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Health and Safety Policy

Document Control	
Document author	MCC
Statutory status	Statutory
Website status	On website
Approved by	Management Committee
Date approved	September 2026
Approval cycle	1 year
Next review date	September 2027

Document history			
Version	**Date**	**Reviewer**	**Note of revisions**
2	Sep 2026	JP	Change of name Change of reference from Governors to Management Committee members

Introduction

Employers have a legal and moral duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees, and to conduct their business in a manner that ensures individuals not in their employment (such as visitors, contractors, learners and the public) are not exposed to risks to their health and safety due to their activities.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to prepare and, as often as may be appropriate, revise a written statement of their health and safety policy and to bring it to the notice of their employees.

This Corporate Health and Safety Policy sets out how Monmouthshire County Council manages health and safety across its work activities and premises under its control. It is supplemented by other policies, guidance and service specific operational arrangements to ensure healthy and safe work environments and safe systems of work. In addition, schools have their own health and safety policies which supplement this policy.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all employees and premises under the Council's control, including school and temporary staff. It also extends to third parties who interact with the Council such as consultants, contractors, service users and volunteers. It has been agreed with Trade Unions and will be reviewed and revised as necessary, and in any case not less than biennially.

Statement of Intent

The Council recognises that effective management of health and safety supports the delivery of services to the people of Monmouthshire and accepts its duties and responsibilities to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and others who may be at risk from its activities.

Employees are the Council's most important asset, and we aim not only to prevent their injury and ill health, but also to positively promote good health and wellbeing. To achieve this we will:

- Ensure we comply with relevant legislation and official guidance and effectively assess and manage all significant risks associated with our activities, workplaces, equipment and facilities

- Recognise that the management of health and safety is a core management function and is as important as any other aspect of our business performance

- In accordance with our aim to be a good and caring employer, promote a positive health and safety culture, with managers visibly demonstrating their commitment to achieving high standards of health, safety and risk management

- Provide competent health and safety advice and support through our Corporate Health and Safety

- Manager, nominated Directorate Health and Safety Leads and our Occupational Health provider

- Ensure roles and responsibilities for delivering our health, safety and risk management arrangements are clearly defined and communicated, with delivery monitored via our inspection/ audit arrangements and performance management procedures

- Provide adequate resources, proportionate to the level of risk, to ensure the effective delivery of this policy and our associated management arrangements

- Ensure our employees are competent to carry out their work without risk to themselves or others, by providing adequate training, information and supervision

- Promote effective employee involvement and support the role of safety representatives in the delivery of our health, safety and risk management arrangements

- Learn from any accidents, incidents, hazardous events and work-related ill health, and regularly monitor, review and report on health and safety performance

- Monitor the health of our employees, where appropriate, and provide them with effective occupational health support services

- So far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that our partners, suppliers and contractors are health and safety competent and that they conduct their activities so as not to expose themselves, our staff, service users, and members of the public to unnecessary risks to their health and safety

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of every manager throughout our organisation. However, **every employee has a part to play in the safe and successful delivery of our services.**

A copy of this statement (Appendix 1) will be brought to the attention of all employees. It will be periodically reviewed and supplemented with service specific arrangements.

Responsibilities for Health and Safety

To effectively manage health and safety, everyone in the organisations has to understand their role in managing the risks that arise from their work. It is therefore important that roles and responsibilities at all levels within the Council are clearly defined. This section outlines the general roles and responsibilities of persons and forums. Additional roles and responsibilities may be found in supplementary health and safety policies and procedures which deal with specific hazards e.g. violence at work.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by the Authority's undertakings. Strategic management of health and safety has been delegated to i) the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) who is accountable to Cabinet for the Authority's health and safety performance and ii) to other members of the Strategic Leadership Team in respect of services under their control.

In addition to responsibilities as part of the Strategic Leadership Team, the Chief Executive will:

- Ensure that the Deputy Chief Executive and other Strategic Directors fulfil their health and safety management responsibilities
- Promote a positive health and safety culture by demonstrating leadership and clear commitment to achieving high standards of health and safety management and encouraging the involvement of all employees in improving standards and arrangements
- Ensure that health and safety is an integral part of the Council's management plans and strategies and that activities are delivered in a manner which is fully compliant with relevant legal standards
- Ensure that health and safety performance is reviewed periodically
- Keep informed of the general requirements of and developments in legislation and best practice

Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)

The Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) is responsible to the Chief Executive for strategic health and safety management and will:

- Promote a positive health and safety culture by demonstrating leadership and clear commitment to achieving high standards of health and safety management across the Authority
- Act as an advocate for health and safety within the authority and at Strategic Leadership Team and support the Chief Executive in meeting the responsibilities set out in this policy
- Foster an awareness and understanding of health and safety issues as they affect the Council amongst elected members
- Inform the Chief Executive and Cabinet of any serious health and safety issues that may compromise or damage the Council's reputation through adverse media coverage or potential enforcement action
- Promote and present health and safety policies and health and safety performance information to the Strategic Leadership Team
- Ensure the Executive Member with portfolio responsibility for health and safety is suitably apprised of health and safety matters
- Ensure there are adequate, competent resources at a corporate level within the Council for the effective implementation of this policy and associated management arrangements
- Ensure that health and safety performance is reviewed periodically

- Ensure the provision of competent resource to support effective arrangements for the monitoring and surveillance of the health of employees who are exposed to specific risks

- Ensure that health and safety management is an integral part of all management plans, strategies and activities of the Council, and is given due consideration when endorsing any policies and strategies, and when allocating associated responsibilities and resources

- Ensure consultation with relevant employee relations forums, including Trade Unions on health and safety matters

- Liaise with the Corporate Health and Safety Manager on a regular basis

- Where appropriate, facilitate cross Directorate working on health and safety matters

- Chair the Corporate Health and Safety Group

Strategic Directors and Heads of Service

Strategic Directors are responsible for health and safety in all areas under their control and in conjunction with Heads of Service will:

- Nominate a Health & Safety Lead Officer for their Directorate and support them in establishing a Directorate Health & Safety Working Group with appropriate representation

- Ensure their own health and safety competence and that of managers by directing them to identify and attend appropriate health, safety and well-being training.

- Ensure adequate resources, proportionate to the level of risk, are made available for the effective implementation of this policy, including co-ordinating, reporting, recording, investigative and training functions

- Ensure effective health and safety management arrangements are in place, including for risk assessment, health surveillance, maintenance of premises, facilities and equipment and the delivery of adequate training to employees

- Ensure Directorate specific health and safety policies and guidance are produced where necessary which identify the safety organisation and arrangements, allocating specific and general health and safety responsibilities to appropriate managers and supervisors.

- Ensure there are effective systems for communication and consultation on health, safety and welfare issues

- Have regard to health, safety and wellbeing in service planning.

- Monitor and appraise the health and safety performance of line managers and ensure awareness of their responsibilities.

- Support the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive in meeting their health and safety responsibilities.

- Monitor and review the effectiveness and implementation of Directorate health and safety arrangements on at least an annual basis.

Managers and Supervisors

- Ensure the Council's health and safety policies, guidance and processes are implemented within their service area and take appropriate disciplinary action against any employee who fails to heed a safety warning and who jeopardises the health and safety of themselves and/or other people

- Ensure their own health and safety competence and that all employees within their control are provided with adequate training, instruction, supervision and information to allow them to work safely

- Ensure sufficient resources are allocated to meet the health and safety requirements of their service area

- Ensure all new employees and volunteers undertake an induction on their first day, and as a minimum are instructed in the fire evacuation procedure (including the location of the closest fire alarm call point, what the fire alarm sounds like, the location of the nearest fire exit and how to reach the assembly point), accident reporting procedure and how to summon first aid assistance

- Ensure all work-related hazards associated with workplaces and activities for which they are responsible are identified and suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place.

- Ensure control measures identified through risk assessment are implemented and maintained

- Share the findings of risk assessments with employees so they understand the control measures that have been put in place to protect them

- Ensure additional risk assessments are undertaken for particularly vulnerable persons, such as children or young persons (whether employed or on work experience), trainees, lone workers and new and expectant mothers

- Establish safe systems of work for work activities under their control and ensure employees abide by them at all times

- Identify any substances which require a COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002) assessment and ensure that a COSHH assessment is undertaken before the substance is used

- Ensure that where identified as required by a risk assessment, suitable personal protective equipment is provided to employees as necessary, without charge, that they know why it is required, how to put it on, take it off, and store it correctly and that it is used properly

- Ensure that equipment, machinery and dangerous substances are used, stored and transported in accordance with the relevant instruction and training

- Ensure that equipment and machinery is maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, service requirements and statutory inspections are carried out

- Ensure that Property Services are notified and consulted in relation to any works to be undertaken on Council owned or occupied premises

- Support safety representatives in the delivery of their functions

- Identify health and safety deficiencies within their area of responsibility and take appropriate remedial action, seeking advice where necessary from competent persons e.g. Directorate Health and Safety Advisor, Corporate Health and Safety Manager. Where significant and ongoing concerns are identified, ensure the relevant Head of Service and Corporate Health and Safety Manager are informed

- Suspend any activity which is considered to constitute an immediate danger, investigate the circumstances and only allow work to recommence once the appropriate remedial actions have been taken

- Report and investigate, in accordance with relevant procedures, all accidents, occupational ill health, hazardous incidents (including violence) and near misses to identify the root cause, contributory factors and prevent a recurrence

- Ensure that all employees who have sustained a serious work-related injury or ill health are referred to Occupational Health

- Ensure that health and safety performance is monitored, and is included for discussion at Team meetings and during Performance Reviews

- Ensure health and safety is a standing agenda items for all team meetings and use this as an opportunity to remind employees of their responsibilities, explain the findings of risk assessments and discuss safe systems of work and other related issues

- Co-operate fully with health and safety regulators (HSE, South Wales Fire and Rescue) and notify the Corporate Health & Safety Manager of all regulator interventions and communications

- Actively promote a positive health and safety culture throughout their area of responsibility

Corporate Health and Safey Manager

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager will provide professional, competent health and safety advice to the Strategic Leadership Team and support managers in the delivery of their health and safety responsibilities and in particular will:

- Develop the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy, ensuring it is reviewed at least biennially to ensure it reflects how health and safety is delivered across the Council and is in line with current legislation

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive and consistent strategic approach to the management of health and safety through the development of policies and guidance

- Co-ordinate the development and effective use of reporting procedures for work related accidents, incidents (including violence) and ill-health and use this information to identify and report on trends and recommend actions to improve health and safety performance

- Independently investigate any work- related accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences resulting in serious injury or death and report the findings to the Deputy Chief Executive

- Ensure that all accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences reported which are notifiable under RIDDOR are referred to the Health and Safety Executive within statutory timescales

- Provide advice on new health and safety legislation impacting on the work of the Council

- Ensure the sufficiency of health and safety training across the Authority which supports the reduction of risk and enhances the way that health and safety is managed

- Ensure that Directorate Health and Safety leads are supported in developing and effectively implementing health and safety policies, procedures and guidance

- Provide the corporate lead for liaison with health and safety regulators and ensure the Deputy Chief Executive is apprised of all regulator interactions with the Council

- Assist and support managers and officers during regulator visits, inspections and investigations.

- Promote a positive culture for health and safety across the Authority

- Advise and support independent managers appointed by Human Resources to investigate any serious breaches of health and safety rules and standards

- Support the Corporate Health and Safety Group, providing strategic direction to the Group and, in liaison with the group, identify Council-wide priorities and a work plan

- Provide the central point of contact for the Council's Occupational Health provider in undertaking health surveillance monitoring of employees in line with relevant legislation

- Effectively support and provide specialist advice to managers, as appropriate, regarding work related ill health, in liaison with Human Resources

- Be responsible to the Deputy Chief Executive for monitoring and improving the organisations health and safety standards.

- Bring to the attention of the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Health and Safety group any known serious, or uncontrolled health and safety risks

- Work with Directorate Health and Safety Leads to identify significant health and safety risks for possible inclusion on the Council's Risk Register

- Work in conjunction with Human Resources on key projects which have health, safety and wellbeing implications

- Develop the Council's annual health and safety report for consideration by the Strategic Leadership Team

Head of Landlord and Commercial Services

- In order to ensure that all premises owned or occupied by the Council are in a suitable and safe condition, the Head of Landlord and Commercial Services will:

- Ensure that premises are suitable and sufficient for the purpose for which they are used and are accessible to their users

- Ensure that property risks are suitably and sufficiently identified and managed

- Maintain a register of 'Premises Responsible Persons' and effectively communicate respective roles, responsibilities and duties to ensure compliance with relevant legislation

- Ensure that the findings of all risk assessments, surveys, inspections and any other relevant documents are recorded and communicated to all relevant persons, including persons responsible for premises

- Clearly identify and communicate responsibility for implementation of remedial actions

- Ensure that resources are allocated to implement arrangements which achieve effective control over premises related risks

- Ensure that adequate property maintenance arrangements are in place

- Ensure that premises are designed, constructed, upgraded and maintained in accordance with relevant statutory and legislative requirements

- Ensure suitable and sufficient property risk management arrangements are effectively developed, implemented and maintained

- Ensure that risks associated with the fabric and condition of Council properties are identified and a prioritised schedule of measures to address these risks is established

- Work collaboratively with premises managers to ensure registers relating to properties are compiled, maintained and updated

- Ensure, where property issues are creating health and safety risks, that they are prioritised in balancing competing demands for expenditure of property maintenance budgets

- Provide effective planning during the earliest design stages of construction projects by ensuring robust arrangements are in place to assess and evaluate principal contractor's construction phase plan(s) and other CDM related documents and advise on any improvements or amendments required

Directorate Health and Safety Leads

- Establish and maintain a Directorate Health and Safety Working Group with appropriate representation which meets at least quarterly

- Ensure all reported work-related accidents, incidents and near misses are appropriately investigated by managers

- Ensure that all accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences reported which are notifiable under RIDDOR are identified and referred to the Corporate Health and Safety Manager without delay

- Provide Directorate representation on the Corporate Health and Safety Group

- Produce an Annual Health and Safety Report Plan which reviews Directorate health and safety performance for the previous year and identifies key priorities for the year ahead

- Work with managers to identify the most significant health and safety risks for inclusion on the Directorate Risk Register

Fire Marshalls

Fire Marshalls must ensure that, in the event of a fire alarm, everyone in their area of responsibility has left the building to a place of safety. This may involve assisting those who require assistance, up to and including using an evacuation chair if trained to do so. If, for whatever reason, they are unable to ensure everyone can evacuate they must inform the emergency services on their arrival.

First Aiders

First Aiders must provide fire aid to employees, learners, visitors, contractors, or members of the public if they require or request assistance. First aiders are not required to treat people if they do not feel they are competent to do so. In these instances, they would be expected to inform either another first aider, or the emergency services.

First aiders must maintain a record of all first aid administered in a first aid book.

Corporate Procurement

The Procurement Team are responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to enable due consideration to health and safety in the procurement process.

Where the Council is not the lead authority in a collaborative arrangement with other partners, the authority will only enter into the arrangement if it is reasonably satisfied that health and safety considerations have been adequately addressed.

Safety Representatives

Safety Representatives are appointed by Trade Unions to represent employees in line with the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 (as amended) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996. In addition to representing employees on all matters relating to health, safety and welfare, representatives will be allowed the time and facilities to: -

- Periodically inspect the workplace for hazards, investigate complaints received from staff and make representations to the employer on matters arising from the above and on general matters relating to the health, safety and welfare at work of any employee

- Independently investigate workplace accidents, incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences, complaints and potential hazards, presenting their findings to the relevant Service Manager and the Corporate Health and Safety Manager

Represent employees as necessary during inspections by health and safety regulators and receive information from the Inspector in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

- Attend meetings of specific health, safety and wellbeing groups relevant to their function.

- Represent their members at meetings of the Corporate Health and Safety Group

Fleet Management

In liaison with relevant persons, Fleet Management will:

- Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable due consideration to health and safety in the selection, use and maintenance of fleet vehicles

- Ensure that Directors, Heads of Service and Managers are aware of their duties in relation to the health and safety of fleet vehicles

- Ensure the safety of all fleet drivers by assisting in the promotion and provision of effective driver training

Emergency Planning

The Emergency Planning Team will give due consideration to health and safety issues when developing, implementing and reviewing plans and responses.

The Training Team

The Training Team will assist and support the implementation of this policy. In particular they will:

- Manage the Authority's Learning Management System
- Maintain health and safety training records
- Arrange and deliver health and safety training as appropriate and assist in sourcing competent training providers as required
- Provide health and safety training data to the Corporate Health and Safety Manager to facilitate quarterly and annual reporting

Human Resources

Human Resources will assist and support the implementation of this policy. In particular they will:

- Monitor staff absence resulting from work-related accidents, incidents (including violence) and ill health (including stress)
- Procure, implement and monitor occupational health arrangements

Provide support to managers to assess, when necessary, the requirement for any reasonable workplace adjustments

Insurance

Our Principal Insurances and Risk Management Officer is a member of the Corporate Health and Safety Group. If an employee is injured or becomes ill as a result of their work the Council may receive a claim for compensation. Employers' liability insurance helps pay any compensation. Public liability insurance protects the Council if a claim is made e.g. if something happens at work that results in injury to a customer, a member of the public or damage to someone's property

Employees

Employees must take reasonable care for their own health, safety and wellbeing at work and that of others and co-operate with managers on health and safety matters. In particular employees shall:

- Refrain from intentionally misusing or recklessly interfering with anything provided in the interests of health and safety

- Wear any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided to minimise associated risks when carrying out their duties and report damaged or unsuitable PPE to their manager

- Report to their manager any medical condition which may make them unfit for or at increased risk from any particular work activity either temporarily or permanently

- Attend health and safety training courses as and when directed to do so and work in accordance with any training, information and instruction provided

- Attend Health Surveillance clinics with the Council's Occupational Health provider where these have been identified through risk assessment as necessary for your role

- Ensure that they are not rendered unfit for work through alcohol or drugs

- Assist managers with the assessment and control of risks, familiarise themselves with any health and safety risk assessments which are applicable to their job role and incorporate the control measures identified into their working practice

- Inform their manager if they think existing risk assessments are not sufficient for a particular working situation.

- Use equipment machinery or dangerous substances in accordance with instructions and training and report any hazardous defects in plant, equipment, or shortcomings in existing safety arrangements, or the unsafe activities of work colleagues or contractors, to their manager and/or their Directorate Health and Safety lead and/or their Trade Union representative without delay

- Report any work-related accidents, incidents (including violence) near misses and dangerous occurrences to their manager and seek first aid treatment for any injury sustained at work as necessary

- Co-operate fully with any work-related health and safety investigation

- Make themselves familiar with, and comply with, relevant health and safety policies, procedures and safe systems of work and notify their line manager of their safety training needs

- Ensure that they are aware of relevant roles and responsibilities contained within this policy

- Be aware of and understand their responsibility for reducing the risks of injury and ill-health in the workplace, cooperating and complying with any health and safety instructions given by their manager

- Not participate in horseplay, or initiate types of activities that can lead to accidents, and deter others from doing so

- Immediately inform their manager and the Corporate Health and Safety Manager of any visit, inspection or formal request for interview, or other communication from a health and safety regulator

Responsibilities at Schools

School Governors (Management Committee members for Cysgod y Coed)

School Governors will:

- Ensure that they are aware of their duties and responsibilities under health and safety legislation and ensure that the Head Teacher is aware of, and has regard to the authority's Health and Safety Policy

- Ensure a school specific Health and Safety Policy is in place and oversee its implementation by the Head Teacher.

- Ensure that school specific health and safety arrangements are developed and effectively implemented

- Give due consideration to health and safety when developing, amending and delivering school policies and when allocating associated responsibilities and resources

- Co-operate with advice and directions issued by Monmouthshire County Council relating to matters concerning health and safety or establish and adopt other equally effective measures

- Ensure consultation with the Director of Children and Young People Services and Head of Landlord and Commercial Services at the planning stage of building work or projects, which they are considering to be undertaken on premises that the Council own or occupy

Head Teachers

Head Teachers will, in liaison with the governing body, ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, pupils and others who may be affected by the school premises or activities. The Head Teacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, and will:

Develop a school specific Health & Safety Policy in line with the authority's Model School Health and Safety Policy (or equivalent) and ensure it is effectively implemented, and its requirements are communicated to all relevant persons

- Ensure local management arrangements and emergency response arrangements (e.g. fire evacuation and lockdown procedures) are introduced which effectively control risks associated with the school premises or activities. These should be subject to periodic review to ensure that all risk control measures remain effective

- Ensure consultation with the Director of Children and Young People Services and Head of Landlord and Commercial Services at the planning stage of building work or projects, which they are considering on premises that Monmouthshire County Council own or occupy

- Ensure that the school premises are maintained in a safe state of repair and notify any defects to Property Services.

- Ensure that only competent contractors are engaged and that their work is suitably monitored and supervised to ensure that they discharge their health and safety responsibilities appropriately

- Co-operate with the requirements, guidance or directions issued by the authority relating to matters concerning health and safety

- Act as the Premises Responsible Person for the school site

- Nominate a member of the school's management team with sufficient authority to take the lead responsibility for operational health and safety. The nominated management team member will have the time, resource and competence to fulfil the role and implement appropriate health and safety arrangements

- Ensure that all staff receive adequate training, instruction and supervision to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and work safely

- Keep up to date with legislative changes, codes of practice, industry best practice and advisory services (e.g. Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services)

- Provide visible health and safety management and leadership to ensure a positive health and safety culture

- Ensure that health and safety is included on the agenda of staff meetings

- Ensure work related accidents, incidents (including violence), dangerous occurrences and near misses are reported using the Council's reporting arrangements and that they are appropriately investigated to identify the root cause, contributory factors and prevent a recurrence

- Ensure that all hazards associated with workplaces and activities for which they are responsible are identified and suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place

- Ensure that the risk control measures identified by risk assessment are implemented and their effectiveness monitored.

- Ensure that employees have access to the "Health and Safety Law – What you should know" poster or the associated leaflet

- Ensure that all identified health and safety deficiencies brought to their attention are subject to a risk assessment (this can be a dynamic risk assessment) and acted upon in an appropriate manner and timescale

- Seek advice where necessary from competent persons within the authority where significant and ongoing health and safety concerns are identified. Ensure the Governing Body and the Corporate Health and Safety Manager are informed.

- Consult and work with recognised Trade Unions Safety Representatives / Employee Representatives

- Ensure that employees are provided with this policy and ensure that they are suitably informed and instructed on relevant roles and responsibilities contained within

- Co-operate fully with health and safety enforcing authorities (Health & Safety Executive, South Wales Fire and Rescue) and their inspectors in relation to any enquiries and investigations and notify the Corporate Health and Safety Manager of all Regulator interventions and communications

- Ensure that Landlord Consent forms are completed and submitted to Property Services if any changes are planned to school buildings/sites, or any work is intended utilising external contractors.

- Ensure that all plant, equipment and personal protective equipment are maintained, repaired and replaced as necessary.

- Ensure that all statutory and other appropriate tests are carried out on equipment at appropriate intervals and retain suitable records of the tests.

Arrangements for Health and Safety

To promote a health and safety culture that aims to produce high standards and continual improvement, the following health and safety arrangements are in place and evolving. They are not exhaustive. Other specific policies or guidance may be produced e.g. where there is legislation attributed to the subject e.g. Asbestos, Fire, or a specifically identified need for policy arrangements. Where there is no specific legislation or identified need then subject related guidance or procedures may be produced.

Health, safety and wellbeing information can be found on the Council's intranet site (The Hub) or by contacting Directorate Health & Safety lead officers or the Corporate Health and Safety Manager.

Information is cascaded upwards and downwards from health and safety fora, circulated as necessary via the Council's communication methods including e-mails and newsletters.

Other specialised services within the Council are available to offer support in health and safety matters e.g. Emergency Planning for responding to Critical Incidents and the Outdoor Education Adviser for planning safe school trips.

Corporate Health and Safety Group

The Corporate Health and Safety Group meets quarterly and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive. It provides strategic direction for the management of health and safety across the Council and is attended by the
Corporate Health & Safety Manager, Directorate Health & Safety Lead Officers, officers from Insurance, Property Services, Training, Human Resources and Trade Unions. Terms of reference for the Group were revised in 2023.

The Group provides a forum for discussion on health and safety matters and:

- Identifies health and safety priorities
- Endorses policies
- Reviews statistical reports
- Shares information and good practice

Joint Consultation

The Council recognises the importance of, and its legal duties around consultation on health and safety matters. Trade Union Representatives are invited to attend Directorate and Corporate Health and Safety Group meetings. Health and Safety Policy matters are considered by the Joint Advisory Group (JAG) as necessary.

Risk Management

The Council ensures the effective management of risk, through robust risk assessment and risk control processes. The principles (process) for carrying out suitable and sufficient risk assessments are as follows:

- Identify the hazards associated with the task or activities
- Decide who or what might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions or actions to take (e.g. eliminate or reduce via control measures)
- Record the findings of the assessment, share the information with those who may be affected and implement the controls
- Review risk assessments on an annual basis or sooner in the event of a significant change and update where necessary.

Managers are responsible for ensuring suitable risk assessments are in place and that any actions required to control the risks have been implemented and their impact monitored.

Musculoskeletal Disorders / Mental Health Conditions

The Council recognises its responsibility to support and assist employees with diagnosed medical conditions. A referral system is in place, enabling employees to access Occupational Health and obtain specialist assessments to assist managers in making reasonable workplace adjustments.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Council will provide the appropriate PPE (and other clothing if identified as necessary through risk assessment) at no cost. However, an employee may be charged in the event of loss or damage due to neglect or abuse. All employees are required to wear, use, maintain and store the provided safety equipment in accordance with information and instructions received. Employees must report any damaged or defective equipment immediately to managers.

Welfare Provisions

The Council will ensure that welfare provisions including toilets, rest areas, access to water etc. comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (as amended). Staff can utilise welfare provisions within all council buildings subject to producing identification

Safe Plant and Equipment – Inspection and Testing

The Council will ensure all plant and equipment provided is fit for purpose and maintained in good working order. Where plant and equipment requires statutory maintenance, inspection and testing, this will be carried out within the required timescales. All defective equipment must be reported to the appropriate person, taken out of service until repairs have been made or it has been replaced.

All plant and equipment used must be suitably guarded during use and correctly isolated prior to maintenance, repairs or cleaning. The bypassing of safety guards, safety devices, interlocks; “lock off” procedures may be dealt with through disciplinary procedures. Managers are responsible for ensuring that any new or second- hand plant or “hired in” equipment meets minimum safety standards before purchase or hire. Managers must ensure that employees own equipment used while at work or for business purposes is fit for purpose and suitably maintained as it will be deemed to be workplace equipment.

Safe Handling and Use of Substances – COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)

Managers are responsible for ensuring arrangements are in place for the safe storage, handling, use and disposal of substances which may be hazardous to health and the environment. The principle is the same as risk management above. All substances must be assessed to check if they can be used safely prior to purchase or use. Control measures including safe working procedures, safe storage and disposal arrangements must be adhered to at all times.

Health and Safety Training

All employees regardless of their status in the Council should have sufficient knowledge, skills and training to enable them to carry out their work safely with the minimum of risk. It is particularly important that managers ensure new employees are given an induction ideally within the first week of their employment or

as soon as is reasonably practicable. This induction should include health and safety related matters, including their responsibilities as identified in this policy; other basic information such as fire safety and reporting of accidents, incidents (including violence) and near misses.

Job specific training should follow which introduces local policies, processes and procedures. Further specialist training should take place where additional skills are required; this will include refresher training where these skills are not frequently used or where risks change.

The training needs of all employees will be assessed by managers to ensure they are able to carry out their work safely with the minimum of risk.

Directorates should develop training matrixes identifying essential and desirable employee health and safety training requirements. The training needs analysis should be documented and reviewed annually. Refresher training should be provided as necessary.

The Council has a new Corporate Learning Management system *Thinqi* and, going forward, staff health and safety training records will be recorded on this system. E-learning can also be accessed via Thinqi.

A priority will be to digitalise as much health and safety training as possible although some training will continue to be provided face to face by the Corporate Training Team, Health and Safety Advisors and managers as appropriate.

The Corporate Training Team will continue to provide assistance in sourcing specialist health and safety where necessary.

It is acknowledged that some health and safety training needs to be tailored to specific jobs and some is very specialist. Directorates can still arrange health and safety training for their own teams having regard to the requirements of participants.

Accident, incident (including violence) and near miss reporting and investigation

All accidents, incidents and near misses which occur on Council premises or arising from Council activities must be reported without delay using the online reporting system or the appropriate form.

Managers are responsible for ensuring accident and incidents are suitably investigated to identify the root cause and prevent a recurrence. The depth of the investigation will depend on the severity of the incident and, in some cases when requested by the Directorate health and safety lead or the Corporate Health and Safety Manager, an accident investigation form must be completed to record the findings of the investigation.

The investigation of serious workplace accidents and fatalities will be overseen by the Corporate Health and Safety Manager and the findings reported to the Deputy Chief Executive. All accident/incident records will be retained in accordance with the Councils retention policy.

Directorate health and safety leads and the Corporate Health and Safety Manager are responsible for identifying accidents/incidents that are notifiable to the HSE under the Reportable Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regs 2013 (RIDDOR) and will submit RIDDOR notifications to the HSE.

First Aid

The Council provides first aid training and first aid services and facilities to at least the minimum standards required by legislation. Employees will be advised of first aid arrangements on induction. The contents of first aid boxes or first aid rooms will be checked regularly by facilities managers and any deficiencies made good without delay. Managers must ensure first aiders attend the appropriate approved first aid training courses.

Contractors

Where the Council employs contractors to carry out planned works, we are committed to:-

- Ensuring the competency of such contractors including their ability to carry out the work or service in a safe manner and to the required standard.

- Liaising effectively with the contractor to ensure the proposed works are planned, assessed and suitable controls are in place prior to the commencement of work.

- Monitoring the work or service being carried out to ensure the health and safety of those who may be affected by the operation. It must be clearly understood that any contractor failing to adhere to agreed working procedures or deemed to be working unsafely will be instructed to cease work until the cause for concern is rectified.

Fire Prevention and Control

Fire awareness training is mandatory for all employees and this is available to all staff on the Council's learning management system Thinqi. Other training is provided for Council employees on fire prevention and control where appropriate e.g. fire warden training.

Fire risk assessments are in place for all Council buildings and are provided by a consultant via the Council's Property Services team. Building managers are required to ensure fire risk assessments are carried out and implement suitable emergency arrangements which will include fire /smoke detection; raising the alarm, evacuation, fire- fighting appliances, instruction and information to employees. Issues arising from fire risk assessments will be acted upon as appropriate, including effective communication with relevant staff, building tenants and users. It must also be available for inspection by the various agencies.

Existing fire risk assessments will be reviewed periodically. This review should coincide with any organisation or structural changes in the building and no less than annually. Additional support and guidance can be sought from Compliance Officers in Property Services.

South Wales Fire and Rescue are the enforcing authority for fire safety and from time to time they may audit the Council's fire safety arrangements. They have enforcement powers and failure to comply with fire safety requirements not only puts lives at risk but may result in formal enforcement action against the Council.

Health Surveillance

The Council has robust arrangements in place for health surveillance of employees and has outsourced Occupational Health services to Insight. Managers are responsible for identifying employees who, following risk assessment, are identified as requiring health surveillance and liaise with the Corporate Health and Safety Manager to ensure they are included in the Council's Health Surveillance Programme.

Consultation with Safety Representatives

High quality communication is an integral part of effective health and safety management. The Council will consult with recognised Trade Unions and employee safety representatives on health and safety matters through Directorate health and safety meetings, the Corporate Health and Safety Group and JAG as appropriate. Such consultation and negotiation will take place where practicable, in good time, using existing procedures to ensure effective consultation on matters that affect the health and safety of employees.

Monitoring and Audit Programme

Each Council Directorate is responsible for establishing systems to monitor health and safety standards and identifying opportunities for improvement within their area of responsibility.

The Council has arrangements in place to monitor compliance at Council properties but notwithstanding this, recognises the need to develop and improve the scope and consistency of its monitoring arrangements. These will be further developed during the life of this policy to enable meaningful health and safety performance information to be provided to the Council's Strategic Leadership Team.

Sources of Information, Guidance and Supervision

Council employees should in the first place seek help, support and advice on all aspects of health and safety from their line managers or nominated Directorate health and safety leads. The Council's Corporate Health and Safety Manager also provides health and safety advice on Council policy and more complex matters.

All Council buildings, or accommodation where a Council service operates from (including schools), must display the mandatory Health and Safety law poster and or offer a leaflet version of the poster to employees. Compliance officers in Property services can provide advice on some buildings related health and safety matters.

All young workers, work experience students and trainees must be supervised by managers or nominated employees who are deemed competent to do so.

Other health and safety information is available on:

- The Hub
- Health Safety Executive (HSE) website

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least biennially and updated, modified or amended as necessary to ensure it accurately reflects the evolving arrangements the Council has in place for managing health and safety.

The Policy Statement of Intent shall be signed and dated by the Deputy Chief Executive, demonstrating the Council's high-level commitment to the management of health and safety.

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Health and Safety Policy Statement

The Council recognises that effective management of health and safety supports the delivery of services to the people of Monmouthshire and accepts its duties and responsibilities to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and others who may be at risk from its activities.

Employees are the Council's most important asset, and we aim not only to prevent their injury and ill health, but also to positively promote good health and wellbeing. To achieve this we will:

- Ensure we comply with relevant legislation and official guidance and effectively assess and manage all significant risks associated with our activities, workplaces, equipment and facilities

- Recognise that the management of health and safety is a core management function and is as important as any other aspect of our business performance

- In accordance with our aim to be a good and caring employer, promote a positive health and safety culture, with managers visibly demonstrating their commitment to achieving high standards of health, safety and risk management

- Provide competent health and safety advice and support through our Corporate Health and Safety Manager, nominated Directorate Health and Safety Leads and our Occupational Health provider

- Ensure roles and responsibilities for delivering our health, safety and risk management arrangements are clearly defined and communicated, with delivery monitored via our inspection/ audit arrangements and performance management procedures

- Provide adequate resources, proportionate to the level of risk, to ensure the effective delivery of this policy and our associated management arrangements

- Ensure our employees are competent to carry out their work without risk to themselves or others, by providing adequate training, information and supervision

- Promote effective employee involvement and support the role of safety representatives in the delivery of our health, safety and risk management arrangements

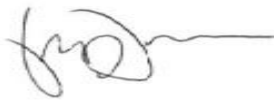
- Learn from any accidents, incidents, hazardous events and work-related ill health and regularly monitor, review and report on health and safety performance

- Monitor the health of our employees, where appropriate, and provide them with effective occupational health support services

- So far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that our partners, suppliers and contractors are health and safety competent and that they conduct their activities so as not to expose themselves, our staff, service users, and members of the public to unnecessary risks to their health and safety

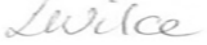
Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of every manager throughout our organisation. However, **every employee has a part to play in the safe and successful delivery of our services.**

A copy of this statement will be brought to the attention of all employees. It will be periodically reviewed and supplemented with service specific arrangements.

Signed:  Date: 30th October 2024

Peter Davies
Deputy Chief Executive
Monmouthshire County Council

This policy was approved by the Management Committee

Signed: ……  …… Chair of the Management Committee

Date: ……14th October 2026……

Signed: ……Jake Parkinson…… Head of Cysgod y Coed

Date: ……14th October 2026……