

HARLOW COUNCIL

Health and Safety Policy

General Statement of Intent

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Version: **9**
Author(s): **Health and Safety Team**

GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT

In pursuance of Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, this policy, together with any appendices, is intended to assist Harlow Council management and staff with the effective implementation of health and safety in their operations of work.

Failure to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 could result in enforcement action being instigated by the Health and Safety Executive.

Harlow Council is committed to the ongoing process of providing a working environment that will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees, and other persons who may be affected by any work undertaken on behalf of the Council.

In maintaining its stated commitment Harlow Council will positively work towards the creation of a health and safety culture within the authority by:

- Actively seeking the cooperation and involvement of all levels of the workforce in the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that sufficient resources are made available to meet the authority's statutory responsibilities in respect of health and safety and fire safety.
- Providing suitable and sufficient health and safety related information, instruction and training.
- Supporting health surveillance programmes to deal with any identified work related health risks.
- Ensuring that health and safety and fire safety plans are developed and maintained in respect of all Council Services.
- Ensuring that all Services develop and implement risk assessment programmes.

Failure by any Harlow Council employee, or contractor, to comply with the terms of this safety policy will be regarded as a breach of safety procedures and could result in disciplinary action being taken by the Council.

Full support to the aims and principles of this policy, and its appendices, is given by Members of the Council who will be kept fully apprised of all current health and safety issues.

Yvonne Rees
Interim Chief Executive
May 2024

ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive

Ultimate responsibility for health and safety at work within Harlow Council rests with the Chief Executive.

The effectiveness of any policy is only as good as the importance placed upon it by senior management and so, in order to reflect Harlow Council's commitment to an integrated health and safety philosophy.

Senior Management Board (SMB)

With management responsibility for a number of services members of SMB, (Senior Management Board), have a requirement to ensure that the Council's health and safety policy is being implemented, and that each service develops safety procedures for the work within their control.

As a part of the process to monitor the effectiveness of health and safety procedures within their areas of responsibility, members of SMB should include this as a regular item at management team meetings.

A member of SMB or senior management team with overall responsibility for Health & Safety will assume specific responsibility for the Council's health and safety requirements.

Assistant Directors

Each Assistant Director is responsible for the health and safety provision within their Service and is required to ensure that safety procedures are prepared covering the areas of work and teams for which they are responsible. Assistant Directors form part of the Wider Leadership Team – WLT.

The safety procedures will include reference to the following:

- Workplace risk assessments
- Safe methods of working
- Maintenance of plant and equipment
- Work involving chemicals and hazardous substances
- Induction of new staff
- Specific risk assessments
- Training and health surveillance
- Use of display screen equipment and workstations
- Compliance with statutory requirements
- Welfare facilities and environmental provision
- Supervision arrangements
- Fire Safety

Although operational managers/team leaders will in practice carry out much of this work, Assistant Directors must ensure that they play an active part, as they cannot delegate their overall responsibility.

In order to ensure that the Health and Safety policy and relevant safe working procedures are implemented and understood by all personnel, effective lines of communication must be developed by each Assistant Director covering all the services for which they are responsible.

The setting up of appropriate safety groups will be an integral part of the communication process. Where it is not appropriate to establish a safety group, arrangements must be made for the implementation of health and safety to be considered at staff meetings.

Assistant Directors will put into place arrangements whereby the Health and Safety Team is notified, as quickly as possible, of any major accidents and/or dangerous occurrences that occur within their areas of responsibility. Regular contact with the Health and Safety Team will also ensure that they are kept informed of current safety issues and new legislation coming into force.

Team Leaders/Line Managers/Supervisors

Personnel in line management positions will not only have a direct involvement in the preparation and implementation of their own operational safety procedures, but also in the implementation of the Council's health and safety policy.

With the assistance of the Health and Safety Team they must develop a programme of routine inspections of the workplace in order to identify hazards and ensure that work under their control is being undertaken in a safe manner.

All accidents, aggressive incidents and dangerous occurrences that occur must be recorded and reported in accordance with Harlow Council procedures, and a localised investigation carried out in order to establish the cause and prevent reoccurrence.

Managers and Supervisors will be an integral part of the internal communications, implemented by Assistant Directors, for the identification of training needs and the dissemination of information to employees on matters associated with health and safety.

Consultation must take place with the Environmental & Licensing Manager on matters relating to health and safety at work, with any recommendations on such being implemented by the relevant Manager or Supervisor.

Employees

All employees have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety whilst at work, but they must also consider the health and safety of others who might be affected by what they do or fail to do.

They must co-operate with Harlow Council in order to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

The intentional or reckless interference with, or misuse of, anything provided in the interest of health and safety will not only be considered as a very serious breach of discipline but could also be a breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Work must not be carried out unless suitable training has been given and appropriate instructions supplied. Employees who have any doubts regarding this point should seek clarification from their line management.

The wearing of specified safety clothing and the use of safety equipment is vital to the safe performance of work activities and the prevention of accidents. Accidents and/or dangerous occurrences that do occur, whether personal injury or not is caused, must be reported through normal line management channels.

Employees will keep themselves informed of this policy and any departmental safety procedures that are relevant to the work they are undertaking.

Environmental Manager (Health and Safety)

The Environmental Manager must ensure a regular and systematic implementation of all matters connected with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and associated legislation, as it affects the employees of Harlow Council.

This will be carried out, where necessary, in conjunction with management and/or staff and will include amongst other matters the following:

- Advising SMB of the statutory obligations imposed by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated legislation.
- Preparation of safety procedures and generic assessments in respect of issues that affect the Council as a whole (see implementation of systems and procedures).
- Investigation of serious accidents, dangerous occurrences and aggressive incidents.
- Implementation of fire prevention procedures, instigation of workplace fire risk assessment programmes, preparation of fire safety plans and the maintenance of fire prevention and protection equipment.
- Statutory inspection of plant and equipment.
- Assist as required in the co-ordination of health and safety related training.
- Provision of information on specific matters relating to health and safety at work.
- Supporting the implementation of Service health and safety audits and the preparation of health and safety plans including risk assessments.
- Supporting the implementation of health surveillance programmes including workplace noise and vibration monitoring.
- Implementation of measures associated with the management of workplace stress.
- Fleet management and driver safety.
- Maintain a health and safety handbook as a means of ensuring staff are aware of health and safety issues and their responsibilities.
- Supporting in the provision and arranging appropriate health and safety training as required.

Where, in his/her opinion, the Environmental Manager considers that a process or operation constitutes an imminent risk to the health and safety of any employee or member of the public he/she will, with the full authority of the Managing Director, call for an immediate cessation of that work. The work will not be permitted to start again unless appropriate health and safety measures have been put in place and agreed by the Environmental Manager.

Safety Representatives

Harlow Council fully acknowledges the role of Safety Representatives and encourages their involvement in matters relating to health and safety at work as outlined in the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996.

Safety Committee

No Safety Policy is likely to be successful unless it actively involves employees from all areas of work, and to this the Chief Executive gives full support. Representatives from each service and recognised trade unions will be nominated to attend the Safety Committee, which will anticipate to meet three times per year. Minutes of meetings will go to the relevant Committee of the Council. The Safety Committee will be chaired by a member of SMB or WLT, (Wider Leadership Team).

Contractors

Harlow Council employs contractors to carry out work on its behalf. Appointed contractors will be required to provide copies of their written health and safety policy, risk assessments, safe systems of work and any relevant training documents to evidence competence to carry out the type of work they have been contracted to undertake.

In addition the Council will also require the contractor to supply evidence of both personal and public liability insurance. It is the responsibility of the Service that has procured the contractors services to ensure that all the relevant documentation is in order.

Without exception contractors are required to work in a way that will not introduce risks to the Council and that safe methods of work are adopted to protect themselves, Council employees and members of the public from harm.

The Council recognises that Contractors are more at risk in unfamiliar surroundings and the Service responsible for the contractors will provide a suitable induction to the building or area where the work is to be undertaken, that any risks present are identified to the contractors and emergency procedures for fire and first aid are explained.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

The implementation of systems and procedures necessary for ensuring that the Health and Safety Policy becomes a comprehensive document, covering all aspects of Harlow Council's health and safety undertaking, will be issued separately as appendices and will take the form of specific policies, including Hand Arm Vibration, Noise at Work, COSHH, and Management of Contractors (this is not an exhaustive list).

These will be supplemented by safe working procedures.

Each appendix will carry the same weight of internal enforcement and be subject to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Health and Safety policies can be accessed via the Health and Safety section of the Kaonet.

Revision History

Date of this revision: May 2024

Date of next planned revision: May 2025

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
November 2005	None	Original document	
March 2009	November 2005	Updates to original document. Inserted Revision History. Logo changed	No
August 2010	March 2009	Document updated to reflect the changes to the health and safety management arrangements and the deletion of the Safety and Licensing Manager post	No
April 2011	August 2011	Document amended to remove term of Strategic Director and replaced by member of CMT and senior management. Contractor's responsibilities added.	No
May 2011	April 2011	Minor text changes as agreed with the HSE	No
January 2014	April 2011	Reviewed and updated – reference to Human Resources Manager	No
January 2016	January 2014	Addition of health and safety training as required etc. and removal of Implementation of measures necessary for the management of asbestos and legionella as specialist removal provided by HMS.	No
February 2018	January 2016	Reviewed document, updated dates & removed references to Malcolm Morley, Chief Executive and replaced with Brian Keane, Managing Director.	No
March 2018	February 2018	Included Managing Directors signature at front of document	No
February 2020	March 2018	Reviewed document, changed Managing Director to Chief Executive – Changed HR Manager to Environmental & Licensing Manager – Changed CMT to SMB	No
September 2022	February 2020	Change references to include WLT & Assistant Directors – Title of Environment Manager – Page 5 Addition supporting implementation of activities	No
May 2024	September 2022	Change of Chief Executive name	No