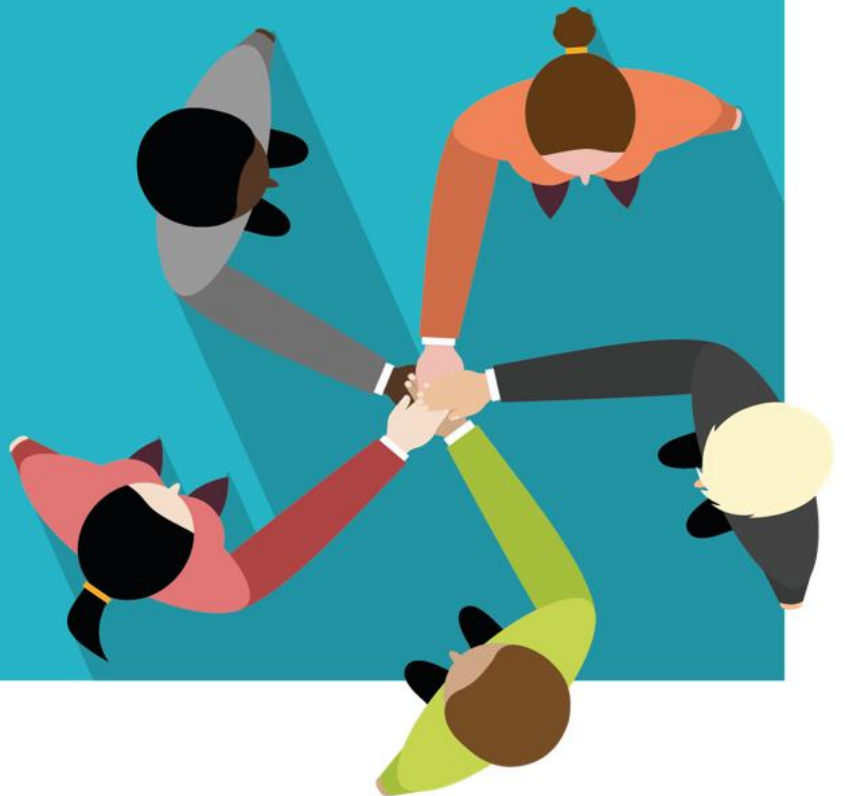

Health and Safety Policy

South Oxfordshire
and
Vale of White Horse District Councils





Change Record	
Policy Title	Health and Safety Policy
Version Number	10
Owner(s)	Health and Safety
Author(s)	Chief Executive, Health and Safety
Change details	Periodic review
Approved by	Health and Safety, Unison, SMT
Approved Date	16 July 2025
Effective date	16 July 2025
Renewal date	31 January 2027



Contents

1.0	STATEMENT of INTENT	3
2.0	ORGANISATION and RESOURCE	5
3.0	SAFETY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	6
4.0	REPORTS, AUDITS, REVIEWS and MONITORING.....	8
5.0	INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES	9
Appendix 1 – Councils Safety Organisation Chart.....		16
Appendix 2 – Specific Health and Safety Responsibilities.....		17



1.0 STATEMENT of INTENT

- 1.1 South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council (the councils) recognise our responsibilities to our employees and will do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure their health, safety and welfare at work.
- 1.2 The councils will so far as reasonably practicable, ensure that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk by our activities, services, and undertakings.
- 1.3 This Health and Safety Policy applies to all council employees and all councillors.
- 1.4 The councils will develop and implement a health and safety management system following the Health and Safety Executive's guidance and current statutory requirements.
- 1.5 The councils give matters of health and safety equal importance to those of economy and productivity and seek improvement in health and safety performance year on year.
- 1.6 The councils believe that injuries and ill-health suffered at work can be prevented through effective management control and intervention.
- 1.7 The councils will provide safety information, instruction, and training to our employees and those directly engaged to provide services to or by the councils.
- 1.8 The councils will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of these arrangements and the safety performance of the councils.
- 1.9 The councils will manage accidents and near misses in accordance with legislation and best practice.
- 1.10 The councils provide competent resource in the field of health and safety to provide guidance to councilors and employees.
- 1.11 The councils will consult with all employees on matters of health and safety.
- 1.12 The councils will review this Health and Safety Policy on a three-yearly cycle.
- 1.13 The councils will promote a drug and alcohol-free workplace and encourage employees to report potential drug and alcohol issues in their respective workplaces.
- 1.14 Disciplinary action (including dismissal, where appropriate) may be taken against any employee found to be in breach of their personal responsibilities either under safety legislation or under the councils' Health and Safety Policy.

Signed: Suzanne Malcolm, Deputy Chief Executive Place

Date: 16 July 2025





2.0 ORGANISATION and RESOURCE

- 2.1. The councils' safety organisation chart (see Appendix 1) illustrates the lines of responsibility for health and safety within the councils.
- 2.2. The ultimate responsibility for safety within the councils lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive assumes the role of the councils' Safety Director.
- 2.3. Health and Safety has a dedicated monthly update at the Strategic Management Team (SMT) meetings, to advise and report on health and safety issues and performance.
- 2.4. The councils have appointed suitably qualified Health and Safety professionals to advise and assist managers on all aspects of the councils health and safety management system.
- 2.5. Deputy Chief Executives, Heads of Service and Service Managers are responsible for health and safety matters within their areas of control and will ensure implementation of this Policy and the provision of appropriate resource for implementation of this Policy.
- 2.6. The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, Heads of Service, Service Managers and Team Leaders have responsibility for health and safety matters relating to persons reporting directly to them.
- 2.7. Every employee will take care of their own health and safety and that of others whom their acts or omissions at work may affect.
- 2.8. All employees are expected to monitor health and safety issues at their workplaces and report matters of concern to their line managers.
- 2.9. Every councillor will take care for their own health and safety and for others whom their acts or omissions whilst carrying out their duties may affect.



3.0 SAFETY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- 3.1. Safety targets will be agreed by SMT each year and subsequently publicised. The councils aim to have no reportable accidents, no lost time accidents and no reportable dangerous occurrences as their ultimate goal.
- 3.2. Standards required by law and the councils' safety policy, procedures codes and guidance notes will be implemented at all council locations. In addition, all locations are encouraged to put in place initiatives to improve safety standards based on local risks.
- 3.3. Risk assessments relating to work activities will be carried out in accordance with the councils' Risk Assessment Code.
- 3.4. Risk assessments covering all council land, buildings, equipment, including disused areas, will be carried out in accordance with the councils' Risk Assessment Code.
- 3.5. Risk assessments will be kept under review to ensure that the risks to the health or safety of employees, tenants, contractors, visitors, and the public are prevented or controlled through appropriate measures.
- 3.6. Risk assessments will be undertaken by competent persons and findings documented and shared. Where relevant, risk assessments will be developed into safe systems of work and communicated to those affected.
- 3.7. All projects and new business activities involving significant risks to health or safety shall be the subject of a documented safety review, involving the relevant Head of Service / Service Manager and Health and Safety Advisor.
- 3.8. Safety training for employees will be kept under review and carried out in accordance with the councils' Safety Training Code.
- 3.9. Safety policies, procedures, codes and guidance notes have been written and implemented as the safety management system and to support the development of safe systems of work.
- 3.10. **It is the responsibility of all line managers to ensure that the safety management system is implemented.**
- 3.11. The councils will ensure the effective implementation of the health and safety management system and communication of matters to all staff to establish a positive health and safety culture throughout.
- 3.12. At each location, adequate measures will be in place to deal with foreseeable emergencies. This includes first aid, fire and documented emergency plans, as appropriate to the level of risk. Documented emergency plans will be exercised periodically.



- 3.13. Information relating to accidents and incidents at each location, along with other relevant information, shall be communicated to employees as required.
- 3.14. The councils' equipment, buildings, structures, and other areas will be inspected and maintained in line with statutory requirements and the councils' inspection procedures. Records will be kept in respect of inspections and maintenance.
- 3.15. Regular contact with tenants, contractors and other agencies will include discussions covering health and safety issues.
- 3.16. Any requirements for modification or revision should be notified to the councils' Health and Safety Advisor.



4.0 REPORTS, AUDITS, REVIEWS and MONITORING

- 4.1. Annually, all service areas will establish safety targets and report on these in the form of an Annual Safety Review to their relevant Deputy Chief Executive.
- 4.2. The Deputy Chief Executive responsible for each area will summarise performance against these targets in auditable reports to the Chief Executive.
- 4.3. At each location, safety performance standards will be monitored by way of safety inspections, audits and reviews.
- 4.4. Health and safety incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be recorded and thoroughly investigated to ensure that effective measures are taken to reduce likelihood and severity of recurrence.
- 4.5. All health and safety incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be notified to the councils' health and safety team in line with the councils' health and safety Incident reporting and investigation code.
- 4.6. Health and Safety, or their appointed representative, will audit all services on a three-year cycle.
- 4.7. SMT will be provided with monthly reports and half-yearly reviews of health and safety performance as a minimum. Health and Safety may present an overview of updates at SMT as deemed appropriate.
- 4.8. The Health and Safety team will consult with recognised trade unions, namely UNISON, on Health and Safety matters that impact council staff, in accordance with the Collective Agreement and as specified in the Health and Safety Policy and Code Review process.



5.0 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Councillors

- 5.1.1 Councillors are not responsible for managing health and safety services on a day-to-day basis but must understand the strategic way in which they can affect health and safety management in the councils.
- 5.1.2 Councillors will have both individual and collective governance responsibilities.
- 5.1.3 Councillors responsibilities are to:
- Ensure that the Chief Executive has in place an effective Health and safety policy and management system.
 - Hold to account the Chief Executive for the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy
 - Ensure that decision-making systems allow for health and safety implications to be given appropriate and proper consideration and are in line with the councils' policies and procedures
 - The Cabinet Members for Property are the lead councillors for health and safety for each council and will receive monthly updates on health and safety, along with copies of the Health and Safety half yearly reports and details of major incidents and accidents.
 - The Joint Audit and Governance Committee are responsible for scrutinising the councils' health and safety performance through the half-yearly reports to the Committee.



5.2 Chief Executive

In addition to the duties in sections 5.3 and 5.8, they must:

- 5.2.1 Ensure the councils have an effective health and safety management structure for the implementation of the councils' Health and Safety management system.
- 5.2.2 Ensure that effective monitoring takes place within the councils on the implementation of the councils' Health and safety management system.
- 5.2.3 Receive oral and written reports from Deputy Chief Executives and other relevant Managers, on major and board of enquiry incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences and report to the cabinet member as necessary.
- 5.2.4 Delegate, where appropriate, investigations of serious incidents and dangerous occurrences (or other safety related issues) to the most appropriate competent persons.
- 5.2.5 Receive regular reports from the Health and Safety Advisor on the safety performance of the organisation, and annual reports from the Deputy Chief Executives on the safety performance of their areas of responsibility.
- 5.2.6 Periodically, review the safety performance of the organisation with the Health and Safety Advisor and, as appropriate, with the Deputy Chief Executives.
- 5.2.7 Review and endorse this policy at least every three years and to ratify its enactment through the councils.

5.3 Deputy Chief Executives

In addition to the duties in section 5.8, for all aspects under their control they must:

- 5.3.1 Ensure the implementation of the councils' Health and Safety management system and other procedures with particular reference to the safety performance standards detailed in section 3.
- 5.3.2 Ensure their teams are provided with appropriate support to implement the requirements of the councils Health and Safety management system and other procedures.
- 5.3.3 Seek advice and assistance on health and safety matters concerning their areas from Health and Safety.
- 5.3.4 Ensure that all projects and new business activities involving significant foreseeable risks to health or safety are subject to a documented safety review.



- 5.3.5 Ensure appropriate policies and processes are established for the planning, design, construction, specification, procurement, maintenance, inspection and disposal of plant, equipment, substances and property within the councils undertaking.
- 5.3.6 Ensure that the design, construction, specification, procurement, maintenance, inspection and disposal of plant, equipment, substances, and property are properly planned, subject to suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- 5.3.7 Ensure that adequate resources are available to meet health and safety targets.
- 5.3.8 Ensure that plant, equipment and property are inspected and maintained by competent persons in accordance with the councils' inspection and maintenance procedures and maintained to safe and compliant standards.
- 5.3.9 Ensure that health and safety is a regular agenda item at meetings with their management teams and those affecting health and safety and all staff within their service area are communicated to on matters of health and safety.
- 5.3.10 Where appropriate, to advise the Chief Executive on any related solutions to specific health and safety issues.
- 5.3.11 Report to the Chief Executive on the safety performance of their areas of responsibility.

5.4 Heads of Service

In addition to the duties in section 5.5 and 5.8, for areas under their control they must:

- 5.4.1 Ensure that managers and others under their responsibility carry out their respective duties within the requirements of this policy.
- 5.4.2 Ensure that all incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses are properly reported and investigated and that any remedial measures are identified, implemented, and monitored.
- 5.4.3 Ensure that their teams deliver the health and safety actions required on behalf of the relevant Deputy Chief Executive.
- 5.4.4 Present monthly and annual reports to their Deputy Chief Executive on the safety performance of their operation.
- 5.4.5 Ensure that all assets under their control are properly inspected and maintained, so as not to create a foreseeable risk to the health or safety of council's employees or other persons.



- 5.4.6 To support inspections of areas under their control with Health and Safety and/or other managers.
- 5.4.7 Ensure that health and safety is a major consideration in all projects and to ensure that formal, documented safety reviews take place at the appropriate time when there are significant health and safety risks.
- 5.4.8 Ensure that essential safety equipment is provided and maintained.
- 5.4.9 Ensure the training needs of employees under their responsibility are assessed provided and maintained.
- 5.4.10 Ensure that actions or matters arising from safety inspections, audits or following health and safety incidents are resolved.
- 5.4.11 Ensure matters of health and safety are effectively communicated and reported to the Deputy Chief Executive, as appropriate.

5.5 All Service Managers

In addition to the duties in section 5.6 and 5.8, for areas under their control they must:

- 5.5.1 Ensure the implementation of the councils' Health and Safety Policy, and health and safety management system, with particular reference to the safety performance standards detailed in section 3.
- 5.5.2 Ensure risk assessments are undertaken and safe systems of work are produced, communicated, implemented, and reviewed.
- 5.5.3 Ensure that emergency plans for their areas of responsibility are prepared, kept up to date and effective through regular reviews and periodic testing.
- 5.5.4 Seek advice and assistance on health and safety matters from Health and Safety team.
- 5.5.5 Carry out formal periodic health and safety inspections of areas under their responsibility on a planned basis and report to their Head of Service.
- 5.5.6 Actively promote safe working practices, to support a positive attitude to health and safety across the councils.
- 5.5.7 Ensure that all incidents, near misses and dangerous are reported via the incident reporting system in accordance with the health and Safety Incident Reporting and Investigation code.



- 5.5.8 Ensure that incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences properly investigated in accordance with health and safety code and any resulting actions are promptly implemented.
- 5.5.9 Ensure that actions or matters arising from safety inspections, audits or following health and safety incidents are resolved.
- 5.5.10 Ensure that the work carried out by contractors on behalf of the councils is properly managed in alignment with the councils' contractor management code.
- 5.5.11 Ensure that third parties likely to be affected by the councils undertaking, are informed of any risks to their health and safety.
- 5.5.12 Ensure that health and safety is a major consideration in all projects and to ensure that formal, documented safety reviews take place at the appropriate time when there are significant health and safety risks.
- 5.5.13 Ensure the training needs of employees under their responsibility are assessed provided and maintained.

5.6 All Team Leaders

In addition to the duties in section 5.8, for all areas under their control they must:

- 5.6.1 Assist health and safety in investigating incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences.
- 5.6.2 Actively report matters of concern in relation to health and safety.
- 5.6.3 Ensure risk assessments and safe systems of work relating to activities under their supervision are produced, adequately communicated, and fully implemented.
- 5.6.4 Encourage safe working practices, promote safety campaigns, and make suggestions to improve health and safety standards.
- 5.6.5 Ensure health and safety is regularly discussed at team meetings.
- 5.6.6 Assist those under their supervision to understand individual responsibilities and the contents of safe systems of work by undertaking and documenting regular toolbox talks.



5.7 Safety Management – Health and Safety Team/Advisor

In addition to duties in sections 5.8, for areas under their control they must:

- 5.7.1 Advise management on all aspects of health and safety at work, including the implementation of the councils' health and safety policy, codes and guidance notes within the overall Health and safety management system.
- 5.7.2 Keep abreast of changes in legislation and interpret new or amended legislation to ensure effectiveness of the councils' Health and safety management system and implementation of processes.
- 5.7.3 Support management in the investigation of incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be recorded and thoroughly investigated to ensure that effective measures are taken to reduce likelihood and severity of recurrence.
- 5.7.4 Maintain, incidents and near misses under review in order to identify any adverse trends and advise SMT through regular reporting.
- 5.7.5 Undertake formal periodic safety inspections and safety walkabouts with Service Managers on a planned basis and report to Heads of Service.
- 5.7.6 Establish appropriate safety training standards for implementation within the councils and assist in the planning and delivery of safety training.
- 5.7.7 Prepare reports and establish key performance indicators for reporting to SMT including highlighting trends requiring specific action.
- 5.7.8 Attend health and safety meetings as required, provide reports, advice, and guidance on health and safety performance and other health and safety issues.
- 5.7.9 Liaise with the enforcing authorities such as the Health and Safety Executive, Police and others including insurance on matters relating to health and safety at work.

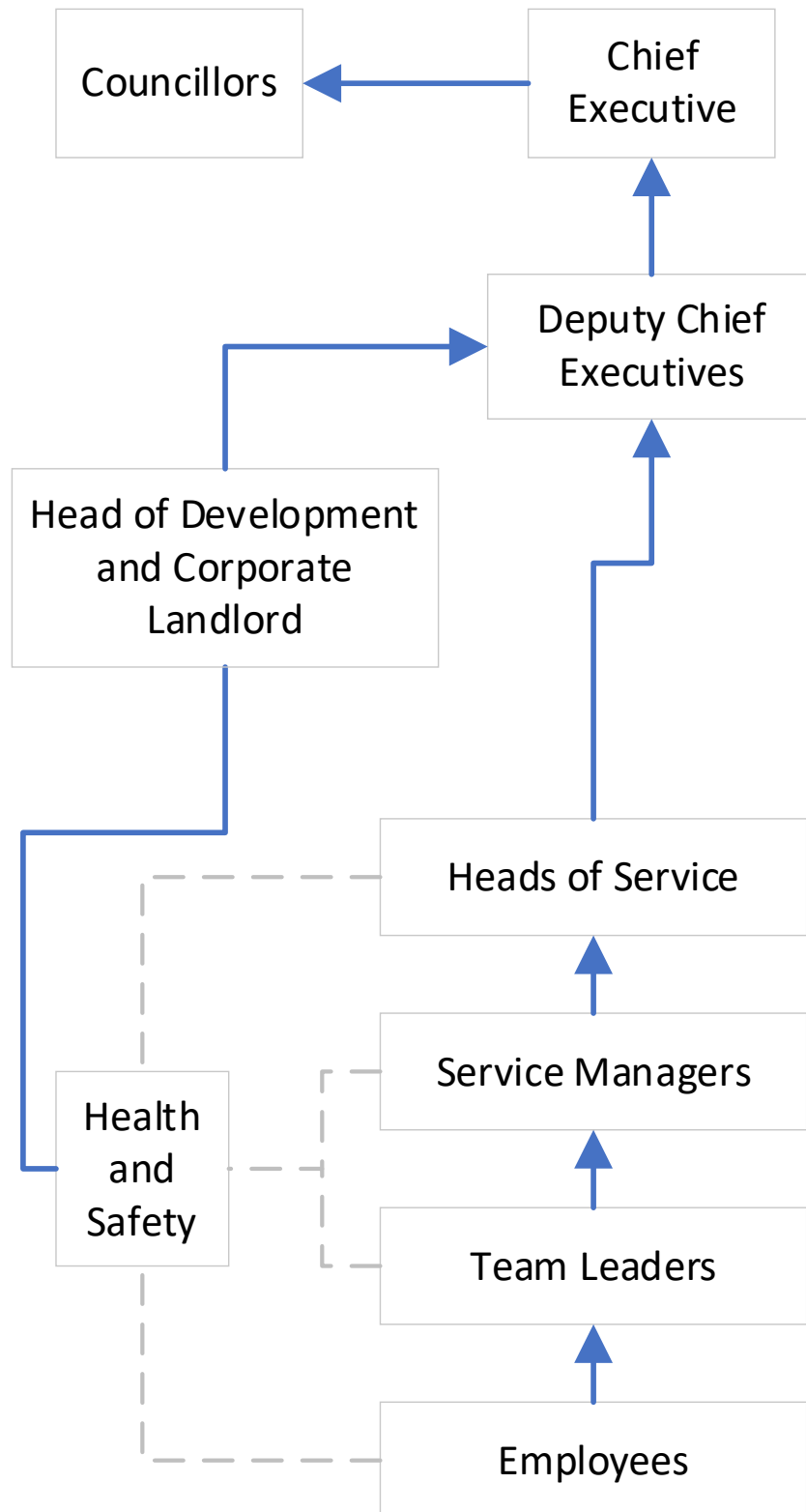


5.8 All Employees

- 5.8.1 Be aware of personal responsibilities for health and safety at work (see Appendix 2).
- 5.8.2 Comply with the councils' Health and safety policy, codes, guidance notes and safe systems of work.
- 5.8.3 Ensure that personal protective equipment is used in the appropriate manner and any defects are reported immediately to their team leader or manager.
- 5.8.4 Report to their team leader or manager and Health and Safety, immediately, any, incidents, near misses or hazards at their place of work, within areas and buildings for which the councils are responsible, including any query regarding health and safety issues or documents.
- 5.8.5 Co-operate in the risk assessment process and the production of safe systems of work, the investigation of incidents and near misses, in training programs and the achievement of health and safety targets.
- 5.8.6 Communicate suggestions for improving health and safety by reporting all potential hazards and risks to their team leader, manager and health and safety.
- 5.8.7 Use materials, buildings and equipment in accordance with the information, training and instruction given.



Appendix 1 – Councils Safety Organisation Chart





Appendix 2 – Specific Health and Safety Responsibilities

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974:

General duties of employers to their employees

Section 2 -

“It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees”

Section 3 –

“It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety”

General duties of employees at work

Section 7 –

“It shall be the duty of every employee while at work:

- to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and*
- as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him, so far as is necessary, to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.”*

Section 8 –

“No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any relevant statutory provisions.”

Offences due to fault of other person

Section 36 –

“Offences due to fault of other persons. Where the commission by any person of an offence under any of the relevant statutory provisions is due to the act or default of some other person, that other person shall be guilty of the offence, and a person may be charged with and convicted of the offence, by virtue of this subsection whether or not proceedings are taken against the first mentioned person.”



Offences by bodies corporate

Section 37 –

“Where an offence under any of the relevant statutory provisions committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to have been attributable to any neglect on the part of any director/ executive, manager, secretary or other similar officer of that body corporate, or a person who was purporting to act in any such capacity, he as well as the body corporate shall be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.”