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Michael Laing Chief Executive

19th June 2007

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **27th JUNE 2007** at **6.00PM**.

AGENDA

	Page No.
1 Apologies for absence.	
2. To consider the Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on 28 th March 2007 as a true record.	Copies previously circulated
3. To consider the Authority's 2005/06 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.	1 - 3
4. To consider a Schedule of Fees in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005.	4 – 11
5. To consider changes to the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.	12 – 17
6. To consider the Council's activities undertaken under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 over the period April 2006 to April 2007.	18 – 19
7. To consider the findings in the Quirk Review : Making Assets Work .	20 - 22
8. To consider the Audit Commission's report : Seeing the Light (Innovation)	23 - 27
9. To consider proposals relating to the draft procurement service level agreement for shared procurement services between Wear Valley and Teesdale District Councils.	28 – 37
10. To consider the revised policy for Corporate Communications and Branding Guidelines	38 – 66

11. To consider the forthcoming Health Profiles 2007. 67 - 72
12. To consider information relating to Best Value Performance 2006/2007 73 - 86
13. To receive information regarding the outcome from the Referendum on options for the Local Government Review in County Durham – Results to be circulated at the meeting.
14. To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Mrs Burn, Ferguson, Gale, Grogan, Hayton, Henry, Kay, Kingston, Mews, Mowbray, Murphy*, Ord ,Perkins, Mrs Pinkney, Mrs Seabury*, Stonehouse and Zair.

*ex officio, non-voting capacity.

Chair: Councillor Stonehouse

Deputy Chair: Councillor Kay

To: All Members of the Council
Management Team

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Resource Management **AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER**

purpose of report

1. To consider the Authority's 2005/06 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

background

2. Members will be aware that the Authority's appointed Auditors produce an annual Audit Letter covering the following areas:
 - (i) Council Performance.
 - (ii) Use of Resources judgement.
 - (iii) Accounts and Governance.
 - (iv) Any other work carried out.
3. The full Audit and Inspection Letter is shown in the separate document attached at Annex A.

2005/06 audit letter key messages and recommendations

4. The key messages contained within the letter are set out below:
 - "The Council's performance improved again during 2005/06. The quality of services improved and costs reduced in targeted areas. The implementation of the performance management framework is nearing completion.
 - As measured by the Direction of Travel 2005/06 basket of best value performance indicators (BVPIs), the Council's rate of improvement was above average for district councils, and it had more than the average number of BVPIs in the top quartile.
 - The Council has improved the arrangements in place to manage its finances in terms of financial management, financial standing, internal control and value for money".

financial and value for money Issues

5. "The key actions needed to further strengthen arrangements for the use of resources is:
 - Continue to develop external reporting of the financial statements with further consultation with stakeholders about the format of the summary accounts and whether the Council should produce an annual report.

- Continue to integrate the medium term financial strategy, business planning and the corporate plan.
- Continue to integrate and embed the asset management plan and capital strategy with the corporate plan.
- Continue to embed the assurance framework that maps the Council's strategic objectives to risks, controls and assurances, including the requirements of the new reporting protocol.
- Further analyse information on costs and performance to demonstrate a stronger link between high spending and corporate objectives.
- Demonstrate a clearer understanding of the impact of service reviews on customers and carry out post project consultation.
- Demonstrate the impact of investment in terms of improved services in addition to cost savings”.

6. The summary recommendations contained within the letter are:

“The Council should:

- Complete the implementation of the performance management framework and continue work to integrate the medium term financial strategy, business planning and the corporate plan;
- Further analyse costs and performance and take action where needed to clearly demonstrate the link between spending decisions and corporate objectives, particularly where services are relatively high cost;
- Demonstrate a clearer understanding of the impact of service reviews on service users and demonstrate the impact of investment in terms of improved services in addition to cost savings;
- Improve arrangements for diversity, in particular by completing and implementing the Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy and making progress on the Equality Standard for Local Government;
- Continue to develop external reporting of the financial statements with further consultation with stakeholders about the format of the summary accounts and whether the Council should produce an annual report; and
- Continue to embed the assurance framework that maps the Council's strategic objectives to risks, controls and assurances, including the requirements of the new reporting protocol”.

commentary

7. It is pleasing to note that the Authority's Auditors recognise that progress in achieving our priorities has continued and that BVPI results show further, sustained, improvement. This is a theme from previous Annual Audit and Inspection letters.
8. However there are several important points that merit further discussion. These are:

- (i) Capacity

All District Councils struggle with capacity and Wear Valley is no different. The requirements placed upon us by central government in relation to new legislation, changes in existing legislation, inspection regimes, responding to key lines of enquiries etc. etc. can only be met by 'feeding the beast', which comes at a price. This is thrown in to sharper progress by external issues such as local government review, changes to inspection regimes etc. However, officers consider that there exists a degree of capacity within the Council to respond to the issues raised in the audit letter.

- (ii) Value for Money (VFM)

It is pleasing to note that the Auditors have recognised the work done by the Council and giving us a score of 2 out of 4 i.e. adequate arrangements are in place. The Council acknowledges that further work is needed in this area which will be centred around implementing the Council's Value for Money strategy which is an action within the 2006/07 Council Plan.

conclusion

9. Whilst the overall message contained within the audit letter is that the Council continues to make progress, the Authority needs to recognise the key messages within the Audit and Inspection Letter. These messages can only be addressed through strengthening capacity within the organisation which will involve the re-alignment of resources towards those areas identified as requiring attention.

RECOMMENDED that the report and attached letter be received.

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley
Strategic Director for Resource
Management
Ext 227

Author of the report

Gary Ridley
Strategic Director for Resource
Management
Ext 227

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration **GAMBLING ACT 2005 – PREMISES LICENCE FEES**

purpose of the report

- 1 The purpose of this report is for Committee to approve and recommend to Council a Schedule of Fees in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 (Annex B).

background

- 2 The Gambling Act 2005 gives responsibility for the licensing and regulation of gambling premises to licensing authorities. Gambling operators, through a one off application fee and an annual fee, will meet the costs of these new responsibilities.
- 3 The Act gives the Secretary of State power to make regulations prescribing the fees payable to the Licensing Authority for gambling premises licences and permits as well as other miscellaneous fees.
- 4 The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published the Gambling (Premises Licence Fees) Regulations 2007 on 21 February 2007. The Regulations provide for Licensing Authorities to determine the fees, subject to maximum fees prescribed in the Regulations. The Regulations provide for licensing authorities to determine separate fees for different types of activities associated with licences (e.g. application for a licence; application to vary a licence etc) and the annual fees payable in respect of a licence.
- 5 The Regulations also provide for Licensing Authorities to determine separate fees for different classes of premises licence (e.g. those relating to bingo halls, betting shops etc) prescribing the maximum fees chargeable for each type of gambling premises. Any fees set must be reviewed on an annual basis. A description of the different types of premises and the types of activities associated with licences are attached in Annex C.
- 6 Local authorities, having not dealt with these new applications before, can only base fees in the first year on a best estimate using currently available information. In considering setting fees the possible costs associated with administration, inspection and enforcement duties have been taken into account. It is not possible however to know in advance the actual number of applications likely to be received for licences and for variations. It is also not possible to estimate how many of the applications for variations might be challenged and be decided at a hearing. Such information is required for an accurate analysis to be undertaken.
- 7 The arbitrary setting of the maximum fees is strongly discouraged by Government and might attract an application for a judicial review. It is

therefore recommended that the fees for the first year in Wear Valley be set at around 75% of the maximum fees as outlined in the regulations and that a review of the costs to the authority be carried out throughout this current financial year and that if necessary, the fees be adjusted accordingly. Local Authority Advisory Body on Regulatory Services (LACORS) have prepared a toolkit to assess the level of fees to be applied and this would be used during and after the first 12-month period as the Authority gains experience of the administration and enforcement of the Act.

proposal

- 8 Committee is asked to approve the Schedule of Fees and recommend it to Council identified in Annex B.

financial implications

- 9 The income from the proposed fees is estimated to cover the costs of administering and enforcing the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005. This has been taken into account in the 2007/08 budget. The Gambling Act will be administered and enforced by the existing personnel in the Licensing section of Environment and Regeneration.

legal implications

- 10 It is possible that persons aggrieved by the level of fees set may apply for judicial review. The proposed fees have been based on estimated costs subject to a maximum limit and a projection of likely enforcement activity.

human resource implications

- 11 The implementation of the Gambling Act 2005 will be carried out using existing staffing resources. Human resource implications will be carefully monitored during this first year of operation.

information technology

- 12 The implementation of the Gambling Act 2005 will be carried out using current IT systems.

crime and disorder and other implications

- 13 Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime is one of the objectives which the Council is required by the Act to promote in carrying out its licensing functions.

timescale

- 14 On the 1st September 2007 responsibility for the regulation of gambling premises will pass from the Magistrates Courts to Local Authorities. Operators of such premises are now applying for their Operating and Personal Licences from the Gambling Commission.

monitoring

- 15 The number of applications and their associated costs will be monitored during the first year of implementation.

conclusion

- 16 The setting of the fees outlined in Annex B will enable the Council to fulfil it's obligation under the Gambling Act 2005.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 It is recommended that the attached Schedule of Fees be adopted to ensure that the Council's functions under the Gambling Act 2005 can be discharged on a full cost recovery basis.

Officer responsible for the report
Robert Hope
Strategic Director for Environment and
Regeneration
Ext 264

Author of the report

Tom Carver
Head of Public Protection
Ext 377



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 – UPDATE REPORT

purpose of the report

1. To report on the Council's activities undertaken under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 over the period from April 2006 to April 2007.

background

2. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 requires that authorities who are entitled to undertake "directed surveillance" and the use of "covert human intelligence sources" (CHIS), have a formal policy for managing these activities.
3. The Council endorsed a policy and procedure for compliance with the RIPA legislation at its meeting held on 30th October 2002 (Minute No. 465 refers). A copy of the RIPA policy is available from the Corporate Development Unit.
4. The Council's RIPA policy requires that the RIPA Monitoring Officer present an annual report to the Policy and Strategic Development Committee summarising all surveillance activities undertaken by the Council. This report is designed to comply with that requirement.

surveillance activities undertaken since the previous report in April 2006 in accordance with RIPA policy

5. There have been three applications made for authority to undertake directed surveillance.
6. Details of the applications are held on file within the Corporate Development Unit.
7. No requests have been received for CHIS applications.

conclusion

8. The Council has undertaken activities under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 since agreeing its policy and procedures in 2002.
9. The arrangements for ensuring that the Council complies with the Act appear to be working well.
10. The RIPA Policy and Procedures are to be reviewed this year, as supported by the Committee.

RECOMMENDED

That the Committee note the activities undertaken by the Council in respect of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

background papers:

1. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 a full copy is available from the Corporate Development Unit.
2. Policy and Strategic Development Committee Report October 2002 – “RIPA Policy and Procedures” copies of this are available from the Corporate Development Unit.

Officer responsible for the report

John Docherty
Head of Management Support
Ext. 306

Author of the report

Su Barker
Administrator
Ext. 317



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

QUIRK REVIEW: MAKING ASSETS WORK

purpose

1. To summarise the findings in the Quirk report and present them to the Policy and Strategic Development Committee.

background

2. The Quirk Review is part of the Government's programme for empowering communities as set out in the 2006 White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*. The review sought to increase community asset management and ownership, taking into account the need to manage risks.
3. The report concludes that there are no substantive barriers to prevent councils transferring assets into community management or full ownership. The main obstacles are:
 - a lack of awareness of the existing powers to act and
 - the need for a change in culture that would enable every community having the opportunity to have a greater role in running services and owning assets.

barriers and benefits

4. The report sets out ten "foundational factors" which need to be factored in to overcoming barriers to greater transfer and management of assets:
 - i. community groups and social enterprises are extremely heterogeneous
 - ii. often these groups are very under-capitalised
 - iii. many of what the public consider to be public assets are not owned by local authorities
 - iv. community empowerment and asset management have historically not been a significant part of local government strategic community plans
 - v. where asset transfer and management has been used for community empowerment it has often not been part of an overall strategic approach
 - vi. many local authorities do not consider community ownership in the asset management plans

- vii. too often the relationships between councils and the community sector are short-term
 - viii. local authorities are now starting to adopt a convening role through local strategic partnerships and local area agreements
 - ix. there is currently a lot of change in the public sector asset base which creates both problems and opportunities
 - x. communities need “recipes” not “blueprints” to be able to find approach that works locally
5. Although the review looked specifically at barriers, what it found was that attitudes and issues had to be addressed, more than particular barriers.
6. Focusing on Wear Valley; implications, comments and benefits are detailed below:

Implications/comments	Benefits
Wear Valley will need to develop the Sustainable Communities Strategy to consider asset transfer then together with the LAA and other partners establish a protocol that will enable the assets within the area to be transferred to the Community via a structured process.	Wear Valley is currently in the process of transferring the Spectrum Leisure Centre over to a Community organisation called SLAM, therefore we are gaining experience of the process and resources required.
More strain on the authorities budget if we were to fund community groups	The community will have a greater say in the management of assets and focus on providing services that the community wants
Would lose a future capital resource if we transfer assets	Improved relationships with the community and partners
How would we ensure equality of access if a community group ran the centre?	Community groups will be eligible for funding which the council is not.
Would council tax rise to pay the subsidiaries for the community groups?	
Before the transfer of the asset money will need to spend on repairing them	
Jointly owned assets will require the use of more resources in order for a compromise to be made.	
If the community group re-tract the asset in three years, non budgeted funds will need to be found to transfer the asset back and under take repairs.	
Would the community groups take on the liability of the asset e.g. running costs?	
Would the asset be managed properly?	

7. The report reminds local authorities that under the Local Government Act 1972 and Circular 06/2003 (“the General Disposal consent”) they have the powers to transfer an asset to community management and ownership in any manner they wish, including at less than market value.

8. The report recommends that the hand of the community, in bidding for the management or ownership of a particular public asset, can be strengthened by recourse to a 'Community Call for Action' – which means that the matter would need to be referred to the local authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.

the report recommends the following:

- Though the report is focused on action by central government, there is clearly much that local authorities should be doing now to realise the community empowerment benefits demonstrated by the review.
- The main area for development is the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement to consider, across all partners, an area-wide strategy for the use of assets. The review recommends property reviews that focus either on a locality or a type of asset as a means to progress this.
- Local authorities are also in a position to put in place the review's recommendation about using the Community Call for Action to enable communities to identify community assets appropriate for community ownership or management.

conclusion

9. The report is that transferring public assets to communities not only leads to more responsive services, but can also create "more confident empowered communities with greater civic spirit".
10. One issue to be aware of is that many voluntary and community groups are not actively seeking responsibility for assets and all stakeholders must consider the long-term damage that can be done in neighbourhoods should asset transfer schemes fail.
11. The LSP may need to consider the review as it revises the Sustainable Community Strategy.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the recommendations detailed at paragraph 8 of this report be noted;
2. That Council policies on managing physical assets be reviewed to ensure consistency with the Council's strategic objectives and to raise awareness of existing powers and the opportunity available for transferring assets into community management.

Officer responsible

John Docherty
Chief Officer, Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the note

Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext 448



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27th JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Officer – Corporate Development **AUDIT COMMISSION – SEEING THE LIGHT (INNOVATION) –**

purpose

1. To submit for consideration the Audit Commission's report, *Seeing the light, Innovation in local public services*.

background

2. The Audit Commission's report is intended to encourage local authorities to consider how innovation can sustain performance improvement. By providing practical advice and support, based on authorities' own experiences of innovating, it seeks to foster the conditions where innovation can develop and be managed.

defining innovation

3. The meaning of innovation for the purpose of the report is as follows:
"The process by which organisations develop new products, services or ways of doing things."
4. Innovation means an approach to improvement with three defining features:
 - **Novelty** – innovation introduces something new to the organisation, marking a break from its established practice
 - **Influence on change** – innovation results in an identifiable step change in the behaviour of the organisation.
 - **The goal of improvement** – organisations innovate in order to deliver performance improvement or increased value for money.

innovation and risk

5. Risk is inherent in the innovation process because innovation requires authorities to embark on something new and untried. An innovation for improvement, for example, can fail to deliver its intended benefits.

encouraging innovation

6. The Audit Commission recognises the role that it can play in promoting innovation in local government.
7. Although innovation and CPA are not related according to a survey carried out by the Audit Commission, they seek to encourage innovation for the benefits it can bring.

where we can innovate

8. The report recognises that there a number of areas where a Council can innovate. They include the following:
- **Service design or delivery innovation**– providing a new service to users, or delivering existing services in a new way.
 - **Process or managerial innovation**– changing the processes, managerial structure, or organisational structure of an authority’s back office or service delivery functions.
 - **Democratic innovation**– implementing new practices in the pursuit of renewed democratic engagement with citizens.
 - **Strategic innovation**– re-positioning the authority in line with new corporate objectives or new ‘customers’, including using alternative service delivery models.
9. Through their research, the Audit Commission identified **five drivers** of innovation. They are:
- i. a focus on greater efficiency within the organisation;
 - ii. pressure from central government for performance improvement;
 - iii. local political pressure for change;
 - iv. the ‘bottom-up’ demands of local communities; and,
 - v. examples of successful innovations within other organisations.

benefits of innovation

10. Innovation offers potential benefits to local authorities in:
- improving value for money;
 - achieving more effective service delivery; and
 - building stronger community engagement and representation.
11. The benefits from innovation and the potential for innovation depend on the organisational culture.

the importance of organisational culture

12. The report identified the following six factors within an organisation’s culture as **critical** to encouraging innovation:
- I. The ambition of authorities.
 - II. Openness to novelty.
 - III. Organisational structure.
 - IV. Empowering staff and partners.

- v. The space for creative thinking.
- vi. Using information effectively

barriers to implementing innovation

13. The report also identified barriers to innovation. They are:

- Failures in risk assessment and risk management
- Over-estimation of capacity
- Lack of effective leadership or strategic input
- Poor organisation and communication among senior officers
- Absence of or poor quality project management
- Inadequate reporting to members
- Failings in the use of external advice
- Poor management of contractual partnerships
- Poor procurement practice

conclusion

14. Annex F details the Audit Commission recommendations and the possible implications for Wear Valley with comments.

15. Wear Valley needs to identify how it can foster and manage innovations.

RECOMMENDED

- i) That the Committee note the report and;
- ii) Authorise the Chief Officer, Corporate Development to develop and implement management processes that will encourage and sustain innovation where possible.

Officer responsible for the note
John Docherty
Chief Officer, Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the note
Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext 448



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27th JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Officer, Corporate Development.

PROCUREMENT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WEAR VALLEY AND TEESDALE DISTRICT COUNCILS.

purpose of the report

1. To present for approval a draft Procurement Service Level Agreement for shared procurement services between Wear Valley and Teesdale District Councils (attached in Annex G).

background

2. In 2005, both councils recognised the limited resources and expertise in the area of procurement to progress national procurement agendas and funding was secured from North East Centre of Excellence on a Corporate Procurement Pilot to appoint a project-based procurement officer to work jointly for both councils.
3. The Corporate Procurement Pilot across Wear Valley and Teesdale District Councils' was launched in October 2005 and was delivered over an 18 month period. This joint project concluded March 2007.
4. The post of Procurement Officer was mainstreamed at Wear Valley District Council at the beginning of April 2007.

proposal

5. With the recognition of the success achieved by the original procurement pilot, Teesdale District Council formally requested that Wear Valley District Council continue to provide the joint procurement arrangement.
6. As a result of this request, a draft Service Level Agreement for joint procurement working between Teesdale District Council and Wear Valley District Council was developed, as attached in Annex G.
7. The Procurement Service Level Agreement will be for a period of one year and will commence 1st April 2007 and conclude 31st March 2008.

8. Milestones and targets will be established and monitored through Procurement Steering Groups at both councils to support the action plans contained within the Joint Procurement Strategy.
9. Under this agreement Teesdale District Council have agreed to pay the sum of £7,500 per annum to Wear Valley District Council for the provision of a procurement service.

scope of service

10. The scope of service to be provided to Teesdale District Council by the Procurement Officer is set out in the table below:

Item No.	Scope of Services
1	Identify and encourage collaborative procurement between WVDC and TDC wherever appropriate
2	Develop a strategic and co-ordinated approach to Procurement across both authorities
3	Promote value for money through partnership and collaborative arrangements wherever possible
4	Lead on procurement and contract establishment for appropriate commodities or services
5	Develop procurement skills and provide support to all officers involved in procurement across WVDC and TDC
6	Challenge current procurement practices and promote innovative approaches to service delivery
7	Represent WVDC and TDC relating to procurement at sub-regional, regional and national forums
8	Identify and encourage efficiency study opportunities across both Councils

legal implications

11. The legal department at Wear Valley District Council has reviewed and verified the content of the Procurement Service Level Agreement.

RECOMMENDED That the Policy the Procurement Service Level Agreement between Wear Valley and Teesdale District Councils for the period of one year, as detailed in the report be approved.

Officer responsible for the report
 John Docherty
 Chief Officer, Corporate Development
 Ext 306

Author of the report
 Julie Warnett
 Project Officer – Procurement
 Ext 204



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

27th JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Officer, Corporate Development Unit CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING POLICY

purpose of the report

1. To submit for approval a revised policy for Corporate Communications and Branding guidelines.

introduction:

2. The purpose of this document (attached at Annex H) is to provide direction and guidance for the Council's marketing and communications section.
3. The strategy is in 7 distinct parts:
 - a. internal and external communications,
 - b. corporate branding guidelines,
 - c. managing the media,
 - d. graphic design,
 - e. printing,
 - f. electronic media, and
 - g. related legislation.

background:

4. The Council's Corporate Communications Strategy was first published in 2005 and this version is a revision of the original, approved strategy.
5. The strategy has been revised to more effectively address promoting a positive image of the council with the public and other stakeholders and through that, enhance the Council's reputation.
6. If approved, the strategy will be published on the Council's website, intranet and hard copies will be given to Directors and Senior Managers.

conclusion

7. Implementing the policy will ensure the Council's departments have clear communications and corporate branding policy to adhere to.

RECOMMENDED

That the Corporate Communications and Branding policy detailed in the report at Annex H be approved.

Officer responsible for the report

John Docherty
Chief Officer of Corporate Development

Author of the report

Joanna Defty
Marketing & Communications Mgr



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27TH JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Officer – Corporate Development
HEALTH PROFILE 2007

purpose of the report

1. To submit for consideration the forthcoming Health Profiles 2007.

background

2. The North East Public Health Observatory (NEPHO) publishes a report every year to inform local authorities and other agencies about the area's health profile.
3. The profile gives a snapshot of health in our area. With other local information the health profile has been designed to support action by local government and primary care trusts to tackle health inequalities and improve people's health in Wear Valley.
4. A copy of the most recent profile is attached as Annex I.

findings

5. A summary of the findings are detailed below:
 - On average, men in Wear Valley live nineteen months less than the national average and women live twenty five months less than the national average.
 - Wear Valley is above the national average for people who die from heart disease and strokes.
 - Smoking kills on average 150 people a year in Wear Valley. It is also estimated that 32% of adults in Wear Valley smoke, whereas the estimated national average for England is 26% making Wear Valley 6% higher than the national average.
6. The report also shows:
 - Income deprivation and child poverty are above average with 28% of children living in households dependant on-means-tested benefits.
 - The level of statutory homelessness is lower than the national average.
 - Teenage pregnancy percentage rate is higher than the national average.
 - An estimated 24% of adults binge drink
 - An estimated 26% of adults are obese which is 4% higher than the national average of 22%

- Diabetes affects at least 2470 people in Wear Valley which is higher than the national average and:
- The rate of hip fracture, in people aged 65 years and over, is higher than the national average.

conclusions

7. The report shows that the population of Wear Valley's health is below the national average on a wide range of statistical indicators.
8. If the Council is to make an effective contribution to tackling these areas of comparative health deprivation then we will need to work even more closely with our professional partners.

RECOMMENDED

That members continue to endorse the councils' objectives and support officers in their efforts to tackle health inequalities.

Officer responsible for the report
 John Docherty
 Chief Officer, Corporate Development
 Ext 306

Author of the report
 Emily Butler
 Policy & Research Officer
 Ext. 448



POLICY & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27TH JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Executive **BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006-2007**

purpose of the report

1. To present the Best Value Performance Indicators for the year 2006-2007. The figures have been updated to include latest weighted figures for the triennial satisfaction surveys from the Audit Commission. This has allowed Wear Valley's performance over this period to be compared and contrasted with more up-to-date information than had previously been the case.

performance for 2006-2007 summary

2. The performance information is presented in Annex J and shows the performance of all indicators for 2006-2007.
3. In comparison to the most up-to-date national data for each indicator, Wear Valley's performance in 2006-2007 has shown (see Annex K):
 - 55% of indicators have improved from the previous year compared with 58% the year before;
 - 23% have declined in performance compared to 14% the previous year,
 - 22% remain unchanged compared to 14% the previous year;
 - 6% are performing at an optimum performance level in comparison to 14% the previous year.
4. The results also show that 57% have met their targets for the year 2006-07. This demonstrates the robustness of the targets that are being set.

data analysis

5. Annex L demonstrates the un-audited 2006-2007 national quartile data for District Councils compared with top quartile indicators in 2005/06. The figures show an improving standard of quartile for Wear Valley nationally.
6. Although the percentage of top quartile indicators for 2006/07 remain at 33%, the number of below median (27%) and bottom quartile (16%) figures continue to decline compared with 2005/06 which were 32% and 18% respectively.

7. The number of indicators performing to their optimum level have declined to seven indicators (6%) compared with nine indicators (9%) in 2005/06
8. Of the indicators where performance has remained constant in terms of their quartile nationally, there is still some considerable potential for performance improvement.

conclusion

9. The data presented here presents the un-audited BVPI figures for 2006-2007. The changing quartile performance has shown that Wear Valley's performance nationally is continuing to improve.

RECOMMENDED That the information presented in this report and the attached annexes are noted.

Officer responsible for the report
John Docherty
Head of Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the report
Judith Grayson
Organisation Improvement Manager
Ext 313

POLICY & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Resource Management **AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER**

purpose of report

1. To consider the Authority's 2005/06 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

background

2. Members will be aware that the Authority's appointed Auditors produce an annual Audit Letter covering the following areas:
 - (i) Council Performance.
 - (ii) Use of Resources judgement.
 - (iii) Accounts and Governance.
 - (iv) Any other work carried out.
3. The full Audit and Inspection Letter is shown in the separate document attached at Annex A.

2005/06 audit letter key messages and recommendations

4. The key messages contained within the letter are set out below:
 - "The Council's performance improved again during 2005/06. The quality of services improved and costs reduced in targeted areas. The implementation of the performance management framework is nearing completion.
 - As measured by the Direction of Travel 2005/06 basket of best value performance indicators (BVPIs), the Council's rate of improvement was above average for district councils, and it had more than the average number of BVPIs in the top quartile.
 - The Council has improved the arrangements in place to manage its finances in terms of financial management, financial standing, internal control and value for money".

financial and value for money Issues

5. "The key actions needed to further strengthen arrangements for the use of resources is:
 - Continue to develop external reporting of the financial statements with further consultation with stakeholders about the format of the summary accounts and whether the Council should produce an annual report.

- Continue to integrate the medium term financial strategy, business planning and the corporate plan.
- Continue to integrate and embed the asset management plan and capital strategy with the corporate plan.
- Continue to embed the assurance framework that maps the Council's strategic objectives to risks, controls and assurances, including the requirements of the new reporting protocol.
- Further analyse information on costs and performance to demonstrate a stronger link between high spending and corporate objectives.
- Demonstrate a clearer understanding of the impact of service reviews on customers and carry out post project consultation.
- Demonstrate the impact of investment in terms of improved services in addition to cost savings”.

6. The summary recommendations contained within the letter are:

“The Council should:

- Complete the implementation of the performance management framework and continue work to integrate the medium term financial strategy, business planning and the corporate plan;
- Further analyse costs and performance and take action where needed to clearly demonstrate the link between spending decisions and corporate objectives, particularly where services are relatively high cost;
- Demonstrate a clearer understanding of the impact of service reviews on service users and demonstrate the impact of investment in terms of improved services in addition to cost savings;
- Improve arrangements for diversity, in particular by completing and implementing the Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy and making progress on the Equality Standard for Local Government;
- Continue to develop external reporting of the financial statements with further consultation with stakeholders about the format of the summary accounts and whether the Council should produce an annual report; and
- Continue to embed the assurance framework that maps the Council's strategic objectives to risks, controls and assurances, including the requirements of the new reporting protocol”.

commentary

7. It is pleasing to note that the Authority's Auditors recognise that progress in achieving our priorities has continued and that BVPI results show further, sustained, improvement. This is a theme from previous Annual Audit and Inspection letters.
8. However there are several important points that merit further discussion. These are:

- (i) Capacity

All District Councils struggle with capacity and Wear Valley is no different. The requirements placed upon us by central government in relation to new legislation, changes in existing legislation, inspection regimes, responding to key lines of enquiries etc. etc. can only be met by 'feeding the beast', which comes at a price. This is thrown in to sharper progress by external issues such as local government review, changes to inspection regimes etc. However, officers consider that there exists a degree of capacity within the Council to respond to the issues raised in the audit letter.

- (ii) Value for Money (VFM)

It is pleasing to note that the Auditors have recognised the work done by the Council and giving us a score of 2 out of 4 i.e. adequate arrangements are in place. The Council acknowledges that further work is needed in this area which will be centred around implementing the Council's Value for Money strategy which is an action within the 2006/07 Council Plan.

conclusion

9. Whilst the overall message contained within the audit letter is that the Council continues to make progress, the Authority needs to recognise the key messages within the Audit and Inspection Letter. These messages can only be addressed through strengthening capacity within the organisation which will involve the re-alignment of resources towards those areas identified as requiring attention.

RECOMMENDED that the report and attached letter be received.

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley
Strategic Director for Resource
Management
Ext 227

Author of the report

Gary Ridley
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Management
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Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

Wear Valley District Council

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. Our remit covers around 11,000 bodies in England, which between them spend more than £180 billion of public money each year. Our work covers local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services.

As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we ensure that public services are good value for money and that public money is properly spent.

Status of our reports

This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, drawing on audit, inspection and performance assessment work and is prepared by your Relationship Manager.

In this report, the Commission summarises findings and conclusions from the statutory audit, which have previously been reported to you by your appointed auditor. Appointed auditors act separately from the Commission and, in meeting their statutory responsibilities, are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of the Commission (and the audited body). The findings and conclusions therefore remain those of the appointed auditor and should be considered within the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission.

Reports prepared by appointed auditors are:

- prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission; and
- addressed to members or officers and prepared for the sole use of the audited body; no responsibility is taken by auditors to any member or officer in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

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Our overall summary

- 1 This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council. It draws on the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council and from any inspections that have been undertaken in the last year. The letter includes our review of how well the Council has progressed (our Direction of Travel report) and our assessment of how well the Council has managed its finances (the Use of Resources scores). These latter components will be an important feed into any future decision regarding the potential for a rescoring the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) category.
- 2 The report is addressed to the Council, in particular it has been written for councillors, but is available as a public document for stakeholders, including members of the community served by the Council.
- 3 The main messages for the Council included in this report are as follows.
 - The Council's performance improved again during 2005/06. The quality of services improved and costs reduced in targeted areas. The implementation of the performance management framework is nearing completion.
 - As measured by the Direction of Travel 2005/06 basket of best value performance indicators (BVPIs), the Council's rate of improvement was above average for district councils, and it had more than the average number of BVPIs in the top quartile.
 - The Council has improved the arrangements in place to manage its finances in terms of financial management, financial standing, internal control and value for money.
- 4 The Council is facing a period of uncertainty arising out of the potential offered by the Local Government White Paper for local government re-organisation. Any consultation on these proposals will present challenges in terms of compliance with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity, and any changes to the structure of local government in the county will present challenges in terms of maintaining and improving local services.

Action needed by the Council

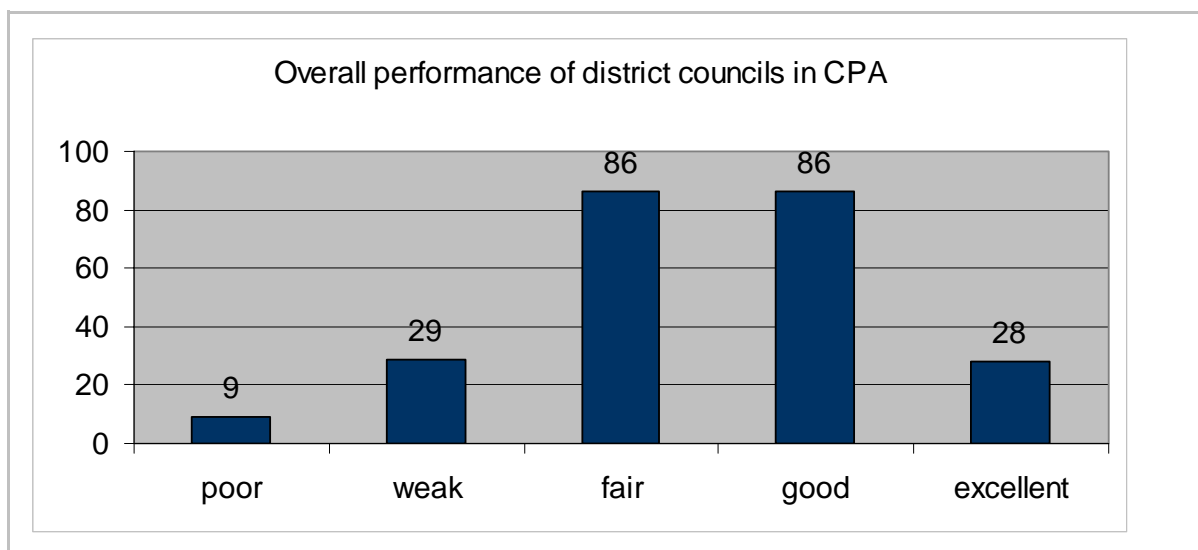
- 5 The Council should:
 - complete the implementation of the performance management framework and continue work to integrate the medium term financial strategy, business planning and the corporate plan;
 - further analyse costs and performance and take action where needed to clearly demonstrate the link between spending decisions and corporate objectives, particularly where services are relatively high cost;

- demonstrate a clearer understanding of the impact of service reviews on service users and demonstrate the impact of investment in terms of improved services in addition to cost savings;
 - improve arrangements for diversity, in particular by completing and implementing the Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy and making progress on the Equality Standard for Local Government;
 - continue to develop external reporting of the financial statements with further consultation with stakeholders about the format of the summary accounts and whether the Council should produce an annual report; and
 - continue to embed the assurance framework that maps the Council's strategic objectives to risks, controls and assurances, including the requirements of the new reporting protocol.
- 6 In the context of the potential for reorganisation of local government in the county, it is important that the Council continues to review governance arrangements and maintains its momentum in terms of performance management, including complying with the duty of best value to improve services, during a period of uncertainty. Equally it is important that the Council is seen to abide by the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity throughout the consultation period and thereafter.

How is Wear Valley District Council performing?

- 7 Wear Valley District Council was assessed as fair in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment carried out in 2003. These assessments have been completed in all district councils and we are now starting to update these assessments, through an updated corporate assessment, in councils where there is evidence of change. The following chart is the latest position across all district councils.

Figure 1 Overall performance of district councils in CPA



Source: Audit Commission

The improvement since last year - our Direction of Travel report

- 8 The Council's performance improved during 2005/06. The quality of services improved and costs reduced in targeted areas. The introduction of the performance management framework is nearing completion and the impact of changes is starting to be apparent. However, overall unit costs are still high and the Council has still not addressed issues of need and provision in leisure services.

- 9 As measured by the Direction of Travel 2005/06 basket of best value performance indicators (BVPIs), the Council's rate of improvement was slightly above average for district councils, and it had more than the average number of BVPIs in the top quartile:
- 58 per cent of PIs improved during 2005/06 compared to the district average of 58 per cent; and
 - 37 per cent of PIs were in the top quartile compared to the district average of 32 per cent.
- 10 The Council is making progress in all its priority areas. It has improved planning and housing services to help reverse the long-standing trend of a declining Population. It is working successfully with its partners to regenerate the district and reduce unemployment including its work with other County Durham authorities to promote the economy and to secure joint funding under round one of the government's Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI). The Council has funded the development of buildings for new business; the first of these is now fully occupied. It worked with the Wear Valley Development Agency to support local businesses including tourism. These schemes are helping to deliver more jobs and improve basic skills which are helping to address LSP priorities.
- 11 The Council is contributing positively to its Lifelong Learning agenda particularly in relation to young people. It runs a business start-up programme including a young people's 'Wolves Lair' programme and school based education programmes through sport and cultural activities for young people at risk of exclusion. The Council runs an in-house modern apprentice scheme and is encouraging local businesses to do the same. It is supporting volunteer groups in the local community to encourage social responsibility and has promoted mentoring of young people to help reduce truancy rates.
- 12 The Council is making good progress towards its commitment to improve both the natural and the built Environment. It has delivered environmental improvements in the community such as those at Jubilee Meadows and Willington Town Green as part of the Minerals Valley Strategy. It has landscaped reclaimed industrial wasteland at Paradise Tip to provide a significant green amenity for community use and is helping to improve biodiversity of the district through the introduction of butterfly colonies. In 2005/06 the Council improved its recycling and composting performance and reduced litter levels across the district. However, it is collecting more waste than most other district councils, against a national drive to reduce waste collected. The number of private sector homes returned to occupation was at top performance nationally but the number of homes reaching the Decent Homes Standard was below average. The Council has established an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) to improve the condition of its housing.

8 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter | How is Wear Valley District Council performing?

- 13 The Council is working with partners to address poor Health issues. It has secured £2 million of external funding to deliver programmes such as Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators; Wellness on Wheels; Walking the Way to Health; Cardiac Rehabilitation; and Sports Development and Physical Activity Programmes. It has also delivered the 'Good for the Soul' project which encourages GP referrals to use art as part of their rehabilitation programme.
- 14 The Council has responded to local residents by making community safety a high priority and is helping to deliver its joint Community Safety Strategy with Teesdale DC. It has mainstreamed the warden service and developed projects to tackle crime including a Night Safe campaign and CPAC as a diversionary scheme. It has also led on the Wear and Tees Anti-Social Behaviour Panel which has been recognised as an example of best practice. These initiatives have resulted in reductions in fear of crime and in anti-social behaviour in targeted neighbourhoods.
- 15 The Council is making slow progress in some aspects of diversity. It has achieved only level 1 in the Equalities Standard. However, it has increased capacity by appointing a Corporate Customer Care Officer. It is finalising its Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy which sets out its approach to engaging with minority and disadvantaged groups. Consultation includes grant funded projects that involve those living in deprived areas. Feedback influences decision-making.
- 16 There is limited work with minority groups although work with young people is developing such as through Planning Aid North East. The Council is addressing access and service delivery issues for some hard to reach groups such as its work with a North-East based refugee and asylum seekers group to deliver a programme of cultural awareness and diversity to young people. Work on Neighbourhood based arrangements is progressing with the aim of increasing local involvement in prioritising and budget setting of some local services by September 2007.
- 17 The Council is improving value for money (VFM). Overall cost per head remains highest quartile as do costs for environment, planning, culture, housing and central services. However, the Council is reducing expenditure in most service areas. The Council has made efficiency gains of £2.1 million over the last three years. Further savings of £1.1 million are on course to be achieved and the Council will meet its Gershon efficiency targets ahead of schedule.

- 18 Support for improvement has increased. A new Council Plan has been introduced to supplement the Best Value Performance Plan and to clarify targets. Although the introduction of the performance management framework was not completed in 2005/06, service planning has been regularised across all service areas and linked to the Council's financial planning process through the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Target setting and programming are based on consultation feedback and a gap analysis of best practice. Actions for improvement and savings are resourced and programmed but not all targets are SMART. Performance indicators and Council plan actions are monitored at service and corporate levels and managers are accountable for performance. The Council is also reviewing some strategic documents to meet changing regional and national issues. These arrangements are helping the council to focus on its priorities.
- 19 Improvement planning is having a positive impact on service delivery. Performance improvement teams (PITs) look at under-performance and carry out option appraisals for alternative service delivery before reporting to the Policy and Strategic Development Committee about proposed actions to be taken. Performance improvements resulting from PIT interventions include recycling/composting, planning, rent arrears, housing voids and benefit processing times. However, the Council does not fully evaluate the impact of service improvement on service users.
- 20 The Council's review of procurement arrangements has resulted in savings in areas including cash collection, banking and treasury management. Service improvements such as street wardens and housing maintenance are helping to improve satisfaction levels and reduced costs.
- 21 The Council is continuing to improve its capacity by developing in-house capabilities and through the benefits of partnership working. It is addressing workforce planning by appointing apprentices to replace trades people who are nearing retirement. It has introduced more flexible working and is increasing community involvement. There is some staff training but this has been without a corporate approach or structured programme; this is being addressed in the new human resource strategy.
- 22 Work with the North East Centre for Excellence has helped the Council to introduce its 'Partnership Evaluation Toolkit' which aligns partnership working with national best practice. Some partnership protocols have still to be fully implemented but partnership working has already improved personnel, IT and call centre functions. Fixed costs have been reduced by sharing facilities and staff such as with Sedgfield Borough Council on the Homeline service control and monitoring. The Council has several joint arrangements with other Durham districts that have improved value for money such as bailiff services and some shared planning and building control functions. Inter-council working has secured a joint award of £10.2 million for a local enterprise growth initiative (LEGI) and there is joint county-wide consideration of the Regional Spatial Strategy. However, the Council's limited capacity has meant that some areas of service provision, notably leisure services, have not yet been considered.

Financial management and value for money

- 23 We reported separately to Central Resources Committee on the issues arising from our 2005/06 audit and have provided:
- an unqualified opinion on your accounts;
 - a conclusion on your VFM arrangements to say that these arrangements are adequate; and
 - a report on the Best Value Performance Plan confirming that the Plan has been audited.
- 24 These findings are an important component of the CPA framework described above. In particular the Use of Resources score is derived from audit assessments in the following areas.
- Financial reporting (including the preparation of the accounts of the Council and the way these are presented to the public).
 - Financial management (including how the financial management is integrated with strategy to support council priorities).
 - Financial standing (including the strength of the Council's financial position).
 - Internal control (including how effectively the Council maintains proper stewardship and control of its finances).
 - Value for money (including an assessment of how well the Council balances the costs and quality of its services).
- 25 For the purposes of the CPA we have assessed the Council's arrangements for use of resources in these five areas as follows.

Table 1

Element	Assessment
Financial reporting	3
Financial management	2
Financial standing	3
Internal control	3
Value for money	2
Overall assessment of the Audit Commission	3

(Note: 1 = lowest, 4 = highest)

26 The key issues arising from the audit, as reflected in the above judgements where appropriate, are as follows.

- Accounts were produced well within deadlines, they presented the Council's financial position fairly and only contained a small number of non-trivial errors. Arrangements have been introduced to obtain feedback from stakeholders on the format of the summary accounts and on whether the Council should produce an annual report. However, feedback to date has been limited and the arrangements are not yet embedded.
- Financial management arrangements have improved and the links between the medium term financial strategy and the corporate plan can now be demonstrated. Asset management arrangements have been strengthened with an updated asset management plan and capital strategy linked to the revised corporate plan but these arrangements are not yet embedded.
- Arrangements for financial standing have improved, target levels of reserves and balances and income collection levels are set and monitored by Members. The Council has a history of maintaining spending within budgets and monitoring information is available that evaluates the effectiveness of recovery action and monitors the costs of recovery action.
- Internal control arrangements improved, risk management arrangements have been strengthened and developed including clearer links to strategic aims. Internal Audit comply with the CIPFA code of practice for internal audit and the report writing protocol has been strengthened to ensure all reports to members are considered to ensure the legality of proposals before presentation.
- Arrangements to demonstrate that the Council currently achieves value for money have improved, the Council's areas of high spend are generally in line with their priorities and funds are being diverted towards priority areas by reducing costs in other areas and improving service efficiencies. Overall service performance has improved since 2004/05.

27 The key actions needed to further strengthen arrangements for the use of resources are:

- continue to develop external reporting of the financial statements with further consultation with stakeholders about the format of the summary accounts and whether the Council should produce an annual report;
- continue to integrate the medium term financial strategy, business planning and the corporate plan;
- continue to integrate and embed the asset management plan and capital strategy with the corporate plan;
- continue to embed the assurance framework that maps the Council's strategic objectives to risks, controls and assurances, including the requirements of the new reporting protocol;
- further analyse information on costs and performance to demonstrate a stronger link between high spending and corporate objectives;

- demonstrate a clearer understanding of the impact of service reviews on customers and carry out post project consultation; and
- demonstrate the impact of investment in terms of improved services in addition to cost savings.

Local Government Review

- 28 Perhaps one of the most significant issues facing the Council at this point is the potential re-organisation following the Local Government White Paper of last year.
- 29 It is important that the Council continues to review governance arrangements and maintains its momentum in terms of performance management, including complying with the duty of best value to improve services, during this period of uncertainty. Equally it is important that the Council is seen to abide by the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity throughout the consultation period and thereafter.

Local Area Agreement

- 30 The Council is a member of the Durham Local Area Agreement covering the period 2006/07 to 2008/09.
- 31 Monitoring of expenditure during 2006/07 indicated, even at the six month stage, that there was a strong possibility of a significant underspend. However, by the year end it is envisaged that £5.247 million or 95.53 per cent of the total allocation will be spent, with just under 5 per cent of funding being carried forward to the next year. The possibility of an underspend remains an issue for the future as funding allocations increase substantially for 2007/08 to approximately £25 million. As a signatory to the LAA, the Council should monitor developments; in particular the risk of any significant underspends given that only a maximum of 5 per cent could be carried forward from 2006/07.
- 32 The Government Office recently carried out a six monthly review of the Durham LAA assessing overall progress as 'amber' and the direction of travel of the agreement as 'green'. The most recent performance report to the LAA board (Programme Report No. 7) refers to work continuing on 'developing a strategic approach to commissioning of funds in 2008/09' and an agreement to take 'an incremental approach to change in the use of LAA pooled funds'.

Conclusion

- 33 This letter has been discussed and agreed with the Chief Executive and the Director of Central Resources. A copy of the letter will be presented Council on 11 April 2007.
- 34 The Council has taken a positive and constructive approach to our audit and inspection I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the Council's assistance and co-operation.

Availability of this letter

- 35 This letter will be published on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk, and also on the Council's website.

Sarah Diggle
Relationship Manager

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration **GAMBLING ACT 2005 – PREMISES LICENCE FEES**

purpose of the report

- 1 The purpose of this report is for Committee to approve and recommend to Council a Schedule of Fees in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 (Annex B).

background

- 2 The Gambling Act 2005 gives responsibility for the licensing and regulation of gambling premises to licensing authorities. Gambling operators, through a one off application fee and an annual fee, will meet the costs of these new responsibilities.
- 3 The Act gives the Secretary of State power to make regulations prescribing the fees payable to the Licensing Authority for gambling premises licences and permits as well as other miscellaneous fees.
- 4 The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published the Gambling (Premises Licence Fees) Regulations 2007 on 21 February 2007. The Regulations provide for Licensing Authorities to determine the fees, subject to maximum fees prescribed in the Regulations. The Regulations provide for licensing authorities to determine separate fees for different types of activities associated with licences (e.g. application for a licence; application to vary a licence etc) and the annual fees payable in respect of a licence.
- 5 The Regulations also provide for Licensing Authorities to determine separate fees for different classes of premises licence (e.g. those relating to bingo halls, betting shops etc) prescribing the maximum fees chargeable for each type of gambling premises. Any fees set must be reviewed on an annual basis. A description of the different types of premises and the types of activities associated with licences are attached in Annex C.
- 6 Local authorities, having not dealt with these new applications before, can only base fees in the first year on a best estimate using currently available information. In considering setting fees the possible costs associated with administration, inspection and enforcement duties have been taken into account. It is not possible however to know in advance the actual number of applications likely to be received for licences and for variations. It is also not possible to estimate how many of the applications for variations might be challenged and be decided at a hearing. Such information is required for an accurate analysis to be undertaken.

- 7 The arbitrary setting of the maximum fees is strongly discouraged by Government and might attract an application for a judicial review. It is therefore recommended that the fees for the first year in Wear Valley be set at around 75% of the maximum fees as outlined in the regulations and that a review of the costs to the authority be carried out throughout this current financial year and that if necessary, the fees be adjusted accordingly. Local Authority Advisory Body on Regulatory Services (LACORS) have prepared a toolkit to assess the level of fees to be applied and this would be used during and after the first 12-month period as the Authority gains experience of the administration and enforcement of the Act.

proposal

- 8 Committee is asked to approve the Schedule of Fees and recommend it to Council identified in Annex B.

financial implications

- 9 The income from the proposed fees is estimated to cover the costs of administering and enforcing the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005. This has been taken into account in the 2007/08 budget. The Gambling Act will be administered and enforced by the existing personnel in the Licensing section of Environment and Regeneration.

legal implications

- 10 It is possible that persons aggrieved by the level of fees set may apply for judicial review. The proposed fees have been based on estimated costs subject to a maximum limit and a projection of likely enforcement activity.

human resource implications

- 11 The implementation of the Gambling Act 2005 will be carried out using existing staffing resources. Human resource implications will be carefully monitored during this first year of operation.

information technology

- 12 The implementation of the Gambling Act 2005 will be carried out using current IT systems.

crime and disorder and other implications

- 13 Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime is one of the objectives which the Council is required by the Act to promote in carrying out its licensing functions.

timescale

- 14 On the 1st September 2007 responsibility for the regulation of gambling premises will pass from the Magistrates Courts to Local Authorities. Operators of such premises are now applying for their Operating and Personal Licences from the Gambling Commission.

monitoring

- 15 The number of applications and their associated costs will be monitored during the first year of implementation.

conclusion

- 16 The setting of the fees outlined in Annex B will enable the Council to fulfil it's obligation under the Gambling Act 2005.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 It is recommended that the attached Schedule of Fees be adopted to ensure that the Council's functions under the Gambling Act 2005 can be discharged on a full cost recovery basis.

Officer responsible for the report

Robert Hope
Strategic Director for Environment and
Regeneration
Ext 264

Author of the report

Tom Carver
Head of Public Protection
Ext 377

GAMBLING ACT FEES

	Max Prescribed £	Proposed £
Bingo Club		
Transitional Fast Track	300	225
Transitional non Fast Track	1750	1310
New Application	3500	2625
Annual Fee	1000	750
Application to vary	1750	1310
Application to transfer	1200	900
Application for re-instatement	1200	900
Provisional Statement	3500	2625
New with Provisional Statement	1200	900
Copy Licence	25	20
Notification of change	50	40
Betting Premises		
Transitional Fast Track	300	225
Transitional non Fast Track	1500	1125
New Application	3000	2250
Annual Fee	600	450
Application to vary	1500	1125
Application to transfer	1200	900
Application for re-instatement	1200	900
Provisional Statement	3000	2250
New with Provisional Statement	1200	900
Copy Licence	25	20
Notification of change	50	40
Track Betting		
New Application	2500	1125
Annual Fee	1000	750
Application to vary	1250	930
Application to transfer	950	710
Application for re-instatement	950	710
Provisional Statement	2500	1875
New with Provisional Statement	950	710
Copy Licence	25	20
Notification of change	50	40
Adult Gaming Centres		
Transitional Fast Track	300	225
Transitional non Fast Track	1000	750
New Application	2000	1500
Annual Fee	1000	750
Application to vary	1000	750
Application to transfer	1200	900
Application for re-instatement	1200	900
Provisional Statement	2000	1500
New with Provisional Statement	1200	900
Copy Licence	25	20
Notification of change	50	40

	Max Prescribed £	Proposed £
Family Entertainment		
Transitional Fast Track	300	225
Transitional non Fast Track	1000	750
New Application	2000	1500
Annual Fee	750	560
Application to vary	1000	750
Application to transfer	950	710
Application for re-instatement	950	710
Provisional Statement	2000	1500
New with Provisional Statement	950	710
Copy Licence	25	20
Notification of change	50	40

GAMBLING ACT 2005

Premises Licence Fees

Introduction

The Gambling Act 2005 requires Wear Valley District Council as a Licensing Authority to regulate commercial gambling in the District, through the issue and enforcement of licences and permits for premises such as casinos, bingo halls, bookmakers and amusement arcades.

The Act gives the Secretary of State power to make regulations prescribing the fees payable to Licensing Authorities for issuing these licences and permits, and for administering them through variations, transfers, reinstatements, etc.

The Secretary of State has decided that Licensing Authorities will have the power to determine their own fees for dealing with premises licences, but has prescribed maximum fees payable for each category of application. Licensing Authority fees should be determined based on cost recovery, and should be subject to annual review.

The Government recognises that the first fee setting exercise will be based on estimates only.

Types of premises

The Act establishes the following categories of premises for which the Licensing Authority must set fees –

- Casinos (existing, small, large and regional)
- Bingo halls
- Betting (off-course)
- Tracks (i.e. on-course betting)
- Adult Gaming Centres
- Family Entertainment Centres

Casinos

The Regulatory Impact Assessment produced by DCMS states that there are 170 casinos in England & Wales.

Under the Act, one regional casino, eight large and eight small casinos have been permitted.

The District of Wear Valley has no casinos, and has not been awarded a regional, large or small casino at this time. As such the Council does not propose to set fees for casino related licences, as they are not applicable to this Licensing Authority.

Bingo

The Regulatory Impact Assessment produced by DCMS states that there are approximately 700 bingo halls in England & Wales.

There is currently one bingo establishment in the District.

There are 425 Licensing Authorities, on average there are 1 - 2 bingo halls per Authority.

Betting shops

The term “betting shops” refers to both on and off track betting, which are dealt with differently under the Act.

Wear Valley does not have any track betting.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment produced by DCMS states that there are approximately 9,000 betting shops in England & Wales.

There are currently 13 betting shops in the District.

On average there are 21 – 22 betting shops per Authority, so Wear Valley has less than the average number of betting shops.

Arcades

The term “arcades” refers to the categories of gambling premises that are termed “Adult Gaming Centres” and “Family Entertainment Centres” under the Act.

‘Adult gaming centres’ are amusement arcades that have age restricted machines, such as those that offer a prize of more than £35.

‘Family entertainment centres’ are amusement arcades that children may enter and use machines, that have low value prize machines.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment produced by DCMS states that there are approximately 2,000 in England & Wales.

There are currently 6 arcades in the District.

On average there are 4 – 5 arcades per Authority, so Wear Valley has slightly more than the average number of arcades.

As such, the existing gambling premises for which fees must be set in the District fall into four types of premises as defined under the Act –

- Bingo halls
- Betting (off-course)
- Adult Gaming Centres
- Family Entertainment Centres

It should be noted that there are other gambling premises, including clubs and licensed premises, which will continue to operate gambling following the Act coming into force. There are other premises, such as taxi offices and fish & chip shops, where gambling will no longer be permitted.

Fast track / non-fast track applications

Fast track and non-fast track applications are effectively 'conversion' applications, from applicants who are already licensed under the existing regime.

Fast track applications can be made to the licensing Authority by existing premises operators. A fast track application is an application for a conversion of an existing license to a licence under the Act where the applicant is not seeking any variation of the default conditions applied to the new licence under s.168 of the Act.

If an application meets the criteria for a fast track application then it can be processed without representations or a hearing. If an application does not meet the criteria for the fast track then it will be a non-fast track application.

If an application is non-fast track then it will be possible for Responsible Authorities and Interested Parties to make representations with regard to the application. If no representations are made then the application can be processed without the need for a hearing, however if relevant representations are made then a hearing will be necessary.

It is also possible that if a party is aggrieved by a decision of the Licensing Authority it may seek to appeal that decision.

As such there are four types of application from existing premises that each involve more work to be undertaken by the Licensing Authority to reach their conclusion –

- Fast track application
- Non-fast track application with no representations made
- Non-fast track application with representations
- Appeal

Licensing Authorities will also expect to receive applications for the following –

- Provisional statements
- Transfers
- Reinstatements
- Variations

In order to estimate the costs that Wear Valley District Council expects to incur in providing these services, it has estimated the number of applications that it may receive, and the amount of work that will be undertaken in dealing with each of these areas.



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27th JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

UPDATE OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

purpose of the report

To submit to the Policy and Strategic Development Committee changes to the Wear Valley District Council Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.

background

1. Health and Safety management is a dynamic process which requires policy and procedure documents which reflect working practices and current legislation. This is especially important following the significant changes which have occurred to legislation covering; working at height, noise, vibration and fire etc within the past 2 years. As such the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures require updating to reflect changes and ongoing improvements.

analysis

2. Wear Valley District Council states in its objectives that 'THE COUNCIL WILL... use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles', the reality of this requires;
 - Structures and responsibilities, across the authority e.g. a Health and Safety Panel for ensuring the implementation and maintenance of health and safety standards.
 - Every individual to take personal responsibility for their own and their colleagues' safety and health, being aware of potential hazards and acting to ensure they are eliminated, managed or avoided.
 - Policy and guidance that explain what should and should not be done.
 - Observance of procedures established to ensure we work in a safe environment.

3. The Health and Safety Policy is an overview of all the essential guidance which the organisation needs. Many of the actions recommended are required by law and must be observed, but in any case, they are mostly common sense. The procedures are expansions of the general statements laid down in the policy and provide the detail through which we can achieve legal compliance.

financial implications

4. It is a management responsibility to ensure that the resources, including any financial costs are secured to ensure commitment to the enclosed policy and procedures. The following estimates are for the implementation of procedures and are in addition to the costs already in place for procedures such as Display Screen Equipment, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health etc.

Occupational Road Risk	- £ 2,300
Sharps	- £ 800
Vibration	- £ 3,000
Noise	- £ 1,400
Total additional costs	- £ 7,500

5. There will possibly be cost implications for the procedures covering; Work at Height, Lone Working and Violence and Aggression, however it is not possible to predict the costs in these areas until risk assessments have been completed on the activities being undertaken by council workers. Where departments cannot meet costs it will be necessary for managers to assess whether the working situation can continue given the organisational risk.

human resources implications

6. The implementation of these procedures will produce associated training issues, most of which will be dealt with through in-house resources. The contents of the policy and procedures will need to be disseminated to all members of staff in the first instance through ongoing team meetings and other media, emails, notices etc.
7. Managers will need to assess their respective departments and where risk assessments etc. are missing or out of date they will need, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer, to ensure that they are completed. The Health and Safety Officer will prioritise this on a risk basis.
8. Training gaps will be identified through Personal Development Plans as completed by managers and through the risk assessments which they produce in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer.

legal implications

9. Failure to approve and implement the policy and procedures could result, on investigation, in prosecution from one or all of the following bodies; the HSE, the environment agency, or the Fire Brigade. All of the procedures listed in the Health and Safety Manual have associated regulations requiring compliance/actions.

conclusion

10. The Health and Safety Policy demonstrates the organisations commitment to Health and Safety, with the procedures providing the practical information on delivery of these objectives. This updated document will assist the authority in its aim to be the best District Council in England as well as demonstrating its commitment to adherence to its legal obligations. The Health and Safety Policy and Procedures Manual (which is attached as a separate document Annex D) has been approved by the Health and Safety Panel (with the Trade Unions forming part of this panel) and the Corporate Management Team.

RECOMMENDED That the changes to the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures as detailed in the report be approved.

Officer responsible for the report

Michael Laing
Chief Executive

Author of the report

Tony Bough
Health and Safety Officer

Annex C

Health and Safety Manual

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council is required under the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to produce a statement of policy to secure the health, safety and welfare of all staff/employees and the protection of any persons who may be affected by our undertakings. Wear Valley District Council as a responsible employer is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of Health and Safety rather than mere adherence to the legal minimum. With this goal in mind this document has been produced to act as a reference tool to staff and Management.

Wear Valley District Council recognises the important role which its employees play in achieving its Health and Safety responsibilities, and therefore engages in full consultation with employee representatives through its Health and Safety Panel.

This document is intended to bring the authorities statement of policy and written procedures to the attention of employees, partners, contractors and others affected by its undertaking as well as to provide details of the organisational arrangements for Health and Safety. This document contains; the Statement of Intent, Organisational Arrangements, Health and Safety Policy and the various Health and Safety Procedures which cover a range of topics (please see appendices on page). Staff are asked to make themselves aware of the contents of this document with emphasis on the health and safety precautions appropriate to their area of work.

Wear Valley District Council seeks to encourage all employees to adopt a positive attitude towards safety requirements and to participate in ensuring a safe working environment for themselves and others.

Health and Safety Policy - Statement of Intent

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Wear Valley District Council. The authority in general will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees and persons affected by our activities.

Our Statement of General Policy is;

- To provide effective control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities.
- To consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety.
- To provide and maintain safe plant and equipment.
- To ensure safe handling and use of substances.
- To provide information, instruction and supervision for employees.
- To ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training.
- To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health.
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions.
- To review and revise this policy and any associated procedures as necessary at regular intervals.
- That a member of Senior Management (Chief Officer, Corporate Development) maintains specific responsibility for Health and Safety.
- That to assist in meeting our statutory duties a competent person is appointed.

Employees of Wear Valley District Council are reminded that they must;

- Co-operate with management on health and safety matters
- Not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety.
- Report all health and safety concerns to their Line Manager.

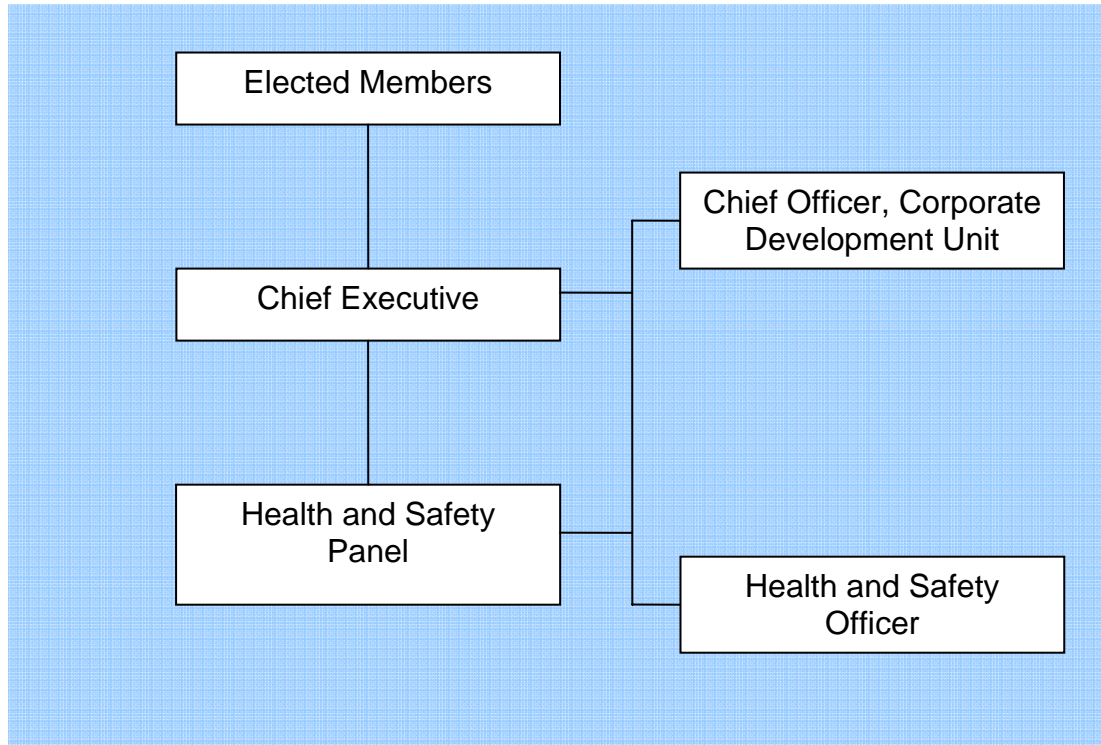
Signed _____

Date _____

Chief Executive, Wear Valley District Council

Organisation

Organisational arrangements for Health and Safety purposes



Organisation

This section of the Health and Safety policy details the general responsibilities of individuals for health and safety within the authority. All staff however have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work (this includes other staff and members of the public and other organisations).

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for health and safety within the authority and will ensure that the policy is updated and reflects the authorities needs. The Elected Members will be appraised of health and safety matters to ensure that sufficient resources are made available as required.

Directors

All Directors are responsible to the Chief Executive and the Elected Members for the effective implementation of all health and safety systems within their respective departments.

Managers

All Managers within Wear Valley District Council (at whatever level) have a responsibility to ensure that all health and safety requirements are adhered to and to promote responsible attitudes towards health and safety. In particular Managers will;

- Maintain a good working knowledge of the health and safety requirements of their role.
- Ensure all health and safety risks resulting from the activities under their control are adequately assessed and documented (with advice and assistance from the Health and Safety Officer where required).
- Implement suitable control measures to ensure that the risks identified by any assessments are appropriately controlled.
- Ensure that accidents and incidents are reported to the Health and Safety Officer in sufficient detail and within reasonable time scales.
- Ensure that where Safe Systems of Work are established, that they are understood by staff and adhered to.
- Set a personal example of good practice on all health and safety matters.
- Take action in respect of those who fail to consider their own well being or that of others.

The Health and Safety Officer

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible to the Chief Officer, Corporate Development Unit and to the Chief Executive for providing competent advice and support to the authority. The Health and Safety Officer will act as Wear Valley District council's 'competent person' in compliance with regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992.

The Health and Safety Panel

The main purpose of the Health and Safety Panel is the continuous promotion of co-operation between Management and Employees in the development and implementation of measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees and others affected by our undertakings.

The Health and Safety Panel shall consist of representatives from Wear Valley District Council as the employer, appropriate trade union representatives and any other elected employee representatives.

All employees

All employees have a duty to co-operate with the authority in the implementation of this policy (as laid down in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974).

In particular they must ensure;

- That they take responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their actions (this includes other staff and members of the public and other organisations).
- They must bring to the attention of their immediate Manager/Supervisor any unsafe condition or perceived shortcoming in health and safety measure.
- They must co-operate full with the authority and with Management in all matters relating to health and safety following closely any instructions or Safe Systems of Work.
- They shall use all vehicles, plant, equipment, tools and materials in a safe manner to avoid personal injury and injuries to others and to prevent damage to equipment etc.
- They shall report all accidents or near misses immediately to their Manager.
- They must never intentionally damage or interfere with anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

- Shall behave responsibly and professionally at all times and shall not engage in any activity which poses a risk to themselves or others unless that activity is carried out in accordance with approved procedures following an appropriate risk assessment.
- That where provided, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as supplied to them is used in all instances where risk assessments have deemed it necessary and that it is used in the correct manner for which it was supplied.
- That they keep their work area clean and tidy and that they do not leave any area in a state which may prove dangerous to others.
- That they work in accordance with any risk assessments.

Risk Assessments

Wear Valley District Council will ensure that the risks to the health and safety of staff and others are adequately assessed, and assessments reviewed as appropriate. Managers shall ensure that risk assessments cover all of the hazards within their control, and that control measures are implemented to control these hazards. The Health and Safety Officer is available for advice on risk assessments to ensure that they are completed to a suitable standard. All risk assessments shall be documented on the appropriate form (form 01) and subject to suitable review especially where activities change or additional hazards are identified. For further information on risk assessments please refer to the **Risk Assessment Procedure**.

Consultation with Employees

Wear Valley District Council acknowledges the importance of employee involvement in health and safety matters and the importance of the positive role played by Health and Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety Panel.

Wear Valley District Council will consult with Health and Safety Representatives over issues relating to health, safety and welfare and will provide them with support and information as required.

TU accredited Health and Safety Representatives are required to provide the authority with reasonable notice of their intention to carry out inspections, to provide written reports following such inspection and to follow the authorities procedures should any issues arise.

To ensure that Health and Safety Representatives are able to adequately perform their functions the authority will provide them with the opportunity to attend appropriate training courses. Additionally the authority will offer paid leave for any Health and Safety Representative requiring time off to carry out their duties (as outlined in the Trade Union agreement) or to receive any necessary training.

The following information details specific requirements in respect of Health and Safety Representatives;

- Trade Unions shall inform the authority, in writing of the individual Health and Safety Representatives appointment.
- Health and Safety Representatives must understand the way in which the health and safety structure operates within the Council.
- Health and Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety Panel members will receive adequate training.
- Health and Safety Representatives should be aware of the disputes and grievance procedures in place within the authority.
- The Health and Safety Panel shall meet as scheduled, there will be agendas for meetings and minutes of the meetings will be carefully recorded. Information about these meetings will be made available to the workforce to enable them to raise issues to their Health and Safety Representatives prior to the meetings.

The Health and Safety Panel will meet regularly and review safety performance within the authority.

Safe Plant and Equipment

Managers are responsible for identifying where maintenance is required for all plant and equipment under their control. Where employees identify issues in relation to any plant and equipment they must bring them to the attention of their Line Manager.

Safe Handling and use of substances

The Health and Safety Officer in conjunction with each departments will identify substances requiring COSHH assessments. These assessments will then be completed by these individuals with each department following the documented storage, use and transport instruction listed. The Health and Safety Panel will approve all risk assessments and safe systems of work, and will aid in the dissemination of information to staff. No substances may be used by any member of staff unless it has been subject to an appropriate COSHH assessment. All COSHH assessments will be reviewed every 12 months or where conditions of storage, transport or use alter. Staff will be provided with appropriate, information, instruction, training and supervision in relation to COSHH.

Information, instruction and supervision

The Health and Safety Law poster is displayed in all Wear Valley District Council premises. The Health and Safety law Leaflet (which details the information contained on the poster) is available on the Health and Safety Policies section of Lotus Notes or from the Health and Safety Officer.

Health and Safety Representatives are able to access any information required to carry out their duties, and can talk to staff directly. The Health and Safety Officer can also provide information to staff.

Young workers will be directly supervised and provided with all information and instruction required to ensure their safety.

Where staff are working at sites other than those controlled by Wear Valley Council their direct Line Managers / Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that our

employees are given relevant health and safety information. Any employee who has any concerns regarding the availability of information may raise the matter with the Council's Health and Safety Officer at any time. The Health and Safety Officer will be entitled to raise any issues of concern with the Site Manager.

Competency for tasks and training

Induction training will be supplied to all employees at all levels within the authority. Job specific training will be provided by each department with suitable records kept.

Accidents, first aid and work related ill health

In an emergency situation the principal concern is for the treatment of any injured person. All accidents/incidents should be reported immediately to the individuals direct Supervisor/Manager and following this to the Health and Safety Officer using the Accident/Incident form. The Accident Book should also be completed in the event of an accident causing an injury.

Managers/Supervisors are required to thoroughly investigate any accident/incident as soon as possible. At the first instance this should be to ensure that the area/situation is made safe. The circumstances leading up to the accident/incident (root causes) and the immediate causes of the accident/incident should be established. Where required the Health and Safety Officer will advise on relevant investigation techniques and suitable remedial actions. Where RIDDOR reportable accident/incidents occur Managers/Supervisor should carry out their investigations with a Health and Safety Representative (where possible).

In addition to this, Supervisor/Managers shall inform the Health and Safety Officer (via the Accident/Incident form) of **all** accidents/incidents involving a member of the public or other organisations. Where any such incident involves the member of the public leaving site and going straight to hospital, the Health and Safety Officer should be informed by the quickest possible means.

The Health and Safety Officer will review all accident/incident forms and is responsible for notifying the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of any accidents/incidents which are reportable under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR).

The Health and Safety Officer will provide training in Accident Investigation to appropriate persons within the authority.

Where work activities involve exposure to hazardous substance and workplace monitoring has indicated that this is above designated Workplace Exposure Limits, individuals will be subject to appropriate health surveillance. These records will be held confidentially and securely. Any risks posed to staff by access to micro-organisms shall be included in risk assessments (where appropriate), with referral to Occupational Health if immunisation is required. All cases of work-related infectious diseases should be reported to the individuals Supervisor/Manager and to the Health and Safety Officer on the Accident/Incident form.

First aid boxes are kept in appropriate areas of all Wear Valley District Council premises. The Council will ensure that an appropriate number of first aiders are trained and available at all times.

Monitoring

Supervisors/Managers must monitor adherence to this policy and associated procedures by means of adequate supervision and regular workplace inspections. The Health and Safety Officer can assist in the production of any necessary systems which are required to undertake this duty.

The Health and Safety Officer shall also undertake a system of routine and ad hoc inspections/audits of workplaces and activities. Any issues raised during such inspections/audits will be discussed with Supervisors/Managers and where appropriate at the Health and Safety Panels. The Health and Safety Officer will endeavour to provide guidance on appropriate remedial actions arising from such inspections/audits.

Health and Safety Representatives may also undertake inspections of the workplace, and will report the findings to the Health and Safety Officer and the Health and Safety Panel.

Any major breaches of this policy and procedures, which result in serious danger will be notified to the Health and Safety Officer. Where situations result in either an Improvement Notice or a Prohibition Notice being served by the HSE (or other enforcing authority) the Health and Safety Officer will be informed immediately and he will in turn report this to the Chief Executive.

Emergency procedures – fire and evacuation

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that Fire Risk Assessments are undertaken and implemented for all Wear Valley District council premises. In addition to this Fire Procedures will be formulated for all premises from these risk assessments and will include such details as the names of Fire Wardens, zones within the building and the frequency of fire drills.

Fire Wardens are responsible for ensuring that their zones are kept clear of obstructions and that all emergency exits are kept clear at all times. All staff are reminded to ensure that they do not block pedestrian access routes/emergency exits.

Arrangements for the routine inspection and maintenance of fire fighting equipment, including but restricted to; alarms, detectors and extinguishers shall be the responsibility of the Manager charged with the management of the premises. Fire Extinguishers and other systems are maintained and checked by a competent contractor in all instances, at the required intervals laid down by regulations and any associated standards.

Fire Wardens and any other persons charged with the evacuation of any Wear Valley District Council premises will be provided with additional training in their role to allow them to discharge their duties confidently.

Welfare facilities

Wear Valley District Council will ensure that appropriate welfare facilities are in place within its workplaces. It shall be the responsibility of the Manager in control of each premises to ensure that the availability of such facilities are maintained, as a minimum to the requirements laid down in;

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

All staff have a duty not to abuse such facilities and to adopt good hygiene practices.

Housekeeping plays a key role in the maintenance of suitable welfare facilities and in accident prevention. Suitable housekeeping standards should be maintained by all staff (and monitored by Supervisor/Managers) and should be included as part of all workplace inspections.

A safe means of access and egress shall be maintained for all Wear Valley District Council premises. All staff have a responsibility not to block pedestrian routes or circulation space within their areas. This is particularly significant for fire escape routes.

Employees with a disability

Wear Valley District Council will treat all employees and visitors who may have a disability with respect and dignity in both the provision of a safe working environment and in equal access to the Councils facilities/services.

Disciplinary procedures

Employees are reminded that serious breaches of the authorities Health and Safety policy or procedures will be investigated and disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the disciplinary procedures

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ACCIDENT / INCIDENT PROCEDURE

Introduction

This procedure details the actions to be taken to

- a) Investigate an accident / incident
- b) Report an accident / incident to the Health and Safety Officer

Supervisor / Manager and all staff should be aware that **all** accidents, safety related incidents and near misses should be reported to the Health and Safety Officer (Tony Bough, Crook Civic Centre, t.bough@wearvalley.gov.uk) on the Accident/Incident form.

For the purpose of this procedure

- An accident is; an unplanned event that causes injury to a person or persons, damage to property, or a combination of both.
- An incident is; An occurrence or event that interrupts normal procedure, for example Violence and aggression, fire, etc.
- A near miss is: an unplanned event that does not cause injury or damage but COULD have done so, e.g. a car just misses hitting a pedestrian.

Importance of this procedure

This procedure helps to ensure that the authority will report all accidents, incidents, near misses, work related diseases and dangerous occurrences as laid down in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for the reporting of all such occurrences to the HSE in compliance with these regulations. In order to be able to achieve this all such occurrences must be recorded and investigated. In addition to this accident/incident investigation identifies immediate and root causes of accidents/incidents and helps the authority to implement adequate control measures to prevent future reoccurrences. Records of all accidents/incidents reported to the Health and Safety Officer will be stored securely and input into a suitable electronic format to allow the authority to identify accident/incident trends.

Accident investigation

The purpose of accident/incident investigation is:

- To understand the sequence of events that led to the accident or incident.
- To identify the unsafe acts and conditions that contributed to the cause of the accident or incident.
- To identify the underlying causes that may have contributed to the accident or incident.
- To ensure that effective remedial actions are taken to prevent any recurrence.
- To enable a full and comprehensive report of the accident or incident to be prepared and circulated to the Health and Safety Panel and where relevant to the HSE.
- To enable all statutory requirements to be adhered to.

This procedure will apply to all accidents or incidents involving employees, visitors, members of the public and contractors. The authority will co-operate with employers of contractors who may be involved in any accident or incident.

Staff Selection

To ensure that the objectives of the investigation are met, all Supervisor and Managers will be trained in investigation procedures and interview techniques.

Supervisor / Managers will be provided with the appropriate information and resources to enable them to carry out their respective roles.

Other staff will be required to co-operate and participate in any investigation if the authority feels that they have specific knowledge, understanding, experience or skills that may assist in the investigation.

Where the Health and Safety Officer feels that the situation is serious enough to warrant his additional investigation, he will also investigate the accident/incident.

Training

All staff selected to participate in investigations will receive suitable and sufficient training in the investigative procedures to be adopted, interview techniques, completion of the accident/incident form and in the use of any equipment employed in the investigation process.

Safety Representatives and Employees

The authority actively encourages the involvement of employees in the investigation process.

Recognised trade union Health and Safety Representatives will be given access to any necessary information and workplaces to enable them to fulfil their duties. Safety representatives will also be encouraged to fully participate in any investigation of any RIDDOR reportable accident/incidents.

All employees will be required to co-operate with the Council in any investigation.

Accident or incident investigation is not a means of determining fault or apportioning blame, it is carried out in accordance with the Councils statutory duty and as a means of preventing any future occurrences of related incidents.

The HSE

In the event that the HSE (enforcing authority) wishes to carry out an investigation, the Council will strive to meet all of its legal responsibilities when co-operating with the investigating inspector.

Process of Investigation

Staff investigating any accident or incident will be given full access to the scene of the incident/accident and any other part of the workplace deemed necessary to carry out the investigation.

All necessary information will be collected and collated. Physical evidence may be recorded and samples taken as necessary.

Investigating staff will be given access to any necessary documentation and will act in accordance with any requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Interviews of those involved in the accident or incident, witnesses and any other person necessary will be carried out in accordance with the individuals training and guidelines issued.

The investigation process should consist of the following steps

- Describe the events leading up to the accident/incident step by step.
- Interview witnesses individually – ask open questions not leading questions (see following section)
- Take photographs / draw diagrams
- Look at any equipment used and comment on its condition/suitability.
- List all measures in place before the accident/incident to prevent occurrence
- List remedial actions to be taken
- What was the root cause or underlying cause of the accident/incident
- If the Health and Safety Representative was not present and the situation warrants their involvement (i.e. RIDDOR related incident), pass the report onto them for their comments (where the individual involved agrees to this).
- Pass the accident/incident form(s) onto the Health and Safety Officer.

Questioning techniques

The purpose of accident investigation is to ensure that the incident does not occur again, it is NOT to apportion blame. With this goal in mind when questioning witnesses you should ask them open questions rather than leading questions. Open questions help to gather the most information from the person without affecting their memory of the accident/incident, they also help to encourage rapport and trust. Remember that you are asking for the individuals help in the investigation, you are not interrogating them.

Leading questions in contrast are questions which attempt to direct an individual to a particular answer. In essence, asking a leading question attempts to put words in the mouth of the respondent. This may put the witness or individual involved with the incident on their guard and will result in little useful information being obtained. However, leading questions can be used to follow-up or clarify answers given to open questions, e.g. 'You said that Kevin was carrying the drill – was this before or after Peter opened the door?'

Ask open questions such as;	Do not ask leading questions such as;
<p>WHO</p> <p>Who was involved? Who was present? Who helped them? Etc.</p>	<p>Was Kevin carrying it? Were Andy and Mick present? Did Darren help Kevin Etc.</p>
<p>WHAT</p> <p>What happened? What time was it? What did they do? Etc.</p>	<p>Did they drop it on their foot? Were they messing around? Why didn't you stop them? Why were they there in the first place?</p>
<p>WHERE</p> <p>Where were they? Where were you? Where were they going? Etc.</p>	<p>Were you in the depot? Should they have been there? Why do you think that they did that?</p>
<p>WHEN</p> <p>When did it happen? When did you see it? When did they leave? Etc.</p>	<p>Did it happen at 10:00 The individual should not have been there, is this correct?</p>

Accident/incident types

Not all accidents/incidents will require the thorough investigation described in the procedure and the following table is intended to provide guidance in this respect.

Accident/incident severity	Action
No injury or loss. A hazard or near miss is being reported	Ensure that the hazard/near miss is recorded on the Accident/Incident form with comments by the Supervisor/Manager and is sent to the Health and Safety Officer
Minor injury Vandalism Small Fire Verbal abuse etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the Accident/incident form is completed. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that appropriate initial action is taken, e.g. First aid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete a succinct investigation (talk to the individual and witnesses) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify the root/underlying cause and any lesson learnt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Send the Accident/incident form to the Health and Safety Officer

Accident/incident severity	Action
Major Injury Serious loss/damage Serious fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the Accident/incident form is completed. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that appropriate initial action is taken, e.g. First aid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete a detailed accident investigation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contact the Health and Safety Officer by the quickest possible means during the investigation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify the root/underlying cause and any lesson learnt

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suitable remedial actions will need to be in place to ensure that the incident does not occur again. This is to be discussed with the Health and Safety Officer.<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide the Health and Safety Officer with a copy of the Accident/incident form and any additional findings, e.g. detailed statements, photographs/drawings etc.
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Remedial Action

The authority will, so far as is reasonably practicable, implement any recommendations made as part of the investigation. In the event of any remedial action taken, staff will be fully involved and provided with the necessary information, instruction and training.

Records and Reports

Members of the Health and Safety Panel will discuss the issues around accidents/incidents. Any confidential information provided during the accident/incident investigation will not be discussed with other parties (including the Health and Safety Panel) without the permission of the person involved in the accident/incident. Employees or their representatives will be given access to any report in so far as it is applicable to do so. All accident data however will be shared with the Health and Safety Panel to ensure that accidents can be prevented in the future and this may include a general account of an accident with confidential information removed.

Records of any accident will be kept in accordance with the authorities policy on record keeping, and will be held securely by the Health and Safety Officer.

Any records kept will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

Accident investigation feedback loop



The Accident/Incident form

This form is to be used for reporting injuries, dangerous occurrences and other near misses including exposure to harmful substances, structural damage to property, other accidents, and incidents of violence or aggression to Staff.

Managers/Supervisors are responsible for coordinating the completion of the Accident/Incident form and the BI 510 Accident Book. The delivery of these documents to the Health & Safety Officer's rests with the Manager or Supervisor. In the absence of the Manager or Supervisor they must ensure that a responsible person can carry out these duties, namely;

- Telephone the Health and Safety Officer on 761555 Ext 416 immediately or at least on the day of the accident/incident.
- Seek guidance or assistance from the Health and Safety Officer if required.

- Ensure the Accident/Incident Report form is completed by all relevant parties and send it for the attention of the Health and Safety Officer to the Civic Centre, on the day of the accident where possible.

Accident Book Recording (NEW BOOK)

The Social Security Act 1979 and Social Security Administration Act 1992 specifically requires the BI 510 accident book being ready available, and into which details must be entered of every accident causing personal injury to any employee. This entry may be made by the employee or by anyone acting on their behalf. The employer is also required to investigate the circumstances of every accident. Note: The completion of the BI 510 accident book is in addition to the completion of the Accident/incident form where there has been an accident, injury or incident e.g. a slip, trip or fall etc.

A new edition of the Accident Book BI 510 was issued in May 2003 by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) personal details entered in accident books must be kept confidential. The HSE have redesigned the book so that individual sheets can be removed and stored securely. This will enable personal information to be kept in confidence.

Reminder - The old style BI 510 accident books ceased to be used after the 31st December 2003.

- The Accident book requires that a **nominated person** at each workplace ensures that the accident book slips are completed, the Health and Safety Officer will complete these slips and hold them centrally.

Completion of the BI 510 does not meet the employee's obligation to report specific accidents and dangerous occurrences and diseases under (RIDDOR).

The responsibility to report accidents to the HSE under (RIDDOR) lies with the Health and Safety Officer

Accident/Incident Report form

This document should be used for reporting injuries, dangerous occurrences and other near misses including exposure to harmful substances, accidental damage to property, other accidents and incidents of violence or aggression to staff or others. This form should be filled in as soon as possible following the incident and returned to the Health and Safety Officer at the Civic Centre.

Part A – Incident details			
Date of the Incident		Time of the Incident	
Address and location where the Incident occurred			
Part B – details of individual involved in the incident			
Persons full name			
Home address and post code of individual involved in the incident			
Home phone no./ Mobile			
Date of birth			
Male or female (please state)			
Job title & Section (where they are an employee)			
Status of the person involved in the incident (please tick one box only) (tick)			
Council Employee			<input type="checkbox"/>
Training scheme	Details		<input type="checkbox"/>
On work experience	Details		<input type="checkbox"/>
Employed by someone else	Details		<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-employed	Details		<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of the public	Details		<input type="checkbox"/>
Part C – About the injury or incident			
What was the injury or incident? e.g. a fracture, eye injury, burn, etc. (please state)			
What part of the body was injured? e.g. right leg (please state)			
Did the injured person (please tick as applicable) (tick)			
Become unconscious?			<input type="checkbox"/>
Need Resuscitation?			<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend hospital for treatment?			<input type="checkbox"/>
Remain in hospital for more than 24 hours?			<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above (a description of the incident can be given in part E)			<input type="checkbox"/>
Have Risk Assessments (e.g. General, Manual Handling, COSHH etc) been completed for this activity			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (please tick).			
Where Yes, please provide the reference numbers;			
Please state, where applicable, the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worn during the incident.			
Please state the environmental conditions at the time of the incident (e.g. high winds/rain etc.)			
Immediate preventative action: Describe what immediate preventative action has been taken to prevent further injury/loss or recurrence or first aid given.			

Part D – About the kind of accident / incident

Please tick the box which best describes what happened to the individual.		(tick)
Contact with moving machinery or material being machined		
Hit by a moving, flying or falling object		
Hit by a moving vehicle		
Hit something fixed or stationary		
Injured while handling, lifting or carrying		
Slipped, tripped or fell on the same level		
Fell from a height	<i>Please state the distance in metres</i>	
Trapped by something collapsing		
Drowned or asphyxiated		
Exposed to, or in contact with, a harmful substance		
Exposed to fire		
Exposed to an explosion		
Contact with electricity or an electrical discharge		
Injured by an animal		
Violence and Aggression or physically assaulted by a person		
Another kind of accident/incident (describe this in part E)		

Part E – Describing what happened

Give as much detail as you can, covering; the name of any substance/machinery etc. involved, the events leading up to the incident, any parts played by other people, general comments about the environment in which the incident happened and any protective equipment worn by the individual. This section is filled in for all incidents including those involving violence and aggression.

Statement of Individual involved with the incident (continue on separate sheets where necessary)

Full name	Date	Signature

Witness Statement (give full details and continue on separate sheets where necessary)

Full name	Date	Signature

Supervisors/Managers Investigation (Provide notes and conclusions of investigation, stating recommendations and immediate/planned action required. Identify whether the task was covered by a risk assessment and if this assessment was suitable and sufficient). Continue on separate sheets where necessary

Full name	Date	Signature

Safety Rep informed Yes No

BOMB PROCEDURE

Introduction

This is the bomb alert procedure for Wear Valley District Council. It specifies the action to be taken by any member of staff in a bomb threat emergency. It also details the actions to be taken by Senior Staff. Specific instructions are also included for use by reception/switchboard staff. This information will be supplemented further in building specific security procedures.

It is the responsibility of section heads to bring this procedure to the attention of all staff, particularly those who may be called upon to undertake the responsibility of any site management. Appendix 1, 'Telephone bomb threat checklist', must be kept near appropriate telephones.

Staff must appreciate that Wear Valley District Council may be the target of bomb or incendiary devices and this procedure must be followed in every instance. The access afforded to the public (in the Civic Centre, leisure centres etc.) makes the authority vulnerable to such attacks.

Staff and visitors should therefore be vigilant and report any suspicious object, package or parcel. Staff are encouraged to challenge anyone acting suspiciously anywhere on any Wear Valley District Council premises.

The following procedure is set out to inform you of the action to be taken in all cases of bomb alert.

Remember, It is important to remain calm in such situations.

Telephone Warnings

Should you receive a call:

- Keep calm.
- Give as little information to the person as possible whilst trying to obtain as much information from the person (see Appendix 1).
- Take down the message exactly as it is given.
- Note the time the call began and ended.
- If you have more than one line, keep the line open after the caller has hung up – as the call may possibly be traced.
- Notify your Line Manager- who will notify the Police, the Health and Safety Officer, the Chief Officer, Corporate Development Unit and the Chief Executive (where the Chief Executive is not available a Director will be notified).

Appendix 1 details the questions to ask in this situation.

In the event of a telephone warning AND parcel or post threat, the person facing the threat should:

Contact and liaise directly with the Police

If the caller did not say where the “bomb” is, staff may be asked to check their immediate work area, look for:

- Any unidentified object, which should not be there, cannot be accounted for or is out of place.
- Begin the search in entrance/publicly accessible areas (where applicable).
- Listen and look for any unusual noise or lights.

The Health and Safety Officer, Chief Officer, Corporate Development Unit and Chief Executive should always be contacted in the first instance.

General Points

It is useful to:

- Ensure access/exit routes are always kept clear of objects (as far as possible).
- Keep continually alert for suspicious incidents.
- NOT TOUCH ANY SUSPICIOUS OBJECT.

NB. The police will advise the Chief Executive (or deputy) of the action to be taken. Following their advice a decision will have to be taken whether to evacuate the building. If evacuation occurs, appropriate procedures in the business continuity plan will need to be followed.

Appendix 1

BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

Date		Time of Call	
Exact wording of the threat: Questions to ask			
1. When is this bomb going to explode?			
2. Where is it now?			
3. What does it look like?			
4. What kind of bomb is it?			
5. What will cause it to explode			
6. Did you place the bomb			
7. Why?			
8. When?			
9. What is your address?			
10. What is your name?			
11. What organisation are you from?			
12. What is your telephone number?			

Characteristics of the caller – Following the phone tick the following boxes to try and help to identify the caller. (please tick)

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	Old	<input type="checkbox"/>	Young	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Voice (please tick)

Speech Intoxicated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rational	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rambling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laughing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Serious	<input type="checkbox"/>	Impediment	<input type="checkbox"/>
High pitched	<input type="checkbox"/>	Harsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deep	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accent (please state)	<input type="text"/>				
Did it seem that the message was read out or spontaneous? (please state)	<input type="text"/>				

Background Noise (please tick)

Factory	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road Works	<input type="checkbox"/>	Street Sounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>	School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	Docks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aircraft	<input type="checkbox"/>	Church Bells	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Distractions

Any noise on the telephone line	<input type="text"/>
Call box pay tone or coins	<input type="text"/>
Was there anyone in the background?	<input type="text"/>
Were there any interruptions?	<input type="text"/>

Were any code – words used during the call?	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------

Name (please print)	<input type="text"/>
Signed	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>

Bomb Incident Procedure

If you receive a bomb threat or are suspicious of an object or vehicle, report immediately to the Police, the Chief Executive, Chief Officer, Corporate Development Unit and the Health and Safety Officer.

If you are informed that a bomb incident is in progress:

- Try and take down as much information as possible (if you are receiving the call) – please refer to the Bomb Threat Checklist.
- If you are asked to visually search your immediate area and you see what appears to be a suspicious object, do not touch it.
- On identifying this object, if it is something which would not be obvious to others place something adjacent to it as a marker.
- Clear the immediate area.
- Immediately report the suspicious object to your Line Manager who will make the appropriate contacts.

If you are asked to evacuate the building or if you hear the fire alarm.

- Evacuate the building as per the fire evacuation procedure for your site and assemble at the designated assembly point.
- Take any visitors/members of the public with you on evacuation.
- Report to the assembly point and provide you name and any relevant information which you may have concerning the incident.
- Follow the instructions given to you at your assembly point from the relevant person.
- Do not re-enter the building under any circumstances, unless told that it is safe to do so.

IDENTIFICATION OF SUSPECT REMOTE CONTROL INCENDIARY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE (RCIED) MAIL

When handling mail, there are several signs that one can identify in order to confirm/refute RCIED.

1. **ORIGIN** Does the letter/parcel originate from a known or normal source?
2. **STAINS** Are there stains on the letter/parcel to indicate the presence of substances other than paper?
3. **SMELL** Are the smells unusual to letters/parcels, i.e. marzipan?
4. **BULGES** Does it bulge to indicate the inclusion of other substances?
5. **WIRE/TAPE** Are there signs of any wires or has tape been used to aid closure after repeated opening?
6. **HEAVY** Is the letter/parcel unnaturally heavy for its size?
7. **INNER ENVELOPE** Is there evidence of an inner envelope/container?
8. **SPRINGINESS** Does the letter/parcel feel unnaturally springy indicating presence of wires?

This should be applied with a certain amount of common sense bearing in mind the level of threat directed to either Councillors, Staff or departments at any given time.

The level of threat can rise or lower depending on information received.

GENERAL MAIL HANDLING – WHAT TO DO

- Open all mail with a letter opener or other method that is least likely to disturb contents.
- Open packages/envelopes with a minimum amount of movement.
- Do not blow into envelopes.
- Do not shake or pour out contents.
- Keep hands away from nose and mouth while opening mail.
- Wash hands after handling mail.

If you believe that a contaminated package has been delivered

- Do not touch the package further or move it to another location
- Leave the room, and ensure that no other person enters it, as far as possible keep yourself separate from others and available for medical examination.
- Notify the Facilities Manager (or designated person in charge of the building) and/or Caretakers and/or the Health and Safety Officer

The Facilities Manager / designated person will then

- Notify police immediately (999).
- Switch off the building air conditioning system
- Close all fire doors in the building
- Close all windows in the rest of the building
- If there has been a suspected biological/chemical contamination, ensure that personnel outside the room are evacuated as soon as possible and ensure individuals in the contaminated room are evacuated to an adjacent unoccupied room away from the hazard.

SUSPECT PACKAGES – WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR WHEN OPENING MAIL

The following items are issues which individually or collectively may trigger suspicion when handling mail;

- Discolouration, crystals or surface, strange odours or oily stains.
- Envelope with powder or powder-like residue.
- Excessive tape or string.
- Unusual size or unusual weight given the size of the package.
- Lopsided or oddly-shaped envelope.
- Postmark that does not match return address.
- Restrictive endorsements such as “Personal” or “Confidential”.
- Excessive postage.
- Handwritten, block-printed or poorly-typed addresses.
- Incorrect titles.
- Title but no name.
- Misspellings of common words.
- No return address.
- Addressed to individual no longer with organisation

IF YOU ARE IN ANY DOUBT ABOUT A PACKAGE, DO NOT TOUCH IT, MOVE IT OR OPEN IT. CALL YOUR LINE MANAGER WHO WILL CONTACT THE FACILITIES MANAGER AND THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER OR NOTIFY THE POLICE DIRECTLY ON 999.

CONSULTATION WITH EMPLOYEES PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council acknowledges the importance of employee involvement in health and safety matters and the importance of the positive role played by Health and Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety Panel. As such, it is the intention of the authority to provide the facilities and assistance that such representatives and s might reasonably require in order to carry out their functions.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

Wear Valley District Council is committed to consulting with Health and Safety Representatives over issues related to health, safety and welfare and to provide the information they require in order to carry out their functions.

TU accredited Health and Safety Representatives are required to give the authority reasonable notice of their intention to carry out inspections, to provide written reports following such inspections and to follow the authorities procedures should disputes over health and safety issues arise.

Wear Valley District Council maintains a Health and Safety Panel that meets at regular intervals. The Panel consists of employer and employee representatives and the Health and Safety Officer and will be chaired by a nominated panel member.

Information, Instruction and Training

Wear Valley District Council will offer Health and Safety Representatives the opportunity to attend relevant training. The authority will offer paid leave for any Health and Safety Representative requiring time off to carry out his or her duties (as outlined in the Trade Union recognition agreement) or to receive any necessary training.

In addition to this the Health and Safety Officer will deliver relevant training and toolbox talks to the Health and Safety Panel as part of their own training and in order to empower the Representatives to take an active role in the delivery of a first rate health and safety service.

The following procedures should be observed with regard to safety representatives

- ✓ In the case of TU accredited Health and Safety Representatives, unions should inform the company in writing of the individual's appointment.
- ✓ Health and Safety Representatives should understand the way in which the safety Panel operates within the authority.
- ✓ Health and Safety Representatives should be aware of the needs of the group or constituency that they represent at the Panel.
- ✓ Health and Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety Panel will receive adequate training.
- ✓ Health and Safety Representatives should be aware of the disputes and grievance procedures in operation within the authority.
- ✓ Health and Safety Panels should meet as scheduled, there should be agendas for meetings and minutes should be carefully recorded. Information about these meetings and minutes from the meetings will be made available to the entire workforce.
- ✓ The Health and Safety Panel should have terms of reference and properly formulated aims and objectives.

Summary

The two most important steps with regard to employee consultation and the Health and Safety Panel are as follows:

- 1) To ensure that the panel operates in a positive way, reinforcing the authorities health and safety culture and employee participation in solving health and safety problems.

To ensure adequate training for Health and Safety Representatives, and the Health and Safety panel members, thus improving communications, prioritisation of risk control and the approach to solving health and safety problems.

Display Screen Equipment procedure

Introduction

This policy is intended to ensure that staff and others using the Councils display screen equipment (DSE) can work comfortably with it and avoid risks to their health, safety and welfare.

Through implementation of the procedure it is the intention of Wear Valley District Council to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.

Who is a user

For the purpose of this procedure the term 'user' is taken from the definition laid down in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, Regulation 1.

(d) "user" means an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his/her normal work;

Where it is clear that the use of DSE is more or less continuous on most days, the individual concerned should be regarded as a user. Where such use becomes less continuous or frequent, it is sensible to assume that someone becomes a user where there is evidence of:

- Use of an hour or more
- The display screen is used on most or every day
- Requires transfer of information to or from the DSE
- Work could not be done without DSE
- High levels of concentration required
- Little choice about using DSE

Guidance

Brightness/Contrast

- Negative/ positive image polarity is acceptable, there is pros and cons with both ie, negative polarity; flicker is less perceptible, positive polarity, reflections are less perceptible.
- Brightness and contrast must be appropriate for ambient lighting conditions.

Screen Adjust

The display screen must:

- Be adjustable for glare and reflection to allow the user to remain in a natural and relaxed position.
- Be at the appropriate height for the user.
- Have a stable and flicker free image to 90% of users.
- Swivel and tilt freely to suit the needs of the user or operator.

Keyboards

The keyboard must:

- Be separate from the screen and be tiltable.
- Have enough space (50cm) between the front of the keyboard and the edge of the work surface to provide hand/arm support.

Work Desk/Surface

Must be:

- Of low reflectance.
- Be large enough for the task allowing flexible arrangement of all necessary equipment.
- Have sufficient space to allow a comfortable position to be achieved.

Work Chair

The chair must be:

- Stable and allow easy freedom of movement and a comfortable position.
- Be adjustable in height.
- Have an adjustable back rest, both in height and angle of tilt (this does not have to be independent).

Environment (space)

- Must be sufficient to allow postural changes.
- Provide adequate space under the workstation for thighs, knees, lower leg and feet.

Lighting

Room or task lighting must ensure:

- Satisfactory conditions and appropriate contrast, taking into account the type of work being undertaken.
- Lighting levels of between 300 – 500 Lux at the work surface for screen and non screen tasks will be required.
- Natural lighting so far as is reasonably practicable should be provided.

Reflection/Glare

The schedule requires:

- Workstations to be designed to prevent glare or reflections on the screen from windows or brightly covered walls.
- Provision of adjustable coverings, window blinds is acceptable to prevent daylight falling on screens.

Noise/Heat/Humidity

- Noise emitted by workstation equipment must not distract the user.
- Equipment must not produce excess heat liable to cause discomfort.
- Humidity must be maintained between 40% - 60% relative humidity

Daily Work Routine

Employers should plan activities so that daily use of DSE is periodically interrupted by breaks or changes of activity. In many tasks, these breaks may occur naturally.

The following should be applied:

- Breaks or changes of activity should be included in the working time.
- These should be taken before the onset of fatigue.
- They should be 5- 10 minutes for every hour
- Users should be given some discretion as to when to take breaks and how to carry out tasks.
- Changes in activity are considered more effective than formal breaks.

Eyes and Eyesight

Employees are entitled, but have no obligation, to undergo an appropriate eye and eyesight test provided by their employer when they are:

- A user of DSE equipment.
- About to become a user.
- About to become employed

An appropriate eye and eyesight test means a sight test defined in the Opticians Act 1989.

The results of an eye and eyesight test can only be disclosed to the employer with the consent of the employee, Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

Procedure for assessing viewing range of DSE and provision of safety spectacles will be developed and managed by departments, a suggested proforma for referral is attached at Appendix B

Risk Assessment

Employees have an absolute duty to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the workstations used by users or operators.

- Workstations used by employees, agency workers or those persons on work experience will be required to be assessed.
- Re assessment will be required if there is a significant change to the work station.
- Record of the assessment is required to be kept in some readily retrievable form.
- Shared workstations will be assessed for each user.
- Details of the significant findings of risk assessment will be brought to the attention of the user.

Detailed assessment procedure is attached at Appendix A

Costs of corrective appliances

Provision of corrective appliances, normally spectacles, specifically for working at DSE, must be provided at the employer's expense.

- This process will be in accord with the system of purchase in use at the time.
- The corrective appliances will be of a quality adequate for its function.
- Employees must meet costs outside of this such as fashionable frames, or tinted lens.
- Employers are not liable for corrective appliances used at distances other than that at which the screen is viewed.

Training and Information

Where a person is a user or is to become a user the Council will ensure they are provided with adequate health and safety training and information.

Training must cover the health and safety aspects of using the workstation, as well as the mechanics of the job and should include:

- The role of the user in detection and recognition of hazards and risks associated with the use of DSE.
- An explanation of the cause of risks and the mechanisms by which harm may be brought about.
- Importance of posture and change.
- Correct use of adjustment mechanisms.
- Sensible layout of workstation equipment.
- The need for maintenance and cleaning.
- The importance of rest breaks and change.
- Eye and eyesight testing .
- Procedures for reporting defects.
- Process for dealing with findings of risk assessment.

Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)

This manifests itself as fatigue cramps soreness and pain affecting the arms, wrists and more specifically, the tendons in these areas. In serious cases, it can be disabling, but it can be prevented by the use of a correctly designed workstation, adequate rest periods and the alternation of tasks to allow arm functions to recover.

Eye and Eyesight Defects

It is not considered that a display screen will cause any more deterioration than the equivalent close up work. It is however possible that discomfort may be experienced due to existing deficiencies, inadequate lighting, glare, flicker or other causes. The eyesight of operators should be tested, corrections applied and any deficiencies in the equipment and the presentation of documents should be addressed as part of the Risk Assessment.

Fatigue and Stress

It is not uncommon for operators to suffer fatigue and stress/tension. Although some ill effects may be caused by the physical arrangement of the workstation and seating provisions, stress and tension are often found to be caused by external factors such as distractions, interruptions, work overload, complex or ineffective software or other related factors. Once the workstation has been made comfortable other stress generating factors should be addressed. Regular short breaks or alternating work activities can play a large part in stress reduction.

Epilepsy

It has not been proved that display screen equipment can trigger an epilepsy attack, even in those known to be vulnerable to flickering light patterns. Management should be aware of anyone who operates display screen equipment that has suffered from epilepsy and should monitor his or her activities closely. The employee is responsible to declare such illnesses in their DSE self-assessment and personnel record, this will then be taken into account in all Risk Assessments.

Facial Dermatitis

This has been attributed to Display Screen Equipment, however it is very rare and is possibly caused by environmental conditions prevalent in the area of the equipment such as humidity or static electricity.

Radiation

There is no scientific evidence to show a connection between radiation and Display Screen Equipment, either to adults or unborn children. It should be appreciated that medical opinion is regularly revised, so this should be reviewed in the light of any future guidelines.

Workstations

An effective workstation is one in which the operator has a comfortable and stable seating position that is adjustable for height and provides back support. Footrests may be desirable to provide support and relieve fatigue.

The surface area should allow adequate space for the equipment, the necessity for having the printer at the workstation should be considered, and it should be possible to support the fore-arms on the work surface when using the keyboard. Sufficient space should be available for copy documents, with or without document holders.

The screen should be free from reflection, glare or flicker and should be adjustable for height and angle to enable the operator to view data without unnecessary twisting or strain to the back or neck. The workstation environment should be controlled so that a stable temperature is maintained, excessive sunlight is prevented from causing dazzle, by the use of blinds or other appropriate methods, and that the artificial light levels are adequate for reading purposes. Noise levels should be low, particularly from printers or ventilation equipment.

Software and work tasking should be logical and fit for the purpose. Stress levels are easily raised when operators with high workloads are obliged to perform unnecessary, complicated or repetitive software directed operations.

Persons with responsibility under this procedure

The persons with responsibility for implementing the provisions within this procedure are as follows:

- 'Users' (must complete the Self-assessment form (Form 16a) and return them to their Line Manager).
- Managers (must ensure that staff under their control complete self-assessments and where required request that the Health and Safety Officer completes a detailed DSE assessment with the staff member).
- The Health and Safety Officer (will complete detailed DSE assessments at Managers requests).

Duties of Managers and Supervisors

Managers or Supervisors must ensure that:

- DSE workstation assessments are carried out where relevant and that records are kept.
- Competent supervision is in place for all employees.
- Adequate information and training (e.g. software usage) is provided to persons working with DSE.

- Any discomfort or ill health believed to be associated with the use of DSE or exacerbated by DSE use is investigated, and appropriate remedial action is taken.
- Employees adhere to the instructions given regarding safe workstation set-up and use, including the need for regular changes of activity or breaks
- Safety arrangements for work involving DSE use are regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Employees carrying out DSE work are screened for reasons of health and safety, before undertaking the work.
- Special arrangements are made for individuals with health conditions that could be adversely affected by working with DSE.

Duties of Employees

Employees must ensure that:

- They inform their departmental Supervisor/Line Manager of any disability or health condition which may affect their ability to work using DSE or be affected by working with DSE (this information will be treated confidentially).
- They comply with the instructions and training given regarding safe workstation set-up and use, including the need for regular changes of activity or breaks.
- They use any equipment provided (as a result of assessment of their workstations) to minimise DSE health risks, e.g. document holders and footrests
- They report to their departmental Supervisor/Line Manager any discomfort or health concern believed to be associated with the use of DSE (this information will be treated confidentially).

User Notes to help in the completion of the DSE Self-assessment

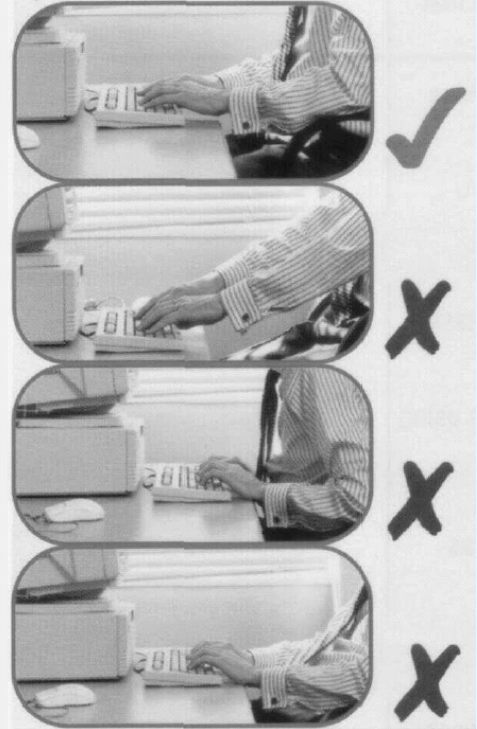
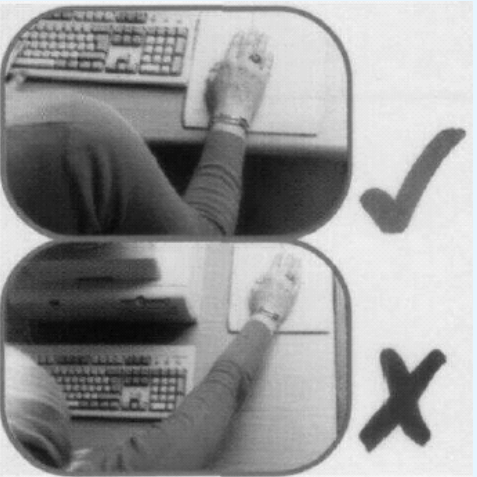
1. This audit is **your** judgement of **your** workstation
2. Carry it out independently, don't copy the assessments completed by others.
3. The information you provide will be used to provide a safer environment for you to work in.
4. Please answer the following questions and on completion pass it back to your Manager/Supervisor.

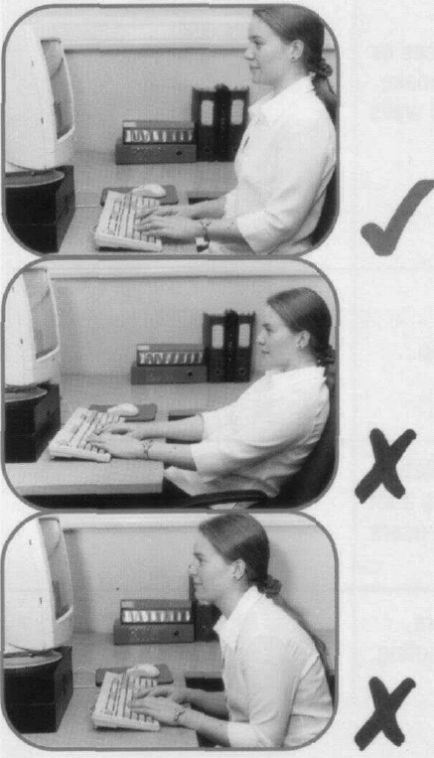
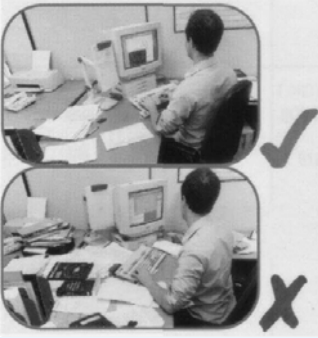
SELF-ASSESSMENT DSE CHECKLIST

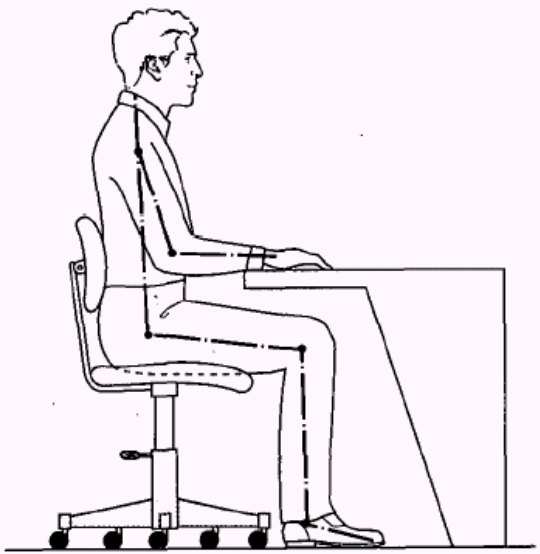
ASSESSMENT OF DSE USERS AND THEIR WORKSTATIONS, ETC

Name of DSE User (please print)	
Workstation Location	
Department	
Date	

Workstation, etc and Task Characteristics	Response		Comments/ Action Required	Date Action Taken
	Yes	No		
<u>Nature of the Job</u>				
1. Does the individual use the display screen equipment for a substantial part of the working day (i.e. at least 25% of the time)?				
2. Is there difficulty with the speed of the software?				
3. Is there difficulty with the way information is displayed?				
4. Is the system easy to use?				
4. Does it provide help when errors or problems occur?				
<u>Display Screen</u>				
5. Is there a facility for keeping the screen clean?				
6. (a) Is the screen display clear and easy to read?				
6. (b) Is the text size comfortable to read?				
7. Is the image on the screen stable, i.e. free of flicker and jitter?				
8. Is the brightness and contrast between the screen characters and the background easily adjustable?				
9. Can the screen swivel and tilt easily to suit the needs of the user?				
10. Is the screen free from glare and reflections?				
<u>Keyboard</u>				
11. Is there sufficient space in front of the keyboard to provide support for hands and arms during pausing from keying?				
12. (a) Is the arrangement of the keyboard suitable for the user/job/task application etc. E.g. are the characters on the keys easily readable? If no to any of these please comment.				
13. Does the keyboard have a matt surface?				

Workstation, etc and Task Characteristics	Response		Comments/ Action Required	Date Action Taken
	Yes	No		
14. (b) Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position? 				
<u>Mouse, trackball etc.</u> 15. Is the device suitable for the tasks it is used for?				
16. Is the device positioned close to the user? 				
17. Is there support for the device user's wrist and forearm?				
18. Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?				
19. Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?				

Workstation, etc and Task Characteristics	Response		Comments/ Action Required	Date Action Taken
	Yes	No		
<p><i>Furniture</i></p> <p>20. (a) Is the work chair adjustable in height?</p> <p>20. (b) If so is the chair adjusted correctly?</p> 				
21. Is the chair back adjustable in both height and tilt?				
22. Is the chair stable, allowing the individual freedom of movement and a comfortable position?				
23. Is there a facility for the individual to rest their feet?				
<p>24. (a) Is the work desk large enough to allow the individual to arrange the screen, keyboard, document holder and related equipment to their satisfaction? If no to any of these please comment.</p>  <p>(b) Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?</p>				

Workstation, etc and Task Characteristics	Response		Comments/ Action Required	Date Action Taken
	Yes	No		
25. Is there adequate space to allow the individual to change their position comfortably?				
26. Does the individual use a document holder? If yes, is it stable and adjustable? If no, do you think one would be useful? Please Comment.				
27. Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?				
28. Is the small of the back supported by the chair's Backrest?				
29. Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same Height as the top of the monitor?				
30. Are feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure From the seat on the backs of the legs? 				

Workstation, etc and Task Characteristics	Response		Comments/ Action Required	Date Action Taken
	Yes	No		
Environment				
31. Are there any electrical hazards such as worn or loose cables or trailing wires presenting a tripping hazard?				
32. Is the room or work area lighting satisfactory?				
33. Are there any light sources (e.g. windows) that cause glare or reflections?				
34. Are noise levels distracting? Does it make talking difficult?				
35. Does the equipment cause excessive heat?				
36. Do you find the humidity level reasonably comfortable?				
37. Do you find the temperature reasonably comfortable?				
38. Do you find the ventilation reasonably comfortable?				
The User				
39. Does the individual suffer from fatigue or any similar problem associated with VDU use? If yes, please comment.				
40. Does the individual suffer from aches and pains in the neck, back or upper limbs associated with VDU use. If yes, please comment.				
41. Does the individual suffer from eye strain or headaches associated with VDU use? If yes, please comment.				
42. Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?				
43. Has this checklist covered all of the problems (if any) which you experience when working with DSE?				
44. Have you experienced any discomfort not covered in this document when working with DSE?				

APPENDIX B

AUTHORISATION FOR EMPLOYEE TO UNDERGO EYE AND EYESIGHT TEST WITH APPROVED OPTOMETRIST

From: Wear Valley District Council
Civic Centre
Crook
County Durham
DL15 9ES

To: Specsavers

Employee Details

Name: Pay No.

Date of Birth:

Work Station Specification

Distance to screen(s) Maximum cms Minimum cms

Distance to documents Maximum cms Minimum cms

Distance to keyboard Maximum cms Minimumcms

I authorise you to carry out a full eye and eyesight test on the above named employee and provide glasses if required for DSE use at a cost of no more than £10.00 eye and eyesight test, £16.60 dispensing and fitting and single vision lens and frames at £17.05, A TOTAL OF £43.65

Signed Date

Name Position

Is there a requirement for VDE corrective appliances Yes/No
(If yes please order as discussed).

Patient/Employee Declaration

I have today undergone a full eye and eyesight test and consent to all information being released to my employer.

Signed Date

Use of Information

Information gathered through the use of the appendices to this guidance must be collated and forwarded to Departmental Management Teams (DMT).

This information will enable DMT's to make suitable budgetary arrangements aligned to the Personal Development Plans (PDP's) for future expenditure regarding training needs, eye and eyesight testing, corrective appliances and workstation or environment modification.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PANEL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

To ensure compliance with the Safety Representative and Safety Committees Regulations (SRSCR) 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with employees) Regulations (HSCER) 1996.

The main purpose of the Health and Safety Panel is the continuous promotion of co-operation between Management and Employees in the development and implementation of measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees and others affected by our undertakings.

The focus of the Panel is to improve Health & Safety standards throughout the authority.

The Health & Safety Panel provides a forum in which employees at all levels have the opportunity to discuss and raise Health & Safety related issues.

The Panel members are of equal representation and standing.

ROLE

The role of the Health & Safety Panel will be to:

- Review organisational policies and procedures relating to Health & Safety;
- Encourage ownership of Health & Safety matters across/throughout the workforce;
- Provide a formal method of reporting Health & Safety matters to Management where these have not been resolved through the normal Line Management channels;
- Consider performance information presented in relation to Health and Safety, e.g. accident /incident statistics;
- Act as a forum to discuss accidents/incidents causation and any remedial actions;
- Disseminate Health and Safety information and instruction;
- To review and monitor Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of work;
- Consider new and impending legislation

MEETINGS

The Health and Safety Panel will meet quarterly and the Health and Safety Officer will present the minutes to the Chief Executive.

Health & Safety Panel Minutes

- Circulate to Chief Executive and Directors
- Health & Safety Notice Board(s)
- Intranet

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH) PROCEDURE

Introduction

This procedure specifically examines chemical and process hazards in the workplace, for example work associated with paints and cleaning material and hazards arising from generating dust, fumes and waste products. Biological hazards (bacteria, viruses and other micro organisms) and any other associated hazards are dealt with in separate procedures. Certain materials are exempt from the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), but are covered by their own specific regulations, for example;

- Asbestos.
- Radioactive materials.
- Lead and lead products.
- Materials hazardous to health ONLY due to their flammability.
- Substances used in medical treatment.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure all exposure of employees to substances hazardous to health is prevented or at least controlled to within statutory limits.

The authority undertakes to control exposure by engineering means where reasonably practicable (e.g. dust extraction). If exposure cannot be adequately controlled by engineering means, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided free of charge after consultation with employees or their Health and Safety Representatives.

All employees will be provided with understandable information and instruction on the nature and likelihood of their exposure to substances hazardous to health.

The implementation of this policy requires the total co-operation of all members of Management and staff.

Arrangements

Wear Valley District Council will, in consultation with workers and their representatives, ensure the following.

- An inventory of all substances hazardous to health kept on site will be maintained, with appropriate hazard information (COSHH assessments).
- Competent persons will be appointed to carry out risk assessments of the exposure to substances hazardous to health and advise on their control. All COSHH assessments must be completed in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer.

- All operations which involve, or may involve, exposure to substances hazardous to health will be assessed and appropriate control measures will be taken if elimination or substitution of the substance is not possible.
- Engineering controls will be properly maintained and monitored by planned preventive maintenance and annual performance monitoring to ensure continued effectiveness.
- All employees and others who may work in the affected areas will be informed of the purpose and safe operation of all engineering controls.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) will only be used as a last resort, or as a back-up measure during testing or modification of other controls.
- The type and use of PPE will be carefully assessed and maintained according to manufacturers' instructions. As far as is reasonably practicable, the number of different types will be minimised to prevent mistakes in servicing, use or replacement.
- Each COSHH assessment will be reviewed or where situations of use, storage etc. change.
- Qualified professionals, where indicated to be necessary by the assessment, will carry out health surveillance.
- Employee health records of all exposures to substances hazardous to health will be kept for a minimum of 40 years.
- All employees will be provided with information and appropriate training on the nature of the hazardous substances they work with. Employees will be informed about any monitoring and health surveillance results.
- All changes to control measures and changes of PPE will be properly assessed and no new substances will be introduced into the workplace without prior assessment. Supervisors/Managers must ensure that they do not permit staff to use any substances which have not been subject to a COSHH assessment.

Procedures for Dealing with Health and Safety Issues

When an employee raises a point related to the use of substances hazardous to health, the authority will:

- Ensure the hazard associated with the substance has been correctly identified.
- Ensure the assessment of the use of the substance is correct and up to date
- Revise controls in place to ensure that they are still adequate.
- Correct any observed deficiencies in the control of the hazards.
- Inform the employee, and the Health and Safety Panel of the results of the investigation and actions taken.

If an identified exposure has taken place, those affected and their Managers and the Health and Safety Panel, will be informed immediately. Possible health effects will, in addition, be communicated to the Councils occupational health provider through supplying the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), COSHH assessments and details of use/exposure.

Information and Training

Wear Valley District Council will give sufficient information, instruction and training to ensure full understanding of the hazards to health posed by substances in the workplace and the importance of the control measures provided. Information will also be given to others who may be affected, such as:

- Contractors.
- Temporary staff.
- Visitors.
- The general public

Managers and Supervisors of areas which use substances hazardous to health will be given additional training to ensure the proper management of the risks.

Safe System of Work

Poorly maintained or adjusted control measures can result in inadvertent exposure to substances hazardous to health. This will be examined through appropriate workplace sampling by a competent person.

Employees are encouraged to report defects. Systems are in place for prompt repair and for the provision of temporary replacement controls, e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE). The following steps are taken to minimise the risk.

- Ensure hazard information is kept up to date.
- Ensure assessments are reviewed annually or when changes in storage, use or disposal are made.
- Ensure employees are trained in the nature of the hazards and use of control measures.
- Ensure controls are maintained and monitored by Management.
- Ensure documentation is comprehensive and understandable.
- Encourage employees to report faults and problems to their Line Manager.

Supervisors/Managers

Supervisors/Managers have a primary role in complying with the COSHH regulations. Due to their knowledge of the circumstances in which the chemicals/substances are used Supervisors/Managers will assist the Health and Safety Officer in completing COSHH risk assessments (all such risk assessments will be signed off by the Health and Safety Panel).

In addition to this Supervisors/Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff under their control comply with the COSHH risk assessments, Safe Systems of Work and any training which staff have received. Supervisors/Managers will also ensure that staff under their control wear all PPE provided by the authority.

Employees

All employees have a responsibility to co-operate with the authority in ensuring it's legal obligations are met. Specifically staff must ensure that they attend any training sessions arranged for them, wear all PPE provided to them and follow the requirements of all risk assessments and safe systems of work. In addition to this employees using substances covered by the COSHH regulations must;

- Report any ill health symptoms arising from their work to their Manager at the earliest possible moment.
- Use all control measures which are designed to maintain their health, safety and welfare.
- Where requested, assist in the preparation of risk assessments.
- Participate in any health surveillance required as a result of risk assessments or workplace sampling.

Others

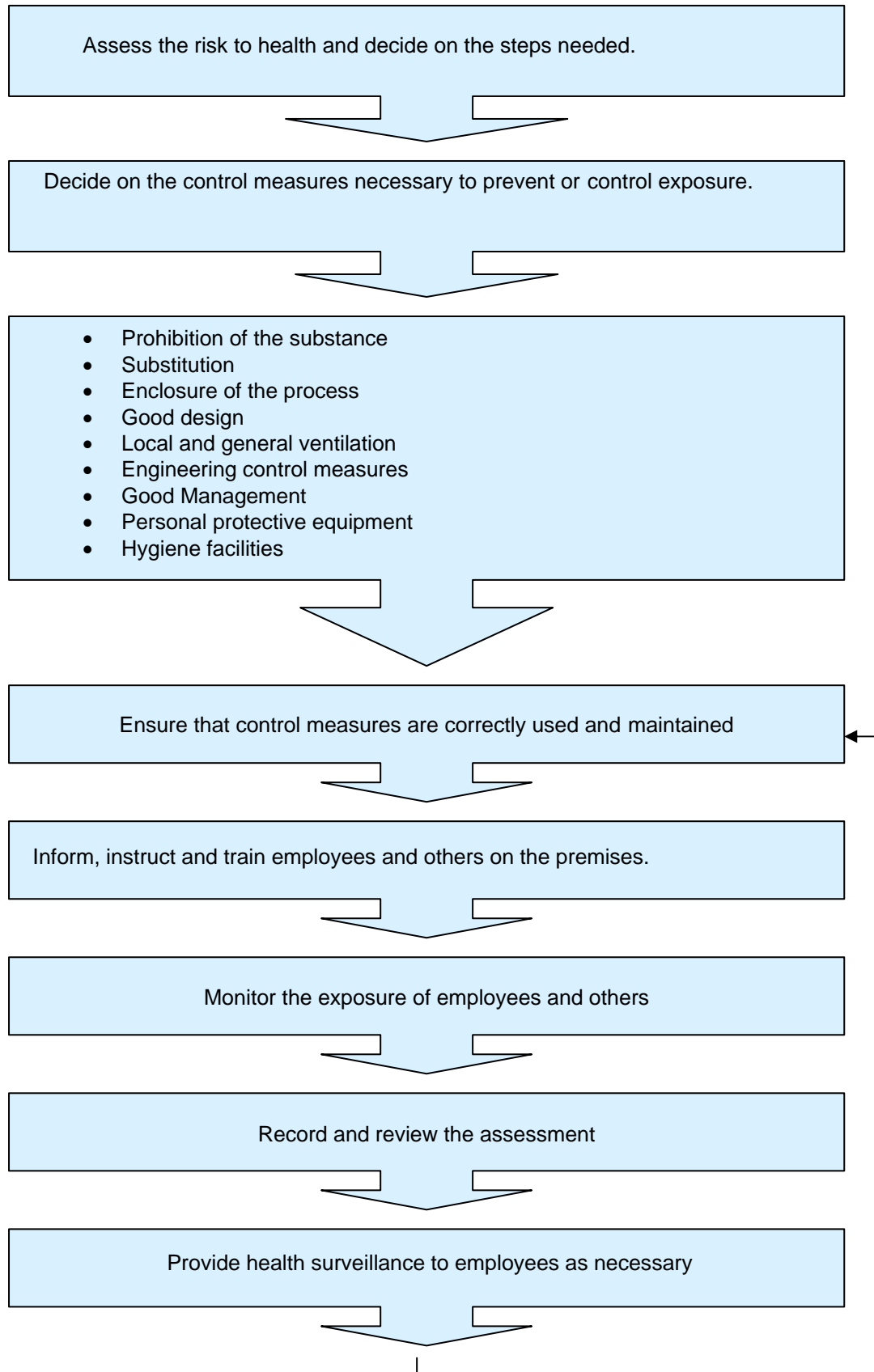
Contractors or others working on Wear Valley District Council premises must provide details of any hazardous substances which they intend to use as part of their work. In such cases the contractor should supply Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and up-to-date risk assessments, as a minimum, to the Health and Safety Officer. Where the contractor is engaged in activities that generate harmful substances, i.e. dust, fumes etc. they shall also provide detailed and up-to-date risk assessments covering these activities.

Health Surveillance and Monitoring

Health surveillance will occur where it has been indicated as necessary in a risk assessment due to the degree of exposure and the nature of the effects.

Monitoring shall be undertaken in accordance with the regulations and approved codes of practice where measurement is necessary to ensure the Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL, as published in EH40, Workplace) is not exceeded.

Flowchart for completing COSHH Risk Assessments



Fire procedure (Corporate)

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council recognises the need to have detailed fire safety procedures in place as a means of preventing any potential fire or explosion. It also recognises the need to plan for emergency measures to deal with any unforeseen fire/explosion related incidents. These plans include staff training in fire safety and prevention, and emergency evacuation drills.

In the event of a fire, the safety of life will override all other considerations, such as saving property and extinguishing the fire.

This procedure is a corporate procedure detailing how Wear Valley District Council will satisfy its legal requirements in relation to fire safety. Detailed information concerning site specific actions in the event of a fire are contained on site in the buildings fire procedure (all Wear Valley District Council Premises must have individual fire procedures).

For the purposes of Fire Management the Health and Safety Officer has been appointed as the Fire Manager and will take the role of Competent Person for Wear Valley District Council. Individuals in control of specific premises are Principal Fire Wardens, with other individuals involved in fire management acting as Fire Wardens.

All staff are reminded that they have responsibilities to ensure their own health, safety and welfare and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. This duty extends to Fire Management.

Legislation

Under the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA)**, employers have to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare both of their employees (section 2) and of any other people who may use, or have access to, the workplace (section 4). Employers and self employed persons must also conduct their undertaking so as to ensure that others not in their employment are not exposed to risks to their health and safety (section 3). These general duties include safety in relation to fire hazards, both from processes or activities, as well as general fire safety in the workplace.

The **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, MHSWR, generally make more explicit what employers are required to do to manage health and safety under the HSWA. These Regulations, and the **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**, require employers to formally assess the risk of fire to their employees at work as part of the general risk assessment required by the Regulations.

However, responsibility for enforcing these requirements lies with fire authorities and not the HSE.

Fire certificates are administered and issued by Local Fire Authorities following application by the building owner or occupier. From April 2005 buildings no longer require a fire certificate, but, where buildings are in possession of one prior to this date its stipulations remain in force.

In place of the fire certificate the Fire Regulations place a requirement to undertake a fire risk assessment. In addition to this employers must also provide;

01. Means of detection and giving warning in case of fire
02. The provision of means of escape
03. Means of fighting fire, and
04. The training of staff in fire safety

General Guidance

Fire Procedures will be developed and implemented for all Wear Valley District Council premises by the building and facilities managers in conjunction with the Fire Manager.

Management will ensure that all members of staff and visitors are aware of the relevant fire controls and procedures for fire and emergency evacuation in the relevant premises.

Management/Principal Fire Wardens will ensure the following are brought to the attention of all staff and visitors.

- ◆ The steps to be followed as stated in the site Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Procedures document.
- ◆ The procedures for evacuating the building, where to assemble and who to report to are recorded in this policy. The assembly point for the building is also stated on a standard "Fire Safety Building layout Plan".

Administration

Dates of all drills, practices and alarms (where applicable) must be recorded by the Principal Fire Warden.

Fire extinguishers and fire fighting equipment is to be maintained annually by an approved company. Findings and inspection dates will be recorded on the equipment and fire extinguishers and on a report provided by the company completing the inspection/ maintenance.

Information

Every new member of staff must be given instruction regarding fire safety during any induction training. All visitors will be briefed by staff bringing them onto site concerning the fire and evacuation procedures for the building.

For specific information relating to a specific premises please refer to the Fire Procedure for the building in question. These fire procedures will detail the practical aspects of fire management within each individual premise.

Risk Assessment

The Fire Manager is responsible for completing all Fire Risk Assessments for Wear Valley District Council owned premises and deciding on the fire provision required. These risk assessments will be subject to a 12-month review or following any changes of use or structural alterations within the building(s). All risk assessments will be recorded and will be left on each premises to ensure that they are available to the Fire Brigade. The Fire Manager has the overall decision on fire provision within authority owned buildings, and will act on behalf of the Chief Executive for the purposes of fire management.

Training

All Principal Fire Wardens, Fire Wardens and general staff will be provided with levels of training appropriate to their responsibilities within the building(s) which they work within.

Fire incidents

All fire incidents will be reported to the Fire Manager who will log them and advise on the appropriate actions which must be taken.

FIRST AID PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council is committed to providing sufficient numbers of first aid personnel to deal with accidents and injuries at work.

The Council will provide information and training on first aid to employees to ensure that statutory requirements and the needs of the organisation are met.

Should employees have concerns about the provision of first aid within the organisation, they should inform their Manager who will bring this to the attention of the Health and Safety Officer so that he can investigate and rectify the situation if necessary.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

First Aid Personnel

First aid personnel are employees who have volunteered for the role and have been assessed as suitable. The Council will also nominate a person to take charge if a first aider is unavailable in exceptional circumstances. The appointed person does not need to be a qualified first aider, but will be given a clear indication of the responsibilities and training required.

First aiders are qualified personnel who have received training and passed an examination in accordance with HSE requirements. First aid personnel will be provided with refresher training at regular intervals (as stipulated on their training certificates) to keep their skills up to date.

Wear Valley District Council will ensure there are sufficient first aid personnel within the workplace to adequately cover every shift and absence from work. This includes night shifts and weekend working. Notices will be displayed in all workplaces, giving the location of first aid equipment and the names and locations of relevant personnel.

First Aiders are provided with information concerning the Accident reporting procedure. This information concerns how the Accident Book and Accident/Incident report form must be completed and returned to the Health and Safety Officer at the Civic Centre.

Legal Indemnity of First Aiders

It is unlikely first aid personnel giving assistance to a colleague will become subject to legal action because of deterioration in the colleague's condition. However, the authority guards against this possibility by providing, through its insurance policies, indemnification for any member of staff who assists an employee who becomes ill or is injured.

First Aid Boxes

First aid boxes will be provided within the workplace to ensure there are adequate supplies for the nature of the hazards involved. All boxes will contain at least the minimum supplies suggested by *L74: First Aid at Work. Approved Code of Practice*. Only specified first aid supplies will be kept. No creams, lotions or drugs, however seemingly mild, will be kept or issued by the first aiders.

Suitable contents for a first-aid box, provided they are replaced after use, are:-

- 1 N^o guidance card.
- 20 N^o individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes) appropriate to the work environment.
- 2 N^o sterile eye pads, with attachment.
- 4 N^o individually wrapped triangular bandages.
- 6 N^o safety pins.
- 6 N^o medium-sized (approximately 12 cm x 12 cm) sterile individually wrapped (unmedicated) wound dressings.
- 2 N^o large (approximately 18 cm x 18 cm sterile individually wrapped (unmedicated) wound dressings.

First aid boxes will display the:

- Name of the person responsible for upkeep
- Nearest location of further supplies
- Contents of the box and replenishing arrangements
- Location of the accident book.

First aid boxes will be maintained and restocked when necessary by the first aiders on site. These personnel are made aware of the procedure for re-ordering supplies.

Portable First Aid Kits

Portable first aid kits will be available for staff members required to work away from the normal workplace, where access to facilities may be restricted, such as:

- Work with tools and machinery away from base location.
- Staff travelling in vehicles on a regular basis.
- Staff whose work takes them to isolated or remote locations.

Recording Accidents

All accidents, however minor, must be recorded. The authority will provide an accident book and an Accident/Incident Form (Form 01) on which all incidents must be noted. The accident book will be housed in a central location, details of which are displayed on first aid boxes.

It is the responsibility of employees to ensure they complete an entry in the accident book as soon as possible after an injury. When the injured person is unable to enter an account into the accident book, the first aider or witness (where relevant) should do so.

Please refer to the Accident Reporting Procedure where required.

HOMEWORKING PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its homeworkers and those affected by homeworking as far as is reasonably practicable.

A homeworker is any employee who works at home on behalf of the organisation.

All homeworking activities will be considered and assessed for risk. Where there is little or no risk to the homeworker or others in the home environment no further action will be taken. If a risk assessment indicates the need for action, the authority is committed to putting in place appropriate controls to reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. Homeworkers are covered by existing health and safety law in the same way as any other worker within the organisation.

The implementation of this policy requires the total co-operation of all members of management and staff. There will be full consultation with employee representatives through the Health and Safety Panel.

It is the responsibility of all Managers to ensure that any staff engaging in homeworking activities are covered by an appropriate risk assessment.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

The Council will in consultation with homeworkers and their representatives:

- Provide information, instruction and training.
- Assess all significant risks, including display screen equipment if used.
- Make adequate arrangements for putting in place control measures and for managing control measures.
- Ensure that manual handling loads are appropriate and that appropriate lifting aids and/or training are provided where it is not possible to avoid the risk.
- Supply all necessary equipment, machinery and plant.
- Ensure that all equipment, machinery and plant is suitable for the job.
- Ensure that all equipment, machinery and plant is safe, regularly maintained and appropriately guarded.
- Ensure that any substances provided are assessed and controlled.
- Supply personal protective equipment if needed.
- Review risk assessments whenever there are significant changes and at least annually.

Duties of Managers and Supervisors

- Wear Valley District Council is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of homeworkers as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Line Managers are responsible for ensuring homeworkers receive the appropriate training and information.
- Line Managers are responsible for facilitating risk assessments and putting in place appropriate controls.
- If the Line Manager is unable to deal with problems uncovered in the risk assessment, s/he should refer these problems higher up the Management chain for consideration.

Duties of Employees

- Homeworkers are responsible for their own health, safety and welfare and that of others affected by their work whilst working at home.
- Homeworkers are required to report any problems (including near misses) directly to their Line Manager on an Accident/Incident form.
- Homeworkers are required to follow all training and instruction received.
- Homeworkers are required to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when appropriate.
- If the homeworker is unable to follow training and instruction, the homeworker must cease work and report the problems to his or her Line Manager immediately.

Information and Training

- Suitable information and training will be provided to all homeworkers.
- Training needs will be identified and reviewed by a responsible person.
- Refresher training will also be given at reasonable intervals.

Legionnaire procedure

Introduction

Legionellosis is the generic term used to cover Legionnaire's disease and Pontiac fever. In managing Legionnaires disease Wear Valley District Council will comply with the advice and guidance listed in L8, Legionnaires' disease 'The control of legionella bacteria in water systems'.

Ecology

The ecology of Legionella in water systems is not fully understood, however optimum conditions for growth include:

- Water treatment between 20⁰C and 45⁰C.
- Presence of sediment, sludge, scale etc.
- Certain types of water fittings, pipework and materials.
- Presence of bacteria and bio film on surfaces in contact with water.

Infection

Infection is caused by inhaling Legionella in airborne water droplets small enough to penetrate deeply into the lung or through aerosols.

Control of Exposure

Where potential exposure to infection cannot be prevented, there is a written control scheme to minimise exposure. Wear Valley District Council's Facilities Manager holds managerial responsibility for implementing and supervising the scheme within the public buildings. The Asbestos and Legionnaires Officer will take managerial responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Health Surveillance

People exposed to significant occupational risk of infection will receive instruction about the nature of the risks and the means of controlling exposure. Staff should report relevant symptoms.

Action in the Event of an Outbreak

There is a contingency plan in case of an outbreak of legionellosis. This includes:

1. Identification of people who may have been exposed.
2. Involvement of public health authorities.
3. Dissemination of information to employees and other interested parties as to the nature of the risks.

Selection, Training and Competence of Staff

Persons carrying out control measures will receive appropriate training and supervision so they are able to perform their duties competently.

Safe System of Work

A comprehensive programme of hazard control should reduce the risk of occupationally acquired legionellosis to a very low level in most sites. Environmental Hygiene are responsible for safe systems of work to ensure that their staff, Wear Valley District Council staff and any other persons are not put at risk due to the assessment activities carried out.

Avoidance of Conditions Favouring Growth of Organisms

Minimisation of exposure will normally be achieved by measures, which prevent the growth of Legionella in the water system or plant. Such measures include the use of water treatment techniques which will ensure that the system and the water in it are always clear.

In order to ensure that control measures remain effective, frequent checks on the measures in place routinely occur, and will re-occur following any alteration in the plant or water system.

As far as practicable, water systems will be operated at temperatures that do not favour the growth of legionella. As a result of this the temperature for hot water storage is 60°C and either above 50°C or below 20°C for distribution, as care must be taken to protect people from exposure to very hot water. Cold water storage and distribution will occur at 20°C or below.

The use of materials that may provide nutrients for microbial growth are avoided, as far as possible. Corrosion, scale deposition and build up of bio films and sediments should be controlled and tanks shall be lidded.

Avoidance of Stagnation

Dead-legs, which occur when water services leading from the main circulation water system to taps or appliances are used only intermittently, and other parts of systems which may provide a reservoir for infection are eliminated, as far as possible.

Minimisation of Water Sprays

The dissemination of organisms is reduced by careful design of equipment and the use of drift eliminators to stop excessive circulation of potentially contaminated air or enclosure.

System Maintenance

Water systems will be disinfected by an effective means before being taken into service and after shut downs of five or more days. Plant is regularly and effectively inspected

and maintained via the Service Contract with Environmental Hygiene (by regular visits from a water treatment specialist). Plant is disinfected periodically (normally twice yearly) by chlorination or by temporarily raising water temperatures. Biocides may be used to control microbial growth. Maintenance personnel must wear appropriate protective clothing.

For most systems in stable operation it will be sufficient to inspect and check the following;

- a) Water temperature at calorifiers (monthly).
- b) Water temperature at taps after one minute running (all taps should be checked at least once per year and a representative number, ideally those nearest and farthest from the calorifier should be checked monthly).
- c) Conditions in tanks, for presence of organic materials, vermin etc. annually (more frequently if there is reason to suspect contamination).
- d) Conditions in calorifiers annually.
- e) The condition of accessible pipework and insulation (annually).

The system will require more frequent inspections and checking if it is not in stable operation, because of the poor supply water quality, inadequate enclosure of tanks or faulty operation of plant.

Cleaning and disinfection of services, especially those containing spa/Jacuzzi baths should be carried out frequently to adequately reduce the risk of infection associated with their use.

Maintenance Procedures

Staff involved in plant maintenance or who might otherwise be at significant risk are subject to written safe systems of work. The following are their priorities:

1. Design procedures to minimise exposure, e.g. by prior disinfection.
2. Avoid creation of water sprays, e.g. by high pressure jetting.
3. Avoid exposure of others in the building to water sprays, e.g. by carrying out maintenance out of normal working hours.
4. Wear HSE-approved respiratory protection, normally high efficiency, positive pressure respirators with either a full face piece or hood and blouse.
5. Take necessary precautions when entering confined spaces, e.g. permits to work.
6. Handle biocides and water treatment chemicals with care.
7. Report relevant symptoms of illness to supervisors immediately.

Procedure Summary

Legionellosis is a serious and potentially fatal disease in susceptible persons. Ensure:

- All systems in the workplace that could be a potential source of infection are identified and assessed for risk.
- A control scheme is implemented to ensure the risk of exposure is minimised.
- Special instructions are issued to plant maintenance staff.

LONE WORKING PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, to ensure the safety and welfare of its employees so far as it is reasonably practicable and to complete risk assessments for employee's activities.

This procedure details the actions to be adopted by Managers to secure the safety and welfare of employees within their control who are engaged in lone working activities. Wear Valley District Council provides a wide range of services for the community, many of which require staff to undertake lone working activities.

The Aims of the Procedure

Wear Valley District Council will ensure the safety of its employees who are exposed to risks arising from lone working activities within and away from a recognised workplace. All Lone Working activities will be subject to risk assessment.

In accordance with Wear Valley District Council's Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment Procedure, all hazards arising from employees carrying out lone working activities are to be risk assessed. Where found necessary such activities are to be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable or suitable control measures are to be implemented.

Each department should be able to show that all hazards arising from lone working, which affect their staff, have been properly assessed to include all reasonably foreseeable risks. The steps to eliminate or minimise these risks should be documented to provide:

- Evidence of compliance by Managers and as evidence for HSE inspectors etc.
- To allow the authority to re-assess activities in the future (following an alteration to work activities or as part of the general review process).

Where risks to lone workers are assessed as negligible or low, then these activities can continue with little or no alteration (as stated in each individual risk assessment). Where moderate or high risks are identified then suitable control measures will be implemented by Management to reduce the risk (as recommended by the Health and Safety Officer).

Managers Responsibilities

There is no general prohibition on working alone but certain situations may arise where a safe system of work specifies the need for two or more people to be involved.

Managers have the same duty of care for those employees who are required to work alone as they have to all other employees under their responsibility.

It is necessary to:

- Identify the hazards of the work involved and the risks arising from them.
- Decide whether any existing precautions are adequate.
- If not, ensure that these risks are either eliminated or minimised (all of which occur through completing a risk assessment)
- Devise safe working arrangements and ensure they are carried out correctly (listed as control measures in the risk assessments).

Managers are responsible for implementing a system that:

- Identifies 'lone workers' in their section/department.
- Identifies the specific lone working tasks which these designated individuals perform.
- Alerts them (or a deputy/designated person) if an employee fails to attend an appointment.
- Records all incidents of violence, threats and abuse etc (These should be recorded on the Accident/Incident form, please refer to this procedure for further information).
- Informs employees of any safety requirements applicable when dealing with service users.
- Continues to monitor the service provided, the service user/employee relationships and the conditions in which an employee is expected to operate.

This last point would help a Manager to highlight and respond to any change in circumstances, which may produce an increased or decreased risk to an employee.

Where it is not possible for work to be carried out safely by one person, then arrangements will have to be made to alter the current arrangements. This may include providing help in the form of additional person(s) or operating a back-up system where necessary (e.g. a Lone Worker alarm).

Extra considerations may have to be given to employees with special needs such as:

- a. New and expectant mothers.
- b. People returning to work from long illness or major operation.

Risk Assessment

Managers with responsibilities to lone employees must assess the specific risks arising whilst carrying out their duties as lone workers.

Areas to be specifically included are;

- Hazards involved when travelling between appointments.
- Hazards external to the immediate location.
- Hazards presented within the location.

Having established the main areas of risk in the operation for which they are responsible Managers will establish a safe system of work by:

- Completing a risk assessment with the member of staff and the Health and Safety Officer.
- Establishing a plan of action and introducing the controls measures thought necessary.
- Making available to the employees the finalised assessments and allowing further consultation and feedback (where/if required).
- Carrying out regular monitoring and evaluation to highlight any change of circumstances which could produce a higher level of risk.
- Making arrangements to record the movements of their staff (please refer to the 'Buddy tracking system' as an example).

High Risk Visits

Visits are automatically considered high risk where they are:

- Initial visits to individuals where little information is known.
- Visits to individuals where there is a known history of violence/aggression.
- Visits made outside of usual working hours with no previous risk assessment.
- Where the function of the visit is something you know has the potential to be difficult or contentious.
- Where the home is in a location which is perceived to be high risk due to isolation or high crime rates.

Possible measures to minimise risk

- Visit with a colleague.
- All high-risk visits should be communicated to the Line Manager or a colleague.
- If the individual is assessed as a high-risk do not visit alone.

- Where there is a history of aggression it may not be appropriate for visits to take place and it may be better for them to be moved to a venue which can, as far as possible, be a controlled environment e.g. the Civic Centre.
- Arrange to check-in after any visit assessed as high-risk if you do not intend to return to your area of work.

Travel by car/works vehicle:

- Ensure your car/works vehicle is, at all times, in a road worthy state with sufficient fuel.
- Do not leave for a visit without being sure of your route. Have directions and/or a map printed.
- Where possible park in a well-lit, public area.
- Lock possessions in the boot of the car.
- If confronted while in the car do not get out.
- Always drive with the doors locked.
- Switch off/do not answer mobile phones whilst driving.

During visits:

- If the service user/visitor is nervous or confrontational on your arrival resolve as much as possible before entering the property.
- Be prepared and well informed.
- Let them enter first.
- Do not position yourself so that they are between you and the door.
- When sitting down try not to choose a low, soft chair that will be difficult to get out of quickly.
- Keep your possessions close to you so that you can leave quickly if necessary.
- Remain calm and non-confrontational.
- Remember you are in a person's home.
- If necessary, terminate the visit in a calm and non-judgemental way and offer another chance to discuss the matter.

Lone Working assessments will also be subject to Health and Safety panel review and approval.

Employee Duties

Employees have a legal obligation not to place themselves or others in danger. In the context of lone working this duty includes ensuring that employees provide themselves with a safe and serviceable means of transport to allow them to carry out their work. Please refer to the Occupational Road Risk policy for further detail.

Before visiting or entering the home, or during work undertaken alone, an assessment of the hazards must be undertaken. The situation should continually be assessed once inside taking into account the environmental hazards such as methods of access and egress in the event of an emergency, and the behaviour of the tenant/service user. All employees working within and away from a fixed location must leave a schedule of their movements (where possible). Please refer to the 'Outside visits, buddy tracking system'.

Those employees who require specific training in lone working will be identified and an appropriate training programme will be devised. A record of the specific training given to the employees will be maintained.

These records will show:

- The names of those who received the training.
- The dates and the duration of the training received.
- The contents of the training given.
- The names of the trainers.

Monitoring and Review

Under the requirements of Wear Valley District Council's Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment procedure a periodic review of risk assessments must occur to ensure that they remain effective. Evidence should also be available to show that the following is monitored and reviewed by Management:

- The control systems are in place.
- Managers and employees are following the procedure.
- They are effective.
- They are being monitored.

Managing violent or potentially violent incidents

Defusing skills

When working with someone who is potentially angry or aggressive it is vital to remain in control of your emotions and responses.

Your main objective should be

- To prevent the situation from getting worse.
- To try to defuse the situation.
- To reach a mutual co-operation and a positive outcome.

Verbal and non-verbal responses can determine the outcome of a potentially difficult visit. It is important that we understand the strategies involved in verbal and non-verbal communication to enable us to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome.

Verbal responses:

- Allow the individual to talk without interruption.
- Show interest by using active listening skills.
- Reflect back what is said to the person so that they know that you have been listening to them.
- Establish the significance of events for the individual/acknowledge the existence of the problem.
- Don't make promises that you can't keep.
- Show genuine concern (where applicable).
- Ask the person to clarify anything that you don't understand.
- Be aware of the tone, pitch and volume of your voice.
- Avoid direct statements.
- Stress positive outcomes.
- Speak slowly and clearly, be willing to clarify as necessary.
- Personalise, draw attention to yourself as a person so they do not perceive you just as your role. However do not provide the individual with details about yourself such as home address, phone number etc.
- Don't make threats
- Admit failures (where applicable).
- Offer alternatives.
- **DO NOT** try to use humour.

Non-verbal responses:

Eye Contact – avoid glaring and excessive eye contact as this can be seen as confrontational. You should maintain regular eye contact to show interest but you need to divert your eyes occasionally.

Personal Space – people who are angry or aggressive need more 'personal space'. It is also practical to keep a 'safe' distance between you and the individual – at least their arms length – in order to make a quick exit to avoid being struck or grabbed should the situation arise.

Body Posture – standing with feet apart, arms crossed and directly facing an individual is seen to be an aggressive/confrontational posture, which could exacerbate the situation. Try to adopt an open, friendly posture.

Try to sit down – this can sometimes help to defuse the situation – but be aware that you are vulnerable.

Gestures – don't make excessive or sudden gestures. Excessive gestures can be annoying to someone whose tolerance is low and sudden gestures could initiate a violent response. You could occasionally use slow open hand gestures to emphasise what you say.

Outside visits, Buddy tracking system

During Working Hours

The following procedure is to be adopted where individuals undertake visits to premises and sites other than Wear Valley District Council or Dale and Valley Homes offices during normal working hours.

- The individual is to compile a list of proposed visit details in an appropriate recording system e.g. noticeboard before leaving the office.
- One person in the section is to be a nominated “buddy” for confirming whether the individual has returned to the office/site. The “buddy” is to have their name recorded alongside the details of the person completing the visit.
- The individual is to take a mobile phone (where possible) switched on and be responsible for checking that it is in working order prior to leaving. The mobile phone number should also be recorded with the name of the “buddy”.
- The noticeboard (or whatever system is used) is to be completed by each individual on exit and return to office/site. If possible, the expected duration of the visit should also be indicated.
- If an individual is unable to return to the office/site at the agreed time, they are to contact their Buddy or their Line Manager. Details to be noted on the noticeboard.
- If the individual has not returned to the office/site by 14:00 or 17:00 and has not phoned the office the Buddy shall:
 - a. Check with members of staff to discover if the individual in question has been seen.
 - b. Check the individuals usual parking space (where appropriate) to see if the vehicle is present.
 - c. Ring the mobile phone (if possible).
 - d. Examine the details left by the individual concerning their visits and contact the appropriate site(s) to determine if the individual is present or what time they left.
 - e. Alert the Line Manager or most senior person available of the potential problem.
 - f. Invoke the emergency procedure (as contained at the end of this procedure).

Out of normal working hours

The following should be applied where individuals undertake visits to premises and sites controlled by persons other than Wear Valley District Council or Dale and Valley Homes, outside of normal working hours:

- The individual is to compile a list of proposed visit addresses in an appropriate recording system before leaving the office/site.
- One person in the section is to be nominated as the home contact Buddy and the individual is to inform them of visit/location details.
- The individual is to take a mobile phone (where possible) switched on and be responsible for checking it is in working order prior to leaving. The mobile phone numbers should also be recorded and given to the home contact Buddy.
- Each individual is to obtain a list of team members home contact telephone numbers and make sure that the home contact Buddy has this information. This information must be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act.
- The Individual is to check-in with the home contact person upon their return to their own home.
- In the event of a problem, the home contact Buddy is to ring an appropriate team member and invoke points 4, 5 and 6 of the emergency procedures (following).

NB: Evening meetings should not be attended alone except in certain circumstances, e.g. official meetings such as Board Meetings or Seminars where other individuals will also be present. If in doubt individuals, should discuss the situation with their Line Manager.

Emergency Procedure

It is the responsibility of the Line Manager or Senior Officer to implement the emergency procedure by:

1. A further check within the office to ensure the individual has not returned or been seen.
2. Re-check the individuals regular parking space (where appropriate).
3. A check by telephone of the mobile phone used or the individuals home address.
4. For at least one member of staff (but preferably two) to visit the last known location visited by the individual. If the individuals car is present interview the occupiers. A mobile phone is to be taken and details reported back to the Line Manager or Senior Officer.
5. A final check by telephone of the individuals home address.
6. If there is still not a satisfactory explanation of the whereabouts of this individual, the Police should be contacted.

Note:

The role of the "Buddy" will not usually restrict their use of the flexi-time system or holiday entitlement, provided suitably agreed alternative arrangements are put in place.

The details of site visits should be adequate to enable the checking procedure to be followed. It should be available at all times in a prominent position within the section. The addresses should be listed in the expected order of visit.

It is accepted that in certain circumstances, the list will not be accurate e.g. additional unplanned visits, survey work, etc, but individuals should complete the list in as accurate a manner as possible. A file/database is to be established of any violence, threatening or abusive behaviour directed towards individuals associated with any tenant or premises (this must be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act). Individuals are strongly advised to check this file prior to out of office visits.

If individuals have concerns regarding their safety when carrying out visits they should:

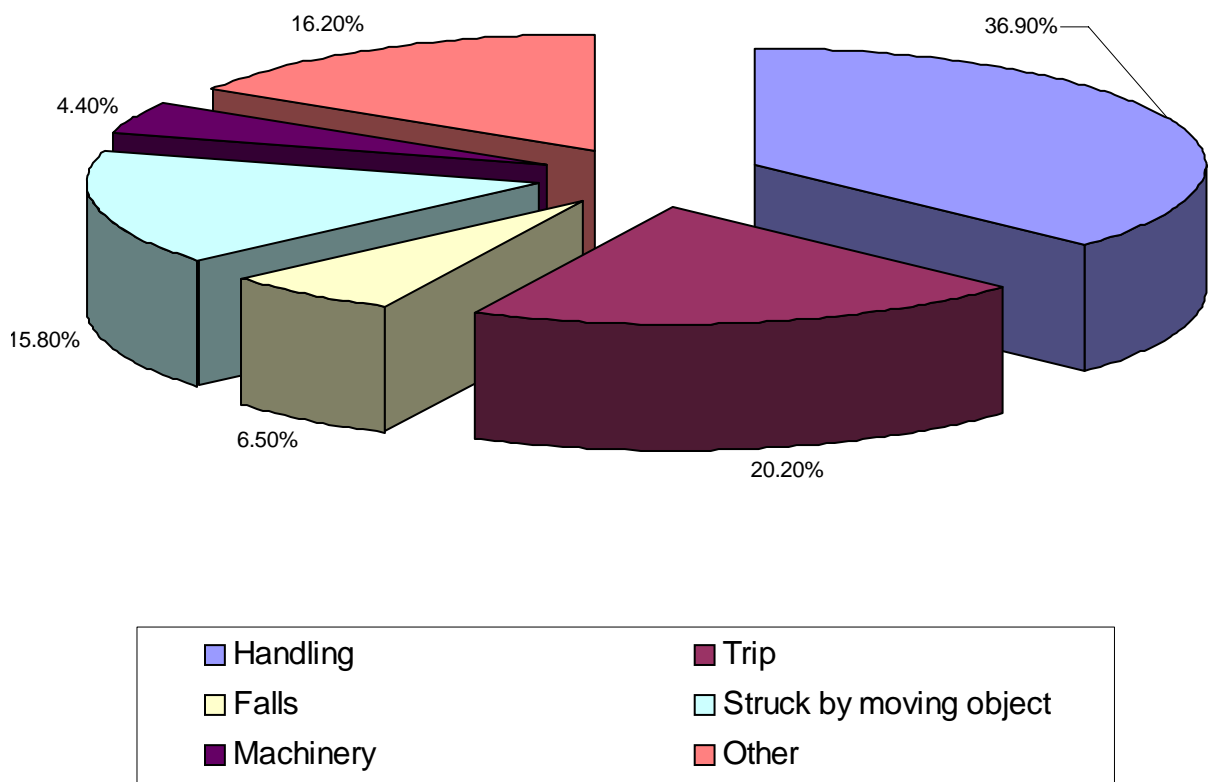
- a. Discuss with their Line Manager and, where appropriate,
- b. Arrange to be accompanied by a colleague and/or,
- c. Take a mobile telephone and/or pager and/or,
- d. Arrange to be accompanied by the Police.

Individuals are reminded that, should they find themselves in a situation in which they consider themselves to be at risk, they should leave immediately and discuss the circumstances with their Line Manager upon their return to the Office. An Accident/Incident form should be completed with the Health and Safety Advisor, and a log should be made on file of the incident.

MANUAL HANDLING PROCEDURE

Introduction

Statistics show that manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury in the workplace. The HSE have compiled the following statistics (1998 – 1999), which indicate that manual handling is the biggest cause of accidents and injuries in any industry.



These injuries often have long-term effects. This policy is intended to reduce the risk of manual handling injuries and provide guidance on the measures that should be taken to ensure safe lifting and carrying.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

Elimination of Hazardous Manual Handling Activities

Wear Valley District Council will ensure that operations which involve manual handling are eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable. Measures to achieve this include ergonomic design of the workplace and activity, and the provision of automated or mechanical aids such as trolleys, debris chutes, forklift trucks, cranes etc.

Assessment of Risk

Managers, Supervisors and worker representatives in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer will carry out an assessment of the risks of manual handling activities. The HSE state that any significant findings from the risk assessments should be recorded. The regulation imposes an absolute duty to review assessments if there is reason to think the assessment is no longer valid or the manual operation to which it relates have changed significantly. Identified risks will be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable. All manual handling assessments will be completed on a specific manual handling risk assessment form as approved by the Health and Safety Panel. All individual risk assessments will be subject to scrutiny by the Health and Safety Panel and must be passed through the panel for approval.

The following four factors will be considered during the assessment.

The Task

Bending with the back and stooping to lift a load significantly increases the risk of back injury. Items should ideally be lifted from no lower than knee height and no higher than shoulder height. Outside this range, lifting capacity is reduced and the risk of injury is increased.

If items must be lifted from above shoulder height, a stand or suitable means of access should be used. Items which are pushed or pulled should be as close to waist level as possible. Pushing is preferable, particularly where the back can rest against a fixed object to give leverage.

Carrying distances should be minimised, especially if the task is repeated. Repetitive tasks should be avoided where possible. Tasks that involve lifting and carrying should be designed to allow for sufficient rest breaks to avoid fatigue. Avoid tasks that require twisting the body where possible.

The Load

The load should be kept as close as possible to the body's trunk to reduce strain and should not be of such size as to obscure vision. An indication of the load's weight and centre of gravity should be provided.

Unstable loads should be handled with particular caution. The change in centre of gravity is likely to result in overbalancing. Ensure there is a secure handhold, using gloves where necessary to protect against sharp edges, splinters or heat/cold.

The Individual

Consideration must be given to age, body weight and physical fitness. Regard must also be given to personal limitation; employees must not attempt to handle loads that are beyond their capabilities. Assistance must be sought when necessary.

Allowances should be made for people with genuine physical or clinical reasons for avoiding lifting. New and expectant mothers should not be required to undertake hazardous lifting or carrying tasks.

Sufficient knowledge and understanding of the work is an important factor in reducing the risk of injury. Individuals undertaking lifting or carrying will be given suitable information, instruction and training.

Working Environment

There must be adequate space to enable the activity to be safely conducted and the transportation route must be free of obstructions. Lighting, heating and weather conditions must be considered in risk assessments. Floors and other working surfaces must be free from slipping and tripping hazards, and adequate ventilation is required (when natural ventilation is lacking additional requirements must be assessed).

In addition to these four considerations, other task specific items will also be examined which may affect specific tasks/work areas.

Other Factors include

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) may be necessary whilst carrying out manual handling activities. If the use of PPE restricts safe and easy movement, this should be reported. Constant interruptions from other workers must also be avoided, as it can reduce concentration. Work at height activities involving manual handling will warrant additional assessment to ensure that the handling does not result in a fall. Confined spaces where movement is affected or PPE proves restrictive will also be

assessed to assess any additional requirements or the need for any safe systems of work.

Managers' and Supervisors' Duties

Managers or supervisors must ensure that:

- Manual handling activities are identified to ensure that risk assessments can be carried out where relevant
- Records are kept of all manual handling assessments and any safe systems of work.
- Employees are properly supervised.
- Adequate information and training is provided to persons carrying out manual handling activities, and that staff under their control attend this training.
- Any injuries or incidents relating to manual handling are reported to the Health and Safety Officer and that they investigate them, with remedial action taken where required.
- Employees adhere to safe systems of work.
- Safety arrangements for manual handling operations are monitored and reviewed.
- Employees undertaking manual handling activities are suitably screened for reasons of health and safety, before doing the work.
- Special arrangements are made for individuals with health conditions which could be adversely affected by manual handling operations

Employees' Duties

Employees must ensure that:

- They report to management (in confidence) any personal conditions which may be affected by manual handling activities
- They attend any training session arranged for them on manual handling.
- They comply with instructions and training provided
- Their own health and safety is not put at risk when carrying out manual handling activities
- They correctly use equipment which has been provided.
- Any problems relating to the activity are reported to a responsible person.

Information and Training

Suitable information and training will be provided to persons required to carry out manual handling activities. Training needs will be identified and reviewed by a responsible person within each department. Refresher training will also be provided as identified by the responsible person.

Employees, where possible, will be provided with information of approximate weights of loads to be handled and objects with an uneven weight distribution. These will be identified through risk assessments.

Employees will be provided with access to all Manual Handling risk assessments and safe systems of work which have been approved by the Health and Safety Panel.

Any other relevant information obtained by the Health and Safety Officer will be shared with the appropriate persons.

Safe Systems of Work

Injuries caused by lifting goods and materials are a major source of lost time accidents and long term pain to workers. This risk can be significantly reduced by observation of the points below.

- Ensure that any formal safe systems of work designed to reduce manual handling are followed. (e.g. work instructions etc.).
- Always use any lifting equipment provided. (Do not operate the lifting equipment yourself if you have not been trained and authorised to do so).
- Use any equipment in accordance with manufacturers instructions and for the purpose for which it is intended.
- When handling manually use the legs and knees to bend and lift, do not stoop or bend.
- Obtain assistance when heavy or irregular objects are to be lifted or moved.
- Avoid tasks that require stretching or twisting, by the use of equipment such as steps, hop ups, staging, scaffolding etc.
- Ensure that the walkway or the route along which the items are to be carried are free from obstructions.
- Ensure that there are no sharp, hot or cold surfaces on the object to be lifted or in the vicinity that could cause injury whilst carrying the load.

- If an operation requires continuous or repetitive lifting, ensure that regular rest breaks or job rotation (where possible) occur to avoid injury and to prevent the onset of fatigue.
- When sorting heavy items try to keep them between hip and shoulder height to avoid high risk lifting and stretching.
- Get assistance or report any manual handling operations of concern to your direct Supervisor or Manager.

Lifting sequence

This sequence is an outline for manual lifting. If you have any doubts DO NOT attempt to lift and seek advice or assistance.

- a. Stop and think – plan the lift. Do you need help? Is the area free from obstruction? Is there mechanical handling provided for the operation, e.g. hiAb, if so use it.
- b. Place feet apart – leading leg forward.
- c. Get a firm grip – keep your arms inside the boundary formed by the legs.
- d. Do not jerk – lift with your legs not your back.
- e. Move the feet – do not twist the body.
- f. Keep close to the load
- g. Put down and adjust if necessary.

NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council will ensure that work activities exposing new and expectant mothers to unacceptable risks are eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable. Measures to achieve this include preventing exposure to such risks by ensuring:

- Relevant legal standards (dependent on the risk involved) are met.
- Official guidance and good practice is followed.
- Adjusting working conditions and/or hours (where required).
- If necessary, removing new and expectant mothers from hazardous activities, i.e. providing suitable alternative work or ultimately suspension until a time when it is safe to return to normal duties.

Assessment of Risk

Where hazardous activities cannot be eliminated, risk assessments carried out by the individuals Line Managers and the Health and Safety Officer, together with the new and expectant mother, will be undertaken to identify residual risks and to reduce them to the lowest level reasonably practicable. The assessments will take into account the actual risks associated with the work activities and whether these risks are increased, due to any particular problems experienced by a new or expectant mother during her pregnancy or postnatal period.

Specifically, the assessment will consider risks associated with exposure to:

- Physical agents
- Biological agents
- Chemical agents.

The assessment will also consider the suitability of working and welfare conditions.

Risk assessments relating to new and expectant mothers will be reviewed, and if necessary revised, regularly taking into consideration each individuals circumstances or problems relating to the workplace.

Duties of Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors must ensure that:

- New and expectant mothers are encouraged to inform them of their condition at the earliest possible opportunity and that the highest level of confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Ensure that they inform the Health and Safety Officer that one of their staff is a new or expectant mother.
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out for all work activities undertaken by new and expectant mothers and associated records and documentation maintained.
- Implement necessary control measures identified by the risk assessment and ensure that they are followed, monitored, reviewed and, if necessary, revised.
- Ensure that new and expectant mothers are informed of any risks to them and/or their child and the controls measures taken to protect them.
- Adverse incidents are immediately reported to the Health and Safety Officer and investigated in conjunction with him.
- Appropriate training, etc is provided where suitable alternative work is offered and accepted.
- Provision is made to support new and expectant mothers who need to take time off work for medical reasons associated with their condition.
- Ensure the provision of suitable areas where new and expectant mothers can spend any required rest periods.

Duties of New and Expectant Mothers

New and expectant mothers must:

- Inform their general practitioner or midwife of the nature of their work.
- Notify their employer in writing, as soon as possible, if they are pregnant, have just given birth or are breastfeeding.
- Follow any safety arrangements implemented for their protection, including attending training sessions, complying with control measures, etc.
- Not act in a manner that adversely affects their own health and safety, that of their child and/or anyone else.
- Report any perceived or real shortcomings in protection to their Manager and the Health and Safety Officer.

Information and Training

Suitable information and instruction will be provided to new and expectant mothers to ensure their health and safety at work. Training needs will be identified and reviewed by a Line Managers and the Health and Safety Officer and support will be given to allow new and expectant mothers to attend any identified training sessions. The effectiveness of any training provided will be monitored and training regularly reviewed.

All new and expectant mothers will be provided with copies of their risk assessment.

NOISE PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the risk of hearing damage to employees who work with noisy equipment or in a noisy environment is reduced to a minimum. The authority also recognises that noise levels below those which cause hearing damage, in offices for example, can still cause problems such as disturbance, interference with communication and stress and will take all reasonable steps to reduce noise levels as far as possible. Wear Valley District Council will also take all reasonable steps to minimise the disturbance caused by noise from council premises affecting people in the neighbourhood/local vicinity.

It is extremely important that all personnel are aware of the danger of noise to them as an individual. Hearing protection is available to all employees free of charge and it is recommended that it is worn at all times when operating equipment or plant etc.

Where there are signs or work instructions to indicate ear protectors must be worn employees must comply.

Wear Valley District Council will carry out regular noise exposure assessments and noise level surveys of noisy:

- Areas
- Processes
- Equipment
- Plant

These surveys will be used as the basis for formulating action plans for remedial measures when necessary. Assessments and surveys will be recorded and updated regularly, particularly when changes in work practice cause changes in noise exposure levels.

Regulation

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 deals with the legal obligations of employers to prevent damage to the hearing of workers from excessive noise at work and the specific steps to be taken. The Regulations require that a competent person assess the noise exposure of personnel where it is likely they may be exposed to the first action level or above.

The noise assessment shall be reviewed when there is reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in the work to which the assessment relates.

Specifically the regulations require the following;

Lower exposure action value of 80dB (A), or peak of 135dB (C)

Upper exposure action value of 85dB (A), or peak of 137dB (C)

Daily/weekly personal exposure limit values of 87dB (A) with a peak of 40dB (C)

There is a specific requirement to provide health surveillance where there is a risk to health.

Noise Risk Assessment must be conducted and an action plan developed when the lower action value is exceeded.

Hearing protection should also be made available.

When the upper action value is exceeded, as before, a Noise Risk Assessment should be conducted and an action plan developed.

Hearing protection is compulsory for all employees and a health surveillance programme should be implemented.

The exposure limit value provides an absolute limit of exposure and is measured at the ear. Therefore hearing protection can be considered as part of the control measures.

Provision of Ear Protectors

Wear Valley District Council will provide suitable and effective ear protection to employees working in high noise levels, as indicated as necessary by the results of noise exposure assessments. The authority will also provide for the maintenance and repair or renewal of the protective equipment, and provide training in the selection and fitting of protectors and details of the circumstances in which they should be used.

Ear Protection Zones

Wear Valley District Council will designate and mark out ear protection zones, which may include particular areas, operations or pieces of equipment. All personnel entering these zones will be required to wear ear protectors.



This sign indicates an area where you **MUST** wear hearing protection.

Use and Maintenance of Noise Control Equipment and Procedures

Wear Valley District Council will maintain all equipment and monitor all procedures introduced for the purpose of reducing noise exposure of employees, such as:

- Enclosures
- Silencers,
- Machine covers.

All personnel will be required to follow these procedures and use equipment correctly and promptly report any defects or deficiencies through the appropriate channels.

OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK PROCEDURE

Introduction

HSE guidelines, 'Driving at Work' states that **“health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities as to all work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system”**.

The HSE estimates that a third of all road accidents involve somebody who is at work at the time. This accounts for approximately 20 fatalities and 250 serious injuries every week.

Current health and safety legislation applies to all work activities and driving on company business is a work activity and must therefore be treated as such.

Wear Valley District Council recognises that employees driving or travelling in motor vehicles on company business are potentially exposed to specific risks and is committed to the safety of all such employees whether they travel regularly or just make occasional short trips.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures implemented by Wear Valley District Council to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all employees who may be exposed to occupational road risks. It sets out the duties placed on both the Managers of employees who drive on Council business and also of the employees themselves who undertake work-related journeys.

General Rules

The simple rules outlined below represent the line of least risk and will assist in ensuring that all those who drive on Council business do so safely:-

- When travelling, always observe and comply with speed limits and all other road traffic laws and guidance (please refer to appendix 1). Ensure that all occupants of the vehicle (including yourself) wear seat belts at all times and do not take risks to achieve deadlines etc.
- Ensure that long journeys (over 2.5hrs) are adequately planned to take into account appropriate rest periods, prevailing weather conditions and known areas of significant traffic congestion.
- Never continue to drive if you feel sleepy, stop at the nearest appropriate place and take a break.
- When driving in slow moving urban traffic, always ensure that doors are locked and that handbags and briefcases etc. are out of sight, “traffic light” robberies are not uncommon.

- When parking in a public place never leave valuables or personal belongings on view inside the vehicle, lock them in the boot or glove compartment. Do not leave your mobile phone in the car-kit cradle.
- Do not allow the fuel level to drop too low and always ensure that the vehicle is locked if you leave it unattended e.g. to pay after re-fuelling.
- Do not pick up hitch-hikers and do not give “lifts” to strangers.
- Ensure that all road and vehicle related accidents are appropriately reported to the Health and Safety Officer on the accident/incident form (Form 01).

It is the responsibility of all managers of employees who drive on Council business to ensure that:

Both themselves and their employees are familiar with the contents of this policy and that all applicable aspects are complied with.

All their employees who are required to drive a vehicle as part of their duties hold an appropriate and valid driving licence and have submitted this along with their insurance documents (confirming business insurance) and MOT certificate (where applicable) to themselves or the sections administrator.

Any employee who cannot produce this documentation must not be asked to drive on Council business until such time as they can.

Managers responsible for one or more shared vehicles e.g. section/fleet vehicles must ensure that the vehicles are regularly serviced and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. In the case of fleet vehicles all Road Fund Tax, vehicle insurance and MOT certificates will be managed by the appropriate Manager.

Employee Responsibilities:

All employees who drive on Council business must accept personal responsibility for their actions and conduct and as a minimum must ensure that:-

- They are familiar with this policy and its contents and that all applicable aspects are complied with at all times.
- They hold an appropriate and valid driving licence and that they respect and follow the guidance contained in all road traffic laws and the Highway Code.
- They do not drive a vehicle whilst they are under the influence of any legal or illegal substances that might adversely affect their capacity to drive safely. Any such instances discovered shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures.
- They drive all Council vehicles (where relevant) with due consideration and treat them with respect at all times.

- They ensure that their vehicle is regularly serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations to ensure that it is road worthy.
- Employees must ensure that their personal vehicles have Road Fund Tax, Business Insurance and valid MOT certificates prior to using them on Council business.
- They complete visual checks of their vehicle for defects and that any defects relating to the operation of the vehicle and its safety equipment are rectified immediately, prior to use at work.
- They inform their Manager immediately of any changes in their personal circumstances which may affect their ability to drive as part of their job, such as taking prescribed drugs that expressly advise against driving whilst taking the medication.
- In the event of any vehicle related accident/incident then Wear Valley District Council's Accident/incident procedure must be followed and the accident/incident must be reported using the appropriate form (form 01).

Driver Competence

No employee is allowed to drive any Council vehicle unless they have attained the age of 18 and, have held a full driving licence for a minimum of 12 months.

Wear Valley District Council, in order to assess driver competence will check an individual's accident history and any penalty points which they have obtained on their driving licence. Where it is evident that a driver has obtained **6 or more** penalty points and/or has a proven history of accidents the individual will be expected to undertake and pass the appropriate assessment, e.g. a ROSPA 'SenseAbility' assessment. Where the individual does not pass this assessment they will be provided with further training in order to ensure their suitability to drive at work.

No employee will be allowed/requested to drive a Council vehicle or their own vehicle for Council business until they have presented their driving licence, MOT certificate (where applicable) and business insurance documentation (where applicable) for inspection and the details have been recorded by their Line Manager or a designated administrator. Employees are reminded to give details of any changes to their own vehicle to their Line Manager/Administrator for their section along with the required Business insurance, road tax and MOT certificates where applicable.

All employees will present their driving licence to their Line Manager for an annual inspection, in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

Where staff have received a speeding conviction, or been involved in a crash, they will be interviewed by their Line Manager to establish details and to identify what lessons can be learned. In the first instance, this approach should be helpful and supportive, rather than punitive. This interview will help to determine if remedial driver training should be considered, especially for staff involved in a crash as they may be suffering from post-traumatic stress or a loss of driving confidence.

Driving Time and Tiredness

Driving whilst tired can be just as dangerous as driving whilst under the influence of alcohol, which is one of the biggest causes of road deaths in the UK, especially on long monotonous roads such as motorways. LGV drivers have their driving hours and rest periods strictly regulated and enforced, which is not the case for cars or light commercial vehicles. However in recognition of the fact that the safety of drivers and any third parties is always the primary consideration, Wear Valley District Council's policy on driving time is that:-

Where long journeys are to be undertaken drivers should take a break of at least 15 minutes after every 2 hour period of continuous driving throughout the journey (as recommended by the Highway Code).

Drivers when experiencing tiredness should not continue to drive, and should never revert to relying on opening a window or having the radio volume turned up to maintain levels of alertness. Neither of these options works. It is very difficult to prevent yourself falling asleep at the wheel once you become excessively tired.

Alcohol and Drugs

Under no circumstances whatsoever must any employees drive a vehicle for work purposes when they have consumed any amount of alcohol, any employee who does so may be liable to criminal prosecution and would also be subject to Wear Valley District Council's disciplinary procedures.

Employees must also consider the 'morning after effect' where a driver may still be unfit to drive through alcohol consumption the night before.

Note: A half-pint of beer/lager, a single measure of spirit or a small glass of wine each equal 1 unit of alcohol. The current guideline is that it takes a minimum of 1 hour to clear 1 unit of alcohol from the body (taken from the NHS).

Similarly, under no circumstances must any employee drive a vehicle for work purposes whilst they are using or under the influence of any illegal substance. As above any employee who does so, may be liable to criminal prosecution and would be subject to Wear Valley District Council's disciplinary procedure. It should be noted that prescribed or un-prescribed medication can also adversely affect an individuals ability to drive.

Employees must not drive following any medical treatment or for any other reason that could adversely affect their general ability to drive under full control.

Any person driving a vehicle as part of their work activities who is taking prescribed medication which expressly states that they should refrain from driving must inform their Manager immediately.

Please refer to Wear Valley District Council's alcohol and drug policy for further information.

Use of mobile phones whilst driving

From the 1st December 2003 the government legislation affecting mobile phones made it an offence to hold a mobile phone while driving. The following requirements are designed to meet both these regulations and the wider regulations which fall under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA).

Complying with the Regulations

The use of a mobile phone by the driver of a vehicle is prohibited unless the driver is parked with the engine switched off.

Drivers are not permitted to use mobile phones at traffic lights or during any short hold-ups in a journey.

These procedures cover all mechanically propelled vehicles, including; trucks, motorbikes, or any similar equipment operated by Council staff

It is an offence to cause or permit someone to not have proper control of the motor vehicle which they are driving. This is the effect of using a hand-held mobile phone or similar device while driving. As an employer it is an offence to expect an employee to use a mobile phone while driving and no Manager or Supervisor may place such a requirement on any employee.

All employees are encouraged to not use their mobile phones while driving. This includes the use of personal or Council mobile phones.

In connection with the above any fine incurred or penalty points incurred through such activities are the responsibility of the person who incurs them.

Although the use of hands-free mobile phones or similar devices are not specifically covered by the regulation, under broad Health and Safety Regulations Wear Valley District Council does not encourage the use of any mobile phones or similar devices by employees driving whether these devices are hand-held or hands-free.

Accepted use of mobile phones

Various employees are given mobile phones for use at work. These are provided so that they can be used while out of a vehicle or when a vehicle is parked with the engine switched off. This policy is not to be used as a means of not providing mobile phones to individuals who use them for genuine work activities or require them for their personal safety.

Road Traffic Offences

Inappropriate Speed

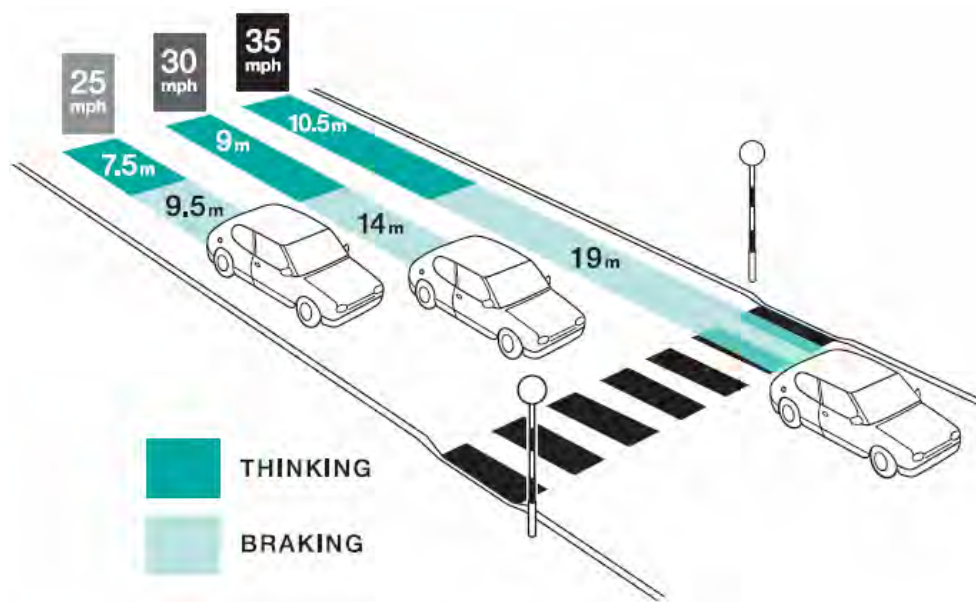
One of the most significant risks is staff driving at inappropriate speeds on work-related journeys. This includes both exceeding the speed limit and driving within the limit but still too fast for the conditions (for example, twisting rural roads, poor weather, poor visibility or high pedestrian activity). People who drive too fast cause, or contribute to over 70,000 speed-related road crashes each year on Britain's roads. This kills around 1,100 people and seriously injures over 12,000.

At higher speeds, there is less time to identify and react to what is happening, it takes longer to stop and impacts are more severe, causing more serious injuries to vehicle occupants and others. Higher speeds also magnify other driver errors, such as close-following or driving when tired or distracted, thus multiplying the chances of causing a crash.

Drivers who 'speed' crash more often than those who don't. Company car drivers often exceed speed limits in order to get to appointments on time, are less likely to view speeding as risky and more likely to think that being on time is more important.

All fines, endorsements and other costs associated with motoring related offences are the sole responsibility of the employee.

Please see the diagram below for appropriate stopping distances.



Any employee who is expected to drive as part of their job **MUST** disclose any driving licence disqualifications to their Line Manager/Administrator for their Section immediately as it comes into effect.

Any employee who is asked to undertake a business related journey who is currently serving a driving ban or other restriction MUST disclose this at the time to the person making the request.

Employees are reminded that they must always wear seatbelts even on short journeys, and that failure to do so is a road traffic offence.

Ensuring your vehicle is not overloaded

It is illegal to overload a vehicle. Overloaded vehicles put drivers and other road users at risk as well as causing damage to the roads and the vehicle. An overloaded vehicle:

- 1) Is less stable and more difficult to control.
- 2) Puts strain on tyres, which could lead to overheating and tyre failure.
- 3) Can mean insurance cover is void.
- 4) Increases fuel consumption meaning higher costs for the Council.
- 5) Ensuring that the vehicle is not overloaded is the responsibility of the driver. The weight loading capacity of the vehicle can be determined by the driver through reference to the vehicles manual.

Safe Towing

It is essential that when towing, a driver never tows more than their licence permits. Specifically a driver must;

- a. Not overload their vehicle
- b. Should not tow a weight greater than that recommended by the manufacturer of the vehicle.
- c. Must secure your load(s) and it must not stick out dangerously.
- d. Ensure that the weight in the trailer is distributed evenly (where applicable).
- e. Keep to Speed restrictions apply to towing vehicles (see the previous grid)
- f. Inspect the trailer prior to use, e.g. Check brake lights, tyres and tyre pressure, jockey wheels, emergency brake cable etc. are all in working order.

The Vehicle

It is a requirement of current road traffic legislation that any vehicle intended for use on the public road network must be safe to use.

All Wear Valley District Council and private vehicles used for work must be fit for their intended purpose and safe for road use at all times.

All Wear Valley District Council and privately owned vehicles used for Council business must be maintained in a road worthy condition in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations and legal requirements. Where drivers believe that fleet vehicles are not in a suitable condition they must report this to their Line Manager immediately.

Any defects found which may affect the vehicles ability to be operated safely and/or legally must be reported and rectified immediately.

All legally required documentation relating to the vehicle such as insurance and MOT Certificate must be current and provided to the individuals Line Manager/ Administrator for their Section within 4 weeks of issue.

Reminder: Please note when you change your privately owned vehicle (for whatever reason), the appropriate documentation, to support this change, must also be provided to your Line Manager within 4 weeks.

The Journey

Journey planning predominantly relates to journeys of excessive distance, for example where persons are travelling to meeting/seminars/training in other parts of the country. The overriding principle of journey planning is that unnecessary car journeys should not be made. Where such journeys are unavoidable then proper planning, particularly of long journeys, is very important from a health, safety and welfare perspective. The guidance below must always be followed.

The Distance

A reasonable distance to be travelled in a day will always depend on factors such as the time of day, traffic density, road works and the associated work tasks of the driver, therefore journey planning is far from an exact science. Even in the best of conditions, calculations should not be based on an average speed of more than 50mph.

The recommended maximum daily driving distance for Wear Valley District Council staff is a maximum of 200 miles. For journeys over 400 miles consideration should be given to alternative means of transport e.g. rail or air to avoid long periods of driving time. Driving time can be extended within reasonable limits where the driving is shared with one or more other drivers.

Planning the Route

For single journeys involving significant time and distance, consideration should be given to alternative means of transport. This often means that a person arrives for a meeting less fatigued and more alert which improves their performance. Whilst cost does not form part of the 'safety' consideration, such additional positive benefits can result in overall cost savings.

Where driving is unavoidable, drivers should plan their routes along Motorways and A-Roads wherever possible, as this makes it easier to facilitate rest periods to reduce the onset of fatigue.

Where possible and practicable drivers should make themselves aware of any particular traffic congestion along their intended route and plan to avoid it. This can normally be achieved via national and local media.

Itineraries

Employee's itineraries must not be unrealistic where a single long journey or several shorter journeys are involved. An employee cannot control road, traffic or weather conditions and a heavy workload can quickly become unachievable. Managers must ensure that a reasonable amount of journey time is allowed that does not result in drivers missing essential rest breaks and/or potentially having to exceed speed limits in order to keep on time.

Weather Conditions

Before starting out drivers must always take note of the existing and forecasted weather conditions along their intended route. If this includes the likelihood of snow and freezing conditions or heavy rain and flooding then consideration must be given to re-scheduling the trip.

Drivers should take appropriate measures to allow for adverse conditions if the journey has to be undertaken. This may include such things as having blankets, gloves and suitable footwear available or perhaps a plentiful supply of drinking water and snacks.

Information on weather conditions across the UK can be obtained via both national and local media, in (e.g. radio) and out (e.g. internet) of the car. Please also refer to Appendix 4 which provides basic advice.

Breakdowns

Where fleet vehicles breakdown in the Wear Valley District Council area the driver should attempt, where possible, to stop in a safe area i.e. pull off the road, and then call for roadside assistance to repair/remove the vehicle for repair. The driver should also contact their Line Manager/Supervisor immediately following this to inform them that they have broken-down.

In the event of a motorway breakdown the procedure below should be followed

- Drive as close as possible to an emergency telephone. These are usually situated one mile apart.
- Park well over on the hard shoulder and switch on the hazard warning lights. Exit by the passenger (near-side) door and then lock all doors.
- Keep clothing, a blanket and footwear in the vehicle appropriate for the time of year.
- Arrows on the marker posts point in the direction of the nearest telephone, when walking stay alert to and maximum distance away from moving traffic.
- When an emergency call has been made, occupants should stand or sit on the motorway embankment. The main danger is from passing traffic.
- If alone and an unidentified vehicle pulls up, get into the car immediately and lock the passenger doors.

In the event of a breakdown at night the procedure to be followed is

Try to drive to a well-lit area and telephone for assistance.

If the breakdown occurs in a dark place switch on the hazard-warning lights.

Remember street names, landmarks and pub names to assist in locating your vehicle.

Drivers are advised to carry a hand torch and personal alarm in the vehicle.

Appendix 1

Employees should be aware that using a mobile phone, with or without a hands-free facility, can be hazardous and employees should not make or receive calls whilst driving. The following list details the legal repercussions of using a mobile phone whilst driving:-

Employees who are caught illegally using a hand held mobile phone whilst driving a road vehicle are currently subject to a fixed penalty.

Using the phone whilst driving could lead to a prosecution by the Police for one of several offences under Regulation 104 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, which states that “a driver must have full control of the vehicle at all times”.

That a prosecution for “driving without due care,” on conviction carries a maximum penalty of £2500.

21.

That a prosecution for “careless driving,” on conviction carries a maximum fine of £2500 and up to 9 penalty points on the driving licence.

That ultimately a prosecution for “dangerous driving,” on conviction carries a maximum of 2 years imprisonment, an unlimited fine, a one year disqualification, and an extended retest.

An employee, who faces prosecution for wrongly using a mobile, could also face disciplinary action by the company.

It is possible for the Council to be prosecuted under Health and Safety law, as a consequence of an offence by an employee, with severe penalties being a potential outcome in certain circumstances.

Appendix 2 – Pre – journey checklist

Pre - Journey Checklist		Yes	No
The Vehicle:			
1	Is the vehicle in a road worthy condition?		
2	Are the tyres in good condition and correctly inflated?		
3	Is the road tax and MOT correctly dated?		
4	Does the vehicle contain some fuel and where it is a Wear Valley District Council vehicle do you have the vehicle fuel card?		
The Journey:			
1	Have you planned your route and checked for road works?		
2	Have you timed journey to ensure that most of it is undertaken in daylight?		
3	Have you planned your driving time and rest stops?		
4	Have you checked the weather conditions on-route?		
5	Have you checked for traffic congestion on-route?		
6	Have you considered an alternate route if you encounter problems?		
7	Have you informed a 3 rd party of your journey plan (Supervisor, Community monitoring Centre etc.)?		
The Driver:			
1	Have you read and do you understand the authorities Road Risk Policy?		
2	Do you have an appropriate licence to drive the vehicle?		
3	Do you have a mobile phone?		
4	Are you currently taking any medication that could affect your driving ability?		
5	Are you under the influence of any substance that could affect your driving ability?		
6	Do you know the procedure to following the event of an accident?		
7	Are you carrying clothing appropriate to the forecasted weather conditions?		

Appendix 3 – Weather Conditions

Bad weather conditions often leads to more difficult driving conditions and longer journeys, for example if bad weather coincides with the rush-hour for example, there is more traffic congestion on the roads than usual and the gritters and snow ploughs have difficulty getting through. Weather forecasting has improved greatly in recent years but sudden weather changes do still occur. Sometimes where roads are salted overnight, the salt can be washed away by rain, which can then freeze over again before repeat salting occurs.

Please remember that when roads have been salted it takes time for the salt to be effective and in very low temperatures even rock salt can't prevent ice forming on the roads.

Driving Advice

Some things are obvious, like checking the weather forecast before you set out and considering if your journey is really necessary anyway. If it is, perhaps public transport would be a better alternative (where possible). **If you really do need to travel by car, make sure you allow extra time for your journey and check your vehicle/car:**

- make sure you have enough petrol
- that your battery is alright
- that your tyres are suitable
- that you carry a shovel in the boot (where possible)
- that you carry a bit of rock salt (where possible)

Also remember to adapt your driving to the conditions:

- don't over-rev the engine or your wheels will spin
- use as high a gear as possible to improve grip
- on hills, build your speed up slowly
- always brake gently and in plenty of time
- don't block junctions or roundabouts
- keep more distance than usual from the car in front
- give cyclists more space
- keep a look out for pedestrians particularly at Zebras, Pelicans and schools.

If you do break down or have to abandon your vehicle, do push it off the carriageway where possible. Drivers are understandably frustrated when the snow has not been cleared, yet abandoned cars and stationary vehicles are two of the main obstacles which get in the way of the snow ploughs.

Remember, at times of heavy snow many people experience difficulties, so if you can, please try and help others.

Appendix 4 – further sources of information

Driving at Work (Managing work-related road safety) – INDG 382. Available on the HSE webpage

The Highway code – The Stationary Office ISBN 0 11 552290 5, Also viewed on www.highwaycode.gov.uk

Code of practice. **Safety of loads on vehicles**. Third Edition.

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/page/dft_roads_506864.pdf

For specific information about driving at work and road safety visit;

The Department for Transport (DfT) website; www.dft.gov.uk/roadsafety
www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

HSE:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety/index.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm>

Information concerning drug and alcohol in relation to driving;
<http://www.drugsprevention.net/alcohol/?artId=32>

Other sources www.orsa.org.uk
www.nationalsafetycameras.co.uk

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council provides personal protective equipment (PPE) when the risk presented by a work activity cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled by other means. When it is provided, it is because health and safety hazards have been identified that require the use of PPE and it is therefore necessary to use it in order to reduce risks to a minimum. It is a last resort measure in line with the hierarchy of control listed in Schedule 1 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Managers will be responsible for ensuring that PPE is properly maintained (as/where required and as laid down by the manufacturer) and that employees are provided with adequate information, instruction and training in the inspection, storage and use of any PPE.

The implementation of this procedure requires the co-operation of all members of management and staff.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

Wear Valley District Council will, in consultation with workers and their representatives:

- Ensure PPE requirements are identified when carrying out risk assessments.
- Use the most effective means of controlling risks without the need for PPE whenever possible and only provide PPE where it is necessary.
- Carry out an assessment to identify suitable PPE.
- Ensure that if two (or more) items of PPE are used simultaneously, they are compatible and are as effectively used together as they are separately.
- Ensure PPE is available to all staff who need to use it.
- Provide adequate maintenance, cleaning and repair of PPE.
- Inform staff of the risks their work involves and why PPE is required.
- Train staff in the safe use and maintenance of PPE.
- Review assessments and reassess the need for PPE and its suitability whenever there are significant changes or at least annually.

Duties of Managers and Supervisors

Managers/Supervisors must ensure:

- PPE requirements are considered when risks are assessed.
- Suitable PPE is provided and is always easily available to all employees that need to use it.
- PPE is properly stored, maintained, cleaned, repaired and replaced when necessary.
- Adequate information and training is provided to all employees who need to use, maintain or select PPE.
- Any injuries, ill health or incidents relating to the use of PPE are investigated, with remedial action taken.
- Employees use the PPE provided in accordance with any training provided, the risk assessments and any manufacturers guidelines.
- The use and maintenance of PPE is regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Special arrangements are made, where necessary, for individuals with health conditions that could affect the use of PPE.
- Documentation is kept in respect to the issue, inspection and maintenance of PPE..

Duties of Employees

Employees must ensure they:

- Use all PPE provided in accordance with any training received, the guidelines laid down in risk assessments and in manufacturers guidelines.
- Attend training sessions and comply with the training, instruction and information provided.
- Check the condition of their PPE before each time that they use it.
- Store, clean and maintain their PPE correctly.
- Report any losses, defects or other problems with PPE to their manager or another responsible person immediately.
- Report to management, in confidence, any personal conditions that may affect their ability to use PPE correctly.

Information and Training

Wear Valley District Council is committed to providing sufficient information, instruction and training, in the wearing of PPE, to ensure the health and safety of workers using it. This includes temporary staff, persons gaining work experience with the Council and contractors, as well as those in direct employment. Managers and supervisors who are responsible for users of PPE will also receive appropriate training, as will those responsible for selecting and maintaining it.

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Introduction

Risk assessment forms the central strand of Wear Valley District Council's Health and Safety Management system. Successful completion of risk assessments provides sound economic benefits to the organisation as well as satisfying legal requirements.

This procedure is intended to reduce risks to the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by the way in which the Council operates.

Those involved in the risk assessment process will receive appropriate training. All risk assessments will be completed in line with Regulations and any guidance produced by the HSC or HSE. An example of this is the HSE's document 'The Five Steps to Risk Assessment' which forms the basis for the risk assessment process within Wear Valley District Council.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

Elimination of Hazards

Wear Valley District Council will ensure all hazards will be eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable. If this is not possible, the remaining risks will either be avoided or reduced to an acceptable level. The measures introduced to achieve this will follow the principles of prevention and aim to combat risks at source.

Assessment of Risk

If hazards cannot be eliminated or risks avoided, an assessment of risks will be carried out by the Health and Safety Officer, in liaison with Management and Health and Safety Representatives. The following factors will be considered during the assessment.

Likelihood

Whether the likelihood of the harm arising from the hazard is rare, unlikely, possible, likely, or almost certain will be considered.

Severity

Consideration will be made of whether the severity of harm from the hazard is insignificant, minor, moderate, major or catastrophic.

Reference will be made to previous Accident/Incident records, the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations records (F2508's) and sickness and ill-health records, when reaching this decision.

Those at Risk

Individuals or groups at risk due to the hazard will be considered. This will include employees, the self-employed and any other persons who could be affected by the Council's undertakings. Additional consideration will be given in respect of vulnerable persons, new and expectant mothers, persons with a disability, lone workers etc.

Managers' and Supervisors' Duties

Managers or supervisors must ensure:

- Hazards are identified and brought to the attention of the Health and Safety Officer.
- Assessments are carried out in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer and records are kept.
- Control measures introduced as a result of assessments are implemented and followed.
- Employees are informed of the relevant results and provided with necessary training.
- Any injuries or incidents lead to a review of relevant assessments.
- Employees adhere to safe systems of work.
- Safety arrangements are regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Employees identified by the assessment as being at risk are subjected to appropriate health surveillance.
- Special arrangements are made, where necessary, for vulnerable persons, new and expectant mothers, persons with a disability, lone workers etc.

Employees' Duties

Employees must ensure:

- They report to management (in confidence) any personal conditions which may put them at greater risk when carrying out work activities.
- They comply with all instruction and training.
- Their own health and safety is not put at risk when carrying out work activities.
- They use equipment and machinery in accordance with instruction and training.
- Any problems relating to their work activities are reported to a responsible person, along with any shortcomings they believe exist in the arrangements made to protect them.

- Where requested by the Health and Safety Officer they take part in the risk assessment process.

Information and Training

Suitable information, instruction, training and supervision will be provided to all persons involved in the risk assessment process.

Health and Safety Officer

The Health and Safety Officer, as the competent person, must be involved in the risk assessment process. The Health and Safety Officer will complete risk assessments on complex topics, such as the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) where specialist knowledge is required.

Health and Safety Panel

The Health and Safety Panel, as a key driver for health and safety within Wear Valley District Council is provided with the responsibility and authority to reject or approve all risk assessments. With the exception of risk assessments which are confidential (e.g. certain occupational health based risk assessment) all risk assessments will be approved by the panel prior to being adopted by Wear Valley District Council.

In the case of confidential risk assessments responsibility will lie with the Health and Safety Officer, the appropriate Line Manager, and the individual affected by the assessment. The individual for whom the assessment is being written may request that the assessment is submitted to the Health and Safety Panel for approval.

SAFETY SIGNS AND SIGNALS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council is aware that it must provide and maintain safety signs where risks cannot be adequately controlled using other health and safety measures without them.

Wear Valley District Council will also provide and maintain the safety signs required by fire safety legislation, notably those specified in fire certificates/risk assessments.

The Council will ensure that the safety signs provided comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

Organisation

The implementation of this policy requires the total co-operation of all members of management and staff. There will be full consultation with employee representatives through existing channels of communication.

Arrangements

Wear Valley District Council will, in consultation with employees and their representatives:

- a. Identify where safety signs are needed provide safety signs that comply with the specifications of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- b. Clean signboards as frequently as necessary to ensure that they remain visible and check that they remain securely fastened.
- c. Test and maintain illuminated signs and acoustic signals
- d. Train employees in the meaning of safety signs.
- e. Ensure that employees who use verbal communication or hand signals are competent in their use, including training them on the code used by the Council.

Procedures for Dealing with Health and Safety Issues






Where an employee raises a matter related to health and safety associated with safety signs, the authority will:

- Take all necessary steps to investigate the circumstances.
- Take corrective measures where appropriate.
- Advise the employee of actions taken.

Where any employee notices a problem or defect with a safety sign, they must inform their manager or the facilities manager immediately.

Information and Training

Wear Valley District Council will provide sufficient information, instruction and training to all employees on the meaning and use of safety signs and the consequences if they are ignored. Managers and Supervisors will also be given appropriate training.

TYPE	SHAPE	COLOUR	MEANING	EXAMPLE
Prohibition 	Circular	Red border and cross bar Black symbol on white background	What must not be done	No Smoking
Mandatory 	Circular	White symbol on blue background	What must be done	Wear eye protection
Warning 	Triangular	Yellow with a black border and symbol	Warns of danger or hazard	Fork-lift operating
Safe Condition 	Square or Rectangular	White symbol on green background	Information on safe conditions	First Aid Point
Fire Equipment 	Square or Rectangular	Red, with white wording and signal	Location of fire information, alarms or fire fighting equipment	Fire Extinguisher

SHARPS AND BIOLOGICAL AGENTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council acknowledges that contact with biological agents (blood and bodily fluids are biological agents) can be hazardous to health. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure all exposure of employees to biological agents or substances hazardous to health is prevented or at least controlled to within statutory limits. As far as is reasonably practicable Wear Valley District Council will ensure that information is made available to all relevant staff.

Wear Valley District Council undertakes to control exposure by physical means where reasonably practicable. If exposure cannot be adequately controlled by such means, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided free of charge as indicated by risk assessments.

All employees will be provided with understandable information and instruction on the nature and likelihood of their exposure to substances hazardous to health. This information will come from various sources including; Risk Assessments, COSHH assessments, manufacturers Data Sheets, trade information, etc.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

Wear Valley District Council will, in consultation with workers and their representatives, ensure the following.

- Information of all biological agents or other substances hazardous to health kept on site will be maintained, with appropriate hazard information.
- The Health and Safety Officer in conjunction with Managers and employee representatives will carry out risk assessments of the exposure to substances hazardous to health and will advise on their control. These assessments will be completed in conjunction with persons who are experienced in completing the tasks for where biological agents or unknown substances are or may be encountered.
- All operations which involve, or may involve, exposure to biological agents or substances hazardous to health will be assessed by the Health and Safety Officer (where brought to his attention).
- All employees and others who may work in the affected areas will be informed of the purpose and safe operation of all Control Measures.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which includes (but is not restricted to); disposable overalls, gloves, respirators, goggles, face protection, hard hats, safety

footwear, litter tongs, tweezers, magnetic pickers, plastic sharps boxes, clinical waste bags and spillage kits. PPE will be issued in line with the recommendations of risk assessments.

- The type and use of PPE will be carefully assessed and maintained according to manufacturers' instructions. If possible, the number of different types will be minimised to prevent mistakes in servicing or replacement.
- The type of PPE used, its condition and issue will be regularly reviewed (please refer to the PPE procedure).
- Each risk assessment will be reviewed annually..
- Qualified professionals, where required, will carry out health surveillance.
- Employee health records of all exposures to substances hazardous to health will be kept for a minimum of 40 years.
- All employees will be provided with understandable information and appropriate training on the nature of the hazardous substances they work with. Employees will be informed about any monitoring and health surveillance results.
- All changes to control measures and changes of PPE must be properly assessed.

Concerns/issues raised by members of the public or employees

Following any concern or issues raised by employees or members of the public related to the removal or clean up of contaminated biological agents or of substances hazardous to health, Wear Valley District Council will:

- Ensure the hazard associated with the biological agent or substance has been correctly identified and brought to the attention of the Health and Safety Officer.
- Ensure the risk assessment of the biological agent or the substance is correct and up to date.
- Ensure control measures in place are suitable and sufficient.
- Correct any observed deficiencies in the control measures.
- Inform the employee/member of the public, or their representative, of the results of the investigation and actions taken.
- Re-issue updated; Risk or COSHH assessments if/as required.

If an identified exposure has taken place, those affected and their representatives, will be informed immediately. Possible health effects will, in addition, be communicated to Wear Valley District Council's occupational health service and the individual is advised to bring it to the attention of their general practitioner.

Information, instruction and training

Wear Valley District Council will provide sufficient information, instruction and training to ensure full understanding of the hazards to health posed by biological agents and substances in the workplace and the importance of the control measures provided.

Information will also be given to others who may be affected, such as:

- Contractors, Sub-contractors
- Visitors/members of the public

Managers and supervisors of areas which use substances hazardous to health will be given additional training to ensure the proper management of the risks.

Regulation

Sharps and bloodborne diseases fall under the general remit of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act which requires an employer to provide a safe and healthy working environment.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations require employers to produce risk assessments for any hazards in the workplace and to avoid contact with biological agents.

Guidance

Contamination from biological agents can be from the following sources

- Inoculation of blood by a used needle or other sharps article.
- Blood splashes to mucus membrane e.g. eyes, nose or mouth.
- Swallowing a persons blood e.g. after mouth to mouth resuscitation.
- Contamination, where clothing or other materials have been soaked or contaminated with biological agents (blood or body fluids).
- Bodily fluids or secretions entering the body through a wound or sore.
- Human bites or scratches from an infected person.

Common areas to look out for include

Likely Locations	People most at risk
Toilets	Cleaners, waste handlers
Litter Bins	Cleansing workers, contract inspectors
Refuse Sacks	Cleansing workers, contract inspectors
Fly Tips	Cleansing workers, contract inspectors
Void Properties	Housing Maintenance Officers, (HMO), DLO
Gardens	HMO, DLO, Contract Inspectors
Open Spaces	Contractors, Contract Inspectors, Public
Playgrounds	Contractors, Contract Inspectors, Public
Sewers/Gullies	Contractors, DLO

Some needles found in children’s playgrounds are known to have been placed deliberately to cause injury.

Appropriate first aid actions following exposure include

- Always encourage a sharps injury to bleed by gently squeezing the wound (Do Not Suck the Wound)
- Wash the wound under warm running water (Do Not Scrub) or if water is not available use a disposable clinical wipe (dispose of clinical wipes as clinical waste).
- Cover the wound with a clean sterile dressing.
- Irrigate eye or mouth splashes with copious amounts of clean water, or saline solution.
- Report the incident to Line Manager/Supervisor. Comply with Wear Valley District Council’s accident/incident procedure.
- Line manager/Supervisor should ensure any injured person receives immediate medical assistance and attends the accident and emergency dept of the nearest local hospital.
- Line Manager/Supervisor should telephone the Health and Safety Officer following any accidents or incidents immediately in order to carry out a detailed investigation (where possible ensure minimal or no disturbance to the scene).

Vaccination

It is not recommended that all employees are vaccinated against Hepatitis B as the emphasis should be on prevention.

Vaccination should only be considered for those identified by risk assessment as being at frequent high risk or following a needle penetrating injury.

SLIPS TRIPS AND FALLS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Statistics show that slip, trip and fall injuries result in many absences from work, cause unnecessary pain and suffering to employees and economic loss to the Council. The HSE report that 37% of all 'major injuries' reported under RIDDOR are caused by slips and trips and that 24% of 'over 3 day injuries' are caused by slips, trips and falls. This policy is intended to reduce the risk of slip, trip and fall injuries, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Elimination of Hazardous Slip, Trip and Fall Areas and Activities

Wear Valley District Council will ensure that areas and operations which involve a high risk of slip, trip and fall accidents will be eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable. Measures to achieve this will include careful design of and maintenance and inspection of work areas and traffic routes.

Assessment of Risk

Managers and Supervisors in conjunction with employee representatives and the Health and Safety Officer will carry out slip, trip and fall risk assessments. Identified risks will be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable. The following three factors will be considered during the assessment.

The Individual

Along with physical ability, individuals' awareness of the risks present and the control measures to be followed will be considered during the assessment. Other factors relating to the individual may include the suitability of clothing and footwear worn, and eyesight health in relation to work areas and traffic routes and the levels and consistency of lighting, etc. Due to the varied work environments which Wear Valley District Council staff are exposed to, the individual's perception of risk forms a major part in the risk assessment process.

The Task or Activity Being Performed

Consideration will be given to whether employees need to carry objects that are awkward in shape or too many objects at once (which might affect balance), whether changes in floor levels increase the risk of falls, whether traffic routes are clear, and whether there are obstacles that must be avoided. Other factors to be considered are

whether liquids or slippery materials are present that might cause slip hazards if spilled, or if trailing leads or airlines from equipment create trip hazards.

The Immediate Environment

Consideration will be given to slip, trip and fall hazards created by the physical layout of the area, e.g. whether equipment obstructs traffic routes, or whether there is travel from outdoor to indoor areas which might lead to water being carried in on footwear, etc and whether matting or other means of drying the soles of footwear are provided at all access and egress points. Other factors will include the general condition of the roof and floors, whether regular building maintenance is carried out, the type of floor covering used, the materials used for cleaning and polishing the floor (which may affect the coefficient of friction between foot and floor) and the amount and type of lighting provided and the arrangements for its maintenance. Safety signs may have to be displayed during cleaning operations.

Duties of Managers and Supervisors

Managers or supervisors must ensure that:

- Slip, trip and fall assessments are carried out where relevant, and that records are kept. These assessments must be completed in conjunction with employee representatives and the Health and Safety Officer.
- Employees wear appropriate footwear, clear away materials and equipment not in use, do not rush in traffic routes and are properly supervised.
- Adequate information and training is provided to persons involved in activities or working in areas with the potential for slip, trip and fall accidents.
- Any injuries or incidents relating to slip, trips and falls are investigated, and that remedial action is taken.
- Employees adhere to safe systems of work.
- Safety arrangements for the control of slip, trip and fall risks are regularly monitored and reviewed.
- Regular inspections of work areas and traffic routes are carried out, which cover slip, trip and fall risks: housekeeping, trailing leads, lighting levels and the condition of floors and the building fabric, etc.
- Regular maintenance of buildings, work areas, traffic routes, equipment and lighting takes place and is recorded.

Duties of Employees

Employees must ensure that:

- They report to management (in confidence) any personal conditions that may increase their risk of slips, trips and falls.

- They comply with any instruction and training which is provided in relation to the control of slips, trips and falls.
- Through their actions their personal health and safety is not put at risk from slips, trips and falls as they carry out work activities.
- They use equipment in a way which does not increase the risk of slips, trips and falls to either themselves or others, e.g. by trailing leads or through causing obstructions in traffic routes.
- Any problems relating to slips, trips and falls are reported to your Line Manager who must also bring it to the attention of the Facilities Manager and the Health and Safety Officer.

Information and Training

Suitable information and training will be provided to persons who carry out activities involving risks of slips, trips and falls. Additional training will be provided to those identified as being at greater risk. Training needs will be identified and reviewed by the Health and Safety Officer. Refresher training will also be given at reasonable intervals.

CONTRACTORS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council acknowledges that it has both legal and social duties to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and must also ensure that its activities do not expose others to risks to their health and safety. It is common practice for individual departments to independently engage contractors to carry out various works on behalf of the council and where this is the case, the following guidelines should be applied. Observance and implementation of these guidelines, should assist individual departments in compliance with the above duties.

Selection of Contractors

Selection of contractors

Wear Valley District Council utilises 'Constructionline' (the UK's register of pre-qualified local and national construction and construction-related suppliers) for the selection of contractors. Where a contractor is not a member of Constructionline they will be required as standard to complete Wear Valley District Council's Pre-qualification questionnaire. This questionnaire will also require the submission of the Health and Safety Policy adopted by the company and relevant information in relation to risk assessments, safe systems of work and previous experience in work of similar type for other customers. The Health and Safety Officer will assess these submission and no contractor which does not meet the relevant health and safety standards will be engaged by Wear Valley District Council.

Persons arranging work should consider health and safety as an integral part of the selection process when planning to engage an outside contractor.

Individuals arranging work should also aim to assess a contractor's commitment to health and safety by consulting the contractor's health and safety policy document and asking any relevant questions. A method statement is also required, and the person arranging the work must obtain this prior to work occurring. The method statement should detail how the contractor plans to carry out the work and supporting documentation may be required. These documents must be given to the Health and Safety Officer for assessment and work may not commence until the method statement has been reviewed and approved.

Permits to work

Where work involves; entry to confined spaces, excavations, work at height, use of toxic corrosive or flammable materials, heat or flames, liquids or gas under pressure, work around live services, work which may disturb asbestos containing materials etc. a permit to work may be required before work can commence. These permits can be obtained from the Health and Safety Officer following submission of the contractors

method statement, risk assessments, emergency procedures and any relevant training records.

Subcontractors

Where the contractor or principal contractor is going to sub-contract the work to another contractor, this will be termed as the sub-contractor. All sub-contractors must demonstrate that they;

- a) Have signed up to the same health and safety standards and requirements as the principal contractor. Written evidence shall be provided to Wear Valley District Council to prove this, or.
- b) Have submitted the relevant documents; including Company Health and Safety Policy/procedures, generic risk assessments, method statement for the work to be undertaken, company liability insurance documentation, where possible previous examples of work of similar type, emergency procedures, and any relevant training records of employees undertaking the work.

Responsibility of person arranging the work

In all cases, health and safety will be dependent on the establishment of good communications between the contractor and or sub contractor and his point of contact within the authority, who will normally be the person arranging the work or a nominated Project Officer . This point of contact will also keep the Health and Safety Officer notified of any relevant information which may be required.

The person arranging the work should co-ordinate the work where necessary and will be the first point of contact through whom the contractor can communicate any queries or problems. Where the work may affect other departments/buildings etc, the person arranging the work should ensure that the heads of these departments receive clear information as to the nature and timing of the work and adequate time to implement the necessary health and safety arrangements before the work commences.

Lines of communication should be maintained with the contractor and other departments for the duration of the work so that the relevant persons can be informed of any changes or problems that may require implementation of additional health and safety arrangements. These departments should similarly be informed when the contract work has officially been completed.

The person arranging the work must advise the contractor of any additional or replacement persons who may be designated as an authorised point of contact during the work.

Starting work

Before work commences on each contract, the person arranging the work must check that the appropriate health and safety arrangements have been made. In addition, they and/or authorised departmental personnel should, where necessary, liaise with the contractor to determine whether any additional or special health and safety

arrangements are required e.g. for work in ducts, confined spaces or laboratories. Where a permit to work is required they must ensure that they have obtained this from the Health and Safety Officer and provided it to the contractor.

Fire and Emergency Procedures

The person arranging the work must inform the contractor of the buildings fire and emergency plan before the contract commences so that his employees can be made aware of;

1. The nearest means of escape in the event of a fire or emergency.
2. The location, type and method of operation of the nearest fire fighting appliances.
3. The location and method of operation of the nearest fire alarm. The fire and emergency plan should be available for each site and must confirm that the necessary arrangements are in place before the work begins. The person arranging the work should additionally inform the contractor to whom he and his employees must report in the event of a fire, emergency or evacuation drill.

Contractors will be required to adhere to all relevant Wear Valley District Council emergency plans.

Supervision and monitoring

Wear Valley District Council reserves the right to inspect all works undertaken by contractors or sub contractors on its behalf, and where necessary to take steps to ensure that the work is undertaken to a suitable standard of quality and safety.

The level of supervision and monitoring necessary will vary considerably, according to the nature of the work. Where appropriate the person arranging the work or authorised personnel may need to periodically check the progress of the work and the health and safety arrangements. Where health and safety issues arise or are suspected the Health and Safety Officer should be contacted and a request for an inspection of the site should be made. Contractors who are not complying with statutory requirements and the provisions of the method statement or permit to work should be immediately reported to the Health and Safety Officer so that the appropriate action can be taken.

Contractors who deliberately or repeatedly ignore the statutory requirements of current health and safety legislation, Council requirements or the stipulations laid down within the method statement or permit to work may be asked to leave the site and may not be re-engaged.

In any case of doubt regarding the application of these guidelines or in any circumstances affecting safe working practice not covered by the code, advice should be sought in the first instance from the Health and Safety Officer.

WORK AT HEIGHT PROCEDURE

Introduction

Wear Valley District Council will take all reasonable steps to provide a safe working environment for all employees who may be affected by work at height activities.

Wear Valley District Council shall provide a safe system of work that will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the necessary preventative and protective measures to prevent falls of persons or materials from the workplace. We will require employees, contractors and any other persons involved in the work activity to co-operate in the implementation of this policy and the requirements of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

Wear Valley District Council will, in consultation with workers and their representatives and contractors ensure that:

- Work is not carried out at height where it is reasonably practicable to carry out the work safely otherwise than at height.
- Where work is carried out at height, Wear Valley District Council shall take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.
- All work activities that involve work at height are properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a manner which is as far as is reasonably practicable, safe. All work at height planning will include consideration for emergency and rescue situations.
- Wear Valley District Council will ensure that all persons engaged to work at height or to organise, plan and supervise work are competent to do so.
- Work at height activities will not occur where weather conditions will jeopardise the health or safety of persons involved in the work or any other persons.
- The correct equipment is chosen for the activity through a risk assessment process in consultation with employee representatives.
- A risk assessment is completed for all work at height activities.

Duties of Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors will:

- Ensure that all work activities that involve work at height are identified.
- Eliminate the need to undertake work at height whenever it is reasonably practicable to do so.
- Undertake site specific risk assessments for those activities where work at height cannot be eliminated and reduce the level of risk, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Provide all the necessary equipment to their staff to allow safe access to and egress from the place of work.
- Provide all the necessary equipment to ensure adequate lighting and protection from adverse weather conditions.
- Provide suitable plant to enable the materials used or created in the course of the work to be safely lifted to and from the workplace and stored there if necessary.
- Ensure that any working platform and its supporting structures are selected and/or designed in accordance with current standards.
- Make provisions for regular inspections of all equipment required for working at height.
- Ensure that all persons who have to undertake work at height are trained and competent to do so.
- Require any contractors from whom they procure services to comply with this policy.

Duties of Employees

Employees will:

- Attend all training sessions provided for them in respect to health and safety and work at height.
- Comply with all instruction and training provided in work at height activities.
- Take appropriate steps to ensure their own health and safety is not put at risk when working at height.
- Report any perceived shortcoming in the arrangements for managing the risks associated with working at height.

Information and Training

Suitable information and training will be provided to persons who are required to undertake or supervise activities that involve work at height. Refresher training will also be given at reasonable intervals.

VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION PROCEDURE

Introduction

The policy of Wear Valley District Council is to tackle and reduce aggression and violence in the workplace, whether it affects the health and safety of staff, local residents, service users, visitors or others.

Risks from aggression and violence will be assessed in a systematic way, in order to develop safe and supportive systems.

Aim

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that Wear Valley District Council fulfils its duty to provide and maintain a safe working environment, establish and maintain safe working practices and provide all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision regarding policy and procedure to protect and support elected members, employees and contractors appointed to work for Wear Valley District Council.

In addition, the overriding principle will be to avoid all incidence of violence directed at employees whilst at work.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides the following definition for Violence and Aggression:

“Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”.

Issues relating to sexual and/or racial harassment or bullying of a non-violent nature, which affect staff, will be dealt with under other procedures.

Legislation

There are five main pieces of health and safety law which are relevant to violence at work. These are:

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA)

Employers have a legal duty under this Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employees must comply with the organisation in its arrangements for health and safety.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR)

Employers must assess the risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety by effective:

- Planning
- Organisation
- Control
- Monitoring and review

The risks covered should, where appropriate, include the need to protect employees from exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

Employers must notify their enforcing authority in the event of an accident at work to any employee resulting in death, major injury or incapacity for normal work for three or more consecutive days. This includes any act of non-consensual physical violence done to a person at work.

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (a) and The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b)

Employers must inform, and consult with, employees in good time on matters relating to their health and safety. Employees representatives, with appointed trade unions under (a) or elected under (b) may make representations to their employer on matters affecting the health and safety of those they represent.

Implementation

Each Senior Manager in general will ensure that

Appropriate assessments of risk of violence are undertaken, at least annually, using the risk assessment documentation, and in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer.

Information is provided to staff groups identified as being at risk, as indicated in the next section. This information will include such matters as how to summon assistance and support and what safety procedures will be followed.

Requirements relating to employees with disabilities, or new and expectant mothers who may need to work in identified risk areas will be risk assessed as appropriate for each individual case.

Staff affected by violent/aggressive situations will be offered appropriate post incident debriefing (talks with Line Manager, counselling etc. as required by each individual incident).

Specific Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibility to ensure compliance with these requirements rests with the Chief Executive who delegates the operational requirements of the Regulations to each Director/Senior Manager, as appropriate to their span of control and also ensures that staff understand and are aware of their responsibilities with regard to this policy.

Senior Managers

- Implement and monitor the policy within their areas.
- Ensure all staff, including temporary, agency and locum staff, are suitably risk assessed for any task they are given to undertake by their line manager.
- Ensure the initiation, development and approval of local procedures that support this policy
- Consult with the Health and Safety Advisor on matters relating to aggression management, including proactive requirements, e.g. facility design or alterations.
- Plan and resource measures to facilitate effectiveness of this policy, including risk assessment implications and prioritising staff availability for any necessary training.

Managers responsibilities include

- Identifying roles, tasks etc where violence and aggression is a potential threat.
- Undertaking an assessment of risks (in consultation with the Health and Safety Officer) of violence to determine appropriate procedures and training for staff.
- Identifying the assessed risks to their Line Managers and developing protocols to address the risks.
- Ensuring their staff are aware of this policy, comply with it and carry out their responsibilities identified within it, including attendance for training.
- Investigate incidents of violence, plan appropriate subsequent action and ensure that staff debriefing is available following the incident.
- Consulting the Health and Safety Officer regarding aggression management issues, equipment purchase, risk reduction, etc.

Employees responsibilities include

Employees are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others who are affected by their acts or omissions (Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974). Where, on occasions there is an identified risk to individuals, e.g. a threat to harm, this may overrule the need for resident confidentiality to make that person aware for their own safety.

They must ensure they are aware of this policy and adhere to it, as well as any Safe Systems of Work or additional procedures within their workplaces.

Staff have a duty to bring any adverse situations, problems or concerns (including near misses) regarding aggressive or violent incidents to the attention of their Supervisors or Line Managers. This would also include incidents which are work related, but which may occur outside work premises or work time. Staff must also complete the *Accident Incident Report form* following such incidents.

There is a requirement that staff co-operate in the completion of risk assessments and identify and work with safe working practices, including notifying their managers of any health issues regarding their abilities to manage their own safety and/or that of others.

Health and Safety Officer responsibilities

The Health and Safety Officer will provide the input that supports the Council and its staff in meeting the requirements of this policy and local procedures.

The Health and Safety Officer, supported by the Senior Management Team will:

- Provide advice and information to the Council and its staff regarding aggression management issues.

Volunteers, External Contractors and Visitors/Members of the Public

Managers have an important role in ensuring that individuals who enter Wear Valley District Council premises whilst undertaking work or visiting residents, are protected wherever possible from violence or aggression.

Visitors and external contractors are expected to comply with reasonable instructions given by members of staff who are seeking to protect them from violent or aggressive situations.

Reporting Violent or Aggressive Incidents

Acts of violence and aggression should be reported on Wear Valley District Council's accident/incident form (as provided in the Accident/Incident procedure).

Training

Training in the area of Violence and Aggression is a specialist topic and as such a competent contractor/consultant/trainer will be secured to provide the necessary training. Contents of this training will include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Procedures adopted by Wear Valley District Council.
- Causes of violence
- Identifying potentially violent situations.
- Customer care.
- Personal safety.

Support and Counselling

Support in the first instance will be through Supervisors and Line Managers; additional support will be provided through trades unions, the personnel department or counselling should it be required.

Guidance

What is Violence at Work?

Any incident, in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public or co-worker in circumstances arising out of or in the course of his/her employment.

Violence will, for the purpose of this policy, extend to behaviour that is physically or emotionally hurtful and will include:

- Actual violent behaviour
- Serious verbal or written abuse or threats
- Violent or threatening associates
- Sexual harassment
- Racial or religious harassment

Policy Cover

All employees and Councillors will be covered by the policy while at work.

The Workplace

In the context of this policy the workplace means all Wear Valley District Council owned property and any other area where an employee is required to work.

Workplaces vary and include the office, temporary sites, travelling on the highway to work locations, tenants properties or other situations arising from or during the course of employment.

Who is at Risk?

Employees of Wear Valley District Council by the very nature of their work may be exposed to greater or lesser degrees of potential violence as they come into direct contact with members of the public while dealing with work-related issues.

Wear Valley District Council Responsibilities

Employer:

Duty arises from S2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require employers to carry out risk assessment (Regulation 3) and record the significant findings of the assessment.

Risk assessment requires:

- Identification of the hazards.
- Assessment of the risk arising.
- Implementation of procedure or control measures.
- Monitor - to ensure effective.
- Review – whenever, the nature of the work changes or situations dictate i.e. following a violent incident.

Employee

Duty arises from S7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to take reasonable care for the health and safety of his/her self and of others and to co-operate with his/her employer in fulfilling his/her statutory duty.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations also require that employees follow procedures, use equipment etc according to instruction or training given and to inform his/her employer of any shortcomings in his/her employer arrangements for health and safety (Regulation 14).

Preventing Violence

The primary objective of this policy is to prevent the use of violence to employees and Members and secondly to ensure that any act of violence against employees or Members is minimised as much as possible.

Being prepared for the possibility of violence occurring, through training, protective or preventative measures being introduced will reduce the risk of such an event.

This procedure provides guidance that covers the following areas :

- Training of staff/Members who may encounter violence.
- Support for victims.
- Security - personal, department and organisation.
- Working practice.
- Incident reporting.

As with all procedures the active participation of all employees and Members in reporting and responding to all acts of aggression is required to ensure its effectiveness.

Implementing the Violence and Aggression Procedure

It will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive through Directors and departmental Managers and Supervisors to ensure that all employees are provided with or have access to this procedure and guide.

A copy of this procedure will be available to all employees and Members on Lotus Notes 'Health and Safety Policies'.

Training

Inevitably there will incidents when employees are confronted with potentially violent persons or situations. To assist in dealing with such situations training and awareness programmes will be available to those considered to be at risk.

Confidence in dealing with all foreseeable situations is the key and through risk assessment Managers will be able to identify the likely confrontational situations and plan their training requirements accordingly covering:-

- Causes of violence.
- Recognition of warnings.
- Interpersonal skills.
- Management provisions.
- Personal safety.

Training will be identified through risk assessment and personal development plans; this will form the basis for the corporate training needs analysis and be budgeted for accordingly.

Support

Counselling

Any employee or Council Member of Wear Valley District Council who has been the victim of violence or aggressive action will be entitled to counselling that will be available through their Supervisors or Managers in the first instance. Further counselling will be available through the Personnel Department and through their respective Union if needed.

Employees may, if they so wish, contact the Personnel Department directly.

Legal Assistance

In addition, Wear Valley District Council will, on case by case decisions, decide whether it would be appropriate to support financially any employee who wishes to seek legal remedy against anyone who is violent towards them. They may also choose to seek the support of their respective Trade Union.

Security

Personal security is paramount in combating violence and aggression through general awareness of your situation and circumstances. Even in comparatively friendly environments such as the office, back up systems should be in place to prevent attacks and would typically include physical barriers, alarms, and arrangements for staff/Police assistance where required.

When out of the office or in situations with potential for violence the same back up systems should be enhanced by additional provisions and typically should include, an out of office log, telephone contact details and where necessary, accompanied visits.

All staff should apply the principles contained within the Lone Workers Policy and Guide.

It is important that staff are aware of the need for personal security. Training and employee vigilance will reinforce the necessary skills and reduce the risk of being attacked.

Wear Valley District Council will use the Accident/Incident form to make record of any incidents of violence and aggression with remedial actions taken which are appropriate to each individual circumstance.

Incident Reporting

All Members and staff must report all incidents of violence or aggression; this will be by completion of the Accident / Incident form.

This will be forwarded to your Supervisor/Line Manager.

Detailed investigation by the Supervisor or Line Manager will be carried out to determine the necessary action to be taken, this could include:

- Writing to the individual.
 - Including the individuals name on a database or register.
 - Offering support or counselling to the individual.
- (Forms for undertaking such tasks are included in the Appendix)

YOUNG WORKERS PROCEDURE

Introduction

While generic precautions taken to protect the health and safety of the workforce as a whole will, in many cases, also protect young persons, there are occasions when different and/or additional measures will be necessary.

This procedure aims to reduce any identified risks to young persons and provide guidance on specific control measures required to protect them. This procedure also acknowledges relevant legislative provisions and confirms Wear Valley District Council's commitment to compliance with them.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Young Workers

Elimination of Activities Hazardous to Young Workers

Wear Valley District Council will ensure that work activities exposing young persons to unacceptable risks are eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable. Measures to achieve this include preventing exposure to such risks by ensuring relevant legal standards are met (dependent on the risk involved), and that official guidance and good practice is followed.

Assessment of Risk

Where hazardous activities cannot be eliminated, risk assessments, to be carried out by Management in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer, will be undertaken to identify residual risks and to reduce them to the lowest level reasonably practicable. The assessments will take into account the actual risks associated with the work activities and whether or not these risks are increased due to the age of the young person.

Specifically, the assessment will consider risks associated with exposure to:

- physical agents
- biological agents
- chemical agents.

- Violence and aggression incidents

It will also consider other work situations, as prescribed in HSE guidance.

Risk assessments relating to young persons will be reviewed, and if necessary revised, regularly.

Duties of Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors must ensure:

- Risk assessments are carried out for all work activities undertaken by young persons and associated records and documentation maintained
- Necessary control measures identified by the risk assessment are implemented, followed, monitored, reviewed and, if necessary, revised
- Young persons are informed of any risks associated with their work and the control measures taken to protect them
- A copy of the risk assessment is provided to the parents or guardian of any 'children' employed
- Any adverse incidents are immediately reported to the Health and Safety Officer and investigated by Management.
- Appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training, etc is provided to the Young Person.

Duties of Young Workers

Young workers must:

- Follow any safety arrangements implemented for their protection, including attending training sessions, complying with control measures, etc
- Not act in a manner that adversely affects their own health and safety, and/or the health and safety of anyone else
- Report any perceived, or real, shortcomings in protection levels to their Line Manager/Supervisor.

Information and Training

Suitable information, instruction and training will be provided to young workers to ensure their health and safety. Training needs will be identified and reviewed by a competent person. The effectiveness of any training provided will be monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure its continued effectiveness.

Those persons responsible for completing the risk assessment will be as follows, the Young Workers Line Manager, the Health and Safety Officer, the Young Worker.

CONTROL OF VIBRATION PROCEDURE

Introduction

Hand–arm vibration means mechanical vibration which is transmitted into the hands and arms during a work activity

Hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) is a widespread industrial disease affecting tens of thousands of workers. The most widely known of these diseases is vibration induced white finger.

Where individuals regularly work for prolonged periods with tools and processes which produce vibration, there is a possibility of injury. Examples of common tools and processes likely to create hazardous vibration include pedestal grinders and hand-held portable grinders, chain saws, brush cutters, hand-held or hand-fed circular saws, mowers and strimmers.

Requirements

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 specifically concern the control of vibration at work. These regulations place the following duty on Wear Valley District Council:

- Assess the vibration risks to employees, including the likelihood of exposure above the daily exposure action value (EAV) or the daily exposure limit value (ELV).
- Provide health surveillance to those employees who continue to be regularly exposed above the action value.
- Where employees are exposed to levels of vibration above the ELV then immediate action must be taken to reduce their exposure.
- Provide information, instruction and training to employees.
- Consult with Employee representatives to discuss actions to control risks and provide health surveillance.
- Record risk assessments and control measures.
- Keep health records of employees under health surveillance.
- Review and update risk assessment at regular intervals.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment involves;

- Making a list of equipment that may cause vibration and record what it is used for and, the make, model and manufacturer of the tool.
- Make a list of employees who use vibrating equipment, what tasks they undertake and specifically what equipment they use.
- Note as accurately as possible how long employees' hands are actually in contact with the equipment while it is vibrating – in some cases this 'trigger time' may only be a few minutes in several hours of work.
- Ask employees which equipment seems to have high vibration and about any other problems they may have in using it, eg its weight, awkward postures needed to use the tool, difficulty in holding and operating it etc.
- Record the relevant information collected and the assessment of who is likely to be at risk.

It will be the responsibility of Managers to collect this information and provide it to the Health and Safety Officer.

The Health and Safety Officer will then analyse this information in conjunction with Managers and employee representatives. Following this basic risk assessment a more detailed assessment may be required. This will involve specialist measurement of the levels of vibration from tools identified as being high risk or high usage. All tools which will result in employees exceeding the EAV or ELV will either be replaced or systems of work will be designed to reduce exposure to vibration.

Control Measures

Control measures for the control of vibration will focus on the following areas;

- The implementation of alternative work methods, and work schedules which reduces employees exposure to vibration.
- Managers will plan work to avoid individuals being exposed to vibration for long, continuous periods (several shorter periods are preferable).
- Equipment selection will ensure that equipment selected or allocated for tasks is suitable and can do the work efficiently. Equipment that is unsuitable, too small or not powerful enough is likely to take much longer to complete the task and expose employees to vibration for longer than is necessary, such equipment will be avoided.
- PPE will be provided which ensures that employees are kept warm and dry whilst using vibrating tools. This will encourage good blood circulation which helps to protect against vibration white finger. Gloves are not relied upon to protect from vibration – they are provided to keep the hands warm and dry.
- Health surveillance, in-line with regulatory requirements, will occur for all staff who are identified as being at risk from exposure above the (EAV).

- The purpose of health surveillance is to:
 - Identify anyone exposed or about to be exposed to hand-arm vibration who may be at particular risk, for example people with blood circulatory diseases such as Raynaud's Disease;
 - Identify any vibration-related disease at an early stage in employees regularly exposed to handarm vibration;
 - Help to prevent disease progression and eventual disability;
 - Help people to stay in work;
 - Check the effectiveness of vibration control measures.
- Information, instruction and training will be provided to employees who may be exposed to vibration on the following areas;
 - The health effects of hand-arm vibration;
 - Sources of hand-arm vibration;
 - Whether they are at risk, and if so whether the risk is high (above the ELV), medium (above the EAV) or low;
 - The risk factors (e.g. the levels of vibration, daily exposure duration, regularity of exposure over weeks, months and years);
 - How to recognise and report symptoms;
 - The need for health surveillance, how it can help them remain fit for work, how it will be provided, how to use the results and the confidentiality of the results;
 - Ways to minimise risk including:
 - Changes to working practices to reduce vibration exposure;
 - Correct selection, use and maintenance of equipment;
 - Correct techniques for equipment use, how to reduce grip force etc;
 - Maintenance of good blood circulation at work by keeping warm and massaging fingers and, if possible, cutting down on smoking.

Information and Training

Suitable information, instruction and training will be provided to workers exposed to vibration to ensure their health and safety. The effectiveness of any training provided will be monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure its continued effectiveness.

Action plan

Procedure	Action	Timescale to complete
Accident Incident procedure	The procedure will instigate the new accident incident form immediately. Training in accident incident investigation	Training will commence approximately 3-6 months following procedure approval
Bomb procedure	Formalises the corporate procedures in place for bomb security. Training has already occurred.	Refresher training in bomb awareness will be offered in January 2008.
Consultation with employees procedure	This is a corporate statement of how H&S consultation occurs	No further action required
Display Screen Equipment procedure	This is an update and therefore few alterations to the existing procedure are evident.	On-going DSE issues to be tackled as they are raised.
Health and Safety Panel terms of reference	These are terms of reference for the H&S panel	No further action required
Control of Substances Hazardous to health (COSHH) procedure	1) COSHH risk assessments 2) COSHH training	10 months from approval 12 months from approval
Corporate Fire procedure	This is a corporate statement through which individual building risk assessments, procedures and training is generated.	12 months from approval
First aid procedure	Few changes to existing procedure	No further action required
Homeworking procedure	Risk assesses individuals undertaking Homeworking activities	On-going issues to be tackled as they are raised.
Legionnaires procedure	No new requirements at this time. When the Legionnaires Officer takes over these duties alterations will be made accordingly.	TBC
Lone Working procedure	1) Risk assessment of Lone Working activities 2) Safe systems of work for lone workers 3) Training implications	12 months following approval of the procedure 6 months following completion of risk assessments To be identified following above two points

Procedure	Action	Timescale to complete
Manual Handling procedure	1) Risk assessments 2) Safe systems of work 3) Training	6 months following approval of the procedure. 6 months following completion of risk assessments. Has occurred in some areas – 24 month refresher training.
New and expectant mothers procedure	Risk assess the activities of new and expectant mothers.	On-going issues to be tackled as they are raised.
Noise procedure	1) Complete noise assessments in set areas 2) Assess the current PPE to ensure legal compliance 3) Provide information and training to relevant staff	24 months following approval of the procedure. 6 months following above. 6 months following above.
Occupational road risk procedure	Begin implementation of procedure	12 months following approval of H&S Manual
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) procedure	1) Complete risk assessments 2) Review Current PPE in use to ensure that it is suitable	18 months following approval of the procedure. 10 months following the above
Risk Assessment procedure	This is a corporate statement of how risk assessment occurs	No further action required
Safety signs and signals procedure	This is a corporate statement of the signage which must be purchased for safety related incidents	On-going issues to be tackled as they are raised.
Sharps and biological agents procedure	1) Complete Risk Assessments 2) Training in dealing with issues around sharps and biological agents	12 months following approval of the procedure. 6 months following completion of the above.
Contractors procedure	Contractors used by the authority must be on the approved contractors list	Immediate implementation
Working at Height procedure	1) Risk Assessments 2) Training	12 months following approval of the procedure. 6 months following completion of above.

Procedure	Action	Timescale to complete
Violence and aggression procedure	1) Risk Assessments 2) Training	12 months following approval of the procedure (also ongoing as issues arise). Already occurring through Andrew Hall
Young workers procedure	1) Risk Assessments	On-going issues to be tackled as they are raised.
Vibration at work procedure	1) Assessment of hand arm vibration in portable machinery, e.g. drills, grinders etc.	24 months following approval of procedure



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 – UPDATE REPORT

purpose of the report

1. To report on the Council's activities undertaken under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 over the period from April 2006 to April 2007.

background

2. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 requires that authorities who are entitled to undertake "directed surveillance" and the use of "covert human intelligence sources" (CHIS), have a formal policy for managing these activities.
3. The Council endorsed a policy and procedure for compliance with the RIPA legislation at its meeting held on 30th October 2002 (Minute No. 465 refers). A copy of the RIPA policy is available from the Corporate Development Unit.
4. The Council's RIPA policy requires that the RIPA Monitoring Officer present an annual report to the Policy and Strategic Development Committee summarising all surveillance activities undertaken by the Council. This report is designed to comply with that requirement.

surveillance activities undertaken since the previous report in April 2006 in accordance with RIPA policy

5. There have been three applications made for authority to undertake directed surveillance.
6. Details of the applications are held on file within the Corporate Development Unit.
7. No requests have been received for CHIS applications.

conclusion

8. The Council has undertaken activities under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 since agreeing its policy and procedures in 2002.
9. The arrangements for ensuring that the Council complies with the Act appear to be working well.
10. The RIPA Policy and Procedures are to be reviewed this year, as supported by the Committee.

RECOMMENDED

That the Committee note the activities undertaken by the Council in respect of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

background papers:

1. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 a full copy is available from the Corporate Development Unit.
2. Policy and Strategic Development Committee Report October 2002 – “RIPA Policy and Procedures” copies of this are available from the Corporate Development Unit.

Officer responsible for the report
John Docherty
Head of Management Support

Author of the report
Su Barker
Administrator

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

QUIRK REVIEW: MAKING ASSETS WORK

purpose

1. To summarise the findings in the Quirk report and present them to the Policy and Strategic Development Committee.

background

2. The Quirk Review is part of the Government's programme for empowering communities as set out in the 2006 White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*. The review sought to increase community asset management and ownership, taking into account the need to manage risks.
3. The report concludes that there are no substantive barriers to prevent councils transferring assets into community management or full ownership. The main obstacles are:
 - a lack of awareness of the existing powers to act and
 - the need for a change in culture that would enable every community having the opportunity to have a greater role in running services and owning assets.

barriers and benefits

4. The report sets out ten "foundational factors" which need to be factored in to overcoming barriers to greater transfer and management of assets:
 - i. community groups and social enterprises are extremely heterogeneous
 - ii. often these groups are very under-capitalised
 - iii. many of what the public consider to be public assets are not owned by local authorities
 - iv. community empowerment and asset management have historically not been a significant part of local government strategic community plans
 - v. where asset transfer and management has been used for community empowerment it has often not been part of an overall strategic approach
 - vi. many local authorities do not consider community ownership in the asset management plans

- vii. too often the relationships between councils and the community sector are short-term
 - viii. local authorities are now starting to adopt a convening role through local strategic partnerships and local area agreements
 - ix. there is currently a lot of change in the public sector asset base which creates both problems and opportunities
 - x. communities need “recipes” not “blueprints” to be able to find approach that works locally
5. Although the review looked specifically at barriers, what it found was that attitudes and issues had to be addressed, more than particular barriers.
6. Focusing on Wear Valley; implications, comments and benefits are detailed below:

Implications/comments	Benefits
Wear Valley will need to develop the Sustainable Communities Strategy to consider asset transfer then together with the LAA and other partners establish a protocol that will enable the assets within the area to be transferred to the Community via a structured process.	Wear Valley is currently in the process of transferring the Spectrum Leisure Centre over to a Community organisation called SLAM, therefore we are gaining experience of the process and resources required.
More strain on the authorities budget if we were to fund community groups	The community will have a greater say in the management of assets and focus on providing services that the community wants
Would lose a future capital resource if we transfer assets	Improved relationships with the community and partners
How would we ensure equality of access if a community group ran the centre?	Community groups will be eligible for funding which the council is not.
Would council tax rise to pay the subsidiaries for the community groups?	
Before the transfer of the asset money will need to spend on repairing them	
Jointly owned assets will require the use of more resources in order for a compromise to be made.	
If the community group re-tract the asset in three years, non budgeted funds will need to be found to transfer the asset back and under take repairs.	
Would the community groups take on the liability of the asset e.g. running costs?	
Would the asset be managed properly?	

7. The report reminds local authorities that under the Local Government Act 1972 and Circular 06/2003 (“the General Disposal consent”) they have the powers to transfer an asset to community management and ownership in any manner they wish, including at less than market value.

8. The report recommends that the hand of the community, in bidding for the management or ownership of a particular public asset, can be strengthened by recourse to a 'Community Call for Action' – which means that the matter would need to be referred to the local authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.

the report recommends the following:

- Though the report is focused on action by central government, there is clearly much that local authorities should be doing now to realise the community empowerment benefits demonstrated by the review.
- The main area for development is the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement to consider, across all partners, an area-wide strategy for the use of assets. The review recommends property reviews that focus either on a locality or a type of asset as a means to progress this.
- Local authorities are also in a position to put in place the review's recommendation about using the Community Call for Action to enable communities to identify community assets appropriate for community ownership or management.

conclusion

9. The report is that transferring public assets to communities not only leads to more responsive services, but can also create "more confident empowered communities with greater civic spirit".
10. One issue to be aware of is that many voluntary and community groups are not actively seeking responsibility for assets and all stakeholders must consider the long-term damage that can be done in neighbourhoods should asset transfer schemes fail.
11. The LSP may need to consider the review as it revises the Sustainable Community Strategy.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the recommendations detailed at paragraph 8 of this report be noted;
2. That Council policies on managing physical assets be reviewed to ensure consistency with the Council's strategic objectives and to raise awareness of existing powers and the opportunity available for transferring assets into community management.

Officer responsible

John Docherty
Chief Officer, Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the note

Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext 448



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27th JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Officer – Corporate Development **AUDIT COMMISSION – SEEING THE LIGHT (INNOVATION) –**

purpose

1. To submit for consideration the Audit Commission's report, *Seeing the light, Innovation in local public services*.

background

2. The Audit Commission's report is intended to encourage local authorities to consider how innovation can sustain performance improvement. By providing practical advice and support, based on authorities' own experiences of innovating, it seeks to foster the conditions where innovation can develop and be managed.

defining innovation

3. The meaning of innovation for the purpose of the report is as follows:
"The process by which organisations develop new products, services or ways of doing things."
4. Innovation means an approach to improvement with three defining features:
 - **Novelty** – innovation introduces something new to the organisation, marking a break from its established practice
 - **Influence on change** – innovation results in an identifiable step change in the behaviour of the organisation.
 - **The goal of improvement** – organisations innovate in order to deliver performance improvement or increased value for money.

innovation and risk

5. Risk is inherent in the innovation process because innovation requires authorities to embark on something new and untried. An innovation for improvement, for example, can fail to deliver its intended benefits.

encouraging innovation

6. The Audit Commission recognises the role that it can play in promoting innovation in local government.

7. Although innovation and CPA are not related according to a survey carried out by the Audit Commission, they seek to encourage innovation for the benefits it can bring.

where we can innovate

8. The report recognises that there a number of areas where a Council can innovate. They include the following:
 - **Service design or delivery innovation**– providing a new service to users, or delivering existing services in a new way.
 - **Process or managerial innovation**– changing the processes, managerial structure, or organisational structure of an authority’s back office or service delivery functions.
 - **Democratic innovation**– implementing new practices in the pursuit of renewed democratic engagement with citizens.
 - **Strategic innovation**– re-positioning the authority in line with new corporate objectives or new ‘customers’, including using alternative service delivery models.
9. Through their research, the Audit Commission identified **five drivers** of innovation. They are:
 - i. a focus on greater efficiency within the organisation;
 - ii. pressure from central government for performance improvement;
 - iii. local political pressure for change;
 - iv. the ‘bottom-up’ demands of local communities; and,
 - v. examples of successful innovations within other organisations.

benefits of innovation

10. Innovation offers potential benefits to local authorities in:
 - improving value for money;
 - achieving more effective service delivery; and
 - building stronger community engagement and representation.
11. The benefits from innovation and the potential for innovation depend on the organisational culture.

the importance of organisational culture

12. The report identified the following six factors within an organisation’s culture as **critical** to encouraging innovation:
 - i. The ambition of authorities.

- II. Openness to novelty.
- III. Organisational structure.
- IV. Empowering staff and partners.
- V. The space for creative thinking.
- VI. Using information effectively

barriers to implementing innovation

13. The report also identified barriers to innovation. They are:

- Failures in risk assessment and risk management
- Over-estimation of capacity
- Lack of effective leadership or strategic input
- Poor organisation and communication among senior officers
- Absence of or poor quality project management
- Inadequate reporting to members
- Failings in the use of external advice
- Poor management of contractual partnerships
- Poor procurement practice

conclusion

14. Annex F details the Audit Commission recommendations and the possible implications for Wear Valley with comments.

15. Wear Valley needs to identify how it can foster and manage innovations.

RECOMMENDED

- i) That the Committee note the report and;
- ii) Authorise the Chief Officer, Corporate Development to develop and implement management processes that will encourage and sustain innovation where possible.

Officer responsible for the note
John Docherty
Chief Officer, Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the note
Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext 448

Annex F

Recommendations from report	Implications/comments for Wear Valley
Identify areas where gaps between performance and aspiration are greatest as potential areas for innovation. These may be where performance is poor or aspiration high, or both	Continue with 6 monthly up-dates of BVPI's and conduct a gap analysis to identify where improvements can be made then set up Performance Improvement teams to progress and move forward.
Consider routinely the role that innovation has to play in service improvement, and be willing to countenance innovative approaches where incremental improvement may not deliver the results required.	Research innovation' s role and put on the Extended Management Team agenda to develop ideas on how to encourage staff in developing themselves and idea's throughout the authority. Set up working group to follow actions through.
Ensure they are in a position to assess and manage the potential costs and benefits of innovating, against the costs and benefits of other improvement strategies.	Conduct a departmental risk analysis with people from across all sections detailing staff, financial and resource implications.
Undertake an assessment of the risks of innovating before proceeding with innovation, bearing in mind that missing an opportunity is a business risk in itself	Conduct a departmental risk analysis with people from across all sections detailing staff, financial and resource implications.
Ensure that elected members, local communities and stakeholders (including delivery partners) are able to drive innovation by applying pressure to change, by contributing good ideas, and by participating in the innovation process itself.	Conduct focus groups/meeting involving members, community groups, stakeholders and partners expressing the importance of change and gaining ideas on how to move forward.
Encourage staff across all service and support areas to consider innovative ways to improve performance and, where appropriate, encourage innovation when commissioning services from providers in the private and voluntary sectors.	Put on agenda for EMT probing for ideas on how to encourage staff in developing themselves and idea's throughout the authority. Invite community groups and partners to share ideas.
Establish mechanisms for scanning for good ideas elsewhere and forums for creative discussions between staff, external stakeholders and users.	As above
Review organisational structures to ensure that departmental silos and hierarchies do not inhibit the generation or spread of innovative ideas.	Corporate Management Team to discuss.
Review their own organisational capacity to innovate and, in particular, the level of	As above

senior management and member commitment and expertise in change management and risk management.	
Involve users in the design and development stages of innovations, wherever possible.	Consult with customer panel and other community groups
Involve members in innovative projects at an early stage to ensure their support for the change associated with implementing innovation.	Hold briefing meeting for members and involve in meetings with staff
Evaluate the costs and benefits of innovating, considering not only whether it has led to performance improvement or increased value for money, but also whether there is learning, which is more widely transferable.	Once processes and mechanisms implemented conduct bi-monthly reviews with evaluations involving staff and members throughout every step.
Publicise the lessons learned from both successful and unsuccessful innovation within the authority.	Use WV Matters, Team talk and press released to publicise wins and failures and what we intend to do in the future showing accountability for our actions.
Work with local government bodies and central government to disseminate the lessons learned from innovative practice to help raise performance across the sector.	The Audit Commission will identify innovative practice as part of its audit and inspection work and proactively share this knowledge with other local authorities.



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27th JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Officer, Corporate Development.

PROCUREMENT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WEAR VALLEY AND TEESDALE DISTRICT COUNCILS.

purpose of the report

1. To present for approval a draft Procurement Service Level Agreement for shared procurement services between Wear Valley and Teesdale District Councils (attached in Annex G).

background

2. In 2005, both councils recognised the limited resources and expertise in the area of procurement to progress national procurement agendas and funding was secured from North East Centre of Excellence on a Corporate Procurement Pilot to appoint a project-based procurement officer to work jointly for both councils.
3. The Corporate Procurement Pilot across Wear Valley and Teesdale District Councils' was launched in October 2005 and was delivered over an 18 month period. This joint project concluded March 2007.
4. The post of Procurement Officer was mainstreamed at Wear Valley District Council at the beginning of April 2007.

proposal

5. With the recognition of the success achieved by the original procurement pilot, Teesdale District Council formally requested that Wear Valley District Council continue to provide the joint procurement arrangement.
6. As a result of this request, a draft Service Level Agreement for joint procurement working between Teesdale District Council and Wear Valley District Council was developed, as attached in Annex G.
7. The Procurement Service Level Agreement will be for a period of one year and will commence 1st April 2007 and conclude 31st March 2008.

8. Milestones and targets will be established and monitored through Procurement Steering Groups at both councils to support the action plans contained within the Joint Procurement Strategy.
9. Under this agreement Teesdale District Council have agreed to pay the sum of £7,500 per annum to Wear Valley District Council for the provision of a procurement service.

scope of service

10. The scope of service to be provided to Teesdale District Council by the Procurement Officer is set out in the table below:

Item No.	Scope of Services
1	Identify and encourage collaborative procurement between WVDC and TDC wherever appropriate
2	Develop a strategic and co-ordinated approach to Procurement across both authorities
3	Promote value for money through partnership and collaborative arrangements wherever possible
4	Lead on procurement and contract establishment for appropriate commodities or services
5	Develop procurement skills and provide support to all officers involved in procurement across WVDC and TDC
6	Challenge current procurement practices and promote innovative approaches to service delivery
7	Represent WVDC and TDC relating to procurement at sub-regional, regional and national forums
8	Identify and encourage efficiency study opportunities across both Councils

legal implications

11. The legal department at Wear Valley District Council has reviewed and verified the content of the Procurement Service Level Agreement.

RECOMMENDED

That the Policy the Procurement Service Level Agreement between Wear Valley and Teesdale District Councils for the period of one year, as detailed in the report be approved.

Officer responsible for the report

John Docherty
Chief Officer, Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the report

Julie Warnett
Project Officer – Procurement
Ext 204

Procurement Service Level Agreement

between

Wear Valley District Council

and

Teesdale District Council

We the undersigned hereby agree in accordance with the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 and subject to the terms and conditions contained in this agreement, a Service Level Agreement SLA between the aforementioned Parties for the provision of Strategic Procurement Management of the Councils' Procurement function.

The Parties agree that the Corporate Procurement Officer at Wear Valley District Council will also operate as Corporate Procurement Officer at Teesdale District Council for the mutual benefit of both Parties.

Signed on behalf of Wear Valley District Council:

.....
John Docherty - Chief Officer, Corporate Development



Signed on behalf of Teesdale District Council:

.....
Joanne Kellett - Head of Financial Services



Date:



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- 3. Scope of Services to be provided**
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- 10. Concern resolution**
- 11. Termination of this Agreement**
- 12. Freedom Of Information Act 2000**
- 13. Entire Agreement and Variations**

Purpose, Principles and Objectives

- 1.1. The purpose of this Service Level Agreement (SLA) is to agree to the Corporate Procurement Officer at Wear Valley District Council (WVDC) to also operate as Corporate Procurement Officer for Teesdale District Council (TDC) in line with the Scope of Services set out in Clause 3 below.
- 1.2. Both Parties recognise each others needs, constraints, limitations, capabilities, roles and responsibilities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes and will work to develop openness and trust in a transparent and data sharing environment.
- 1.3. It is intended that the SLA will enable both Parties to mutually benefit as a result of the identification and implementation of strategic and collaborative procurement arrangements and synergy benefits in support of the Joint Procurement Strategy.

2. Commencement and duration of the Service Level Agreement

- 2.1. The commencement date for the SLA is 1st April 2007 and the duration will be for an initial 1 year period and will expire on 31st March 2008.
- 2.2. The SLA will be subject to a formal annual review by the Parties with a view to adopting any required modifications including an option to extend the duration of the SLA if mutually agreed.

3. Scope of Services to be provided

- 3.1. The Scope of Services to be provided by the Corporate Procurement Officer is as per items 1 to 8 in the table below set out in Clause 3.2.1
- 3.2. The Scope of Services to be provided can be modified to support business needs or other opportunities by mutual agreement between both Parties.

3.2.1

Item No.	Scope of Services
1	Identify and encourage collaborative procurement between WVDC and TDC wherever appropriate
2	Develop a strategic and co-ordinated approach to Procurement across both authorities
3	Promote value for money through partnership and collaborative arrangements wherever possible

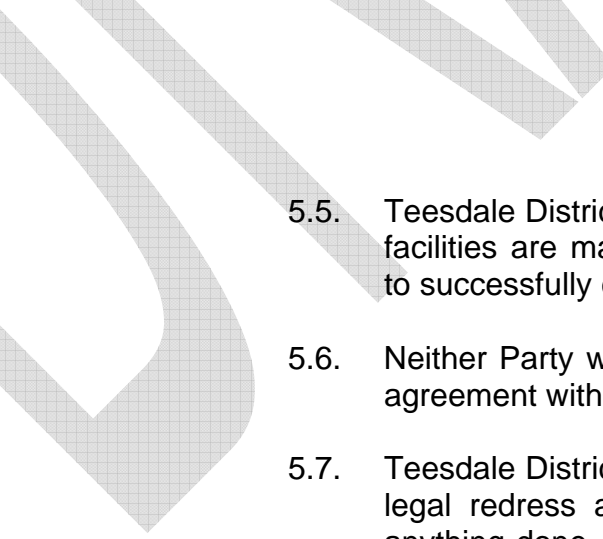
4	Lead on procurement and contract establishment for appropriate commodities or services
5	Develop procurement skills and provide support to all officers involved in procurement across WVDC and TDC
6	Challenge current procurement practices and promote innovative approaches to service delivery
7	Represent WVDC and TDC relating to procurement at sub-regional, regional and national forums
8	Identify and encourage efficiency study opportunities across both Councils

4. Location of Services to be provided

- 4.1. The Corporate Procurement Officer will be based at Wear Valley District Council and will be on site one day a week at Teesdale District Council. However, the Parties agree and accept that flexibility of location could be required to perform the Scope of Services.
- 4.2. Both Parties also agree and accept that staff from both authorities may be required to occasionally visit each other to carry out joint procurement activities and both authority resources and facilities will be used equitably during the SLA.

5. Obligations of the Parties

- 5.1. Wear Valley District Council undertakes to provide advice and strategic procurement leadership within the Scope of the Services set out in Clause 3 for Teesdale District Council by respecting and working within the relevant Corporate Policies and Financial Regulations of each authority.
- 5.2. Wear Valley District Council will appoint a person to represent TDC in all matters relating to this agreement whose identity will be notified to Teesdale District Council prior to the commencement date. Any changes to the appointment will be notified to Teesdale District Council as appropriate thereafter.
- 5.3. Wear Valley District Council will undertake to apply appropriate corporate level commitment and resources to procurement activities and fully support the successful achievement of the SLA Purpose and Principles and Objectives as set out in Clause 1 and the Scope of Services as set out in Clause 3.
- 5.4. Teesdale District Council officers involved in procurement activities will respect all Joint Procurement Policies.

- 
- 5.5. Teesdale District Council will ensure that appropriate resources and facilities are made available to the Corporate Procurement Officer to successfully carry out the Scope of Services.
 - 5.6. Neither Party will assign any rights duties or obligations under this agreement without the prior written consent of the other Party.
 - 5.7. Teesdale District Council agrees not to claim damages or any other legal redress against Wear Valley District Council in respect of anything done, or omitted to be done, in good faith by Wear Valley District Council.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1. Both Parties, acknowledge that the staff involved in procurement activities may gain knowledge of or have access to confidential or commercially sensitive information related to the other Party or their activities, agree not to use such information to the detriment of the other Party.
- 6.2. Both Parties agree that they will not disclose or publicise confidential or commercially sensitive information to any third party without the prior written consent unless statutorily required to do so.

7. Reporting Procedures

- 7.1. The Corporate Procurement Officer will report directly to WVDC Chief Officer, Corporate Development and also the Head of Financial Services at TDC.

8. Review Process

- 8.1. The Parties will review performance for the provided services through the Joint Procurement Board. These meetings will be scheduled on a three monthly cycle. They will review the performance of the SLA, discuss and mutually agree any required changes or improvements to the SLA.
- 8.2. Specific performance objectives and targets will be derived from the action plan within the Joint Procurement Strategy.
- 8.3. The Corporate Procurement Officer will ensure that both parties will monitor procurement activities through agreed Procurement Performance Indicators separately on a 6 monthly basis. These Performances Indicators will be available to neighbouring authorities for benchmarking purposes.
- 8.4. The parties will monitor and review individual procurement related activities through separate Procurement Boards held on an eight weekly cycle.

9. Payments

- 9.1. Under this agreement Teesdale District Council will pay the sum of £7,500 per annum to Wear Valley District Council for the Scope of Services to be provided as set out in Clause 3 above.
- 9.2. Any changes to the services and the payments mutually agreed between the Parties at the formal annual review will be negotiated prior to 31st March each year with the revised price effective from 1st April in the following financial year.
- 9.3. Payment will be made to Wear Valley District Council in advance on receipt of a valid invoice presented to Teesdale District Council.
- 9.4. Any future investment required for common systems or processes to support procurement, will be reviewed and mutually agreed by the Parties to ensure the funding and cost sharing is paid for on an equitable basis.

10. Concern or dispute resolution

- 10.1. Both Parties are committed to act in good faith and resolve any concerns and disputes jointly and confidentially based on a common understanding of the facts surrounding the issues.
- 10.2. In the eventuality of a concern or dispute that cannot be resolved by the Corporate Procurement Officer, a review meeting with the Reporting Directors will be held in order to resolve the issues to the satisfaction of both parties.
- 10.3. In the eventuality of a concern or dispute that cannot be resolved by the Reporting Directors then the Chief Executive / Executive Directors of each authority will be requested to hold a review in order to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of both Parties.

11. Termination of this Agreement and concern resolution

- 11.1. The SLA will terminate on the expiry date set out in Clause 2 or on such other date as agreed mutually between the Parties in the formal annual review.
- 11.2. Any payments due will be made up to the date of termination of the SLA.


12. Freedom Of Information Act 2000

- 12.1. The Parties acknowledge that under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that the Parties may be required to disclose information about this agreement or issues related to it should there be requests for information as defined in the Act.



13. Entire Agreement and Variations

- 13.1. This agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties and any variations may only be made in writing between the Parties.



Schedule 1 Definitions

SLA: Service Level Agreement

Parties: Wear Valley District Council and Teesdale District Council

Party: Wear Valley District Council or Teesdale District Council

WVDC: Wear Valley District Council

TDC: Teesdale District Council



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

27th JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Officer, Corporate Development Unit
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING POLICY

purpose of the report

1. To submit for approval a revised policy for Corporate Communications and Branding guidelines.

introduction:

2. The purpose of this document (attached at Annex H) is to provide direction and guidance for the Council's marketing and communications section.
3. The strategy is in 7 distinct parts:
 - a. internal and external communications,
 - b. corporate branding guidelines,
 - c. managing the media,
 - d. graphic design,
 - e. printing,
 - f. electronic media, and
 - g. related legislation.

background:

4. The Council's Corporate Communications Strategy was first published in 2005 and this version is a revision of the original, approved strategy.
5. The strategy has been revised to more effectively address promoting a positive image of the council with the public and other stakeholders and through that, enhance the Council's reputation.
6. If approved, the strategy will be published on the Council's website, intranet and hard copies will be given to Directors and Senior Managers.

conclusion:

7. Implementing the policy will ensure the Council's departments have clear communications and corporate branding policy to adhere too.

RECOMMENDED

That the Corporate Communications and Branding policy detailed in the report at Annex H be approved.

Officer responsible for the report
John Docherty
Chief Officer of Corporate Development

Author of the report
Joanna Defty
Marketing & Communications Mgr

Introduction

1.1 About this strategy

The purpose of this document is to provide direction and guidance for the Council's marketing and communications over the next three years.

This Communications Strategy lies at the heart of our vision for the future which is *"to become the best district council in England"* and underpins the delivery of the Council's six corporate objectives, which are:

- Population
- Economy
- Environment
- Crime
- Health
- Lifelong learning

1.2 Structure of this strategy

The Corporate Communications Strategy, includes 6 additional sections which are:

- Part 2 – Corporate branding guidelines
- Part 3 – Managing the media
- Part 4 – Graphic design
- Part 5 – Printing
- Part 6 – Electronic media
- Part 7 – Legislation

The 6 sections give guidance on the marketing and communication areas that are mentioned in the strategy.

1.3 Communications aim and intent

Our communications aim is to:

"Create a framework to co-ordinate communication between the council, its citizens, communities, customers and other stakeholders."

Statement of Intent

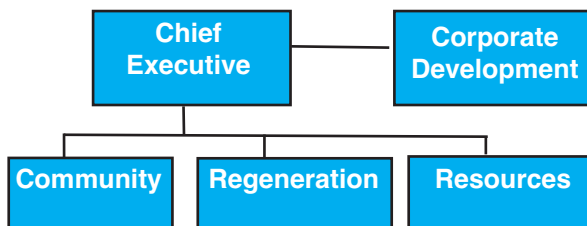
To support our communication aim:-

- Ensure internal and external communications are focused on as a corporate priority;
- Maintain effective communication resources, structures and systems, aimed at improving public awareness of the Council's corporate objectives, policies and activities;
- Maintain a framework guiding our communications activities and supporting our corporate objectives. This will ensure that the right people get the right information at the right time;
- Ensure our corporate objectives, and the measures taken to pursue them, are communicated effectively to key audiences;
- Ensure we are clear and focused on what we are seeking to achieve in communications at corporate and service levels;
- Offer clear guidance on communication to all employees, members and our partners;
- Help to fulfill our role as Community Leader by working closer to the citizens of Wear Valley;
- Ensure all information and publicity is up to date, accurate, relevant and regularly reviewed;
- We will provide information to all people of the district, ensuring it is widely publicised and appropriately placed, and;
- Continue to identify areas where regular or occasional communication is needed.

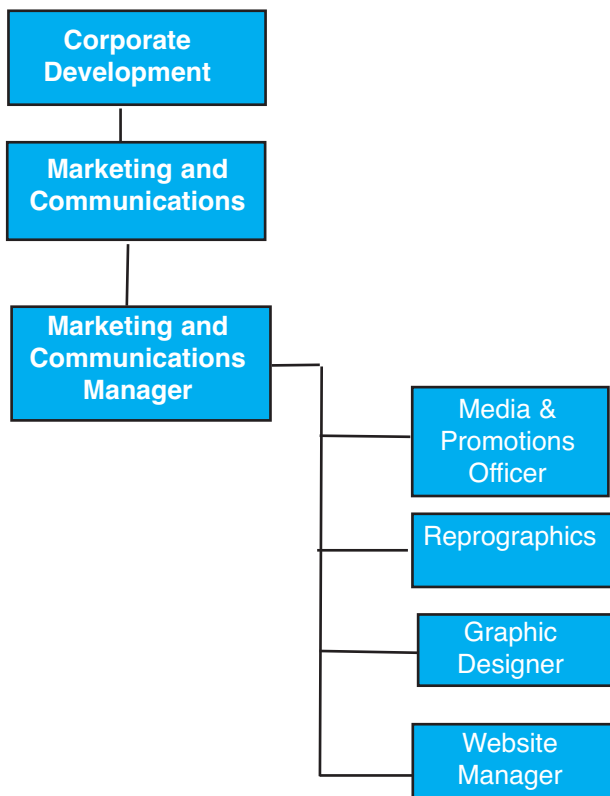
1.4 Responsibility for communications

The Marketing and Communications Section within the Corporate Development Unit (see structure below) will drive the day-to-day implementation of this strategy.

Council Structure:



Marketing and Communications Section:



The Marketing and Communications Section will provide strategic guidance on the following areas:

- corporate branding guidelines
- publications,
- managing press and media relations,
- graphic design and print services,
- electronic media, and
- related legislation

However, members and senior managers have a leading role in communicating Council policies and decisions, and all managers, supervisors and staff have a key role to play, both in ensuring effective communications within the organisation and in communicating effectively with our service users.

The Council does not operate in isolation – it has a complex network of relationships with a wide variety of organisations, from Durham County Council and Central Government to our local partners and stakeholders. All of these relationships have particular communication requirements. Many have their own strategies and plans. This Communications Strategy needs to be integrated with these other strategic plans and programmes.

Internal Communications

1.5 Internal communications

Good communications are essential to cascade decisions on policy and practice through the organisation, from the Council, Executive/ Corporate Management Teams, through all tiers of management, to each member of staff.

Internal communication objectives

- We will secure a consistent flow of communication so that all employees and members feel informed;
- We will ensure that a corporate identity and style is consistent across the organisation;
- We will inform employees, elected members and members of the LSP of important changes, achievements and developments; and
- We will seek to continually improve the council's communications structures and systems.

Methods of internal communication

The Council effectively communicate messages to staff via,

Face-to-face

These include;

- Staff briefings - Bi-annual briefings by the Chief Executive and other directors to make staff aware of Council issues.
- Team meetings - every member of staff attends a team meeting at least once a month.
- Interview with the Chief Executive - Staff are invited to ask the Chief Executive a question on a bi-annual basis. Staff who put forward a question are invited to ask the question face-to-face and will receive an answer to their question. The questions and answers are feedback to all staff in Teamtalk.

Electronic

These include;

- All new or updated policies are sent to all staff via email and saved on a policy database.
- All staff with a computer has access to a public network. This allows staff to have shared access to corporate documents.
- Regular news updates are sent to staff via email and saved on an information / corporate database.
- All press releases are sent to staff and members via email and saved on a press release database.

Print - based materials

These include;

- Teamtalk is the internal newsletter distributed to all staff with payslips on a quarterly basis. It is a 12 page, printed document that updates staff on Council performance, staff news and corporate issues.
- Corporate Notice Boards – Staff news, corporate objectives, Unison news are all permanent features on corporate notice boards, which are located on every floor of the Civic centre.

The effectiveness of each form of communication will depend on the extent to which the method(s) is most appropriate for the target audience.

Medium term objectives

- Evaluate the existing methods of internal communications.
- Encourage all staff to get actively involved in decision making on internal communications issues rather than leaving decisions to Senior Managers.
- Electronic Access – Only two thirds of Council staff have access to a computer. It is hoped that within the next year all staff will have access to a communal computer or alternatively, digital access to Council information. This will greatly contribute to the two-way communications process of the council.
- Sustain the momentum of Team Talk's success. Employee ownership will be encouraged by inviting all employees to contribute formal and informal news to the internal newsletter.
- In addition to Team Talk, introduce a 1-2 page monthly news bulletin distributed with pay slips or published on the information database. This will allow the Council to update staff on issues on a regular basis.
- An annual staff communications survey will be sent to all staff. The survey will highlight issues and ask for suggestions and ideas for improvement.

External Communications

1.6 External communications

Although customers may not use all the services available to them, we have a duty to keep them informed about those services and how well each one is performing.

The public is not an homogenous audience. The reality is that the Council's audiences are made up of a whole range of specific groups whose interests and knowledge and expectations of the Council will vary tremendously.

We have to consider that our audience includes hard to reach groups; rural communities, Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, the travelling community, young people and many more.

External communications objectives

- Presenting a beneficial image of Wear Valley District Council at a local, regional and national level and increase awareness of the Council's aims and objectives, services and standards,
- Ensuring that all information is clear consistent and in plain English,
- Continuing to establish and build relationships with the citizens of Wear Valley and communicate effectively in a manner that encourages participation and feedback with service users, partners and the business community, public and voluntary sectors,
- Actively monitor the effectiveness of our communications strategy,
- Improve communications and access to information with 'hard to reach' groups, and
- Increase positive perceptions of the Council through communications.

Methods of external communication

The Council effectively communicate messages to residents via;

Media

Media is defined as any form of external agency that broadcasts or publishes information for public consumption. It includes mainly regional press (The Northern Echo, Wear Valley Mercury, The Journal, Wear Valley Advertiser) and regional broadcasters (BBC Radio Newcastle, Sun FM, Metro FM, Durham FM, BBC Look North, Tyne Tees). Under certain circumstances the national local government press and national press are circulated media releases.

Media relations play a fundamental part in delivering this communications strategy. Press releases and media relations are vitally important to Wear Valley District Council as it is through the drip feed of positive messages in the media that the residents of Wear Valley hear about the services of the Council. There is a Media protocol for such requests (see section 3).

Publications and print

To ensure consistency and provide quality assurance all publications and literature are referred to the Marketing & Communications section for design approval. The Graphic Designer will develop all publications for each department on behalf of the Council. There is a Graphic Design and print protocol for such requests (see section 4 and 5).

The Marketing and Communications section will work alongside departments to ensure that schedules, deadlines and desired outcomes are achieved.

Publications and the availability of them must comply with the requirements of The Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and the Corporate Governance requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.

All corporate publications should include the Council's vision and corporate objectives and should be available to reproduce in formats including braille, large print, audiotape, CD-ROM and other languages (Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Polish, Urdu and Welsh). All other literature including leaflets, posters and newsletters should be available to reproduce in these other formats upon request.

Electronic Media

For the purposes of this strategy e-based external communications include any communications and information circulated, or available in electronic formats.

The Council views the Internet as crucial to both internal and external communication and the website is used as a one-stop shop for customers and employees to access information.

The website contains information and contact details for all departments, latest news and information, links to other partners, online consultation with residents through our 'Forums' facility and all the Council's latest press releases. The Council is supportive of partnership working and wherever possible, actively displays information provided by our partners onto the site.

It is important that the mandatory e-government protocols as identified in the E-Government Priority Outcomes document are taken into account. This includes providing facilities to our citizens for them to participate in consultations electronically via forms on the website, or by an email address included on the consultation documents. In addition, the Laws Website Usability Guidelines will have other implications for electronic communications across the Authority.

Elected Members

Councillors have a crucial role in ensuring that local democracy works and is believed in by residents. Individual Councillors are the 'bridge' between a community and its Council – the community's advocate in the Council. Tools are provided to enable Councillors to develop skills that enable them to:

- Communicate
- Facilitate
- Empower
- Support
- Inform

Councillors inform residents about important local issues or Council policies and consult with them in this respect. They will develop relationships to ensure they learn about local issues and problems when they first arise.

An important role of Councillors is to keep in touch with their communities.

Circumstances will be varied and Councillors will make their own decisions about how to conduct their duties while remaining easily accessible to their residents.

All Members will find different ways of informing people about their work and enable residents to bring their concerns. Details of how to contact local Councillors is communicated via the Council's community newspaper but is also available on the Council's website or by contacting the Civic Centre in Crook.

Councillors will take time to keep in touch with local issues and to involve their community in matters affecting their Wards and across the district. They will make themselves available to people who want to contact them and work to solve the problems that arise.

Medium term objectives

Website objectives:

- The plan over the next 3 years is to implement the Content Management System (CMS), allowing each department more flexibility and control over the content of the Council's website. It is important that the website is kept up-to-date and accurate. The CMS system will allow all departments to manage and update their own content, thus allowing the Council, our partners and members of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to communicate more effectively to citizens and members of staff.
- Increase the number of photographs on the website.
- Review the layout and navigational aspects of the website.

Publications (posters & leaflets) objectives:

- Review the design and feature articles in Wear Valley Matters using the feedback from a survey sent to all residents in Wear Valley Matters.

- Encourage staff to send all publications and literature to the Marketing & Communications section for design approval to secure the corporate style and identity of the Council. The Graphic Designer will develop all publications for each department on behalf of the Council.

Media objectives:

- Significantly increase the number of media releases – the Council's new target is five press releases per week.
- The Media and Promotions Officer will monitor the effectiveness of our press coverage and areas identified as negative publicity will be responded to in an effort to develop a positive image.
- Increase willingness of members and officers to participate in media issues.
- Improve our relationship with our media contacts.
- Circulate cuttings on hardcopy to members and officers.

Corporate Branding Guidelines

2.1 Introduction

These guidelines aim to assist and help ensure that all corporate branding is consistent across the Council.

To create a distinct and memorable identity, we will communicate our brand through the consistent use of our crest, corporate colours and typeface.

The identity of Wear Valley District Council is a valuable asset and all staff, elected members and partners have a responsibility and duty to protect that value by managing its use.

These guidelines provide direction on usage and the elements necessary for developing and maintaining the Council's corporate identity. All corporate publicity material for the Council will, as a matter of policy adhere to these guidelines.

Wear Valley District Council works with a large number of associated organisations, many who already have their own corporate identities and house styles. It is not the intention that the Wear Valley District Council style contained within this guide should supersede, replace or clash with these styles – its aim is to support these. In these instances it should act as a technical guide for crest pantone's, typeface's, quality of materials and press release protocol.

Additional advice and help with specific publicity issues not covered within this guide is available and logos can be supplied upon request from the Marketing and Communications Manager or Graphic Designer at Wear Valley District Council.

2.2 Crest style

The Wear Valley District Council crest is the most important visual device through which the Authority is identified.

The following guidelines provide instructions to its appearance and use, as well as additional guidelines to strengthen Wear Valley District Council's image in a consistent and effective way (see below).

The resolution of the raster version crest will vary dependent on its usage however, it is preferable that the crest is at least the size it is going to be used and at least 300dpi (dots per square inch) for print.

However, there are various versions of the Wear Valley District Council crest.

Printing processes, coloured backgrounds and the size of the crest to be used will dictate which one is the most suitable. The crests available and the likely reasons for their use are as follows:

Full colour raster versions

There are 3 TIFF versions in small, medium and large. These are suitable for use in CMYK full colour process publications on a white background. A JPEG format of this version of the crest is also available.

There are 3 EPS versions in small, medium and large. These are suitable for use in CMYK full colour process publications and are 'cut-out' which are suitable for coloured backgrounds.

Where wording of the crest is likely to 'clash' with the coloured background or have insufficient contrast there is an EPS 'cut-out' crest with white writing should be used.

Vector versions of the crest

There is a 2-colour pantone vector version of the crest created in Macromedia Freehand, which is the most suitable crest to use when the crest needs to be enlarged to a very large size (i.e. on a flag) because it retains its sharpness.

It can also be used when the two corporate pantone colours only are used in a publication.

Grey scale version of the crest

This version of the crest is to be used on all black and white printed material that allows the use of

tints of black or can be printed in a single colour that allows tints.

Outline version of the crest

This is only to be used in circumstances when the greyscale can't be used in black and white or single colour due to a limitation of the printing process involved (i.e. screen printing).

Landscape version of the crest

This is only to be used on promotional material when it is used alongside partnering logos within a horizontal strip or the position of best fit. This is because the standard portrait crest and the 'Wear Valley District Council' lettering can appear too small when sat alongside other logos. There is also a white lettering EPS 'cut-out' to be used as explained above.

Minimum size of the crest

The Wear Valley District Council corporate crest should be kept in the same proportions as the originals supplied by the Marketing and Communications Section.

There is no maximum size for crests, but each of them has a minimum size.

Please ensure the correct crest version is selected for your purposes. It should always be displayed in its specified colour and under no circumstances should the crest be altered or distorted in any way.

Portrait version of the crest

The portrait version of the Wear Valley District Council corporate crest should not be sized below 22mm in height. This is the minimum recommended size for print on all materials.

This applies for full colour, greyscale and outline versions of the crest.

Landscape version of the crest

The landscape version of the Wear Valley District Council corporate crest should not be below 13mm in height. This is the minimum recommended size for print on all materials.

This applies for full colour, greyscale and outline versions of the crest.

For all versions of the crest contact the Marketing and Communications Section.

Protection areas

To maintain maximum impact and clarity of the crest, a protection area must be observed. The role of the protection area is to maintain the crest's visibility when using other graphic elements near the crest. Graphic elements, including other crests and typography, must not break into this protection area.

The crest should be used in proportion and a minimum sized crest should have a minimum protection area of no less than 5mm for both portrait and landscape crests or less than half the width of the crest for larger portrait sizes and no less than a quarter the width of the landscape crest.

It is important that we do not:

- alter the crest
- distort the crest
- use the crest as part of a heading or within text
- use the crest on a complicated background
- intrude into the protection area
- reproduce the crest in anything other than the approved colours
- alter the font
- reverse the crest
- reproduce the crest in a shade/tint of black
- reproduce the crest in a shade/tint of the core colour

Always re-size in proportion and ensure the crest can be clearly seen.

2.3 Associated Wear Valley District Council logos and graphics

Wear Valley District Council and its associated departments work on a range of projects to deliver key aims and objectives for individual projects. The Marketing and Communications Section is required to develop a number of corporate identities and house styles for these projects.

The guidelines provided within this manual should also be followed for the usage of these logos and/or graphics to ensure that their appearance and use, as well as additional guidelines to strengthen Wear Valley District Council's image in a consistent and effective way are maintained.

The resolution for all logos and graphics will vary dependent on its usage however, it is preferable that the crest is at least the size it is going to be used and at least 300dpi (dots per square inch) for print.

The following logos and/or graphics may be provided in JPEG, TIFF or EPS formats upon request from the Marketing and Communications Manager or the Graphic Designer.

Logos

- Market Towns Initiative (MTI)
- Pride Campaign
- Wear Valley Arts
- No. 75
- Wear Fit
- Kick
- Sports Action Zone

If there are additional logos that you may require and are not listed above, please contact the Marketing and Communications Section.

2.4 Images

Imaginative use of images is very important. Photographs, illustrations and graphics (for example, pie charts, diagrams and cut-away drawings) all communicate more effectively than words alone. For these reasons, we should aim to use the best and most effective imagery possible. Supporting graphics help to add impact. They can be used to enhance and enliven the identity across various applications.

Digital photography

Care must be taken when using digital images. Resolutions need to be preferably 300dpi (dots per square inch) and in JPEG or TIFF format. The Marketing and Communications Section have a digital camera and is compatible to take hi-resolution digital photographs. The camera is available for use by all members of staff upon request.

Graphics

Supporting graphics help to add impact. They can be used to enhance and enliven the identity across various applications.

They can be adapted to various formats and incorporate the core and supporting colours.

Supporting graphics can only be used on Wear Valley District Council corporate literature and materials. They are not a replacement for the Wear Valley District Council corporate crest and should not be used on their own.

No other text or image should be applied to these graphics. The original graphic must always be used and can be obtained from the Marketing and Communications Manager or the Graphic Designer upon request. The following graphics have been designed:

- Green Box Character
- Wheeled Bins Character
- Pride Campaign
- Green Waste Character
- Map(s) of Wear Valley District

It is important that we do not:

- Use the supporting graphic on its own without the crest.
- Distort the supporting graphic. For usage on corporate clothing, vehicles or stationery may vary.



2.6 Vertical and horizontal branding strips

On some publications, a vertical or horizontal branding strip is required to separate corporate logos from the main body design. This strengthens the impact of the message but still fits into the corporate style of the Council. The following branding strips have been applied to various publications e.g. public notices.

2.7 Straplines

All corporate publications will include the Council's vision, which is...

'to become the best district Council in England.'

This vision will also be included (where applicable) on newsletters, corporate documents, press releases, stationery (e.g. letter headed paper, compliments slips) and on the Council's website.

The Council has also developed the following statements to be used where appropriate. If in doubt, please seek advice from the Marketing and Communications Manager or the Graphic Designer.

Local People, Delivering Local Services, to Local People.

2.8 Corporate typeface's

Corporate typeface's are essential in strengthening a distinctive identity. A strong typographic style helps to communicate clearly and effectively.

The corporate typeface's are specified on the next page. These are our preferred typeface's for all corporate literature and materials including the Wear Valley District Council corporate crest. These should not be changed in any way.

2.9 Corporate crest typeface

The Marketing and Communications Section will be able to supply various formats of the corporate Wear Valley District Council crest. If for whatever reason, the wording of the corporate crest should be re-created and at the permission of the Marketing and Communications Manager or the Graphic Designer, the following will apply.

Wording:	Wear Valley District Council
Fonts to be used:	Goudy, Garamond
1st Line:	‘WEAR’ should all be written in uppercase. Horizontal scale of 78% and letter space of 48.
2nd Line:	‘VALLEY’ should all be written in uppercase. Horizontal scale of 78% and letter space of 0.
3rd Line:	‘DISTRICT COUNCIL’ should all be written in uppercase. Same width as the word ‘VALLEY’ but with no horizontal scale. Letter space should be 40 between letters and 90 between words.

2.10 Corporate fonts in all publications

All corporate literature is designed in-house (corporate documents, posters, flyers, manuals, leaflets and stationery) will use the following font families for main body text.

- **Helvetica family**
- **Arial family**

The use of a secondary typeface may help flexibility and creativity whilst retaining a consistent ‘corporate look’ and is useful for headings. All chosen point sizes and fonts used throughout the document should be consistent.

2.11 Font sizes in all publications

The following font sizes should be used on all corporate literature.

Main body text: The preferred font size is between 10 and 12 point and the minimum font size should be no less than 9 point. 7 point can only be used for small print and/or disclaimers.

It is important that we do not:

- distort the type too much
- use too many fonts in one design (generally no more than three at most)
- use upper case type in main copy or headings which are longer than three or four words
- underline for emphasis
- mix too many different colours within the text
- use drop shadows
- use outline type

2.12 Corporate colours

The Wear Valley District Council identity uses the corporate colours as specified below. These colours help identity and reinforce the Council’s identity.

It is essential that the core colours are correctly specified. This is to ensure that consistency of colour is achieved across all media.

Wear Valley District Council ‘Blue’
Match to Pantone® 7462
Process: 100C, 50M, 0Y, 10K

Wear Valley District Council ‘Bronze’
Match to Pantone® 7526
Process: 29C 83M 100Y 28K

The process colour specification is an indication only. The final colours must match the Pantone® references specified above. It may be necessary to adjust this on various printing materials to achieve an accurate match. Pantone® is Pantone Inc’s check-standard trademark for colour reproduction and colour reproduction materials.

2.13 Supporting colours

When used creatively, colour can go beyond visual appeal. It can help to deliver a message, provide emphasis or generate an appropriate look and feel. With this in mind, we have selected some suggested colours, which can be used to support the Wear Valley District Council core colours.

Other colours may be used but care must be taken to ensure that they complement the Wear Valley District Council Blue and Bronze (as stated in section 2.12 on the previous page).

2.14 Corporate clothing

Certain sections and areas within the Council are required to wear uniforms, e.g. maintenance services, street wardens, works and caretakers. The corporate colour for clothing is exactly or as close to the Wear Valley District Council 'Blue' as specified above. If in doubt or prior to ordering, please consult with the Marketing and Communications Manager.

2.15 Building and signage

The signage and corporate branding of all Council and public buildings will adhere to these guidelines. For advice and information on buildings and signage, please contact the Council's Facilities Manager or the Marketing and Communications Manager on (01388) 765 555.

2.16 Wear Valley District Council vehicles

All of the Council's fleet of vehicles should clearly display the Wear Valley District Council corporate crest. Vinyl stickers should be developed using the correct corporate colours and typeface's as identified within these guidelines. If in doubt or prior to ordering, please consult with the Marketing and Communications Manager.

2.17 Literature formats

All publications and literature will be referred to the Marketing & Communications section for design approval to secure the corporate style and identity of the Council. All publications and design materials will be developed 'in-house' by the Council's Graphics Designer.

Publications and the availability of them will comply with the requirements of The Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and the Corporate Governance requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.

All corporate publications should include the Council's vision and corporate objectives and should be available to reproduce in formats including Braille, Large Print, Audiotape, CD-ROM and other languages (Bengali, Polish, Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Urdu and Welsh). All other literature including leaflets, posters and newsletters should be available to reproduce in these other formats upon request.

If the Council receives a request to reproduce in alternative formats, it should be referred to the Council's Marketing and Communications Manager in the first instance.

The Council fully endorses the removal of all barriers to effective participation regarding; disability, ethnicity, religion, local geography, special needs, language, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender or age.

Wear Valley District Council's policy will adhere to the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) 'See it Right' document.

All publications and design materials produced in-house (excluding posters), will include the following text:

'This publication (or leaflet) can be produced in alternative formats. Please contact the Marketing and Communications Manager on (01388) 761 958.

The minimum font size for this text will be 7 point.

2.18 Identity in use - Wear Valley District Council corporate materials

The following shows the identity in use on corporate material produced by Wear Valley District Council using the principles from these guidelines. They show that creative and successful designs can be achieved whilst retaining and communicating a 'corporate look'. For the presentation template, contact the Marketing and Communication Section.



Below, The website which is branded in the same style as the Council's newspaper - Wear Valley Matters



2.19 Notices and recruitment adverts

All external adverts e.g. recruitment, demand notices, licensing notices, Council Tax notices will be designed by Pearsons, an external agency. All corporate branding and usage of the corporate logo should be followed. For advice and assistance, please contact the Marketing and Communications Manager on (01388) 765 555.

2.20 Identity in use - Wear Valley District Council funded research projects and investments

The following page shows examples of how the Wear Valley District Council identity should be applied by all Wear Valley District Council funded projects. They are aimed at achieving a common approach and best practice across all Wear Valley District Council funded projects, without imposing a rigid single style.

Many Wear Valley District Council partners develop their own clear identities to promote their project and name. The Wear Valley District Council corporate crest must always appear on all material viewed by the public.

- No. 75
- Pride Campaign

2.21 Identity in use - stationery

The positioning of the Wear Valley District Council corporate crest and Strapline (where appropriate) should always be applied on the following:

- Headed paper
- Fax Paper
- Press Releases
- Compliments Slips
- ID Cards
- Name Badges

A consistent position for the crest will create strong visual recognition. Promotional, display and exhibition stands may vary depending on its usage. For other methods that may not be listed above please consult with the Marketing and Communications Manager or the Graphic Designer.

Two or more logos on a business card is not practical. The use of space and the layout can become restricted. In this situation, the Wear Valley District Council crest can be omitted if necessary (for example on the No.75 business cards).

It is important that we do not:

- distort the crest
- reproduce the crest in anything other than the core colours
- reverse the crest
- alter the crest font
- position the crest incorrectly, or break the protection area
- omit the crest unless instructed to do so by the Marketing and Communications Manager

Always re-size in proportion.

Please see 'the crest' section for a full explanation on use of the Wear Valley District Council identity.

Managing the Media

3.1 Media relations protocol

The Media and Promotions Officer is the Council's first point of contact for any media enquiry. The Media and Promotions Officer will not answer the media enquiry without speaking to the Senior Manager responsible for the media's line of enquiry.

The only personnel within the Council who have authorisation to speak directly to the media are:

- The Leader of the Council,
- Deputy Leader of the Council,
- Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council,
- Elected Members,
- The Chief Executive,
- Directors
- The Marketing and Communications Manager, and
- Media and Promotions Officer.

In all other cases, Officers may seek permission from a Director and get advice from the Media and Promotions Officer before speaking to the media.

Union representatives must speak directly to the media regarding Union matters however; they are not permitted to speak directly to the media as representatives of the Council.

3.2 Writing a press release

The Media and Promotions Officer will write the content of all press releases in consultation with relevant officers and members to ensure corporate consistency, style, guidelines and that the messages we portray are beneficial to the Authority.

3.3 Media enquiries

This is where the media requires a response from the Council in relation to a particular issue, normally a negative issue. The Media and Promotions Officer will draft appropriate responses, in consultation with relevant officers and members, to counteract potential negative media coverage.

3.4 Distribution of press releases

Every Press Release written will be;

- E-mailed to all members of staff accessible on e-mail and posted within the 'Information' database in Lotus Notes prior to being sent to all press and media. This is to ensure that all members of staff are kept informed about what the Council is publishing.
- Distributed by E-mail to designated press contacts list (including Local, Regional and some National, depending on the release) by the Media and Promotions Officer or the Marketing and Communications Manager.
- Posted onto the Council's website.
- Copies displayed in the front window of the Civic Centre Mall.

3.5 Press cuttings

The Council's newspaper license allows the Authority to distribute and circulate cuttings on hardcopy to Councillors and Directors. The Media and Promotions Officer will endeavour to monitor the Council's press coverage.

3.6 Photography

A poor photograph, even if it is the right subject, is worse than no photograph. Four colour images are the most effective, but black and white or duotone (two colours) photos can usually be used when there are budget constraints. When researching photographic images, remember that the appropriate choice and sensitive use of photographs is as important as the quality of the photographs themselves. See section 7, Legislation.

The Marketing and Communications Section is continuing to build an image library for use by all members of staff and elected members upon request.

The Media and Promotions Officer is available to take photographs to accompany the press release or other news stories.

Graphic Design

4.1 Introduction

The Council's graphic design service plays a key role in helping to effectively deliver this communications strategy. All literature that is designed (corporate documents, posters, flyers, manuals, leaflets) will fit in with the 'corporate branding, style and identity' of the Council.

The corporate style, logo, font and colours will be applied on all corporate literature.

4.2 Graphic design services

To comply with the Council's financial regulations, the Corporate Development Unit will negotiate a preferred supplier list on behalf of the council for the procurement of graphic design and/or print services. All departmental requirements for work of this kind will be placed with the nominated preferred supplier. Written approval to use another supplier will need to be obtained from the Chief Officer, Corporate Development or his approved deputy.

All graphic design requirements should come to the Marketing & Communication Section within Corporate Development, who will then provide guidance on the most cost effective approach to meet the request.

All graphic design requests need to be submitted on Graphic Design / Print Request Form.

When considering graphic design work; the average turnaround time for a particular type of document is:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------|
| a. Leaflets & posters | 14 days |
| b. Corporate Documents | 20-30 days |
| c. Major Events | 20-30 days |

Design requirements containing more than 30 words, must be submitted with text in word format.

When resource constraints prevent graphic design production in-house, the Marketing and Communication Section will arrange for the customers work to be sent to an external graphic designer for completion.

The decision to outsource graphic design work rests with the Marketing and Communications Manager and additional costs rest with the commissioning department.

The Marketing and Communications Manager will be required to check the design proof prior to print, both for internal or external design.

The customer must sign off a final approval statement on the Graphic Design /Print Request Form before the artwork can be forwarded for print. All responsibility for final artwork rests with the customer.

If the design job costs over £10,000, the Marketing & Communications Section will obtain three quotations from printing suppliers.

4.3 Procedure for graphic design services

The design/text information must be checked by a supervisor / budget holder, before submitting a graphic design request to the Marketing and Communications Section.

Graphic design requests need to be submitted on a Graphic Design / Print Request Form. Ask the Marketing and Communications Section for a copy.

If the graphic design requirements are complicated, the Graphic Designer or/and Marketing and Communications Manager will meet with the customer to discuss the requirements.

The customer will receive a proof of the artwork before it is sent to print.

The customer must sign off a final approval statement on the design brief form. All responsibility for final artwork rests with the customer.

Printing Guidelines

5.1 Printing and colour copying services

The Council has an internal printing/photocopying facility based at the Civic Centre in Crook. This is a black and white printing/photocopying process only and ideal for committee reports or internal documents.

A colour copier is based within the Marketing and Communications Section. Depending on the type of publication, the volume required and its intended use, print may need to be commissioned externally but only at the discretion of the Marketing and Communications Manager or the Graphic Designer.

All printing/copying requirements should be submitted to the Marketing & Communication Section within Corporate Development, who will then decide whether the artwork can be printed in-house or outsourced.

In-house printing requests need to be submitted on a Graphic Design / Print Request Form.

The Marketing & Communication Section is able to print / copy (**colour**) up to:

- a. 500 A4 copies (single leaf) or
- b. 350 A3 copies (single leaf) in-house.

If further prints are required, the Marketing & Communications Section will obtain quotations and arrange for the job to be printed / copied at a preferred supplier.

The cost of outsourcing printing requirements will rest with the commissioning department.

The Marketing and Communication Section will request a proof of all artwork before it goes to print for quality control purposes.

The commissioning department will need to have a purchase order number available prior to sending work to external printers.

Print work will be delivered to the Marketing and Communications Section for quality control purposes.

The Marketing and Communications Section will retain a sample copy of all print work for quality control purposes.

The commissioning department is responsible for approving the document prior to printing.

If the print job costs over £10,000, the Marketing & Communications Section will attain three quotations from printing suppliers.

5.2 Procedure for printing and copying services:

Copies or print requests need to be discussed with the Marketing and Communications Section. The Marketing and Communications Section will advise on whether, the document can be printed in house or whether (due to complexity of job or quantity of print) the job will have to be sent to external printers.

5.3 Printing in house (colour copier)

If the job can be printed in house, a Graphic Design /Print Request Form, detailing the quantity of copies required will need to be completed and submitted to the Marketing & Communications Section.

5.4 Printing / copying in house (Black and White)

The Council's black & white internal printing/photocopying facility is managed and operated by the Reprographics Officer. If the job can be printed in house, a Graphic Design / Print Request Form, detailing the quantity of copies required will need to be completed and submitted to the Marketing & Communications Section.

5.5 Copying in house (colour copier only)

If the job can be copied in house, you will need to fill in Copy Record book, detailing the quantity of copies, department etc.

If the job has to be printed externally, the Marketing and Communications Section will arrange a quote from the printers (preferred supplier only).

When the quote has been accepted the commissioning department will need to raise a requisition (purchase order).

The Marketing and Communications Section will save the artwork to CD for collection from the commissioning department, who will then deliver the artwork to the printers with a print specification sheet and a proof.

5.6 Private copying

The Marketing and Communication Section can copy a document for private use, however, a charge will incur. See below.

Private Copying Price List:

Colour	Black & White
A4 12p	5p
A3 16p	8p

The Marketing & Communication Section cannot supply more than 50 copies for private use, and all private copying jobs will need a private Graphic Design / Print Request Form, payment and acceptance of a formal receipt.

5.7 Paper weights and sizes

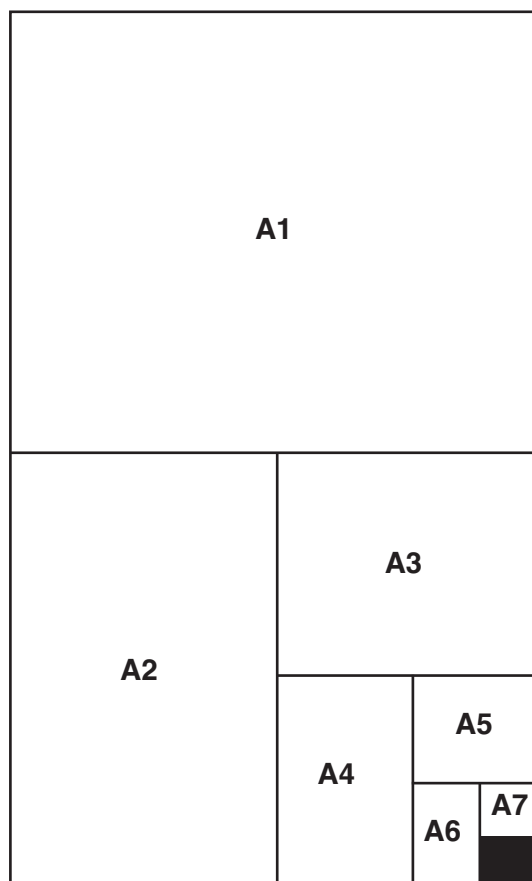
Paper is specified in 'weight' – grammes per square metre (gsm).

The difference in paper weights will result in different quality of stock (density and stiffness). The smaller the number e.g. 80gsm, the lighter the paper or the higher the number e.g. 300gsm, the more firm and stiff the paper.

There are a standard range of paper sizes. They are as follows:

Size measurement (mm):

A7	74mm x 105mm
A6	105mm x 148.5mm
A5	148.5mm x 210mm
A4	297mm x 210mm
A3	297mm x 420mm
A2	420mm x 594mm
A1	594mm x 840mm
A0	841mm x 1188mm



5.8 Finishing

The Council is equipped to complete the following, however, it is the individual member of staff who is responsible for internal finishing.

Booklet Made / Saddle Stitch

Guillotine

Collate

Bind

Laminate

Cut

Package

Crease

Fold

Trim

Electronic Information – website

6.1 Introduction

The Council's Website Manager, part of the Marketing and Communications Section in the Corporate Development Unit, is responsible for assisting in the delivery of the Council's Electronic Media resources. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of the Council's website, via the Council's chosen Content Management System – Goss iCM.

The corporate style, subject to conformance with the agreed Website Standards Policy Document (see below), should be used at all times.

In addition to the Council's website, Electronic Media also refers to presentations, multimedia applications, video and audio – though it must be noted that such applications are “bespoke”, and as such, time needs to be resourced accordingly.

6.2 Procedure for website updates /additions

All website/multimedia updates/requirements should come to the Marketing and Communication Section within the Corporate Development Unit, who will then provide guidance on the most cost effective approach to meet the request.

All such requests should be submitted in writing, either via email or in hard copy.

The timescale for the work to be completed depends upon the type of work to be undertaken, for example:

1. Minor changes (a couple of paragraphs of text) will usually be done same or next day.
2. Job application forms/committee minutes will be added within one day.
3. Major changes (new pages) will usually be done within three days.

Of course, there are occasions when it will be impossible to adhere to these timescales, in which case, appropriate advice will be given.

6.3 Responsibility for website content

The responsibility for content rests entirely with the Service Providers. They should ensure that the content is up to date, submitting requests for changes where appropriate.

It should also be noted that, even though BVPI 157 has been discontinued, the principles behind it should still be followed, i.e., that any and all information available to the public by non-electronic means, should also be available electronically.

6.4 Website standards

There are a number of agreed website standards which must be adhered to, such as legislative requirements, government guidance, etc. As the Website Manager for more information.

6.5 The future

In the future, the Content Management System will be rolled out to Departments/Sections and an appropriate approval chain implemented.

6.6 E-Service requests

It should be noted that “Electronic Service Requests”, though the system is managed by the Website Manager, are the responsibility of Service Providers.

Legislation

7.1 Copyright

Copyright exists in almost every thing we use, and is a right granted in law to creators of works including; music, books, film, computer software. Copyright also exists in newspaper content.

7.2 Newspaper license agreement

The Councils Newspaper License Agreement is renewed each year and allows the Council to copy newspaper content – giving the council freedom to copy and protects us from breaching publisher's copyright. However, there are restrictions to our license.

We are allowed to:

- Copy any article from our regional newspapers (e.g Northern Echo, Wear Valley Mercury and The Journal)
- Photocopy an article (but no more than 40 copies of the same article can be made)

We are not allowed to:

- Scan an article - (making a digital copy) - hence we no longer have a Newspaper Clipping database
- Email
- View articles via an external web hosted service
- External copying to clients

Media and Promotions Officer has hard copies of newspaper clippings, so if you wish to see an article, please speak to the Media and Promotions Officer on ext. 841.

7.3 Photography

When researching photographic images, remember that the appropriate choice and sensitive use of photographs is as important as the quality of the photographs themselves.

The Marketing and Communications Team are experienced to take photographic images on behalf of the Council and its departments. The section is continuing to build an image library for use by all members of staff and elected members upon request.

Images of children

Sometimes, photographs can be quite sensitive particularly when taking photographs of children and young people for use in Council publications and written permission must be obtained from individual parents / guardians / schools. Copies of written consent must be obtained and forwarded to the Marketing and Communications Manager for filing. Written consent forms can be downloaded from the P drive.

7.4 A guide to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

The DDA of 1995 gave disabled people new rights in the areas of employment, access to goods, facilities and services, and the management of or buying and renting property.

As a service organisation, we have increased duties and responsibility under the DDA.

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against members of the public on the grounds of disability.

It is unlawful to refuse to provide a service, provide a lesser standard of service or offer worse terms for a service to disabled person. The DDA also includes failure to make reasonable adjustments to the way in which the services are provided and failure to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of the service premises.

On request, all of our documents, whether it be a poster, brochure, corporate document, newsletter, must be made available in either Braille (for blind) or large print (for partially sighted).

For advice please speak to the Marketing and Communications Manager.

7.5 RNIB & printing advice

The RNIB estimate that there are 1.7 million people in the UK with visual impairment such that they find it difficult or impossible to read ordinary newspaper print. The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit advise that there are 5.5 million people who have reading and writing difficulties.

To make it easier for visually impaired people to read corporate documents the Council should follow the following print guidelines:

Type Size

- Use 12-14 point type size for all documents.
- If something doesn't fit in the space you have available reduce the amount of text rather than the size.

Type face

- Most blind and visually impaired readers prefer a sans serif typeface such as Helvetica or Arial.
- Do use type not handwriting.
- Do not use 'unusual' or indistinct typefaces.
- Make sure that numbers are clear. Blind and visually impaired people misread numbers 3,5 and 8 in some typefaces and 0 and 6 can also be confused.
- White typeface on black or another dark colour is a good way of emphasising headings or sections of text.
- Do not use white on black with a small type face.

Contrast

Make sure you have a strong contrast between the type and the paper on which its printed.

- Black type on white or yellow paper gives the best contrast.
- Use dark coloured inks for type – strong greens, blues, reds and browns.
- Do not use red and green together. About one in twelve men and one in two hundred women are red/green colour blind.
- Do not have words printed over a photograph or illustration.

Paper

Use a plain relatively thick paper for printing on glossy or art papers can reflect light back and make it difficult to read.

Paper should be thick enough (80 grammes or thicker) to ensure that text cannot be seen from the other side.

Spacing

- Stick to even word or line spacing in your document.
- Do not shrink or stretch lines of type or mangle words to fit your line length.
- Leave a reasonable space between lines so that people can clearly see the difference between 2 lines of text.
- Leave a clear space between paragraphs
- If you are using columns, have a clear space or a line between them.
- Leaving the right margin unjustified is thought by RNIB to benefit blind and visually impaired people.
- Be consistent. Only change a type size or spacing where you want to headline, emphasise or draw attention to something.

Capital Letters

- Capital (upper case) letters are harder to read than lower case letters. It is easier for all of us to read upper and lower case than upper case only.
- Do not use all capital letters if you want to emphasise something. Use bold text or boxing to show that something is important.

Illustrations

- Try to use illustrations, which make the text clearer and give a clue to what the text is about.
- Put the illustration wherever possible at the end of paragraphs or sentences rather than in the middle of them.

7.6 The Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) came into effect from 1 January 2005. The act provides a general right of access to information held by public authorities such as Wear Valley District Council. The process starts when we receive a request for information.

A freedom of information request is similar to any other request for information that the Council receives. The only differences are that it must be made in writing and include the following request criteria:

- the name of the applicant
- an address for correspondence
- describe the information requested

A request can come in any written form. For example,

- a fax,
- an email,
- in the post
- a hand delivered note.

Please note a request for information could occur in the middle of a complaint letter.

Advice and Assistance

If a request does not meet the request criteria but it appears to be intended as a request under the FOIA it must not be ignored. The applicant must be given advice on how to make a valid request.

The Council have a duty to give advice and assistance to help people make a valid request. One way to do this is to encourage people to make an application with a Council freedom of information form. Applications must not be refused because they are not on the form.

Identifying a request for information

Is there anything that distinguishes a freedom of information request from the requests we normally receive? No. A good rule of thumb is that a freedom of information request will probably ask for information that you did not normally release before the Act came into force and it will require more work to answer. For example, an information request might ask how much the Council spent on grass cutting last year, or ask for all the officer reports relating to playground closures. These types of requests will probably require you to consult your line manager or a Freedom of Information representative.

If you already send out information, such as opening hours or council tax leaflets, continue to do so. Likewise, if the information is on the Council's publication scheme, you can release it.

It is important not to ignore a request or only answer part of it. If in doubt, ask your Freedom of Information representative who will be able to help you process the request.

The deadline

The authority has 20 working days to respond to a request. The clock starts the day after the Council receives the request.

Things to do to prepare for the FOIA:

- Attend a briefing session on the Freedom of Information.
- Become familiar with the Council's Publication Scheme.
- Look at the new FOI database on lotus notes.

7.7 Glossary

CMYK OR FOUR-PROCESS COLOUR

When you print in 'full colour', you are actually printing four colours, namely Cyan (C), Magenta (M), Yellow (Y) and Black (K). From the mix of these colours, you can produce virtually any colour, or at least a close approximation.

PDF

A type of electronic file that allows publications to be viewed on screen or, with a larger file variant printed out almost as published. Standing for 'Portable Document Format', the files can be read using the Adobe Acrobat Reader, a free piece of software that can be downloaded from www.adobe.com.

TIFF, JPEG, BIT MAP, EPS

These are image file formats that are required and can be used for pictures and graphics.

RGB (RED, GREEN, BLUE)

This is the screen colour. Some laser and bubblejet printers use RGB instead of CMYK. Most computer screens display in RGB. Because of this, a publication's colours may vary slightly once printed from how it was viewed on screen.

MAC - MacIntosh

DPI - Dots per Square Inch



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27TH JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Officer – Corporate Development
HEALTH PROFILE 2007

purpose of the report

1. To submit for consideration the forthcoming Health Profiles 2007.

background

2. The North East Public Health Observatory (NEPHO) publishes a report every year to inform local authorities and other agencies about the area's health profile.
3. The profile gives a snapshot of health in our area. With other local information the health profile has been designed to support action by local government and primary care trusts to tackle health inequalities and improve people's health in Wear Valley.
4. A copy of the most recent profile is attached as Annex I.

findings

5. A summary of the findings are detailed below:
 - On average, men in Wear Valley live nineteen months less than the national average and women live twenty five months less than the national average.
 - Wear Valley is above the national average for people who die from heart disease and strokes.
 - Smoking kills on average 150 people a year in Wear Valley. It is also estimated that 32% of adults in Wear Valley smoke, whereas the estimated national average for England is 26% making Wear Valley 6% higher than the national average.
6. The report also shows:
 - Income deprivation and child poverty are above average with 28% of children living in households dependant on-means-tested benefits.
 - The level of statutory homelessness is lower than the national average.
 - Teenage pregnancy percentage rate is higher than the national average.
 - An estimated 24% of adults binge drink

- An estimated 26% of adults are obese which is 4% higher than the national average of 22%
- Diabetes affects at least 2470 people in Wear Valley which is higher than the national average and:
- The rate of hip fracture, in people aged 65 years and over, is higher than the national average.

conclusions

7. The report shows that the population of Wear Valley's health is below the national average on a wide range of statistical indicators.
8. If the Council is to make an effective contribution to tackling these areas of comparative health deprivation then we will need to work even more closely with our professional partners.

RECOMMENDED

- i. That members continue to endorse the Councils objectives and support officers in their efforts to tackle health inequalities.

Officer responsible for the report
John Docherty
Chief Officer, Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the report
Emily Butler
Policy & Research Officer
Ext. 448

Wear Valley Health Profile 2007



This profile gives a snapshot of health in your area. With other local information, this Health Profile has been designed to support action by local government and primary care trusts to tackle health inequalities and improve people's health.

Health Profiles are funded by the Department of Health and produced annually by the Association of Public Health Observatories.

To view Health Profiles for other local authorities and to find out how they were produced, visit www.communityhealthprofiles.info



Wear Valley at a glance

◀ This is a Spearhead area

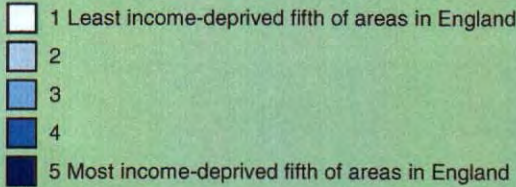
- On average, men in Wear Valley live 75.2 years compared with 76.9 years for England and life expectancy for women is 79.0 years compared with the England average of 81.1 years.
- The death rate from smoking and the rate of early deaths from heart disease and stroke are higher than average; on average smoking kills about 150 people each year in Wear Valley.
- Income deprivation and child poverty are above average with about 28% of children living in households dependent on means-tested benefits. However, the level of statutorily homeless households is lower than average.
- The teenage pregnancy rate is higher than average.
- It is estimated that about 32% of adults in Wear Valley smoke compared to the estimated average of 26% for England as a whole.
- About 24% of adults are estimated to binge drink.
- A higher percentage of adults are estimated to be obese: about 26% compared with the estimated average of 22% for England.
- The percentage of people with recorded diabetes is higher than average: diabetes affects at least 2470 people in Wear Valley.
- The rate of hip fracture in people aged 65 years and over is higher than average.
- Local annual reports are available from www.countydurhampct.nhs.uk/reports.html
- Local priorities include: reducing smoking; tackling obesity; reducing alcohol misuse; promoting good sexual health; promoting positive mental health.



Income inequalities: a national perspective

This map shows variation in the percentage of people on low income, between small areas in this local authority *in relation to the whole of England* (2003).

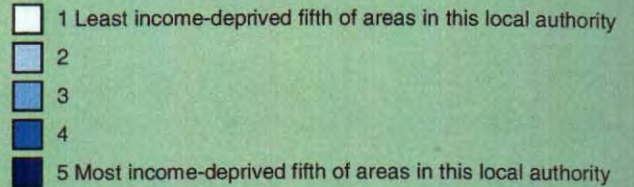
National income groups



Income inequalities: a local perspective

This map shows variation in the percentage of people on low income, between small areas *within this local authority* (2003).

Local income groups



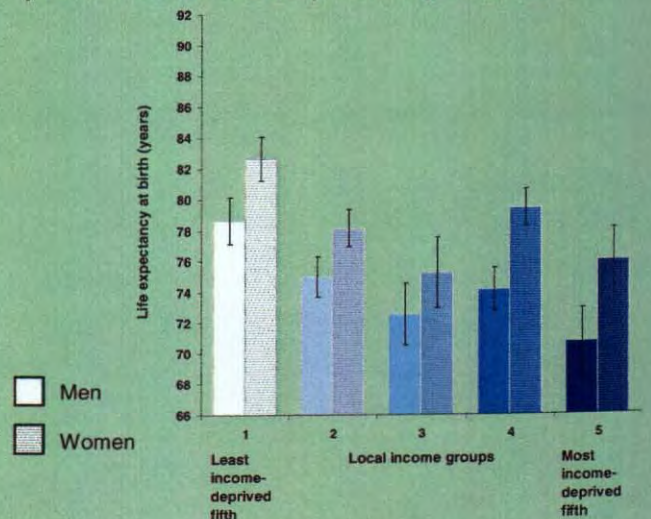
Ward legend

- 1 Bishop Auckland Town
- 2 Cockton Hill
- 3 Coundon
- 4 Crook North
- 5 Crook South
- 6 Dene Valley
- 7 Escomb
- 8 Henknowle
- 9 Howden
- 10 Hunwick
- 11 St John's Chapel
- 12 Stanhope
- 13 Tow Law and Stanley
- 14 West Auckland
- 15 Wheatbottom and Helmington Row
- 16 Willington Central
- 17 Willington West End
- 18 Wolsingham and Witton-le-Wear
- 19 Woodhouse Close



Health inequalities: a local perspective

This chart shows inequalities in life expectancy (2001-05) at birth for men and women for the five local income groups presented in the map directly above.



95% confidence interval. These indicate the level of uncertainty about each value on the



POLICY & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

27TH JUNE 2007

Report of the Chief Executive
BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2006-2007

purpose of the report

1. To present the Best Value Performance Indicators for the year 2006-2007. The figures have been updated to include latest weighted figures for the triennial satisfaction surveys from the Audit Commission. This has allowed Wear Valley's performance over this period to be compared and contrasted with more up-to-date information than had previously been the case.

performance for 2006-2007 summary

2. The performance information is presented in Annex J and shows the performance of all indicators for 2006-2007.
3. In comparison to the most up-to-date national data for each indicator, Wear Valley's performance in 2006-2007 has shown (see Annex K):
 - 55% of indicators have improved from the previous year compared with 58% the year before;
 - 23% have declined in performance compared to 14% the previous year,
 - 22% remain unchanged compared to 14% the previous year;
 - 6% are performing at an optimum performance level in comparison to 14% the previous year.
4. The results also show that 57% have met their targets for the year 2006-07. This demonstrates the robustness of the targets that are being set.

data analysis

5. Annex L demonstrates the unaudited 2006-2007 national quartile data for District Councils compared with top quartile indicators in 2005/06. The figures show an improving standard of quartile for Wear Valley nationally.
6. Although the percentage of top quartile indicators for 2006/07 remain at 33%, the number of below median (27%) and bottom quartile (16%) figures continue to decline compared with 2005/06 which were 32% and 18% respectively.

7. The number of indicators performing to their optimum level have declined to seven indicators (6%) compared with nine indicators (9%) in 2005/06
8. Of the indicators where performance has remained constant in terms of their quartile nationally, there is still some considerable potential for performance improvement.

conclusion

9. The data presented here presents the unaudited BVPI figures for 2006-2007. The changing quartile performance has shown that Wear Valley's performance nationally is continuing to improve.

RECOMMENDED That the information presented in this report and the attached annexes are noted.

Officer responsible for the report

John Docherty
Head of Corporate Development
Ext 306

Author of the report

Judith Grayson
Organisation Improvement Manager
Ext 313

Annex C - Quartile Performance over Time

