



This statement of policy on health and safety at work in Cumbria County Council is made in accordance with section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

2022/23 Corporate Health & Safety Policy Statement

Cumbria County Council has a duty to provide for the health, safety and wellbeing of all its employees, elected members and any other person who may be affected by Council activities.

We aim to promote a positive health and safety culture where everybody plays their part. We are committed to continuous improvement in health and safety performance and recognise that for health and safety management to be successful, all parties must be actively engaged.

To promote better health at work we will focus on measures to ensure:

- Effective public health leadership with robust infection prevention and control measures in place;
- An effective work life balance;
- A healthy lifestyle (including physical activity, healthy eating, musculoskeletal improvements);
- Positive mental wellbeing (including the prevention of work related stress).

To promote a positive safety culture we will focus on:

- Strong corporate commitment from Council Leaders and Managers;
- Compliance with legislation and safe working procedures;
- A high corporate profile with effective performance and audit management systems;
- Maintaining a positive attitude towards health and safety objectives;
- Regular engagement and co-production of improvement initiatives working with employees and recognised Trade Union colleagues;
- Effective training, communication and awareness campaigns;
- Robust working practices and arrangements for effective risk control methods utilising ICT and personal protection when required;
- Sufficient capacity to benchmark with others, and to learn from accidents, near misses and safety performance indicators to strive for continual improvement.

To achieve our aims

To achieve our aims, we will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that we provide safe premises and working environments, safe equipment and substances, and safe systems of work. We will provide information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the highest possible levels of health and safety are achieved and maintained.

We provide a range of information, advice, training and tools to support employees, elected members, contractors and customers of council services to be aware of and improve their health and safety and to assess and effectively manage risks.

These include:

- Provision of health and safety support to all council staff including maintained schools;
- Provision of health and safety advice to elected members;
- Best practice health and safety standards expected and monitored for commissioned services and contractors that deliver services on behalf of the Council;
- Ensure the safe transition back to providing County council services is aligned to new ways of working and builds on learning identified during the Covid-19 response;
- Systemic audit and risk management controls devised, implemented and monitored ensuring health and safety arrangements are suitable and sufficient;
- Health, safety and wellbeing information via the In-Touch intranet site;
- Targeted health and safety related training provided in a variety of delivery formats;
- Close working and co-chairing arrangements with recognised Trade Union representatives on joint initiatives to aim for continual improvement;

- Safety discussion forums at various levels of the council with up to date terms of reference, two way communication and regular engagement activities.

A professional occupational health service

The Council adheres to robust health and safety governance and performance management arrangements ensuring cross cutting organisational safety objectives are achieved. Where gaps exist, or performance does not achieve the required standards, action plans will be devised, implemented and tracked by competent and accountable persons to ensure standards improve.

Roles and Responsibilities

Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility and all elected members, staff, trade union representatives and contractors working on behalf of the Council are expected to: Adopt excellent health and safety standards; Comply with legislation, policies and procedures; and Engage in the management/reporting of health and safety issues.

Corporate Governance

The Public Health Service will lead a robust system for outbreak management and infection prevention and control, initially focused on Covid-19 but applicable in the longer term to wider health protection support;

- **The Corporate Health and Safety Group** (co-chaired between senior officer and recognised Trade Union representatives) will lead on corporate health, safety and wellbeing issues and engage with staff, members and contractors at all levels. Corporate health and safety procedures will be reviewed, updated and approved by the Corporate Health and Safety Group following co-production and consultation.
- **Senior Officer Governance** The Senior Officer Health & Safety Group ensures an Assistant Director and Senior Management level forum for discussion and monitoring of cross cutting health, safety and wellbeing issues affecting the Council and our contractors. The group also debate and learn from issues that are relevant to more than one directorate; require corporate investment; or have not been resolved through other discussions.
- **Directorate Governance** Executive Directors, the Chief Fire Officer and Director of Finance are responsible for maintaining high standards of health, safety and welfare within their own Directorates consistent with this health and safety policy statement and in line with the Corporate Health & Safety Procedures Manual. Each Directorate Management Team (working with recognised Trade Unions through Directorate Health and Safety Groups), will prepare an action plan for health and safety improvement. This will be regularly reviewed and if required expanded upon to describe the various functions and arrangements for health and safety to address specific risks within the Directorate.
- **Safety Practitioners** The Safety Practitioners Group, chaired by the Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager, is a forum for health and safety professionals to discuss and share health and safety experiences across the Council and wider professional sectors. This assists the development of corporate health and safety procedures and ensures that emerging issues can be escalated to the Corporate Health and Safety Group, DMT's or Directorate Health and Safety Groups as appropriate.
- **Managers and Supervisors** Managers and supervisors throughout the council have responsibility not only for their own health and safety but also for that of employees within their teams or those accessing the services provided.

- **Individual Responsibility** Health and safety is everyone's responsibility and all elected members, staff, trade union representatives and contractors regardless of role have a duty to ensure healthy and safe working practices are followed, not only for their personal benefit, but also for those working around them or for customers in receipt of the service.

Legal compliance in all areas is deemed to be the minimum standard to be attained. Failure to adopt adequate procedures or safety practice will be taken seriously. Where required, additional communication, support, training or in extreme situations appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed.

Performance Management and Ongoing Learning

To ensure adequate health and safety standards are achieved, and continual improvement sought, governance and performance management systems are in place to monitor progress against the Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan, audit findings and monitoring of accident and work-related ill health data.

Wherever possible, health and safety performance and ways of working will be benchmarked against available data, other Local Authorities and wider industry best practice to seek to achieve continual performance improvements and ongoing learning.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will produce quarterly dashboard reports summarising key health and safety metrics for reporting to Directorate Management Teams, Corporate Management Team Corporate Health & Safety Group. Overall health and safety performance will then be reported annually to the Council's Cabinet by way of the Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report. Interim updates will be provided on a quarterly basis (or by exception as required) to the Cabinet Member Environment who has portfolio responsibilities that include Corporate Health and Safety.

Think Safe, Be Safe

Communications and awareness events will be progressed throughout the year to maintain and further raise the profile of effective health and safety.

Review

This policy statement will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose and up to date.

Further Information

This statement represents a summary of the Corporate Health and Safety arrangements in place for Cumbria County Council for 2022/23. More detailed arrangements can be found in the Corporate Health & Safety Procedures Manual which is published on the Council's website.

This statement and the procedures manual will also be made freely available to all interested parties and can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

Councillor Stewart Young
Leader of the Council
July 2022

Councillor Celia Tibble
Portfolio Holder for Environment (incl Corporate Health & Safety portfolio)
July 2022

John Metcalfe
Deputy Chief Executive
July 2022