

Corporate Health and Safety Policy

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PART 1

WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY STATEMENT

As the Chief Executive of West Lothian Council, I am committed to achieving high standards of health, safety and welfare within the organisation. This policy statement reflects the importance attached to protecting council employees and those who are affected by our activities in order to create the framework for West Lothian Council to provide high standard services to the public within West Lothian.

This Policy will apply to all West Lothian Council employees. The measures outlined in this policy and subsequent supporting guidance and procedural documents are the minimum standards and values expected and should be adhered to at all times. The policy consists of 3 parts. The first, this policy statement, is designed to provide a general indication of health, safety and welfare duties. The second will outline responsibilities placed on individuals and the organisational structure in place to achieve those duties. The third is in the form of guidance and corporate procedural documents that will provide greater detail on how those responsibilities will be implemented.

All foreseeable hazards must be identified and assessed in order to reduce the likelihood of accidents, incidents and cases of occupational ill health. Equipment, premises, people and systems of work will be, as far as is reasonably practical, safe and without risks to safety and health. Each Depute Chief Executive, and in turn Heads of Service hold responsibility for the safety, health, welfare and wellbeing of their staff. This should be achieved by creating and maintaining a positive health and safety culture where everyone can contribute by identifying and mitigating risk. Consultation with health and safety representatives, employees, unions and stakeholders must take place in order to achieve this.

All council staff must be made aware of their legislative duties and be responsible for the safety of themselves and others through their acts and omissions. This will form part of an induction process and in the required instruction and training that all employees will participate in. Our responsibilities extend to other staff members, visitors and contractors alike, who must be provided a safe environment.

West Lothian Council is committed to the continual improvement of health and safety standards. Health and Safety Advisers are charged with monitoring, reviewing and reporting on health, safety and welfare performance. In order to achieve our ambitions and goals for West Lothian Council, it is vital that we continue to create a safe working community. Effective communication, consistent safety culture and strong values will enable us to thrive and contribute to the performance of the council.

This policy will be reviewed every three years and will remain extant unless amended by changes in legislation.

Graham Hope
Chief Executive
January 2024

PART 2

2. ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1 Introduction

The policy statement set out below is for the information, guidance and compliance of all employees in West Lothian Council. It details the general policy statement together with the responsibilities and organisation required for its implementation. The statement supports the requirements of Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

2.2 General Policy

West Lothian Council through its Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executives, Heads of Service and Elected Members attaches great importance to safeguarding the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of its employees. As members of the public can be affected by our work activities it is vitally important that a safe environment is also created for them. Health, safety, welfare and wellbeing are integral parts of West Lothian Council's ethos but can only be implemented effectively if managers are aware of the duties and responsibilities placed upon them and carry them out diligently.

2.3 Chief Executive and Depute Chief Executives

The Chief Executive retains the overall responsibility for the Council's Health and Safety Policy and will provide effective leadership and direction for its implementation.

Depute Chief Executives will be responsible and accountable to the Chief Executive for the health, safety and welfare of everyone affected by the work activities in their service areas and will demonstrate clear commitment to achieving high standards of health and safety management.

2.4 Head of Corporate Services

The Head of Corporate Services, without detracting from the delegated responsibility of other senior officers, has been appointed by the Chief Executive to have responsibility for overseeing the implementation, monitoring and effectiveness of this Health and Safety Policy.

The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for actively monitoring how the Council manages its health and safety risks by ensuring that the Corporate Management Team:

- a) Formally and publicly accepts its collective role in providing health and safety leadership.
- b) Makes decisions that reflect the Council's health and safety intentions as articulated in its health and safety policy statement.
- c) Recognises its role in engaging the active participation of workers in improving health and safety.
- d) Is kept informed of, and alerted to, relevant health and safety risk management issues.

The Council's Health and Safety Manager will assist the Head of Corporate Services in the fulfilment of this role.

An annual health and safety report will be published by the Head of Corporate Services containing details of health and safety aims, goals, targets and performance across all services of the Council.

2.5 Service Responsibilities

Each service is delegated responsibility for all health, safety and welfare matters within their area of responsibility, from the Chief Executive through the respective Depute Chief Executives to Heads of Service. Heads of Service can delegate day to day matters to designated representatives i.e. Responsible Persons, Head Teachers and managers, however, overall responsibility remains with the Head of Service. Assistance can be sought at any time from health and safety.

2.5.1 Heads of Service

Heads of Service will be responsible for the following:

- a) Developing a positive attitude towards health, safety and wellbeing by encouraging the participation and involvement of employees in health, safety and wellbeing matters and visibly demonstrating a commitment to the achievement of high standards within the service area.
- b) Ensuring adequate resources are allocated to achieve a safe working environment, safe equipment and trained competent staff.
- c) Ensuring service specific procedures and high standards of working are produced based on guidance and corporate procedural standards created under this policy.
- d) Having in place a risk assessment plan that ensure all foreseeable hazards are identified and all risk assessments are made and recorded by a competent individual on the corporate online safety management system Sphera (deviations from this are to be agreed with Health and Safety). Work is not to take place where a hazard has been noted and where no remedial action has been taken to reduce that risk to an acceptable level. Risk assessments are to be reviewed at regular intervals, if there is a reason to suspect that they are no longer valid or if there is a change to the circumstances to which they relate. Method statements/Safe Operating procedures recording a safe system of work must also be completed for tasks that pose a significant risk to health and safety
- e) Implementing and maintaining a health and safety management system using a plan-do-check- act approach that will ensure the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures necessary to eliminate or control risks and prevent accidents and ill health.
- f) Heads of Service shall submit to the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and the Health and Safety Manager, copies of any prosecutions, prohibition notices, improvement notices, notification of intention to serve improvement notices and/or notification of any contravention within 24 hours of their receipt.
- g) Providing all employees with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to enable them to discharge their individual safety responsibilities and to carry out their tasks in a safe manner. During the recruitment process, any health and safety responsibilities outlined for the post are to be documented and communicated to the candidates.
- h) Ensure arrangements for consultation between management, trade union safety representatives and/or representatives of employee's safety. Each service shall convene

a safety committee that shall meet at intervals appropriate to the needs of the service area/function and with agreement from Trade Unions.

- i) Ensuring that a health and safety plan is developed and monitored by each service which has realistic short- and long-term objectives, establishes performance standards and sets priorities.
- j) Ensuring that a record of accidents, incidents and near misses at work are recorded in an appropriate manner within required timescales on the online safety management system. (Sphera)
- k) Ensuring the Chief Executive's policy statement is understood by all managers and is made available for employees.
- l) Ensuring there is sufficient emergency planning including first aid cover within each of the services locations covering all shifts and activities.
- m) Providing adequate occupational health surveillance and monitoring in relation to the risks presented to employees.

2.5.2 Managers, Head Teachers, Supervisors, Co-ordinators & Squad Leaders

All managers are responsible for managing health and safety in their area of responsibility. Support is available from health and safety although managers will be ultimately responsible. In particular, they will: -

- a) Make sure that all employees under their control are familiar with relevant local health and safety arrangements.
- b) Set up and maintain within their service area safe, healthy working conditions.
- c) Make sure safe systems of working, significant findings arising from risk assessments and the necessary control measures are brought to the attention of employees.
- d) Ensure that systems of work operated in their area of management are safe and without risk to health and safety
- e) Audit and monitor their own health and safety arrangements, verifying control measures are working effectively and taking whatever remedial actions necessary where concerns are identified.
- f) Make sure that safety procedures are considered when designing, buying and using all new plant and equipment.
- g) Make sure that investigations are carried out for accidents and incidents in their area of responsibility and within required timescales.
- h) Carry out safety inspections (including housekeeping) to identify hazards; and make sure that all employees, including safety representatives, are able to carry out their responsibilities and encourage them to work with managers to promote an attitude of safe working across the council.
- i) Ensuring that employees under their management receive sufficient instruction and training. Refresher training should be provided as necessary.

- j) Ensuring all contractors are vetted with regard to health and safety competence to minimise the risks to all who may be affected by their activities or omissions and undertake continuous monitoring and assessment of contractors' health and safety performance.

2.5.3 Employees

All employees and those operating on behalf of West Lothian Council will be expected to cooperate in the implementation of this health and safety policy by:

- a) Acting with due care for their own safety and that of other who may be affected by something they do or their omissions.
- b) Cooperate with and participate in, so far as is necessary, any activity that will assist the council in complying with any requirements as a result of health and safety legislation.
- c) Participate in health and safety training identified as required for job tasks carried out.
- d) Participate in health surveillance programmes identified as necessary for job tasks carried out
- e) Using correctly all work items, equipment and machinery in accordance with the training and instruction received.
- f) Not to intentionally interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare. This includes safety guards, safety signs, first aid equipment and firefighting equipment
- g) Report all accidents, incident and near misses within timescales given in corporate procedures.
- h) Cooperate with any investigation into the circumstances of incidents, accidents and near misses.
- i) Report poor working practices and hazards immediately to their line manager.

An employee may be liable to disciplinary action if they are found to have acted in a negligent manner which knowingly violates any procedures, safe system of work, failure to utilise personal protective equipment, work equipment, refusal to cooperate in training, formal investigations and health surveillance programs or have failed to act in accordance with any council health and safety policy or procedure.

2.5.4 Health and Safety

Health and Safety Manager

The Health and Safety Manager will provide specialist advice and guidance throughout the council on matters relating to corporate health and safety policy by:

- a) Providing guidance and procedures.
- b) Developing health and safety strategies.
- c) Preparing regular reports for senior management that inform and evaluate the council's health and safety performance.
- d) Coordinate all serious incident / serious near miss investigations.
- e) Provide information on health and safety performance through statistics and trend analysis at various strategic committees.

- f) Lead on liaison with external agencies e.g. HSE in relation to visits, inspections, enquiries and incidents as and where required. This will be carried out in conjunction with Health and Safety advisers and other employees as required.

Health and Safety Advisers

Competent health and safety advisers will provide advice, support and guidance to managers and in particular will:

- a) Advise on the interpretation and application of health and safety legislation and guidance.
- b) Investigate the cause and circumstances of serious accidents, incidents and near misses.
- c) Assist services to develop health and safety standards and procedures.
- d) Assist and advise on health and safety related training programmes.
- e) Advise and support managers in the risk assessment process.
- f) Liaise with services and external agencies.
- g) Contribute to the development of occupational health and safety strategies and policies.
- h) Carry out health and safety inspections of the workplace and project related works.

In some areas where advisers have been directly engaged by the service, they will work in conjunction with the corporate Health and Safety Manager to ensure council objectives are being achieved.

To monitor the implementation of this policy and other associated safety procedures health and safety may:

- a) Enter council premises at any time if it is safe to do so.
- b) Take any substance, product or prevent the use of equipment required to complete an investigation.
- c) Where there is an immediate risk of serious personal injury, in consultation with management, take action requiring the immediate cessation of any activity.
- d) Require those with information relevant to an investigation to give that information either verbally or in a written statement.
- e) In the event of serious incident / near miss require that an area is not disturbed (if safe to do so) to allow relevant information to be collated.

2.6 SAFE PLACE OF WORK

2.6.1 Emergency and Fire Procedures

In addition to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and in line with requirements made under The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 a risk assessment-based approach to fire safety has been adopted to prevent fires from occurring. The safety of life must override property related considerations.

To assist in this approach it will be ensured that:

- a) Fire can be detected in a reasonable time and those who may be affected can be warned reliably.
- b) An area can be vacated quickly and safely
- c) Those within a building know what to do in the event of a fire
- d) All premises will have suitable and sufficient evacuation procedures in place
- e) Employees will be provided information and instruction in relation to fire safety and emergency evacuations of buildings.
- f) Specific instruction and training will be provided to nominated employees to ensure their safety and the safety of others when undertaking the Unwanted Fire Alarm signal (UFAS)

investigation procedure

- g) Emergency procedures will be established within premises where there is a possibility of serious or imminent danger to employees or those who may be affected.

2.6.2 Property Compliance

Every workplace within West Lothian Council must have a delegated Responsible Person (RP) who will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Premises Management Handbook and completion of the Property Compliance Log Book. The Responsible Person can be assisted in this task by appointing employees to carry out detailed inspections on their behalf and on subjects within their area of expertise.

The Premises Management Handbook details requirements in relation to health and safety arrangements, access and use of premises, fire safety, maintenance, plant and equipment, electricity, water hygiene and asbestos. To ensure ongoing property compliance the following is expected:

- a) Risk assessments for all premises shall be available and up to date.
- b) First aid procedures shall be in place.
- c) Security arrangements shall be in place, to include procedures on bomb threats, suspicious packages and control of visiting contractors.
- d) Asbestos containing materials shall be identified and controlled in line with the Asbestos Procedures.
- e) Fire risk management procedures shall be in place.
- f) Access to firefighting equipment and ensuring fire exits are not obstructed
- g) Legionella controls shall be in place.
- h) Maintenance of workplace equipment, devices and systems shall be in place.
- i) Pedestrian, vehicle segregation shall be managed.
- j) Any lifting equipment used within the premises is tested and maintained in accordance with legislation.
- k) The transport and storage use and disposal of hazardous substances conforms to current regulations and guidance.

In addition to the Premises Management Handbook, the Workplace, Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 expand on these responsibilities and place duties on employers, so far as is reasonably practicable, to protect the health and safety of everyone in the workplace and ensure that adequate welfare facilities are provided for people at work.

In addition:

All premises must be clean, tidy and in a safe condition by ensuring :

- a) Safe access, egress to each workplace, walkways, paths, exits and traffic routes etc. are clearly marked, kept in good repair and are free of obstacles
- b) Staircases, landings, floor openings etc. are guarded to prevent falls of personnel and stores.
- c) Loose tools and equipment are secured and stored in a safe manner.

- d) Warning notices are visible, relevant and up to date.
- e) Windows, doors, fixtures and fittings should be installed to the correct standard and should be maintained
- f) Electrical equipment is maintained and periodically tested as per WLC's maintenance schedule

Responsible persons are responsible for the general upkeep of workplaces used by employees. They are to ensure, by inspection, every 6 months, that as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe place of work exists. The Responsible Person can be assisted in this task by appointing employees to carry out detailed inspections on their behalf and on subjects within their area of expertise.

2.6.3 Welfare facilities

The following key areas of welfare are to be considered when ensuring a healthy working environment:

- a) Indoor temperature levels should be comfortable in relation to the task.
- b) Humidity levels are considered.
- c) Adequacy of lighting for the work being carried out.
- d) Monitoring of ventilation levels.
- e) The reduction of vibration, dust, smells and noise.
- f) Consideration of wind, rain, cold and lightning must be made when working outdoors.
- g) Toilet facilities are provided with soap, hot and cold water and hand towels.
- h) Potable drinking water is provided
- i) Accessible facilities for rest breaks and to eat meals.
- j) Suitable storage and maintenance facilities for personal protective equipment.

2.7 SAFE PEOPLE

2.7.1 Employee Responsibilities

Every employee of West Lothian Council should recognise the importance of working in a safe manner and environment. This will be taught on all induction courses and subsequent identified training. All employees must be aware of the general responsibilities outlined in section 2.5.3 of this policy and specific procedures in laminated related to job specific tasks.

2.7.2 Training and instruction

All new employees are required to undergo induction training. This training is intended to outline the safety culture and behaviours expected from all council employees. The following points will be covered on the induction course:

- a) Employer's and employee's responsibilities
- b) The accident and incident reporting procedure (Sphera)
- c) Actions to be carried out in reaction to an emergency evacuation
- d) The safe use of work equipment and PPE
- e) The safe use, handling, transport and storage of substances
- f) The importance of safe methods of work and risk assessment

Induction training is supplemented by more detailed training identified by risk assessment and legal requirements from the service. Refresher training must also be provided at regular intervals.

2.7.3 Stress

West Lothian Council is committed to promoting health and wellbeing at work and providing suitable support mechanisms for employees suffering from the effects of stress.

Managers have the responsibility to ensure risk assessments identify potential work place stressors and subsequent control measures with the objective of reducing harm from stress, so far as is reasonably practicable.

To assist in this process the council will:

- a) Provide suitable support mechanisms for employees suffering from the effects of stress.
- b) Encourage a working environment where employees who feel they are suffering from the effects of stress can approach their managers in confidence in order that necessary support mechanisms can be put in place.
- c) Offer suitable training to enable employees and managers to recognise symptoms of stress, the effects of stress at work, effective communication, handling difficult situations, time management and employee relations.
- d) Undertake general health promotion activities within the workplace.

2.7.4 Lone Working

Lone workers are employees carrying out specific work tasks unaccompanied, without direct supervision and without immediate access to another person should assistance be required. Specific risk assessments should be carried out for any situation where an individual's safety is put at additional risk due to lone working, potential exposure violence at work or where personal safety may be compromised.

All lone workers will be appropriately trained and instructed in all matters relating to their health and safety whilst lone working.

2.7.5 First Aid

First-aid requirements will be identified through a first aid needs assessment to ensure sufficient first aid personnel, equipment and facilities are provided within each workplace.

The first aid needs assessment shall identify the required numbers of trained first-aid personnel and necessary equipment to deal with potential injuries, accidents and ill health in each service. This must take account of specific needs of the service e.g. paediatric first aid.

Information on accessing first aid assistance and appropriate first aid training will be made available to employees to ensure statutory requirements and the needs of the organisation are met.

2.7.6 Manual Handling

Manual handling is one of the most common causes of incidents in the workplace and should be avoided so far as is reasonably practicable. Where manual handling is undertaken risk assessments will determine the level of risk with required necessary controls introduced to reduce the risk of injury. This will be to the lowest level reasonably practicable including provision of training, mechanical aids, automation, redesigning the work process or even the workplace itself.

2.7.7 Violence and Aggression

It is not part of any employee's duty to be subjected to verbal abuse, threats or physical

assault. The council expects employees will be treated with courtesy and respect by those we provide services to and equally expects employees to show courtesy and respect to others in the course of their work tasks.

Support and guidance will be offered to employees as is necessary to make sure that the effect of any such abuse is minimised. Employees are required to report incidents of violent behaviour through Sphera and their manager will investigate the incident, take action to prevent a recurrence and provide feedback on the outcomes of their investigation.

All employees will receive appropriate training to make sure they have the skills and knowledge to perform their duties to minimise the effects of exposure to violence and aggression.

2.7.8 New & Expectant Mothers

Risks associated with working operations that may pose risk to a new or expectant mother or to that of their baby will be managed by the ongoing process of individual specific risk assessment.

2.7.9 Medication (Management & Administration)

Services responsible for management of medicines or administration to other will make sure there is a structured approach in order that management and staff can apply consistent and effective practices in respect of the management of medication.

2.7.10 Occupational Health Arrangements

The aim of the council's occupational health provision is to prevent ill health and to promote good health at work. The broad aims are to develop employee health services by promoting health screening, surveillance, preventative medical services and to develop health promotion and education initiatives as appropriate.

The Occupational Health Service provided will depend on the nature of the work activity. All Service areas will have access to occupational health services which will be co-ordinated by HR Services.

Health and Safety can provide advice on matters relating to occupational health hazards. Services will be responsible for ensuring they have an appropriate health surveillance system in place according to work related tasks.

2.7.11 Employee and Safety Representatives

The importance of employee involvement and the role played by Trade Union representatives appointed under The Safety Representatives and Committees Regulations 1977 is recognised. The appointment of employee representatives and/or trade union representatives will be encouraged. Assistance will be provided to those representatives so they can reasonably carry out their functions as detailed in regulations.

This will include decisions involving work equipment, processes, risk assessments training and technology which could have health and safety consequences for employees and services will allow adequate time to:

- (a) provide trade union representatives with information about proposals;
- (b) give trade union representatives an opportunity to express their views about the matter in the light of that information; and
- (c) take account of any response provided.

Health and Safety committees will meet at intervals determined appropriate to the needs of corporate and service functions. The terms of health and safety committees will be reviewed on an annual basis.

2.8 SAFE PROCEDURES

2.8.1 Risk Assessment and Safe Systems of Work

Each task is to be critically examined for hazards. Appropriate safe working procedures are to be developed, recorded and adopted with appropriate training given. Regulation 3 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 makes it a legal requirement to carry out risk assessments. As West Lothian Council employs more than 5 people there is also a legislative responsibility to record these assessments. Risk assessments will formally identify the hazards and show the control measures implemented to reduce the likelihood and / or consequence of injury, ill health or damage

Assistance from the respective Health and Safety Adviser can be sought to achieve this. Assessments are to be brought to the attention of employees within that service area, recorded in the online safety management system (Sphera) and revised annually as a minimum.

Method statements (safe systems of work) are to be formally recorded for tasks that create a significant risk to employees. These statements will identify the requirements for that specific task such as training, equipment, testing, emergency procedures and first aid requirements. Employees delegated to complete these responsibilities must be aware of the safe system of work prior to engaging in the task.

2.8.2 Permit to work

A Permit to Work (PTW) is a communication that forms part of a safe system of work, issued by the responsible person. Before work commences a responsible person will assess the risks involved and where necessary will eliminate or control it. The person receiving the permit must sign the permit to confirm that they understand the limits of the work that can be carried out and the precautions that have to be taken. When the work has been completed, or has to be suspended, the responsible person must sign off the permit and communicate this fact to any stakeholders in the task. A register of PTW shall be kept and be accessible in all services.

2.8.3 Accident and Incident reporting

All accidents and incidents occurring at work are to be recorded on the corporate online safety management system, Sphera. As much detailed information as possible, including corrective action, should be included in the accident report. This includes injury, damage or loss of plant, equipment or materials. Near misses are also to be recorded to establish whether corrective action is required to eradicate dangerous trends. Service Managers and Heads of Service are to check their service entries in the online safety management regularly.

All incidents reportable under The Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) will be reported to the relevant enforcement body. The Health and Safety Manager will be notified of all RIDDOR notifications and reports will be made in conjunction with Health and Safety Advisers.

Managers, Head Teachers have the responsibility for ensuring all incidents, accidents and near misses are reported within required timescales and an appropriate investigation is created and completed in SPHERA as detailed in corporate procedures.

The Health and Safety Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating all serious health and safety incidents and near misses in conjunction with health and safety advisers. In these incidents the Health and Safety Manager will liaise with the HSE, the Council's Risk and Insurance Section and report directly to the relevant Depute Chief Executive and Head of Service or will nominate a health and safety adviser to lead the investigation.

A serious health and safety incident or near miss is an event that leads to, or could lead to

reportable cases of ill health, injury or any other criteria stipulated in the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR) Regulations. Managers will be responsible for informing the Health and Safety Manager as quickly as possible following an incident of this type. More information can be found within the incident reporting guidance on My Toolkit, <https://intranet.westlothian.gov.uk/article/29169/Incident-Reporting--Investigation>) however when in doubt, advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Manager.

Health and Safety must be notified all types of incidents that have led to an individual (employee or third party) being conveyed to hospital by whatever means because of the extent of their injuries. This notification must be made as soon as practicable by telephone, followed up by an email to HealthandSafety@westlothian.gov.uk.

Information on incidents shall be shared with employee and safety representatives to meet the requirements of The Safety Representatives and Committees Regulations 1977.

2.9 SAFE EQUIPMENT

The Provision of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 implements legislation on health and safety standards for work equipment. Any work equipment used in or in connection with West Lothian Council activities must be designed for that specific purpose and properly maintained.

All equipment issued for use in the workplace must be safe. It is to be checked prior to use by the operator and where appropriate or required must be regularly examined by a competent person, e.g. lifting equipment and the results recorded in a register. The frequency of checks will be determined by manufacturer's instructions and risk assessment. Equipment must only be issued to those properly trained to use it and only used for the intentions of its design. This is the responsibility of the manager.

Defective, incorrect or incorrectly used equipment can cause a variety of accidents. More detailed information can be found in the respective guidance documents. The following steps and precautions are required:

- a) Work equipment will only be used for the purposes for which it is designed.
- b) Equipment must be maintained and in good condition. All guards for dangerous machinery parts will be inspected as per manufacturer's guidance.
- c) Suitable information and training must be provided to anyone using the equipment.

2.9.1 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Service procedures shall be implemented to ensure no work is carried out which is liable to expose employees or others to any product, chemical or substance hazardous to health.

A suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks and steps needed to reduce the risks shall be undertaken using the online safety management system SPHERA. Exposure to hazardous products, chemicals or substances will either be prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled. Measures introduced to control exposure will be maintained, monitored and tested to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose. Information, instruction and training will be given to employees working with substances that may be hazardous to health. Where it is required by risk assessment each service will make arrangements for employees to be included in a health surveillance programme.

2.9.2 Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER)

All services will ensure all lifting equipment provided for use at work meets the requirements stated in the Corporate Procedure and all lifting operations are planned in accordance with legislative requirements.

2.9.3 Noise

All reasonable steps necessary will be taken to ensure potential hearing damage is reduced to a minimum. Service noise assessments must identify required actions to reduce noise levels and / or exposure times implemented as alternatives to personal protective equipment. Ear defenders will be provided only as a last resort means of controlling exposure to noise. Where it is required by risk assessment each service will arrange for employees to be included in an audiometric health surveillance programme.

Services will provide adequate training. Employees will be provided with readily understood information about the harmful effects of noise and what they must do in order to protect themselves.

2.9.4 Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protective Equipment

Risk assessment will identify the need for use for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE). Its use will be the final control method and

alternative methods for reducing identified risks will be implemented as far as are reasonably practicable.

When PPE / RPE is to be used as a control measure, services are instructed to consult with employees and their representatives, to carry out a full assessment to determine its suitability and compatibility with other items of PPE / RPE, the identification and provision of adequate storage, training and maintenance arrangements, which will be provided, at no cost to the employee.

2.9.5 Transport

All reasonably practicable measures will be taken to make sure high standards of health, safety and welfare are implemented for when vehicles are used as part of work activities. Managing workplace transport safety involves controlling a wide range of matters including vehicle safety, driving, loading / unloading, towing, vehicle operation etc.

Services will provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and provide the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision required for this purpose.

2.9.6 Work at Height

Risk assessment shall identify operations where employees are expected to work at height. The planning of working at Height must follow the Corporate Procedure <https://intranet.westlothian.gov.uk/article/29177/Risk-Assessment> insofar as:

- Avoiding work at height where possible.
- Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid working at height.
- Where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

2.9.7 Vibration

Services will implement procedures to comply with the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations. This will include identifying and assessing the magnitude of existing vibration risks and the implementation of control measures to eliminate or reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable. Competent people will be designated in each service to assess the vibration levels of work equipment (including existing work equipment or sample equipment being assessed for purchase) to make sure that vibration levels fall within safe limits. This will be monitored to ensure any exposure stays within acceptable tolerances.

Where required employees shall be included and participate in a health surveillance programme.

2.10 Purchasing Equipment

Many safety issues can be solved at the procurement stage by purchasing the correct equipment for the task. The following points are required to be considered for safety purposes prior to purchasing equipment:

- a) All equipment must be purchased and used only for the intended use it was designed for.
- b) All electrical equipment must be CE marked.
- c) Consideration must be given to aspects such as vibration, noise, PPE, storage and disposal requirements prior to procurement.
- d) Equipment designed to hold or lift a load must be load tested with a certificate of compliance.

- e) Consideration should be given to the entire life cycle of the equipment including commissioning, testing, maintenance (including insurance inspections), and spare parts and decommissioning.
- f) Services must make arrangements for assessing the suitability of work equipment with respect to its initial integrity, the place where it will be used and the purpose for which it will be used.
- g) Services must make arrangements for the suitable maintenance, inspection, information, instruction and training. Services must also make specific provision for conformity with European Community requirements, specific dangers, markings and warnings and mobile work equipment.

2.11 Contractors

Contractors are required to provide evidence of health and safety competence prior to working on council projects. This process identifies that contractors carrying work on behalf of West Lothian Council will have the correct qualifications, skill set, and safe systems of work, risk assessments and insurances in place.

The same conditions apply when the Principal Contractor (PC) sub contracts the work out. In this instance the PC must carry out their due diligence and evidence to the Council that the sub-contractor is competent to carry out the works safely.

Periodic inspections should be carried out on contracted works by the designated project officer, Clerk of Works etc. The council will monitor the activities of contractors to minimise the risks presented to employees and to other persons on site or within council buildings including members of the public.

2.12 Construction

Services involved in construction work will take appropriate steps to make sure that such work is planned in accordance with relevant standards or statutory provisions (principally the CDM Regulations).

They must also make sure that all persons at all levels have the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their duties. Employees must be provided with the necessary information relating to any risks arising out of the work, the preventive or protective measures to be taken, and the procedures required in the event of serious or imminent danger.

These regulations also contain specific provisions relating to how all construction work is carried out. Inter-Service organisation and arrangements must be in place to make sure that relevant duties are allocated to competent persons where a council service performs a multi-functional role for CDM (i.e. any combination of the following duty holders - clients, principal designers, designers, principal contractors, and contractors). The person or section with skills, knowledge and experience must be provided with adequate resources to carry out those duties. Arrangements must be in place to make sure duties are clear, concise and there is no ambiguity between duty holders.

2.13 Measurement of Health and Safety Performance

In order to demonstrate health and safety standards are being achieved it is necessary to measure performance against pre-determined plans and objectives. Any areas where the standards are not being met will require remedial action.

Safety Monitoring is a general term to describe the formal and structured examination of safety in a workplace. It is carried out by management at various intervals in order to build up a comprehensive picture of safety, health and welfare. It can involve the following activities:

- a) **Safety Tour.** A safety tour is a general review of the workplace without a set formal plan.
- b) **Safety Inspection.** A safety inspection is done by appointed safety representatives and/or health and safety. It is a detailed inspection of the workplace to identify hazards, unsafe working conditions and inadequate safety conditions.
- c) **Safety Sampling.** A safety sample is carried out by a nominated employee in their workplace, against a check list and at frequent intervals, to identify where accidents could occur and any conditions which could affect the workforce.
- d) **Safety Survey.** A safety survey is an examination of a specified working area i.e. firefighting equipment to provide detailed information about inadequately controlled hazards. It can also confirm the safety instructions are relevant and up to date.
- e) **Safety Audit.** A safety audit is a thorough detailed examination of the service area by a person that is suitably qualified. This will provide detailed information in relation to a specific topic or area of the overall assessment of safety across the area and a measure against which subsequent audits can be judged in order to identify areas for improvement.

2.14 Reviewing Health and Safety Performance

The Corporate Management team understand the importance of making informed judgements on the adequacy of health and safety performance across the council and in each service area. Information will be gathered and reviewed on both success and failures to allow a continuous process of review to be undertaken at Corporate and Service levels. It must be demonstrable by all services that health and safety performance is being monitored, reviewed and actions to remedy failures or implement workplace precautions can be easily identified. Key performance indicators will be monitored at Corporate and Service levels.

The Health and Safety Manager will ensure that health and safety management systems are monitored regularly and audited, which may result in reviews of certain policies, procedures and activities. This shall include reviewing this safety policy document to ensure its continued effectiveness. Regular safety inspections and surveys are to be carried out by managers and safety representatives to ensure health and safety systems and controls are complied with. Any action points raised during these inspections and assessment shall be addressed. Monitoring, auditing and reviewing are part of continual improvement.

PART 3

3.1 GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Where management action, risk assessment provision and other safety management system documentation is required further instruction and information will be published in the form of Corporate Procedures by Health and Safety. The documents will be a reference for legal obligations, set out responsibilities and provide detailed advice on best practice to comply with the council safety management system arrangements. The documents will be produced and published in consultation and with input from appropriate identified service personnel.

In addition to the Corporate Procedures a service standard of control will be achieved through specific risk assessments, procedural documents and safe systems of work. Additional procedures will be implemented pertaining to any activity particular to that Service. Service assessments will implement further controls or take any such alternative action which will achieve the same level of control in their specific circumstance. Where this is the case then the rationale for the actions taken should be fully documented in the risk assessment process.

Guidance Documents are available on My Toolkit –

<https://intranet.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2197/Health-Safety-and-Welfare>