Bridgend County Borough Council

Corporate Health and Safety Policy 2024-2027

Contents

1. Manual issue and control

1.1 All documents will be held electronically by Bridgend County Borough Council and as such all documents within the health and safety management system will be available and accessible to all via the intranet.

1.2 The revision and issue status of the health and safety management system is summarised in the table below:

Section number	Revision number	Date issued	Changes made and reason for change	Approved by

3.1 The health and safety management system is maintained and updated by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU).

2. Health and safety policy statement

2.1 Our vision is to work together to improve lives across the Bridgend County Borough.

2.2 The council's Well-being Plan outlines how to improve well-being in Bridgend. It also shows how the plan will help us meet the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's seven wellbeing goals:

- A prosperous Wales

- A resilient Wales

- A healthier Wales

- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of more cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

Statement of intent

2.3   We are committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all our employees and ensuring our work does not adversely affect the health and safety of other people such as service users, visitors, contractors and members of the public. Our employees are our most important asset, and we will therefore aim to promote their good health and wellbeing as well as prevent injuries and ill-health. We will comply with relevant legislation and management standards to effectively manage all significant risks associated with our activities, workplaces, equipment and facilities.

2.4   The organisation is committed to the continual improvement of its health and safety performance and recognises the health and safety management system as a core management function. The management system will effectively and efficiently meet changing business, legislative and regulatory needs. This will be achieved through proactive implementation of a health and safety risk management system.

2.5   The council has adopted the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guide on health and safety management (that is, HSG65) as the model for its health and safety management systems and will measure itself against this model. This framework helps the council ensure that health, safety and wellbeing issues are addressed and identify areas for further improvement. The council will monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of these systems.

2.6   The council will widely promote its health and safety policy to demonstrate its commitment to the health and safety of its employees, service users and those it comes into contact with. The council will use its health and safety framework to review the implementation of its policy providing continual improvement and promote a positive health and safety culture.

3.   Scope and application

Organisation details

3.1   The Corporate Management Board, led by the Chief Executive, oversees the strategic running of the council. Approximately 6000 council staff (including schools) are employed to deliver or commission the delivery of services within Bridgend. The council also works in partnership with other bodies to deliver services.

3.2   The council has reviewed it working practices to improve the work-life balance of staff while continuing to provide services to its residents and visitors. Part of this approach has been to approve a new Hybrid Working Policy and there have also been changes in the way parts of the council operate through collaboration with our partners.

3.3   The CHSU is based within the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate. The unit provides assistance on health, safety and wellbeing matters arising from all the council's activities.

Scope

3.4   This policy outlines the council's plan to satisfy health and safety requirements and legal obligations.

3.5   This is a 'controlled' document. However, 'uncontrolled' copies can be distributed to any interested party upon approval of the CHSU.

3.6   This document is intended to describe the core elements of the management system and relevant interactions.

Application

3.7   This health and safety management system is intended to directly meet the requirements of the following legislation and regulations:

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

3.8   This Act requires organisations to have a health and safety policy which should include:

- Statement of intent (that is, the health and safety mission).
- Organisation (that is, the structure, roles and responsibilities).
- Arrangements (that is, procedure and guidance).

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

3.9   These regulations require organisations to have arrangements for undertaking effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective health and safety measures.

HSG65 Successful Health and Safety Management

3.10   This guidance outlines the management system requirements for implementing the arrangements required within Regulation 5 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

3.11   This 'plan, do, check, act' approach will provide the mechanism for managing other legislative, regulatory and policy requirements (for example, risk assessment).
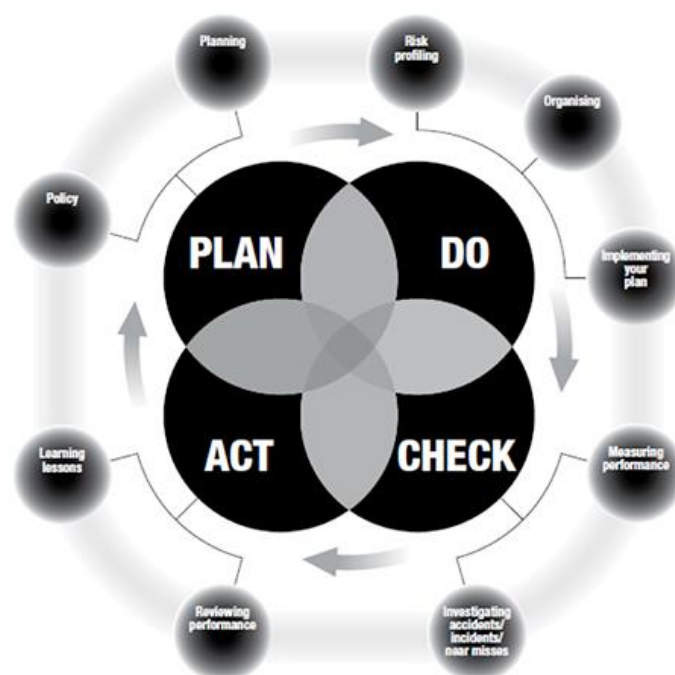
Enforcement

3.12 The HSE is the enforcing body for local authorities including Bridgend County Borough Council. The HSE has the 'right of access' and where health and safety failings are identified, the HSE can take enforcement action which may include a fee for intervention. Further information can be found on the HSE website.

4. Health and safety management system

System structure

4.1 The council will comply with all legal requirements and maintain appropriate health and safety management systems, arrangements and organisational structures to ensure adequate health and safety for all those affected by its undertakings.

- As previously stated, the council has adopted HSG65, as the model for its health and safety management systems and will measure itself against this model.

- The council will monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of these systems.

- The council will adopting a sensible risk management approach to ensure attention is focused on the issues that really matter.

- Other parts of the council may comply with other health and safety standards that is, ISO 45001 for operational purposes.
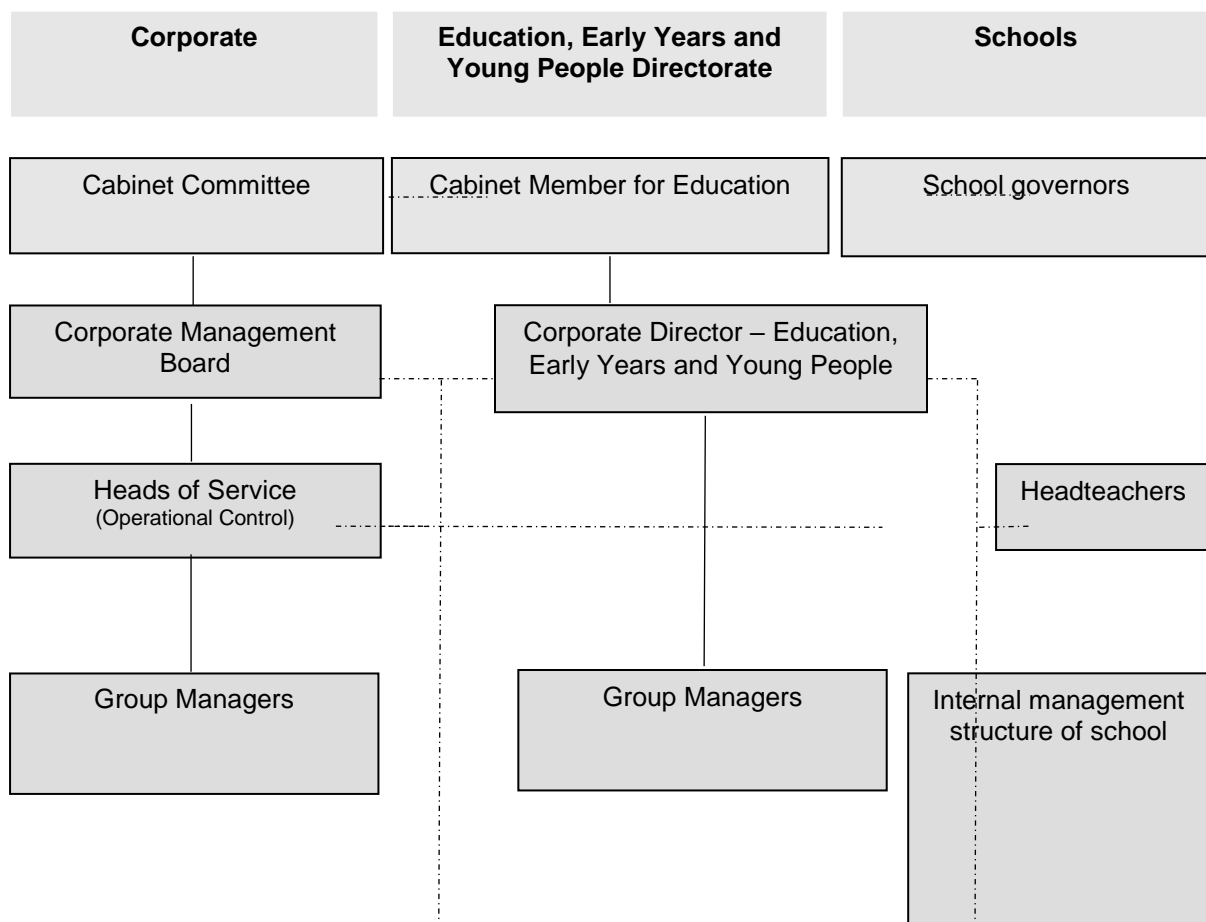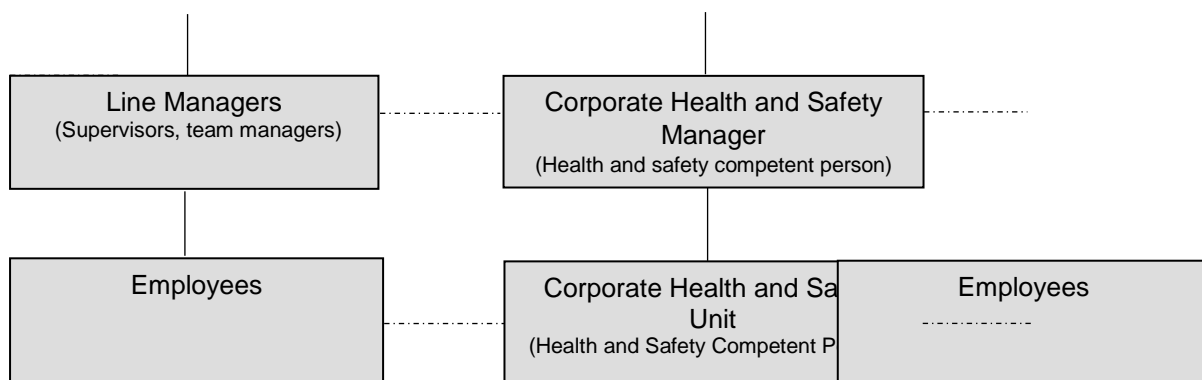
Health and safety procedures

4.2   Related policies, guidance/information and procedures within the health and safety management system can be accessed on the council's health and safety webpages.   However, some areas (for example, fire, asbestos, legionella, and radon), may be managed by a separate council team (for example, Corporate Landlord).

4.3   Managers/supervisors/headteachers should check with the relevant teams (for example, Human Resources for employee wellbeing) for the most up-to-date related policies, guidance/information and procedures.

4.4   All schools are encouraged to use the council's procedures to support their health and safety performance, which provides processes, forms and guidance. However, schools are able to operate their own management system (that is, policy, risk assessment and procedures) providing that it meets the expected standards of legislative and best practice requirements. Schools should ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the availability of such documents for council officers and for enforcement purposes.

5.   Structure and responsibilities

General structure

5.1   The structure within the council that supports the continual improvement of health and safety management showing direct (full line) and in-direct (broken) lines of communication is summarised in the chart below:

Corporate	Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate	Schools
Cabinet Committee	Cabinet Member for Education	School governors
Corporate Management Board	Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People	
Heads of Service (Operational Control)		Headteachers
Group Managers	Group Managers	Internal management structure of school

```
┌─────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────┐
│      Line Managers      │- - - - -│  Corporate Health and   │
│ (Supervisors, team      │         │       Safety Manager    │
│  managers)              │         │ (Health and safety      │
│                         │         │  competent person)      │
└─────────────────────────┘         └─────────────────────────┘
            │                                   │
┌─────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┬──────────────────────┐
│                         │  │  Corporate Health    │                      │
│       Employees         │- -│      and Sa Unit     │     Employees        │
│                         │  │ (Health and Safety   │                      │
│                         │  │  Competent P         │                      │
└─────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┴──────────────────────┘
```
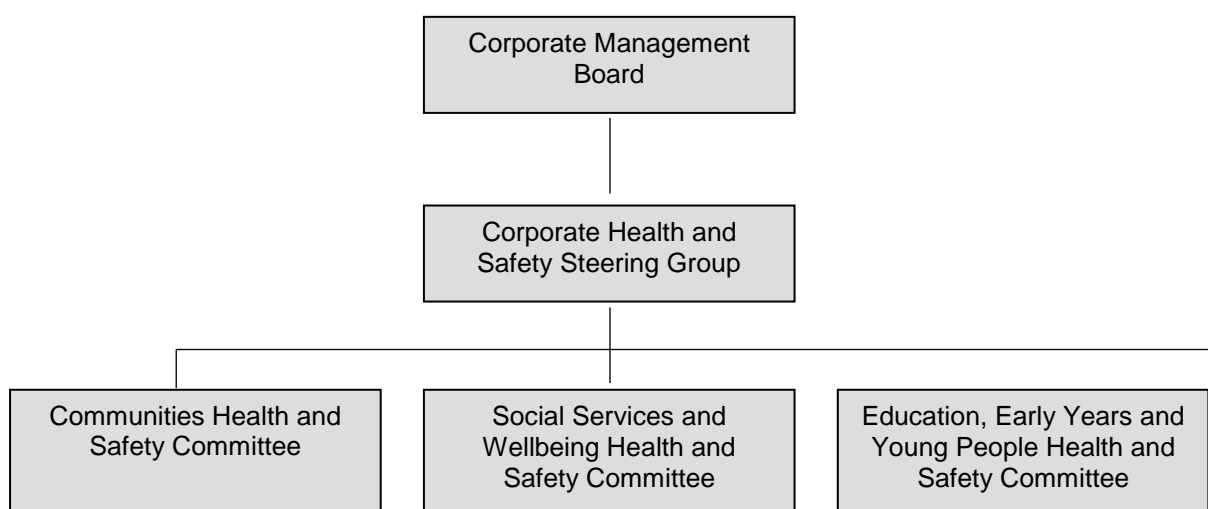
5.2   The chart indicates the arrangements for escalation to a higher level of management to resolve any conflict between health and safety issues and service delivery considerations but also for information to be disseminated where required. A more detailed structure outlining the management reporting lines for each directorate and service will be available on the Intranet.

5.3   Health and safety roles and responsibilities are summarised in job descriptions and refer to the health and safety management arrangements.

5.4   Collaborative working is a key priority for the council. Any collaborative project proposals will need to consider the specific health and safety arrangements for both parties and agree the role and responsibilities for that post, services or the employees that it works within.

Health and safety committee's structure

5.5   In line with the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, health and safety committees are in place to promote lines of communication from all levels of the workforce including senior management, management, workplace representatives and the corporate health and safety unit. Individual directorate health and safety steering groups report into the Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group. The Chief Executive's Directorate will form part of the Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group. The chart below shows the main lines of communication.

```
                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │   Corporate Management   │
                    │          Board           │
                    └──────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │   Corporate Health and   │
                    │  Safety Steering Group   │
                    └──────────────────────────┘
                                 │
        ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Communities      │  │ Social Services  │  │ Education, Early Years   │
│ Health and       │  │ and Wellbeing    │  │ and Young People Health  │
│ Safety Committee │  │ Health and       │  │ and Safety Committee     │
│                  │  │ Safety Committee │  │                          │
└──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────┘
```

General responsibilities

5.6   The general health and safety roles and responsibilities of management and employees are outlined below:

Elected members

- Ensure that suitable resources and strategic direction are available to discharge the council's health and safety responsibilities.
- Monitor the overall performance of the council's health and safety management systems.
- A member of Cabinet will be identified to undertake the role of 'champion' and lead in this area.

The Chief Executive

- Maintain overall responsibility for all matters regarding the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees and others who may be affected by the council's undertakings.
- Will be accountable to Cabinet for the council's health, safety and wellbeing performance, overall policy compliance and review processes.
- Will ensure health, safety and wellbeing as an agenda item at regular meetings of the corporate management team.
- Address any health, safety and wellbeing issues identified by the corporate management board, the health, safety and wellbeing champion or the corporate health and safety manager.
- Ensure that the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, subordinate policies and associated documents are regularly reviewed and updated as and when necessary.
- Ensure that health, safety and wellbeing reports are prepared for presentation to members as required.
- Ensure the resource needs for the health, safety and wellbeing statutory obligations are identified for consideration by Cabinet.
- Attend any mandatory health, safety and wellbeing training identified for their job role and any health, safety and wellbeing training identified through training need analysis.
- The Chief Executive may choose to delegate health, safety and wellbeing delivery to corporate directors but retains ultimate responsibility.

Corporate Management Board (CMB)

- Provide strategic direction and oversight of corporate health and safety policies, strategies and priorities.
- Ensure that robust health and safety management systems, arrangements and organisation exist in each directorate.
- Monitor the overall performance of the council's health and safety management systems.

- Support the Chief Executive in meeting health and safety responsibilities for the council as a whole.

Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate (responsible for health and safety functions)

The Corporate Director, Education, Early Years and Young People is responsible for health and safety and will undertake the following functions/responsibilities:

- Act as 'champion' for health and safety and make representations to CMB with regard to information, feedback and reports from the Corporate Health and Safety Manager and team members.
- Make representations to the Chief Executive/CMB with regard to any resource implications relating to health and safety.

Directors, heads of service and group managers (including headteachers)

- Responsibility for all matters regarding health and safety within the directorate/school/service area under their control.
- Allocate duties and responsibilities for health and safety within their directorate/school/service area.

Managers and supervisors (including headteachers)

Managers, supervisors and headteachers are responsible for health and safety within their schools/service areas including:

- The dissemination of this policy to staff, ensuring its promotion and implementation by providing leadership, support and advice on health and safety issues.
- The identification of health and safety training needs of staff and link with relevant teams where appropriate (for example, Learning and Organisational Development, CHSU, and Corporate Landlord).
- Provide training, information, instruction and supervision to new and existing employees to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, their health and safety whilst at work.
- Complete risk assessments and safe systems of work (involving staff in this process) where significant risk has been identified, ensuring they are communicated to relevant people and implemented.
- Where applicable, provide and maintain adequate, suitable and sufficient personal protective clothing and equipment at no cost to employees.
- Monitor accidents/incidents.
- Investigate accidents/incidents and where necessary ensure remedial action is implemented to prevent recurrence.

Trade union safety representatives

- Be formally appointed by their respective trade union before undertaking the role of trade union safety representative.

- Independently investigate workplace incidents, near misses, complaints and potential hazards, presenting the findings to the manager and the CHSU.
- Undertake independent inspections of the workplace, presenting the findings to the manager and CHSU.
- Represent employees, if necessary, when dealing with the HSE inspectors or other regulatory bodies.
- Attend health and safety meetings, in order to represent members.

Employees (including agency staff)

All employees (including those in a management role) have a legal duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and must:

- Co-operate with their managers and supervisors on health and safety matters.
- Not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety.
- Ensure their own safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Work in accordance with any information, instructions and training provided.
- Report all health and safety concerns to a responsible person (for example, the line manager, building manager, and headteacher), without delay.
- Familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and other associated policies/procedures.

Health and safety steering groups

- In pursuance of the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, the council has established a Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group (CHSSG). There are also additional health and safety steering groups for each directorate. The CHSSG and directorate steering groups must meet a minimum of twice a year. Where required, a committee can meet more frequently to deal with specific issues.
- Separate terms of reference are in place for the CHSSG and directorate committees.
- Notes of meetings will be made available on request to council employees and trade unions.

CHSU

It will be the responsibility of members of the CHSU to:

- Provide professional advice and support on all health and safety matters.
- Maintain information relating to accidents/incidents and produce statistics for the relevant meetings and committees.
- Investigate certain types of accidents/incidents and liaise with managers/supervisors/headteachers to ensure appropriate control measures have been put in place to prevent further occurrences.
- Undertake health and safety audits within service areas and support managers in implementing recommendations.
- Undertake health and safety inspections.

- Report certain types of accidents to the HSE in line with the Reporting Of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013.
- Produce an annual report on health and safety performance to the Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group.
- Provide and/or facilitate appropriate health and safety related training to council employees and volunteers (for example, risk assessment training).
- Develop policies, procedures and guidance relating to specific health and safety matters.
- Where necessary, support managers/headteachers to undertake risk assessments, display screen equipment assessments and new and expectant mother/pregnant worker risk assessments.
- Monitor health and safety performance against the relevant policy, approved code of practice, bets practice and UK legislation.
- Consult with designated trade union safety representatives and enforcing authorities whenever appropriate.
- Stop any activity or operation which, in their professional opinion, poses an immediate and serious risk to persons or property (including situations of potential risk).
- Consult and work with the council's partners to improve health and safety in the workplace.
- Undertake specific health and safety risk assessment where required.

5.7 It is important to note that specific roles and responsibilities within the health and safety management system (for example, fire safety management, manual handling, and occupational health) are covered by specific teams and/or external contractors (for example, Corporate Landlord).

5.8 This policy is applicable to schools where the council is the employer. It can also be adopted by other schools where the governing body is the employer.

6. Arrangements

Health and safety compliance

6.1 Managers/supervisors/headteachers are required to take reasonable steps to ensure they are health and safety compliant in relation to their undertakings. Building compliancy forms an essential part of this process and therefore managers/supervisors/headteachers are required to take reasonable steps to ensure their building are compliant with the current UK legislation. This may require working with other council services (that is, Corporate Landlord), to achieve compliance.

Risk assessments

6.2 Managers/supervisors/headteachers are to ensure risk assessments are undertaken in order to identify potential hazards, evaluate the associated risks and implement control measures to minimise the risks. All relevant employees must be involved in the risk assessment process. These assessments must be documented (for example, using the council's risk assessment forms) and

formally communicated to their staff. Training in undertaking risk assessments can be provided by the corporate health and safety unit.

6.3   It is the responsibility of the relevant manager/supervisor/headteacher to ensure that any recommendations requirement/action plan made to reduce health and safety risks within their area of responsibility are implemented, enforced and monitored to ensure effectiveness. Risk assessments must be reviewed annually, or sooner should they become out of date (for example, changes to work practices, new/revised legislation).

6.4   The completion/implementation of risk assessments will be monitored by health and safety advisors/officers via the audit process. They will be randomly checked, and advice/support given to implement any recommendations.

Information, training, instruction and supervision

6.5   Relevant, job specific health and safety training is mandatory for staff at all levels (advice available from the corporate health and safety unit).

6.6   Information on health and safety will be provided to all new employees (as part of their induction) by managers/supervisors/headteachers and appropriate records kept. This should cover the basics such as details of the nominated first aider(s) for the site, and fire safety arrangements.

6.7   All new employees must attend corporate induction (except school-based staff who will receive similar within their school).

6.8   Line managers will ensure that job specific health and safety training (and refresher) is identified, arranged and monitored, including the maintenance of appropriate records (for example, working in confined spaces, lone working, and manual handling).

6.9   There are a number of [e-learning modules](#) on the intranet that staff are able to access.

6.10   Risk assessment training will be provided for managers, supervisors and headteachers with records kept.

6.11   Health and safety advice is available from the CHSU.

Communication and consultation

6.12   This policy will be available on the staff intranet and disseminated to staff by managers/ supervisors/headteachers.

6.13   Information relating to health and safety will be communicated to staff (and other stakeholders) in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- Bridgenders;

- formal health and safety meetings;
- the council's internal corporate health and safety web pages;
- team meetings (health and safety to be a standard agenda item);
- trade unions; and
- direct e-mail.

6.14   Consultation with staff on health and safety issues, will take place primarily through the directorate health and safety steering groups. Where appropriate, such matters will also be considered by the Joint Consultative Forum. Staff will also be consulted directly, particularly if a specific member or group of staff is, or could be, affected by a particular issue.

Employee competency

6.15   Managers, headteachers and supervisors will ensure all employees have suitable and sufficient training, experience, knowledge and ability to undertake their duties safely.

Safe plant and equipment

6.16   Managers/headteachers/supervisors will ensure arrangements are in place for regular maintenance and inspection regimes of equipment at the required frequencies.

6.17   Defective equipment (for example, tools and personal protective equipment) must be reported to the appropriate person (for example, line manager) and taken out of service until it is safe to use.

6.18   All employees will use work equipment provided by the council in accordance with the training and instructions they receive.

6.19   Employees will make reasonable checks of equipment prior to use. These processes will be monitored by health and safety officers via the audit process.

Safe handling and use of substances

6.20   Substances hazardous to health must be risk assessed under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 1992 (as amended).

6.21   Managers/supervisors/headteachers are responsible for ensuring completion of COSSH risk assessments in all areas of operation for which they have responsibility, using the using a suitable and sufficient template. They must ensure that all actions identified are implemented and ensure all relevant employees are informed about the assessments.

6.22   Employees can request safety data sheets for all substances purchased from the council's stores department.

Accidents/incidents (near misses)/first aid and work-related ill-health

6.23 All accidents, incidents and cases of work-related ill-health must be reported in accordance with the council's accident/incident reporting procedure.

6.24 All accidents, incidents and cases of work-related ill-health will be investigated by the relevant manager/supervisor/headteacher and recorded on the appropriate accident form. This should include, where required, implementing recommendations to prevent a recurrence. Cases of stress should be referred to occupational health and an appropriate risk assessment completed.

6.25 All serious accidents/incidents will be investigated by the manager with support from the CHSU.

6.26 Managers/persons responsible for buildings will ensure that the required number of first aiders have current qualifications that adequate facilities are provided and maintained (first aid boxes) and that suitable notices are displayed informing employees of the arrangements. First aiders will receive up-date training, as necessary.

6.27 The CHSU will advise on first aider requirements and types of training. They will also monitor that service areas have suitable and sufficient arrangements in place.

6.28 Following completion of risk assessments and implementation of control measures, managers/supervisors/headteachers must identify staff that require health surveillance) - for example, those exposed to asbestos, hazardous substances, noisy environments, vibrating tools, and night workers.

6.29 Managers/headteachers must refer these staff to Human Resources who will refer them to the council's occupational health service provider for the appropriate health surveillance to be undertaken. The results of any health surveillance fitness to work/restrictions will be shared with the relevant manager and the records kept by the council's occupational health service provider.

Fire safety management

6.30 The council's Fire Officer will ensure as far as reasonably practicable, that adequate arrangements are in place across the council in relation to Fire Safety Management, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Fire Safety Act 2021 (Wales). The Fire Safety Act 2021 clarifies the parts of a premises that are covered by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (or 'the Fire Safety Order' or 'FSO').

6.31 Premises responsible person (PRP), premises, managers, managers and headteachers must comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ensuring a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been completed with recommendation actioned.

6.32 PRPs/premises managers/managers/headteachers responsible for buildings will ensure that fire management systems are implemented, including an appropriate fire strategy, emergency procedure/evacuation plans, personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS) and the provision of equipment for the evacuation of persons with disabilities. A copy of the assessment will be kept on site for inspection by the fire service.

6.33 For corporate buildings, the council's Fire Officer will engage with the PRP and where required appoint fire co-coordinators/fire wardens and will ensure that suitable and sufficient site-specific training is provided in line with their duties. The council's Fire Officer is responsible for actively monitoring and reviewing these arrangements.

Monitor, review and evaluation

6.34 Measuring health and safety performance will be undertaken by the CHSU using active and reactive monitoring and will form the basis for the content of the council's health and safety annual report and periodic reports to CMB.

6.35 Active monitoring provides feedback on performance before risks result in injury, ill-health or other damage and will include:

- Progress made towards specific health and safety plans, objectives and targets.
- Regular and systematic inspections (including fire risk assessments) of premises, plant and equipment.
- Health and safety auditing to ensure compliance with relevant health and safety policies and to drive continuous improvement.
- Environmental monitoring and health surveillance to check the effectiveness of health control measures and detect the early signs of harm to health.
- Regular feedback to CMB and Cabinet.
- Production of the health and safety annual report.
- Updates to health and safety service plan.

6.36 Reactive monitoring includes gathering data about health and safety failures in order to learn from mistakes and improve the risk management systems and their effectiveness. This will include:

- Gathering data about accidents, cases of ill-health (including sickness absence figures), property damage and other incidents.
- Investigations.
- Learning from insurance claims.
- Learning from HSE notices.

Supporting documentation

6.37   Reference should also be made to other council health and safety policies, strategies, procedures and guidance included on the Intranet. Staff who do not have access to the Intranet may obtain copies from their line manager.

7.   Glossary

Accident - undesired event giving rise to death, ill-health, injury, damage or other loss.

Audit - systematic examination to determine whether activities and related results conform to planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable for achieving the council's policy and objectives.

Continual improvement - process of enhancing the occupational health and safety management system, to achieve the improvements in overall health and safety performances in line with the organisation's occupational health and safety policy.

Hazard - source or situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill-health, damage to property, damage to the workplace environment, or a combination of these.

Hazard identification - process of recognising that a hazard exists and defining its characteristics.

Incident/ near miss - event that gave rise to an accident or had the potential to lead to an accident.

Interested parties: individual or group concerned with or affected by the occupational health and safety performance of the council.

Non-conformance - any deviation from work standards, practices, procedures, regulations, and management system performance that could either directly or indirectly lead to injury or illness, property damage to the workplace environment, or a combination of these.

Objectives - goals in terms of occupational health and safety performance that the council sets itself to achieve.

Health and safety - conditions and factors that affect the wellbeing of employees, temporary workers, contractor personnel or and any other person in the workplace.

Occupational health and safety management system - part of the overall management system that facilitates the management of the occupational health and safety risks associated with the business of the council. This includes the council's structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining the council's occupational health and safety policy.

Organisation - company, operation, firm, enterprise, institution or association, or part thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private, that has its own functions and administration.

Performance - measurable results of the occupational health and safety management system, related to the council's control of health and safety risks, based on its occupational health and safety policy and objectives.

Risk - combination of the likelihood and consequence(s) of a specified hazardous event occurring.

Risk assessment - overall process of estimating the magnitude of risk and deciding whether or not the risk is tolerable.

Safety - freedom from unacceptable risk of harm (ISO/IEC Guide 2).

Tolerable risk - risk that has been reduced to a level that can be endured by the organisation having regard to its legal obligations and its own occupational health and safety policy.