



Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement 2023/24

This statement of policy on health and safety at work in Cumberland Council is made in accordance with section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Cumberland Council places our people as our priority. Our employees, our customers, our elected members, and our partners, working together, will achieve the change, the improvements to service delivery and the equality that are at the heart of our Council Plan – with improving health and wellbeing being at the heart of our ambitions.

Cumberland Council fully recognises and accepts its duties to provide for the occupational health, safety, and wellbeing of all its employees, elected members and any other person who may be affected by Council activities.

Leadership and Worker Participation

This policy has been endorsed by the Corporate Health and Safety Group and will be implemented by Council Officers and overseen by the Chief Executive as head of paid service and the senior management team made up of departmental directors. We will ensure that the Chief Executive, Council Leader and our Portfolio Holder for Health, Safety and Wellbeing will provide overall leadership on health and safety for the council and will review and sign off the health and safety policy statement. This policy statement will be communicated to all employees and interested parties and be published on the Council's website.

We will ensure that health safety and wellbeing conversations and consultations with employees will be a central part of day-to-day management and engagement. Not only enabling issues to be raised, but also empowering everyone to contribute to improving health, safety and wellbeing across the organisation and finding new ways to engage.

This will include

- Establishing clear corporate occupational health and safety objectives at relevant functions and levels to maintain and continually improve the H&S management system and our OH&S performance.
- Health, safety and wellbeing documentation and information available via our intranet and internet sites.
- Targeted health and safety related training provided in a variety of delivery formats.
- Regular engagement and co-production of improvement initiatives working with employees and recognised Trade Union colleagues.
- Close working and health and safety committee co-chairing arrangements with recognised Trade Union representatives to aim for continual improvement.
- Joint working with recognised Trade Unions on matters of health, safety, and welfare.
- Safety discussion forums establish at various levels of the council with up-to-date terms of reference, two-way communication, and regular engagement activities.
- Effective communication with other stakeholders and interested parties on health safety and wellbeing matters.
- Health and safety committees at service, directorate, and corporate levels of the council.

Responsibility and Accountability

We recognise that we cannot delegate our legal responsibility for the day-to-day control of OH&S risk even if third-party expertise, advice, or services are used. We are committed to deliver the highest standards and best environment for all those we work with.

The Chief Executive will ensure that the responsibilities and authorities for relevant roles within the occupational health and safety management system are assigned and communicated at all levels.

We aim to promote a positive and continually improving health and safety culture where everybody is actively engaged and plays their part.

Corporate Governance

The Council will ensure it establishes robust health and safety governance and performance management arrangements ensuring cross cutting organisational safety objectives are achieved. Each group will establish clear terms of reference.

Where gaps exist, or performance does not achieve the required standards, action plans will be devised, implemented, and tracked by competent and accountable persons to ensure standards improve

- The Corporate Health and Safety Group** (co-chaired between Exec H&S Lead and recognised Trade Union representatives) will lead on corporate health, safety and wellbeing issues and engage with staff, members, and contractors at all levels. Corporate health and safety procedures will be reviewed, updated, and approved by the Corporate Health and Safety Group following co-production and consultation.
- Senior Officer Governance** - The Senior Officer Health & Safety Group ensures an Assistant Director and Senior Management level forum for discussion and monitoring of cross cutting health, safety and wellbeing issues affecting the Council and our contractors. The group also debate and learn from issues that are relevant to more than one directorate; require corporate investment; or have not been resolved through other discussions.

Directorate Governance - Executive Directors are responsible for maintaining high standards of health, safety, and welfare within their own Directorates consistent with this health and safety policy statement and in line with the Corporate Health & Safety Procedures Manual. Each Directorate Management Team (working with recognised Trade Unions through Directorate Health and Safety Groups) will prepare an action plan for health and safety improvement. This will be regularly reviewed and if required expanded upon to describe the various functions and arrangements for health and safety to address specific risks within the Directorate. Directorate health and safety committee-co-chaired with recognised Trade Unions. Co-Charing arrangements will be one Management and one Trade Union Representative.

- Safety Practitioners** The Safety Practitioners Group, chaired by the Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager, is a forum for health and safety professionals to discuss and share health and safety experiences across the Council and wider professional sectors. This assists the development of corporate health and safety procedures and ensures that emerging issues can be escalated to the Corporate Health and Safety Group, DMT's or Directorate Health and Safety Groups as appropriate.
- Service specific health and safety committees chaired by appropriate service area manager, is a forum for employees, Trade Union safety representatives and management to discuss and share all matters relating to employees' health and safety at work and to escalate matters to the committees above as required. Management representatives should not exceed employee representatives at these groups.
- Line Managers and Supervisors** Managers and supervisors throughout the council have responsibility not only for their own health and safety but also for that of employees within their teams or those accessing the services provided. They must Ensure that suitable and sufficient assessments of risk are carried out in relation to their operations, activities, and premises, and that the control measures which they identify are communicated and implemented, together with maintaining a written record of these assessments ensuring they are periodically reviewed particularly following incidents and significant changes.
- Managers must also ensure regular engagement with, and providing support to, their teams, and individually, on health, safety, and wellbeing. Training and development plans must fully reflect requirement for the provision of adequate training and instruction, as necessary for health, safety, and welfare, and that these plans are periodically reviewed to ensure their effectiveness; They will ensure that a suitable site induction is provided where relevant. The induction will be site specific and highlight any risks that will be encountered by virtue of the duties, tools and site as required under terms and conditions of their job roles.

- Individual Responsibility** Health and safety is everyone's responsibility and all elected members, staff, trade union representatives and contractors regardless of role have a duty to ensure healthy and safe working practices are followed, not only for their personal benefit, but also for those working around them or for customers in receipt of the service

Legal compliance in all areas is deemed to be the minimum standard to be attained. Failure to adopt adequate procedures or safety practice will be taken seriously. Where required, additional communication, support, training or in extreme situations appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed.

This will include

- A high corporate profile with effective performance and audit management systems.
- Sufficient resources and capacity to benchmark with others, and to learn from accidents, near misses and safety performance indicators

Effective planning – Identifying Hazards and controlling risk.

To achieve our aims, we will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that we provide safe premises and working environments, safe equipment and substances, and safe systems of work to comply with legislation and meet best practice. We will establish a clear set of Corporate Health and Safety procedures which will outline the key elements of our health and safety management system arrangements in more detail.

We will follow the Plan - Do - Check - Act management approach to ensure that our services and operational activities are compliant with legislation and implement and follow safe working procedures.

- Plan-** we will set our policy, plan for measuring performance, emergencies, preparedness, documentation, procedures for controlling contractors and any reviewing changes.
- Do-** we will assess risks and set effective risk control measures, consult with our workforce, and obtain competent advice, obtain tools, equipment, plant and machinery, train and supervise staff. Utilising ICT and personal protection when required.
- Check-** we will measure performance, identify gaps, obtain ill health data and act on inspection and audit reports.
- Act-** We will routinely review our performance, identify gaps, and take appropriate action.

To promote better health at work we will focus on measures to ensure:

- Effective public health leadership with robust infection prevention and control measures in place.
- A range of opportunities for regular engagement and open conversations about health, safety, and wellbeing for all
- An effective work life balance/ flexible working practice wherever possible;
- Promotion of healthy lifestyle (including physical activity, healthy eating, musculoskeletal improvements).
- Positive mental wellbeing (including the prevention of work-related stress).

Support – Resources, Competence, Communication and Advice

- We shall provide the resources necessary to ensure we provide suitable levels of, competence, awareness, communications and competent professional advice and support for our health and safety management system.

These include:

- Provision of professionally qualified staff to provide "competent advice" on occupational health and safety management support to all council staff including maintained schools and elected members.

- A professional occupational health service.
- Effective training programmes, communication, and awareness campaigns.
- Internal and external communications relevant to OH&S management system arrangements.
- Best practice health and safety standards expected and monitored for commissioned services and contractors that deliver services on behalf of the Council.
- Systemic audit and risk management controls devised, implemented, and monitored ensuring health and safety arrangements are suitable and sufficient.
- Communications and awareness events will be progressed throughout the year to maintain and further raise the profile of effective health and safety.
- Suitable documented information made freely available to all interested parties and can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

Performance Management and Ongoing Learning

To ensure adequate health and safety standards are achieved, and continual improvement sought, governance and performance management systems are in place to monitor progress against the Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan, audit findings and monitoring of accident and work-related ill health data.

Wherever possible, health and safety performance and ways of working will be benchmarked against available data, other Local Authorities, and wider industry best practice to seek to achieve continual performance improvements and ongoing learning.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will produce quarterly dashboard reports summarising key health and safety metrics for reporting to Directorate Management Teams, Corporate Management Team Corporate Health & Safety Group. Overall health and safety performance will then be reported annually to the Council's Cabinet by way of the Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report. Interim updates will be provided on a quarterly basis (or by exception as required) to the Member who has portfolio responsibilities that include Corporate Health and Safety.

Review

This policy statement will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose and up to date

		
Councillor Mark Fryer Leader of the Council	Andrew Seekings Chief Executive Cumberland Council	Cllr Chris Southward Portfolio holder for Digital Connectivity and Customer Focus

Further Information

This statement represents a summary of the Corporate Health and Safety arrangements in place for Cumberland Council for 2023/24. More detailed information on our health and safety management arrangements can be found in the Corporate Health & Safety Procedures Manual which is published on the Council's intranet and website.

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