



HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

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This Health and Safety Policy was adopted by the council at its meeting held on 26th May 2026. Reviewed and updated May 2026 to reflect the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 and the Employment Rights Act 2025.

Health and Safety Policy

1. Introduction

Safety, as with all aspects of the Council's undertakings, must be properly and cost-effectively managed.

Ashington Town Council is committed to complying with the letter and spirit of the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** and all other relevant legislation, including:

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Working at Height Regulations 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) 2015

These requirements are considered minimum standards.

Employees have a right to work in safe and healthy conditions. These conditions will be created and maintained through this Health and Safety Policy.

The Council and its Managers recognise that Health and Safety is an integral function of management. Training, consultation, supervision, and monitoring are key to discharging these responsibilities.

The Council undertakes to:

- Provide suitable Health and Safety training and information to employees
- Promote a positive safety culture
- Continuously review and improve its Health and Safety performance

This policy will be issued to all employees and will be subject to review annually or after any significant change in legislation or Council operations.

2. Aims of the Policy

- To control risks to employees, service users, contractors, and the public.
- To create a positive Health and Safety culture across all Council departments.
- To ensure compliance by all contractors and third parties.
- To ensure that Health and Safety is a core consideration in all Council decisions.
- To promote Councillor and Manager awareness of their personal responsibilities.

3. Objectives of the Policy

- Always comply with relevant Health and Safety legislation, codes of practice, and guidance.
- Identify hazards and assess risks effectively.
- Implement appropriate control measures.
- Establish and maintain emergency procedures.
- Provide safe systems of work, safe equipment, and a healthy working environment.
- Provide suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and ensure its proper use.
- Ensure appropriate health surveillance where required.
- Manage contractors safely and ensure their compliance.
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensure effective training, supervision, and employee consultation.

4. Responsibilities

The Council will:

- Set and monitor Health and Safety Policy.
- Provide adequate resources to control risks.
- Ensure sufficient insurance is maintained.
- Periodically review and approve the Policy.

Managers will:

- Implement this Policy in their areas of responsibility.
- Conduct regular risk assessments.
- Report accidents, incidents, and near misses.
- Ensure employees understand fire evacuation and first aid arrangements.
- Consult and cooperate with Safety Representatives.
- Maintain good housekeeping and safe practices.

Executive Officer will:

- Advise Councillors on Health and Safety obligations.
- Investigate serious accidents and incidents.
- Oversee risk assessments and safe systems of work.
- Coordinate training requirements.
- Monitor contractor performance.
- Take proactive steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the workplace and in the course of their work, in accordance with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality

Act 2010) Act 2023. This includes ensuring risk assessments consider harassment risks, that staff are aware of reporting routes, and that any concerns raised are acted on promptly. From October 2026 the Employment Rights Act 2025 elevates this duty to taking "all reasonable steps" and extends it to cover harassment by third parties including members of the public and contractors.

All Employees will:

- Comply with this Policy and procedures.
- Report hazards, defects, accidents, and unsafe practices.
- Use PPE and safety equipment as instructed.
- Take reasonable care for their own and others' Health and Safety.
- Cooperate with management to fulfil legal duties.

New Employees will additionally:

- Familiarise themselves with emergency procedures.
- Understand accident reporting processes.

5. First Aid

- First Aid kits will be provided and maintained.
- Qualified First Aiders' names and contact details will be displayed.
- Serious injuries must be reported immediately to the Executive Officer.
- First Aid training will be refreshed regularly.

6. Protective Clothing and Equipment

- PPE will be provided where risk assessments identify a need.
- Employees must maintain PPE and report defects.
- Storage facilities for PPE will be provided.

7. Evacuation Procedure

- Emergency evacuation procedures are detailed in the Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Plan for each location.
- Fire drills will be conducted at least annually.

8. Maintenance of Safe Working Conditions

- Managers will maintain safe and healthy workplaces.
- Firefighting equipment will be inspected regularly.
- Fire exits and escape routes must be kept clear at all times.

9. Safety Records

- All accidents and incidents must be recorded.
- An annual Health and Safety report will be presented to the Council.

10. Legal Implications

- Employees must take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- Employees must cooperate with the Council in meeting Health and Safety duties.
- Breaches may result in disciplinary action or prosecution.

11. Improvement and Prohibition Notices

Employees must inform the Executive Officer immediately if served with an Improvement or Prohibition Notice.

12. Notice of Prosecution

Employees must immediately inform the Executive Officer if they receive notice of prosecution.

13. Health and Safety Arrangements

Key arrangements cover:

- Accident Prevention
- Contractors Management
- Power and Hand Tools
- Eye Protection
- Electrical Safety
- Manual Handling
- Gas Safety
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Display Screen Equipment Assessments
- Working at Height
- Lone Working — lone working risk assessments must consider the risk of harassment and threatening behaviour from members of the public, particularly for staff working in public-facing or outdoor roles. The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 and the Employment Rights Act 2025 third-party harassment duty reinforce the Council's obligation to take reasonable steps to protect lone workers from harassment in the course of their duties. Lone working procedures are maintained separately.

Detailed procedures and Safe Working Practices are maintained separately.

Appendix A: Accident Reporting Procedure

- All accidents, incidents, and near misses must be reported immediately to line managers.
- An accident report form (AR1) must be completed.
- Certain injuries, diseases, and dangerous occurrences must be reported under RIDDOR.
- Timely and accurate reporting enables trend analysis and risk control.