

CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS 2025/26

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This paper updates Members of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee on the ongoing development and maintenance of the Council's Corporate Health & safety arrangements.

Attached to this report is the current Corporate Health & Safety Policy.

CGAS Members are asked to note this report and comment on the adequacy of the Council's health & safety arrangements.

1 Background & History

- 1.1 The Constitution states that one of the roles of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee (CGAS) is to "*provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework*". Specifically in relation to risk management, the Constitution states that CGAS should "*monitor the effective development of risk management in the Council*".
- 1.2 For the purposes of this report, risk management is being considered in the context of the legal duties placed upon the Council by the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and any associated regulations.
- 1.3 In line with arrangements set out in the Council's Corporate Health & Safety Policy, attached as Appendix A, this report provides an update to CGAS Members on the Council's health & safety arrangements and key activity that has taken place over the course of 2024/25 and the plans in place for 2025/26.
- 1.4 Following the response to Covid and the significant changes made to working practices across the majority of the Council's services during that period, the health & safety risk profile of the Council's business activities has now stabilised, with more employees now routinely working from home and other remote locations.
- 1.5 The overall health & safety risk profile of the Council remains low, with the majority of high-risk work activity contracted out, and only a few specific roles with an enhanced level of risk. Examples of these would be technical staff working at Princes Hall, or members of our Place Protection team.

2.0 Corporate Health & Safety Arrangements

- 2.1 The Council receives advice on its arrangements from the Corporate Health & Safety Advisor, employed directly by the Council.

- 2.2 As detailed within the Corporate Health & Safety Policy, there continues to be a number of operational procedures that fall under this scope of work. This includes a number of 'Codes of Practice' (CoP) that act as internal procedures and guidance for complying with specific legislative requirements or subject areas, particularly where a single corporate approach can be taken. This includes subject areas such as risk assessment, COSHH, manual handling, DSE, first aid and fire safety.
- 2.3 The new CoP for 'Staged Audit' provides a new process by which all Services will initially be required to assess their own compliance with the Council's arrangements and provide a central return of their findings. This has been reviewed and approved by CMT and was rolled out during Q1 2025/26. Responses to this self-audit from all Services are expected by the end of August 2025.
- 2.4 The Policy and all associated documents and procedures, including CoPs, are made readily available to staff through a corporate Sharepoint portal. This portal also includes access to the digital links to the potentially violent persons and accident/incident reporting forms.
- 2.5 The Council has an established Corporate Health, Safety & Welfare Group with defined terms of reference that meets at least quarterly. Subgroups to this include Health & Wellbeing and First Aid. Officers from all Services and all levels, including Senior management and the Union, are represented at this group. The last meeting took place on 15th July 2025.

3.0 Data and Reporting

- 3.1 The Corporate Health & Safety Advisor maintains a reporting regime on corporate health & safety matters that is taken quarterly to CMT. This relates predominately to operational matters, with this annual report to CGAS for an overview of arrangements.
- 3.2 The numbers of accidents/incidents and violence at work incidents, including trends and a summary of those reports, are also routinely reported to CMT and Cabinet via the quarterly performance management report.
- 3.3 The number of accidents and incidents seen at the Council is low and has remained relatively stable for a number of years. The Council's recent data on accidents/incidents is displayed in the following table.

Rushmoor Work Related Accident / Incident Data – Q1 2025/26					
Target or expected range: No target, although ideally we would like to see a reduction in the numbers.					
2024/25	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year Total
Employee	5	3	4	5	17
Public	0	1	2	0	3
Near miss / Other incident (New for 2023/24)	0	0	1	1	2
Total	5	4	7	6	22
2025/26	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year Total
Employee	4				4
Public	1				1
Near miss / Other incident	0				0
Total	5				5
(trend ←↑↓)	←				←

3.4 In contrast to accidents, the negative interactions that employees and Elected Members experience with members of the public, collectively referred to as 'violence at work' incidents is still a concern. The significant rise in incidents seen in Q1 & 2 last year has however not continued and there has been a fall in comparison to this time period last year. This data is presented in the following table.

Violence at Work Data – Q1 2025/26					
Target or expected range: No target, although ideally we would like to see a reduction in the numbers.					
2024/25	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year Total
Verbal abuse / threats	12	16	6	4	38
Physical attack (persons or property)	0	0	2	0	2
Other	3	7	2	3	15
Total	15	23	10	7	55
2025/26	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year Total
Verbal abuse / threats	7				7
Physical attack (persons or property)	0				0
Other	1				1
Total (trend ←↑↓)	8 ↓				8 ↓

3.5 The arrangements to protect the personal safety of Officers and Members at public meetings continued to be monitored during Q1, with security booked for all full Council Meetings. For other meetings, additional security will continue to be booked on an 'as needed' basis. In addition, in July 2025 the Council will publicly sign up to the LGA's Debate Not Hate Campaign, supported by all political groups on the Council, which commits to the regular review of support available to councillors and officers in relation to abuse and intimidation.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 CGAS is asked to note this report which summarises how corporate health & safety has been managed across the Council and provide comments and feedback.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix A – Corporate Health & Safety Policy

CONTACT DETAILS:

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RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL – CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Introduction

The Council is required to have a health and safety policy in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy consists of a Statement of Intent (Section 1) and the Organisation and Arrangements for carrying out the policy (Section 2). These are supplemented by a series of Corporate Codes of Practice (CoP) and related Policies which provide further support and guidance in specific areas, but which are not part of this core policy.

1. Statement of Intent

The Council recognises its responsibility to protect, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees and those people affected by the Council's activities. This includes staff, the public, contractors and visitors. This responsibility is in accordance with the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant statutory provisions.

The Council, through the Corporate Management Team and elected members, consider health and safety at work to be a primary and collective management responsibility and will meet its statutory obligations by providing health and safety leadership to ensure:

- Risk assessments are carried out pro-actively to eliminate and/or adequately control risks.
- The provision and maintenance of plant, environment and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health.
- Arrangements for ensuring safety and controlled risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances.
- The provision and communication of information, instruction, consultation, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of employees, contractors and visitors.
- The provision of competent advice on health and safety and consultation with appropriate external sources of expertise where necessary.
- The provision of adequate welfare, occupational health and first aid facilities.
- The provision of appropriate personal protective equipment where a risk assessment dictates.
- The revision of this policy at least annually or where there is a significant change.

Having defined the Council's responsibilities and leadership objectives it is also important to recognise that all employees have a statutory obligation and responsibility to co-operate with health and safety. The responsibilities and duties of all employees are detailed the section of this policy 'Organisation and Arrangements for Health and Safety'.

Ian Harrison
Interim Managing
Director
(Head of Paid Service)

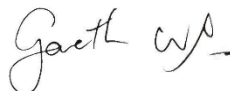
Signature:



Date: 10/07/25

Cllr Gareth Williams
Leader of the Council

Signature:

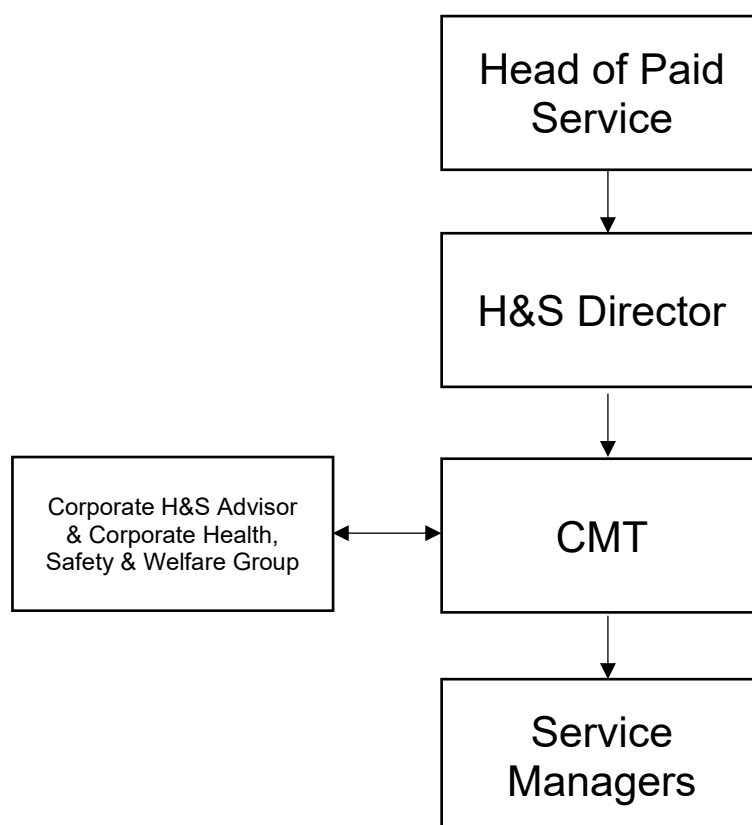


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2. Organisation and Arrangements for Health and Safety

This section details the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the Council's corporate health and safety policy. The Council will, as a responsible employer, ensure that suitable arrangements and resources are in place to effectively manage health and safety.

Rushmoor Borough Council organisational structure chart for the purposes of operational health & safety management:



2.1 The Head of Paid Service

The Head of Paid Service has overall responsibility for health and safety within the Council and shall:

- Ensure that the Policy is effectively implemented and that proper resources are made available to achieve this.
- Ensure that Senior Managers such as Executive Directors and Heads of Service are familiar with the Policy and successfully implement it within their area of responsibility.
- Provide the final authority on matters concerning health, safety and welfare at work.
- Ensure that responsibility for health and safety is properly assigned and accepted at all staffing levels.
- Ensure that the Policy is reviewed at least annually and, if necessary, revised.

To manage health and safety effectively, the Head of Paid Service appoints the Executive Director as the Health and Safety Director. This Director will have primary responsibility for the delivery of the Corporate Health & Safety Policy and the management of the Corporate Health & Safety Advisory Service.

2.2 Director of Health and Safety

The Executive Director with the responsibility for Operational Delivery (Karen Edwards) is appointed as the Director of Health and Safety.

The Director of Health and Safety will ensure that the CMT's directional role in health and safety is maintained as a continuing responsibility. The Director shall:

- Act as CMT lead and liaison for health and safety.
- Monitor the effectiveness of health and safety processes.
- Bring appropriate matters of health and safety to the attention of CMT and Members.

2.3 The Corporate Management Team (CMT)

CMT collectively determines matters of health and safety policy to ensure the Council has a committed health and safety culture.

- CMT has the overall responsibility of ensuring that the Policy and all associated arrangements are implemented within all Services.
- In particular, they will make sure that adequate budgetary provision and staff resource is made to meet the cost of fulfilling responsibilities in relation to health, safety and welfare.

CMT provides strategic leadership, direction and oversight on health and safety at the Council.

2.4 CMT

Each member of CMT, such as Head of Service, are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of their staff, sites, contractors and persons affected by their work within the services that they line manage. They shall:

- Monitor the management of health and safety, and the standard of compliance with the Council's Policy, codes of practice, risk assessments and controls, and relevant statutory provisions.
- Conduct and record workplace self-audits at least annually to assess compliance and identify any shortcomings.
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out and reviewed at least annually in accordance with Rushmoor Policy, and ensure that suitable controls are identified and implemented.
- Ensure that health and safety incidents (accidents, diseases, dangerous occurrences, near misses, etc.) are actively recorded and investigated. An investigation must ensure that appropriate and timely action is taken to ensure the circumstances are not repeated. For more serious incidents (such as those required by regulations to be reported to the

Health and Safety Executive), the Head of Service shall ensure that the incident is correctly reported in liaison with the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser.

- Ensure that all their staff receive adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to work safely, protecting themselves, their colleagues, the public and Council property and premises, particularly where contractors, young, inexperienced or otherwise vulnerable workers are concerned.
- Stop work and take remedial action where a hazard or defect presents an imminent risk to health or safety.
- Liaise with Trade Union Safety Representatives as required and as appropriate.
- Ensure that safeguards provided at the workplace are properly used and maintained. This includes safeguarding machinery, correct use and storage of protective clothing and equipment, and maintenance of a clean working environment and facilities.
- Before starting any new process or using a new substance, check that all hazards have been identified, risk assessed and safeguarded against, and that proper instructions and information have been given to any employee or contractor.

2.5 Elected Members / Corporate Governance

The Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee (CGAS) holds Corporate Health & Safety within its portfolio.

It is the responsibility of CGAS to maintain oversight of the management processes in place at the Council for Corporate Health & Safety and to ensure that they remain effective.

The Director of Health & Safety will report Corporate Health & Safety to CGAS on an annual basis, where the role of the Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the general arrangements in place.

2.6 Service Managers

Service Managers are responsible for the delivery of the Council's health & safety arrangements within the teams and services that they line manage, as instructed by their CMT representative, such as their Head of Service.

2.7 Corporate Health and Safety Adviser (CHSA)

Without reducing the primary responsibility of CMT and other employees to maintain safe conditions at work, the CHSA will provide professional advice on health and safety and will assist as required. The CHSA will consult other stakeholders and will provide advice and support on health and safety issues.

In particular the CHSA will:

- Provide advice and support to CMT, Service Managers and employees, and to Trade Union safety representatives on matters of health and safety.

- Provide updates on changes to statutory provisions and codes of practice.
- Act as arbitrator between line management and employees and the Trade Unions on health and safety.
- Upon request, carry out inspections and audits, review accident reports, risk assessments and controls and other safety documentation and liaise with interested parties as appropriate to maintain standards of health and safety.
- Advise managers and safety representatives of hazards and unsafe practices which are identified.
- Monitor the Council's safety performance, including the provision of quarterly performance data.
- Make adequate arrangements for the maintenance of a Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare group to assist in the delivery of health & safety arrangements, including the maintenance of the Council's Health & Safety Policies and associated Codes of Practice.
- Provide health and safety induction training to all staff, as requested and arranged by HR.
- Assist the Director of Health & Safety in the production of an annual report to CGAS.

2.8 Safety Representatives – Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Group (CHSWG)

In line with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act and relevant statutory provisions, the Council recognises the need to appoint suitable Safety Representatives to represent the employees. These representatives will make up the membership of the CHSWG.

To fulfil their duties under Section 2(4) of the Regulations, Safety Representatives shall:

- Keep informed as to the legal requirements relating to the health and safety of persons at work and the Council's associated arrangements, particularly for the persons/department/technical specialism that they represent.
- Keep informed of any hazards and risks within the workplace for the area they represent and the measures necessary to eliminate or minimise the risk.
- Assist in the development and maintenance of the Council's Health & Safety arrangements such as Policies and associated Codes of Practice.
- Carry out any other specific duties identified by the CHSWG, as identified within the terms of reference.

2.9 Employees

It is the duty of every employee to take responsibility for his or her personal safety, and to take reasonable care for the safety of others, including those who may be affected by his or her actions. It is the duty of each employee to:

- Comply and co-operate with safety duties and requirements laid down by the Council and to use only equipment that is properly maintained and in good condition, report any defect immediately, and to not misuse or interfere with any safety equipment provided for use at work.
- Wear appropriate safety equipment provided, and use it in line with management and the manufacturer's instructions.
- Promptly report all accidents, incidents and near misses via the mechanisms provided by the Council.
- Promptly report any matters of health and safety concern such as uncontrolled risks to their line manager.
- Read all relevant safety documents issued by the Council and comply with their requirements. If any employee is in any doubt as to their safe working, duties and or responsibilities, they must initially discuss this with their line manager.
- Be aware of the location of the first aiders, fire escape routes, assembly points and fire fighting equipment (as appropriate to their role).

2.10 Other specific responsibilities

The **Executive Head of Finance** will ensure that insurance cover is in place for the employment of manpower and the provision of services to the public. A Certificate of Employers' Liability will be displayed at each of Rushmoor's occupied premises.

The **Corporate Manager – Legal Services** will advise on the interpretation of legislation upon request.

The **Lead Officers for Council Offices Facilities and Property / Estates** will ensure a systematic regime of property maintenance for all the Council's buildings and assets for which they hold responsibility. This includes structural matters, pressure systems, fire safety, electricity, gas, asbestos and water safety. It is for each Head of Service to be satisfied that this function is delivered satisfactorily on their behalf.

The ultimate responsibility for health and safety standards in connection with a Council property rests with the managing Head of Service.

The **Corporate Manager – People** will provide advice on employee relations aspects of health and safety and make adequate arrangements for the provision of health and safety information/instruction/training for all employees. In addition, they will manage an Occupational Health Advisory Service to provide staff welfare and counselling, give advice on pre-employment health matters, provide a pro-active health surveillance programme and to provide medical advice to staff and management. They will also make arrangements for the risk assessment and appropriate mitigations to deliver an effective workplace stress management programme for the Council.

2.11 Contractors

The Council has a responsibility for the health and safety of all people on its premises. Therefore, there is a shared responsibility for the conduct of contractors employed to work on the premises.

All contractors are required to conduct their work in compliance with the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and relevant statutory provisions. Work specifications placed on contractors by the contracting officer are to include these requirements.

The staff responsible for appointing and monitoring contractors will take all reasonable steps to ensure safety standards are in place and maintained throughout the term of the contract.

Normally, instructions and dialogue with contractors will be made through the contracting officer. However, employees should not hesitate to question what could be unsafe practices.

Managers must be ready to take action, immediately if necessary, to remove/control the risk. Contractors are required to:

- Take all reasonable care for people in the area that could be affected by the work and maintain the highest standard of housekeeping. Contractors must refer to the contracting officer any non-routine work before it is started and provide at all times “safe” access and exits to all places of work.
- Be compliant with health and safety legislation and any relevant Council policies at all times and ensure that tools and equipment used are safely used and maintained in good working order. As appropriate, protective clothing and safety equipment must be available and used.

2.12 Resolving Health and Safety Concerns

Health and safety matters are treated in broadly the same way as other staffing issues:

Stage One - Staff with a health and safety query/concern should raise it with their line manager. An aggrieved individual may elect to refer it to their union representative. The union representative should then raise it with the relevant Head of Service forthwith.

Stage Two - If the matter is not resolved following Stage One then it may be referred to the Head of Service.

Stage Three - If the matter remains unresolved the Head of Service should report the matter to the Lead Director for Health & Safety.