



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

2021/22 Corporate Health & Safety Policy Statement

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

Our Statement of Intent

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

We will continue to work hard to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic, ensuring the highest standards of infection prevention and control and safe systems of work are in place.

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

- Effective work life balance and a programme of staff engagement initiatives.
- Health Safety and wellbeing is embedded throughout our new ways of working programme.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyle (including physical activity and healthy eating);
- A strong focus on mental wellbeing issues (including work related stress).
- A strong focus on infection prevention and control.

To promote a **positive safety culture**, we will focus on:

- Strong corporate commitment from Council Leaders and Managers.
- Regular engagement and co-production of improvement initiatives working with employees and recognised Trade Union colleagues.
- Suitable and sufficient risk assessments, safe working practices and arrangements for controlling hazards.
- Compliance with legislation and meeting best practice.
- Effective monitoring of our health and safety performance and audit of our H&S management systems.
- Maintaining a positive attitude towards achieving health and safety objectives.
- Implementing effective training, communication and awareness campaigns.
- Sufficient resources and capacity to benchmark with others, and to investigate and learn from accidents, near misses and safety performance indicators to strive for continual improvement.

Arrangements to achieve our aims

We will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that suitable arrangements are in place to provide safe premises, working environments, safe equipment and safe systems of work. We will provide information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the highest possible levels of health and safety are achieved and maintained.

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

These include:

- Provision of health and safety support to all council services including maintained schools and settings.
- Provision of health and safety advice to employees and elected members.
- High health and safety standards expected and monitored for commissioned services and contractors that deliver services on behalf of the Council.
- Strong audit and risk management systems to ensure that health and safety arrangements are suitable and sufficient.
- Health, safety and wellbeing information communicated via the In-Touch intranet site and other relevant methods.
- Targeted health and safety related training provided in a variety of delivery formats.

- Close working and co-chairing arrangements with recognised Trade Union representatives on joint health and safety initiatives.
- Health and Safety Committees at various levels of the council with up to date terms of reference to encourage two way communication.
- Access to a professional occupational health service.

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

Health & Safety Roles and Responsibilities

Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility and all elected members, staff, trade union representatives and contractors working on behalf of the Council are expected to:

- Adopt excellent health and safety standards.
- Comply with legislation, policies and procedures; and engage in the reporting and investigation of health and safety issues/incidents.

Corporate Governance

The Corporate Health and Safety Group will lead on corporate health, safety and wellbeing issues and engage with staff, members and contractors at all levels. Corporate health and safety procedures will be reviewed, updated and approved by the Corporate Health and Safety Group following co-production and consultation.

Senior Officer Governance

The Senior Officer Health & Safety Group ensures an Assistant Director and Senior Management level forum for discussion and monitoring of cross cutting health, safety and wellbeing issues affecting the Council and our contractors; are relevant to more than one directorate; require corporate investment; or have not been resolved through other discussions.

Directorate Governance

Executive Directors, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Finance are responsible for maintaining high standards of health, safety and welfare within their own Directorates consistent with this health and safety policy statement and in line with Corporate Health & Safety procedures. Each Directorate Management Team (working with recognised Trade Unions through Directorate Health and Safety Committee) will manage activity for health and safety improvement. This activity will be regularly reviewed and where necessary will require further written documentation develop action plans and arrangements for improved health and safety to ensure specific risk areas are addressed within the Directorate.

Safety Practitioners Group

Chaired by the Senior Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager, this forum enables health and safety professionals to discuss and share health and safety experiences across the Council and wider professional sectors. This assists the development of corporate health and safety procedures and ensures that emerging issues can be escalated to the Corporate Health and Safety Group, DMT's or Directorate Health and Safety Groups as appropriate.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors throughout the council have responsibility not only for their own health and safety but also for that of employees within their teams or those accessing the services provided.

Elected Members

Elected Members will champion a strong health and safety culture and consider health and safety implications in all key decisions through for example Cabinet and Full Council reports and recommendations.

Individual Responsibility

All elected members, staff, trade union representatives and contractors regardless of role have a duty to ensure healthy and safe working practices are followed, not only for their personal benefit, but also for those working around them or for customers in receipt of their services.

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

Performance Management and Ongoing Learning

To ensure continual improvement and adequate health and safety standards are being achieved, governance and performance management systems are in place to monitor progress. This includes Health and Safety action plans, audit findings and monitoring of accident and work-related ill health data.

Wherever possible, health and safety performance and safe ways of working will be benchmarked against available data, other Local Authorities, HSE and wider industry best practice to seek to achieve continual performance improvements and ongoing learning. The Corporate Health and Safety Team will produce quarterly dashboard reports summarising key health and safety metrics for reporting to Directorate Management Teams, Corporate Management Team and the Corporate Health & Safety Group.

Overall, the Organisations health and safety performance will be reported annually to the Council's Cabinet by way of the Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report. Interim updates will be provided on a quarterly basis (or by exception as required) to the Cabinet Member Environment who has portfolio responsibilities that include Corporate Health and Safety.

Think Safe, Be Safe

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

Review

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

Further Information

This statement represents a summary of the Corporate Health and Safety arrangements in place for Cumbria County Council for 2021/2022. More detailed arrangements can be found on the Council website.

Procedures which will be made freely available to all interested parties and can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

Councillor Stewart Young
Leader of the Council
July 2021

Councillor Celia Tibble
Portfolio Holder for Environment (incl Corporate Health & Safety portfolio)
July 2021

John Readman
Deputy Chief Executive
July 2021