

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Policy Date:	December 2025
Policy:	County Health and Safety Policy
Next Review Date:	December 2026

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Date:	August 2025
Replacing previous Policy dated:	August 2023
Review Date:	August 2026
Policy Type:	County Health and Safety Policy
Approval:	Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group
Author:	Simon Bates Head of Health & Safety
Email:	simon.bates@devon.gov.uk
Health & Safety Contacts:	Devon Health & Safety Service healthandsafety@devon.gov.uk Helpline: 01392 382027
Sponsor:	Donna Manson, Chief Executive
Associated policies:	This policy states in broad terms Devon County Council's commitment to managing health and safety including, in general terms, how roles and responsibilities are delegated. The "Arrangements", i.e. the measures to manage specific health and safety risks including more detailed health and safety policies, procedures and arrangements to address more specific risks, are documented separately. Appendix 2 of this document provides a list of the relevant documents.

CONTENTS

1.	Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent	page 4
2.	Organisation and Accountability	page 6
3.	Duties and responsibilities:	page 6
	• The Chief Executive	page 6
	• The Elected Member - Health and Safety	page 7
	• Head of Service with overall Responsibility for Health and Safety	page 7
	• Leadership Group, Heads of Service and Senior Managers	page 7
	• Line Managers and Supervisors	page 9
	• The Devon Health & Safety Service	page 10
	• Employee Health and Wellbeing	page 11
	• All Employees	page 11
	• Contractors and Partners	page 12
	• Service Users and Visitors	page 12
4.	Trade Union Health and Safety representatives	page 12
5.	Arrangements	page 13
6.	Review of Policy	page 13

Appendices

1.	Consultation and Committees Chart	page 14
2.	DCC Procedural Arrangements	page 15

	Policy History	page 17
--	-----------------------	---------

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

1. Devon County Council (the Authority) is committed to achieving high standards of health and safety performance throughout the organisation. This commitment will be afforded to all County Council employees and those that may be affected by the Council's work activities and as such will include service users, visitors, volunteers, contractors and the general public. In addition, the Authority will take account of the needs of those with protected characteristics where this affects their health and safety. The Authority is also committed to ensuring that all reasonable measures are in place to maintain and enhance employee wellbeing so that they can lead productive and healthy working lives.
2. The Authority recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and other relevant statutory provisions. This includes the duty to make and put into effect suitable arrangements for health and safety and employee wellbeing together with the funding and other resources necessary to carry them out. To this end, sections 2 and 3 of this policy outlines how the Authority will organise itself for health and safety purposes and set into effect its arrangements to identify and manage risks. This policy is supplemented by specific health and safety policies and arrangements which outline how Regulations, Policy and good practice etc. are applied throughout the Authority. These arrangements will include measures to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the provision of:
 - a) Plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe and without risk to health.
 - b) Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
 - c) Appropriate levels of information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure that all employees are aware of any hazards to which they may be exposed, and the measures used to control any significant risks arising.
 - d) Safe place of work together with safe access and egress to and from it.
 - e) A healthy work environment that promotes good physical and mental health and wellbeing and provides support services to benefit the wellbeing of employees and their families.
 - f) Effective systems for the monitoring of health and safety performance throughout the Authority together with means for reporting and responsibility for instigating any corrective measures found necessary.
 - g) A robust audit and review process designed to measure safety performance generally and the compliance with the Authority's policies and relevant statutory provisions.
3. The Authority will strive to meet the aims and goals of national initiatives. The Leadership Group, Members, Heads of Service, managers and employees each have an important role to play in achieving the degree of performance to which

this Authority aspires and to this end, their co-operation and commitment is essential. I am confident that we can rely upon all employees, Members, service users and contractors in helping to achieve our goals.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Donna Manson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Donna Manson - Chief Executive

2. ORGANISATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

GENERAL

- 2.1 This section of Devon County Council's Health and Safety Policy establishes and allocates a range of duties and responsibilities to both managers and employees throughout the Authority.
- 2.2 Health and safety arrangements at service and establishment level supplement and add to these duties and responsibilities to ensure that activities and risks of a more unique or specific nature are catered for. These arrangements and management systems will be formulated in a manner compatible with other management systems and controls that may apply.
- 2.3 The application of this policy will be fair, equitable and objective. To learn more about the Council's approach please see our Policy Equalities Statement.
- 2.4 In recognition of the size and diversity of this Authority, the following information is provided to assist in reaching an understanding of how the County Council organises itself for health and safety purposes:
- Appendix 1: Communication and Consultation arrangements
 - Appendix 2: Corporate health and safety documents that confirm Devon County Council's arrangements and that support this policy document, and signposting to other relevant DCC documentation

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive

- 3.1 The Chief Executive holds the overall responsibility to make and give effect to such arrangements and management systems as necessary for the health and safety of County Council employees and others affected by its activities. Such arrangements and management systems will apply to all work activities and be so designed and implemented as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all employees and that of the County Council's service users, contractors, volunteers and members of the public. To achieve these goals, the Chief Executive will:
- Ensure that all directors have sufficient competence in health and safety to allow them to fulfill their responsibilities
 - Set objectives and monitor management performance to verify that reporting directors and senior managers are meeting their health and safety accountabilities
 - Ensure that the necessary financial and other resources are provided to meet the County Council's objectives for health and safety and employee wellbeing

- Ensure that adequate competent health and safety advice and assistance is available to undertake the measures needed to comply with statutory requirements

The Elected Member - Health and Safety

- 3.2 An elected member is appointed to serve on the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group. The Health and Safety Lead Member will actively monitor and promote health and safety across the Council raising matters with Senior Management and relevant Committees as necessary.

Head of Service with Overall Responsibility for Health and Safety

- 3.3 The Chief Executive holds overall responsibility for health and safety across the authority and is advised by the Health and Safety Manager and by other specialists as may be appropriate. To meet these responsibilities the Chief Executive is required to:
- Have sufficient knowledge and understanding of health and safety law and good practice to effectively champion health and safety at board level and to promote high standards of performance throughout the Authority
 - Inform the Leadership Group of the level of health and safety performance achieved by the Authority as a whole as verified by management systems for monitoring, auditing and reviewing health and safety arrangements
 - Identify relevant key performance indicators for health and safety, co-ordinate the collection of relevant data and facilitate its use within the County Council for benchmarking purposes
 - Advise the Leadership Group of new developments in health and safety legislation and approved Codes of Practice together with proposals for new or amended management systems necessary to ensure legal compliance
 - Assist the Leadership Group in setting the Council's health and safety objectives and in the establishment of appropriate means of performance measurement
 - Co-ordinate measures for joint consultation with safety and employee representatives. This includes the allocation of specific research and development tasks and to continuously monitor the effectiveness of this forum.

Leadership Group, Heads of Service and Senior Managers

- 3.4 To meet the duties and responsibilities delegated by the Chief Executive, each Director, Head of Service and Senior Managers / Headteachers are required to:
- Ensure they have sufficient understanding of the County Council's Health and Safety Policy and bring it to the attention of all employees in their service, including those Devon County Council employees who work from home and at establishments run by other organisations

- Have sufficient knowledge of health and safety laws to enable them to discharge their duties and responsibilities
- Provide positive leadership and a visible commitment to the County Council's declared performance standards and management systems as outlined within the corporate Health and Safety Policy
- Provide and have in place, written Directorate Health and Safety Statement of Arrangements and procedures that build on and add to Corporate Arrangements, that are specifically tailored to meet the hazards and risks arising from the business functions and work activities of that part of the organisation. These are to be reviewed annually.
- Ensure that the necessary financial and other resources are provided so as to facilitate and meet the health and safety objectives of the County Council
- Ensure that competent advice is available for Service-specific risks such as clinical risks, highway working, etc.
- Monitor health and safety performance within the organisation through planning and setting objectives, establishing systems of inspection, audit and review
- Take all reasonable precautions to provide a healthy and safe working environment
- Ensure that health and safety issues are given equal priority with other management issues at regular management or quality review meetings
- Ensure that all accidents, incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences and cases of occupational disease or ill-health are recorded, reported, appropriately investigated and acted upon according to County Council policy and legal requirements
- Introduce and participate in appropriate means of consultation and communication with employees and their health and safety representatives. The means of such communication can include the Service, Team or establishment Health and Safety Groups
- Collaborate with the Devon Health & Safety Service in health and safety performance monitoring for internal/external audit and subsequent reporting on health and safety performance on a regular basis
- Ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken, recorded and reviewed as appropriate. To achieve this requirement, allocate and train sufficient numbers of key personnel having regard to the diversity, size and complexity of the organisation's activities and the degree of risk to which employees are exposed
- Ensure that all contractors, commissioned to undertake work on behalf of the Council, are appropriately selected in terms of competence for health and safety and managed accordingly. Management systems will include those for monitoring and reporting on contractor performance and their suitability for further commissions or appointments
- Have in place current, suitable and sufficient written emergency procedures for each site or workplace
- Where the Service, Team or establishment shares facilities with other employing organisations (either internal or external), ensure that there are suitable and sufficient arrangements for communicating and co-ordinating effective arrangements for health and safety
- Demonstrate commitment and support to the County Council's holistic approach to health and safety at work for employees, service users and customers by taking into full account all health and safety factors when planning and undertaking work.

Line Managers and Supervisors

3.5 Every manager and supervisor, so far as is reasonably practicable, is responsible at all times and in varying degrees, for the health and safety of all persons (including employees, service users, learners, visitors, volunteers, contractors and the general public) within their area of responsibility or control, including those Devon County Council employees who work from home and at establishments run by other organisations. As appropriate, this applies to every manager or supervisor beginning with the Chief Executive. Each must be aware of and comply with relevant County Council health and safety policies and arrangements, as well as the specific statutory provisions, guidance and Approved Codes of Practice applying to their specific work activities. A manager (especially in a school) may wish to assign one of their employees the role of Health and Safety Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator would provide the first point of contact on matters of health and safety within their Service, Team or establishment, including the provision of guidance and assistance on low risk issues. They would also ensure the dissemination and regular flow of health and safety advice and information to and from managers throughout their Directorate, Service, Team or establishment. Managers must ensure that:

- Regular hazard identification and risk assessment, including workplace, fire and work activity risk assessments are carried out and necessary actions completed
- Relevant records, including hazardous substance registers, risk assessments etc are held, reviewed annually and kept up to date to reflect significant changes
- All equipment is safe and checked on a regular basis by competent persons
- Hazardous substances are controlled according to legal and County Council requirements
- Health and safety information and training needs are assessed and duly provided
- All necessary activity or job instructions, warning notices and signs are provided
- No person works alone unless a risk assessment has been completed and appropriate arrangements put in place
- Appropriate protective clothing, equipment, devices and aids are selected and made available to those who need them and properly used, maintained or replaced as necessary
- All health and safety incidents are reported and investigated as appropriate to determine the cause and to expedite any corrective action required
- Health and safety objectives and targets are set to improve health and safety performance and monitor their attainment
- Health and safety topics are included on the agenda of management and team meetings
- All relevant health and safety considerations are applied to all employees both working in and away from their normal County Council workplace
- All contractors under their control have been appropriately selected and are competent in terms of health and safety and that their safety performance is appropriately monitored
- A good example is set for all employees, service users, learners, visitors, volunteers, contractors and the general public by always following Devon County Council's

Policies, Arrangements and procedures and wearing appropriate protective clothing and equipment as required

- All relevant information regarding those health and safety policies which have a Health at Work focus must be monitored and audited regularly especially those which have identified health surveillance needs at risk assessment
- Commitment must be given to health surveillance monitoring needs and rigorous data must be kept by managers where health surveillance needs have been identified
- If appointed, that the Health and Safety Co-ordinator has received sufficient instruction, training and resources as commensurate with the level of risk prevailing and will be assisted by the Devon Health and Safety Service.

The Devon Health & Safety Service

3.6 The County Council employs a number of specialist Health and Safety Advisers. The Head of Health & Safety, accountable to the Chief Executive, acts as the Regulation 7 Competent Person for the Council and leads and co-ordinates the development of the Authority's health and safety policies and strategies.

3.7 In relation to Health and Safety, this service is required to:

- Provide health and safety advice and assistance to managers and employees within their remit. Assist managers and employees in the application of policy and relevant health and safety legislation, guidance and Approved Codes of Practice (ACoP) as may apply to the business and service delivery needs
- Produce Corporate H&S Arrangements under this Policy and keep them updated and communicated to Services
- Manage the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group and highlight to senior managers any lack of Directorate representation
- Provide and update the Directorate, Service or Team on new legislation, guidance and ACoP's to enable it to respond cost effectively
- Be proactive in applying health and safety and risk management techniques within planning and review processes
- Assist senior managers in monitoring health and safety performance
- Initiate health and safety audits of the Service/Team/establishment activities personally or by external/internal arrangements to ensure that the various health and safety policies are implemented, and recommendations made for improvements where necessary
- Investigate selected accidents, incidents and cases of ill health, making recommendations on appropriate action
- Analyse and provide a statistical interpretation and commentary on health and safety incidents, accidents, ill health and dangerous occurrences
- Provide advice as requested on litigation from injuries, cases of ill health and the Council's response to enforcement actions
- Assist in the identification of health and safety training needs and the design and delivery of appropriate training

- Co-ordinate the service's approach to the safe placement and management of hazardous materials and processes
- Respond to and influence national policymaking
- Liaise with officers of the Health and Safety Executive, Fire Authority, other enforcing authorities and relevant agencies

Employee Health and Wellbeing

- 3.8 The County Council commissions an Occupational Health provision externally along with an Employee Assistance Programme and these services are managed by People and Culture.
- 3.9 In relation to occupational health and mental health and wellbeing, People and Culture in conjunction with the external service providers are responsible for providing a range of support services, information and advice to the Council on its workplace health and wellbeing needs by:
- Promoting effective people management by ensuring all employees have regular conversations about their health and wellbeing with their line manager,
 - Training and supporting line managers in effective management practices
 - Encouraging open conversations about mental health and wellbeing and providing support when employees are struggling
 - Routinely monitoring employee mental health and wellbeing by understanding available absence and other data, talking to employees and understanding risk factors.
 - Advising and assisting managers in managing sickness absence
 - Assisting in identifying training needs in areas relating to health and wellbeing at work
 - Responding to changing health and wellbeing needs within the organisation
 - Having a robust commitment to compliance with the protection of employee confidentiality
 - Providing the Managing Sickness Absence Policy for manager advice on dealing with employee sickness
- 3.10 In addition, in recognition of the importance of good workplace mental health and wellbeing, the Council's Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy sets out the core mental health and wellbeing standards to support improvement in mental health awareness, management and support, and compliance with legal responsibilities.

All Employees

- 3.11 All persons employed by Devon County Council, including official volunteers, have a duty to themselves, their colleagues, the Council, and the community they serve, to

work in a safe and responsible manner. To that end they must, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Assist the County Council in achieving its health and safety objectives
- Participate in any identified mandatory Health and Safety training
- Take action to prevent work related accidents and ill health
- Report unsafe processes, practices and equipment to supervisors or managers
- Raise health and safety concerns about themselves or others with supervisors or managers
- Report all health and safety incidents however minor to supervisors or managers
- Follow the appropriate safety rules and procedures relating to each work activity
- Use the control measures, protective clothing, equipment and devices where provided
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse anything provided in the interest of health and safety
- Co-operate in screening and health surveillance procedures as required
- Always set a good example to others and always behave in a responsible manner and never instigate or participate in any form of reckless behaviour

Contractors and Partners

3.12 To ensure that the Council meets requirements, it is expected that contractors and partners working with us for the people of Devon, will:

- Co-operate with the Council on all relevant matters
- Meet all health and safety standards and requirements in the performance of their work activities undertaken with or on behalf of the Council

Service Users and Visitors

3.13 Service users and visitors are encouraged to co-operate with the health and safety arrangements put into place by Devon County Council to protect them and the people who are providing a service to them.

4. TRADE UNION HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

4.1 The Authority has made arrangements with the recognised trade unions for the appointment, training and provision of facilities for safety representatives. Health and Safety issues are dealt with as and when through informal monthly meetings with Joint Secretaries. Formal consultation with the trade unions is via the Corporate Forum and Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee. Reports, recommendations and issues raised from this or any H&S committees are fed into the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group which is concerned with the wider aspects of health and safety.

- 4.2 Trade union safety representatives within Devon County Council have agreed to represent all employees' health and safety interests (be they union or non-union members) to meet the requirements of the Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations.

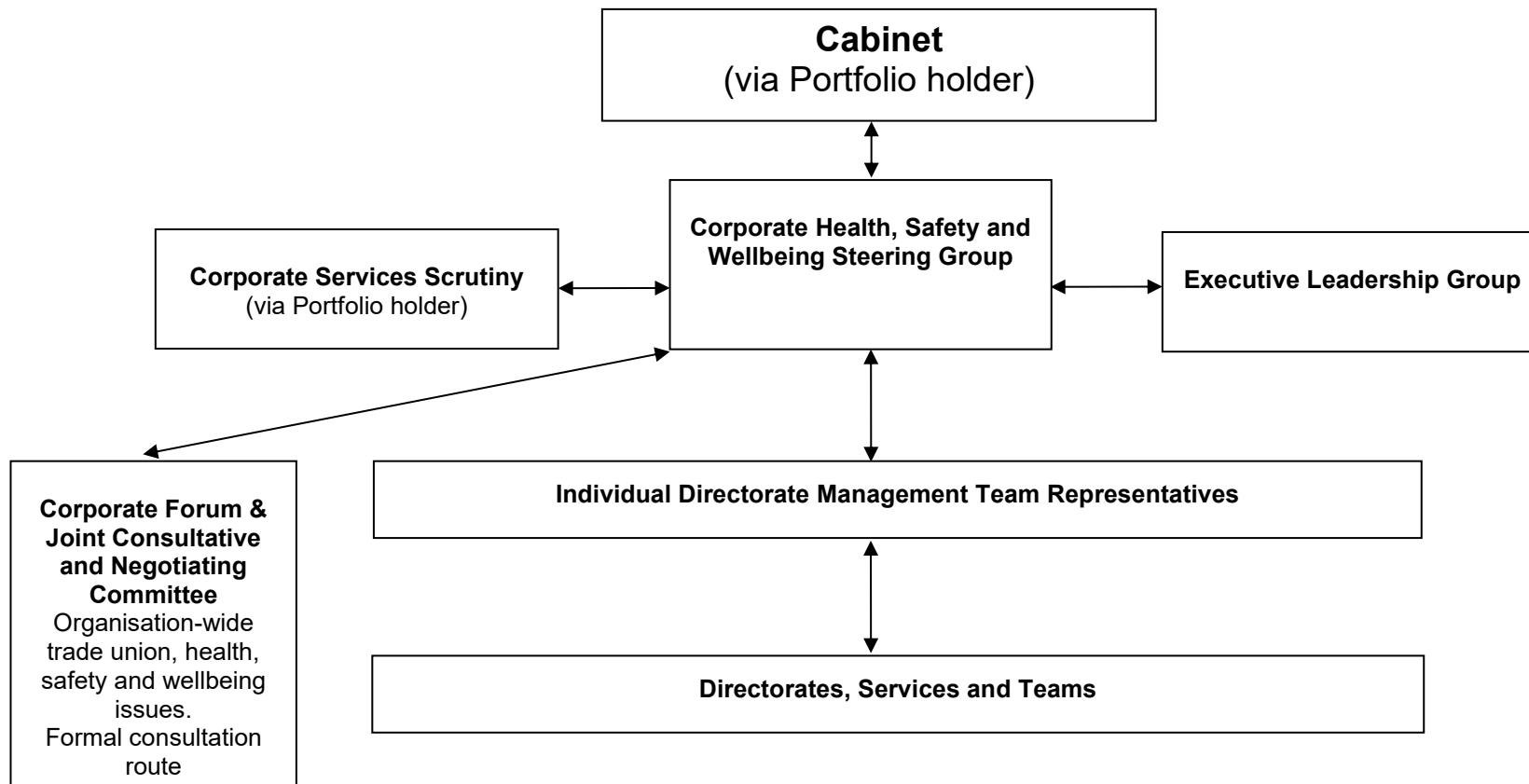
5. HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 Due to the size and diversity of the Council it is not possible, in one document, to identify all health, safety, wellbeing and risk management arrangements (policies, procedures, Arrangements). Corporate Arrangements for the management of risks that are currently assessed as risks applicable to all services are produced by the Devon Health & Safety Service and published on the Council's Health & Safety pages on [the People Hub](#), and they are also available on OSHENS, the online DCC Health and Safety Management system.
- 5.2 The second tier to these are the written Service Health and Safety Statements of Arrangements (referred to in section 3.4). These build on and add to the Corporate Arrangements, clearly detail the health and safety risks associated with that Service area, and the Service-specific arrangements put in place to implement the Corporate Arrangements and deal with and additional risks. This could be either because:
- The competence for that activity / risk area sits within the Service or Team
 - There is the need to add Service-specific detail to the Corporate Policies and Arrangements
 - The Service / Team has a very specific need not covered by the Corporate Policies and Arrangements
- 5.3 Maintained schools will establish and agree their own H&S policies with governing bodies in recognition of the arrangements for local management of schools.
- 5.4 Appendix 2 provides a list of the relevant documents containing procedural arrangements.

6. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

- 6.1 The Devon Health and Safety Panel will review this policy every year or sooner if changes are made to current legislation or Council Structure.

Appendix 1 – HEALTH AND SAFETY – CONSULTATION AND COMMITTEES CHART



APPENDIX 2 – HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS

DCC HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

1.	DCC Corporate Health and Safety Policy
2.	Tree Safety Management Policy and Procedures
3.	Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities Health & Safety Policy

DCC HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

HS01	Accident Information	HS22	Hand Arm Vibration	HS43	Playground Safety
HS02	Agency and Temp Workers	HS23	Health Issues for Young Service Users	HS44	Premises Management
HS03	Art and Pottery Safety	HS24	Health Issues for Staff	HS45	Pressure Systems
HS04	Asbestos	HS25	ICT Safety	HS46	Primary Curriculum Activities
HS05	Auditing and Monitoring	HS26	Infection Control	HS47	Risk Assessment
HS06	Caretaking and Cleaning Safety	HS27	Kitchen Safety	HS48	Safety Signs
HS07	CDM and Control of Contractors	HS28	Legionella	HS49	Science Safety
HS08	Consultation and Communication	HS29	Library Safety	HS50	Security
		HS30	Lifting Equipment	HS51	Slips and Trips
HS10	COSHH	HS31	Personal Safety and Lone Working	HS52	Stress
HS11	Design and Technology	HS32	Medication Arrangements	HS53	Swimming Pool Safety
HS12	Display Screen Equipment	HS33	Mobile Phones	HS54	Working Away from an Office Base
HS13	Drama Safety	HS34	Moving and Handling – Objects	HS55	Training
HS14	Drugs and Alcohol	HS35	Moving and Handling – People	HS56	Transport
HS15	Educational Visits	HS36	Music Safety	HS57	Volunteer Safety
HS16	Electrical Safety	HS37	Noise	HS58	Work Equipment
HS17	Emergencies	HS38	Office Safety	HS59	Work Experience
HS18	Fire Safety	HS39	Organising Major Events	HS60	Working at Height
HS19	First Aid	HS40	Personal Protective Equipment	HS61	Pandemic Flu
HS20	Gas Safety			HS62	Early Years
HS21	Grounds Maintenance Safety	HS42	Physical Education	HS63	Commissioning – H&S Responsibilities

SERVICE SPECIFIC H&S ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCEDURES

In addition to the Policies and Arrangements listed above, which are owned and maintained by the Devon Health and Safety Service and are applicable across Devon County Council, including maintained schools, the individual Services are responsible for producing arrangements and procedures which are specific to their area of work.

OTHER CORPORATE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

[DCC Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)

[DCC Health and Wellbeing – Employee Assistance Programme](#)

[Domestic violence and abuse](#)

[Acceptable Behaviour \(including dealing with harassment and bullying\)](#)

POLICY HISTORY

Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
September 2008	Annual review and updated to reflect DCC current structures	M Bullock	September 2008	September 2009
Various	Updates from intervening policy changes available in earlier versions	M Bullock		
April 2016	References to the Wellbeing@Work Service removed	Simon Bates	September 2015	September 2016
October 2016	Annual Review – minor typographical amendments to titles and meeting groups following 2016 new structure	Simon Bates	October 2016	September 2017
February 2018	Change of co-sponsor to County Solicitor Changed to reference to Leadership Group and Arrangement documents	Simon Bates	February 2018	October 2018
July 2019	Greater reference on health and wellbeing and changed ownership. Reference to Service / Team arrangements and procedures. Signposting to other related information.	Simon Bates	July 2019	July 2020
November 2021	Annual review delayed due to COVID-19. Reference made within the Policy to COVID controls (p5). Also inclusion of protected characteristics and updated wellbeing section	Simon Bates	November 2021	November 2022
May 2023	Amended due to new Chief Executive, reference to delegated Chief Officer removed. Specific reference to COVID-19 now removed.	Simon Bates	August 2023	August 2024
December 2025	Removal of wellbeing from this Policy, additional wellbeing links. Addition of reference to People Hub, greater clarity regarding Service H&S Statements of Arrangements, Removal of many H&S Policies, plus other minor amendments New equality statement. Changes to reflect the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group	Simon Bates	December 2025	December 2026