



Health, Safety & Welfare Policy

January 2010.

Reviewed: June 2011.
May 2012.
June 2015.

This document is in three parts.

Part one is a summary statement of intent, which outlines Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's commitment to provide a successful health and safety management system.

Part two describes the responsibilities of employees and organisation required to implement the policy.

Part three includes the detailed arrangements made by the Council to manage health and safety.

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Part 1 - General Policy Statement	4
Part 2 – Organisation for Health and Safety.....	5
Allocation of General Responsibilities	6
Part 3 - Arrangements for implementing the Policy.....	12

Introduction

In accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, this document sets out the policy of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council towards the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and others who may be affected by its work activities. The scope of this policy includes the occupational health of all employees as well as their safety at work. The Council views health and safety and the management system as a core function that continually adapts to change.

This document also explains the organisation and arrangements which the Council has established to put the policy into effect and applies to all employees working at all council venues. The benefits of this document are:

- A consistent approach to the management of health, safety and welfare throughout the Council.
- Achieving compliance with legislative requirements.
- Continuing commitment to the health, safety and welfare of employees.

The Council recognises that health and safety is the responsibility of everyone within the organisation and acknowledges that the Leadership Team have specific duties and responsibilities to comply with this policy, with the Chief Executive having overall responsibility and the Director of Finances and Resources having operational management of health and safety. The Leadership Team encourage a positive safety culture within the council by their active support of employees.

Monitoring the implementation of the health and safety policy is undertaken annually with the aim of continuous improvement.

A copy of this document is available to all employees via the intranet system. It will be reviewed annually by the Health and Safety Officer and revised whenever appropriate, with the revision being brought to the attention of staff via Team Briefings and the intranet.

Part 1 - General Policy Statement

The Council recognises and accepts its statutory responsibilities as an employer and is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees. This will be achieved by assessing risks and establishing suitable and adequate risk controls.

It is the Council's policy to encourage all employees not only to be aware of their legal responsibilities but to be actively involved in developing a positive safety culture to bring about continuous improvements in their working environment. To guide all employees, this and supplementary policies together with guidance notes on specific health, safety, welfare and other topics are available via the intranet.

In order to achieve the aim of this policy the Council has set the following objectives:

- As a minimum, we will comply with the requirements of relevant legislation.
- Health, safety and welfare arrangements will be established and maintained throughout the Council and reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to be effective and appropriate.
- Health and safety responsibilities of all employees will be clearly defined.
- The Council's most important assets are its people and any risks to their health, safety and welfare and to others are suitably assessed and controlled.
- We will ensure that health and safety objectives complement business objectives to minimise financial losses which may arise from unplanned events.
- Where there are no existing policies or guidance, employees are expected to develop systems which comply with best practice to eliminate or minimise risks so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Competent advice is available to assist employees to meet their responsibilities.
- We will provide and maintain a safe working environment, facilities and equipment.
- We are committed to making sure that any work undertaken by contractors on our behalf is done so with the risks to the health, safety and welfare of employees and others being reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.
- Government strategies will be supported and reasonable steps to promote health and well being at work will be taken.
- All accidents, ill health, near misses and incidents will be investigated by managers or supervisors with the aim of preventing further occurrences.
- Employees will be informed, via established channels, of forthcoming health and safety legislation and revised policies and accompanying guidance notes.

Whilst recognising its own health and safety responsibilities, the Council requires the co-operation of all employees and visitors as health and safety is the responsibility of all.

Signed: Chief Executive

Signed: Chairman of Strategy & Resources

Part 2 – Organisation for Health and Safety

Introduction

Epsom and Epsom Borough Council is committed to the principles of good corporate governance and has in place effective risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function. These arrangements ensure compliance with all applicable statutes, regulations and relevant statements of best practice. The Leadership Team receives quarterly health and safety report and an annual report.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is committed to the principles of good corporate governance and has in place effective risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function. These arrangements ensure compliance with all applicable statutes, regulations and relevant statements of best practice. The Leadership Team receives a quarterly health and safety report and an annual statement.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require the Council to document the organisational arrangements it has in place for the implementation of its health and safety policy. This section describes the key responsibilities of all involved in the organisation of this. It is applicable to all activities under the control of the Council.

To ensure the successful implementation and maintenance of this policy, the Council has chosen to adopt the Health & Safety Executive's management system called: Successful Health and Safety Management, known as HSG65. This safety management system is flexible and means by careful monitoring, new policies and procedures can be developed and added to ensure that the health and safety arrangements continually improve.

The five key elements of the HSG 65 principles which the Council aspires to are:

- Plan
- Do
- Check
- Act

Health and Safety Management

The Council has a system of devolved management and, in line with this, health, safety and welfare functions are delegated to encourage and enable health, safety and welfare issues to be addressed at a local level.

However, the overall responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the Council's employees, and others affected by its work activities, rests with Council Members and the Leadership Team comprising the Chief Executive, Director and Heads of Services.

The role of the Leadership Team is to ensure that health, safety and welfare is considered in policy development, including monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's health and safety strategies.

A key role of all Heads of Service, line managers and supervisors is managing and supervising health and safety, and in maintaining and improving standards of health and safety. To assist them, the Council provides competent advice on health, safety and welfare matters.

The Council appoints an Occupational Health Service Provider to undertake pre-employment screening to ensure people are fit and are not placed in jobs that will aggravate existing or past medical conditions. The Provider will also undertake assessments of employees to ensure their good health is maintained and offer expert opinion regarding individuals who are absent from work due to illness and any measures that can be put in place to promote their return to work. In addition, the Health and Safety Officer undertakes assessments that may identify reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to assist an employee return to work.

Allocation of General Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities for health and safety are allocated as follows:

Members

It is the responsibility of Members to:

- Endorse the Health and Safety Policy statement
- Ensure that suitable resources and strategic direction are available to discharge the Council's health and safety responsibilities.
- Monitor, via reports, the overall performance of the Council's health and safety management systems.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation and application of this policy and for the health, safety and welfare of all employees when at work together with other persons who have a legitimate reason to be present on Council property or areas under the Council's control. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Council Members are kept informed of the Council's compliance with health & safety and other legislation and the effectiveness of resource provision to achieve compliance.

The Chief Executive is also responsible for ensuring that all staff are made aware of their health and safety obligations and that they carry them out in a safe and proper manner as detailed in policies and other related documents.

Director of Finance and Resources

The Director of Finance and Resources is the nominated person responsible for management and legislative compliance of health and safety. Their role is supported by the Head of Housing and Environmental Services and the Health & Safety Officer.

Both the Chief Executive and Director seek assurances from all Heads of Service and designated Senior Managers that suitable and sufficient measures are in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and others associated with the Council's business.

All Heads of Service

All Heads of Service are responsible for the following:

- Supporting the Chief Executive in meeting the corporate health and safety responsibilities.
- Finding corporate solutions to health and safety issues.
- Reporting to the Chief Executive and/or Director any health and safety concerns which they may not be able to resolve or are of a significant nature.
- Having an understanding of health and safety legislation and its application to the Council's services and activities.
- Providing guidance and support to Managers, Supervisors and employees enabling them to fully and properly implement their responsibilities for health and safety.
- Ensuring that Managers perform their health and safety duties outlined in this document.
- Ensuring that adequate resources are included in budgets, business plans and staffing levels to provide safe places of work and safe systems of work to implement the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.
- Ensuring that effective means of communication are established and that health and safety is included in all relevant meetings.
- Ensuring that effective safety measures including risk assessments, instruction, training and supervision are provided to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, service users, contractors and members of the public.
- Ensuring that regular work health and safety self-inspections are completed in all areas under their control.
- Ensuring any reportable accident or incident involving an employee or other person on Council property or involving Council work is reported to the Chief Executive and Director in their absence, Head of Housing and Environmental Services and Health & Safety Officer without delay.
- Ensuring that all minor accidents, incidents and near misses are recorded and forwarded to the Health and Safety Officer as soon as possible after the event.
- Ensuring that any suspicion of occupational disease or exposure to substances is recorded and fully investigated promptly by persons competent to provide suitable guidance on the implications to any work or process involved. Persons requested to advise should be in a position to diagnose the relevance to work and to give advice on any treatment or employment restrictions.
- Actively promote a positive health and safety culture throughout the Council.

Projects & Procurement team

The Procurement team are responsible for:

- Providing advice and guidance across all departments in relation to the development of new and the refurbishment and maintenance of existing buildings.
- Ensuring that suitable contracts are in place for maintaining buildings, plant, equipment and services.
- Providing specific advice and guidance on the management of asbestos and water related matters, including Legionella
- Ensuring incorporation of health and safety requirements as appropriate in policy and procedures.

Human Resources

Human Resources are responsible for ensuring that the following are provided:

- Incorporation of health and safety requirements as appropriate in Human Resources policy and procedures.
- Development and delivery of the corporate training plan.
- Advice on employee fitness for work, on adjustments and restrictions for existing and potential employments.
- Medical advice to inform individual risk assessments on employees who have underlying medical conditions.
- Medical advice on rehabilitation programmes to assist individuals to return to work from sickness absence.
- Advice to managers on medical/health issues to prevent potential ill health.
- Appropriate health surveillance and advice to individuals and their managers on any risks to their health and necessary measures to prevent the development of disease and ill health.
- Support via an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to all employees.

Health and Safety Officer

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Health and Safety Policy is kept up to date and available to all employees via the intranet.
- Ensuring that communications and information obtained from statutory enforcing bodies, safety organisations and other relevant bodies are forwarded throughout the organisation.
- Providing advice and information on all aspects of health and safety and new legislation affecting the work of the Council.
- Assisting Line management in the inspection of work areas paying attention to work practices and compliance with relevant health and safety legislation, Codes of Practice and HSE Guidance.
- Advising managers and others about risk assessments and prioritising suitable means of control.
- Assisting others to put in place measures to monitor control measures by using active and reactive techniques
- Formulating and developing health and safety policies

- Promoting a positive health and safety culture to secure effective implementation of this policy
- Maintaining procedures for recording, reporting, investigating and analysis of accidents, incidents and ill health.
- Reporting to the Leadership Team on a quarterly basis to inform about accidents, incidents and near misses, trends and non-compliance with Regulations.

The Head of Housing and Environmental Services is also responsible for providing advice to Service Heads, managers and employees.

Managers

As part of their management responsibilities, Managers are responsible for:

- Providing guidance and support to Line Managers, Supervisors and employees enabling them to fully and properly implement their responsibilities for health and safety.
- Ensuring that line managers and supervisors reporting to them understand their health and safety responsibilities.
- Ensuring that effective means of communication relating to health and safety issues are established and that health and safety is included in all relevant meetings.
- Ensuring that effective safety measures including instruction, training and supervision are provided to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, service users, contractors and members of the public.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken for all tasks in their business areas including any out of hours services.
- Ensuring that regular health and safety inspections are completed in all areas under their control.
- Supporting the application of this policy and set an effective, positive example to others by positive action and compliance with agreed procedures.
- Actively promote a positive health and safety culture throughout their areas of responsibility.

Line Managers and Supervisors

Line Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the safety of their employees and that procedures are understood and implemented within their service teams. They have a responsibility for:

- Ensuring that health and safety policies are understood and fully and properly implemented within their areas of responsibility.
- Having an understanding of health and safety legislation relevant to the Council's activities and how it applies to their area of responsibility.

- Ensuring that all relevant health, safety and welfare information regarding working safely, new legislation, codes of practice and guidance notes are acted upon.
- Attending appropriate training in order to undertake with confidence specific health and safety duties.
- Ensuring that all employees reporting to them are made aware of and understand their health and safety responsibilities.
- Instructing employees in health and safety requirements and supervise or monitor them to ensure they are working safely.
- Ensuring the provision of information, instruction, training, supervision and resources to safeguard, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of employees and other persons.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken and recorded for all tasks and activities in their departments, including out of hours services and tasks that occur infrequently. New services or activities are to be risk assessed prior to the work commencing. The risks identified should be eliminated where practicable or reduced as low as reasonably practicable to acceptable and manageable levels in order that little potential for harm exists for the work area or process.
- Review risk assessments when the work activity changes, when there is new equipment, when there are new processes or when work commences at a new location, and update as appropriate. If none of these occur, risk assessments should be reviewed annually.
- Undertaking and recording additional risk assessments for persons who are especially vulnerable such as work experience students, young persons, trainees, lone workers and new and expectant mothers, as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Providing suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) that achieves compliance with Regulations and Best Practice, ensuring that employees know why it is required and how to put it on and take it off. Ensure it is properly maintained, that there are suitable facilities for storing the PPE when not in use and that replacements are available for damaged or lost items.

Employees

It is the responsibility of all employees to:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Follow health and safety rules and not act in a way which would deliberately endanger others.
- Know the evacuation procedures for the location at which they are working.
- Co-operate with the Council to provide and maintain places and systems of work which are, so far as reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to health.

- Familiarise themselves with policies, guidance notes, risk assessments and any other instructions relating to their work and comply with the requirements set out.
- Follow prescribed safe systems of work and the control measures identified in risk assessments.
- Report unsafe working practices, shortcomings in safety procedures, potential hazards or other health and safety concerns to their line manager or supervisor as soon as possible.
- Use vehicles, equipment, materials or substances in accordance with information, instruction and training provided.
- Carry out tasks and work in the prescribed manner. Follow approved working procedures. Use correct tools and equipment for work, including any safety equipment and protective clothing provided.
- Wear protective equipment as instructed, store it so as to avoid damage, keep it cleaned and maintained and report loss or damage.
- Co-operate with management to keep their workplace safe, healthy and tidy.
- Report accidents, incidents and near misses to their Line Manager as soon as possible and co-operate with in the investigation of any reported incident.
- Report instances of occupational ill health to their Line Manager.
- Ensure that equipment and materials are stored safely when not in use.
- Not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided to safeguard health and safety, not to remove or destroy it without any good reason.
- Keep their work area clean and tidy; avoid the creation of tripping hazards and clean up and spillages immediately.
- Not to take shortcuts, as this would entail unauthorised and unnecessary risks.
- Inform managers / supervisors of any changes in work practices or of tasks that have not been assessed.

Contractors

Contractors are required to co-operate and communicate with the Council on all relevant health and safety matters. In addition, they must meet the health and safety standards required of them in the performance of the work activities undertaken with or on behalf of the Council.

Part 3 - Arrangements for implementing the Policy

Introduction

The Health, Safety and Welfare Policy sets out a framework for the organisation and arrangements for the health, safety and welfare of employees across the Council. To support this and to effectively manage all the health, safety and welfare risks and issues within the organisation, a series of topic based health, safety and welfare policies are available via IRIS, the councils intranet system, and in hard copy for those who experience difficulty accessing IRIS. The aims of the policies are to:

- provide information
- outline the actions to be taken to achieve legal and corporate standards
- provide effective guidance on how to manage identified risks effectively
- identify those who have specific responsibilities

The policies are based on legislative requirements and best practice and are formulated in accordance with the Health & Safety Executive management system called: Successful Health and Safety Management, known as HSG65.

Consultation arrangements

There is a formal consultation framework in place within the Council for consulting on all health, safety and welfare related policies, procedures and guidance notes.

Employees or their representatives will be consulted regarding the arrangements to control significant risks and the actions required to comply with relevant legislation. This will be done informally by managers and supervisors in the work place and formally via the Staff Consultative Group.

The Staff Consultative Group comprises staff representatives who represent the views of their colleagues and trade union representatives. Some members of this group attend the Joint Staff Group comprising Councillor members of the Human Resources (HR) Panel.

Planning

Effective planning is essential for the implementation of this policy.

For new projects, health and safety planning begins at the earliest stage of the project. Risk assessment methods are used to decide on priorities and to set objectives for eliminating hazards and reducing risks. Wherever possible, risks are eliminated through selection and design of facilities, equipment and processes. If risks cannot be eliminated, they are to be minimised by the use of physical controls and by designing safe systems of work and as a last resort by using personal protective equipment.

Risk assessment

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) build upon the general duties contained in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and include a requirement to assess the risks to health and safety to employees and others arising out of the employer's undertaking.

The Council strives to comply with these regulations and carries out risk assessments in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and published guidance.

Risk Assessment Review

All managers are responsible for ensuring their risk assessments are up to date; cover all activities in their area; their budgets include adequate resources for dealing with identified hazards and any other higher risk activities that are not adequately controlled.

Each manager will review their risk assessments of regular tasks on either an annual basis or when new equipment or working practices are introduced to ensure they are still appropriate. Assessments of new activities will be undertaken prior to the activity taking place and are to be reviewed after the initial task has been undertaken.

Health and safety checks

The purpose of undertaking a formal and documented check of the workplace is to identify any deficiencies of the workplace and/or systems of working that could cause harm to staff or others. Each manager undertakes a formal quarterly check of their workplace.

Auditing and Review performance

Monitoring provides information in order to review activities and decide how to improve performance. Audits, whether undertaken internally or externally, complement monitoring activities by ensuring that policies and systems are achieving results.

External audits are undertaken by Fire Officers, Auditors and Insurance Company inspectors. Internal audits of health and safety will be undertaken by the Head of Health and Environmental Services and/or the Health and Safety Officer.

Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

All accidents, incidents and near misses are investigated by the manager or supervisor, with remedial actions being taken to prevent a recurrence. Where an accident or an incident of a serious or potentially serious nature occurs, the manager will involve the Health and Safety Officer or Head of Housing & Environmental Services to assist in the investigation.

Health and safety information and training

To assist employees meet their health, safety and welfare responsibilities and implement common standards throughout the Council the following activities are undertaken with supporting documentation to guide them.

- Health and safety induction training that includes E learning courses
- Task related information, instruction and training
- Refresher training eg first aid
- General information to achieve legislative compliance

Performance Standards

Each service has a service standard which incorporates health and safety objectives. These are used by Heads of Service to ensure compliance with legislation.

Emergency procedures

The Corporate Risk Group assesses foreseeable risks to the organisation and produces contingency plans to mitigate their effects eg prevention, preparedness and response procedures.

Fire procedures

Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that detailed guidance on the appropriate action to be taken in the event of fire is in place for all buildings they manage. The Building Surveyor is responsible for undertaking and reviewing all fire risk assessments.

Managing health and well-being

Line managers play a key part in setting good standards of health, safety and welfare of employees and for ensuring that employees feel supported in their workplace.

The Council gives all employees access to an Employee Assistance Programme and benefits such as discounted gym membership.