

# Corporate Health & Safety Policy

For All Employees at  
Cheltenham Borough Council



*Corporate Health & Safety*

## Foreword by the Chief Executive

Our commitment to health and safety forms part of the Council's wider agenda of social responsibility, sustainability, risk management, corporate governance and ultimately, quality of service.

The basis of our health and safety policy is to develop a climate in which a positive health and safety culture can develop.

We expect and require all employees to recognise their responsibilities as set out in this policy and to abide by their service area's local arrangements and procedures.

The signatures below demonstrate commitment at the highest level of the Council to this Health and Safety Policy and to the continuous improvement in our health and safety performance.

**Chief Executive: Andrew North**



**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Leader of the Council: Councillor Steven Jordan**



**Signature:**

**Date:**

# Corporate Health and Safety Policy

## “Striving for excellence in health and safety risk management”

In line with the Council's general and statutory obligations to provide a safe and healthy working environment for employees, Cheltenham Borough Council has adopted a policy statement on health and safety. This policy statement details the Council's intentions towards the creation, maintenance and development of a safe and healthy working environment. It identifies the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council as an employer and in relation to all employees working within the Council.

### Guiding Principles

To achieve continuous improvement of our health and safety performance through leadership, the dedication of our employees and the application of high standards in our work we have adopted four guiding principles:

**Control** – management are responsible for the clear allocation of health and safety responsibilities and for ensuring those responsibilities are implemented

**Co-operation** - we all have a responsibility to co-operate as individuals and as groups to make health and safety a collaborative effort

**Communication** - communication of health and safety information is essential and can always be improved

**Competence** - developing the health and safety competence of managers and employees to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a safe and healthy working environment.

These guiding principles are interrelated and interdependent and consistent activity in each area is needed to promote a climate in which a positive health and safety culture can develop.

### Policy Aim

To provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, an environment and working practices that ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and visitors to the Council.

To be an organisation where everyone can fulfil their potential free from work related injury or ill health; this includes employees, service users, contractors, and others who may be affected by our work activities

All employees are expected to co-operate in the implementation of the Council's Health & Safety Policy by: -

- acting in the course of their employment with due care for their own safety and that of others, who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- co-operating, so far as is necessary, to enable the Council to perform any duty or to comply with any requirements, as a result of any Health and Safety legislation which may be in force.

- using correctly all work items provided by the Council in accordance with the training and the instructions they receive to enable them to use the items safely.

## Policy Objectives

- to conduct all our activities and operations safely and in compliance with legislation and best practice
- to provide safe working conditions and equipment including plant and machinery
- to promote a positive safety culture
- to be an exemplar organisation in health and safety management
- providing information, instruction and training, as necessary, at all levels (including non-employees and contractors) to make sure they are competent, avoid ill health or injury at work, and increase awareness of employees' legal and moral obligations towards health and safety
- providing suitable and adequate assessment of the health and safety risks to employees (while at work) and non-employees (arising out of our work activities)
- to establish Directorate targets and action plans for continuous improvement of health and safety performance

The Council recognises that the successful implementation of its health and safety objectives is dependent on the commitment and involvement of both Members and officers and sufficient resources being allocated to both implement the Policy and ensure systems are sustainable.

## Organisational Structure and Responsibilities for Health and Safety

The specific health and safety roles and responsibilities assigned to various posts and functions within the Council are detailed below.

### The Council

The Council as the employer is ultimately responsible for the application of Health and Safety legislation, for achieving the objectives of this Health and Safety Policy, and for ensuring that adequate resources are made available to meet the health, safety and welfare needs of its employees.

The Council delegates the work required to meet these responsibilities to Cabinet, the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors, with advice from the Corporate Health and Safety advisors.

Responsibility for health and safety cascades through the authority from the Chief Executive to each individual. Responsibilities are allocated based on the principle that you are responsible for the work under your control, for those working under your control and for the people who are affected by your work.

## Chief Executive and Strategic Directors

The Chief Executive is responsible for the overall management of the Authority and is accountable and has ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of all those who work in the Authority and those who may be affected by our work activities.

To demonstrate this responsibility the Chief Executive personally endorses this Health and Safety Policy Statement.

Strategic Directors play a strategic role in supporting the Chief Executive to meet his responsibilities.

The Exec Board takes responsibility and visible leadership for strategic health and safety issues and will:

- Ensure adequate resources are made available to implement the Corporate Health and Safety Policy.
- Take account of health and safety when developing policies, making decisions, implementing major projects and change management initiatives.
- Monitor and review health and safety performance.
- Ensure full co-operation between divisions to enable us to deliver a consistent approach to managing health and safety
- Ensure that decision-making is in line with Council policy and procedures for health and safety and any statutory provisions set out in legislation
- Ensure development, implementation and review of systems within the authority to promote management control, communication, co-operation and competence on health and safety matters

## Members

All members shall ensure that the decisions they make are in line with Council policy and procedures for health and safety and any statutory provisions set out in legislation. This principle is to be borne in mind by all committees and during all contacts with employees and members of the public.

## Assistant Directors

Assistant Directors are responsible for ensuring that robust health and safety management systems exist in their respective divisions.

They are accountable for the overall health and safety performance of the services they manage.

It is the responsibility of Assistant Directors to ensure that there are arrangements in place to:

- Meet the aims and requirements of the Corporate policy, organisation and arrangements
- Identify and cascade service and individual health and safety objectives through the

management line

- Periodically review performance against health and safety objectives
- Report on Service health and safety performance as required
- Ensure that any identified preventative and corrective actions are implemented.

## **Service Managers/Supervisors/Team Leaders**

Health and Safety legislation requires all 'Managers', wherever they work, to help the Council maintain and improve health and safety standards.

### **This means that 'Managers' must:**

- Ensure all work-related hazards are identified and suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken.
- Develop local procedures and safe working practices in line with departmental documentation, and local risk assessments and communicate these to employees.
- Ensure that they and their employees have adequate levels of competency to complete their work tasks safely.
- Ensure that local health and safety systems are maintained.
- Report and investigate incidents as necessary.
- Set a good example and promote good practice
- Encourage people to identify problems before they result in accidents
- Release employees for appropriate health and safety training
- When procuring services ensure the supplier has the necessary health and safety arrangements in place relevant to the service being requested.

## **Building Managers**

Building managers, working in conjunction with Property Maintenance, have additional responsibilities to ensure that the place of work they are responsible for is maintained to an appropriate standard and that relevant legislative and the Councils requirements are met.

### **In particular this means that Building Managers must ensure that:**

- An Asbestos Risk Register is undertaken and maintained
- Building fire risks are managed through Fire Risk Assessment, maintenance of relevant equipment and adequate numbers of trained and competent Fire Wardens
- First Aid provision is maintained with appropriate equipment and trained and competent First Aiders
- General access and egress routes are maintained and appropriate measures are in place for separation of vehicles and pedestrians
- Legionella risks are appropriately controlled
- Contractors working on their behalf are properly controlled

## Employees (including Agency staff and Casual Workers)

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires all employees (including agency staff and casual workers), *“to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts and omissions”* and *“shall co-operate with management to enable management to carry out their responsibilities under the Act”*. This means that all employees must:

- Act responsibly and take care of their own health and safety and that of others, not only in what they do but also what they may fail to do.
- Co-operate with and support the Council, managers and other employees (including agency staff and casual workers), in meeting their health and safety legal responsibilities.
- Undertake any required training in safe methods of working and only use tools, machinery, plant, vehicles or equipment that they are trained to use.
- Take all suitable safety precautions and carry out work in accordance with the information, instruction and training they have received (written or verbal).
- Make use of, wear and take good care of anything (including equipment and protective clothing) provided for the purposes of health and safety.
- Maintain tools, machinery, plant, vehicles and equipment in a good condition, only use them for the purpose intended and withdraw from use anything that is considered unsafe.
- Report defects, malfunctions, hazards, accidents, incidents, “near misses” and anything thought to be dangerous to their Manager and /or the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor without delay. **If employees feel that reporting of any health and safety issue may bring recrimination from a manager or other employee, they should report their issue using the Whistle Blowing reporting process**
- Be sensibly and safely dressed for their particular working conditions.

## Contractors

Contractors must:

- Co-operate and communicate with the Council on all relevant health and safety matters.
- Meet the health and safety standards required of them in the performance of the work activities undertaken with or on behalf of the Council.

## Corporate Health and Safety Function

**The Corporate Health and Safety function is delivered by officers (who act as the ‘competent person’ as set out in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999) within the Human Resources and Organisational Development Division and is managed by the HR Operations Manager.**

**The Corporate Health & Safety function responsibilities include:**



- the provision of competent health and safety advice throughout the Council
- offer professional advice to ensure the Council's responsibilities for health and safety are met and any issues resolved (e.g. if management and employee safety representatives views differ for any reason, supporting the procurement of services etc.)
- auditing, monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of the policy
- provide advice on health and safety legislation
- identify health and safety training needs

## Joint Consultative Committee

Membership of the Joint Consultative Committee (the JCC) includes Cabinet Members, the HR Operations Manager, Corporate Health and Safety Advisors, representatives from Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Trade Union Representatives.

## Safety Representatives

Cheltenham Borough Council recognises and encourages appointed safety representatives as they represent the interests and concerns of their co-workers and respond on their behalf.

## The JCC:

- Fulfills the Council's obligations as regards to consultation on health and safety at work, with recognised Trade Unions.
- Ensures that operational health and safety policies and standards are brought to the attention of SLT.
- Provides a forum for discussing health and safety issues.
- Supports health and safety activities including monitoring, inspection, audits and review of activities.

## Occupational Health

To ensure the health and wellbeing of employees, the Council provides access to an occupational health support service to ensure that relevant advice is available to managers and employees in keeping them fit for work.