aware of the need to follow, as far as reasonably practicable, safe working practices.

Contractors who carry out work on behalf of NPTCBC shall follow, as a minimum, the requirements of this policy document and other measures put into place to ensure their health and safety while at work.

2.10 Consultation on Health and Safety

The requirements set out in the Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations and in the Safety Committee and Safety Representatives Regulations will be followed, where it is appropriate to do so.

Employees will be consulted, in good time, on the drawing up and maintaining of arrangements for the effective promotion, development and monitoring of measures to ensure their health and safety while at work.

2.11 Safety Training

New employees, and/or employees transferred from other operations, will be informed of all the relevant health and safety matters, risk control systems and workplace precautions that are particular to their work and/or their workplace. This will include instruction and training about machinery, articles and/or substances for use at work and/or risks relating to the workplace.

Training in work related health and safety is an important and integral part of the corporate general safety policy. No employee may undertake any task unless they have received adequate training and have satisfied a competent person of their ability to perform that task.

2.12 Workplaces

Heads of Service will arrange for all workplaces and other premises used by NPTCBC to be assessed for potential hazards and risks. Managers will ensure that all its workplaces comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations as far as is reasonably practicable.

Heads of Service shall investigate, prepare and adopt procedures to deal with foreseeable emergencies that may arise in or around workplaces used by NPTCBC. The Directorates will notify staff, temporary workers and visitors to their workplaces of these.

2.13 Display Screen Equipment

Where the assessment shows that display screen equipment is in use, it shall meet the requirements the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations. Workstations will be assessed for suitability and where necessary, 'users' of display screens will be trained in the most appropriate working practices and have access to eyesight tests.

2.14 Young Persons and New / Expectant Mothers

Children between 13 and the minimum school leaving age (just before or after the 16th birthday) will not be employed but will be permitted to participate in work experience schemes approved by the Council.

Directorates shall comply with the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations and will assess the risks to young people, less than 18 years old, before they start work. Risks to young persons will be reduced to the lowest practicable level and they will be properly supervised.

Management will comply with the Health & Safety at Work Regulations and assess the risks to new and expectant mothers once they have received written notification of the

pregnancy. Risks to new and expectant mothers will be reduced to the lowest practicable level.

2.15 Risk Control

Heads of Service, Accountable Managers, Principal Officers, Managers, Headteachers and Team Leaders will design, develop and operate suitable management arrangements, risk control systems and workplace precautions which are proportionate to the needs, hazards and risks identified and in accordance with the Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations and others require that hazards pertaining to work activities are assessed before the work starts. When doing this, Managers will pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable persons, employees and new or expectant mothers to ensure they are not exposed to any significant risk. The assessment will be sufficient to cover all hazards. Managers shall generally identify, evaluate and record the risks, using the appropriate corporate risk assessment forms.

2.16 Manual Handling

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations requires an assessment of the risks arising from employees undertaking any manual handling operations. Each Directorate shall comply with these regulations obtaining, where necessary, expert advice through the Corporate Health and Safety Section.

Each Directorate shall ensure that current manual handling risk assessments are in place, reviewed and communicated to employees. Each Directorate must also ensure the provision of necessary resources to implement the control measures and procedures for completing the manual handling tasks safely.

2.17 Violence and Aggression

Each Directorate is responsible for protecting their employees from foreseeable risks of abuse/assault by those they can come into contact with in the course of their work. Practical local safe systems of work will need to be prepared to ensure the risks associated with dealing with violence and aggression are either eliminated or adequately controlled to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

2.18 Lone Working

Each Directorate will assess the risks of lone working for their employees and ensure the risks associated with lone working are either eliminated or adequately controlled. Local safe working practices will then need to be implemented and these will need to be tested and reviewed/revised as necessary to ensure the practices are working correctly and effectively.

2.19 Noise at Work

The Noise at Work Regulations will be complied with, where exposure to loud or prolonged periods of noise may damage hearing. Where required, noise levels will be assessed and hearing protection provided if it is required. Hearing protection will always be used when working in, or entering, a “hearing protection zone”. Items of plant and equipment that may damage hearing will generally be marked to show that hearing protection is to be worn when near them or while using them.

2.20 Hand Arm Vibration

To reduce the likelihood of employees suffering from hand-arm vibration they are encouraged to reduce the grip, pushing and pulling forces that they apply when using plant or machinery. They are also required to avoiding long periods of uninterrupted vibration exposure. The responsible Managers shall select tools and equipment designed for low vibration and make sure that they are correctly maintained and free of loose parts.

2.21 Confined Spaces

No person must enter a confined space if the work can be done in another way. Where the work cannot be done from outside, there must be a safe system of work in place and the personnel involved must be adequately trained and instructed so they know what to do and how to do it safely. The requirements of the Confined Spaces Regulations shall be met.

2.22 Asbestos

Asbestos may be found in existing buildings, particularly those built or refurbished before 1980. Employees and contractors working on behalf of the Council must treat any insulation or insulating board in such buildings, etc, as asbestos. Where it is known or suspected that asbestos insulation, coating or boarding is present, then work in that area will stop and the supervisor notified, so that samples of the material can be taken for analysis.

2.23 Working at Height

The Working at Height Regulations aim to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

The prescribed hierarchy for safe work at height is as follows:

- Directorates shall avoid the risk by not working at height, where it is reasonably practicable to carry out the work safely other than at a height.
- Directorates shall prevent falls - where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid work at height, you should assess the risks and take measures to allow the work to be done whilst preventing, so far as is reasonably practicable, people or objects falling. This

might include ensuring the work is carried out safely from an existing place of work or choosing appropriate work equipment to prevent falls.

- Directorates shall *mitigate* the consequences of a fall - where the risk of people or objects falling still remains you should take steps to minimise the distance and consequences of such falls. This also involves the selection and use of work equipment and preventing those not involved with the work entering the hazardous area.

2.24 Working on or near Highways

Directorate Supervisors qualified under the New Roads and Streetworks Act or the Order shall ensure all work on or near highways conforms to the standards laid down in Chapter 8 of the Traffic Safety Measures and Signs for Roadworks and Temporary Situations 1991, as amended, and other relevant legislation.

Everyone working on or near highways has the responsibility to behave safely, to the best of their ability. Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Council and its employees have duties to protect themselves from dangers to their health and safety, and to protect others who might be affected by their work activity (e.g. passing pedestrians and motorists). These include proper arrangements for design (including planning and risk assessment) and management (including supervision) of the works.

2.25 Hazardous Substances

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations requires an assessment of the risks arising from substances before commencing work. Each Directorate shall comply with these regulations obtaining, where necessary, expert advice through the Corporate Health & Safety Section.

Directorates shall ensure that up to date COSHH Assessments are obtained and reviewed and then design, develop and operate suitable arrangements, risk control systems and workplace precautions which are proportionate to the hazards and risks identified.

2.26 Accident, Property Loss, Damage, Fire and Occupational Illness Reports

All incidents are to be reported (no matter how small) as soon as possible to the Corporate Health and Safety Section.

It is essential that all accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences, fire, security incidents, near misses and occupational illnesses are reported, and recorded, so that the appropriate action can be taken to improve the safety of the working environment and to enable the necessary action to be taken to prevent a recurrence.

The accident/ incident report forms can be obtained from your manager/ team leader/headteacher/ personnel section and should be sent to the Corporate Health and Safety Section.

Alternatively, if the appropriate manager/team leader/headteacher is not available, report the incident to the Corporate Health and Safety Section at 01792 512793.

2.27 Reporting Of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences

The accident/incident reporting form is to be passed to the Corporate Health and Safety Section who will record the information received on the Vision database and assess whether the accident/incident requires further investigation and notification to the Health and Safety Executive as required under RIDDOR (HSE's Incident Control Centre telephone no. 0845 300 9923).

The Directorate which is responsible for the incident concerned will investigate incidents that are reportable under RIDDOR. The Directorate shall, if required, implement measures to prevent a recurrence.

3. REVIEW

The contents of this document will be regularly reviewed. Changes to legislation and the working practices of the Authority will be kept under review to identify any changes that may be needed to it. If required, expert advice will be obtained through the Corporate Health and Safety Officers. Where changes are identified, the officers will recommend the improvements that are to be made as necessary.

Ken Sawyers
Chief Executive
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Date: