

# Health, Safety & Welfare Policy

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**This document has been written in anticipation of many assets and services being managed by Northampton Town Council in the future, not all sections are currently applicable to the Town Council. The Town Clerk has ultimate responsibility for all staff until such time as staffing structures are in place and approved by the council.**

## **Health, Safety and Wellbeing POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1. Introduction**

This Policy provides a business framework for the implementation and development of an effective Health & Safety management system for Northampton Town Council that facilitates a high standard of employee care and wellbeing together with compliance to the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other legislation. It has an overriding purpose to reduce, as far as reasonably practicable, the risk of injuries, ill health and other losses. This applies to the employees of the Town Council, elected members, the general public and other organisations that may be affected by our actions.

### **2. Purpose**

- To promote a positive Health, Safety and Welfare culture throughout the organisation;
- To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities as far as reasonably practicable;
- To consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- To promote clear channels of communication for Health, Safety and Welfare between all services;
- To provide information, instruction and supervision for employees;
- To provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- To ensure safe handling and use of substances (COSHH);
- To ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks and to give them adequate training;
- To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions;
- To initiate continuous improvement of Health and Safety through regular reviews and auditing both internally and externally;
- To make Health and Safety integral to all business processes, planning and decisions.

### **3. General statement**

The health and safety of our employees is of paramount importance. We aim to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees and to provide them with the necessary information, instruction and training to achieve this aim.

Appropriate preventive and protective measures are and will continue to be, implemented following the identification of work-related hazards and assessment of the risks associated with them.

We recognise the importance of employer/employee consultation on matters of health and safety and the value of individual consultation prior to allocating specific health and safety functions.

We also accept our responsibility for the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by our activities.

The allocation of duties for safety matters, the identity of competent persons appointed with particular responsibilities and the arrangements made to implement this policy are set out in this policy and in associated risk assessments and safety documents and records.

Expert advice will be sought as necessary when determining health and safety risks and the

measures required to guard against them.

The objectives of this policy statement can only be achieved through the support and co-operation of employees and all other persons who use our premises, e.g. members of the public (hirers, customers, users), Councillors, contractors and visitors.

The contents of this policy statement is informed by statutory guidance and good practice issued by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) or industry recognised bodies.

The Policy will be reviewed for its effectiveness on an annual basis with a formal review undertaken every three years.

#### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

**Full Council has the overall responsibility** for the Town Council's Health, Safety and Welfare policy, who review and consider this policy at the agreed intervals. The Council's Finance & Governance Committee will have general oversight of the Policy, make recommended amendments to Full Council and consider the health, safety and welfare systems, processes, procedures, risk assessments or similar as required to ensure the Council undertakes its responsibilities in accordance with the law.

**The responsibility** for ensuring the application of this policy is delegated to the Town Clerk. Heads of Service will have overarching responsibility for health and safety standards for their respective service areas:

The Council will designate an officer to act as its **Health and Safety Officer**. The Health and safety officer's main aim is to prevent injuries, accidents and work-related illnesses in the workplace. Their role is to assist in creation and implementation of health and safety policies in accordance with the legislation and to ensure that these policies are implemented by management and employees. They are also the Chair of the Health and Safety consultative Group.

**All employees** are expected to:

- Co-operate with managers on all health, safety, welfare/ wellbeing matters;
- Actively consider their safety and the safety of others and help NTC develop and maintain a good safety culture with a low level of risk. All employees are encouraged to make suggestions to improve health, safety and welfare in their workplace;
- Correctly use work items, including personal protective equipment as instructed;
- Not misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interests of health and safety;
- Read all relevant risk assessments and comply with the control measures;
- Report all accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences, whether there is injury/damage or not, and complete a form provided for the purpose;
- Promptly report foreseeable hazards (or situations considered to be potentially hazardous);
- Report all property and equipment defects;
- Use any machinery, equipment, substance, transport or safety device provided in accordance with training and instructions, in compliance with regulations;
- Inform their Manager of any work situation or shortcomings in protective arrangements which he/she considers represents a significant risk to health, safety and welfare, or a risk to other persons (i.e. contractors, visitors, customers, the general public and members); and

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety.

Supervision of **trainees/work experience** will be arranged, undertaken and monitored by Service Area Managers.

## **MANAGING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **5. Accidents**

*Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*

*Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)*

#### **Reporting and Recording Accidents**

There is a legal duty placed upon the Council to report and record all accidents at work.

Details of all accidents involving employees or members of the public shall be recorded on an **Accident Report Form** and submitted to their Manager.

**Individual employees are responsible for reporting accidents** and potential accidents/near misses that occur at work on the mandatory Accident Report Form, which is available from the Town Clerk's Office, the Health and Safety Officer or from your Manager.

The Health and Safety Officer will record all accidents/near misses in an **Accident Book** and will be responsible for reporting 'Lost Time' accidents. All accidents and cases of ill health as a result of an accident at work are to be recorded in the accident book. The book is kept by the Town Clerk.

Senior Managers will ensure that **accidents and work-related causes of sickness absences are investigated** and that the causes are analysed to assist in formulating preventative measures and will report to the Council's Senior Management Team and Staff Consultative Group. The appropriate Senior / Service Manager will ensure the agreed preventative measures are implemented.

The Town Clerk is responsible, where required by law, for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority.

### **6. Employee Consultation**

*Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996*  
*Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977*

Consultation with employees will be undertaken at:

- Service Team Meetings; and
- One to one meetings with individual staff members.

In addition, each service area will nominate a representative to be part of a staff Health and Safety consultative Group (Not a Senior Manager). The Group will meet on a 6-monthly basis to:

- Discuss day to day operational health and safety matters;
- Consider reports and methodology proposed to address any issues or concerns; and
- Assist in the process of integrating health, safety and welfare.

## **7. Fire & Evacuation Procedures**

*Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002*

*Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2015*

UK fire regulations require a fire risk assessment for all workplaces. Service area Managers are responsible for ensuring a **fire risk assessment** is undertaken and implemented, including appropriate provision of fire exits, signs, alarms and extinguishers.

Fire evacuation procedures are to be provided at each place of work / public office.

## **8. First Aid**

*The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981*

First aid means treating minor injuries at work and giving immediate attention to more serious casualties until medical help is available. Through this initial management of injury or illness suffered at work, lives can be saved and minor injuries prevented from beginning major ones.

Nominated staff are required to attend a "First Aid at Work Appointed Person Course". First aid equipment is readily accessible at each premises and is kept stocked, clean and ready for use.

A list of First aid trained personnel is displayed at the Councils offices.

## **9. Contractors & Visitors**

Fire & Evacuation Procedures

Fire action notices are positioned around all the Council's premises to inform visitors of the action to be taken in an emergency.

Contractors

Contractors shall, at all times, comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992 and of any other Acts Regulations or Orders pertaining to the health and safety of employees.

The Contractor shall identify risks to the health and safety of employees and others and provide the applicable Manager with Risk Assessments, method statements or other depending on the type of work being undertaken.

The Contractor shall have regard to the Council's Safety Policy. Whilst on premises owned by the Council the Contractor shall ensure that his employees comply with the Council's Health & Safety Policy.

## **10. Personal Protective Equipment**

Service Area Managers will be responsible for ensuring that a Personal Protective Equipment Assessment is completed for each task to ensure that appropriate information, equipment, instruction and training is issued.

Periodic reviews are to be initiated to ensure that Personal Protective Equipment is compatible

with the wearer, in hygienic condition, in effective working order and that the measures are satisfactory for the work being undertaken.

## 11. Risk Assessments

**Risk assessments will be undertaken** by the Service Area Manager for all activities carried out. Where technical expertise is required and/or there are serious/significant risks being assessed, the Manager will liaise with the Health and Safety Officer to commission qualified experts to advise and undertake the assessment. Employees will also help to inform the assessments.

Guidance on undertaking a Risk Assessment is available from the Health and Safety Officer

**The findings of the risk assessments** will be reported to the:

- Health & Safety Consultative Group; and
- Council's Senior Management Team.

**Action required** to remove/control risks will be approved by the Town Clerk or Senior Manager.

The Service Manager will be **responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented** and will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.

Employees will be made aware and a copy of the service area risk assessment/s applicable to their area of work will be made available to them.

A Risk based approach will inform the frequency of inspections for the Town Council's open space areas and the measures to be implemented in order to mitigate against the hazard /risk.

**Risk Assessments will be reviewed annually**

## 12. Training

### Induction training

Induction training will be provided for all employees by their Manager who will ensure that all new employees complete an Induction Checklist.

Where specific jobs require special training, the Manager will make arrangements for this to be undertaken, which can be by a work colleague, attendance on a training course or similar.

### Ongoing Training

Training will be identified, arranged and monitored by the employees Manager who will also make arrangements for refresher training to be completed on an annual basis or such approved frequency determined by the service area risk assessment.

Centralised training records are kept by the Health and Safety Officer, who is also responsible for ensuring that any changes to the Council's Health and Safety Procedures are made to the 'Master File' and copies distributed to all relevant members of staff.

## 13. Workplaces (Health, Safety & Welfare)

Both Senior & Service Managers are responsible for ensuring that a periodic review is undertaken in their service/s area/s to check working conditions and ensure safe working practices are being

followed.

Members of the Health & Safety Consultative Panel will keep the Council's Risk Assessments under review to reflect changes in activities, etc.

All Employees have a duty to familiarise themselves with the Risk Assessments relevant to their work and adopt the procedures and working practices contained within them.

## **RISKS TO HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **14. Asbestos**

*The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012*

Asbestos is the largest single cause of work related fatal disease and ill health in Great Britain. Almost all asbestos related deaths and ill health are from exposures several decades ago, but where people work with asbestos or come into contact with it during repair and maintenance work, they are at risk. Working with asbestos should be avoided if possible but, if not, it must be done safely.

Asbestos can be found in buildings from 1950 to 1999 in many forms. It may also be found in some vehicle brake pads and clutch linings.

The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (CAWR) introduces an explicit duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises, to manage the risk of exposure to asbestos or asbestos containing material (ACM). The duty to manage requires those in control of premises to:

- Take reasonable steps to determine the location and condition of materials likely to contain asbestos;
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not;
- Make and keep an up to date record of the location and condition of the ACMs or presumed ACMs in the premises;
- Assess the risk of the likelihood of anyone being exposed to fibres from these materials;
- Prepare a plan setting out how the risks from the materials are to be managed;
- Take the necessary steps to put the plan into action;
- Review and monitor the plan periodically; and
- Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them.

Service Area Managers are responsible for ensuring that a copy of the applicable Council's 'Asbestos survey' is issued to Employees/Contractors who carry out any type of maintenance, repair or refurbishment work.

### **15. Display Screen Equipment**

*Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992*

Using a computer or other kinds of display screen equipment (visual display units) can give rise to back problems, repetitive strain injury or other musculoskeletal disorders. These health problems may become serious if no action is taken. They can be caused by poor design of work stations (and associated equipment such as chairs), insufficient space, lack of training or not taking breaks

from display screen work. Work with a screen does not cause eye damage, but many users experience temporary eye strain or stress. This can lead to reduced work efficiency or taking time off work.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all relevant employees:

- are given the necessary training;
- complete a display screen risk assessment;
- implement any necessary control measures to eliminate or reduce the identified risks.

Where applicable, staff will be able to arrange eye tests at appropriate intervals, for which reimbursement of the cost can be claimed from Northampton Town Council.

## 16. Hazardous Substances

*Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)*

*Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulations 2008 (CLP)*

*Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002*

### COSHH

COSHH safety notices and Guidance Procedures are to be displayed on the applicable storage cupboards.

Service Area Managers are responsible for **identifying substances** which need a COSHH assessment. **Employees who use hazardous substances** will be responsible for undertaking the COSHH assessments.

Employees are responsible for notifying their Service Area Manager of any hazardous substances for use in order that the Product Data Sheets can be obtained and Risk Assessments including appropriate control measures can be identified and implemented.

Service Managers will be responsible for ensuring that all **actions identified** in the assessments are implemented.

Managers will be responsible for ensuring that all of their relevant employees are informed about the COSHH assessments.

Service Managers will check that new substances can be used safely before they are purchased. Assessments will be reviewed every 3 years or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

**Safety Data Sheets** from suppliers are to be maintained at the appropriate Offices

### Spill Control

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of procedures in the event of a spillage of hazardous substances and for ensuring that stocks of spill control equipment are maintained.

## **17. Working at Heights**

*Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015*

A fall from height has sudden and irreversible consequences and can only be prevented by ensuring that each task associated with working at height is carefully planned before deciding if the method of gaining access is appropriate. The overriding principle is to do all that is practicable to prevent anyone falling. Strict adherence to the principles and practices within the Work at Height Regulations 2005, and its Schedules, is the only acceptable solution.

Separate guidance is available from the Councils Health and Safety Officer.

## **18. Lone Working**

A Lone Working Policy & Procedure, which is designed to raise awareness of the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to give guidance on how to manage such risks has been produced by the Town Council. This is available from the Councils designated Health and Safety Officer.

## **19. Machinery**

*Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998*

Vibration from work with powered hand held tools, equipment or processes can damage the hands and arms of users causing 'hand-arm vibration syndrome'. This is a painful, irreversible condition which includes 'vibration white finger' and the effects can be impaired blood circulation, damage to the nerves and muscles, and loss of ability to grip properly.

Back damage can be caused by vibration from a vehicle or machine passing through the seat into the driver's body through the buttocks – known as whole body vibration. Whole body vibration can also be caused by standing on the platform of a vehicle or machine, so vibration passes into the operator through their feet.

The Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that an assessment is carried out in respect of all new machinery and equipment.

Service Managers are also responsible for maintaining the Work Equipment Inventory and Maintenance Schedule.

Staff are advised to report any faults immediately to their Manager/Supervisor.

The use of the Council's equipment is restricted to only the trained operatives and staff.

## **20. Maintenance & Building Work**

*Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015  
Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 Confined Spaces*

## *Regulations 1997*

All contractors should be qualified and competent for the work to be carried out. The Contractor shall provide the Service Manager with a Risk Assessment/s, method statements or other depending on the type of work being undertaken.

The Contractor shall have regard to the Council's Safety Policy. Whilst on premises owned by the Council the Contractor shall ensure that his employees comply with the Council's Health & Safety Policy.

### **21. Manual Handling**

*Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992*

*Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*

A manual handling policy and procedure designed to raise awareness of the risks, to identify responsibilities, and to give guidance on how to manage such risks has been produced by the Town Council. A copy is available from the Council's Health and Safety Officer.

### **22. Noise at Work**

*The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 Noise at Work Regulations 1989*

High levels of noise at work can cause hearing loss. This can take many years to become serious. Young people can be damaged as easily as the old and premature deafness is even worse. Sufferers often first start to notice hearing loss when they cannot keep up with conversations in a group or when the rest of their family complains they have the television on too loud. Deafness can make people feel isolated from their family, friends and colleagues.

A preliminary decision on whether an assessment is needed can usually be reached without making detailed noise measurements.

As a rough guide, an assessment of daily personal exposure will usually be needed wherever people have to shout or have difficulty being heard clearly by someone about 2 metres away or they find it difficult to talk to each other.

Whenever it is decided that a more detailed assessment is needed the Service Manager will complete the assessment.

### **23. Plant, Mechanical and Electrical Equipment**

*Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 Supply of Machinery (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*

Work equipment covers an enormous range spanning process machinery, machine tools, office machines, lifting equipment, hand tools, ladders and pressure washers. Important points include: selecting the right equipment for the job, making sure equipment is safe to use and keeping it safe through regular maintenance, inspection and if, appropriate, thorough examination, training employees to use equipment safely and following manufacturers' or suppliers' instructions.

Accidents involving work equipment happen all the time – many serious, some fatal.

The Town Council is committed to ensuring that all equipment is suitable for its intended use. Employee Safety Representatives will be consulted in connection with the use of new machinery and equipment.

Service Managers will:

- Be responsible for ensuring effective maintenance procedures are drawn up;
- Be responsible for ensuring that all identified maintenance is implemented;
- Will check that new plant and equipment meets health and safety standards before it is purchased;
- Maintain the register of all plant, mechanical and electrical items and ensuring that all inspection and maintenance regimes are complied with, to include:
  - Description of Equipment
  - Location
  - Restricted Users Supervisor
  - Responsible
  - Inspection Maintenance Regime Service
  - Engineers
- Arrange for periodic inspections of portable items;
- Ensure all persons are adequately trained in using electrical equipment; and
- Ensure the use of residual current devices especially if equipment is used outside;

### Electrical Equipment

#### *Electricity at Work Regulations 1989*

Electricity can kill. Most deaths are caused by contact with overhead or underground power cables. Even non-fatal shocks can cause severe and permanent injury. Shocks from faulty equipment may lead to falls from ladders, scaffolds or other work platforms. Those using electricity may not be the only ones at risk. Poor electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can lead to fires which can also result in death or injury to others.

User checks on **electrical equipment** can be made by the person using the equipment. Aspects to look for should include damage to the plug, cable or equipment casing, use of tape to join wiring, overheating, and whether the item has been exposed to conditions for which it is not suitable, e.g. a wet environment. Formal visual inspections and changing plugs or altering electrical equipment must be completed by a qualified electrician.

Any items that have not been registered in the inventory and checked (PACT TESTED) must not be connected to the Council's electricity supply.

Any faults should be reported immediately to the Manger/Supervisor responsible for the maintenance and the equipment taken out of use immediately.

## **24. Play Equipment**

All play equipment is subject to a detailed inspection by independent specialists at least annually.

These detailed inspections should be supplemented with more frequent inspections by the Council's own staff, a visual inspection is carried out on a weekly basis to check for any obvious

vandalism, wear and tear, broken glass, dog fouling, etc. A more detailed inspection is carried out on a monthly basis. All inspections should be formally recorded.

Any equipment found to be unsafe should be immobilised and taken out of use. In some cases, it may be sufficient to cordon off the area, in others it may be necessary to remove the item completely to ensure the safety of users. DIY repairs should not be carried out unless they are endorsed by the original manufacturer or installer. All repairs shall be carried out by a competent person.

## 25. Radiation

*Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017*

*Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*

Various kinds of radiation, both ionising and non-ionising, may affect us.

1) Non-ionising radiation:

- UV radiation (e.g. from the sun) can damage the skin and lead to skin cancer; and
- Lasers can cause burns and damage the eye.

2) Ionising radiation:

- Naturally occurring radon gas from the ground; and
- Radiography or thickness measuring gauges.

Excess doses of ionising radiation can cause burns, sickness and can have other adverse health effects.

Service Managers will be responsible for ensuring that jobs at risk of the effects of radiation are **risk assessed** and all **actions identified** in the assessments are implemented.

## 26. Stress at Work

*Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*

Many people argue about the definition and sometimes even the existence of 'stress'. However, research has shown that whatever you choose to call it, there is a clear link between poor work organisation and subsequent ill health. The Health & Safety Executive defines stress as "*the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them*".

Stress at work can be tackled in the same way as any other risk to health – by identifying the hazards, assessing who is at risk and the level of risk, deciding how to manage the risk and putting the plans into action.

In order to reduce stress in the organisation, Managers and the staff they are responsible for should keep in regular contact. Managers should ensure they hold regular team meetings and one to one meetings with individual members of staff, providing for an opportunity for all to raise any issues of concern and explore a way to resolve them.

The Town Council has an approved Absence Policy, which is designed to reduce sickness absence by addressing the causes. Any member of staff who is absent from work, even for one day, should complete a return to work form and have a conversation with their Manager about the reasons for absence and whether any support or action can be taken to prevent future

reoccurrences.

## **27. Trip & other Dangerous Hazards**

*Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*

The most common cause of injuries at work is the slip or trip, resulting in falls which can be serious. It's a particularly important subject since members of the public use our premises. Measures to prevent such injuries are often simple, cheap and lead to other benefits.

Parks & Open spaces grounds staff are responsible for regular visual checks of their respective premises to ensure there are no trip hazards, sharp objects or obstructions.

Where any member of staff discovers spillages, wet surfaces, broken objects, damaged furniture or equipment, they must take every step to initially make the area safe and where the member of staff can deal with the danger safely, they must do so. Otherwise it should be immediately reported to the appropriate responsible officer.

## **28. Vehicles**

*Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*

*Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998*

*Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015*

Every year about 70 people are killed and about 2500 seriously injured in accidents involving vehicles at the workplace. Being struck or run over by moving vehicles, items falling from vehicles, or vehicles over turning are the most common causes. Northampton Town Council uses vehicles in its public places, which includes the workplace, and examples include vans, tractors and mowers. Often there is significantly more danger from vehicles on parks and open spaces and at depots than on the public highway since the operating conditions are different.

All staff using vehicles should have the relevant licence and receive appropriate training and must operate and use the vehicle in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and solely for the purpose intended by Northampton Town Council.