

Dear Member

HR COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 9TH JUNE, 2022

Please find attached, for consideration at the next meeting of the HR Committee, taking place on Thursday, 9th June, 2022, the following Policy which is Appendix 1 to Item 10 that was unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Please bring this document with you to the meeting.

Agenda No Item

10. **Health and Safety Policy Update (Pages 3 - 28)**

To note the updated Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

Yours sincerely

Committee Administrator

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New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Corporate Health and Safety Policy

March 2022

CONTENTS

Section	Item	Page
1	Policy Statement.	3
2	Roles and Responsibilities.	5
3	The Organisation.	7
4	Arrangements.	8

Appendix

i	Health and Safety Consultation Structure;
ii	Health and Safety Arrangements.

SECTION 1: POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 New Forest District Council Health and Safety Policy Statement

It is the policy of New Forest District Council to safeguard the Health, Safety and Welfare of its employees and all persons likely to be affected by its undertaking. The Council is committed to its legal and moral obligation in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974, Management of Health, Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and other relevant statutory duties. We recognise that successful Health and Safety management contributes to the performance and objectives of the Council. New Forest District Council believes that safety is a core value in the organisation and is committed to:-

- a. Assessing the health and safety risks to our employees and to anyone else who may be affected by its undertakings with the aim of eliminating or mitigating risk, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- b. Making arrangements for the effecting planning, implementing, checking and acting on health and safety risks identified;
- c. Ensuring that risk assessment is the foundation of our health and safety management system, requiring that managers and supervisors have the competency to review the workplace hazards, the likelihood of these being realised and controls which may be put in place;
- d. The provision and maintenance of a safe working environment for employees, contractors and visitors, with adequate welfare arrangements and emergency procedures so far as is reasonably practicable;
- e. Ensuring that plans are in place for the higher risk services in order to meet both short- and long-term health and safety performances targets;
- f. Develop and maintain a positive incident reporting procedure across all services which secures the commitment and participation of all employees in order to reduce accidents to as low a level as reasonably practicable;
- g. Develop and maintain good employee health and safety consultation, engaging with unionised and non-unionised representatives;
- h. Ensuring partnership working arrangements are reached prior to commencement of work with all partners, to determine how health and safety will be managed and the standards to be met. As a minimum standard the Council's health and safety procedure and policies will be maintained.

The Council aims to promote and communicate this policy and the associated arrangements across all Services. Each employee regardless of their role is responsible for their health and safety and that of the wider team, and they shall adhere to the Council's health and safety policies and procedures.

This Policy has been endorsed by the Chief Executive and Executive Management Team and sets out the arrangements for health and safety management at the Council.

SIGNED _____ LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, _____ Dated.

SIGNED _____ CHIEF EXECUTIVE, _____ Dated.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Name of Policy:	COPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
Purpose of Policy:	This policy and subsequent arrangements outline the health and safety management duties and culture of the Council.
Policy Applies to:	This policy applies to all New Forest District Council employees including any individual undertaking work for the Council on a voluntary basis, or those employed on work experience. This Policy also applies to contractors and agency staff working on any Council premises or on behalf of the Council to deliver our services.
Latest Update:	March 2022
Review frequency:	Annual review.
Update Overview:	Revised policy reflecting new health and safety management and Senior Leadership changes.

SECTION 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Chief Executive shall:

- Take overall responsibility for the health and safety arrangements across New Forest District Council and lead the authority in setting the safety culture;
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring New Forest District Council meets its duties under the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, and other relevant safety regulations;
- Ensure that sufficient financial and other resources are available to ensure the authority is able to deliver its aims and objectives safely;
- Ensure that the authority receives suitable health and safety advice from competent persons to ensure all significant health and safety risks are identified and managed, and so assisting the organisation in the safe service delivery of the authorities objectives.
- Ensure that risk assessment processes are embedded across all the Councils different Services;
- Ensure safety and health objectives are set and monitored to verify that the Council is meeting its accountabilities and duties;

2.2 Executive Management Team shall:

- Lead on the health and safety culture of the Council;
- Provide strategic direction and oversight of health and safety policies and action plan's;
- Review the work programme of the corporate health and safety team;
- Ensure that New Forest District Council has competent health and safety advice available to assist the organisation.

2.3 Senior Managers shall:

- Ensure that health and safety policies and procedures are adhered to within their Service area;
- Ensure that staff are aware of the need to report accidents, incidents, near misses and occupational disease's;
- Ensure all employees under their control have sufficient training, experience, knowledge and skill to undertake their role competently and safely. This will usually involve the need for formal health and safety induction training, regular training reviews as part of the corporate appraisal process, and training to be reviewed through the risk assessment process;
- Lead by example on all health and safety matters and encourage a positive safety culture ensuring good communication channels throughout the workforce.

2.4 Managers and Supervisors shall:

- Ensure staff complete the relevant health and safety e-learning courses, and refreshers;
- Ensure staff are aware of relevant risk assessments, safe system of works, method statements and standard operating procedures;
- At all times ensure work is being undertaken safely in line with local standard operating procedures (our safety arrangements), and that relevant work practices have been risk

assessed and have safe system of works or method statements are in place (where necessary) which have identified controls;

- Ensure accidents, incidents, near misses and occupational diseases are recorded and reported through to the Corporate Health and Safety Team;
- Gather information on incidents: witnesses; equipment used; details of third parties; site conditions at the time of the incident. And support the Corporate Health and Safety team in undertaking accident investigations.

2.5 Corporate Health and Safety Team shall:

- Monitor the health and safety performance within the organisation by establishing reporting arrangements for incidents and accidents, and undertaking, inspections, audits and reviews;
- Lead on ensuring that accidents, incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences and cases of occupational ill health are recorded and reported;
- Take quarterly health and safety reports to EMT so that performance and trends can be reviewed;
- Ensure work planning is undertaken, and planning, delivery, monitoring, review and auditing of safety critical functions is in place;
- Provide competent advice to services on management systems, regulations, standards, risk assessments, training and other health and safety matters;
- Ensure all accident, incidents, near misses and occupational diseases reported are reviewed quickly to assess the appropriate actions to take, in line with policy – investigation type;
- Liaise with enforcement bodies on behalf of New Forest District Council, e.g. the Health and Safety Executive;
- Ensure all accidents, incidents and occupational disease's, which met the criteria set out in Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013, are reported promptly to the HSE, e.g. within 14 days, or earlier.

2.6 Employees shall:

All employees whether permanent or temporary have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work;
- Co-operate with managers and other staff to ensure safety requirements and standards are met;
- Undertake the mandatory training that is provided;
- Make themselves familiar with the safety rules and safe systems of work relevant to their job role(s).

SECTION 3: Organisation

3.1 New Forest District Council

New Forest District Council delivers a variety of services by its staff to businesses, residents and visitors which includes: Burials and cemeteries; coastal protection; community safety; council tax and business rates; economic development; elections and electoral services; emergency planning; environmental health; fly tipping clearance; Housing landlord (over 5000 social housing units, including extra care schemes); homelessness support; housing benefits; litter, bins and street cleaning; licensing of events; local planning; parking; public toilets; trees (maintenance of TPO's); and waste and recycling collections.

We recognise the need to have suitable health and safety arrangements in place in order to efficiently provide these services. Further information on the Council arrangements are detailed in the Appendix.

The Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024

The Corporate Plan for the Council focuses on securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest, guided by the people we serve and working in partnership with others to enhance the quality of lives for all by:

- Understanding the local needs and creating a balanced, healthy community who feel safe, supported and have access to services;
- Protecting the special character of the New Forest and responding pro-actively to environmental challenges; and
- Working with others to maintain a vibrant local economy that brings opportunity to the area.

The maintenance of trees and open spaces and the cleanliness of our streets is central to the quality of the place in which we live, and we will continue to deliver these services.

To help reduce the Council impact on the environment we will aim to provide the New Forest with a cost effective, sustainable and carbon efficient waste and recycling service that will maximise the recovery of valuable natural resources, align with the national strategy and meet the needs of our residents.

3.2 Performance Management of Health and Safety

There are a number of different factors which are monitored and reviewed as part of the Council's regular performance management of health and safety. However, there is no single reliable measure which can be used to confirm how well health and safety across the organisation is performing. Therefore we must monitor, review and report on a number of safety elements in order to successfully deliver health and safety performance, so we will:-

- Formally review health and safety performance quarterly by a report being taken to the Executive Management Team (EMT). The health and safety report will include feedback from the three Safety Panels: *Operational Services, Housing Service, & Office Based staff*;

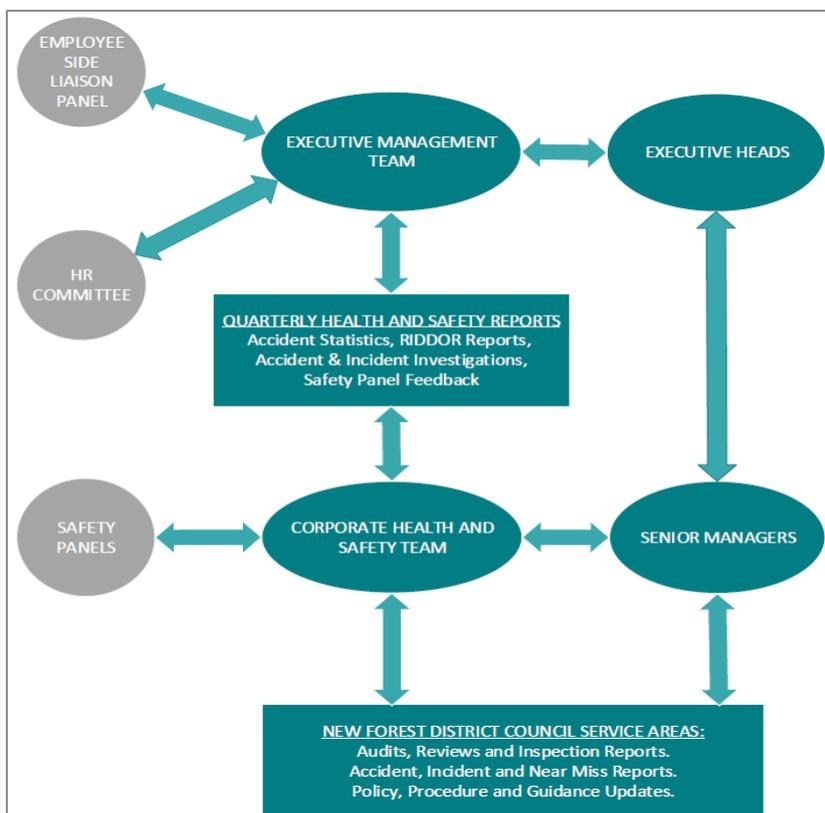
- Undertake risk-based monitoring of the work activities undertaken by the organisation;
- Undertake accident and incident investigations, with action plans produced where necessary;
- Review of the Corporate Health and Safety Team Work Programme annually.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team produce an annual work programme reviewed by EMT which gives a focus of the planned work for the year ahead, which will be targeted on higher risk Services, and higher risk health and safety topics. The work programme is produced taking account of the previous years programme, incident reports from services, and any new risk which may have materialised due to changes to work practices. The annual cycle is also fed into by the work of the Safety Panels which meet quarterly. In addition any 3rd party reports or external audits will also be part of the process of review.

The monitoring of accidents, incidents and near misses in the workplace is primary information on how well controls are working across the organisation. They are also an opportunity to scrutinize and review our risk assessments and safe systems of work, especially where there are a number of similar incidents. Even though a near miss incident has not led to any injury, ill health or time off work, they can be an important management tool in identifying issues and making improvements. The Council e-forms are used for reporting incidents, accidents and near misses and are available on ForestNet intranet, with hard copy forms at depots.

In addition to the planned quarterly health and safety reports taken to EMT, additional monitoring of safety risks can come from working groups, such as the Construction Design and Management Working Group. The working groups will focus on health and safety work programmes for the specific topic area, which can include identifying the need for additional safety training for key managers and staff. In addition to the above processes the Corporate Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed at least annually.

Health and Safety Performance Management



3.3 Contractors and Partners

Due to the nature of the services New Forest District Council provides we engage with many different contractors and partners to deliver improvements to the new forest area. When engaging with third parties we expect the health and safety management of these organisations to meet that of our own.

3.4 New Forest District Council health & safety consultation structure

Undertaking health and safety consultation with the workforce is a statutory requirement and is delivered through the Safety Panels which meet quarterly. The structure for how this is delivered in the Council is detailed in the structure chart in Appendix 1.

SECTION 4: ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is a primary management tool in ensuring the health and safety of our staff, and others. There is a duty on the organisation to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments so that effective risk management controls are in place.

Risk assessment is a straight-forward and structured method of ensuring risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of employees (and others) are sufficiently eliminated, reduced or controlled – and staff given appropriate information. It is about identifying sensible and proportionate measures, not creating paperwork. The main purposes of risk assessment are:-

- To identify health and safety hazards and evaluate the risks presented in the workplace;
- To evaluate the effectiveness and suitability of existing control measures;
- To ensure additional controls (including procedural) are implemented wherever the remaining risk is considered to be anything other than low;
- Prioritise further resources if needed to ensure the above.

Different types of risk assessment

The types of risk assessment required within the workplace should be proportionate and relevant to the operational activities being undertaken. There are a variety of prescribed types of risk assessment which are a requirement from different sets of Regulations, and some common types include:

Manual Handling Risk Assessment: should be conducted in any workplace where employees may be at risk from injury and/ or ill-health through the need to lift, carry or move loads;

Display Screen Equipment Risk Assessment: are required to be completed in workplaces where employees are using computers, laptops, etc.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health: are required within workplaces where hazardous substances are stored, used or manufactured;

Fire Risk Assessment: fire safety management procedures are required to be established in all workplaces including suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments.

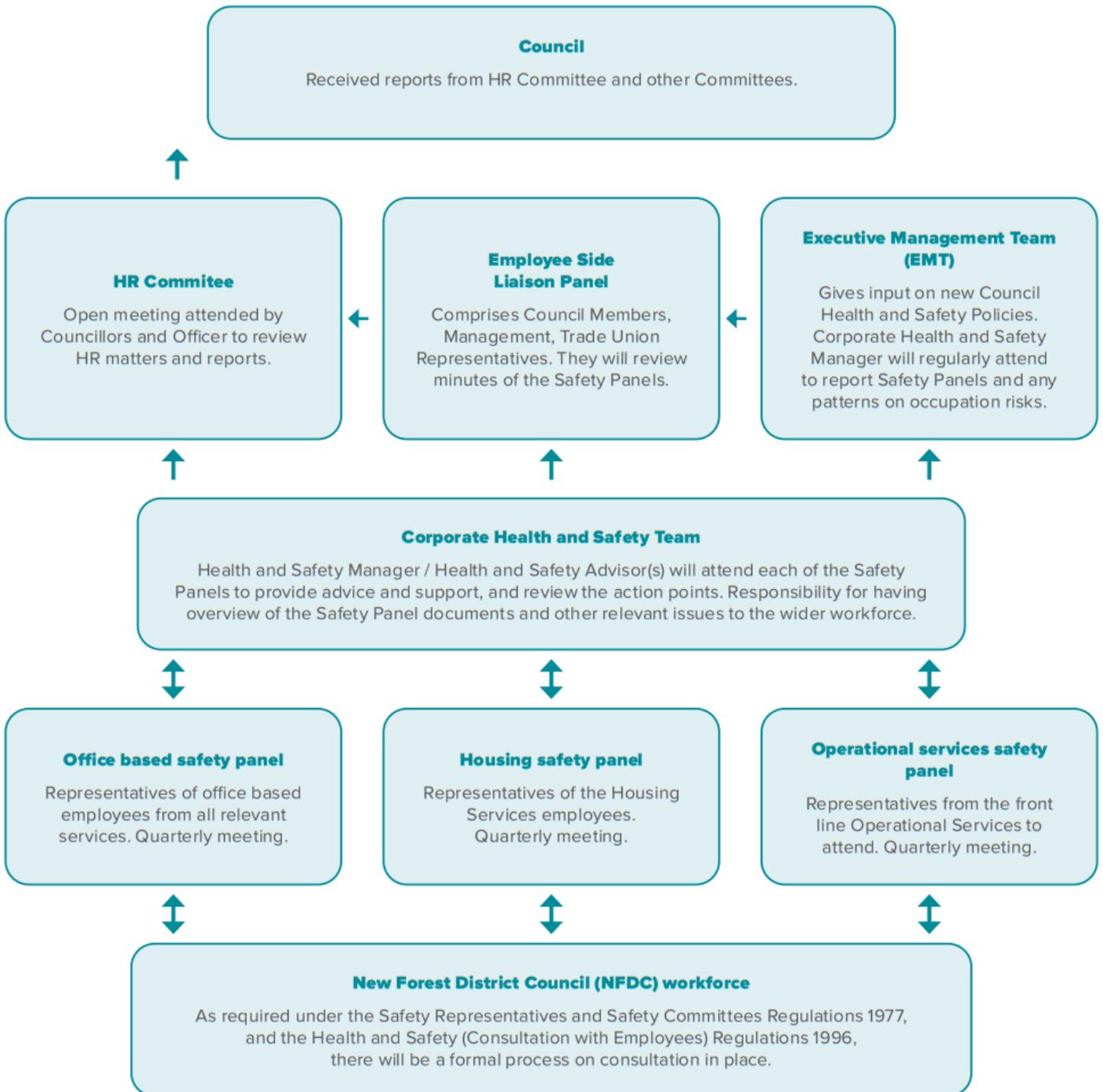
Responsibility for completion of risk assessments

It is the responsibility of the employer to carry out the risk assessment, or to appoint those who have relevant knowledge, experience and skills to do so – the Corporate Health and Safety Team assist all the Services in ensuring the risk assessments are suitable and sufficient for the tasks undertaken. However, ownership has to stay with the local service management who have the day-to-day responsibilities for the work activity.

Once hazards have been identified the associated risks evaluated and steps taken to minimise the potential effects, the next step is for management to clearly and effectively **communicate** the risk assessment process and the controls, which may be in the form of Standard Operating Procedures, to the employees and other relevant parties e.g. contractors. More in-depth information on the Council health and safety arrangements is detailed in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1

Health and Safety Consultation Structure Chart



Appendix 2

Health and Safety Arrangements

This section provides an outline of the corporate arrangements for health and safety within the Council. More detailed information can be found from the specific procedure or policy document for the risk/ topic, and on the relevant health and safety pages of ForestNet.

Health & Safety Auditing

The Plan, Do, Check, Act approach is detailed in Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance document Managing for Health and Safety (HSG65), and this process will be used for planned audits. Auditing is part of active monitoring of the Health and Safety Management System and can be preventative in nature in that it can help to identify areas of improvement before a critical incident/ unplanned event occurs.

Health and Safety audits can be undertaken in a variety of ways, from high level reviews of the organisations safety management system, to focused vertical safety topics e.g. manual handling risk assessments. An audit should be undertaken in a systematic way that takes account of policies and procedures, as well as ongoing management systems and the processes for making records. Our health and safety audits will be announced to aid preparation and are likely to be detailed on the Corporate Health and Safety Teams work programme approved by Executive Management Team (EMT).

The focus of audits will generally be on the high-risk Services/ Teams and will be highlighted in the annual health and safety work programme. The auditing officer will ensure non-compliances are identified and recorded and detailed in an actions table with a set deadline for management to review. Actions detailed will be clear, follow S.M.A.R.T. principles and have an individual identified to lead on the work. Follow up meetings will be set to track progress, and a summary of findings will be presented at the relevant Safety Panel, and to EMT in quarterly reports.

Consultation on health and safety with employee representatives

The Council has a legal duty to consult with workers on health, safety and welfare matters through two sets of regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Those being the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee's Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued an Approved Code of practice on the regulations *Consulting Workers on Health and Safety* (L146), and additional guidance *Involving Your Workforce in Health and Safety* (HSG263). These national documents provide a framework on achieving good employee consultation on occupational risks in the workplace.

The HSE guidance states that consultation on health and safety is a simple two-way process between management and employees, where by as the employer we: **talk** to Union and Safety representatives about issues; **listen** to their concerns and raise our concerns; **seek** and **share**

views and information; **discuss** issues in good time; and **consider** what employees say before a decision is made. This is considered good management practice.

The Council have three Safety Panels which meet quarterly, and which provide employee consultation on three distinct service areas: Operational Services; Housing Service; Office Based services. A programme of works is identified at the start of the year through input by management, employees and the Health and Safety Advisor and a Table of Actions is produced, which details a lead officer(s) and target deadline. These actions are reviewed by the group and presented to EMT in the quarterly Health and Safety Report.

Health and Safety Training and Competence

In order for the Council to meet its duties under the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, and to provide our services efficiently every one of our staff need some level of training and competence in health and safety. How much depends on their role and the responsibilities they have. Supervisors and managers need to have a deeper understanding of their health and safety duties and know about the risks associated with the work they oversee. Training and instruction given to new and experienced employees is a critical part of safety management and contributes to the health and safety culture of the Council.

Training needs are reviewed at the recruitment stage and then formally on an annual basis as part of performance appraisals. However, training needs will also be reviewed for risk assessments, during health and safety audits, with the introduction of new machinery or new ways of working. There are also particular tasks and roles which face specific hazards, which will often have training and instruction specified in safety regulations, which include: Gas Safety Engineers; HGV drivers; those who work on asbestos materials (housing maintenance). There are a number of mandatory e-learning safety modules which all staff need to complete, which includes: DSE; Fire Safety; Manual Handling; and Office Safety. In addition certain staff members should receive additional training and/ or instruction such as young workers, as specified in individual risk assessment.

The ownership of training matrixes will be down to individual teams and services, with advice provided by the Corporate Health and Safety Team, which will need to be regularly reviewed. These training matrixes will feed into the formal appraisal process, any gaps in critical training will be raised with the Corporate Health and Safety Team and discussed at the quarterly Safety Panels. If significant issues are identified these issues will be reported on to EMT.

Accident & Incident Reporting and Investigations

Under the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 organisations have a duty so far as is reasonably practicable to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff and others. So the Council must reduce accidents and occupational ill health to as low a level as reasonably practicable, and in order to do this we must learn lessons from previous accidents, incidents and near misses. As part of mandatory health and safety training all employees must be aware of the need to report, accidents, incidents and near misses. When an adverse event has occurred it may suggest that the existing risk control measures are inadequate, so we must use these incidents as a learning opportunity so that remedial actions can be identified.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will undertake investigations into the most serious incidents, and also review investigations undertaken by local management (for the lower risk

incidents). To be effective an investigation requires a methodical, structured approach to information gathering, collation and analysis. The findings of the investigation may form the basis of an action plan to prevent the accident or incident from happening again and for improving our overall management of risk. It is likely that findings will identify areas of local risk assessments that need to be reviewed, or where improvements to communication or training are required. Therefore it is important New Forest District Council has a systematic approach to determining why an accident or incident has occurred, and the steps needed to be taken to make sure a similar incident does not happen again.

Investigations completed will be discussed at the Safety Panels which are part of the corporate health and safety consultation structure, which allows employee safety representative overview. Also, the significant investigations will be detailed in the quarterly reports taken to Executive Management Team (EMT), which allows further scrutiny.

Asbestos Management

The Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2012 places a duty to manage asbestos containing materials to those who manage or are responsible for maintenance and repairs in non-domestic building. This includes industrial, commercial and public buildings. The regulations also apply to the 'common' areas of certain domestic premises such as blocks of flats. Although regulation 4 of CAR 2012 doesn't apply to residential tenanted properties, the Council does have a legal obligation under the Housing Act 2004, Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, and the Defective Premises Act 1972 to ensure it manages asbestos within its domestic property portfolio.

The Corporate Asbestos Management Team will have responsibility for operational arrangements, and ensure we: Take 'reasonable' steps to find materials in premises likely to contain asbestos and check their condition; Presume that materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence to suppose that they do not; Make and maintain a written record of the location and condition of the asbestos (the Asbestos Register); Assess the risk of the likelihood of anyone being exposed to the asbestos; Manage the risk and put into effect actions to ensure that any material known or presumed to contain asbestos is kept in a good state of repair; ensure suitable and sufficient information about asbestos containing materials are communicated to those who are likely to be exposed to asbestos fibres, such as maintenance operatives and contractors; implement a comprehensive asbestos management plan to effectively manage the Councils property portfolio.

In order to ensure effective management of asbestos the Corporate Asbestos Management Team will ensure the asbestos management plans are regularly reviewed and hold a quarterly Asbestos Management Working Group to facilitate suitable communication channels between all duty holders within the Council and undertake regular audits of the asbestos management system. Periodic audits will be undertaken by the Corporate Health and Safety Team.

Construction (Design and Management) Regulation 2015

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015) are the main set of regulations for managing the health, safety and welfare of construction, maintenance, and refurbishment projects. CDM 2015 applies to all buildings and construction work and can include new build, demolition, refurbishment, extensions, repair and maintenance. CDM 2015 identifies duty holders who hold specific responsibilities to manage health, safety and welfare for any construction project included within the scope of the regulations. The Council will normally take the role of the 'Client' and therefore are responsible for appointing other duty holders in writing, providing contractors with relevant pre-construction information at the earliest opportunity, to ensure the Principal Designer and Principal Contractor carry out their duties, ensure welfare facilities are provided during the construction phase, and ensuring the Principal Contractor completes a suitable and sufficient construction phase plan prior to the construction works. Notification to the HSE of any construction project that meets the requirements set out under regulation 6, requiring an F10 form.

The Councils Corporate Control of Contractors Policies identifies the key services who undertake construction and maintenance projects, the Corporate policy requires these services to complete their own specific arrangements for the management of construction projects and the control of contractors. These arrangements must include roles and responsibilities, procedures, training requirements, procurement requirements and template documents.

In order to ensure health and safety performance and compliance against the CDM regulations, the Council has implemented the CDM Working Group. The group will meet quarterly to provide responsible managers and project managers with a platform to communicate and consult with other services across the Council. The working group also provide EMT with an overview of health and safety performance in relation to CDM and the control of contractors. The CDM Working Group will also implemented the Contractor Incident Notification Protocol (CINP). The CINP will ensure appropriate action is taken when contractors have displayed unsatisfactory health and safety practices or poor health and safety performance. The Corporate Health and Safety Team will act independently undertaking routine audits, accident investigations and provide guidance and advice to services.

Control of Contractors

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place duties on employers to ensure that persons not in their employment, but who may be affected by the work they undertake are not exposed to risks to their health, safety and welfare, as far as is reasonably practicable, and to ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been undertaken by contractors undertaking works on their behalf.

In order to ensure contractors are competent to undertake their work, service managers must ensure contractors have been appropriately vetted at the earliest opportunity. Vetting requirements must be in proportion to the level of risk of the contract. As a minimum all contractors must submit method of work statements and site-specific risk assessments, employer's liability insurance and public liability insurance verification, relevant training certification and a copy of their health and safety policy (if appropriate).

For all contracts with a value of over £25k, service managers must follow the relevant corporate procurement procedures. For works/ contracts valued over £25k contractors will be asked to

provide further information, this includes appropriate third-party accreditation. The Council offers a flexible approach and recognises organisations registered under the SSIP safety schemes.

Service managers completing the procurement Gateway documents must also provide appropriate information on the risk relating to the contract, specific information on health and safety arrangements and details on how contractors' performance will be monitored throughout its duration, including information on the established KPIs. The health and safety performance of contractors will be reported quarterly at the relevant service Safety Panel and relevant Working Group.

COSHH

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 places a responsibility on employers to ensure that exposure to potentially hazardous substances by employees and others who may be affected by their work are adequately controlled. New Forest District Council recognises its responsibility under these Regulations and aims to minimise the incidence of workplace risks by providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

Hazardous substances can be found in many of the working environments that NFDC employees encounter, therefore risk assessments and safe working procedures have been put in place, in line with the COSHH Regulations framework, to eliminate or reduce the risks.

Services/Teams using any products or undertaking any processes which may cause exposure to potentially harmful substances e.g. chemicals, fumes, dusts or bio-hazards must ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is carried out for the product or process.

This assessment must identify who is likely to be at risk of exposure, identify what, if any, potential health hazards exist and how to prevent or reduce the risk through a hierarchy of control measures.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will provide competent training and advice to Services/Teams in order for them to carry out their assessments. Additionally, all Services/Teams must:

- Ensure that any control measures introduced, such as LEV (local exhaust ventilation) are maintained in good working order;
- Provide all employees with information, instruction and training in using products or undertaking work processes;
- Provide monitoring and health surveillance in appropriate cases;
- Plan for emergency situations.

Assessments and safe working procedures should be reviewed by the Service/Team at regular intervals of no more than 3 years or when they are no longer valid, or a change in the work process has occurred.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will undertake Service specific Health and Safety audits which may include examination of COSHH documentation as well as carry out periodic reviews of assessments and safe working procedures. Significant changes relating to the management of COSHH within Services/Teams will be discussed at Service-specific Safety Panels that are attended by both management and workplace representatives. Any actions that may follow these discussions are detailed in the Safety Panel action table and allocated to the relevant individual/s for completion.

Covid-19

COVID-19 is an infectious disease and was the cause of the pandemic starting in late 2019. It causes serious flu-like illness that can affect lungs and airways and can, in certain cases, be fatal; it is caused by a type of virus called a novel coronavirus which is a virus not previously identified in humans. The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

A high temperature	This means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature).
A new continuous cough	This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, its may be worse than usual)
Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste	This means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything or things smell or taste different to normal

During the pandemic NFDC organised a Recovery Group which consisted of relevant officers within the Council to work on common guidance for the workforce based on new legislation and advice coming from central government. Generic risk assessments and guidance documents were produced by the Corporate Health and Safety Team for use by Services/Teams in carrying out their own assessments in response to the risks posed by the pandemic, to reduce risks to staff.

For similar infectious disease outbreaks legislations and guidance set out by the Government and the HSE will be followed, with generic risk assessments and supporting guidance provided to Services/ Teams and accessible by all Council employees. In order to reduce the chance of transmission from infectious diseases of national interest the Council employees will be able to work from home where they can continue to deliver a service through use of ICT solutions. Other controls for those working in the office may included asking staff to stay in specific zoned areas, and entering and exiting by specified entrances.

Display Screen Equipment risks (DSE)

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations apply to workers who use DSE daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more, who are defined as 'DSE users'. The regulations don't apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or only use it for a short time. In order to protect our staff from the health risks of working with display screen equipment (DSE), such as PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones, a DSE self-assessment must be undertaken as part of an employee's induction and refreshed every 2 years or if there has been a significant change in their workstation or work practices.

Employees must also take personal responsibility for ensuring that their workstation is set up correctly so that they can work comfortably – be it at home or in the office. Staff also need to ensure that regular breaks are taken during the working day. The Council provide all DSE user will sufficient information and training in relation to the risks related with the use of DSE and the measures that should be taken to reduce those risks. DSE e-learning training must be completed as part of all employee's induction and refreshed every 2 years.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will provide all managers with advice and guidance and where necessary, undertake additional DSE assessments with employees who have reported injuries/ ill health due to problems with their workstation set up.

Electricity

As required under the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 we must ensure that the electrical installations and electrical equipment the Council owns or has duties for is safe. As an employer and Housing Landlord the Council will ensure that Electrical Safety for maintenance, repair and servicing will reflect the following overall principles to:

- protect the health and safety of staff, tenants, residents, visitors, public, and contractors so far as is reasonably practicable;
- maintain all electrical appliances that are the Council's responsibilities in safe working order and in accordance with manufacturer's guidance;
- identify and manage risks involved;
- promote and enforce electrical safety;
- provide relevant electrical safety information and maintain a dialogue with tenants and employees, and to work in partnership with contractors;
- ensure that all Council properties are safe and suitable for letting from a health and safety perspective and comply with all legal requirements;
- raise awareness to residents and staff of smoke detectors and electrical safety including recognising the symptoms of electrical fires and the procedure to follow.

Up to a quarter of all serious electrical incidents involve portable electrical equipment. Portable equipment is the term applied to items with a flexible cable plugged into the fixed electrical installation of the building. Portable equipment is prone to physical damage sometimes through wear and tear, and also through equipment being used in harsh environments. Around 95% of faults or damage to portable equipment can be identified visually. The portable equipment used in buildings where the Council has primary responsibility, e.g. Appletree Court and Marsh Lane Depot, will receive routine inspections/ testing by a competent person. Electrical Installation Certification will be completed every 5 years for our buildings.

Fire Safety

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places responsibilities on the 'responsible person' to take such general fire precautions as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of any of their employees and persons not in their employment. The responsible person must also make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which relevant persons are exposed to the risks of fire within a premise under their control and ensure suitable measures have been implemented to reduce the risk(s) identified, to as low as is reasonable practicable.

The Council has a competent fire risk assessment consultancy to undertake fire risk assessments on all buildings under our control, this includes, social housing blocks, corporate buildings and leased buildings (where the Council is identified as the responsible person).

The Council will ensure all fire risk assessments are regularly reviewed and any actions required are discussed at the relevant Safety Panels, or at the Fire Safety Management Group. Regular property inspections of fire safety equipment/ systems will be undertaken by Facilities Team for the Civic buildings, and by Building Safety Officers for the Housing Service stock. The Corporate Health and Safety team will raise significant issues with the relevant service managers, and report to EMT in the quarterly health and safety reports.

First Aid at Work

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 place a duty on employers to ensure that they provide adequate and appropriate first aid facilities for their employees in the event of injury or illness at work. This includes the provision of suitably trained personnel to respond to accidents and incidents with adequate, in-date first-aid provisions. New Forest District Council is committed, under these Regulations, to providing suitable and sufficient first aid arrangements in response to accidents and injuries that occur during its business activities.

The Regulations do not place a legal duty on employers to make first aid provision for non-employees such as members of public, visitors etc. However, in line with the HSE recommendation, non-employees are included in the assessment of first aid needs at NFDC and provision is made for them.

First aid needs assessments are carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Team for all NFDC work locations. This is to identify the appropriate level of provision required dependant on the number of staff, visitors and other members of public on site, the types of workplace activities that take place and the hazards that exist. Other factors that may affect the level of provision required could include:

- Work patterns (employees who work shift/out of hours);
- Staff/Visitors with disabilities;
- The distance from outside medical services;
- The needs of travelling and lone workers;
- Accident history within NFDC sites.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will review these assessments regularly (at least every 3 years), or when circumstances change such as, changes in legislation, reorganisation, changes in personnel or because of a major incident/accident that highlights deficiencies in arrangements. Completed assessment forms are retained and held securely on SharePoint to enable them to be readily accessible for audit or review.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will arrange for suitable training for volunteer workplace first aiders based at NFDC work locations. First aid kits at NFDC workplace locations contain sufficient first aid materials suitable for the workplace in which they are situated, and are regularly inspected by a local volunteer first aider with supplies replenished where required.

All accidents and incidents that occur whilst at work are recorded along with the first aid treatment received. This information must be retained securely on SharePoint to assist with the monitoring and assessment of first aid need, and for insurance and investigative purposes.

Gas Safety

The Council is committed to its legal duties in accordance with The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, as amended. As a Housing Landlord, gas safety inspections are required every 12 months on gas appliances and flues in all tenanted properties, we aim to maintain these installations to the highest standards of health and safety.

Gas Appliances will be inspected annually and tenants are written to and offered an appointment for a Gas Safety Inspection to be carried out, and every effort will be made to work with tenants to make an appointment at a time that is convenient. Legal action will be taken against tenants who do not respond to requests to complete a gas safety inspection, or

consistently refuse access to their property. In such cases action will be taken to obtain a court injunction to enter the property. Legal action will only be taken as a last resort.

Where immediate risks are identified during a gas safety inspection, appropriate action will be taken to isolate and make safe any equipment, additional heaters will also be provided to tenants in winter months. A compliance report can be provided by the Housing Service at the Housing Safety Panel, and any issues around gaining access to properties or potentially dangerous appliances can be discussed and actioned.

Hand Arm Vibration (HAV)

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 places a duty on employers to prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from the exposure to vibration at work. Regulation 6 requires that an employer shall ensure that risk from the exposure of employees to vibration is either eliminated at source, or where this is not considered possible, it be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

New Forest District Council Services/Teams must identify all hand-held power tools, equipment and machinery which potentially pose a risk of hand arm vibration. They must then carry out risk assessments to enable them to make a valid decision about the measures necessary to prevent or adequately control the exposure of employees to hand arm vibration. These assessments must identify:

- who is likely to be at risk of exposure;
- individual factors such as pre-existing health conditions;
- maximum trigger time, or usage time, permissible for the equipment to ensure that personal vibration exposure limits are not exceeded;
- measures in place to reduce the risk from vibration exposure.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will provide competent training and advice to Services/Teams for them to carry out the assessments. These assessments, and relevant safe working procedures, should be reviewed by the Service/Team at regular intervals of no more than 3 years or when they are no longer valid, or a change in work process has occurred or an incident of work-related ill health relating to hand arm vibration is reported.

To control risks the NFDC employees that may be required to use vibrating equipment must be given appropriate training in its safe use. Those employees identified as at a greater risk of exposure to vibration or have a pre-existing condition relating to hand arm vibration will have health surveillance provided to them by the Council. To minimise the deterioration of equipment over time, regular routine inspections must take place and employees are encouraged to report any equipment deterioration to their supervisor/ manager. Services/Teams should undertake regular active monitoring of workplace activities to ensure that: controls identified in assessments are implemented, trigger times are not being exceeded and that safe working procedures are consistently being followed. These may take place in the form of periodic monitoring of tasks or more regular routine workplace inspections.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will undertake periodic Service specific Health and Safety audits. This may include examination of HAV documentation, as well as carry out periodic reviews of assessments and safe working procedures. The outcomes of any formal audit will be reported back at the relevant Safety Panel and EMT.

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment (LOLER)

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) places a legal duty on the Council to ensure the safety of all lifting operations and the use of lifting equipment, to prevent injury. The principle aims of LOLER and its associated Approved Code of Practice (L113) is to ensure that all lifting operations are properly planned, lifting equipment is used in a safe manner and that, where necessary, it is thoroughly examined at suitable intervals by a competent person.

Services/Teams are responsible for ensuring that where there are lifting operations, risk assessments are undertaken and any actions or control measures identified are implemented. These assessments, and any relevant safe working procedures, should be reviewed by the Service/Team at regular intervals of no more than 2 years or when they are no longer valid, a change in work process/equipment has occurred or following an accident or incident. Services/Teams are also responsible for ensuring that all employees are given the necessary information, instruction and training in the use of all lifting equipment. This includes their responsibility for carrying out pre-use checks and reporting of defects of lifting equipment and accessories.

Regulation 9 of LOLER requires all equipment to be thoroughly examined to an extent and frequency determined by a 'competent' person. These inspections are carried out by the Insurance Assessor on behalf of New Forest District Council.

All written reports following a thorough examination must be kept by the relevant Service securely on SharePoint (or equivalent) for purposes of audit or investigation. The Corporate Health and Safety Team will monitor the Council's overall compliance with health and safety arrangements via Service specific Health and Safety audits where there is potential for health hazards associated with lifting operations and lifting equipment.

Manual Handling

The Manual Handling Operation Regulations 1992 require the Council as an employer to take the following actions, as far as reasonably practicable to:

- Avoid manual handling whenever possible;
- Assess the risk of those manual handling activities that cannot be avoided;
- Reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level possible.

The regulations do not set specific weight limits for lifting or carrying, however the Approved Code of Practice HSE L23 guidance document gives broad recommendation on weight limits and how to properly risk assess work practices. As an organisation where many different manual handling tasks are being undertaken from the fitting of gas boilers, collection of domestic waste street-side, and maintenance activities in social housing the guidance provided by HSE will be used for completing and reviewing risk assessments and the accompanying safe system of work. Equipment such as trolleys will be provided where possible to minimise or simplify the handling of heavy objects. Many other handling aids are now also available which will eliminate the need to lift some heavy objects.

Manual Handling is one of the mandatory health and safety e-learning packages which new employees are required to complete. Those employees involved in significant lifting will be trained in using safe lifting techniques and must use the lifting equipment supplied to them safely and follow the safe system(s) of work put in place. Where an accident or near miss occurs this must be reported via the e-forms on ForestNet.

New and Expectant mother

Under Regulation 16 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, it places a duty on the Council to complete a risk assessment to identify risks to the individual as part of their role.

When a notification of pregnancy is received the manager will undertake a risk assessment to review the role, tasks and work environment for the employee. In addition it may be appropriate to review any role-based risk assessments which are in place. Special consideration needs to be given to work conditions, manual handling, chemicals handled, or shift work. The risk assessment should be completed by the line manager, with support provided by the Corporate Health and Safety Team. Reasonably practicable controls will be put in place.

Further guidance is available on the health and safety pages of ForestNet, and template forms are available to assist managers.

Noise at Work

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 require New Forest District Council, as the employer, to protect both their own employees and others (agency workers) who are exposed to noise from their activities. Regulation 5 requires that a risk assessment be completed where there may be a significant risk to employees. Guidance for duty holders is provided on how a noise assessment should be undertaken in HSE Approved Code of Practice L108. Hearing loss can be a gradual and debilitating condition, and those identified as being exposed to high levels of noise or have a pre-existing hearing condition that may impact their role, will have suitable health surveillance organised for them by the Council.

For the great majority of staff at the Council noise is not a significant occupational hazard. However, there will be some teams where roles could have a high level of noise exposure which if not managed properly could become a health risk. Those roles where there may be the risk of high noise exposure includes waste operatives, those in the workshop environment, and those working with machinery, or handheld tools, e.g. a strimmer. Services/Teams will ensure that appropriate noise level assessments are carried out by a competent person at workplaces and on equipment. These assessments will be stored securely where they can be accessed for training purposes, reviewed and audited, or inspected following a report of ill health.

Assessments must be reviewed when there has either been a significant change in the work to which the assessment relates or wherever there is reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid. Services/Teams also have a responsibility to provide information, instruction, and training to ensure staff have an understanding of hearing protection compliance and the dangers posed by exposure to noise at work. Services/Teams should undertake regular active monitoring of workplace activities to ensure that:

- controls identified in assessments are implemented;
- exposure times are not being exceeded;
- where required, hearing protection is being worn and it offers the appropriate level of protection;
- hearing protection is in good working order and satisfactory condition;
- safe working procedures are consistently being followed.

These may take place in the form of periodic monitoring of tasks or more regular routine workplace inspections. The Corporate Health and Safety Team will monitor the risk controls in place for noise exposure, through risk assessment reviews and programmed audits. Noise concerns can also be raised by employees and union representatives at the relevant Safety Panel, which is attended by management, health and safety advisor and workplace representatives.

Occupational Health Surveillance/ Health Screening

In order to meet duties laid down in the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, and other regulations, it is a requirement for some of the Council employees to have Health Surveillance undertaken because of the job roles they have. Health Surveillance can be summarised as a system of ongoing health checks designed to detect early signs of work-related ill health among employees who are exposed to certain health risks. Some of these health checks are required by law for employees because they may be exposed to noise, vibration, fumes, dusts, and other substances hazardous to health (COSHH Regulations).

Health surveillance is important for:

- detecting ill-health effects at an early stage, so employers can introduce better controls to prevent them getting worse;
- providing data to help employers evaluate health risks;
- enabling employees to raise concerns about how work affects their health;
- highlighting lapses in workplace control measures, therefore providing invaluable feedback to the risk assessment process;
- providing an opportunity to reinforce training and education of employees, e.g. on the impact of health effects and the use of protective equipment.

Risk assessment will be used to identify any need for health surveillance, which can be a requirement due to exposure to noise, vibration, chemicals, working with asbestos, and other occupational hazards. Health surveillance is not a substitute for undertaking a risk assessment or having effective control measures in place. Health surveillance can sometimes be used to help identify where more needs to be done to control risks and where early signs of work-related ill health are detected, employers should take action to prevent further harm and protect employees.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will undertake Service specific Health and Safety audits, and periodic reviews of risk assessments and safe working procedures. Significant changes in the workplace for employees who may be exposed to workplace hazards, as detailed above, can be reviewed and discussed at the relevant Safety Panels that are attended by both management and workplace representatives.

Occupational Road Risk

The Council accepts we have duties under the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, and other legislation, to take actions to reduce the incidents and costs, both in human and financial terms of occupational road risks, through good management and clear practical guidance. The Occupational Road Risk Policy applies to all employees, agency staff and volunteers. Driving can be a dangerous activity, annually there are many thousands of road traffic collisions on the country's roads. The policy covers both the commercial fleet and the grey fleet – essential and casual drivers.

For the vehicles in the commercial fleet (including hired vehicles) the Transport Manager will ensure that they are fit for purpose, adequately insured and have a valid MOT certificate. Managers will ensure there are records of driver documentation checks, to check for any endorsements on driving licenses which have not been declared. For some of the drivers of the commercial fleet (HGV vehicles) medical checks will be undertaken prior to employment commencing, and then at intervals prescribed in law, or as required by Council policy. Employees who drive at work will know of the duties placed on them, e.g. having their personal vehicle insured for 'business use'. Also, employees will be required to complete a drivers declaration form and complete mandatory e-learning training (where appropriate).

Monitoring of the Commercial Fleet will include, checking the vehicle defect sheets, repair response times, other routine monitoring records, observations of drivers on a planned basis, numbers of employees attending appropriate training and the level of compliance with the monitoring procedures. Managers will monitor compliance by random checking of documentation, facilitated by HR, where employees who drive on Council business must present their driving licence, motor insurance certificate (showing business use), and MOT for inspection. A Driver's Handbook will be issued to all Commercial drivers.

Analysis of the total number of reported accidents within each Service will be undertaken and reviewed quarterly. The results of the monitoring and audits, if there are significant issues, will be included in the quarterly and annual health and safety report taken to EMT.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the HSE Approved Code of Practice L25, place a duty on New Forest District Council, as the Employer, to ensure that PPE is supplied free of charge and used at work wherever there are risks to an employee's health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways. The Regulations also require that PPE:

- Is properly assessed before use to ensure that it provides appropriate protection to the user;
- Is maintained and stored correctly;
- Is provided with instructions on how to use it safely, is used correctly by employees and does not cause any unnecessary discomfort.

New Forest District Council recognises that PPE is the last resort in controlling workplace hazards. Services/Teams are responsible for carrying out risk assessments for the tasks that they undertake, and these assessments will establish whether PPE is required and specify the type of protection that it should afford. Employees will be involved in the selection of types and styles of PPE through workplace safety representatives and should have informed choice wherever possible.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will provide competent training and advice to Services/Teams for them to carry out their assessments. Services/Teams will also provide their employees with information & instruction on how to use the PPE and, where appropriate, and at suitable intervals, organise demonstrations in the wearing/ use of the personal protective equipment. Adequate supervision should be given to ensure this is carried out. Employees should also be told how to maintain PPE, keep it in good order and store it correctly.

Risk Assessments should be reviewed by the Service/Team at regular intervals of no more than 3 years or when they are no longer valid, or a change in the work process has occurred

or if an employee's individual attributes have changed. All risk assessments should be easily accessible.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will undertake Service specific Health and Safety audits as well as carry out periodic reviews of assessments and safe working procedures. Significant changes relating to the provision of PPE within Services/Teams will be discussed at Service-specific Safety Panels that are attended by both management and workplace representatives. Any actions that may follow these discussions are detailed in the Safety Panel minutes &/ or action table, and allocated to the relevant individual/s for completion.

RIDDOR 2013

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) is the legislation which places a duty on employers to report certain occupational accidents, injuries, dangerous occurrences and diseases, e.g. *7 day injury*. The Regulations state that reporting is to be undertaken by the *Responsible Person* (within the timescales set), which is the Corporate Health and Safety Team for the Council. Reportable incidents include injuries to non-employees which results in them being taken directly to hospital for treatment.

It is imperative that all staff are aware of the importance of recording and reporting accidents and incidents through the electronic reporting forms on ForestNet. Major injuries which are reportable under RIDDOR include: fractures (other than fingers and toes); amputation; dislocation of shoulder or knee; loss of sight; staff admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours due to workplace incident. Certain gas incidents are also reportable.

Most reported RIDDOR incidents are likely to require a full in-depth investigation, in line with the Accidents and Incident Reporting, and Investigations Policy. The investigation is likely to result in a formal report being sent to the relevant Service Manager, with a list of actions which are recommended to be taken by the Service/ Team. A summary of the investigation and the report will be discussed at the relevant Safety Panel, and summarised to EMT in the quarterly health and safety reports.

Violence and Aggression

The Council has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health safety and welfare of their employees. Due to the type of work undertaken by the Council, it is likely that employees will be exposed to potential violence and aggressive behaviour. This includes intimidation, verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, threats or assault while at work.

In order to reduce the risk of violence and abuse faced by employees all managers must ensure suitable control measures are in place for all activities where there is a potential of violence and abuse, all control measures must be identified in relevant risk assessments and safe working procedures. All visiting officers have access to the Councils Warning Marker Register (WMR). The WMR is an electronic register held on ForestNet which holds details of individuals who may pose a risk to Council employees and contractors. The WMR is based on the ICO guidance on violent warning markers.

As part of the WMR arrangements, service managers notify individuals if they have been included or removed from the register in writing. The WMR is a secure database only accessible by employees with a log in. Managers must ensure their employees (visiting officers) are provided access to the WMR as part of their induction.

The Corporate Health and Safety team will undertake regular reviews of the register and prompt managers to review individuals' cases when they are due for review. All violent and abusive incidents must be reported to the relevant line manager and a member of the Corporate Health and Safety team via completing an incident and accident report form.

Wellbeing of Employees

The Council has developed an employee wellbeing policy to manage its obligations to maintain the mental health and overall wellbeing of all staff. It covers the organisation's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communication and training on health issues. The policy sets out our commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of our employees, and how we will fulfil our legal obligation, describe the responsibilities of both managers and employees and list the range of services and specialists available to help employees maintain good health and wellbeing.

We recognise that wellbeing and performance are linked and that by improving employee's ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance. The Council has a legal obligation under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. This includes operating the business in a way that minimises harm to employee's mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work. The Council will seek to foster a supportive mental health culture by incorporating these principles into manager training sessions. Specific mental health support can be found on the HR ForestNet pages.

The HR Service will liaise with Occupational Health or other external individuals or companies with the object of helping employees to maintain good mental health and general wellbeing. The Council's Occupational Health provider(s) offer a comprehensive service designed to help employees stay in work or return to work after experiencing mental health problems or any physical health problems. In addition to the health surveillance provided for certain roles, all New Forest District Council employees have the option to access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by Vita Health who provide a 24/7 support line (Tel: 0800 1116387) where staff can discuss their emotional wellbeing.

Further information on the Bullying and Harassment Policy can also be found on ForestNet.

Young Persons and those on work experience

Under The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regulation 19 details that employers have a legal duty to ensure that young persons (under 18) employed by them are protected at work from any risks to their health and 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.

The Council recognises its duty to protect young people at work, therefore a person centric risk assessment must be undertaken for all young person's employed by the Council. Risk assessment must identify any additional training and information to be provided, and the specific supervisor levels required. Where necessary training will be provided to relevant managers & supervisors.

Additional guidance is available from the HSE, and also from the Health and Safety Team who can assist with risk assessments.