

BCC HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for our staff, and indeed for all of the people, for whom we provide services, is a high priority for the County Council. As we develop new services and upgrade other practices to meet rising standards, health and safety issues have to permeate right through the County Council's activities.

This document sets out the role and responsibilities of each and every one of us – from my personal responsibilities, which are laid down by an Act of Parliament, to yours, whether you are a manager or an individual employee. Each of us has a part to play and a responsibility to ensure that the actions set out in this policy document are followed. Both the letter and the spirit of this policy document are important. We must do everything we can to support each other in promoting safety, reducing accidents and tackling the causes of ill health.

We are rightly proud of our track record as a good and fair employer. Our commitment to health and safety is second to none and we are taking steps to improve staff welfare whenever we can.

If you have any doubts about your responsibilities or any of the policies set out in this document, please speak to your line manager. Remember that you owe it to yourselves and colleagues to understand and to act on this important policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Neil Gibson
Interim Chief Executive
April 2016

2. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

As a good employer, Buckinghamshire County Council accepts its responsibility for providing, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe workplace and working environment for all its employees, customers, visitors and other persons who may be affected by its activities.

The County Council will take all steps within its powers, to meet its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other legal requirements for health and safety and is committed to continual cost effective improvement in health and safety performance and for:

- providing adequate resources to implement this policy
- setting and publishing health and safety standards and objectives
- ensuring the policy is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels
- gaining the commitment of employees to the policy by involvement and consultation
- the periodic review of the policy and auditing compliance with it.

Particular attention will be paid to the provision and maintenance, as far as is reasonably practicable, of:

- a work environment, workplace, equipment, systems of work, articles and substances that are safe and without risk to health
- sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure all employees are competent to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work
- adequate welfare facilities
- a safe and healthy environment for all users of County Council premises and facilities.

The prime responsibility for managing health and safety rests with managers and supervisors at all levels notwithstanding an employee's duty to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their activities.

The duties can be divided into:

- the need for senior managers to prepare and ensure that employees are aware of the health and safety policy and the arrangements in place to carry it into effect and
- the need for line managers to ensure that this Policy is implemented.

To ensure the effective implementation of health and safety within the County Council, the following general responsibilities have been allocated.

3. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

The County Council, through One Council Board, Business Units and other committees, is fully committed to supporting this Health and Safety Policy and, in particular, is responsible for:

- Overseeing the overall implementation of the Policy by the Chief Executive.

- Ensuring that the County Council complies with its legal responsibilities and that appropriate financial provision is made, as far as is reasonably practicable, to meet the health and safety standards required.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and its periodic review to ensure a continuous improvement in the Council's performance.

A Cabinet Member has been designated to act as health and safety champion at Member level.

4. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for health and safety within Buckinghamshire County Council; this responsibility is designated operationally to the Managing Director, Business Enterprise and Business Services Plus (BE&BSP). In conjunction with members of the One Council Board these officers:

- Accept formally and publicly their role in providing health and safety leadership in the County Council.
- Will ensure that their decisions reflect its health and safety intentions, as articulated in this Safety Policy Statement.
- Recognise their role in engaging the active participation of workers in improving health and safety.
- Will ensure that they are kept informed of, and alert to, relevant health and safety issues.

In particular they are responsible for:

- Ensuring that appropriate health and safety policies, standards and objectives are set.
- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for monitoring these health and safety standards.
- Taking action in the event of any shortcoming identified.
- Leading by personal example in health and safety matters.
- Reporting annually on health and safety matters to the Regulatory and Audit Committee of the County Council.

5. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MANAGING DIRECTORS

Managing Directors have an overall responsibility for health and safety within their Business Unit. In particular they are responsible for:

- The health and safety of employees and non-employees.

- Promoting health and safety within their Business Unit.
- Producing a written organisational structure and arrangements for fulfilling the County Health and Safety Policy within their Business Unit.
- Maintaining and cost effectively improving health and safety standards and taking into account the financial implications of health and safety provisions when preparing annual budgets.
- Ensuring that systems are in place for identifying any hazards created by Business Unit activities. Assessing the risks created by these hazards and for eliminating, or where elimination is not possible, for ensuring that adequate measures are in place for controlling those risks, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensuring adequate arrangements are in place to protect visitors, clients, pupils and other members of the public from health and safety risks arising from Business Unit activities.
- The role of HQ and Business Unit Managing Directors is further clarified within section 1.5, Model Health, Safety & Wellbeing Responsibilities for HQ and Business Units <https://intranet.buckscc.gov.uk/how-do-i/building-and-facilities/health-and-safety/policies-and-procedures/>

6. RESPONSIBILITY OF BUSINESS UNIT DIRECTORS

Business Unit Directors have an overall responsibility for health and safety within their Service area. In particular they are responsible for:

- The health and safety of employees and non-employees.
- Promoting health and safety within their Service area.
- Producing a written organisational structure and arrangements for fulfilling the County Health and Safety Policy within their Service area.
- Maintaining and cost effectively improving health and safety standards and taking into account the financial implications of health and safety provisions when preparing annual budgets.
- Ensuring that systems are in place for identifying any hazards created by Business Unit activities. Assessing the risks created by these hazards and for eliminating, or where elimination is not possible, for ensuring that adequate measures are in place for controlling those risks, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensuring that adequate provision is made for the appointment of designated persons to assist in fulfilling the Managing Director's legal responsibilities for health and safety.

- Preparing, in conjunction with competent Health and Safety Advisers, objectives and plans for implementing the safety policy and for monitoring the health and safety standards achieved.
- Ensuring adequate arrangements are in place to protect visitors, clients, pupils and other members of the public from health and safety risks arising from Service area activities.
- The role of HQ and Business Unit Directors is further clarified within section 1.5, Model Health, Safety & Wellbeing Responsibilities for HQ and Business Units <https://intranet.buckscc.gov.uk/how-do-i/building-and-facilities/health-and-safety/policies-and-procedures/>

7. RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNING BODIES OF SCHOOLS

The Governing Body has a statutory duty to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy Statement, so far as it is within their power to do so, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Education Reform Act 1988 and the Education Committee's Scheme for the Local Management of Schools.

Where this policy statement does not fully cover the circumstances, which fall within their responsibilities, the Governing Body must establish its own policies to meet its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGERS/ SUPERVISORS

Managers and supervisors at all levels are responsible for managing health and safety within their area of control in accordance with agreed County and local policies and procedures.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES

All employees have a legal responsibility to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work and to co-operate fully with the County Council in health and safety matters.

Employees are responsible for reporting any hazard or defect found in their workplace or in their system of work to their line manager for action, and where reasonably practicable taking immediate action to render the hazard permanently or temporarily safe.

- Employees must not use any machinery, equipment or dangerous substance, or carry out any work activity other than in accordance with any instruction and training given, or interfere with or misuse anything provided.
- All employees must attend safety-training courses as and when directed to do so.
- Failure to comply with any written procedures or codes of practice, misuse of equipment or failure to co-operate on health and safety matters is a disciplinary matter.

10. THE COUNCIL'S HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISERS

The County Council employs a team of competent Health and Safety Advisers to assist in fulfilling its legal obligations and to support Managing and Business Unit Directors in discharging their health and safety responsibilities. It is the role of the Principal Health and Safety Consultant to act as "Head of Profession" for the Health and Safety Team and to liaise as appropriate on health and safety matters with, the Managing Director, Business Enterprise and Business Services Plus (BE&BSP), the Chief Executive and the Designated Elected Member with responsibility for health and safety.

Although acting in an advisory and monitoring capacity, all Health and Safety Advisers have the authority to require the cessation of unsafe practices where this is considered essential.

Where a requirement to stop an unsafe practice is not complied with then Advisers will arrange for the Chief Executive or appropriate Managing Director to issue an appropriate instruction to cease the activity.

The role of the Health and Safety Advisers is defined within the relevant service organisation structure. (Section 1.5 Health and Safety Policies and Procedures, Model Health, Safety & Wellbeing Responsibilities for Business Units <https://intranet.buckscc.gov.uk/how-do-i/building-and-facilities/health-and-safety/policies-and-procedures/>)

11. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

The County Council has a contract for the provision of occupational health services for advice on matters involving occupational health and hygiene and for the provision of a medical service to staff when requested to do so by Business Unit Directors/Managers. This contract is regularly reviewed and updated.

12. EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

No health and safety structure is likely to be successful unless it actively involves both managers and employees. There is a legal requirement under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999) and the Consultation with Employees Regulations 1996 for employers to consult with staff on matters of health and safety.

The County Council communicates and consults on health and safety matters, which affect employees through established Safety Committees and Working Groups as appropriate.

In conjunction with recognised Trade Unions, the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will be maintained to provide a general oversight of health and safety standards within the Council's services.

The County Council will also co-operate fully in the appointment of agreed numbers of Safety Representatives by recognised Trade Unions.

Services and facilities for such committees and Safety Representatives will be provided in accordance with the Safety Representative and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.

13. CIRCULATION

A copy of this statement will be brought to the attention of existing employees and issued to all new employees on appointment. It will be reviewed from time to time and supplemented as necessary.

The Policy should be read in conjunction with other appropriate safety documents and relevant codes of practice, which will be made available to employees.

14. IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

Any health and safety problems you have should be raised with your line manager, who may resolve the problem themselves or refer it to someone who can.

Health and safety issues can also be raised with appointed Safety Representatives or Employee Representatives who may resolve the issue on an individual basis or by referral to the appropriate local safety committee and/or the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee. The names of appointed Safety Representatives are available through the appropriate Trade Union.

Information about your Local Safety Committees is available from your Health and Safety Adviser.

15. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

- your Manager
- your Health and Safety Adviser
- your Safety Representative
- the Health and Safety Team
- the HR Service Desk

You can also obtain useful information from:

- The Health and Safety Notices displayed at your workplace.
- Instruction manuals, risk assessments, codes of practice, safe-working procedures.
- Supplier's hazard and data sheets, manufacturer's guidance sheets.
- Health and Safety Policies and Procedures available via the Intranet A-Z under Health and Safety
<https://intranet.buckscc.gov.uk/how-do-i/building-and-facilities/health-and-safety/policies-and-procedures/>

- Schools Web A-Z under Health and Safety.

Help keep your workplace healthy and safe.

You can contribute by:

- Knowing your duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act.
- Following the Health and Safety Policy and specific health and safety policies and procedures.
- Asking your manager if you have any questions.
- Working together to provide a healthy and safe environment for all.

16. LEGAL LIABILITIES

Liability for a health and safety offence would rest with the County Council. However, if there is any evidence that the offence was committed with the consent or connivance of, or was attributable to any neglect on the part of a member of the executive or manager, then that person (as well as the County Council) is liable to be prosecuted.

Failure to comply with health and safety legislation may also carry a civil claim (for personal injury) against the County Council. The Council indemnifies its employees for acts committed in the course of their employment.