



**HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY 2024**

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## 1. Statement of Intent

Hartlepool is a vibrant and energetic town with growing prospects. As an authority we want to make Hartlepool the best it possibly can be and want dedicated, driven and committed staff to help us achieve that. Our priority is to make Hartlepool an ambitious, healthy, respectful, inclusive, thriving and outward-looking community, in an attractive and safe environment, where everyone can realise their potential.

Hartlepool Borough Council acknowledges and accepts its moral, financial and legal responsibilities, along with its statutory duties to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees and those who may be affected by its work activities, as defined in the Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act 1974.

In order to help fulfil these duties, the Council and its officers aim to continually improve its health and safety performance by encouraging Elected Members and officers to develop a culture which promotes a safe and healthy working environment for ourselves and others, whether working on HBC premises or undertaking work elsewhere.

To ensure compliance with the Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act 1974, the Council will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable:

- Safe plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe, without risks to health and which are adequately supervised.
- Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances that ensure the absence of risk.
- The provision of information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of its employees whilst at work.
- Work environments, including access to and egress from them, are maintained in a condition that is safe and without risks to health.
- Adequate facilities and welfare arrangements.
- The health and safety of other people not employed by the Council, but who may be affected by its activities.

The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services is the nominated officer to undertake the lead role for Health and Safety on behalf of the Managing Director and will ensure that Elected Members, Managing Director and Executive Directors are informed of any significant health and safety issues and will keep the Council informed of the implications of relevant changes to best practice and legislation. The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services will also ensure that the Council and its officers are provided with competent technical advice, and that regular reports are produced on performance management of health and safety for ELT.

The Council:

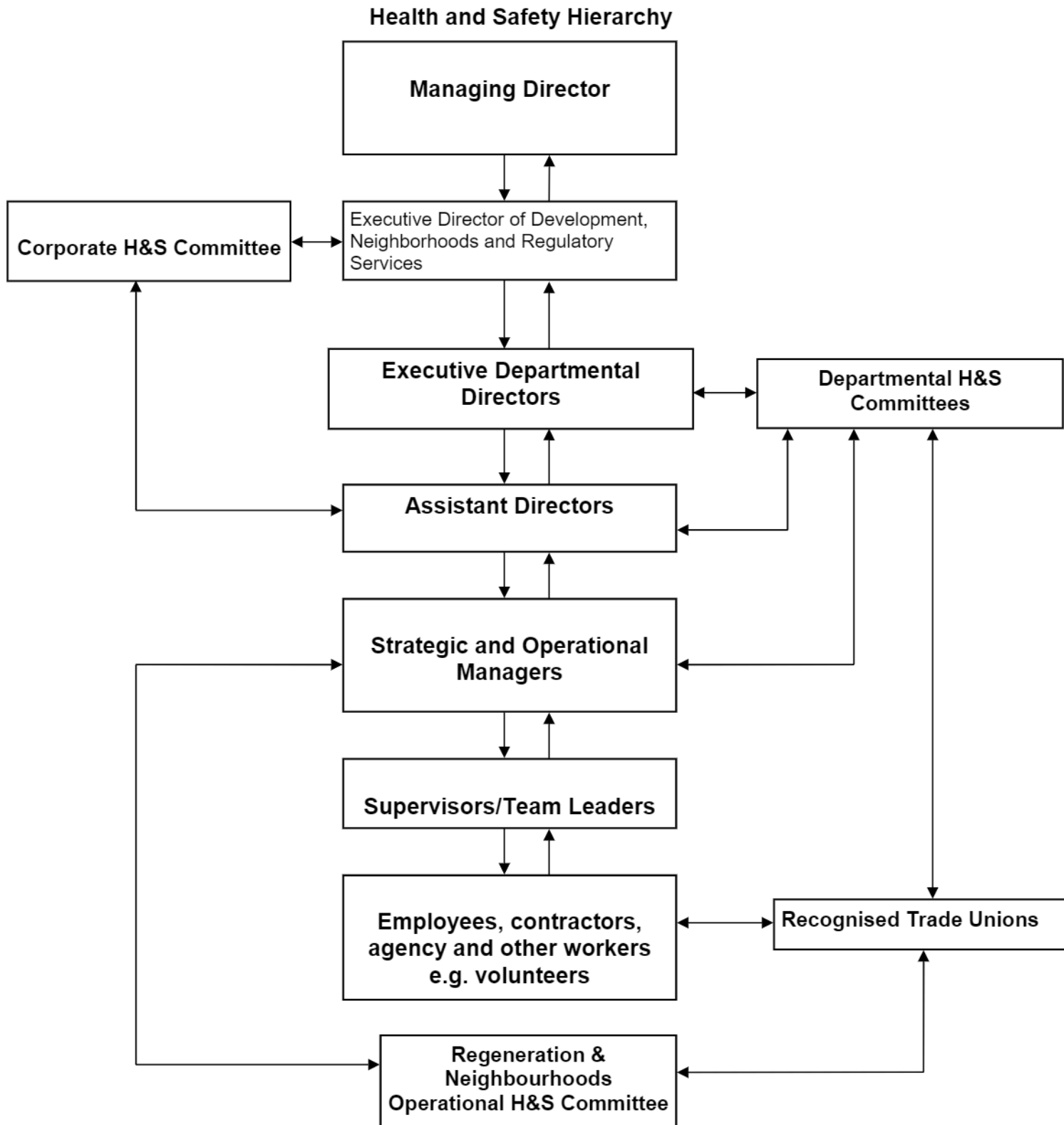
- Accepts the principal that work-related accidents, injuries, dangerous occurrences and ill-health conditions can be prevented and that all significant risks will therefore be prioritised accordingly, properly assessed, and control measures implemented.
- Recognises the collective commitment of Elected Members' responsibility to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees through political governance.

- Recognises the importance of the continued commitment of all its employees to the highest standards of health and safety, and to provide them with the necessary skills and support to achieve this.
- Encourages and promotes employee and elected member participation and co-operation in establishing and maintaining measures to improve health and safety within the Council.
- Provides adequate facilities and arrangements to enable effective communication, co-operation and consultation with recognised trade unions and employee representatives.
- Ensures systematic risk assessment programmes are embedded to identify, eliminate, reduce and adequately control risks associated with the Council's activities.
- Provides sufficient finance and resources to successfully achieve its health and safety commitments.
- Acknowledges that effective management and monitoring of health and safety within the Council can reduce overall financial and resource losses.
- Requires all those undertaking work on behalf of, or in partnership with the Council, to apply health and safety standards which are consistent with Hartlepool Borough Council policy and procedures.

The Council recognises that the management of health and safety must be fully integrated into its activities and treated with at least equal status as that of any other area of work. The Council will actively monitor health and safety performance and review policies and procedures appropriately to ensure the achievement of best practice in all aspects of health and safety management.

## 2. Organisation

This section identifies the organisational arrangements for the management of health and safety. It explains how the Council manages the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring, review and auditing of its health and safety control measures, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals.



## **2.1 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Elected Members**

It is the responsibility of Elected Members to give due regard to health and safety in their decisions, and to ensure policies promote high standards in health, safety and welfare throughout the Council.

### **Managing Director**

The Managing Director has overall and ultimate responsibility for health and safety compliance in the delivery of the Council's undertakings, whether delivered directly or via external contractors. The Managing Director is responsible for:

1. Ensuring health, safety and fire statutory requirements are met.
2. Taking appropriate action regarding significant health and safety risks and failures.
3. Ensuring sufficient resources are provided to enable this policy to be implemented appropriately.
4. Ensuring health and safety performance is reviewed and remedial action taken where significant risks have been identified.
5. Ensuring the health and safety framework is reviewed, at least biennially and that it is amended and promoted to maintain its effectiveness.
6. Support the Health, Safety and Risk Team to facilitate a positive health and safety culture.

### **Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services**

The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services has responsibility for the health and safety performance within the Council and is specifically responsible for:

1. Ensuring that a health and safety management system is in place and operating effectively to ensure compliance with statutory duties,
2. Chairing and leading the Corporate Health and Safety Committee meetings to enable health and safety objectives to be agreed and monitored.
3. Acting as conduit to the Managing Director and ELT to ensure that safety is considered in all strategic decisions.
4. Allocating or re-allocating resources as necessary to ensure that strategic health and safety priorities are met.
5. Monitoring the implementation of the health and safety policy and management system and periodically reviewing it to ensure it remains valid and fit for purpose in all spheres of operation.
6. Ensuring quarterly and annual health and safety reports are submitted for ELT consideration.
7. Ensuring delivery of an effective health, safety and risk service.

## Directors

Directors have responsibility to ensure the HBC Health and Safety Policy is effectively embedded within their departments. They are specifically responsible for:

1. Leading in the implementation and monitoring of the health and safety policy arrangements within their departments, taking appropriate corrective actions where necessary.
2. Escalating problems or constraints in meeting duties and responsibilities which cannot be resolved locally to the attention of the Managing Director and/or the Director of Finance & Policy without delay.
3. Facilitating effective consultation arrangements with employees via the departmental Health and Safety Committees to ensure:
  - a. Appropriate information is shared at departmental level to enable a consistent and joint approach to health and safety.
  - b. Safety performance is monitored, and health and safety arrangements remain effective and relevant to the work activities and level of risk.
  - c. Consultation with recognised trade unions is enabled.
4. Ensuring health and safety performance is monitored, audited and incorporated as an equal consideration in operational planning.
5. Facilitating the provision of adequate resources, training, instruction and supervision to enable this policy to be implemented at departmental level.
6. Informing the Health Safety and Risk Manager as soon as practicable of any enforcement actions or visits by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or other regulatory bodies.
7. Ensuring arrangements are in place to ensure the safety of premises under their control or partial control, in relation to the management of asbestos, control of legionella, fire safety, use and maintenance of gas appliances and any other relevant matters;
8. Facilitating safety inspections/audits by the Health, Safety and Risk Team, Health and Safety Executive, fire authority, safety representatives and members of health and safety committees or other relevant agencies.
9. Leading by example in developing and encouraging a positive health and safety culture within their departments.
10. Ensuring departmental duty holders under the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations are identified and competent to undertake their relevant duties.

## **Assistant Directors**

Assistant Directors have responsibility to ensure high standards of health and safety performance are embedded in their areas of control and are specifically responsible for:

1. Monitoring health and safety performance of their services, taking appropriate corrective actions where necessary.
2. Ensuring employees, supervisors and managers are competent and have sufficient resources allocated to discharge their health and safety duties.
3. Ensuring suitable and sufficient assessments of risks are undertaken, and written records maintained.
4. Ensuring adequate arrangements for communicating control measures and safe systems of work to employees and that they are understood and implemented.
5. Ensuring that organisations and persons engaged to carry out work for or deliver services on behalf of the council as contractors, partners or otherwise, are commissioned/contracted in compliance with statutory obligations and the Council's commissioning and procurement procedures.
6. Informing senior management of safety concerns arising out of inspections or risk assessments or lack of resources and of any enforcement actions or visits by the HSE or Fire Authority.
7. Ensuring appropriate health and safety training needs analysis is undertaken for all employees and activities and incorporating key health and safety responsibilities into individual job descriptions.

## **Strategic and Operational Managers**

Strategic and Operational Managers are responsible for implementing this policy within their areas of control and specifically responsible for:

1. Maintaining an awareness of statutory requirements, industry standards and principles of best practice for health, safety and welfare relevant to the departmental activities and services under their control.
2. Ensuring suitable and sufficient assessments of risks in relation to activities and services under their control are undertaken, communicated and understood and that safe systems of work implemented.
3. Escalating problems or constraints in meeting required health and safety standards to the attention of the Departmental Director/Assistant Director without delay.
4. Ensuring health and safety performance is monitored, audited and incorporated as an equal consideration in operational planning.
5. Ensuring training plans identify adequate training and instruction needs, and ensuring the relevant training is provided and health surveillance appointments attended.
6. Ensuring that organisations and persons engaged to carry out work for or deliver services on behalf of the council as contractors, partners or otherwise, are commissioned/contracted



in compliance with statutory obligations, the Council's commissioning and procurement procedures.

7. Implementing the Council's Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedures.

### **Team Leaders/Supervisors**

Team leaders/supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance and implementation of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy within their areas of responsibility.

Specifically, responsible for:

1. Assisting Strategic and Operational Managers with the undertaking and implementation of health and safety risk assessments and safe systems of work.
2. Embedding a positive health and safety culture, and challenging unsafe behaviour appropriately.
3. Ensuring adequate communication of control measures and safe systems of work to employees and that they are understood and implemented.
4. Ensuring plant and equipment used is fit for purpose, adequately tested and maintained, and that comprehensive records of statutory tests and inspections are maintained.
5. Monitoring the health and safety performance of areas and employees under their control, taking appropriate remedial action where required.
6. Implementing the Council's Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedures.
7. Taking immediate remedial actions where there is a risk of serious or imminent danger identified, reporting to senior management and the Council Health, Safety and Risk Team without delay.

### **All Employees (including agency workers, volunteers, work experience etc.)**

All employees are responsible for observing and following the HBC Health and Safety Policy.

Specifically, all employees have a responsibility to:

1. Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions or inaction.
2. Work safely and report any hazard, defect, malfunction or faulty equipment to their line manager and take appropriate steps to warn others who may be affected.
3. Report any accident or near miss to their line manager and inform the health and safety section.
4. Adhere to established safe systems of work and avoid taking actions that could be hazardous.
5. Familiarise themselves with fire evacuation procedures and the position of fire equipment, alarms, evacuation routes and assembly points as appropriate to their places of work.

6. Seek the advice of their line manager or supervisor before carrying out any work where they do not feel competent and safe.
7. Refrain from interfering with or misusing anything provided in the interests of health and safety.
8. Refrain from any type of irresponsible behaviour which could give rise to a hazard.
9. Never carry out unauthorised work or attempt to access any unauthorised area.
10. Attend any necessary health surveillance appointments associated to their work activities.

### **Health, Safety and Risk Manager and Health, Safety and Risk Team**

The Health, Safety and Risk Manager and Team provides a competent source of advice, guidance and support to the Council to enable it to fulfil its statutory health and safety duties, and is specifically responsible for:

1. Maintaining up-to-date knowledge and awareness of relevant legislation and best practice.
2. Assisting in the development of the health and safety management system, and to actively and reactively monitor the standard of the system.
3. Providing accurate and comprehensible advice for management, staff and any other persons who may be affected by the HBC's activities, on all matters pertaining to health and safety.
4. Monitoring performance of the HBC against internal procedures and legislative requirements, through a system of audit and investigation.
5. Liaising with HBC management, staff, trade unions representatives and other stakeholders on all matters pertaining to health and safety within the HBC.
6. Assessing training needs and arranging adequate health and safety information, instruction and training for staff.
7. Advising the Managing Director and Executive Directors, where necessary, of any serious health and safety concerns.
8. Assisting management where necessary in carrying out risk assessments on work activities, and in the development of plans for the implementation of the health and safety management system.
9. Taking the lead role in communications and consultations with any relevant enforcing authorities such as the HSE and fire authorities.
10. Taking action to prohibit work activities where there is serious or imminent risk of injury or a significant breach of statutory requirements, and to immediately inform the Managing Director, Departmental Executive Director and other relevant officers of such action and the recommended remedial actions necessary to allow the work activities to recommence.
11. Developing and leading on Health and Safety partnership arrangements and service level agreements.

## **Trade Union and Employee Health and Safety Representatives**

Working in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council, Trade Union and Employee Health and Safety Representatives will contribute to the improvement of standards regarding health, safety and welfare. Trade Union Representatives, where appropriate in order to fulfil their role within this policy, will be given reasonable time off work to undertake these duties.

Specifically, Trade Union and Employee Health and Safety Representatives are responsible for:

1. Contributing to the identification, elimination or control of possible risks to employees' health, safety and welfare.
2. Working with the employer and employees to investigate accidents and incidents that caused or have the potential to cause injury or ill health to employees.
3. Taking an active part in health and safety meetings and disseminating relevant information, health and safety procedures and updates to their members.
4. Representing the views of employees in discussions with the Health and Safety Executive and other enforcement agencies and receive information from those agencies.
5. Promoting safe working practices and undertaking joint safety inspections with representatives of the Authority to assist in the provision of a safe working environment.

## **School Governors**

In local authority controlled schools, the Board of Governors role is to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. The Board of Governors may have control of the premises both during and outside the school day and may oversee a delegated budget for some maintenance activities.

An increasing number of Boards of Governors are also trustees of the charity that runs the school, and/or directors of the company responsible for the school. If this is the case, their role is identical to that set out for the employer\*.

## **Head Teachers**

Head teachers and the school management team/ manager have considerable autonomy in the day-to-day running of their schools. It is important that head teachers exercise this autonomy in line with their employer's policies\*, procedures and standards. Head Teachers are specifically responsible for:

1. Ensuring that the school is following the employer's health and safety policy and having effective arrangements for managing the real health and safety risks at the school.
2. Maintaining effective communications with employers, governors, and the school workforce, and giving clear information to pupils and visitors, including contractors, regarding the significant risks on site.
3. Making sure staff have the appropriate training and competencies to deal with risks in their areas of responsibility.
4. Consulting and working with recognised TU safety representatives/employee representatives and safety committees.

5. Making sure that staff understand their responsibilities and know how to access support and advice to help them manage risks responsibly.
6. Ensuring the full implementation of the Hartlepool Local Education Authority's procedures in relation to all educational visits.
7. Ensuring organisations and persons engaged to carry out work for, or delivering services on behalf of, their school, as contractors, partners or otherwise, are assessed to be competent in terms of health, safety and welfare for the work concerned, in compliance with statutory procurement procedures.
8. Co-operating in the undertaking of safety inspections by the Health, Safety and Risk Team, Health and Safety Executive, Fire Authority or other appropriate agencies and act appropriately on the findings and recommendations.
9. Ensuring the Council's accident and safety incident reporting procedure is followed, and that accidents, incidents and near misses are reported and investigated appropriately.
10. Monitoring the performance of their employees in terms of safety, encouraging excellence, taking effective remedial action where required and setting a personal example of good safety practices.

*\* The Local Authority has health and safety responsibilities for community schools, community special schools, maintained nursery schools, pupil referral units and the statutory youth service and this policy applies to those establishments. However, in foundation or voluntary aided schools, although Hartlepool Borough Council may have some legal responsibilities for the building, premises and safety of the staff and pupils at the school, the School Governors and Head teachers, are the employers of teachers and support staff and their employer responsibilities should therefore be reflected in the schools' own health and safety policies and arrangements.*

### 3. Arrangements

As part of the Council's health and safety management system, a series of Health and Safety Procedures and guidance documents have been developed which detail the specific arrangements in place to assist managers to manage health and safety effectively.

These procedures are designed to satisfy the requirements under statutory legislation, Approved Codes of Practice, guidance documents, industry standards and best practice in relation to health and safety.

Implementing these procedures will assist managers to fulfil their health and safety responsibilities within their service areas.

Some examples of procedures available are:

- Risk Assessment
- Fire Safety
- Violence at Work
- Display Screen Equipment
- Hand Arm Vibration
- Incident Reporting
- First Aid
- Procuring or Commissioning Services
- Electrical Safety
- Asbestos

The above list is not exhaustive, and all the procedures can be accessed via the Health, Safety pages on the Council Intranet. The procedures will be developed, reviewed or superseded as legislative requirements, best practice or organisational changes occur.

Advice and guidance of the implementation of the procedures and standards to be applied can be obtained from the Health, Safety and Risk Team.

The Health, Safety and Risk Team will regularly audit and monitor the health and safety performance of service areas both proactively and reactively. Significant findings and recommendations from audits will be recorded by the Health, Safety and Risk Team and any trends reported to ELT. Relevant officers will be required to update the Health, Safety and Risk Team confirming the recommended actions have been implemented. Recommendations not implemented will be brought to the attention of ELT via the quarterly health and safety reports.

### 4. Supporting Information

#### What is the health and safety policy about?

The Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act 1974 imposes general duties on employers and states specifically that every employer shall prepare a written statement of his general policy with respect to:

- The health and safety at work of their employees; and
- The organisation and arrangements in place for carrying out that policy, and to bring the statement and any revision of it to the notice of all employees.

The main aim of the policy is to fulfil the Council's obligation under the Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act 1974, demonstrate that the Council acknowledges and understands its legal obligations at the highest corporate level, and to provide performance criteria that will assist the Council in demonstrating its compliance with relevant statutory health and safety requirements.

#### Who does the policy apply to?

The Health and Safety Policy applies to all Elected Members and every employee (including agency workers, volunteers, casual staff, works experience etc.). This policy can also be adopted and adapted as good practice by other groups associated with Council such as faith schools and

academies with Health and Safety Service Level Agreements with the Council's Health Safety and Risk Team.

### **Responsibility**

Hartlepool Borough Council has overall responsibility for ensuring the health safety and wellbeing, so far as is reasonably practicable, of its employees and others affected by its activities.

### **Monitoring**

The Health Safety and Risk Manager will monitor relevant health and safety legislation and make recommendations for review accordingly.

### **Support**

The Council's Health, Safety and Risk team will provide relevant health and safety support to assist service areas apply this policy effectively.

### **Abuse of the policy**

Hartlepool Borough Council view false or misleading accusations about the implementation and application of this policy seriously and employees who attempt to abuse the policy may face disciplinary action. This, of course, will not include ill-founded allegations which were made in good faith.

### **Distribution of the policy**

A copy of this policy is available on the Health and Safety pages of the intranet. However, copies are available to key personnel within the Services with the expectation that they will bring the policy to the attention of all employees for which they are responsible.

**Date of Next Review: January 2025**