

**The Highland Council**  
**ADULT & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**19 February, 2014**

Agenda Item	20.
Report No	ACS/34/14

**Health and Safety Policy**

**Report by Director of Health and Social Care**

**Summary**

This report updates Members on the revised Health and Safety policy for the Health and Social Care Service, and recent associated statistics for the Service.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Health and Social Care Service has a range of responsibilities including:
- Commissioning social care services for adults
  - Health and Social Care Services to children and families
  - Criminal Justice Social Work Services
  - Provision of the Mental Health Officer service
  - Provision of the Out-of-Hours service
- 1.2 The Service must produce a current Health and Safety policy which meets the needs of the Service and identifies responsibilities for its implementation.

**2. Health and Safety Policy**

- 2.1 The main areas of risk for staff are:
- Moving and handling – staff working with children with a disability
  - Lone working – many health, social work and other community based staff
  - Violence and aggression – all staff
  - Infection control – all staff
  - Workplace stress – all staff
- 2.2 With the changes made to the Service through Integrating Care in the Highlands and further changes to come with the creation of the new Care and Learning Service, it has become necessary to revise the Health and Safety Policy.
- 2.3 Members are asked to agree the revised Policy, which is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

**3. Accidents and Incidents in Health and Social Care Service**

The most recent figures for accidents and incidents involving staff in the service are shown below in Table 1. These are the figures from April 2013 to December 2013.

Violence and Aggression	11
Moving and Handling	1
Slips, Trips and Falls	2
Heat/Cold	1
Human	2
Other	2

#### 4. **Health and Safety Training**

Health and Social Care staff attended a range of Health and Safety training courses organized through Employee Development. The figures for 2013 are shown below.

Emergency first aid at work	47
First Aid at work (3 days)	8
First aid at work requalification (2 days)	6
Managing challenging behaviour in adult care settings	14
Stress awareness	4
Management of stress	2
Risk assessment	7
Mentally healthy workplace	18
Violence at work	18
Moving and Handling	51

#### 5. **Implications arising from the Report**

- 5.1 There are no resource, legal, equality or climate change implications. The Health and Safety Policy sets out how risks are managed as part of a strategic approach.

#### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to approve the revised Health and Safety Policy for the Health and Social Care Service.

Bill Alexander  
Director of Health & Social Care

**Date:** 9 February 2014

**Author/Reference:** Fiona Palin, Head of Social Care



## **Health and Social Care Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Version 1- 2013**

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### **1.0 Policy statement**

- 1.1 The Health and Social Care (H&SC) Service recognises the importance of health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace.

The objectives of this policy are therefore to ensure that:

- There is a positive culture embedded across the Service that recognises and accepts the importance of health, safety and well-being for all staff and service users;
- All managers and employees are aware of their specific health and safety responsibilities, including statutory duties, on an on-going basis;
- The appropriate and proportionate health and safety training is provided for all employees, as identified through health and safety risk assessment;
- A safe working environment is provided for all H&SC employees and any other users of our buildings and services.

This policy document reflects the Council's corporate health, safety and well-being policy requirements.

August 2013  
Bill Alexander  
Director of Health and Social Care

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## 2.0 Legislation

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This policy and supporting guidance meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and all other subordinate legislation.

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## 3.0 Scope

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**3.1** This policy is applicable to all locations from which the Health and Social Care Service delivers a service. It also applies to all full and part time H&SC employees, including temporary workers and those undertaking placements and similar roles, and all other users of Health and Social Care facilities.

**3.2** Health and Social Care will develop and maintain a health, safety and wellbeing manual which will underpin the Health and Social Care policy. The manual will provide instruction and guidance to fulfil and maintain compliance with all statutory, corporate policy and sector specific requirements.

The contents of the health, safety and wellbeing manual will include, but not limited to:

- Accident reporting and investigation
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Antisocial behaviour and violence
- Blood borne infections
- Building management (
  - Asbestos management
  - Legionella
  - Gas safety at work
  - Electricity at work
  - Property management
  - Responsible Premises Officer (RPO) duties
  - Management of contractors
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- Control of substances hazardous to health
- Management of clinical waste including sharps
- Display screen equipment
- Food safety
- Fire safety
- First aid at work
- Health and wellbeing at work
- Incident reporting and investigation
- Lone working
- Manual handling
- Moving and handling (including lifting and lowering of people)
- Noise
- Occupational health
- Risk assessments
- Safe driving at work
- Smoking at work
- Stress management

- Vibration
- Working at heights

The manual will be reviewed periodically and when there are relevant changes in legislation and/or sector specific guidance.

## 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 General health safety and wellbeing responsibilities are set out in the corporate health, safety and wellbeing policy. In addition, specific responsibilities in relation to Health and Social Care are set out below.

4.2 **The Director** holds ultimate responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing across the Health and Social Care Service.

The Director is responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for:

- The implementation and monitoring of this policy within the Service, and ensuring good communication re the content with employees at all levels;
- Ensuring that sufficient resources are available to ensure compliance with all policy requirements;
- Developing and maintaining a Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy which is specific to the tasks and responsibilities of the Service. This must detail the Service's health, safety and wellbeing management arrangements, which will include assessing, planning, organising, monitoring and reviewing the measures required to eliminate, reduce or control local risks;
- Establishing arrangements for consultation on Service specific health, safety and wellbeing policy and other related issues ;
- Bringing to the attention of line management that health, safety and wellbeing responsibility is shared and that they will be accountable for the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, or others who may be affected by the work of the Service;
- Submitting an annual health, safety and wellbeing report to the Adult & Children Services Committee.

4.3 **Heads of Service** are responsible for the implementation of Health, Safety and Wellbeing management arrangements throughout their area of responsibility. These duties will include:

- Overall responsibility for ensuring that the Health and Social Care health, safety and well-being manual (or any related documentation) is maintained and updated as and when required as a result of legislative changes, any sector specific guidance and changes to the corporate policy;
- Ensuring that appropriate, valid risk assessments are available, and regularly reviewed, for activities conducted by the service;
- Ensuring proper control, including monitoring, of contractor activities;

- Nominating a responsible person (the RPO) for each building to be accountable for and deal with health and safety property matters. Where premises are a shared Highland council building, the relevant Heads of Service should ensure that one RPO or equivalent is appointed and that pertinent information is shared. RPO training is available from Employee Development.

4.4 **Line Managers** are responsible for the following:

- Implementing this policy in his/her area of responsibility;
- Ensuring compliance with all legal requirements and relevant Council and Health and Social Care health, safety and wellbeing documents;
- Communicating Health and Social Care and corporate health, safety and wellbeing policies and guidance to all relevant staff for whom they have a direct line management responsibility and also service users;
- Ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out and these assessments are reviewed at regular intervals or when a specific need arises;
- Ensuring that any significant findings arising from risk assessments and any related changes to work practices are communicated to staff;
- Ensuring action plans arising from risk assessment and audits are followed through and completed within the prescribed timescales;
- Motivating and empowering employees and service users to work in a safe and healthy manner in order to encourage a positive attitude to health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace;
- Ensuring that all employees have received suitable and sufficient training at induction and refresher training on an on-going basis;
- Encouraging staff to adopt safe working practices;
- Consulting with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team when appropriate;
- Addressing appropriately any health, safety and wellbeing concerns raised by an employee; and
- Encouraging the reporting of accident/incidents, episodes of antisocial behaviour and violence against staff in line with the related corporate and Health and Social Care policy and procedures.

4.5 Each **employee** is responsible for their own acts or omissions and the effect that these may have upon the safety of themselves or anyone else. Whilst the Council accepts the main responsibility for the implementation of this policy, individuals are legally obliged to co-operate to ensure a healthy and safe working environment.

Employees have a responsibility to:

- Avoid taking unnecessary risks;
- Cooperate with their manager in relation to all issues relating to health, safety and well-being;
- Set a good example to others, especially young or inexperienced

workers and service users;

- Use equipment in accordance with any instructions and training given;
- Work in accordance with any health and safety instruction or training that has been given;
- Bring to the attention of their line managers and any other relevant person any health and safety issues they may have; and
- Report to management any defects or faults relating to equipment and systems of work;
- Familiarise themselves with the corporate and Health and Social Care health, safety and wellbeing policy documents and also the Health and Social Care health, safety and wellbeing manual and;
- Attend any relevant training provided.

Staff are encouraged, when and where appropriate, to seek health and safety advice and guidance from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.

#### 4.6 **Service users:**

It is expected that all service users contractors and visitors to Health and Social Care premises will comply with the relevant health and safety arrangements. It is important that the RPO ensures that the appropriate health, safety and wellbeing arrangements are communicated effectively.

#### 4.7 **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Section**

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team will provide advice, guidance and support in the following way:

- Assist with developing, reviewing and updating the Health and Social Care Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy and the Health and Social Care health, safety and wellbeing manual documents;
- Advise managers of changes in legislation, policy and any other relevant guidance as and when required;
- Carry out high level inspections and audits and produce reports with recommendations for Health and Social Care management;
- Investigate significant accidents and incidents;
- Raising health, safety and wellbeing awareness to ensure that Health and Social Care managers and staff are aware of their individual and collective responsibilities;
- Facilitate the appropriate health, safety and wellbeing training to ensure that all managers are aware of their related responsibilities;
- Providing the appropriate health, safety and well-being advice and support for managers in order that they fulfil legal compliance.

## 4.8 Trade Union Representatives

Safety representatives are appointed by trade unions to represent their members on health and safety issues, including:

- Representing Health and Social Care staff in discussions with the Service on health, safety or welfare issues and in discussions with the HSE or other enforcing authorities;
- Being involved in any consultative exercise which has significant health and safety implications;
- Being involved with the Service's risk assessment processes where appropriate;
- Attending Health and Social Care Service Consultative health and safety meetings;
- Having access to relevant health and safety information;
- Carrying out workplace inspections, including investigating potential hazards;
- Investigating notifiable accidents, cases of diseases or ill health and dangerous occurrences;
- Investigating employees' health and safety complaints;
- Receiving information from health and safety inspectors;
- Being given reasonable paid time off their normal work to carry out their functions and undergo training;
- Having access to suitable facilities and assistance to carry out their functions, for example access to IT facilities and suitable office accommodation when required.

## 5.0 General Arrangements

- 5.1** Health and Safety is a standing item on all area and team meeting agendas. The Minutes of each meeting are made available to each group member. Information is disseminated as appropriate within each staff grouping. As necessary health and safety issues will be escalated to the appropriate level. As appropriate any cross cutting issues will be disseminated by the senior management team.

### **5.2 Area Health and Safety Groups:**

The Health and Social Care Service will be represented at each Area Health and Safety meeting.

This group will consider local issues that have been identified at an establishment level and require further consideration.

### **5.3 Training:**

Basic training will be provided as part of each employee's induction. Thereafter,



additional job specific training will be provided as identified in the job description and through risk assessments. In addition and in compliance with corporate health and safety training guidance, specific training needs should be discussed as part of the Employee Development and Review (ERD) process (or equivalent).

#### **5.4 Inspection and Maintenance contracts:**

Under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 there is a catch- all requirements for the appropriate level of inspection, test and maintenance of work equipment. There are also other specific legal requirements for test, inspection and maintenance of certain pieces of work equipment such a local exhaust ventilations systems (LEVs), lifting and lowering equipment (e.g. lifts, slings, hoists) and vehicles.

To comply with the test and inspection requirements the Housing and Property team will oversee the procurement of centrally funded test and inspection contracts for the work equipment and services.

It is essential that the appropriate levels of funding are available on a sustainable basis to ensure that vehicles and major items of work equipment are maintained and replaced as and when required.

#### **5.5 Health Safety and Wellbeing Plan**

The Service will develop, monitor and review a Health, Safety and Wellbeing plan. The aim of the plan will be to maintain legal compliance and deliver constant improvement in the standards of Health, Safety and Wellbeing across the Service.

The plan will be informed by information gathered from health and safety audits, accident investigations, corporate targets and changes to legislation and guidance.

The plan will be included in the annual report and monitored by the Health and Social Care SMT.

#### **5.6 Hazard Identification**

The Service will develop, maintain and update a health and safety risk register. The register will be reviewed by the Health and Social Care Health and Safety Group and SMT and will be incorporated within the overall Service Risk Register document.

#### **5.7 Occupational Health**

Where longer term risks to health are identified through the risk assessment process, mandatory health monitoring will be provided by the current Occupational Health Provider.

When a fit note for a member of staff states stress as the reason for an absence the line manager must make an occupational health referral for stress immediately.

## **5.8 Communication within Health and Social Care**

Health and Social Care recognises the importance of effective health and safety communication throughout the Service and that effective communication is a two way process.

Health and safety information will be communicated to all staff and where necessary to service users through the following mediums:

- Staff Briefings

  - Standing agenda items at Health and Social Care Trade Union Liaison meeting.

  - Standing agenda item on all team meeting agendas.

  - Staff supervision agendas.

  - Service user meetings, as necessary.

  - Service user safety briefing and inductions

  - Staff inductions

  - Service user admissions.

Staff are encouraged to identify and report health and safety concerns to their line managers. Managers are required to treat these concerns seriously and to take appropriate action and where necessary escalate.

Staff are encouraged to identify and communicate health and safety improvement proposals to their line managers. Managers should consider proposals and respond appropriately. Where proposals merit further considerations and potential policy implications they should be referred to the SMT.

## **5.9 Sources of health and safety information, advice and support**

Health and Social Care will comply with corporate health and safety policies, procedures and guidance. Where there is a need for specific procedures and guidance this will be located in the Health and Social Care Health and Safety manual.

Additional sources of health and safety information are located on the [Corporate health and safety intranet pages](#), [HSE website](#) and Health and Social Care Health and Safety Manual. Advice and contact details can be sought from the [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team](#).

## **5.10 Monitoring and Review of health and safety Policy**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and in light of any significant changes in the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, legislation, health and safety guidance and sector specific guidance.