



Royston Town Council Health, Safety & Welfare Policy 2024

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POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

This Policy provides a business framework for the implementation and development of an effective Health & Safety management system for Royston Town Council that facilitates a high standard of employee care and wellbeing together with compliance to the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and other legislation. It has an overriding purpose to reduce, as far as reasonably practicable, the risk of injuries, ill health and other losses. This applies to the employees of the Town Council, elected members, the general public and other organisations that may be affected by our actions.

2. Purpose

- To promote a positive Health, Safety and Welfare culture throughout the organisation;
- To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities as far as reasonably practicable;
- To consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- To promote clear channels of communication for Health, Safety and Welfare between all services;
- To provide information, instruction and supervision for employees;
- To provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- To ensure safe handling and use of substances (COSHH);
- To ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks and to give them adequate training;
- To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions;

3. General statement

The health and safety of our employees is of paramount importance. We aim to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees and to provide them with the necessary information, instruction and training to achieve this aim.

Appropriate preventive and protective measures are and will continue to be, implemented following the identification of work-related hazards and assessment of the associated risks.

We recognise the importance of employer/employee consultation on matters of health and safety and the value of individual consultation prior to allocating specific health and safety functions. We also accept our responsibility for the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by our activities.

The allocation of duties for safety matters, the identity of competent persons appointed with particular responsibilities and the arrangements made to implement this policy are set out in this policy and in associated risk assessments and safety documents and records.

Expert advice will be sought as necessary when determining health and safety risks and the measures required to guard against them.

The objectives of this policy statement can only be achieved through the support and co-operation of employees and all other persons who use our premises, e.g. members of the public (hirers, customers, users), Councillors, contractors and visitors.

The contents of this policy statement is informed by statutory guidance and good practice issued by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) or industry recognised bodies.

The Policy will be reviewed formally every three years or earlier if conditions dictate.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Full Council has the overall responsibility for the Town Council's health, safety and welfare policy, and review and consider this policy at the agreed intervals. The committee which undertakes the internal review of the effectiveness of internal audit controls will review all the council's risk assessments on an annual basis.

The responsibility for ensuring the application of this policy is delegated to the Town Clerk. The following staff have responsibility for health and safety standards for their respective service areas:

Nominated Staff Member	Service areas
Administration Officer	Town Hall, Annex, Market Hill Rooms
Market Manager	Market Place
Cave Manager	Royston Cave
Deputy Town Clerk	Allotments, War Memorial, Plantations

Staff are accountable to the Town Clerk for the effective implementation of and legal compliance with health & safety legislation, this policy, agreed practices and be responsible for safety management responsibilities as determined, directed or defined as part of their role (including the production, implementation, review and monitoring of documented risk assessments).

All employees are expected to:

- Co-operate with managers on all health, safety, welfare/wellbeing matters;
- Actively consider their safety and the safety of others and help RTC develop and maintain a good safety culture with a low level of risk. All employees are encouraged to make suggestions to improve health, safety and welfare in their workplace;
- Correctly use work items, including personal protective equipment as instructed;
- Not misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interests of health and safety;
- Read all relevant risk assessments and comply with the control measures;
- Report all accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences, whether there is injury/damage or not, and complete a form provided for the purpose;
- Promptly report foreseeable hazards (or situations considered to be potentially hazardous);
- Report all property and equipment defects;
- Use any machinery, equipment, substance, transport or safety device provided in accordance with training and instructions, in compliance with regulations;
- Inform their Manager of any work situation or shortcomings in protective arrangements which he/she considers represents a significant risk to health, safety and welfare, or a risk to other persons (i.e. contractors, visitors, customers, the general public and members); and
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety.

MANAGING HEALTH AND SAFETY

5. Accidents

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

Reporting and Recording Accidents

There is a legal duty placed upon the Council to report and record all accidents at work.

Details of all accidents involving employees or members of the public shall be recorded in an Accident Book and submitted to the Town Clerk.

Individual employees are responsible for reporting accidents and potential accidents/near misses that occur at work on the mandatory Accident Record Forms in the accident books which are available from the Town Hall Office and Caretaker's Office and have been distributed to the Market Manager and Cave Manager.

Details of all accidents/near misses and Accident Record Forms will be kept in a file in the Town Hall Offices.

All accidents and cases of ill health as a result of an accident at work are to be recorded in the accident book. The Town Clerk will ensure that accidents and work-related causes of sickness absences are investigated and that the causes are analysed to assist in formulating preventative measures and will report to the Council's HR committee who will ensure the agreed preventative measures are implemented.

The Town Clerk is responsible, where required by law, for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority.

6. Employee Consultation

Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977

Consultation with employees will be undertaken at:

- Sub-committee and working party meetings; and
- One to one meetings with individual staff members.

7. Fire & Evacuation Procedures

Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2015

UK fire regulations require a fire risk assessment for all workplaces. Nominated Staff Members are responsible for ensuring a fire risk assessment is undertaken and implemented, including appropriate provision of fire exits, signs, alarms and extinguishers.

Exit corridors, landings and stair cases must be kept clear at all times.

Fire extinguishers should be visually inspected in the Town Hall, Annex and Market Hill Rooms by the caretaker and maintained and checked regularly by compliance contractors and the Fire Protection Service.

Fire Alarm call points are tested alternatively on a weekly basis and tested by the Fire Protection Service on an annual basis.

Emergency evacuation procedures must be tested six monthly. Fire evacuation procedures are to be provided at each place of work/public office

Flammable materials must not be stored, even for a temporary period, in the offices or corridors, unless the storage is in a fire resistant structure such as a metal cupboard or bin, clearly marked "Flammable Materials".

Emergency lighting should be tested regularly in the Town Hall, Annex, Market Hill Rooms and Cave by the compliance contractors and the Fire Protection Service.

All staff will attend fire marshal training.

8. First Aid

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981

First aid means treating minor injuries at work and giving immediate attention to more serious casualties until medical help is available. Through this initial management of injury or illness suffered at work, lives can be saved and minor injuries prevented from beginning major ones. All staff are required to attend an "Emergency First Aid at Work Course". First aid equipment is readily accessible at each premises and is kept stocked, clean and ready for use.

9. Contractors & Visitors

Fire & Evacuation Procedures

Fire action notices are positioned around all the Council's premises to inform visitors of the action to be taken in an emergency. Fire exits are clearly marked.

Contractors

Contractors shall, at all times, comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992 and of any other Acts Regulations or Orders pertaining to the health and safety of employees.

The Contractor shall identify risks to the health and safety of employees and others and provide Risk Assessments, method statements or other depending on the type of work being undertaken. The Contractor shall have regard to the Council's Health and Safety Policy and whilst on premises owned by the Council the Contractor shall ensure that his employees comply with the policy.

10. Personal Protective Equipment

Nominated Staff Members will be responsible for ensuring that Personal Protective Equipment is supplied where necessary.

Periodic reviews are to be initiated to ensure that Personal Protective Equipment is compatible with the wearer, in hygienic condition, in effective working order, in good supply and that the measures are satisfactory for the work being undertaken.

11. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments will be undertaken by the Nominated Staff Members for all activities carried out. Where technical expertise is required and/or there are serious/significant risks being assessed, the staff member will liaise with qualified experts to advise and undertake the assessment. Employees will also help to inform the assessments.

All risk assessments will be reviewed by the members of the committee for the internal review of the effectiveness of internal audit controls. The risk management assessment will be approved by Full Council in accordance with statutory requirements.

Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by the Town Clerk or Nominated Staff Member.

The Nominated Staff Member will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented and will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.

Employees will be made aware and a copy of the risk assessment/s applicable to their area of work will be made available to them.

Risk Assessments will be reviewed annually or when activities change, whichever is sooner.

12. Training

Training will be identified, arranged and monitored by the employees manager who will also make arrangements for refresher training to be completed on an annual basis or such approved frequency determined by the risk assessment.

Centralised training records are kept by the Administration Officer.

13. Workplaces (Health, Safety & Welfare)

Nominated Staff Members are responsible for ensuring that a periodic review is undertaken in their service areas to check working conditions and ensure safe working practices are being followed.

All Employees have a duty to familiarise themselves with the Risk Assessments relevant to their work and adopt the procedures and working practices contained within them.

RISKS TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

14. Asbestos

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

Asbestos is the largest single cause of work related fatal disease and ill health in Great Britain. Where people work with asbestos or come into contact with it during repair and maintenance work, they are at risk. Working with asbestos should be avoided if possible but, if not, it must be done safely. Working with asbestos must only be carried out by professional contractors and not staff members.

The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (CAWR) introduces an explicit duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises, to manage the risk of exposure to asbestos or asbestos containing material (ACM). The duty to manage requires those in control of premises to:

- Take reasonable steps to determine the location and condition of materials likely to contain asbestos;
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not;
- Make and keep an up to date record of the location and condition of the ACMs;
- Assess the risk of the likelihood of anyone being exposed to fibres from these materials;
- Prepare a plan setting out how the risks from the materials are to be managed;
- Take the necessary steps to put the plan into action;
- Review and monitor the plan periodically; and
- Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them.

Nominated Staff Members are responsible for ensuring that a copy of the applicable Council's 'Asbestos survey' is issued to Employees/Contractors who carry out any type of maintenance, repair or refurbishment work. The survey is completed regularly by the compliance contractors.

15. Display Screen Equipment

Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

Using a computer or other kinds of display screen equipment (visual display units) can give rise to back problems, repetitive strain injury or other musculoskeletal disorders. These health problems may become serious if no action is taken. They can be caused by poor design of work stations (and associated equipment such as chairs), insufficient space, lack of training or not taking breaks from display screen work. Working with a screen does not cause eye damage, but many users experience temporary eye strain or stress. This can lead to reduced work efficiency or taking time off work.

All employees will be given any necessary training and complete a display screen risk assessment.

16. Hazardous Substances

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulations 2008 (CLP)

Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002

COSHH

COSHH Guidance Procedures and safety data sheets are in the caretaker's office.

Nominated Staff Members are responsible for identifying substances which need a COSHH assessment and a product safety data sheet. Employees who use hazardous substances will be responsible for undertaking to comply with Health and Safety guidelines whilst they are being used. Those employees will undertake COSHH training.

17. Working at Heights

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015

A fall from height has sudden and irreversible consequences and can only be prevented by ensuring that each task associated with working at height is carefully planned before deciding if the method of gaining access is appropriate. The overriding principle is to do all that is practicable to prevent anyone falling. Strict adherence to the principles and practices within the Work at Height Regulations 2005, and its Schedules, is the only acceptable solution.

18. Lone Working

Staff working alone have the responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work. They should ensure that any entry doors are secure and entry to the building by visitors is within their control. Staff should check credentials if they are not satisfied as to the bona fides of any visitor acting in an official capacity.

Staff should be trained in emergency procedures (fire, first aid etc.)

Under no circumstances should staff use ladders or work at height if working alone.

Should a member of staff working alone become ill or sustain an accident and require medical attention they should (if able) ring the emergency services.

Staff should be in ready contact with the office through a mobile phone or similar. Arrangements must be in place to have contact with a third party during any lone working situation.

Staff should be trained on how to handle potentially dangerous situations. These may include aggressive behaviour, being approached for valuables, etc.

Officers using their own vehicles should ensure their vehicle is serviced, maintained and correctly insured.

19. Machinery

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

Vibration from work with powered hand held tools, equipment or processes can damage the hands and arms of users causing 'hand-arm vibration syndrome'. This is a painful, irreversible condition which includes 'vibration white finger' and the effects can be impaired blood circulation, damage to the nerves and muscles, and loss of ability to grip properly.

The Nominated Staff Members are responsible for ensuring that an assessment is carried out in respect of all new machinery and equipment.

Staff are advised to report any faults immediately to their Manager.

The use of the Council's equipment is restricted to only the trained operatives and staff.

20. Maintenance & Building Work

Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015
Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994
Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
Confined Spaces Regulations 1997

All contractors should be qualified and competent for the work to be carried out. The Contractor shall provide Risk Assessments, method statements or other depending on the type of work being undertaken.

The Contractor shall have regard to the Council's Health and Safety Policy and whilst on premises owned by the Council the Contractor shall ensure that his employees comply with the Policy.

21. Manual Handling

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations apply to the manual handling of loads, i.e. human effort, as opposed to mechanical handling by crane or forklift truck.

The Regulations impose the need to avoid manual handling tasks wherever reasonably practicable. If it is not reasonably practical to avoid moving loads, or the operation cannot be automated or mechanised – and there is a risk of injury – then the task must be assessed, risks reduced and adequate information, instruction and training provided in the residual risk.

Nominated Staff Members must ensure that all manual handling tasks are identified within the areas of their control, and where appropriate, carry out manual handling assessments. All actions arising from the assessments must be addressed.

All Staff who are required to conduct manual handling tasks will need to decide for themselves how they will carry out any manual handling tasks they undertake but they must recognise their own limitations and use mechanical devices to reduce all instances of manual handling. Once they have been trained they must put the training into action.

It is compulsory for all staff to complete manual handling training. Training options on line or otherwise will be provided to staff. In addition, practical attendance training will be provided for staff at higher risk if circumstances allow face to face training.

On line training is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nt4PEss3Ppk>

Refresher training is required to be completed on a 24 monthly rolling cycle. New employees must complete training within 4 weeks of starting employment.

Procedures and Practices

First principles of manual handling are not to undertake such a task in the first place if you can avoid doing so. Recognising this is often impractical, manual handling tasks should be identified during a pre-assessment walk through. This can be part of the procedure for general risk assessments required under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

The regulations clarify that the risk assessment should specifically consider:

- The physical suitability of the employee to carry out the operations;
- The clothing, footwear or other personal effects he/she is wearing;
- His/her knowledge and training;
- The results of any relevant risk assessment carried out to comply with management regulations;
- Whether the employee is within a group of employees identified by that assessment as being especially at risk; and
- The results of any health surveillance provided for that employee.

In most cases managers should be able to carry out the assessments themselves as they are best placed to know about the manual-handling taking place in their own departments. There may be a requirement to draw on the knowledge of others who have greater knowledge, experience and have been trained in risk assessment to advise or assist in the assessments.

If after assessment it is determined that staff require training to minimise the residual risk then training must be carried out by competent/qualified trainers. Staff must be made aware of the fact that safe handling is not just work related but also a lifestyle issue.

Manual handling risk reducing principles should be adopted for all types of lifting or when the manual movement of an item is being contemplated. By applying a simple dynamic risk assessment before commencing with a manual activity the risk of injury can be greatly minimised. It is a simple thought process, ask yourself:

- Does the object look awkward to hold, has it sharp edges or is difficult to grip;
- Have I lifted the same type of object before, how did I feel, did I cope;
- Is it heavy - perhaps just rock the object backwards and forwards to make a judgement on how heavy it is;
- Could the load have an unequal centre of gravity that could put me off balance or add to straining;
- What is my capability today at this time, am I tired or have I suffered with recent back pain or twinges;
- Are sack trucks or a trolley available to take the load;
- Can I ask someone to help me with a two person lift; and
- Where do I need to take the object, are there stairs or is the walking surface slippery.

By asking these simple types of question you can risk assess the task and give yourself the best chance to avoid injury, remember if in doubt – do not lift.

22. Noise at Work

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
Noise at Work Regulations 1989

High levels of noise at work can cause hearing loss. This can take many years to become serious. Young people can be damaged as easily as the old and deafness can make people feel isolated from their family, friends and colleagues.

A preliminary decision on whether an assessment is needed can usually be reached without making detailed noise measurements.

As a rough guide, an assessment of daily personal exposure (Lep,d) will usually be needed wherever people have to shout or have difficulty being heard clearly by someone about 2 metres away or they find it difficult to talk to each other.

Whenever it is decided that a more detailed assessment is needed, expert advice will be sought.

23. Plant, Mechanical and Electrical Equipment

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
Supply of Machinery (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

Work equipment covers an enormous range of items. Important points include: selecting the right equipment for the job, making sure equipment is safe to use and keeping it safe through regular maintenance, inspection and, if appropriate, thorough examination, training employees to use equipment safely and following manufacturers' or suppliers' instructions. Accidents involving work equipment happen all the time – many serious, some fatal.

Royston Town Council is committed to ensuring that equipment is suitable for its intended use.

Nominated Staff Members will:

- Ensure that all inspection and maintenance regimes are complied with;
- Will check that new plant & equipment meets health & safety standards before purchased;

- Arrange for periodic inspections of portable items;
- Ensure all persons are adequately trained in using electrical equipment; and
- Ensure any fixed electrical installations are safe and tested on a regular basis

Electrical Equipment

Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

Electricity can kill. Even non-fatal shocks can cause severe and permanent injury. Shocks from faulty equipment may lead to falls from ladders, scaffolds or other work platforms. Those using electricity may not be the only ones at risk. Poor electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can lead to fires which can also result in death or injury to others.

User checks on electrical equipment can be made by the person using the equipment. Aspects to look for should include damage to the plug, cable or equipment casing, use of tape to join wiring, overheating, and whether the item has been exposed to conditions for which it is not suitable, e.g. a wet environment. Formal visual inspections and changing plugs or altering electrical equipment must be completed by a qualified electrician.

Any items on council premises that have not been PAT tested must not be connected to the Council's electricity supply.

Any faults with electrical equipment should be reported immediately to the person responsible for the maintenance and the equipment taken out of use immediately.

24. Stress at Work

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

There is a clear link between poor work organisation and subsequent ill health. The Health & Safety Executive defines stress as "*the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them*". Stress at work can be tackled by identifying the hazards, assessing who is at risk and the level of risk, deciding how to manage the risk and putting the plans into action.

In order to reduce stress in the organisation, Managers and the staff they are responsible for should keep in regular contact. Managers should ensure they hold regular meetings with individual members of staff, providing an opportunity for all to raise any issues of concern and explore a way to resolve them.

Any member of staff who is absent from work, even for one day, should complete a return to work form and have a conversation with their Manager about the reasons for absence and whether any support or action can be taken to prevent future reoccurrences.

25. Trip & other Dangerous Hazards

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

The most common cause of injuries at work is the slip or trip, resulting in falls which can be serious. It's a particularly important subject since members of the public use our premises. Measures to prevent such injuries are often simple, cheap and lead to other benefits.

Where any member of staff discovers spillages, wet surfaces, broken objects, damaged furniture or equipment, they must take every step to initially make the area safe and where the member of staff can deal with the danger safely, they must do so. Otherwise it should be immediately reported to the appropriate responsible officer.

26. Pandemics

If a pandemic is announced then all council activities and functions will be risk assessed and any necessary procedures and restrictions will be implemented.

Government advice will be strictly adhered to, checked regularly and procedures will be updated as required.

Health and safety and wellbeing of staff, councillors, service users and members of the public is paramount.

27. Abuse and Threats to Staff

Abuse and threats to staff from members of the public, councillors or other employees will not be tolerated in any circumstances.

Appropriate action will be taken which may include, but is not limited to, reporting the abuse and threats to the police, reporting members under the council's code of conduct and utilising the council's policies such as the disciplinary procedure and the vexatious complaints policy.

Policy approved by Full Council: 15th January 2024

Minute number: 280/24

Review date: January 2027 or earlier if conditions dictate.