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General Health and Safety Policy



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SŴR

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GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

This statement is published in pursuance of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, associated regulations, health and safety legislation and other relevant 'Approved Codes of Practice'.

1. AIM OF POLICY

To provide a safe and healthy working environment for the employees of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and to accept its responsibility for the health and safety of others who may be affected by its work activities.

To respond to the targets set out in the "Revitalising Health and Safety Strategy Statement" launched by the Government and the Health and Safety Commission.

2. PART A – POLICY STATEMENT (STATEMENT OF INTENT)

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council recognises and accepts its legal obligations as well as its moral and economic duties to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees and others.

The promotion and continuous improvement of health, safety and welfare standards are regarded as an essential objective for management and employees at all levels. The efforts and co-operation of all employees, contractors and service users will be viewed as essential to permit work to be carried out without danger and for the success of its service delivery.

The Council will seek to ensure that statutory requirements are met by the formulation, implementation and development of policy, together with the setting of objectives and performance standards. Appropriate action will be taken to underpin this commitment.

The Council will endorse appropriate health and safety management standards, recognising that a successful health and safety management system is one which is integrated with other management activities, with the aim of achieving continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

The Council recognises its responsibilities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, particularly the duty to carry out risk assessments. To this end, suitable and sufficient risk assessments will be undertaken under this and other specific legislation, ensuring that clear and accurate records are kept. Risk assessments will be reviewed on a regular basis or in light of change.

The Council will endeavour to implement and maintain measures such that activities will be controlled and managed to avoid unnecessary or unacceptable risk and will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees or others who may be affected by its work activities.

The Council will endeavour to ensure adequate levels of competence in health and safety. Employees at all levels will be provided with appropriate information, instruction, training, supervision and communications systems to ensure their health and safety.

The Council will actively involve and consult with employees and will seek to ensure consultation will take place with recognised trade unions and employee representatives and will promote in the setting up of safety committees, as appropriate.

All personal control will be exercised by employees in order to carry out their work in a manner conducive to their own safety and the safety of other persons. Senior management will ensure that appropriate responsibilities are delegated through their line management structure and that formal health and safety consultative mechanisms are in place.

Work requiring health or medical surveillance, including pre-employment screening for new employees will be provided by an in-house Occupational Health Service.

Health and safety performance will be monitored and reviewed to ensure agreed standards are maintained.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to meet its responsibilities and will pay particular attention to the provision and maintenance of:

- plant, equipment and systems of work that meet known statutory requirements and are safe
- safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
- sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own safety and health at work
- a safe place of work and safe access to and egress from it
- a healthy working environment
- adequate welfare facilities.

Adequate resources will be provided to ensure that proper provision will be made for health and safety to ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations.

All levels of management will be directly responsible for achieving the aims of the policy, each level accountable to the one above and responsible for the one below.

A copy of the policy statement will be brought to the attention of all employees. It will be reviewed periodically, added to or modified as appropriate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KG', written over a horizontal line.

Signed:

**Keith Griffiths
Chief Executive**

Date: 15th April, 2011

3. PART B THE ORGANISATION (RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The ultimate responsibility for health and safety lies with the Chief Executive. In particular, the Chief Executive will ensure:

- adequate resources are made available for health and safety
- health and safety responsibilities are made clear to senior managers
- health and safety is afforded equal importance to other managerial functions
- measures taken for implementing the Policy are established and kept under review
- a pro-active approach to health and safety management is maintained
- the Council's statutory obligations are being met
- an annual health and safety plan is submitted by Group Directors
- an annual health and safety report is submitted by Group Directors
- effective communication is maintained within the Council.

GROUP DIRECTORS/COUNTY BOROUGH OFFICERS

Group Directors/County Borough Officers will be accountable to the Chief Executive and will be responsible for the health and safety of employees under their control. In particular they will ensure:

- adequate resources are made available for health and safety
- the Divisional Directors implement and develop, where appropriate, the Corporate Health and Safety Policy statements, into divisional strategies
- an annual health and safety plan is submitted to the Chief Executive
- an annual health and safety report is submitted to the Chief Executive
- a pro-active approach to health and safety management is being maintained
- effective communication is maintained within the Group
- the monitoring and appraisal of health and safety performance of senior managers under their control and ensuring awareness of their responsibilities
- health and safety teams are set up in the divisions.

THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES:

The Director of Human Resources will be the Director to “champion” health and safety issues under the Government/Health and Safety Commission “Revitalising Health And Safety Strategy Statement” (Action point 11). He will ensure that health and safety risk management issues are properly addressed by the Corporate Management Team and more widely within the Council.

DIVISIONAL DIRECTORS

Divisional Directors will be accountable to the Group Director and responsible for the health and safety of employees under their control. In particular they will ensure:

- that advice is given to the Group Director on what resources are necessary for health and safety
- the effective co-ordination of health and safety within their division
- a pro-active approach to health and safety management is being maintained
- effective health and safety communication channels
- the preparation of an annual health and safety plan for the Group Director
- the preparation of an annual health and safety report for the Group Director
- the Corporate Health and Safety Policy Statements are implemented and developed, where appropriate, into divisional strategies
- health and safety performance within their Division is monitored.

HEADS OF SERVICE

Heads of service will be accountable to the Divisional Director and are responsible for the health and safety of employees under their control. In particular they will ensure:

- they co-ordinate the divisional incident/accident reporting system and assist in the investigation and prevention of accidents
- they advise and liaise with line managers and others on health and safety and the assessment of health and safety risks
- they assist in the production of an annual health and safety plan
- they assist in the production of an annual health and safety report
- that health and safety inspections are carried out and appropriate action taken to encourage safe working practices

- employees receive adequate health and safety training
- effective communication with the division
- a pro-active approach to health and safety management is maintained
- they monitor health and safety performance within their service area.

LINE MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

Each line manager/supervisor will, as an integral part of their normal management function, prepare an annual programme setting out objectives for improving health and safety within their sphere of responsibility. The programme should be prepared in consultation with the next level of management, thus contributing to the Group's health and safety plan. Line managers/supervisors shall demonstrate high standards when organising work places and activities. They will lead and be actively involved in risk assessments, inductions, inspections, investigations, training requirements and will ensure that employees are given the opportunity to receive advice and assistance. Line managers/supervisors will ensure formal systems to review risk assessments and for the provision of adequate supervision, particularly for young, vulnerable or inexperienced workers.

All line managers/supervisors and others when deputising on their behalf shall be responsible for health and safety in all areas under their control and will so far as is a reasonably practicable:

be responsible for the implementation and contribute to the development of the Group's safe working systems
establish responsibilities and relationships, which promote and sustain a positive health and safety culture, by securing the motivation and involvement of staff in order to control risks

- develop annual plans and set performance standards which reflect the results of the risk assessments, with the aim of eliminating and controlling risk
- establish systems and determine frequencies for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of health and safety plans and the extent of compliance with performance standards and procedures
- familiarise themselves with and ensure communication of the health and safety policies and relevant related guidance to employees under their control
- monitor and evaluate health and safety performance in order to maximise learning, thus ensuring appropriate action is taken to improve and further develop arrangements for health and safety.

EMPLOYEES

Employees are required to act in a safe manner at all times, so as to ensure their own safety and the safety of others in the work area. In particular, they will:

- not misuse, intentionally or recklessly interfere with anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any relevant statutory provision
- report incidents/accidents to their manager
- assist in the investigation of incidents/accidents
- attend health and safety training courses as requested
- use the correct tools and equipment for the job
- make use of protective equipment provided
- comply with any reasonable instructions
- report to their manager any work situation that they may reasonably consider represents an immediate danger to health and safety to themselves, other employees or any other person
- not take any unnecessary risks
- suggest ways of eliminating hazards
- comply with safe systems of work
- refrain from boisterous play.

4. PART C – ARRANGEMENTS (SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES)

These arrangements supplement the Policy Statement and Organisation Sections. They are not exhaustive and particular arrangements covering specific functions will be issued Corporately or by the Group Director.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

Competent people will be employed by the Council to give health and safety advice and assistance as appropriate.

SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES AND SAFETY COMMITTEES

The Council recognises the regulations governing Safety Representatives and Safety Committees and will fully co-operate with the recognised Trade Unions in implementing these Regulations, together with their Code of Practice and Guidance Notes. The Council will also consult, as appropriate, with employees not represented by a Trade Union.

SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

Safe systems of work will be prepared to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who may be affected by its work activities. Safe systems of work will be documented and reviewed in light of change. Where work is undertaken which could give rise to significant risk, for example, working in confined spaces, work on live electricity, work on high speed roads, consideration will be given to a 'permit to work system'.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Suitable and sufficient risk assessments will be carried out for all workplace activities and action taken as a result. All risk assessments will be recorded and documented.

As well as the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 regarding all risks, there are statutory requirements for the assessment of the effects of specific types of hazards. To ensure the specific legal requirements are met for risk assessment, the 1999 Regulations will be used as the basic standard and the standard raised where necessary, to comply with other specific regulations for risk assessment.

STATUTORY EXAMINATIONS

All items of plant and equipment requiring statutory examinations will be identified and arrangements for their examination undertaken by a competent person. Full records of examinations will be kept.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Where it is not possible to eliminate hazards to the individual by any other reasonably practicable means, then employees will be issued with PPE. Where this has been issued it should be properly used whenever the employee is at risk from the hazards for which it has been provided. Employees will receive appropriate training as necessary.

PPE will only be issued when the risk that it is protecting against cannot be effectively eliminated by any other means. PPE in all the circumstances will be the last resort and where the PPE is necessary to fulfil a statutory requirement, will be provided free of charge.

Sikhs will be excluded from wearing head protection when undertaking construction work.

INCIDENTS/ACCIDENTS

Reporting of incidents/accidents, no matter how minor, is the responsibility of every employee and will be recorded on the appropriate form.

(i) Accident Investigation:

All incidents/accidents will be investigated at the earliest opportunity to establish causes, who were involved, where and why it occurred and how a recurrence can be prevented. Depending on the circumstances, a detailed investigation may be necessary.

(ii) Accident Reporting to the Health & safety Executive:

Reporting procedures will be in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

Arrangements for the use of any chemicals or substances will be in accordance with the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. Information will be obtained on all products used, COSHH assessments carried out and information given to employees with regard to their health and safety when using the product.

EQUIPMENT

Managers will be nominated to oversee that items and materials are obtained which are safe for use at work when used in accordance with the suppliers instructions. Information must be obtained from suppliers and distributed as appropriate.

(i) Plant and Equipment:

Plant and equipment will be suitable for the purpose and inspected and maintained to standards necessary to eliminate failures giving rise to personal injuries and ill health or to serious property damage.

(ii) Hire of Mobile Plant and Equipment

Managers who hire mobile plant and equipment will ensure that employees are competent and trained in its use. Plant and equipment will be suitably maintained and checked prior to use.

STORAGE OF MATERIALS

So far as is reasonably practicable, materials will be stored so that they are maintained in a proper condition to allow safe placement and retrieval and in accordance with statutory requirements.

CIVIL ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION WORK

Civil Engineering and construction work will be undertaken in conformity with all appropriate legislation. For example, The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM). The Council will apply the regulations with regard to client, designer and contractors responsibilities etc., on all projects affected.

The Council recognises that the construction industry is one of the industries with greatest risk to employees' health and safety. The Council will provide the resources and implement control measures to reduce the risk.

INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Managers will inform employees of the arrangements for communicating information relating to health and safety matters, which includes articles and substances for use at work.

Training needs analysis must be undertaken and annual training programmes devised.

Employees must be made aware of the procedures for drawing the attention of their line manager to health and safety issues. Employees will either be provided with or have access to all information necessary for them to undertake their duties, with proper regard for the safety and health of themselves, and others.

ASBESTOS

The management of asbestos within Council establishments will be afforded high priority. A programme will be developed whereby all establishments will be surveyed and action taken as appropriate. An asbestos register will be kept.

WORKING IN CONFINED SPACES

Working in confined spaces is a very high-risk activity, the primary risk in some instances being the build up of dangerous gases, vapours or liquids. When employees are required to work in such spaces these will be identified and a safe system of work formalised. No employee will work in a confined space without following a safe system of work (e.g. Permit to Work system).

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

The Council will encourage and promote high levels of physical, mental and social well being of employees whilst at work. All health aspects of work processes and procedures, which may adversely affect the relationship between work and health, will be regularly reviewed and policies and procedures developed and implemented.

Medical examinations and precautionary measures such as immunisation will be offered for employees whose duties expose them to particular hazards.

WORKING AT HEIGHT

Arrangements will be made for the safety of employees required to work in elevated positions. This includes the means of access and egress as well as protection against falls. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 will be adhered to and any other relevant legislation.

WORKING ON OR NEAR HIGHWAYS

All work on or near highways will conform to the standards laid down in Chapter 8 of the Highways Act 1980 and all other relevant legislation.

CONTROL OF NOISE

So far as is reasonably practicable, any exposure of employees to noise will be minimised. Noise levels will be assessed and where the levels are in excess of 85 db (A), arrangements for the protection of employees and others will be taken in accordance with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

Equipment/machines will be assessed and, where necessary, noise levels reduced so far as are reasonably practicable.

FIRST AID

The Council will comply with the Health and Safety (First Aid at Work) Regulations 1981 by ensuring adequate provision of first aiders/appointed persons. Names of designated first aiders/appointed persons will be displayed and distributed. All first aiders/appointed persons will be trained to the appropriate standard and will only be allowed to practice first aid when the appropriate certificate has been issued.

GUARDING MACHINERY

Machinery will be properly guarded whilst in use in accordance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and British Standards of Safeguarding Machinery. Employees will ensure that the guards provided are properly used.

MANUAL HANDLING

Manual handling assessments will be undertaken to conform with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 and measures will be introduced to reduce the risk of injury.

NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS

Arrangements will be made to ensure the health, safety and welfare of new and expectant mothers. Specific risk assessments will be carried out and all hazards identified will be suitably controlled.

PERMITS TO WORK

Certain sections will need to operate permit to work systems and procedures (e.g. working in confined spaces, hot work, high voltage etc). These will be followed conscientiously and the occasions of use, recorded.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

The appropriate environmental standards will be implemented and monitored. Those involving heating, lighting and ventilation will be in accordance with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

FIRE

The Council will comply with the legal requirements laid down by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) order 2005 and subsequent legislation concerning fire safety in buildings, evacuation procedure etc.

DISABLED EMPLOYEES

Arrangements will be made to ensure that disabled employees will not be treated less favourably than other employees because of their disability, unless "the treatment is necessary in order not to endanger the health and safety of any person (which may include the disabled person)". However the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part 111 will be adhered to, so far as is reasonably practicable.

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

Arrangements for the use of visual display units will conform to the HSE guidance under the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

The Council recognises the risks associated with electrical equipment, which include the risks of burning, electrocution, fire, explosion and arcing.

Periodic inspection, testing and maintenance of portable electrical equipment is necessary and records retained along with equipment inventories. Equipment, which is suspected or discovered to be unsafe, will not be used until it is made safe. The Council will arrange for the fixed electrical installation in Council premises to be tested periodically. In certain circumstances, Residual Current Devices (RCD's) will be used as an additional control measure. Each RCD will also require periodic checking.

CONTRACTORS AND SUB-CONTRACTORS

Arrangements for contractors working on the Council's premises and services will be such that neither employees, premises or other assets be put at risk by contractors' actions nor will contractors be put at risk by the Council's actions.

WORKPLACE STRESS

The Council recognises that workplace stress is a hazard that can lead to ill health and that it has a legal duty to manage it effectively. The Council will take reasonable care to ensure health is not placed at risk through extensive and sustained levels of stress arising from the way work is organised, the way people interact with each other, or from the day-to-day demands placed on employees.

VIOLENCE AT WORK

The Council will ensure appropriate systems of work, which effectively manage the risks of violence to employees. This is not limited to physical assault but includes equally distressing and intimidating verbal aggression and discriminatory behaviour.

AVOIDING DANGER FROM UNDERGROUND SERVICES AND OVERHEAD CABLES

Employees will receive adequate instruction in the use of cable locating devices, safe digging practices, procedure for contacting the relevant organisations and procedures for working around or near overhead cables.

WORKING OUTDOORS AND SKIN CANCER

The Council recognises the risk of over exposure to ultraviolet light radiation where employees work outside, particularly during summer months. Management will be required to assess the risks and implement appropriate control measures, which may include requiring employees to cover up and not expose their skin to excessive sunlight whilst at work.

HAND/ARM VIBRATION

All machinery/tools likely to emit high levels of vibration will be identified and the risks assessed. Control measures such as vibration monitoring, appropriate maintenance regimes, provision of gloves, purchase of low vibration machinery, work rotation, may be implemented. Training should be given to employees who use vibratory machinery/tools. Employees must be familiarised with the risks presented and the control measures required. Employees may be asked to attend periodic medical examinations if they use higher risk vibratory machinery.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENTS

Corporate Health and Safety Policy Statements have been developed, the responsibility for implementing the provision of each policy and the preparation of a divisional strategy rests with each Group Director.

The policies developed so far are listed below and will be amended in light of change. Other policies will be developed, as appropriate.

HS1	General Health & Safety Policy Statement
	Specific Policies:
HS2	Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
HS3	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
HS4	Manual Handling
HS5	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences
HS6	Management of Health & Safety at Work
HS7	Noise at Work
HS8	Pregnant Women at Work
HS9	First Aid at Work
HS10	Electricity at Work
HS11	Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
HS11a	Scheme for the Provision and Payment of Eye and Eyesight Tests and Provision of Special Corrective Appliances
HS12	Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
HS13	Violence at Work

HS14	HIV Infection and Aids
HS15	Visitors
HS16	Young Persons Adventure Activities
HS17	Alcohol and Substance Misuse
HS18	Smoking
HS19	Workplace Stress
HS21	Work Equipment
HS22	Lone Working
HS23	Managing Contractors
HS24	Control and Management of Asbestos
HS25	Infection Control
HS26	Vibration White Finger
HS27	Domestic Violence

UPDATING

All documentation will be kept under review and updated to reflect changes in policy, organisation and arrangements or standards and legislation. Employees will be informed accordingly.

MANAGERS CHECKLIST

	✓ As Appropriate		
	N/A	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">In accordance with the requirements set out in Section 2(3) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, has an up to date copy of the Policy been brought to the notice of all employees? <p>Note: It is not necessary that each employee receive a copy of the Policy. It would be sufficient if the Policy is displayed in a conspicuous position on notice boards, and employees are made aware of its existence.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have you ensured that divisions have prepared a 'responsibility document'?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have you ensured that employees are made aware of their responsibilities under the Policy?			

Completed by: _____

Confirmed by: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____