



Notice of Meeting of

# HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, 10 October 2023 at 2.00 pm**

**Wyndham Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY**

To: The members of the Human Resources Committee

Chair: Councillor Theo Butt Philip

Councillor David Fothergill

Councillor Mark Healey

Councillor Andy Kendall

Councillor Emily Pearlstone

Councillor Leigh Redman

Councillor Mike Stanton

Councillor Mandy Chilcott

Councillor Alistair Hendry

Councillor Graham Oakes

Councillor Faye Purbrick

Councillor Tony Robbins

Councillor Sarah Wakefield

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For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact Democratic Services [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk).

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings and ask questions or make a statement **by giving advance notice** in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Officer at email: [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk) by **5pm on Wednesday, 4 October 2023**.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A: Access to Information.

The meeting will be webcast and an audio recording made.

Issued by (the Proper Officer) on Monday, 2 October 2023

# **AGENDA**

**Human Resources Committee - 2.00 pm Tuesday, 10 October 2023**

**Public Guidance Notes contained in Agenda Annexe (Pages 5 - 6)**

**Click here to join the online meeting**

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

## **2 Minutes from the Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 10)**

To approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

## **3 Declarations of Interest**

To receive and note any declarations of interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The other registrable interests of Councillors of Somerset Council, arising from membership of City, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes: [City, Town & Parish Twin Hatters - Somerset Councillors 2023](#) )

## **4 Public Question Time**

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

We are now live webcasting most of our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, please see details under 'click here to join online meeting'.

**5 Approval Process for Somerset Council Health and Safety Policies (Pages 11 - 78)**

The HR Committee is asked to approve the Health and Safety Statement of Intent for Somerset Council and the following Health and Safety policies: Safety Action Notices, Confined Spaces, New and Expectant Parents, Working Safely at Height, Biological Agent (Infection Control and Blood-borne Viruses), Water Assets, and Working Outside in the Sun and Extremes of Heat and Cold.

**6 Workforce update**

To receive a verbal update on any HR related issues.

## Guidance notes for the meeting

### **Council Public Meetings**

The legislation that governs Council meetings requires that committee meetings are held face-to-face. The requirement is for members of the committee and key supporting officers (report authors and statutory officers) to attend in person, along with some provision for any public speakers. Provision will be made wherever possible for those who do not need to attend in person including the public and press who wish to view the meeting to be able to do so virtually.

#### **Inspection of Papers**

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) or telephone 01823 357628.

They can also be accessed via the council's website on [Committee structure - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Members' Code of Conduct requirements**

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: [Code of Conduct](#)

### **Minutes of the Meeting**

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

### **Public Question Time**

If you wish to speak or ask a question about any matter on the Committee's agenda please contact Democratic Services by 5pm providing 3 clear working days before the meeting. (for example, for a meeting being held on a Wednesday, the deadline will be 5pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting) Email [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) or telephone 01823 357628.

Members of public wishing to speak or ask a question will need to attend in person or if unable can submit their question or statement in writing for an officer to read out, or alternatively can attend the meeting online.

A 20-minute time slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. Each speaker will have 3 minutes to address the committee.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with many people wishing to attend the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

### **Meeting Etiquette for participants**

Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.

Mute your microphone when you are not talking.

Switch off video if you are not speaking.

Speak clearly (if you are not using video then please state your name)

If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called turn on live captions which provides subtitles on the screen.

### **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed.

### **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording, and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting.

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Human Resources Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY, on Tuesday, 11 July 2023 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** Cllr Theo Butt Philip (Chair)

Cllr Andy Kendall Cllr Graham Oakes Cllr Emily Pearlstone Cllr Mike Stanton Cllr Sarah Wakefield Cllr Mark Healey Cllr Connor Payne

**In attendance:** Cllr Liz Leyshon

**Other Members present remotely:** Cllr Leigh Redman Cllr Richard Wilkins Cllr David Fothergill

### **1 Apologies for Absence** - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Councillor Faye Purbrick, Councillor Mandy Chilcott and Councillor Tony Robbins.

### **2 Minutes from the Previous Meeting** - Agenda Item 2

The minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 28th March 2023 were noted as a correct record.

### **3 Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 3

Cllr T Butt Philip and Cllr A Kendell both declared a personal interest as members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

### **4 Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

The Chair noted that there had been no public questions submitted by the published submission deadline.

### **5 Somerset Council Employment Policies including Pensions Discretion Policy** - Agenda Item 5

The Chair, invited the Service Manager HR Policy & Projects and the Strategic Manager HR Practice to introduce the report and they highlighted the key areas:

- The report provided details of the policies for the new Somerset Council for consideration and if appropriate, approval, by the Committee.
- As agreed previously, policies meeting certain criteria would be presented to the Committee for consideration and policies not meeting the criteria would be approved via delegated authority to the Service Director - Workforce.
- The new policy was based on the former Somerset County Council policy and this policy permitted application of a greater number of the discretionary regulations than the former District Councils' policies. Members noted the approach taken when determining which discretions to apply had always been to ensure that the costs to

the Council were controlled while providing flexibility for scheme members as allowed by the regulations.

- Continuing to apply this same approach could have a financial impact on Somerset Council simply on the basis that the new Council a larger organisation would have more pension scheme members covered by the policy. It would not be possible to predict costs as any request to apply a discretion would be on a case-by-case basis. Members noted this would be a positive change for former District Council employees.
- The two additional discretions, outlined in the report, once approved would be incorporated into the Pensions Discretions Policy.

There was a discussion and during which the following points were highlighted:

The potential financial impact to Somerset Council; the importance of the equality impact assessment; the redundancy packages as a result of the Local Government Reorganisation; South Somerset District Council had previously decided not to apply either of the two discretions; the benefits for employees.

The Committee agreed to approve the Somerset Council Employment Policies including the Pensions Discretion Policy.

## **6 Update on Human Resource Matters - Agenda Item 6**

The Chair, invited the Service Director of Workforce to introduce and update and the following points were noted:

- Prior to vesting day monthly updates were provided on the lead up to the Local Government Reorganisation due to the large amount of policy changes.
- The People workstream had included: culture and behaviours, restructures and establishment, dynamics programme, health and safety, organisational development, policy and pay grading and starters, leavers and onboarding and an overview was provided on each topic.
- The value workshops had been exploring culture with staff, to identify their experiences of culture and what they would like to see in the new Council. All service directors were involved in the workshops and the outcomes from those sessions, would be used to inform the people strategy for the new Council's behavioural framework.
- More loan working devices had been procured for personal safety of staff. Reports on Health and Safety including policies would be presented to future meetings.



- The Organisational development team had been helping former employees with CV's and preparing for interviews.
- SAP interim structure had been successfully implemented to bring together five thousand plus employees as they transferred to Somerset Council and this would be reviewed at a later stage.
- The Tier 3 recruitment process had been completed.
- Regarding the newly formed directorates and the structures of each this would be discussed with trade unions before a 45-day consultation period.
- Recruitment would continue for positions in the new Council.
- Dillington House would be closing, with about 30 redundancies.

There was a discussion and the following points were raised: the culture workshops had noted staff attitudes towards the MTFP and budget control; the new structures and how those would be shared with members; the process of recruitment for the LCN team; concerns of losing experienced employees (due to the merger) and how this could be mitigated for the whole organisation and/or in certain areas.

The Director of Workforce advised the Committee that the HR teams were putting strategies into place to support employees in the workplace. Team structures could continue to be discussed and some teams would have different restructures depending on the services provided. Heads of Service will look at their teams and operations taking into consideration budgetary issues. It was noted that both the private and public sectors were paying more therefore making a competitive market place for employees, meaning more were leaving. All Managers would need to liaise and listen to their teams to help and support staff at an uncertain time.

The Chair of the Committee, after ascertaining there were no other items of business, thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting 3.25pm.

Cllr Theo Butt Phillip – Chair of HR Committee

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Somerset Council

Human Resources Committee  
– 10 October 2023

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## Approval Process for Somerset Council Health and Safety Policies

Executive Member: Cllr Theo Butt Philip, Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources.

Lead Workforce Officer: Sari Brice - Strategic Manager HR Practice.

Author: Daniel Thomas – Health and Safety Service Manager

Contact Details: 07508335196 [daniel.thomas@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:daniel.thomas@somerset.gov.uk)

<i>Please complete sign off boxes below prior to submission to Democratic Services</i>			
	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign off</b>	Legal	Jill Byron	29/09/2023
	Corporate Finance	Jason Vaughan	18/09/2023
	Human Resources	Sari Brice	29/09/2023
	Executive Member	Theo Butt Philip	28/09/2023
	Monitoring Officer	David Clark	18/09/2023
	<b>Summary:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Statement of Intent</b> outlines an organisational commitment to undertake our business operations in a way that prevents injury or illness to employees, visitors, contractors, and the public who may be impacted by our operations and activities. Responsibilities and arrangements for managing particular risk areas will be addressed by way of individual policies which will be submitted to the HR Committee for approval when existing council H&amp;S policies are reviewed.</li> <li>• <b>The Working Safely at Height</b> Policy outlines Somerset Council's commitment to ensuring compliance with <i>The Working at Height Regulations 2005</i>. In doing so, the policy clearly defines responsibilities placed on employees across all levels of the organisation. Changes to the Council's current policy were deemed minimal, with no significant change in established practice.</li> </ul>	

- **The Safety Action Notice** Policy sets out the approach The Council will administer, when taking action to address identified or reported noncompliance, hazards, or serious risks to H&S. This action will be in the form of a Safety Action Notice (SAN) which is modelled on *Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974* regulatory enforcement procedures as used by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). There are two levels of SAN, these being an Improvement SAN and Prohibition SAN. Changes to the Council's current policy were deemed minimal, with no significant change in established practice.
- **The New and Expectant Parents** Policy sets clear responsibilities to manage and reduce the risk to new and expectant parents at work. Beyond the moral need for this policy, there is also a clear statutory requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Changes to the Council's current policy were deemed minimal, with no significant change in established practice. However, consistent with changes to HR Policy, the term 'New and Expectant Mothers', which is used extensively throughout the document, was replaced with 'New and Expectant parents' to ensure the policy wording is inclusive to all employees who are pregnant, have given birth in the last 6 months, and those breastfeeding, including transgender and non-binary people.
- **The Confined Spaces** Policy is a new policy to the continuing authority. During the LGR process, The Health and Safety Service identified a need for this new policy owing to activities undertaken by operational teams transferring from predecessor district organisations. The policy clearly defines responsibilities to achieve compliance with requirements of *The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997*. The policy endeavours to formalise the Council's arrangements for managing risks associated with confined space working.
- **The Working Outside in the Sun and Extremes of Heat and Cold** Policy is intended to replace the continuing authorities Sun Protection Policy. As the title suggests, the current policy places great importance on the need for suitable and sufficient sun protection. However, during the review, it was determined there is an absence of clearly documented responsibilities for managing risks associated with outdoor working in the extremes of heat and cold.

	<p>Therefore, the policy was adapted to ensure the Council has robust arrangements for managing and assessing these activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Water Assets</b> Policy is a new policy for the continuing authority. During the LGR process H&amp;S colleagues representing former district councils highlighted the importance of developing a water assets policy to ensure the council has clearly defined procedures for their management and the management of employees who may work near the Council’s water assets. The responsibilities articulated in the policy are considered acceptable in the context of ensuring compliance with <i>The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974</i>.</li> <li>• <b>The Biological Agent (Infection Control and Blood-Borne Virus)</b> Policy is a revision of the Council’s current Blood-borne virus policy. No significant impacts or changes to existing working practices were identified during the review.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>	<p>The members of the HR Committee are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the Somerset Council Health and Safety Statement of Intent (Attached) – Members are reminded that owing to the importance and statutory requirement associated with this document. Duncan Sharkey and Bill Revans signed the document 31 March 2023. The policy is submitted for approval to ensure the H&amp;S Service has followed the council’s process as much as reasonably possible.</li> <li>• Approve the following policies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety Action Notices</li> <li>• Confined Spaces</li> <li>• New and Expectant Parents</li> <li>• Working Safely at Height</li> <li>• Biological Agent (Infection Control and Blood-borne Viruses)</li> <li>• Water Assets</li> <li>• Working Outside in the Sun and Extremes of Heat and Cold</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Agree to give delegated authority to the Corporate Health and Safety Unit to publish and update guidance documents when necessary.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Reasons for Recommendations:</b></p>	<p>Section 2(3) of <i>The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974</i> places a statutory duty on Somerset Council to prepare a written health and safety policy. The policy must be revised as necessary and be brought to the attention of employees.</p> <p>Owing to the Local Government Reorganisation, a review is necessary to ensure the newly formed Somerset Council has outlined its commitment, aspirations, and arrangements regarding the management health and safety within the organisation.</p> <p>As the most senior individuals in the Council, the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council have signed the Statement of Intent.</p> <p>Guidance supports policy, outlining practical steps to achieve legal compliance, while also reflecting organisational working practices considered pertinent to each policy. Section 2, (2), (C), of the Act prescribes the need for the provision of information, instruction, and training as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of Somerset Council employees. The development of comprehensive guidance is a contributing element of our endeavour to demonstrate compliance with Section 2, (2), (C).</p> <p>The intention of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU) is to produce supporting guidance for the majority of policies we publish. The CHSU propose the guidance documents are brought to the attention of HR Committee for awareness purposes but are not subjected to a formal review and approval process by the HR Committee, thus allowing for greater flexibility to update guidance as and when the need arises. Examples may include revisions due to changes in national guidance, following findings of accident investigation, following feedback from employees affected by the guidance.</p>
<p><b>Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:</b></p>	<p>Part of the People Workstream for Local Government Reorganisation.</p>
<p><b>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</b></p>	<p><b>Financial</b> – Broadly speaking there are no unforeseen financial implications associated with the health and safety policies. Each of the five local authorities had a statement of intent and policy arrangements which outline a commitment to manage its activities in a safe and legally compliant manner, so far as is reasonably practicable (SFAISRP). There is of course a cost</p>

	<p>associated with that endeavour, however it’s a well-known and understood legal requirement.</p> <p>Specifically, The Statement of Intent states <i>“so far as is reasonably practicable, the Council will strive to attain the highest possible standard of health and safety (H&amp;S) management in all its operations”</i></p> <p>Therefore, in seeking to achieve the highest possible standards of health and safety, SFAIRP enables the council to assess the degree of risk against the financial cost, time, effort and impact associated with managing the risk.</p> <p><b>HR</b> – The new policies being drafted will apply to all employees regardless of whether they have transferred into Somerset Council or have remained employed by the continuing authority.</p> <p>The requirements placed on employees will be in accordance with statutory duties placed on them under Section 7 of <i>The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974</i>. Policies are subject to trade union consultation, and review by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group, thus ensuring the impact of each policy review is scrutinised to ensure expectations placed on employees are reasonable.</p> <p><b>Legal</b> – Health and Safety Policies are reviewed to ensure Somerset Council remains compliant with legislative requirements.</p>
<p><b>Equalities Implications:</b></p>	<p>The Statement of Intent commits Somerset Council to ensuring the provision of a workplace where employees feel safe, supported, and free to raise concerns and feel included regardless of race, religion, gender, political beliefs, or abilities.</p> <p>The Council’s duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have “due regard” to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions. Following consultation with Somerset Council’s Equalities in Employment Officer, where required, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for Health and Safety policies.</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>

## **Background**

Local Government in Somerset was reorganised with the formation of a single unitary authority covering the work of the County Council and four District Councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West & Taunton, and South Somerset). Owing to the forming of Somerset Council, work has begun to review and consolidate health and safety policies from across the five local authorities.

In consultation with the LGR JNF trade Union Group and People Workstream, in August 2022 it was agreed existing County Council H&S policies would supersede district policies. It was also agreed that reviews of SCC policies would include a comparison of district policies.

For each policy a fundamental set of principles are being applied – (i) that they are legally compliant, (ii) align with best practice and (iii) are as concise and user-friendly as possible. Where possible, detailed process and guidance is being moved into guides/supporting documents to assist with keeping the policies as concise as possible.

Policies under review are examined by health and safety professionals from across the former five organisations before a newly drafted policy is then issued to Trade Unions for consultation.

In addition to the trade union consultation, policies are submitted to the Council's Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG). Membership of the HSWSG captures representatives from across the Council's seven directorates. This includes a mixture of Trade Union appointed H&S Representatives, Service Directors, Strategic and Service Managers.

Once policies have been through the union consultation process, a process is required for each to be formally approved for implementation.

In October 2022 HSWSG members acknowledged their role in reviewing H&S policies. However, members also cited concerns at the absence of a formal approval process and requested clarification.

In November 2022, it was confirmed, following the process of trade union and HSWSG consultation, newly drafted policies would be submitted to the HR Committee for approval before being adopted by the organisation.

Under the Council's Constitution the HR Committee has a role in terms of signing off Health and Safety Policies. The relevant extract is below:



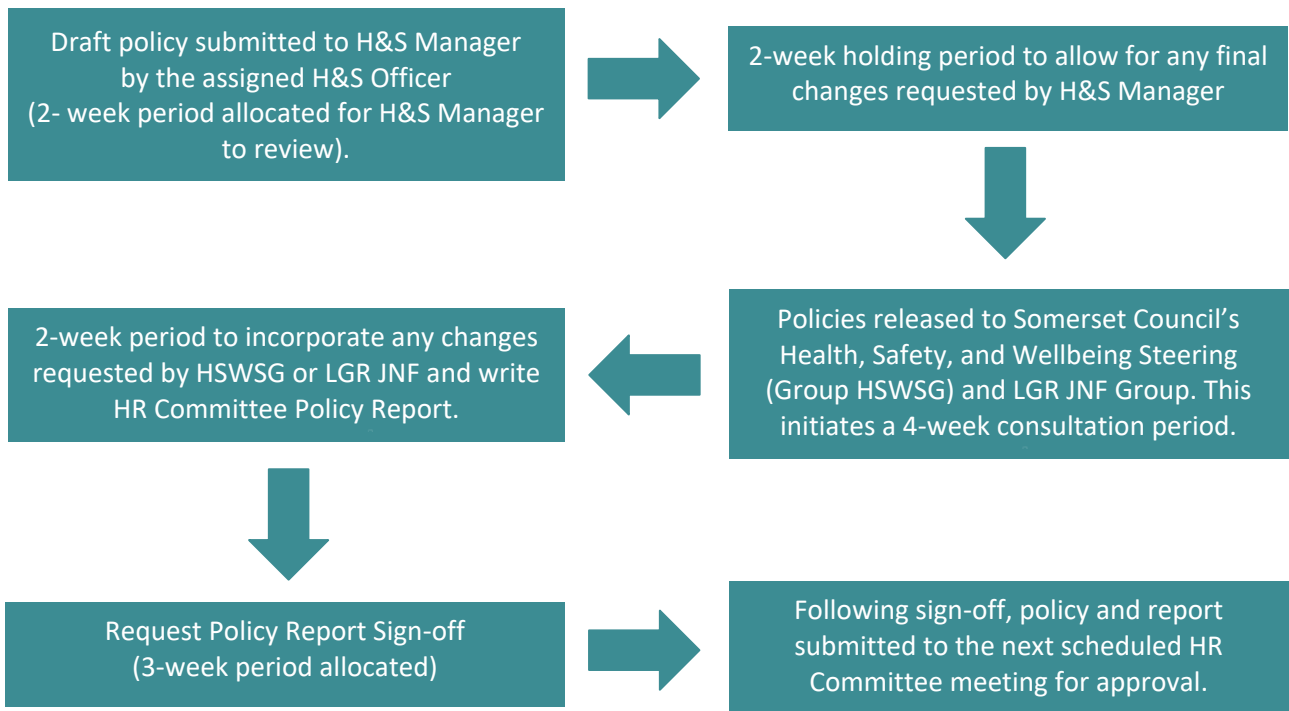
*“To discuss the conditions of service, hours of employment, remuneration, training and health, safety and welfare at work of employees of the Council within the terms of overall Council HR Policies and Procedures and make recommendations as necessary.”*

It is the understanding of the CHSU that a historical decision was taken not to approve H&S policies at HR Committee owing to the fact H&S policies were considered guidance. However, there is a clear expectation from the Health and Safety Executive that a suitable and sufficient policy will contain a Statement of Intent, responsibilities for health and safety, and the arrangements for carrying out the policy. We believe an influencing factor in the decision to withhold H&S policies from the HR Committee, was due to the volume of guidance in the documents which made it challenging to differentiate policy requirements from guidance, this belief influenced our decision to remove guidance from policy.

Therefore, to avoid any confusion, and ensure Somerset Council adopts and embeds appropriate arrangements for managing health and safety, the Health and Safety Service request the HR Committee approve new policy and changes to existing policy.

### Policy Approval Process

The Health and Safety Service has established a policy review [forward plan](#) which we have aligned with HR Committee meetings to ensure drafted policies are ratified by the Committee prior to being published. The process followed is outlined below.





**Somerset**  
Council

# **Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent**

## Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent

Somerset Council values the health and safety of its employees, volunteers, members of the community and any persons that may visit, transact business, or use the facilities it manages and controls. As such, so far as is reasonably practicable, the Council will strive to attain the highest possible standard of health and safety (H&S) management in all its operations. The Council is committed to undertaking our business operations in a way that prevents injury or illness to employees, visitors, contractors, and the public who may be impacted by our operations and activities.

This H&S Policy Statement of Intent supports the principles of the *Local Government Act 2000* and the *Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974* and all Statutory Instruments to which the Council are governed. It demonstrates the commitment of the Council in the provision of a workplace where employees feel safe, supported, and free to raise concerns and feel included regardless of race, religion, gender, political beliefs, or abilities. The policy also endorses the Council's commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical behaviour. The Council will achieve this by:

- Providing and maintaining a safe working environment where plant, equipment and substances are safe to use and ensuring adequate first aid and welfare facilities are in place.
- Adopting a systematic approach to managing risks, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the risk, if this cannot be achieved, minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable by undertaking risk assessments and implementing control measures in accordance with the hierarchy of control.
- Ensuring employees are provided with clear and sufficient information, instruction, training, supervision to support and develop competency.
- Providing effective consultation mechanisms to give employees and others the opportunity to express their views and opinions, so that these can be considered when decisions about H&S are being made.
- Ensure safe systems of work are developed and implemented to allow employees to work safely and free from harm.
- Providing sufficient resources to deliver the effective implementation of this policy and support continual improvement in safety performance.
- Undertake regular workplace inspections and audits, to ensure H&S best practice has been achieved and unsafe tasks, practices, premises or working conditions are identified.
- Carrying out investigations when an incident or accident occurs to identify root causes and establish corrective measures to prevent reoccurrence.
- Providing an effective response to accidents, incidents and near miss events and to report accordingly under RIDDOR.
- Ensure suitable and sufficient emergency procedures are implemented to enable safe evacuation in the event of a fire or significant incident.
- Ensuring that information and adequate welfare support provision is provided relating to Mental Health and Stress.

The full suite of the Council's H&S policies and supporting guidance documents detail arrangements to achieve the aims of this statement. This H&S Policy Statement of Intent will be reviewed annually and more frequently if changes in legislation relevant to Councils operations, or organisational changes indicate a need to do so.

**A SIGNED COPY OF THIS POLICY IS AVAILABLE FROM THE**  
**CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY UNIT**

Duncan Sharkey

Bill Revans

Chief Executive Officer

Leader of the Council

Date: 31/03/2023

Date: 30/03/2023

Review Date: 01/04/2024

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**Somerset  
Council**

# **HS27 Working Safely at Height Policy.**

<b>Organisation</b>	Somerset Council
<b>Title</b>	HS27 Working Safely at Height
<b>Author</b>	Daniel Thomas
<b>Owner</b>	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Protective Marking</b>	Official – Unclassified
<b>Primary Legislation</b>	<a href="#"><u>The Working at Height Regulations 2005</u></a>

## Policy on a page

Work at height can be described as work in any place where, if precautions were not taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.

Somerset Council (The Council) is committed to keeping its employees and any other persons who may be adversely affected by our works, safe and free from harm.

This Working at Height policy supports and extends on the Council's overarching Health and Safety Statement of Intent and is supported by additional guidance on how best to protect employees carrying out those operations which involve working above or below ground, and where falls or falling objects are likely to cause injury.

In order to comply with the above, this policy and associated guidance provides the Council's rules that must be followed, the standards to be maintained, and signposts to further guidance. It also highlights the risks to users, clients and the Council and the potential consequences of breaching this policy.

This document and associated guidance will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Contractors, Secondees and Volunteers.**

### Key Messages

- Somerset Council will ensure that through design of its premises, its management of them and supervision of staff that workplace risks from working at height are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Anyone who is required to work at height must have undertaken a work at height awareness training course which is provided by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, or equivalent external training, where applicable additional task or equipment specific training may be required.
- Managers must ensure that risk assessments are carried out for all working at height activities which cannot be avoided.
- The Corporate Health and Safety Unit can advise managers on completing risk assessments and sourcing suitable external training courses.



This “policy on a page” is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements stated.

## Responsibilities

<a href="#">Somerset Council</a>	<a href="#">Directors and Senior Managers</a>
<a href="#">Service Managers and those with direct line-management responsibilities for employees undertaking working at height activities</a>	<a href="#">Authorised Persons (AP) who issue permits to work</a>
<a href="#">Premise Managers, Property Services, or those in control of premises</a>	<a href="#">Employees</a>
<a href="#">Corporate Health and Safety Unit</a>	

### Somerset Council will ensure:

- Compliance with The Working at Height Regulations 2005.
- That through design of its premises, its management of them and supervision of staff that workplace risks from working at height are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

### Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will:

- Ensure that this policy and guidance is implemented in their respective business areas.
- Ensure business areas under their control are adequately resourced to implement effective arrangements to control risks associated with working at height activities so far as is reasonably practicable.

### Service Managers and those with direct line-management responsibilities for employees undertaking working at height activities will:

- Ensure that working height activities are avoided, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out for all working at height activities which cannot be avoided, and safe systems of work are applied.
- Ensure the requirement for personal protective equipment is given adequate consideration when undertaking the risk assessments.
- Ensure employees are consulted during the risk assessment process.

Ensure that all work at height is properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in a safe manner.

- Plan for emergencies, implement effective rescue procedures, and where risk assessments have identified a need, issue permits to work.
- Ensure provision of suitable work equipment or other measures are implemented to prevent falls where work at height cannot be avoided.
- Provide direction, guidance, and support for the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure all work equipment used whilst working at height is being carried out is properly inspected and maintained.
- Ensure that all staff involved in working at height are aware of this policy, understand its contents and comply with local procedures and safe systems of work.
- Ensure recruiting managers clearly outline work at height activities in the recruitment information made available to prospective applicants.
- giving due regard for the candidate's ability to complete the tasks required.
- Ensure all staff who work at height are fit to do so.
- Ensure that staff who work at height and those who issue permits to work, have appropriate information, instruction, training, and supervision.
- Ensure all contractors employed are competent to work at height and are appropriately managed when on site.
- Ensure that all work at height takes account of weather conditions that could endanger safety.
- Where required, implement a permit to work process in accordance with Somerset Council policy guidance HSG27

### **Authorised Persons (AP) who issue permits to work will:**

- Be responsible for the issue of the permit to work and its cancellation.
- Ensure those concerned are working in accordance with their risk assessments and safe systems of work.
- Ensure all necessary precautions, including emergency procedures are considered and implemented where required.
- Check safety arrangements as required by the permit procedures.
- Act upon any report of an activity or defect likely to endanger safety.
- Check the workplace before a permit is issued.
- Check work equipment installed or assembled prior to use.
- Issue permits in accordance with Somerset Council policy guidance HSG27

### **Premises Managers, Property Services, or those in control of premises will:**

- Where applicable comply with responsibilities required of Service Managers and those with direct line-management responsibilities for employees undertaking working at height activities.
- Ensure anyone undertaking work at height activities on the premises is working to a risk assessment.

- Ensure work at height activities are properly planned, organised, and undertaken by appropriately trained and competent persons.
- Ensure the place where work is to be done is safe.
- Ensure risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled.
- Ensure risks from falling objects are controlled.
- Ensure that in the case of new buildings and when modifying existing buildings, they are designed to minimise risks as effectively as possible.
- Where required, implement a permit to work process in accordance with Somerset Council policy guidance HSG27

### **Employees will:**

- Report any illness, medical condition, or medication that may prevent them from working at height safely.
- Identify and report any defects found in relation to equipment provided for work at height.
- Co-operate with any training requirement and use the equipment supplied properly.
- Follow instructions or arrangements provided to them by their employer or person in control in compliance with the requirements and prohibitions under the relevant statutory provisions.
- Report unsafe acts and misuse of equipment used for working at height.

### **The Corporate Health and Safety Unit will:**

- Offer advice to managers regarding this policy and associated guidance.
- Maintain and communicate this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.
- Provide technical advice when required.
- Provide Work at Height Awareness Training as required.
- Audit Compliance with this policy

## Governance Arrangements

### Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's disciplinary procedure.

### Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Somerset Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and publishing the policy
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation

<b>Responsible</b>	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Accountable</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Consulted</b>	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
<b>Informed</b>	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

### Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

### Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Daniel Thomas	V1.0	New policy - draft

## Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Service Director of Workforce and chair of HSWSG		
HR Committee		

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**Somerset  
Council**

# **HS06 Safety Action Notice Policy.**

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Safety Action Notice Policy
Author	Daniel Thomas
Owner	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
Protective Marking	Official – Unclassified
Primary legislation	<a href="#"><u>Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974</u></a>

## Policy on a page

Somerset Council (The Council) believes in a firm but fair approach to the enforcement of our policies and safe systems of work to enable The Council to discharge its duties under Health and Safety (H&S) law. This enforcement applies to The Council's employees and also extends to all other parties who are undertaking work for or on behalf of The Council.

This policy sets out the approach The Council will administer, when taking action for identified or reported noncompliance, hazards, or serious risks to H&S. This action will be in the form of a Safety Action Notice (SAN) which is modelled on *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974* regulatory enforcement procedures as used by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). There are two levels of SAN's, these being an Improvement SAN and Prohibition SAN.

When issuing a SAN, The Council will adopt the principals of proportionality, as such, enforcement action will be proportionate to the H&S risks and to the seriousness of any breach of the law. This includes any actual or potential harm arising from any breach, and the economic impact of the action taken.

Any reference in this policy to Prohibition and Improvement Notices relates exclusively to the council's internal procedures for managing serious H&S risks which require the intervention of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit. The HSE and other authorities responsible for the enforcement of statutory provisions may also issue Prohibition and Improvement Notices under sections 21,22 and 23 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

This document will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Contractors, Secondees and Volunteers.**

## Key Messages

- There are two types of SAN: a **Prohibition Notice (*Appendix 1*)** and an **Improvement Notice (*Appendix 2*)**. Either or both may be issued, where appropriate by the CHSU Manager, or an Officer delegated by the CHSU Manager.
- A Prohibition SAN will be issued when a risk of serious injury or ill health has been identified or reported, associated with a particular work activity or process. Prohibition notices will be issued to cease an activity where there is a serious risk of harm from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard.
- An Improvement SAN will be issued where it is believed that there has been a systematic failure to introduce adequate risk controls.
- An individual or Company can appeal the issuing of a SAN.

**This “policy on a page” is a summary of the detailed policy document please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the full policy**



## Policy Content

<a href="#">Responsibility and accountability</a>	<a href="#">Management of Consequences – Disciplinary Process</a>	<a href="#">Appeal Procedure</a>
<a href="#">Policy Governance</a>	<a href="#">Appendix 1. Prohibition SAN</a>	<a href="#">Appendix 2. Improvement SAN</a>
<a href="#">Appendix 3. SAN Flow Chart</a>	<a href="#">Appendix 4. Improvement and Prohibition Notices Explained</a>	

## Responsibilities

<a href="#">Somerset Council</a>	<a href="#">Directors and Delegated Senior Managers</a>
<a href="#">Managers</a>	<a href="#">Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU)</a>
<a href="#">Human Resources</a>	<a href="#">Contract Owners</a>

### Somerset Council:

- Somerset Council so far as is reasonably practicable, will ensure the highest standard of H&S is achieved and maintained when undertaking all aspects of our business operations and that a firm but fair approach to the enforcement of our policies and safe systems are endorsed by those who represent The Council.

### Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will:

- Appoint both financial and physical resources to ensure the successful implementation of The Council's H&S policies.
- Be held responsible and accountable for ensuring that activities within their area of control are undertaken so far as is reasonably practicable in a safe manner without exposing any persons to the risk of harm.
- Be responsible for hearing appeals against a SAN and ensure a fair and just decision is made accordingly.
- Ensure that all aspects of this Policy are complied with and implemented.
- Ensure that all persons under their direction or management comply with the provisions laid out in this Policy.
- Ensure the Executive Leadership Team are informed when a SAN has been issued.

### Managers will:

- When required, assist the CHSU with the administration and issuing of SANs in their area of control.
- Attempt to resolve the safety issue with the relevant CHSU Officer.
- Ensure that the relevant Director is informed that a SAN has been issued.
- Ensure that any remedial action timeframes are met.

- When required monitor the progress of improvements and ensure additional controls are adequate.
- Provide accurate and timely updates to the relevant Director as to the progress of remedial actions communication.
- Ensure that all aspects of the relevant notices are complied with in accordance with this Policy.
- Undertake site/work area inspections and audits in their area of control as and when required.

### **Corporate Health and Safety Officers (CHSO) will:**

- When notified of a safety issue, attempt to resolve the safety issue with the relevant responsible person who has control of the work activity.
- Apply the principals of proportionality when issuing a SAN.
- Give a direction to cease an unsafe activity, where a serious safety issue has been reported, and the severity is such that there is reasonable belief serious injury or ill health may occur.
- Notify the relevant Director, that a SAN has been issued.
- Notify the Chair of the Health Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG), that a SAN has been issued.
- Ensure that the SAN remains in place until effective controls have been implemented or the SAN has been successfully appealed.
- Ensure the recipient of the SAN is aware of this policy.
- Approve controls that are to be implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk of serious injury or ill health and monitor the effectiveness of control measures.
- In agreement with key stakeholders, remove a SAN once approved remedial action has been completed.
- Report any instances of failure to satisfy a SAN to the Corporate Leadership Team.
- Provide any request of information pertaining to a SAN to a legitimate approved interested party.
- Include a summary of SANs issued in reports to the HSWSG.

### **Human Resources will:**

- Facilitate support with consideration to personal impacts that a SAN may have on an individual from the issuing of a SAN.
- Facilitate disciplinary proceedings that arise from the issuing of a SAN, that may have resulted in exposing a person/s to the risk of harm.

### **Contract Owners will:**

- Ensure that contractors under their control to undertake work for The Council do so in a safe manner, complying with relevant Council Policies, procedures, and processes. Any unsafe practices are to be reported to the relevant CHSO for address.

- Give direction to the contractor to cease a work activity, when a serious safety issue is identified or reported which may give rise to a risk of serious injury or ill health.
- Ensure any SAN issued to a contractor is recorded and placed on the contractor's file.
- Where more than one SAN is issued to a contractor on a single project, the work is to cease until the contractor has reviewed their safe work practices and implemented the necessary controls to eliminate or mitigate identified risk to a level as low as is reasonably practicable.

## Management of Consequences – Disciplinary Process

- In the event of issuing Prohibition or Improvement Notices, to either an individual team or third party, The Council may investigate the matter further and dependent of the outcome possible disciplinary processes may be initiated in line with The Councils established [disciplinary procedures](#) as administered by the Human Resources (HR) Department.
- The stage at which the matter is escalated to HR to initiate disciplinary proceedings will be dependent on the severity of the situation and each case will be assessed on its own merit.
- Prior to any referral to HR to initiate a disciplinary process, the following will be conducted; An investigation of the event, involving the CHSO, the direct reporting manager and the most appropriate Director,  
Completion of a report defining the reasons for escalating to disciplinary, including details of the compliancy non-conformance.

## Appeal Procedure

- Directors may appeal to have a Notice overturned.
- All appeals will be heard by the Workforce Service Director, except for those involving Notices served within the Workforce business area which will be heard by another nominated Director.
- A Prohibition Notice shall remain in effect while an appeal is considered.
- An Improvement notice shall be suspended while the appeal is considered.
- The Workforce Service Director shall consult with the CHSU Manager as part of the appeal process and before deciding on any appeal.
- The CHSU Manager may amend the conditions of any SAN to take account of the result of an appeal.

## Monitoring

- The issuing of SANs will be measured and monitored to ensure practices are in accordance with this Policy.
- Following the issuing of a SAN, monitoring of The Council and contractor's safety performance will be assessed through regular site inspections undertaken by the relevant responsible manager in control of the work area/site.

- Monitoring will involve undertaking audits of contractors Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) and safe systems of work, to ensure remedial actions applicable to the SAN have been implemented.
- Inspections and audits are to be undertaken by a CHSO or another deemed competent person when nominated as a responsible person.
- Copies of issued SANs shall be retained in line with The Council's General Retention Schedule and shall be accessible to interested parties in a known location on SharePoint

# Governance Arrangements

## Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's disciplinary procedure.

## Policy Governance

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<b>Responsible</b>	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Accountable</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Consulted</b>	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
<b>Informed</b>	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

## Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

## Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Daniel Thomas	V1.0	New policy - draft

## Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Service Director of Workforce and chair of HSWSG		
HR Committee		

## **Appendixes.**

- Appendix 1. Prohibition SAN
- Appendix 2. Improvement SAN
- Appendix 3. SAN Flow Chart
- Appendix 4. Improvement and Prohibition Notices Explained

## Appendix 1. Prohibition SAN

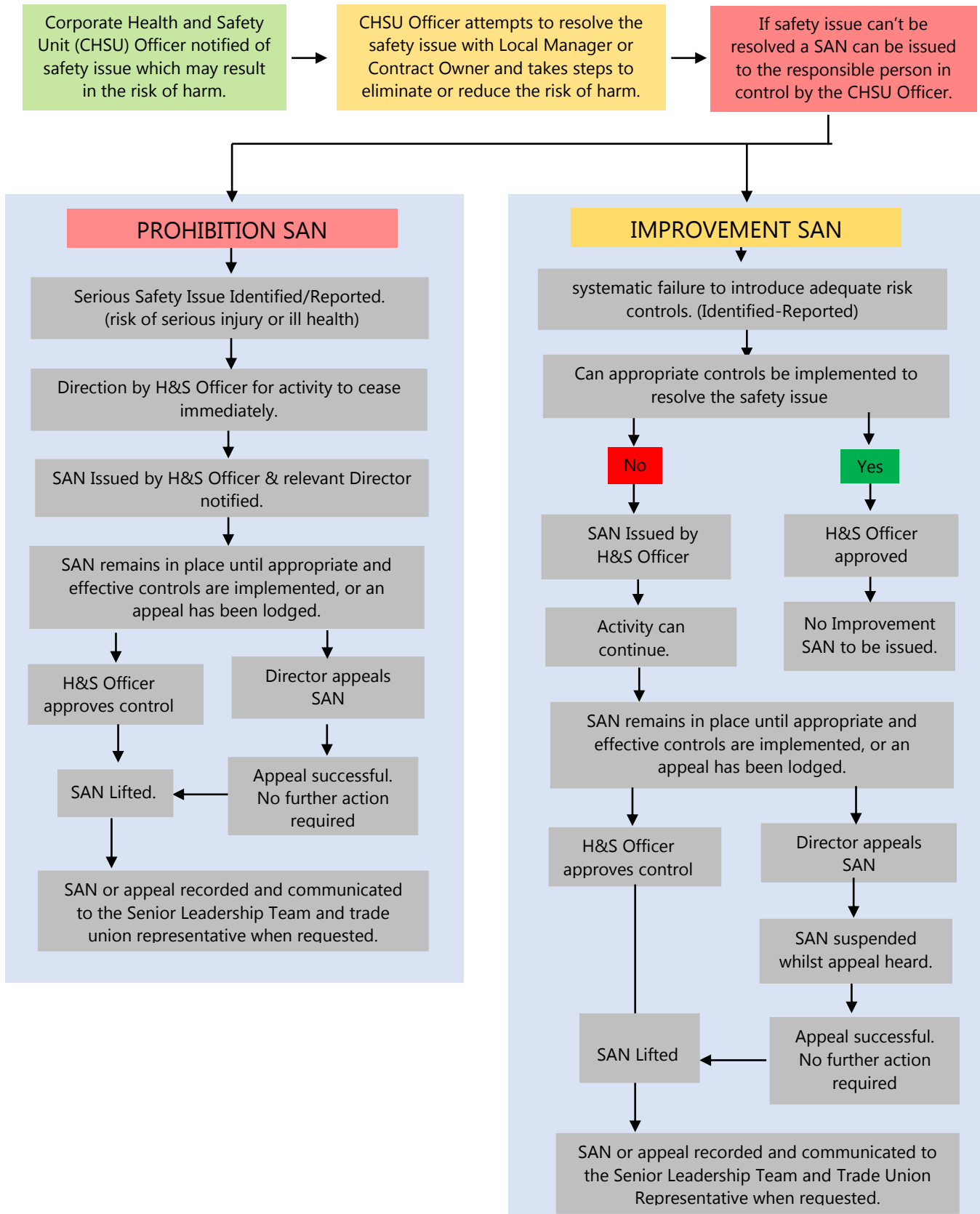
Prohibition Notice Reference	
Issued to (team and/or individual)	
Notice Activation Date	
Person in receipt of notice	
Reason for issue	<p><b>ALL WORK ACTIVITIES MUST CEASE IMMEDIATELY</b>  <i>As a result of the significant safety risks to personal safety involving the activity below: -</i></p>
	<p><i>Resulting in the following risks: -</i></p>
<b>SPECIFIC ACTION REQUIRED</b>	
<p>These specific remedial measures must be undertaken within the given timescale to achieve compliance with legal standards or internal policy, for the SAN to be lifted.</p>	
<b>Remedial Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
	Immediate
	Immediate
	Immediate
<b>Condition of Notice</b>	Until the actions detailed above are met <b>ALL WORK ACTIVITIES MUST CEASE IMMEDIATELY</b>
<b>Issued By (and position)</b>	
<b>Date Director/Assistant Director Notified</b>	

## Appendix 2. Improvement SAN

Improvement Notice Reference	
Issued to (team and/or individual)	
Notice Activation Date	
Person in receipt of notice	
Reason for issue	<i>As a result of the failure to introduce/adhere to, adequate risk controls in relation to the following activity: -</i>
	<i>Resulting in the following risks: -</i>
<b><u>SPECIFIC ACTION REQUIRED</u></b>	
These specific remedial measures must be undertaken within the given timescale to achieve compliance with legal standards or internal policy	
<b>Remedial Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Condition of Notice</b>	Until the actions detailed above are met <b>this Improvement Notice will be raised as a risk on the Service H &amp; S Risk Register</b>
<b>Issued By (and position)</b>	
<b>Date Director/Assistant Director Notified</b>	



**Appendix 3. SAN Flow Chart**



## Appendix 4: Improvement and Prohibition Notices Explained

### What is an Improvement Notice?

- An improvement notice means there needs to be an improvement.
- The notice will identify what safety improvements need to be addressed to rectify the unsafe condition.
- The improvement notice applies as soon as it is issued but it doesn't require immediate action (although you should take action as soon as you reasonably can). The improvement notice won't just tell you what needs to be improved, but also when it needs to be improved by. A deadline. A time limit by which you need to fix the issue. So, instead of stopping work right away, you get time to make things right.
- You shouldn't wait until the deadline to fix any problems. If any issues arise or an accident happens, and you haven't attempted to make the relevant safety improvements, there could be further consequences. So, it's best to get the matter resolved as quickly as you can.
- But, putting in place safety measures can take time. If you have been issued with an improvement notice, you have time on your side to make the necessary changes.
- If you feel an improvement notice is wrong, it can be appealed. During the appeal of an improvement notice, the notice is suspended while the appeal takes place.

### What is a Prohibition Notice?

- A prohibition notice will be issued for more serious health and safety problems. This notice has more of an immediate impact because it stops work. As soon a prohibition notice is issued, the activity must stop.
- A prohibition notice would be issued where there is a serious risk of personal injury to one or more people. For example, if moving parts of machinery are not guarded, or work at height is being carried out without any edge protection.
- This type of notice is usually issued in person, to the person carrying out the activity, even if they are not legally responsible for the safety measures. This is to make sure they stop work, and the dangerous activity, right away.
- A copy of the notice will then be issued to the company/employer, who has legal responsibilities to ensure the work is carried out safely.
- Unlike the improvement notice, the prohibition notice doesn't need a deadline. Work just simply cannot happen until the matters are resolved.
- Sometimes, where work is happening, the prohibition notice may be delayed allowing the section of work to finish, if stopping immediately would introduce additional risks, or for example, if workers need to get to a place of safety.
- The work doesn't necessarily need to have taken place for a prohibition notice to be issued. Where there is an anticipation that something dangerous is about to happen, this notice can be issued to stop that work from happening.
- Just like with an improvement notice, you have the right to appeal against a prohibition notice, if you feel it is wrong. However, the prohibition notice remains in place during the appeal process.



**Somerset**  
Council

# **HS17 New and Expectant Parents Policy.**

<b>Organisation</b>	Somerset Council
<b>Title</b>	New and Expectant Parents Policy
<b>Author</b>	Francesca Benson
<b>Owner</b>	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Protective Marking</b>	Official – Unclassified
<b>Primary legislation</b>	<a href="#"><u>Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999</u></a>

## Policy on a page

This policy aims to reduce any identified risks to new and expectant parents and to provide practical guidance on measures to protect them. Somerset Council (The Council) will ensure that all employees, who are new or expectant parents, are not exposed to unacceptable risks whilst they are at work.

In order to comply with the above, this policy provides the Council's rules that must be followed, the standards to be maintained, and signposts to further guidance. It also highlights the risks to users, clients and the Council and the potential consequences of breaching this policy.

This document will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, and Volunteers.**

### Key Messages

- This policy and associated guidance apply to all employees who are pregnant, who have given birth in the last 6 months, and those breastfeeding, this includes transgender and non-binary people. Therefore, to ensure the document is inclusive, 'new and expectant parents' is the term used to describe all relevant employees.
- Employees who are pregnant, have given birth in the last 6 months, and those breastfeeding, must notify their manager in writing as soon as possible.
- Managers must use the risk assessment process, identified in this document, and described in the associated guidance, to ensure that all risks facing new or expectant parents are assessed and reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Managers must ensure that any necessary control measures, identified by the risk assessment, are implemented, followed, monitored, reviewed and, if necessary, revised.

**This "policy on a page" is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements stated.**

## Responsibilities

<a href="#">Somerset Council</a>	<a href="#">Directors and Delegated Senior Managers</a>
<a href="#">Managers</a>	<a href="#">Employees</a>
<a href="#">Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU)</a>	

### Somerset Council will:

- Ensure that all employees, who are new or expectant parents, are not exposed to unacceptable risks whilst they are at work.
- Use the risk assessment process, explained in this document and associated guidance to ensure that all risks facing new or expectant parents are assessed and reduced so far as is reasonably practicable. This process has two key elements namely:
  - identifying potential hazards in the workplace to pregnant employees, and passing this information on to all relevant employees of child-bearing age
  - specific assessments, which should be reviewed regularly, for any employee who is pregnant, or who has returned to work following a birth or miscarriage, or who is breast-feeding (see HS F17).
- Provide suitable facilities, including:
  - providing a place for pregnant and breastfeeding parents to rest
  - where practicable, provide a private room for nursing parents to express and store breast milk (toilet facilities are not suitable for this purpose).

### Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will:

- Ensure that those managers, responsible for carrying out risk assessments, are aware of this policy, associated guidance, and the required risk assessment process.

### Managers will ensure that:

- New and expectant parents are encouraged to inform their employer, of their condition, at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The highest level of confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Risk assessments are carried out:
  - that identify the risks to pregnant workers, from work activities, and that all relevant employees of child-bearing age are informed of these risks for each individual new or expectant parent (see form HS F17) to assess and reduce the risks to that specific employee.
- Any necessary control measures, identified by the risk assessment, are implemented, followed, monitored, reviewed and, if necessary, revised.
- Where significant risk cannot be controlled or removed, managers must take the following action:
  - Action 1 – Adjust the working conditions or hours to avoid the risk, if that's not possible;
  - Action 2 – Give them suitable alternative work, if that's not possible;

- Action 3 - Suspend the worker on paid leave for as long as necessary to protect their health and safety and that of their child. Managers should discuss this process with the CHSU and the council's HR Advisory Team.
- New and expectant parents are informed of any risks, to them and/or their child, and the measures taken to protect them.
- Any adverse incidents are immediately reported and investigated.
- Provision is made to support new and expectant parents who need to take time off work, for medical reasons, associated with their condition.
- HR receive a copy of the F17 risk assessment, which will be kept on the employee personnel file.

### **Employees who are new or expectant parents will:**

- Inform their general practitioner or midwife of the nature of their work.
- Notify their manager in writing as soon as possible, if they are pregnant, have given birth in the last 6 months, or are breast feeding.
- Follow any arrangements implemented for their protection at work, including attending training sessions and complying with any relevant control measures stated in the risk assessment.
- Not act in a manner that adversely affects their own health and safety, that of their child and/or anyone else.
- Keep their manager informed of any concerns or difficulties they may have.
- Keep their manager informed of any appointments which will take place during work hours.

### **Human Resources will:**

- Where reasonable, support staff and managers regarding any changes to duties or work patterns.
- Offer advice and guidance which relates to the relevant HR policy for new and expectant parents.
- Where required, ensure appropriate provision of Occupational Health Service and Counselling service.

### **The Corporate Health and Safety Team will:**

- Maintain and communicate this policy.
- Offer advice on the requirements of this policy and associated guidance.
- Audit compliance with this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.

## **Governance Arrangements**

### **Policy Compliance**

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's disciplinary procedure.

### **Policy Governance**

The following table identifies who within Somerset Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

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<b>Responsible</b>	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Accountable</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Consulted</b>	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
<b>Informed</b>	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

## Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

## Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Francesca Benson	V1.0	New policy - draft

## Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Service Director of Workforce and chair of HSWSG		
HR Committee		

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**Somerset  
Council**

# **HS42 Confined Spaces Policy.**

<b>Organisation</b>	Somerset Council
<b>Title</b>	Confined Spaces
<b>Author</b>	Jo Coles
<b>Owner</b>	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Protective Marking</b>	Official – Unclassified
<b>Primary Legislation</b>	<a href="#"><u>The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997</u></a>

## Policy on a Page

For the purpose of this policy, a Confined Space is defined as follows:

A confined space is one which is both enclosed or largely enclosed and has a reasonably foreseeable specified risk to workers of:

- fire
- explosion
- loss of consciousness
- asphyxiation
- drowning

This Confined Spaces policy supports and extends on the Council's overarching Health and Safety Statement of Intent and is supported by additional guidance on how best to protect employees carrying out those operations which involve confined space working.

The Council will implement appropriate arrangements for the management of confined space working and areas of confined spaces under its control.

This document will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Contractors, Secondees and Volunteers.**

### Key Messages

- Somerset Council will ensure that through its management of these areas, and supervision of staff, that workplace risks from Confined Spaces are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Those responsible for managing confined space activities will ensure employees are provided with suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision.
- Managers must ensure that risk assessments/permits to work are carried out for all work relating to Confined Space activities which cannot be avoided.

**This "policy on a page" is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements stated.**

## Responsibilities

<a href="#">Somerset Council</a>	<a href="#">Directors and Senior Managers</a>	<a href="#">Service Managers</a>
<a href="#">Authorised Persons (AP) who issue permits to work</a>	<a href="#">Premise Managers, Property Services, or those in control of premises</a>	
<a href="#">Employees</a>	<a href="#">Corporate Health and Safety Unit</a>	

### Somerset Council will ensure:

- Compliance with The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997.
- Through the management of its Confined Spaces and the supervision of its staff/contractors, and information/equipment provided to its customers, that risks arising from these areas and activities are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

### Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will:

- Ensure that this policy and guidance is implemented in their respective business areas.
- Ensure business areas under their control are adequately resourced to implement effective arrangements to control risks associated with confined space working so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that Managers and employees under their control whose duties involve working in Confined Spaces are trained as appropriate in the policy and procedures, safe working practices, systems & Permits to Work (PTW).

### Service Managers will:

- Ensure that activities involving confined spaces are avoided, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out for all confined space work activities which cannot be avoided, and safe systems of work are applied.
- Ensure the requirement for personal protective equipment is given adequate consideration when undertaking the risk assessments.
- Ensure employees are consulted during the risk assessment process.
- Ensure that all confined working is properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in a safe manner.
- Plan for emergencies, implement effective rescue procedures, and where risk assessments have identified a need, issue permits to work.
- Provide direction, guidance, and support for the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure all work equipment associated with confined space working is properly inspected and maintained.

- Ensure that all staff involved in confined space working are aware of this policy, understand its contents and comply with local procedures and safe systems of work.
- Ensure recruiting managers clearly outline confined space work activities in the recruitment information made available to prospective applicants. Giving due regard for the candidate's ability to complete the tasks required.
- Ensure all staff who work in confined spaces are fit to do so.
- Ensure that staff who work in confined spaces and those who issue permits to work, have appropriate information, instruction, training, and supervision.
- Ensure all contractors employed are competent to undertake confined space working and are appropriately managed when on site.

### **Authorised Persons (AP) who issue permits to work will:**

- Be responsible for the issue of the permit to work and its cancellation.
- Ensure those concerned are working in accordance with their risk assessments and safe systems of work.
- Ensure all necessary precautions, including emergency procedures are considered and implemented where required.
- Check safety arrangements as required by the permit procedures.
- Act upon any report of an activity or defect likely to endanger safety.
- Check the workplace before a permit is issued.
- Check work equipment installed or assembled prior to use.
- Implement a permit to work process for confined space working.

### **Premises Managers, Property Services, or those in control of premises will:**

- Ensure all workers have sufficient knowledge of the area, where required providing detailed site plans and other information relevant to the planning of confined space working.
- Ensure risk assessments, safe systems of work and permits to work are in place before allowing confined space working to take place.
- Monitor any works to be carried out on The Council's premises.
- Ensure that in the case of new buildings and when modifying existing buildings, they are designed to minimise risks as effectively as possible.

### **Employees will:**

- Report any illness, medical condition, or medication that may prevent them from working in confined spaces.
- Identify and report any defects found in relation to equipment provided for confined space working.

- Co-operate with any training requirement and use the equipment supplied properly.
- Follow instructions or arrangements provided to them by their employer or person in control in compliance with the requirements and prohibitions under the relevant statutory provisions.
- Report unsafe acts and misuse of equipment used for confined space working.
- Act in accordance with policy, procedures, safe systems of work which pertain to confined space working.
- Co-operate with any training requirements and use equipment supplied properly.
- Report any unsafe acts, misuse of, or missing equipment.
- Request & attend training as required.
- Assist in the creation of Risk Assessments/Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) relating to the task.

### **The Corporate Health and Safety Unit will:**

- Offer advice to managers regarding this policy and associated guidance.
- Maintain and communicate this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.
- Provide technical advice when required.
- Provide assistance in seeking relevant training when requested/required.

## Governance Arrangements

### Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's disciplinary procedure.

### Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Somerset Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and publishing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation.

<b>Responsible</b>	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Accountable</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Consulted</b>	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
<b>Informed</b>	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

### Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

### Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Jo Coles	V1.0	New policy - draft

## Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Service Director of Workforce and chair of HSWG		
HR Committee		

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**Somerset  
Council**

# **HS33 Working Outside in the Sun and Extremes of Heat and Cold Policy.**

<b>Organisation</b>	Somerset Council
<b>Title</b>	Working Outside in the Sun and Extremes of Heat and Cold Policy
<b>Author</b>	Jo Coles
<b>Owner</b>	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Protective Marking</b>	Official – Unclassified
<b>Primary Legislation</b>	<a href="#">Health and Safety at Work Act 1974</a> <a href="#">Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992</a>

## Policy on a page

Somerset Council (The Council) have a legal obligation to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that workers carrying out work outside, in extreme heat or cold, must be able to carry out work without a risk to their health and safety. This obligation extends to protecting workers from the effects of solar ultraviolet radiation (SUVR) generated from exposure to sunlight.

The Council understands that there are no legally defined minimum or maximum outside working temperatures. However, The Council will ensure that all reasonably practicable steps are taken to prevent workers being exposed to risk of harm from extremes of heat and cold and SUVR.

The Council will ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is undertaken and that the principles of prevention are applied when implementing any preventive and protective measures for persons required to work outside in extreme heat or cold and where prolonged exposure to the SUVR may exist.

The Council will ensure that Health and Safety Representatives (HSR's) and workers, including the workers at risk and those with health conditions and disabilities are consulted when assessing the risk to workers' health. Both personal and environmental factors shall be considered when assessing the risk.

This document and associated guidance will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Contractors, Secondees and Volunteers.**

### Key Messages

- This Policy does not incorporate indoor working environments where specific thermal comfort obligations apply. This is covered in the HS20 Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.
- Risk relating to working outside in extremes of temperature incorporate acute and chronic health risks from excess exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation (SUVR).
- The law does not state specific minimum or maximum outside working temperatures. Risk relating to working outdoors must be assessed by undertaking a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

**This “policy on a page” is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements stated.**

## Responsibilities

<a href="#">Somerset Council</a>	<a href="#">Directors and Delegated Senior Managers</a>
<a href="#">Service Managers and those with direct line management responsibilities</a>	<a href="#">Employees</a>
<a href="#">Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU)</a>	<a href="#">Appendix 1 – Supporting Guidance</a>

### Somerset Council will ensure:

- That adequate and appropriate resources, both physical and financial are provided to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable that the health of employees is not adversely affected from exposure to extreme levels of temperature when undertaking work outside.

### Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will ensure:

- All aspects of this Policy are implemented within their area of control.

### Managers will ensure:

- All aspects of this Policy are implemented into their area of control.
- A suitable and sufficient risk assessment is completed in consultation with workers and their representatives.
- Working habits and current practices are reviewed periodically and (where necessary) changed, to control the risks.
- Both personal and environmental factors are considered when assessing risks to workers' health arising from working in hot or cold environments and in the sun.
- Suitable and appropriate personal protective equipment is provided to protect workers from extremes of heat, cold and SUVR.
- Where employees are at risk from SUVR, ensure appropriate sun protection including:
  - Sun protective clothing
  - Sun protective hats
  - Sunscreen at least Factor 15<sup>1</sup> (Applied regularly in accordance with manufacture recommendations)
- Environmental conditions and the health and safety of workers are monitored when work involves prolonged or repeated exposure to heat, cold or SUVR.

- Health surveillance or medical screening is considered, and where required, provided for staff who have special requirements due to pregnancy, certain illnesses, disabilities and/or maybe taking medication.
- Provide information, training, and instruction to workers to enable workers to recognise the early symptoms of heat-related illness or hypothermia in themselves and others.
- Information, training, and instruction is provided to workers on acute and chronic adverse effects of sun exposure and how to manage and protect themselves from exposure.
- Where possible schedule work outside, to minimise exposure to heat, cold and SUVR.
- Where possible, formal systems of work are introduced to limit exposure, e.g., flexible working patterns, job rotation.
- Sufficient breaks, shelter and accessible cold drinking water and hot drinks are provided.
- Safe work procedures in relation to managing risk associated with working outside in hot and cold environments are developed and implemented.
- Ensure that incident reports are recorded when employees raise concerns or report ill health effects associated with working in the sun or extremes of heat and cold.
- Comply with requirements of the Heatwave Plan for England: Somerset Delivery Framework, and Cold Weather Plan for England: Somerset Delivery Framework, including, where necessary reviewing relevant risk assessments. The latest version is available through the Civil Contingency Unit (CCU) [InfoCCU@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:InfoCCU@somerset.gov.uk).

Every individual's skin is different and some employees with sensitive skin can receive allergic reactions to some types of sunscreens, therefore, where an agreement is made between a manager and employee, sunscreen can be purchased by the employee and the cost to be authorised by the manager. The employee must be refunded the cost on production of receipts.

### **Employees will ensure:**

- That incidents and hazards arising from exposure to excessive heat, cold and SUVR whilst working outside are reported.
- Any symptoms as a result of exposure to excessive heat, cold and SUVR in themselves or other workers are reported.
- Compliance with all reasonable instruction given to protect against adverse H&S conditions from exposure to thermal risk and SUVR.

- Ensure all personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by The Council is worn and maintained, including sunscreen and other PPE to protect against exposure to SUVR.
- They are able to recognise warning signs if their health is being affected by work in extreme heat, cold and in the sun.

### **The Corporate Health and Safety Team will ensure:**

- Timely, accurate advice and support to managers and employees in relation to working in hot and cold temperatures and SUVR.
- Provide guidance and information in relation to eliminating and mitigating risk associated with exposure to extreme temperatures and SUVR.
- Maintain and communicate this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.

## **Appendix 1 – Supporting Guidance**

### **Schools**

Volume 4 – [Guidance for schools](#) gives comprehensive guidance on Sun Protection for School Children.

### **Guided Walks and Outdoor Activities**

All staff involved in organising and running guided walks/activities for members of the public are to inform them of the appropriate sun protection to take before commencing the walk/activity.

### **Outdoor Working**

Managers responsible for managing work-related activities which involve outdoor working should refer to the HSE '[Temperature in the workplace](#)' and '[Skin at work: Outdoor workers and sun exposure](#)' guidance for further information.

Managers and employees are welcome to contact the [Health and Safety team](#) for specific advice and guidance.

## Governance Arrangements

### Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's disciplinary procedure.

### Policy Governance

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- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation.

<b>Responsible</b>	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Accountable</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Consulted</b>	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
<b>Informed</b>	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties (on request).

### Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

### Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Jo Coles	V1.0	New policy - draft

## Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Director of HR and Chair of HSWSG		
HR Policy Committee		

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**Somerset**  
Council

# HS41 Water Assets Policy.

<b>Organisation</b>	Somerset Council
<b>Title</b>	Water Assets Policy
<b>Author</b>	Jo Coles
<b>Owner</b>	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Protective Marking</b>	Official – Unclassified
<b>Primary legislation</b>	<a href="#">Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974</a> <a href="#">Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999</a>

## Policy on a page

The Council is responsible for several water assets. For the purpose, of this policy, a water asset is defined as “*an area of water that is able to be accessed by the public and used in a variety of different leisure activities*”. The Council, when assessing risk of its water assets, will take all ‘reasonably practicable steps’ to protect people from danger.

These water assets are of varied size and shape and therefore their use is varied. The Council recognises the importance of water from an environmental perspective, and for recreation and leisure activities. The uses can be broadly fitted into the following categories:

- a) Those maintained entirely by a third party on a Council owned or operated site
- b) Assets owned and operated by the Council
- c) Those used for leisure activity, and of which are managed and maintained by the Council.

The Council will provide appropriate arrangements for the effective management of risk with water assets owned and operated by the Council. These arrangements will ensure that, ‘so far as is reasonably practical’, all water assets & all water related infrastructures which the Council is responsible for, are maintained in a safe condition for the benefit of users and the safety of employees. For this policy to be effective, it is essential that all persons involved in the management and development of these assets take responsibility for their role.

This document and associated guidance will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Contractors** (on request), **Secondees and Volunteers**.

### Key Message

The Council will ensure that through its management of these areas, and supervision of staff, that workplace risks arising from open water activities and the management of water related assets are eliminated, or where this is not possible be reduced to a level as low as reasonably practicable, through the implementation of risk controls adopted using a hierarchy of control approach.

**This “policy on a page” is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements stated.**

# Responsibilities

<a href="#">Somerset Council</a>	<a href="#">Directors and Delegated Senior Managers</a>
<a href="#">Service Managers and those with direct line manager responsibilities</a>	<a href="#">Those in control of Water Assets</a>
<a href="#">Employees</a>	<a href="#">Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU)</a>

## Somerset Council will ensure:

- Compliance with this policy and any associated documents relating to it.
- The effective and efficient management of its water assets by the provision of adequate and appropriate resources to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that employees, members, volunteers, contractors, and the general public are protected from the risk of harm.

## Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will:

- Ensure that relevant managers & staff under their control are trained as appropriate in the requirements of this policy, its related procedures, and safe systems of work.
- Ensure that relevant staff to whom this policy applies are aware of their responsibilities and how to discharge them with regard to health & safety.

## Service Managers and those with direct line-manager responsibilities will:

- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out for all work activities undertaken in or around water which cannot be avoided.
- Ensure that only appropriately trained staff work around water assets.
- Draw to the attention of employees, their duties with respect to this policy.
- Make sure employees are aware of what action they are required to take to protect their own and others personal safety.
- Ensure emergency, PPE (personal Protective Equipment) and safety equipment are kept in good working condition regularly serviced and maintained.
- Ensure persons are provided with sufficient knowledge and training and are deemed competent to implement the requirements of this policy and emergency procedures.
- Monitor the effectiveness of and level of compliance with the policy and emergency procedures through regular inspections, auditing, and checks on adherence to relevant procedures and processes that support this policy.

## **Those in control of Water Assets (Property Services, Coastal & Environmental Protection, Land Drainage, Port Officers & Harbour Masters) - will:**

- Ensure Risk Assessments for the management of water assets under their control are undertaken and are fit for their intended purpose.
- Asset registers are kept up to date.
- Ensure all assets are listed which may include but is not limited to- waterways, SUDs (sustainable urban drainage), ponds, parcels of land, culverts, beaches, docks.
- Follow Port & Marine Safety Code, SIP 020 (Guidance on water safety & use of buoyancy equipment in ports)
- Audit & Maintain Safety Signage
- Carry out routine checks on safety equipment such as life buoys and ladders used for escape purposes. Replace as required.
- Main/Service Pumping stations, flood relief schemes, flood barrier/loggers, platforms and sluice gates that fall under the Council's area of responsibility.

## **Employees will:**

- Act in accordance with the policy, procedures, safe systems of work or instruction given to them.
- Co-operate with any training requirements and use equipment supplied properly.
- Report any unsafe acts, misuse of, or missing equipment i.e., life buoys.

## **The Corporate Health and Safety Team will:**

- Offer advice to managers regarding this policy.
- Maintain & communicate this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.
- Provide assistance in seeking relevant training.

# Governance Arrangements

## Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's disciplinary procedure.

## Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Somerset Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

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<b>Responsible</b>	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Accountable</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Consulted</b>	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
<b>Informed</b>	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

## Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

## Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Jo Coles	V1.0	New policy - draft

## Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Service Director of Workforce and chair of HSWSG		
HR Committee		



**Somerset**  
Council

# **HS07 Biological Agent (Infection Control and Blood-Borne Virus) Policy.**

<b>Organisation</b>	Somerset Council
<b>Title</b>	Biological Agent (Infection control and Blood-borne Viruses)
<b>Author</b>	Francesca Benson
<b>Owner</b>	The Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Protective Marking</b>	Official – Unclassified
<b>Primary legislation</b>	<a href="#"><u>Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002</u></a>

## Policy on a page

Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 a biological agent is defined as “*A micro- organism, cell culture, or human endoparasite, where or not genetically modified, which may cause infection, allergy, toxicity or otherwise create a hazard to human health.*”

There are different sources of biological agent which staff could interact with through their workplace activities. These sources are divided into the following groups:

- **Human sources** – transferred by body fluids. An example of this type is tuberculosis or viral Hepatitis.
- **Animal sources** – zoonotic diseases. These are disease which can pass from animals to humans.
- **Plant sources** – transfer from plant to human. This is when the pathogen is passed on to a human through direct contact, by pollen, or from an insect. An example of this is *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. This disease can cause illness to people who have a compromised immune system.
- **Environmental sources** – these types of biological agents originate from the environment. An example is *Legionellosis* caused by Legionella bacteria. This bacterium naturally occurs in damp soil and water courses.

To protect employees the Council has created this policy and supporting guidance to provide, inform and support to control the risk of biological agents.

This document and associated guidance will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Contractors, Secondees and Volunteers.**

### Key Messages

- A risk assessment must be completed, and adequate training provided, for any activity where an employee may be exposed to any source of biological agent.
- Provision for needle stick injuries protocol, vaccinations, control measures, information and support for employees that may be exposed to any source of biological agent.

**This “policy on a page” is a summary of the detailed policy and guidance documents, please ensure you read, understand, and comply with the arrangements**



## Responsibilities

<a href="#">Somerset Council</a>	<a href="#">Directors and Delegated Senior Managers</a>
<a href="#">Service Managers and those with direct line-management responsibilities</a>	<a href="#">Premise Managers, Property Services, or others in control of premises</a>
<a href="#">Employees</a>	<a href="#">Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU)</a>

### Somerset Council will:

- Provide sufficient information to identify work activities, environments, and persons at risk from transmitting blood-borne diseases, infections, or other diseases.
- Provide suitable training and PPE for work activities, environments, and persons at risk from the transmission of biological agent disease.
- Provide managers with information about the transmission of blood-borne viruses and infectious diseases, and management standards for identifying the risk of exposure.
- Immunisation scheme is offered at no financial or time costs to those employees who, through the process of risk assessment, are identified as high risk to blood-borne diseases through the working activities they provide.
- Monitor immunisation programmes and maintain details of vaccinations, including boosters.
- Provide access to a specific counselling service\* for an employee who has had a high-risk penetration injury by ensuring notification of incidents to Public Health England South-West health protection team (Tel: 0300 3038162) and ensuring referral to occupational health services (Tel: 012723 976982).

\*Counselling services are available to Somerset Council staff through Care First

### Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will:

- Ensure that all managers and staff under their control are trained as appropriate in the requirements of this policy, its related procedures, and safe systems of work.
- Ensure that ALL staff to whom this policy applies are aware of their responsibilities and how to discharge them regarding health and safety.

### Service Managers and those with direct line-management responsibilities will:

- Use the information, guidance, and links within this policy to assess the risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses and infectious diseases associated with exposure in each service area and take all reasonably practical measures to prevent transmission of infection, including the establishment of appropriate procedures and control measures.
- Inform employees of the level of risk in their work area.
- Provide employees with guidance on standard infection control procedures to reduce the risks of transmission of blood borne diseases and other diseases.
- Ensure that all staff operate in accordance with good hygiene practices and safe systems of work.
- Ensure provision of appropriate PPE, equipment, clinical waste disposal and safe sharps.
- Ensure employees know of their duty to avoid placing themselves at risk.

- As part of a risk assessment, assess the individual's HIV, HBV, or HBC status, and adjust working practices to reduce onwards transmission from staff with a positive status. Keeping information about an individual's status confidential. Information should not be disclosed on the basis that it might protect those providing care for a service user.
- Establish employees in areas of known risk to confirm their Hepatitis B immune status. **If an employee does not have immunity and immunisation against Hepatitis B, they will be offered a course of vaccinations in work time and at no cost to the employee, or their work activities will be changed to reduce their exposure to the risk of transmission.**
- Provide employees with guidance and information to minimise the risk of sharps injuries, and the action they should take in the event of an injury.
- Ensure appropriate procedures are in place for response to a sharp's injury or other exposure event and ensure access to treatment.
- Record incidents involving exposure or potential exposure to blood-borne viruses on B-Safe so they can be reported to the Health and Safety Executive, when required.
- Ensure people who are vulnerable (e.g., pregnant, or expectant parents, immunosuppressed, or being treated for cancer) to a disease or infection have an individual risk assessment.
- Line managers, as part of the Annual Appraisal (AA) process, should include the completion of the interim 'Health, Safety and Wellbeing - Appraisal Meeting - Check List', where health and safety issues are to be raised.
- Line managers through consultation with staff and their representatives, which may be informally or through safety committees:
  - Must complete a risk assessment for BBV and infection control when there is a risk to the staff of exposure to BBV and infectious diseases during work activities.
  - Must ensure a safe system of work (SSOW) or procedures for tasks in which staff are at risk of exposure to BBV and infectious diseases during work activities.
  - Keep up to date with any changes in PHE, HSE or internal changes relating to managing the risk of exposure to BBV and infectious diseases for work activities. Cascade this inform to staff.
  - Keep records of staff training, risk assessments, tool kits and changes to SSOW or procedures.

### Employees must:

- Follow any system of work provided for them.
- Wear PPE provided by the Council or employer.
- Wear PPE correctly and dispose of it correctly. As stated in any risk assessment or SSOW.
- Report to their manager of any shortcomings they recognise in health and safety arrangements.
- Report to their manager any injury or condition which may increase the risk of transmission e.g., needlestick injuries, pregnancy, or any concerns related to immunosuppression.
- Report to their manager and to the CHSU of any injury, needlestick, contact with bodily fluids, animals or other situation which could have resulted in exposure to BBV or infectious disease.
- Co-operate in occupational health or health monitoring, unless disclaimer is completed
- Take part in any training required for biological agents, when required.
- Follow good hand hygiene practices.
- Follow office hygiene practices for offices e.g., wiping down shared equipment.

## **Premises Managers, Property Services, or those in control of premises will:**

- Use the information, guidance, and links associated with this policy to assess the risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses' infections or other disease associated with exposure in each service area and take all reasonably practical measures to prevent transmission of infection, including the establishment of appropriate procedures and control measures.
- Inform employees of the level of risk in their work area.
- Provide employees with guidance on standard infection control procedures to reduce the risks of transmission of blood borne diseases and other diseases.
- Ensure that all staff operate in accordance with good hygiene practices and safe systems of work.
- Ensure provision of appropriate PPE, clinical waste disposal and safe sharps.
- Inform employees of their duty to avoid placing themselves at risk.
- As part of risk assessment, assess individual's HIV, HBV or HBC status, and adjust working practices to reduce onwards transmission from staff with a positive status. Keeping information about an individual's status confidential. Information should not be disclosed on the basis that it might protect those providing care for a service user.
- Establish employees in areas of known risk to confirm their Hepatitis B immune status. **If an employee does not have immunity and immunisation against Hepatitis B, they will be offered a course of vaccinations in work time and at no cost to the employee, or their work activities will be changed to reduce their exposure to the risk of transmission.**
- Provide employees with guidance and information to minimise the risk of sharps injuries, and the action they should take in the event of an injury.
- Ensure appropriate procedures are in place for response to a sharp's injury or other exposure event and ensure access to treatment.
- Record incidents involving exposure or potential exposure to blood borne viruses on B-Safe so they can be reported to the Health and Safety Executive, when required.

## **The Corporate Health and Safety Team will:**

- Offer advice to managers regarding this policy.
- Maintain and communicate this policy.
- Review this policy at intervals not exceeding 3 years.
- Liaise with other agencies or authorities when required relating to BBV or infectious diseases.

## **Human Resources will:**

- Ensure appropriate provision of Occupational Health Service and Counselling service.
- Ensure all staff have completed the Occupational Health Questionnaire.
- Support staff if they declare as vulnerable at any point of their employment.

## Governance Arrangements

### Policy Compliance

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### Policy Governance

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<b>Responsible</b>	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
<b>Accountable</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Consulted</b>	LGR JNF Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
<b>Informed</b>	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

### Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

### Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
	Francesca Benson	V1.0	New policy - draft

## Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Service Director of Workforce and chair of HSWSG		
HR Committee		

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