

Corporate Health and Safety Policy

January 2018

Version 1

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PART 1

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY STATEMENT

As the Chief Executive of West Lothian Council, I am committed to achieving high standards of health, safety and welfare within the organisation. This policy statement reflects the importance attached to protecting council employees and those who are affected by our activities, in order to create the framework for West Lothian Council to provide high standard services to the public within West Lothian.

This Policy will apply to all West Lothian Council employees. The measures outlined in this policy and subsequent guidance documents are the minimum standards and values expected and should be adhered to at all times. The policy consists of 3 parts. The first, this policy statement, is designed to provide a general indication of health, safety and welfare duties. The second will outline responsibilities placed on individuals and the organisational structure in place to achieve those duties. The third is in the form of guidance documents that will provide greater detail on how those responsibilities will be implemented.

All foreseeable hazards must be identified and assessed in order to reduce the likelihood of accidents, incidents and cases of occupational ill health. Equipment, premises, people and systems of work will be, as far as is reasonably practical, safe and without risks to safety and health. Each Depute Chief Executive, and in turn Head of Service holds responsibility for the safety, health and welfare of their staff. This should be achieved by creating and maintaining a positive health and safety culture where everyone can contribute by identifying and mitigating risk. Consultation with health and safety representatives, employees, unions and stakeholders must take place in order to achieve this.

All council staff must be made aware of their legislative duties and be responsible for the safety of themselves and others through their acts and omissions. This will form part of both induction and required training that all employees will attend. Our responsibilities extend to other staff members, visitors and contractors alike, who must be provided a safe environment.

West Lothian Council is committed to the continual improvement of health and safety standards. Health and Safety Advisers are charged with monitoring and reviewing health, safety and welfare performance. In order to achieve our ambitions and goals for West Lothian Council, it is vital that we continue to create a safe working community. Effective communication, consistent safety culture and strong values will enable us to thrive and contribute to the performance of the council.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and will remain extant unless amended by changes in legislation or other council policy.

Graham Hope
Chief Executive
October 2017

PART 2

2. ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1 Introduction

The policy statement set out below is for the information, guidance and compliance of all employees in West Lothian Council. It details the general policy statement together with the responsibilities organisation required for its implementation. The statement supports the requirements of Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

2.2 General Policy

West Lothian Council through its Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executives, Heads of Service and Elected Members attaches great importance to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of its employees. As members of the public can be affected by our work activities, it is vitally important that a safe environment is also created for them. Health, safety and welfare are integral parts of West Lothian Council's ethos but can only be implemented effectively if line managers are aware of the duties and responsibilities placed upon them and carry them out diligently.

2.3 Chief Executive and Depute Chief Executives

The Chief Executive retains the overall responsibility for the Council's Health and Safety Policy and will provide effective leadership and direction for its implementation.

Depute Chief Executives will be responsible and accountable to the Chief Executive for the health, safety and welfare of everyone affected by the work activities in their service areas and will demonstrate clear commitment to achieving high standards of health and safety management.

2.4 Head of Corporate Services

The Head of Corporate Services, without detracting from the delegated responsibility of other senior officers, has been appointed by the Chief Executive to have responsibility for overseeing the implementation and monitoring the effectiveness of this Health and Safety Policy.

The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for actively monitoring how the Council manages its health and safety risks by ensuring that the Corporate Management Team:

- a) Formally and publicly accepts its collective role in providing health and safety leadership
- b) Makes decisions that reflect the Council's health and safety intentions as articulated in its health and safety policy statement
- c) Recognises its role in engaging the active participation of workers in improving health and safety
- d) Is kept informed of, and alerted to, relevant health and safety risk management issues

- e) Accepts their individual role in providing health and safety leadership for the Council.

The Council's Health and Safety Manager will assist the Head of Corporate Services in the fulfilment of this role.

An annual health and safety report will be published by the Head of Corporate Services containing details of health and safety aims, goals, targets and performance across all services of the Council.

2.5 Service Responsibilities

Each service is delegated responsibility for all health, safety and welfare matters within their area of responsibility, from the Chief Executive through the respective Depute Chief Executives to Heads of Service. Heads of Service can delegate day to day matters to designated representatives i.e. Head Teachers and managers, however, overall responsibility remains with the Head of Service. Assistance can be sought at any time from the corporate health and safety team or service health and safety advisers.

2.5.1 Heads of Service

Heads of Service will be responsible for the following:

- a) Developing a positive attitude towards health and safety by encouraging the participation and involvement of employees in health and safety matters and visibly demonstrating a commitment to the achievement of high standards of health and safety within the service area.
- b) Ensuring adequate resources are allocated to achieve a safe working environment, safe equipment and trained competent staff.
- c) Ensuring all foreseeable hazards are identified and risk assessments made and recorded by a competent individual (where possible on the Corporate electronic incident reporting system RIVO). Work is not to take place where a hazard has been noted and where no remedial action has been taken to reduce that risk to an acceptable level. Risk assessments are to be reviewed at regular intervals, if there is a reason to suspect that they are no longer valid or if there is a change to the circumstances to which they relate. Method statements recording a safe system of work must also be completed for tasks that pose a significant risk to health and safety.
- d) Implementing and maintaining a health and safety management system that will ensure the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures necessary to eliminate or control risks and prevent accidents and ill health.
- e) Heads of Service shall submit to the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and the Corporate Health and Safety Manager, copies of any prosecutions, prohibition notices, improvement notices, notification of intention to serve improvement notices and/or notification of any contravention within 24 hours of their receipt.
- f) Providing all employees with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to enable them to discharge their individual safety responsibilities and to carry out their tasks in a safe manner. During the recruitment process, any health

and safety responsibilities outlined for the post are to be documented and communicated to the candidates.

- g) Detailing arrangements for consultation between management, trade union safety representatives and/or representatives of employee's safety. Where it is appropriate to have safety committees, they should meet at intervals appropriate to the needs of the service area/function.
- h) Ensuring that a health and safety plan is developed by each service which has realistic short and long term objectives, establishes performance standards and sets priorities.
- i) Ensuring that a record of accidents, incidents and near misses at work are recorded in an appropriate manner on the Corporate electronic incident recording system (RIVO)
- j) Ensuring the Chief Executive's policy statement has been read and understood by all managers and made available for employees.
- k) Ensuring that there is sufficient emergency planning including first aid cover within each of the services locations covering all shifts and activities.
- l) Providing adequate occupational health surveillance and monitoring in relation to the risk presented to employees.

2.5.2 Managers, Head Teachers, Supervisors, Co-ordinators & Squad Leaders

All managers are responsible for managing health and safety in their area of responsibility. Support is available from the corporate health and safety team and service specific health and safety advisers (where appointed) although managers will be ultimately responsible. In particular, they will:-

- a) Make sure that all employees under their control are familiar with relevant local health and safety arrangements.
- b) Set up and maintain within their service area safe, healthy working conditions.
- c) Make sure safe systems of working, significant findings arising from risk assessments and the necessary control measures are brought to the attention of employees.
- d) Ensure that systems of work operated in their area of management are safe and without risk to health and safety
- e) Audit and monitor their own health and safety arrangements, verifying control measures are working effectively, taking whatever remedial actions necessary where concerns are identified.
- f) Make sure that safety procedures are considered when designing, buying and using all new plant and equipment.
- g) Make sure that investigations are carried out for accidents and incidents in their area of responsibility.
- h) Carry out safety inspections (including housekeeping) to identify hazards; and make sure that all employees, including safety representatives, are able to carry out their responsibilities and encourage them to work with managers to promote an attitude of safe working across the council.

- i) Ensuring that employees under their management receive sufficient instruction.
- j) Ensuring all contractors are vetted with regard to health and safety competence to minimise the risks to all who may be affected by their activities or omissions and undertake continuous monitoring and assessment of contractors' health and safety performance.

2.5.3 Employees

All employees and those operating on behalf of West Lothian Council will be expected to cooperate in the implementation of this health and safety policy by

- a) Acting with due care for their own safety and that of other who may be affected by something they do or their omissions
- b) Cooperate with and participate in, so far as is necessary, any activity that will assist the council in complying with any requirements as a result of health and safety legislation. This includes the need to participate in Health and Safety Training.
- c) Using correctly all work items, equipment and machinery in accordance with the training and instruction received.
- d) Not to intentionally interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.
- e) Report all accidents, incident and near misses.

2.5.4 Occupational Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Manager will provide specialist advice and guidance throughout the council on matters relating to corporate health and safety policy by;

- a) Providing guidance and procedures.
- b) Developing health and safety strategies.
- c) Preparing regular reports for senior management that inform and evaluate the council's health and safety performance.
- d) Coordinate all serious incident investigations and liaise with external agencies as and where required.

Competent health and safety advisers will provide advice, support and guidance to managers and in particular will:-

- a) Advise on the interpretation and application of health and safety legislation and guidance.
- b) Investigate the cause and circumstances of serious accidents and incidents.
- c) Develop health and safety standards.
- d) Develop training programmes and advise and support managers in the risk assessment process.

- e) Liaise with Services and external agencies.
- f) Contribute to the development of occupational health and safety strategies and policies.

In some areas where advisers have been directly engaged by the service, they will work in conjunction with the corporate health and safety manager to ensure council objectives are being achieved.

Health and Safety will inspect and audit all council premises and activities, and, where required will take action as necessary to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and those who may be affected by the actions of West Lothian Council.

2.6 SAFE PLACE OF WORK

2.6.1 Emergency and Fire Procedures

In addition to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and in line with requirements made under The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 a risk assessment based approach the approach to fire safety has been adopted to prevent fires from occurring. The safety of life must override property related considerations.

To assist in this approach it will be ensured that:

- a) Fire can be detected in a reasonable time and those who may be affected can be warned reliably.
- b) An area can be vacated quickly and safely
- c) Those within a building know what to do in the event of a fire
- d) All premises will have suitable and sufficient evacuation procedures in place
- e) Employees will be provided information and instruction in relation to fire safety and emergency evacuations of buildings.

Emergency procedures will be established within premises where there is a possibility of serious or imminent danger to employees or those who may be affected.

2.6.2 Property Compliance

Every workplace within West Lothian Council must have a delegated Responsible Person (RP) who will be responsible for the implementation of the Premises Management Handbook and completion of the Property Compliance Log Book.

The Premises Management Handbook details requirements in relation to access and use of premises, fire safety, maintenance, plant and equipment, electricity, water hygiene and asbestos on property compliance.

- a) All premises must be clean, tidy and in a safe condition by ensuring that:
- b) Walkways, paths, exits and traffic routes etc. are clearly marked and kept in good repair.

- c) All tripping hazards are removed. Arrangements exist for clearing hazards (e.g. spilt oil, snow etc.).
- d) Asbestos containing materials are identified and controlled in line with the Asbestos Policy and Procedures.
- e) There is a safe access and egress to each workplace.
- f) Access to firefighting equipment and fire exits are not obstructed.
- g) Staircases, landings, floor openings etc. are guarded to prevent falls of personnel and stores.
- h) Premises are kept tidy, with a safe access and egress using suitable storage systems.
- i) The transport, storage, use and disposal of hazardous substances conforms to current regulations and guidance
- j) Loose tools and equipment are secured and stored in a safe manner.
- k) Warning notices are visible, relevant and up to date.
- l) Any lifting equipment used within the premises is tested and maintained in accordance with legislation.

Responsible persons are responsible for the general upkeep of workplaces used by employees. They are to ensure, by inspection, that as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe place of work exists. The Responsible Person can be assisted in this task by appointing employees to carry out detailed inspections on their behalf and on subjects within their area of expertise.

2.6.3 Welfare facilities

The following key areas of welfare are to be considered when ensuring a healthy working environment:

- a) Indoor temperature levels should be comfortable in relation to the task.
- b) Humidity levels are considered.
- c) Adequacy of lighting for the work being carried out.
- d) Monitoring of ventilation levels.
- e) The reduction of vibration, dust, smells and noise.
- f) Consideration of wind, rain, cold and lightning must be made when working outdoors.
- g) Toilet facilities are provided with soap and hand towels.
- h) Potable drinking water is provided

- i) Suitable storage and maintenance facilities for personal protective equipment.

2.7 SAFE PEOPLE

2.7.1 Employee Responsibilities

Every employee of West Lothian Council should recognise the importance of working in a safe manner and environment. This will be taught on all induction courses and subsequent continuation training. An employee may be liable to disciplinary action if they have been found to have acted in a negligent manner or failed to act in accordance with any council health and safety policy or procedure. All employees must be aware of the following responsibilities:

- a) To take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. This means employees must act in a responsible manner.
- b) To co-operate with West Lothian Council so far as is necessary and participate where required to allow the council to discharge any legislative duties imposed.
- c) No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health or safety in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions. This includes safety guards, safety signs, first aid equipment and firefighting equipment.
- d) To report poor working practices and hazards immediately to their line manager.
- e) To correctly use all work items provided by the council in accordance with the training and the instructions they receive to enable them to use the items safely.

2.7.2 Training and instruction

All new employees are required to undergo induction training. This training is intended to outline the safety culture that is expected from all council employees. The following points will be covered on the induction course:

- a) Employer's and employee's responsibilities
- b) The accident and incident reporting procedure (RIVO)
- c) Actions to be carried out in reaction to an emergency evacuation
- d) The safe use of work equipment and PPE
- e) The safe use, handling, transport and storage of substances
- f) The importance of safe methods of work and risk assessment

Induction training should be supplemented by more detailed instruction from the service on arrival. This training will be risk based and training programmes should be recorded by the service. Refresher training must also be provided at regular intervals.

2.7.3 Occupational Health Arrangements

The aim of the council's occupational health arrangements is to prevent ill health and to promote good health at work. The broad aims are to develop employee health services by promoting health screening, surveillance, preventative medical services and to develop health promotion and education initiatives as appropriate.

The Occupational Health Service provided will depend on the nature of the work activity. All Service areas will have access to occupational health services, which will be co-ordinated by HR Services.

The Corporate Health and Safety team will, when necessary, provide advice on matters relating to occupational health hazards. They will also provide information and guidance on other occupational health related subjects e.g. alcohol, smoking, personal safety and stress.

2.7.4 Employee and Safety Representatives

The importance of employee involvement and the role played by Trade Union representatives appointed under The Safety Representatives and Committees Regulations 1977 is recognised. The appointment of employee representatives and/or trade union representatives will be encouraged. Assistance will be provided to those representatives so they can reasonably carry out their functions.

Where appropriate Health and Safety committees will be encouraged and will meet at intervals determined appropriate to the needs of the service function.

2.8 SAFE PROCEDURES

Each task is to be critically examined for hazards. Appropriate safe working procedures are to be developed, recorded and adopted with appropriate training given. Regulation 3 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 makes it a legal requirement to carry out risk assessments. As West Lothian Council employs more than 5 people there is also a legislative responsibility to record these assessments. Risk assessments will formally identify the hazards and show the control measures implemented to reduce the likelihood and / or consequence of injury, ill health or damage.

Assistance from the respective health and safety adviser can be sought to achieve this. Assessments are to be brought to the attention of personnel within that service area.

Method statements (safe systems of work) are to be formally recorded for tasks that create a significant risk to employees. These statements will identify the requirements for that specific task such as training, equipment, testing and first aid requirements. Employees delegated to complete these responsibilities must be aware of the safe system of work prior to engaging in the task.

2.8.1 Permit to work

A Permit to Work (PTW) is a communication that forms part of a safe system of work, issued by the responsible person. Before work commences a responsible person will assess the risks involved and where necessary will eliminate or control it. The person receiving the permit must sign the permit to confirm that they understand the limits of the work that can be carried out and the precautions that have to be taken. When the work has been completed, or has to be suspended, the responsible person must sign off the permit and communicate

this fact to any stakeholders in the task. A PTW should be issued for activities such as hot works and confined spaces.

2.8.2 Monitoring, Auditing and Reviewing

Safety Monitoring is a general term to describe the formal and structured examination of safety in a workplace. It is carried out by management at various intervals in order to build up a comprehensive picture of safety, health and welfare. It can involve the following activities:

- a) **Safety Tour.** A safety tour is a general review of the workplace without a set formal plan.
- b) **Safety Inspection.** A safety inspection is done by appointed safety representatives. It is a detailed inspection of the workplace to identify hazards, unsafe working conditions and inadequate safety conditions.
- c) **Safety Sampling.** A safety sample is carried out by a nominated employee in their workplace, against a check list and at frequent intervals, to identify where accidents could occur and any conditions which could affect the workforce.
- d) **Safety Survey.** A safety survey is an examination of a specified working area i.e. firefighting equipment to provide detailed information about inadequately controlled hazards. It can also confirm the safety instructions are relevant and up to date.
- e) **Safety Audit.** A safety audit is a thorough detailed examination of the service area by a person that is suitably qualified. This will provide detailed information in relation to a specific topic or area of the overall assessment of safety across the area and a measure against which subsequent audits can be judged in order to identify areas for improvement.

The Health and Safety Manager will ensure that health and safety management systems are monitored regularly and audited, which may result in reviews of certain policies, procedures and activities. This shall include reviewing this safety policy document to ensure its continued effectiveness. Regular safety inspections and surveys are to be carried out by line managers and safety representatives to ensure health and safety systems and controls are complied with. Any action points raised during these inspections and assessment shall be addressed. Monitoring, auditing and reviewing are part of continual improvement.

2.8.3 Accident and Incident reporting

All accidents and incidents occurring at work are to be recorded on the corporate online safety management system, RIVO. As much detailed information as possible, including corrective action, should be included in the accident report. This includes injury, damage or loss of plant, equipment or materials. Near misses are also to be recorded to establish whether corrective action is required to eradicate dangerous trends. Service Managers and Heads of Service are to check their service entries in the online safety management regularly.

All incidents reportable under The Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) will be reported by the service's respective health and safety adviser to the relevant enforcement body. The Health and Safety Manager will be notified of all RIDDOR notifications being made by the service.

The Health and Safety Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating all serious health and safety incidents in conjunction with the health and safety advisers. In these incidents the Health and Safety Manager will liaise with the HSE, the Council's Risk and Insurance

Section and report directly to the relevant Depute Chief Executive and Head of Service or will nominate a health and safety adviser to lead the investigation. A serious health and safety incident is an event that leads to, or could lead to reportable cases of ill health, injury or other criteria stipulated in the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR) Regulations. Managers will be responsible for informing the Health and Safety Manager as quickly as possible following an incident of this type. More information can be found within the incident reporting guidance on My Toolkit, (https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/13875/Incident-Reporting-Guidance-2016v12/pdf/WLC_Incident_Guidance_2016v1.2.pdf) however when in doubt, advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Manager

Information on incidents shall be shared with recognised Trade Unions to meet the requirements of The Safety Representatives and Committees Regulations 1977.

2.9 SAFE EQUIPMENT

The Provision of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 implement legislation on health and safety standards for work equipment. Any work equipment used in or in connection with West Lothian Council activities must be designed for that specific purpose and properly maintained.

All equipment issued for use in the workplace must be safe. It is to be checked prior to use by the operator and where appropriate or required must be regularly examined by a competent person, e.g. lifting equipment and the results recorded in a register. The frequency of checks will be determined by the risk assessment. Equipment must only be issued to those properly trained to use it and only used for the intentions of its design. This is the responsibility of the manager.

Defective, incorrect or incorrectly used equipment can cause a variety of accidents. More detailed information can be found in the respective guidance documents. The following steps and precautions are required:

- a) Work equipment will only be used for the purposes for which it is designed.
- b) Ensure the equipment is maintained and in good condition. All guards for dangerous machinery parts will be inspected as per manufacturer's guidance.
- c) Suitable information and training must be provided to anyone using the equipment. Consideration should be given on emergency signage to those whose first language is not English. The information and training provided must include the following points:
 - 1. The conditions the equipment can be used in.
 - 2. Foreseeable abnormal situations and the action to be taken if such a situation were to occur.
 - 3. How to report any damages or accidents.
 - 4. Any danger zone created by the equipment.
 - 5. Identification of controls for the machinery especially emergency stops and means of isolation

2.10 Purchasing Policy

Many safety issues can be solved at the procurement stage by purchasing the correct equipment for the task. The following points are required to be considered for safety purposes prior to purchasing equipment.

- a) All equipment must be purchased and used only for the intended use it was designed for.
- b) All electrical equipment must be CE marked.
- c) Consideration must be given to aspects such as vibration, noise, PPE, storage and disposal requirements prior to procurement.
- d) Equipment designed to hold or lift a load must be load tested with a certificate of compliance.
- e) Consideration should be given to the entire life cycle of the equipment including commissioning, testing, maintenance (including insurance inspections), spare parts and decommissioning.

2.11 Contractors

Contractors are required to provide evidence of health and safety competence prior to working on council projects. This process identifies that contractors carrying work on behalf of West Lothian Council will have the correct qualifications, skill set, safe systems of work, risk assessments and insurances in place. Periodic inspections should be carried out on contracted works.

PART 3

3.1 GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Corporate Health and Safety will provide topic specific information in the form of guidance documents. The documents will be a reference for legal obligations, set out responsibilities and provide advice on best practice.

Guidance documents will detail a standard of control to be achieved through Service specific risk assessments, procedural documents and safe systems of work. Services will produce additional procedures pertaining to any activity particular to that Service.

Guidance Documents are available on My Toolkit –
<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2197/Health-and-Safety>