

# HARLOW COUNCIL

## Addendum to Health and Safety Policy

### Young Persons

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Author(s): **Health & Safety Team**

### General Statement

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974<sup>1</sup> places specific duties on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, as well as the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by their work activities.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999<sup>2</sup> employers must assess significant risks to the health and safety of both employees and other persons who may be affected by their work activities.

Employers must also ensure under the law that young persons are protected at work from any risks to their health or safety which are a consequence of their lack of experience or absence of existing or potential risks or the fact that young persons have not yet fully matured.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy is a disciplinary offence, which in serious cases could lead to dismissal.

### Introduction

In the U.K a young person is seriously injured in the workplace every 40 minutes and one young person is killed at work each month.

A young person is defined as someone who is under 18 years of age, but above the minimum school leaving age.

Young people are at greater risk of having an accident in the workplace due to their age, immaturity and inexperience.

When they are new to a workplace they will encounter unfamiliar risks from the work they carry out and from the working environment.

They may not have reached their physical maturity and therefore lack physical strength to carry out a work task; they may also be eager to impress or please the people with whom they work. They may also not have the confidence to ask for help or know how to get help.

Employers have specific responsibilities with regard to young persons and as a consequence, the degree of information, instruction, training, supervision and safe systems of work may be different for young people than that required for experienced adults.

Young people may work or volunteer for any Council Services and the main activities will be office type work. There are however, a number of Services in the Council where the work carried out includes manual handling, the use of equipment or machinery or in roles where the young person may have certain health and safety responsibilities. This includes working at:

- Parndon Wood Nature Reserve
- Pets Corner
- Paddling Pools
- Stewarding at Council events
- Playhouse

These Services should ensure that any risk assessments include the risks to young people and that suitable and sufficient induction, supervision and training is carried out for new starters who are also young people.

### **Risk assessment**

The law requires employers to assess risks to all young people under the age of 18 years of age before they start work and tell them of the outcome of the risk assessment including the hazards associated with the work and the control measures in place.

The assessment must take account their psychological or physical immaturity, inexperience and lack of awareness of risks.

The assessment should consider the design and layout of the work station and workplace, the nature, degree and exposure to any biological, chemical or physical agent, the type and use of any work equipment and the way the work activities are organised.

The risk assessment must introduce control measures to eliminate or minimise risks, so far as is reasonably practicable and specify any health and safety training intended to be given.

It is good practise to include a review of the young person's current state of health and look at other personal factors which may influence the risk assessment.

### **Work, work environment and work equipment**

Young persons are not permitted to work beyond their physical or psychological capacity.

They cannot undertake work involving exposure to harmful agents which are toxic or carcinogenic or substances that can cause genetic defects or which can cause chronic health problems, or work involving exposure to radiation. The Council does not undertake work process that would expose young people to harmful agents.

The Council shall not employ young people to carry out work if there is a risk to health from extreme cold or heat, noise or vibration.

Under 18's should not work unsupervised with any high risk machinery including any sawing machine fitted with a circular saw or saw band or a planing machine when used for surfacing. Equipment such as this is used at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve.

A young person may use the equipment during training; provided they are sufficiently mature and adequately supervised and that they are supervised till they are competent and can use the equipment safely unsupervised.

Some animals kept at Pets Corner may occasionally show aggression such as those with young.

Young people may be at increased risk of harm from an aggressive animal because of the inexperience and lack of appreciation of the risks.

There are additional risks to young people from zoonoses (diseases carried by animals that can also affect humans) because of the lack of understanding of the need to maintain good hygiene practises.

Pets Corner should consider the risks from animals as part of the risk assessment process and decide what level of contact is deemed suitable depending on the hazards presented. This can include restricting contact, adequate supervision until the young person is competent and suitable training before they can work with animals independently.

### **Information, training, instruction and supervision**

The Council recognises that training and proper supervision is particularly important for young people because of their relative immaturity, unfamiliarity with the working environment and the lack of understanding of the risks in the workplace young people may have.

As part of the risk assessment services shall identify what training is required by the young person in order for them to be able to work safely and without risks to their health.

The assessment of training required will be made on the individuals' ability and knowledge so that the training provided can bring the young person up to an appropriate level of competence.

Health and safety induction will form an important part of the young persons first few days at work.

Services will provide increased levels of supervision and support for young people during the early stages of employment until they are satisfied that the young person appreciates the risk they are likely to encounter in the workplace.

Safe use of equipment, Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L22<sup>3</sup> emphasises the importance of training and properly supervising young people because of their relative immaturity and unfamiliarity of the working environment.

### **Safe system of work**

In addition to any specific training the young person will need to carry out their work tasks, the following safe systems of work need to be outlined to the young person:

- Games and practical jokes are not appropriate in the work place and potentially serious injuries could result from such behaviour
- Work areas and walkways need to be kept tidy so as not to create any trip or slip hazards
- Good hygiene is needed when handling certain substances to prevent risks to health
- If personal protective equipment is supplied it needs to be used as instructed and kept in good condition
- Lifting and carrying should be carried out in the correct manner. Managers will need to arrange instruction and training and monitor that the correct techniques are being used
- Using ladders safely requires instruction and training, ladders should be checked before use
- Electricity is dangerous and electrical equipment should be used according with instructions
- Hazard warning signs for harmful substances need to be recognised and the instructions of the Manager followed
- Care must be taken when handling flammable substances. All smoking restrictions must be observed
- All accidents or aggressive incidents must be reported to the Manager
- Be fully aware of any emergency arrangements for fire safety and first aid arrangements

### **Work experience**

Work experience opportunities for school children in years 10 and 11 is made possible under the Education Act 1996<sup>4</sup>; as this allows school children to assume the temporary status of a Young Person in employment law.

Work experience children are regarded as employees for the purpose of health and safety and Services shall take account of any additional precautions required for young persons.

All elements of this policy will apply to those on work experience. In addition the hazards and precautions identified in the risk assessment will also be communicated to the parents or carer of the work experience placement.

Before work experience placements can begin permission must be sought from Human Resources.

### **Summary**

The key to ensuring the health and safety of young people in the workplace is having a good health and safety management system that protects everyone

Young people can be at particular risk because they lack experience and trained judgement and therefore need good advice, support, information and training.

The following procedures will be implemented to ensure the safety of young persons working at Harlow Council:

1. Risk assessments will be undertaken, taking into account the lack of knowledge, experience and possible immaturity of the young person and any physical or psychological immaturity of the individual.
2. Additional training, instruction and supervision will be provided until the young person has demonstrated a satisfactory degree of competence.
3. Careful attention must be made by both the young person and their line management to any restrictions placed on the type of work which may be undertaken.

Health and Safety Team  
Ext 6499

## Revision History

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
22.06.2011	None	Original Draft document	
07.07.2011		Agreed by Safety Committee	
1/2014	7/2011	Reviewed and updated	No
March 2020		Reviewed and updated	No

## Reference

<sup>1</sup> The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

<sup>2</sup> Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

<sup>3</sup> Safe use of equipment, Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 Approved Code of Practise and Guidance

<sup>4</sup> Education Act 1996