

Somerset West  
and Taunton

# Health & Safety Policy

A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing in a white notebook with a yellow and black marker. The person is wearing a blue shirt. The background is blurred, showing a wooden surface. The overall image has a teal gradient at the bottom.

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## 1.0

### Health and Safety Policy (Statement of Intent)

Somerset West and Taunton Council (“The Council”) is committed in its duty to comply with all relevant Health and Safety legislation whilst undertaking work activities and business operations.

SWT is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for Members, employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors, and will also ensure that any persons who are involved or may come into contact with operational activities, will not be placed under unnecessary risk or will experience a detrimental effect on their health and safety.

This will be achieved through the way the Council works and behaves and by adhering to:-

- **The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974,**
- **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- Any other legislation applicable to the Council’s organisational activities and business operations.

The Council will ensure that all such legislation is complied with in full, and all legal obligations are discharged by those who have control of the Council’s business operations and activities.

The Council understands that this can only be achieved effectively with the co-operation and partnering of employees, contractors and all key stakeholders. Every employee has a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts and omissions whilst at work.

In support of this policy, The Council will ‘so far as is reasonably practicable’, protect and promote the health, safety and welfare of Members, employees, contractors and the public and in doing so will:

- Ensure that a functional and effective Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) is implemented and maintained, that incorporates a robust audit process to ensure that policies and procedures are continually scrutinised. This must ensure currency, applicability and effectiveness in managing health and safety and provide the Council with an opportunity to continually improve safety performance, promote partnerships and forward-looking policies that support continuous improvement.
- Monitor health and safety performance to verify that the Council’s Health and Safety Policy is being implemented and health and safety standards are being maintained and progressively improved.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to deliver the effective implementation of this policy and to support continuous improvement of the

Council's HSMS, ultimately to ensure the health and safety of employees and others affected by the Council's work activities and operations.

- Strive to eliminate risk and identify all significant hazards connected with work activities and operations and put into place measures to eliminate, or reduce, the potential for the hazards to cause harm using the hierarchical approach to risk control, required by the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**.
- Identify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for health and safety in support of this policy and ensure that these are articulated throughout the Council's HSMS procedures and arrangements.
- Provide leadership and clarity on strategy, and roles and responsibilities that promote health and safety.
- Ensure that competent health and safety advice is available to provide information to the Council on its statutory duties and on current best practice.
- Provide and maintain a safe working environment with adequate facilities and arrangements for health and welfare at work (**Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulation 1992**)
- Provide safe (maintained) plant and equipment and procedures for ensuring the safe handling and use of substances and articles for use at work.
- Provide supervision, information, instruction and training to support and develop competency for Council employees through the employee appraisal schemes and to promote health and safety at work of all other employees including temporary employees and visitors, who are working in Council premises.
- Provide for the use of The Council's employees, such personal protective equipment (PPE) as is necessary to ensure their health and safety at work.
- By adhering to the **Safety Representative and Safety Committee Regulation 1977**, ensure that there are adequate mechanisms in place to consult with employees and their representatives through the Health and Safety committee (Unison is the recognised Union), and at departmental level with management, encouraging employees to contribute to the Health and Safety culture, well-being and performance of the Council.
- Ensure suitable and sufficient emergency procedures are implemented to enable safe evacuation in the event of fire or significant incident. Providing an effective investigation/ response to accidents, incidents and near miss events and to report accordingly under **RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation 1995**. Ensure suitable First Aid provision is in place and reviewed regularly.

- Make arrangements for access to suitable Occupational Health support for employees. Ensure that regular monitoring and screening is in place and steps are taken to continuously mitigate risk of Occupational injury and illness.
- Ensure Members (Councillors) of the Council and Senior Management Team maintain an ongoing commitment to health and safety and exercise due diligence in their commitment to:
  - Understand the nature and scale of risk exposure in their area of control and authority.
  - Having oversight of The Councils injury and ill health performance,
  - Setting and maintaining achievable health and safety performance improvement measures and objectives and monitoring and reviewing these,
  - Ensuring health and safety reporting mechanisms are in place to provide duty holders with up-to-date and relevant safety performance data,
  - Complying with all their legal duties and discharging such duties,
  - Participating in periodic and planned audits of The Councils HSMS to ensure ongoing compliance and continual improvement.

This policy statement, together with its associated organisational arrangements and procedures, will be subject to continuous review in order to reflect the Council's commitment to health and safety following any changes to legislation.

The Council will also review this Policy Statement as part of an annual review cycle. The Council will ensure that this Policy is effectively communicated to all employees, agency employees, contractors and sub-contractors.

The responsibilities for implementing and monitoring the Policy are detailed in Section 2 of this Policy.

<b>Name – CEO (Somerset West and Taunton Council)</b>	<b>Andrew Pritchard</b>
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date: 5 May 2022</b>	
<b>Name – H &amp; S Member Sponsor</b>	<b>Councillor Ross Henley</b>
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

## **2.0 Purpose of the Policy**

SWT's commitment, outlined in the 'Statement of Intent' is the promise made by the employer to the workforce, setting out the general approach to health & safety, how it will be managed, by who, and practical arrangements for delivering the key components, to ensure compliancy of key H & S legislation.

By providing effective policies, procedures, and safe systems of work, will enable the workforce to develop a positive safety culture and to ultimately achieve the key goal - **Safe People/Safer Places.**

This policy clarifies the responsibilities of Elected Council Members, Senior Management Team, Assistant Directors, People Business Partners, Managers, The H & S Team, Union Representatives and all employees (all SWT employees and workplaces). It also applies to any agency employees, contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers that SWT engage with to deliver its core work activity.

To ensure delivery, there must be adequate organisation, arrangements and resources to implement this policy, and to plan, monitor and review the health and safety activities of the Council.

**Key Purpose of the policy** - SWT as an employer and its Elected Members, are responsible for ensuring that health, safety and welfare standards are established and maintained. Also, to ensure systems are in place to continuously aim to reduce accidents/incidents/near miss and events resulting from occupational injury and illness in the workplace.

**Key purpose of the policy** - SWT as an employer and its Elected Members, will ensure that sufficient resources are available to achieve and maintain these high standards of safety proficiency, including the provision of any health and safety training and information for employees, safety equipment or clothing and welfare facilities, Also to monitor and review the health and safety standards of the Council by both internal and external audit.

SWT and Elected Members will ensure that a lead Director is identified to steer the delivery of the H & S Management System. In addition, an Elected Member of the Council will adopt the role of H & S Sponsor, to continually maintain visibility of H & S within the environment and to promote a healthy and safe culture.

### **2.1 Employer's Responsibilities**

#### **2.1.1 The Elected Members of Somerset West and Taunton Council will:**

- Ensure an Executive Portfolio Holder/H & S Member Champion is identified to ultimately lead the H & S mission
- Give due consideration to matters of health, safety and welfare when allocating resources, considering changes and determining priorities.
- Commit to, and demonstrate by signing, a published health and safety policy.
- Receive regular reports about service performance on health and safety via the Audit & Governance Committee and / or other relevant committees.
- Discuss issues relating to health and safety matters at any formal meeting within the Council when appropriate (ensuring that all council reports consider the impact of Health & Wellbeing, to be scrutinised by Members as part of decision-making)

### **2.1.2 Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer is directly responsible for the organisation, delivery of services, legal compliance, control and use of the Council's resources and for promoting a supportive leadership culture.

This includes making sure that:

- Effective arrangements, structures and resources are in place to manage health and safety.
- Effective policies are developed and implemented across the council.
- There are means to monitor health and safety performance – such as audits and inspections and that positive action is taken where problems are identified.
- That senior managers receive suitable training to enable to properly fulfil their roles.
- There is appropriate delegation of responsibility throughout the line management chain, including to the delegated assistant Chief Executive or Lead H & S Director who may chair the Health and Safety Committee.

**The Senior Management Team (Chief Executive, Directors and Section 151 Officer) fulfil a crucial role in supporting the Chief Executive in the delivery of the policy.**

### **2.1.3 Directors/SMT**

- Directors are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to make sure health and safety is effectively managed within their directorate (this is assisted by the nomination of appropriate lead managers at H & S Committee. Tier 2 & 3)

- Making adequate resources available for managing health and safety.
- Making sure that H&S is given equal priority with other management functions and is included in operational planning and team meetings.
- Provide strategic direction and endorse corporate health and safety strategies.
- Manage corporate risk and priority ranking of actions.
- Review performance in meeting corporate health and safety strategic objectives and act on the findings.
- Ensure that any decision made is in line with the Council's own policies and procedures as they relate to health and safety.
- Support the employee consultation process (to maintain compliancy of the Safety Representative and Safety Committee Regulation 1977) by ensuring that an effective committee is in place, meets regularly and operates collaboratively with UNISON representation.

## **2.2 Employee's Responsibilities**

### **2.2.1 Assistant Directors**

- Ensure that health and safety is incorporated into service and operational planning to achieve compliance with corporate health and safety policy arrangements and H&S legislation relevant to the work activity.
- Establish roles and responsibilities within their service area and apply them within their own structure.
- Take an active and visible role in the management of health, safety and welfare within their areas of responsibility, by acting as Chair within their H & S Committee group (Tier 3). Also ensure that:
  - risk assessments are reviewed regularly
  - performance against any H&S related targets is monitored
  - accidents, incidents and near misses are recorded and investigated appropriately
- Ensure that Managers are aware of their role and responsibilities in the effective management of health and safety (see 2.2.3), and that they have necessary training and that responsibilities to meet H&S requirements are clear, regularly monitored and subject to an appropriate review.

- Review Safety Action Notices escalated within their service area, support managers and employees to resolve issues and offer recommendations for continuous improvement.

### **2.2.2 People Business Partners/People Team**

- Provide support to Directorates to ensure necessary H & S training is arranged/delivered to maintain compliancy, co-ordinate with Learning & Development Team to maintain Competency Register
- Attend Directorate H & S Committee meetings to present performance data relating to sickness, Occupational Health referral and training programme, communicate observations and recommendations and monitor trends proactively
- Support Directorates with managing H & S consequences (issue of Safety Action Notices) and linking to SWT's disciplinary process when necessary
- Provide support where necessary to ensure that H & S Policy and Procedure is communicated and understood and linked into personal and team objective planning.

### **2.2.3 Task Managers/Team Leads/Case Managers (with people management responsibilities)**

Managers have responsibility for the operational planning and day-to-day delivery of H & S Policy and procedures. Key areas include: -

- identifying and controlling risk, employee competency, training needs, consultation and standards of performance, issue of necessary PPE for team members to deliver role responsibilities
- accountable for all matters under their control, including areas of responsibility for which they are specifically skilled or trained to deliver
- ensure that each employee on their team has access to sufficient information, instruction, training, supervision and resources to allow them to work safely
- identify areas of concern (to the H & S Team) and where possible implement the required control measures to mitigate risk
- At all times take reasonable care for the health and safety of their team members and of any other person likely to be affected by their work activities
- Ensure that Lone Working arrangements are adopted and that team members are registered and use the Deane Helpline Lone working system when necessary

- Allow employees to attend appointments for Health Surveillance/Protection during work hours and reimburse reasonable travel expenses to attend
- Acknowledge the rights of trade union safety representatives to carry out their safety related functions, and provide them with an agreed level of facilities and support
- Managers in charge of premises may also have additional responsibilities such as those involving fire evacuation and alarm testing.
- Ensure that all accidents/incidents/near misses involving their team members are reported to the H & S Team via the correct channels.

### 2.2.3 All Employees

Every employee has a duty to accept their own individual responsibility for their conduct and compliance with this policy.

- All employees have responsibility to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others (including all customers, tenants, visitors, members of the public, contractors and sub-contractors) who may be affected by their work activities.
- This duty extends to refusing to carry out tasks or work (including emergencies) for which they have not been trained or which lack satisfactory supervision or sufficient risk assessment.
- Follow the controls of risk assessments implemented for all team tasks, ensure that managers are aware when controls cannot be adopted and that dynamic risk assessments are completed when necessary
- Ensure that all issued PPE is adopted when necessary and in line with risk assessment controls
- Only use equipment and machinery for which they have had training. (**No training means - No authorisation!**)
- Report all defects, unsafe conditions and 'near misses' to their manager and help in the investigation process.
- Co-operate with Directors/Assistant Directors/Managers on health and safety matters, to not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse anything, that has been provided to meet to protect health or safety
- Immediately report all health and safety concerns (including accidents, incidents and significant near misses, defective processes and unsafe situations) to their line manager

- Report any medical or physical condition which adversely affects their ability to conduct their work in a safe and healthy manner.
- Ensure that Lone Working processes are followed whenever necessary

#### **2.2.4 Health and Safety Team**

The Health and Safety Lead Specialist is appointed under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, as a Competent Person to advise on the arrangements necessary to meet the statutory obligations. Health and Safety is a management responsibility; therefore, the Lead Specialist has a key support role in:

- Providing professional H&S advice and information across all aspects of the Councils activities.
- Review all new health and safety legislation and guidance and advise Members/Directors/SMT on their responsibilities, the impact of any changes and additional measures that need to be taken.
- Auditing and reviewing H&S performance across all service units.
- Promoting opportunities to develop a positive safety culture.
- Developing effective H&S Management System, policies and procedures.
- Evaluating risk (and linking to the corporate risk register when necessary) and advising on legislation.
- Promoting consultation and H&S partnerships with operational teams, providing additional reactive and proactive support as required.
- Investigation of serious accident, incidents and near misses, monitor and report to the Health and Safety Committee, as required by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
- Manage H & S non-conformance consequences and monitor where is it necessary to apply the Safety Action Notice Policy, by issuing RED Cards (Prohibition Notices) and YELLOW Cards (Improvement Notices).

#### **2.3 Union (UNISON) Representation and Responsibilities**

The role of Union H & S Representatives is set out in the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977.

SWT works collaboratively with UNISON (the recognised union within local authority), who has appointed H & S Representatives. UNISON nominate and train safety reps,

to work with the employer to support H & S by representing their colleagues' health and safety interests. Reps have a duty to be accountable to their branch, and the work they deliver for colleagues.

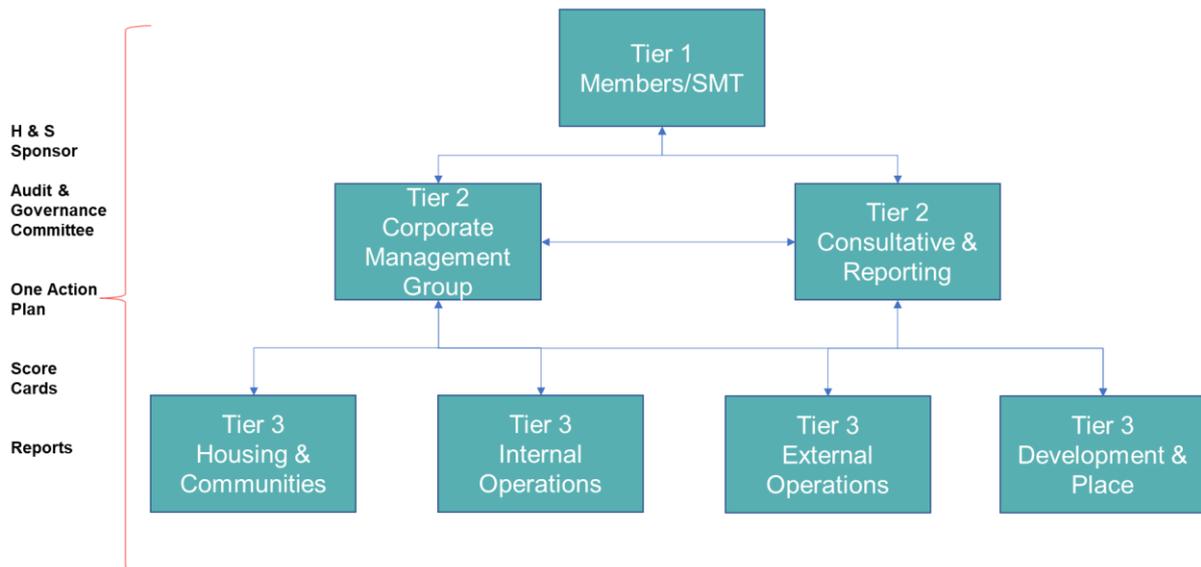
Main responsibilities of Health and Safety Representatives are: -

- to attend and be an active and engaging member of H & S Committee Meetings (Tier 2 – Consultative and Reporting)
- be actively involved in investigating the causes of accidents, incidents and near miss by completing regularly audits of investigation reports
- investigate potential and actual hazards, and dangerous occurrences, as identified by colleagues who feel their safety is compromised
- represent colleagues in discussions and consultations with the employer about issues relating to health and safety in the workplace and ensure information is cascaded when necessary
- investigate colleague's complaints, present colleagues' concerns to management and work collaboratively with the H & S team to seek solution
- carry out workplace inspections and represent colleagues where necessary
- be consulted by the employer on the planning and organisation of H & S training.

### **3.0 Governance and H & S Committee**

The employer has responsibilities (as stated in 2.1.2) to ensure that a suitable structure is in place to effectively manage Health & Safety; this also includes appropriate methods of measuring and managing performance of the system, with necessary formal governance controls to assure compliancy of H & S legislation.

To achieve this, SWT maintains a three tier H & S Committee structure, performance scorecards for key H & S indicators and a consolidated action plan to formally record and track actions raised across all tiers/Directorates. The main function of the structure is to ensure the objectives of the H & S Policy are delivered, audit framework is effective and continuous improvements are identified and delivered.



- Tier 3 groups meet monthly and follow an agreed agenda (consistent across all Directorates) and also focus on forthcoming active pipeline
- Tier 2 groups meet monthly: -
  - Tier 2 – Consultative & Reporting - work collaboratively with employee and union representatives, discuss observations and recommendation and monitor compliancy
  - Tier 2 – Corporate Management Group – steer actions and outputs from Tier 3 groups and Tier 2 Consultative & Reporting, to ensure the committee’s overall objectives are met,
- Tier 1 – Quarterly Reports are produced for Audit & Governance Committee (also represented by H & S Sponsor at Member level).

At each meeting, scorecards performance data is presented together with observation and recommendation. Actions relating to the group are also reviewed and any necessary actions are escalated to the tier above.

In addition, annual reports are also prepared for each tier group; any necessary actions/recommendation will also be included in the forthcoming H & S committee objectives when necessary.

## 4.0 Arrangements (A-Z)

### 4.1 Control of Asbestos in the Workplace

Key Legislation – Control of Asbestos Regulation 2012

SWT acknowledges the health hazards arising from exposure to asbestos and will, where reasonably practicable, prevent the exposure of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) to any employee, agency employee, contractor, visitor, tenant, through the use of effective control measures and work methods supported by trained employees and suitable management systems.

SWT will endeavour to control and manage the risks due to asbestos; this will be achieved by undertaking necessary assessments and sampling, delivered by an appointed licenced contractor. Asbestos reports will be made available to all relevant parties who's work activities may come into contact the ACM's and necessary Asbestos Awareness training will be delivered. In addition, all activities where exposure the ACMs is possible, will be risk assessed, with safe systems of work incorporated where necessary.

A licenced contractor will also be appointed to remove or encapsulate asbestos where necessary and clear air tests will be completed before any removal area is deemed safe to enter. For small volume/low risk types of asbestos removed/handling, SWT will provide necessary training for non-licenced asbestos removal to a limited number of employees; these will also be issued with suitable Respiratory Protective Equipment, regular Face-Fit testing and be included in stringent occupational health checks.

SWT will also ensure where necessary, that Asbestos Awareness Training is delivered to any employees (outside any repairs and maintenance teams) who may also encounter ACM's during the delivery of their roles.

### 4.2 Contractor Management

Key Legislation – Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (Regulation 12)

SWT recognises the responsibility under legislation to ensure that all engagement with Contractors/Sub-Contractors is suitably controlled to manage risk and vicarious liability, but more importantly, to ensure that all persons engaged in delivering services are aware of potential hazard and the processes to protect themselves.

Whichever route that a contractor is engaged (Tender/Project/<£5k), their Health and Safety processes will be vetted before any works can commence. Checks will be made on: -

- H & S Policy (where applicable)
- Insurances to ensure that they are acceptable under the terms of SWT's insurer

- RAMS (Risk Assessments and Method Statements)
- Training Records to ensure competency
- Accident History
- Previous HSE Interventions
- H & S Accreditations

Based on the type of engagement, additional H & S intervention may be required before commencement of work.

All contractor details will be maintained in a centralised database to ensure that regular checks are made and that contractors remain compliant and safe to conduct works on SWT's behalf.

### **4.3 Construction Design Management (CDM)**

Key Legislation - Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015)

Under the terms of the regulation, SWT will:-

- comply, in all aspects, with The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015, (CDM 2015) for all construction work as defined in the regulations
- ensure that any design for construction work is carried out by designers who have the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience for the project
- ensure that any construction work is carried out by contractors who have the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience for the project
- ensure that all designers, principal designers, contractors and principal contractors appointed by SWT for any relevant design and/or construction work comply with CDM 2015

SWT will also ensure that a formal record is maintained of: -

- all nominated appointments of principle designers, principle contractors and contractors
- all active F10 notifications to HSE (Health & Safety Executive)
- all active Construction Phase plans and status of conversion to H & S files.

The contractor database will also record contractor responsibilities under CDM regulation.

### **4.4 Control of Substances (COSHH)**

Key Legislation – Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002

SWT acknowledges the health hazards associated with exposure and handling of hazardous substances and chemicals and will, where reasonably practicable, adopt sufficient controls, provide necessary training and PPE to all exposed persons. In

addition, the use of any substances/chemicals will be risk assessed and all products will be listed on an accessible COSHH Register (accompanied by the manufacturer's safety data sheets).

#### 4.5 Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Monitoring

Key Legislation - The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

SWT will adopt the necessary controls to protect employees from the health risks associated to working with display screen equipment (DSE), such as PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones.

At onboarding, the employer will ensure that necessary assessment and training is provided, to ensure that suitable and sufficient workstation/usage arrangements are in place. In addition, annual reviews of DSE arrangements will be monitored and where necessary, additional advice will be made available by SWT's Occupational Health provider.

Additional/specialist equipment will also be provided, where necessary, where individuals require additional support due to health conditions or disability.

#### 4.6 Driving and use of SWT Vehicles

Key Legislation – Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (section 2 (b), 7), Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Regulation 7)

SWT acknowledges its responsibilities under legislation to consider three key areas when managing workplace transport effectively: -

- **safe site** (design and activity) – ensuring that sufficient traffic management plans are designed, in place, regularly risk assessed and regularly reviewed
- **safe vehicle** – a register of all vehicles is maintained, all Fleet and Pool Car vehicles are regularly serviced and maintained and that a process is in place for reporting defects, vehicle packs are in place to ensure daily checks and also linked to a Driver's Manual
- **safe driver** – ensuring that driver's licences are checked at onboarding and at frequent intervals, driving activities are risk assessed according to individual's capability and requirements, adequate training is delivered to ensure competent drivers (where applicable).

The organisation will ensure that suitable policy is implemented to satisfy all three key areas are controlled and compliant.

#### 4.7 Expectant & Nursing Mothers

Key Legislation – The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 (Regulation 16 & 17)

Under the terms of the regulation, SWT has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers who work throughout pregnancy and during the stages of nursing.

Once an employee confirms a pregnancy, this risk assessment process will commence and will consider: -

- lifting/carrying of heavy loads
- standing or sitting for long lengths of time
- exposure to infectious diseases
- exposure to substances and chemicals
- exposure to lead
- work-related stress
- workstations and posture
- exposure to radioactive material
- other people's smoke in the workplace
- threat of violence in the workplace
- long working hours
- excessively noisy workplaces

Risk assessments will be completed at trimester 1,2 and 3 and all necessary controls will be continually monitored and discussed with managers, to ensure that sufficient support is implemented to protect the health of both mother and child.

#### **4.8 Fire & Emergency Procedures**

Key Legislation – The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

SWT acknowledges its legislative duty to provide adequate fire and emergency procedures and routine servicing and maintenance of all fire detection system and will ensure: -

- All employees undertake mandatory fire safety training via e-learning system. Additional training will be provided for fire wardens, including nominated staff trained for use of Evacuation Chairs and Fire Extinguishers
- Fire risk assessments will be undertaken by a specialist fire consultant and recommended remedial action escalated (DSEAR assessment will be undertaken, with remedial actions escalated, on applicable sites)
- Fire procedures will be regularly reviewed, updated and tested during 6 monthly full evacuation drills. All alarms will be tested weekly using a call point rotation system for each building. Emergency Evacuation Plans will be displayed in all corporate buildings. All escape routes will be clearly marked, and signage regularly reviewed and regular housekeeping checks will be conducted to ensure safe routes are maintained

- Fire extinguishers and evacuation chairs will be regularly serviced to ensure their sufficiency (and all signage regularly reviewed)
- Facilities Management will ensure they work with tenants within its corporate multi-let buildings to ensure co-ordinated fire response are in operation
- Personal Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) will be implemented for all individuals who require assistance to safely evacuate from a building.
- Fire Safety on construction sites will be covered by controls under Construction Design Regulation (CDM)

#### **4.9 First Aid**

Key Legislation -The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981

SWT acknowledges its duty to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and resource to ensure employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

- First aid risk assessments are undertaken for all corporate sites and suitably trained first aid staff nominated to cover each site. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed in line with changing working patterns and numbers of staff on site. Defibrillators are provided at larger sites
- Full first aider at work qualified staff are paid a monthly remuneration for the service they provide
- All first aiders are issued with first aid kits and additional items provided at higher risk sites such as Depots
- All treatment administered by first aiders is recorded on a log sheet in addition to completion of accident/incident reports
- First aiders for each site are listed on site and on the staff Intranet site
- Additional 'First Aid Provision Risk Assessments' are completed for any necessary operational service, where risk may be higher and therefore could warrant additional first aid response.

#### **4.10 H & S Information**

Key Legislation – Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (section 2 (2)c)

Under the terms of the HASAWA 1974, the employer must ensure that necessary H & S information is readily available to all employees.

SWT will provide the necessary access to internal intranets, training materials (e-learning) and links to documentation, to provide the workforce with information on H & S Policy and Procedure, access to electronic forms, risk assessments, registers and databases, that hold all relevant information and guidance required to conduct their roles as safely as possible.

In addition to information available on the intranet, at each corporate building, a H & S Board will be maintained to provide all key H & S Information, copies of all necessary forms, contact details of H & S Committee reps, First Aiders, Fire Wardens and all other H & S signposting information.

Additional support and information is also available directly from the H & S team, that has a H & S Partner assigned to each Directorate.

#### **4.11 H & S Management System**

Key Legislation – Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (section 2 (3)/Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (Regulation 5)

SWT acknowledges the importance of ensuring that an effective H & S Management System is in place and subsequently adopts the standards of the Health & Safety Executive's HSG65 template.

This structure (the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach) helps achieve a balance between the systems and behavioural aspects of management. It also treats health and safety management as an integral part of operational management, rather than as a stand-alone 'bolt-on' system.

Key components of SWT's management system are: -

- Policy and procedures
- Risk Management system, including Safe Systems of Work (SSOW)
- Audit Function, including site and workplace inspections
- H & S Compliancy training, including e-learning (all forming the Competent Person Register)
- H & S governance framework, in the form of H & S Committee structure (the vehicle to ensure the system is delivered)
- H & S Dashboard and Reporting mechanisms, to measure the overall effectiveness of the system and to ensure that necessary management layers are informed of performance.

The H & S Team provides a service across all Directorates, to ensure the H & S Management system is consistently delivered, remains effective and embraces continuous improvement.

#### **4.12 Incident Reporting & Investigation**

Key Legislation – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation 2013 (RIDDOR)

SWT recognises the responsibility under RIDDOR to ensure that certain workplace accidents, occupational diseases, and specific dangerous occurrences (near miss) are reported to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) within the required timescales.

All employees have the responsibility to report any such events to the H & S Team promptly, to ensure that the necessary investigations can take place and the relevant reports are submitted to HSE. However, focus remains paramount on ensuring that any injured parties are provided with sufficient First Aid, and if required are assisted to receive hospital treatment. All events involving employees, contractors, members of the public must be reported when it has in connection to a SWT work activity.

SWT will ensure that the necessary training is provided to all employees (initially at induction stage), to equip everyone with information on what and how to report. Forms will be made available on the internal intranet and also on H & S Boards around corporate buildings, together with full guidance and process maps.

Accident, Incident and Near Miss statistics will form part of the key performance indicators reported to H & S Committee and Senior Management Team.

#### **4.13 Inspection & Audit**

Key Legislation – Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (Regulation 5)

Under the requirements of legislation, SWT has a responsibility to ensure suitable arrangements are in place for a H & S Management system. One component of the system is to ensure that an audit function is integrated as part of the PLAN/DO/CHECK/ACT methodology.

SWT will ensure that the H & S Committee identify the requirements of the annual audit programme and that this is approved by Audit & Governance Committee. The H & S Team will be responsible for managing the audit programme and will work collaboratively with UNISON, to assign resources, identify reporting requirements and deliver the necessary progress updates to H & S Committee (all remedials/recommendations will be tracked on the H & S consolidated action plan).

In addition, SWT will ensure that Health & Safety is identified as a regular audit category within the SWAP Internal Audit Services Programme.

#### **4.14 Lone Working**

Key Legislation – Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (section 2 (2) d)

SWT recognises its legal responsibility to ensure that the workforce is provided with a safe place to work, by risk assessing any situations where employees may be required to work alone.

All lone working activities will be risk assessed and necessary controls will be adopted to mitigate/remove risk where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is necessary and cannot be eliminated, control measures will be adopted to ensure that the employee has a method of keeping in touch and calling for assistance if required.

The Deane Helpline 24/7 system is available to all employees (and contractors when necessary) to utilise during any periods of lone working. The system will automate frequent contact with the employee during the period of lone working and will also be on standby to request assistance for help if required (guidance on how to register and use the Deane Helpline is available on the H & S intranet page).

SWT also operate a Customer Liaison List (CLL) that maintains details of any known high-risk tenants/customers, to avoid any lone officers attending where risk is high.

The H & S Team support managers to identify situations of lone working and how to adopt the necessary control measure to ensure safety. When required, it may also be necessary to issue additional safety devices (GSM units, safety watches, personal alarms) to further reduce risk and protect the individual.

#### **4.15 Occupational Health Monitoring**

Key Legislation – Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (Regulation 6)

Occupational health is how work and workplace environment can impact on employee's health. SWT recognises the importance of promoting and maintaining the health of employees by conducting regular health checks, to ensure employees are closely monitored, where necessary, to avoid injury or illness from any work-related activities.

Health surveillance is a programme of repeated health checks that are legally required, where employees remain exposed to health risks even after controls have been implemented (i.e. risk assessment, training, equipment maintenance).

SWT is committed to maintaining the health of all employees by ensuring that a suitable programme is in place, to monitor the following risks: -

- Noise
- Vibration
- Hazardous Substances
- Handling Lead
- Exposure to Asbestos
- DSE

SWT instruct the services of an Occupational Health provider, to manage certain stages of the OH programme (Tier 1 – 4), and also to provide additional advisory services, assessment and reporting when necessary. The OH provider may also refer to appropriate medical professionals for additional tests or treatment if required. SWT will ensure that all OH processes adopt necessary legislation and support equal opportunities.

Included in the OH programme, are workstation/ergonomic assessments of display screen equipment (also see 4.5).

Employees can also be referred to OH via their manager/People Business Partner when required; this could be because of sickness absence, diagnosis of a medical condition or a health concern that may be affecting the delivery of duties.

#### **4.16 Permits to Work**

Key Legislation – The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Regulations 3 & 4)

SWT will ensure that the following Permits to Work (PTW) are in operation, to provide additional layers of control measures to protect employees, contractors and sub-contractors: -

- **Working at Height** - work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury (ladders, roof/flat roof, scaffold, tree work. Can also include falls into holes in the ground)
- **Hot Works** - operation that uses open flames or the local application of heat and friction (welding, soldering, torch cutting, grinding, hot riveting)
- **Working with Electricity** – any works on electrical circuits or equipment
- **Excavations** – controlling the high risks of excavation/digging work, that may present hazard below the surface
- **Working in confined spaces** – where ingress/egress is complicated, access to oxygen could be limited/restricted, space is restricted to complete works and not intended for continuous human occupancy.

SWT will operate permit-to-work to authorises competence employees, contractors, sub-contractors to carry out specific work within a specified time frame (setting out the precautions required to complete the work safely, based on a risk assessment).

#### **4.17 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Key Legislation – The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 2022 (amended the 1992 Regulation to extend employers' and employees' duties in respect of PPE to a wider group of workers)

SWT recognises its duty under the regulation to provide PPE equipment that will protect the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as

safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

The risk assessment process will identify (as control measures) appropriate occasions and circumstances where PPE/RPE is required to manage and reduce risk. All employees have a duty to adopt the PPE/RPE that has been identified as essential in the delivery of their tasks.

PPE (clothing and equipment) will be provided at no cost to the employee (and contractors where applicable) and will be assessed for suitability both for the task and the individual. Stocks of replacement PPE/RPE and a register of issued PPE/RPE will be maintained and all employees have a responsibility to request replacement items when required.

#### **4.18 Plant and Equipment**

Key Legislation – Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (section 2 (2)a), Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (Regulation 13), Provision and Use of Working Equipment Regulation 1998 (PUWER), Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER), The Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016, Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000.

As an employer, SWT has a duty to comply with all necessary legislation to ensure that any plant and equipment issued to an employee (and contractor where applicable) to conduct their duties, is risk assessed and controlled by: -

- selecting and providing the right equipment for the job
- ensuring work equipment is safely used by trained people
- inspecting and maintaining work equipment so it remains safe.

A PUWER register will be maintained to record all details of any plant and equipment issued to the workforce; this will include service/maintenance records and details of any statutory checks (i.e. LOLER), that need to be performed for insurance requirements.

Necessary processes will also be implemented for the management of pressurised systems or equipment (equipment containing liquid or gas under pressure). Ensuring that regulation is applied, and all systems are sourced, installed, maintained and inspected according to compliancy requirements. Also ensuring that all such systems are incorporated in the insurance written scheme schedule.

All plant and equipment will be risk assessed and only trained persons will be allowed use under strict control measures. In addition any necessary plant and equipment will be assessed for vibration and noise risk and the necessary usage restrictions will be incorporated to ensure sufficient controls are in place to protect the occupational health of users.

Any users of plant and equipment will be assessed for their pertinency to be included in the occupational health monitoring programme.

## **4.19 Property Compliance**

### **4.19.1 Electrical Safety**

Key Legislation – Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, Building Regulations (including Part P requirements), The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) Wiring Regulations 18th Edition BS 7671:2018 and The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994.

SWT recognised its responsibilities under legislation and will: -

- Maintain all our managed electrical installations, components, and associated equipment in a safe condition, in accordance with the relevant electrical safety regulations and legislation.
- Operate clear, concise, and well published arrangements to complete the electrical installation and condition report (EICR) and any necessary repairs.
- Ensure that our tenants are aware of the importance of the electrical testing and repair service and of their responsibility to allow access to our operatives or contractors for the purpose of electrical safety.
- Record on our management databases the details of every property's electrical history, to include the date that the next EICR is due, dates of when rewires and new components such as the consumer unit, smoke alarms, fans etc. have been installed.
- Promote the importance of electrical safety to our customers through tenants' newsletters, leaflets, and letters. All information can be supplied in alternative formats upon request.
- Implement clear procedures to gain access to undertake the EICR within a period not exceeding 60 months since the last report.
- In cases of 'no access', the Council will ensure that we meet our legal obligations to complete the statutory electrical safety check (EICR). This will be enforced by taking legal action in order to gain access as necessary.
- Ensure that all work to the electrical installation is carried out by a competent and suitably qualified engineer, who is regularly assessed by an appropriate accredited certification body and holds minimum level 3 award or equivalent in periodic inspection testing and certification of electrical installations.
- On completion of an EICR or new installation certificate, we will maintain a copy on record for at least 10 years.

### **4.19.2 Gas Safety**

Key Legislation – Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 as amended.

SWT recognised its responsibilities under legislation and will: -

- ensure that suitable and sufficient gas safety inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals. The findings will be recorded, and necessary remedial work undertaken generally in accordance with the predefined timescales within the Gas Safety Procedure (SWTGAS01)
- ensure that residents are provided with a copy of the gas servicing inspection report at the outset of their tenancy and annually thereafter
- ensure it provides gas safety information, operational policies and procedures, training, instruction and supervision to enable staff and contractors to perform their work safely and efficiently
- appoint designated staff and ensure that adequate funding and resources are available to carry out their duties
- will liaise with partner organisations where the activities of these organisations may affect the gas safety of SWT staff, tenants, leaseholders, contractors and visitors who use our services and where the activities of the Council may affect the activities of the other organisations
- record all inspection reports and review for any possible trends and implement appropriate actions as required.

#### **4.19.3 Water Hygiene**

Key Legislation – Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

SWT recognised its responsibilities under legislation and will: -

- ensure that suitable and sufficient water hygiene risk assessments, in accordance with L8, are undertaken at appropriate intervals. The findings will be recorded, and necessary remedial work undertaken in accordance with the predefined timescales within the Water Hygiene Procedures (SWTWAT01)
- ensure that residents are appropriately informed through specific information provided at the outset of their tenancy on how they can minimise the risks of water hygiene bacteria
- ensure that residents who have special needs in relation to water hygiene have been assessed and any extra controls implemented
- ensure it provides water hygiene safety information, operational policies and procedures, training, instruction and supervision to enable staff and contractors to perform their work safely and efficiently
- appoint designated staff and ensure that adequate funding and resources are available to carry out their duties
- ensure that adequate and regular water hygiene checks, servicing and maintenance of stored water and their associated water systems are carried out within appropriate timescales
- liaise with partner organisations where the activities of these organisations may affect the water hygiene safety of Somerset West and Taunton Council staff,

tenants, leaseholders, contractors and visitors who use our services and where the activities of the Council may affect the activities of the other organisations;

- SWT will record all temperature monitoring and review for any possible trends and implement appropriate actions as required.

#### **4.19.4 Fire Risk Assessment**

Key Legislation - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

(see 4.8 for general FRA arrangements)

##### **4.19.4.1 Fire Risk Assessment – Communal Areas**

SWT recognises its responsibilities under legislation and will: -

- ensure that there are suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments, in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and that these are undertaken at appropriate intervals. The findings will be recorded, and necessary remedial work undertaken generally in accordance with the predefined timescales within the Fire Procedures (SWTFRA01)
- ensure that Supported Housing schemes are maintained taking into account the document “Fire Safety in Specialised Housing” produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council
- ensure that residents are appropriately informed through specific information provided at the outset of their tenancy and through general notices and periodic information of fire control measures and actions to take in the event of an emergency
- ensure that residents who have special needs have these assessed and any extra controls implemented and recorded in the site documentation which is made available to the emergency services
- ensure it provides fire safety information, operational policies and procedures, training, instruction and supervision to enable staff and contractors to perform their work safely and efficiently
- appoint Compliance Case Managers and ensure that adequate funding and resources are available to carry out their duties
- implement a Resident Engagement Strategy which will be reviewed periodically, this will enable a stronger voice for our residents to raise concerns relating to fire safety in their homes
- ensure that adequate and regular fire drills, servicing, maintenance and testing of fire safety equipment is carried out within appropriate timescales
- aim to create an effective relationship with the Fire & Rescue Service
- liaise with partner organisations where the activities of these organisations may affect the fire safety of Somerset West and Taunton Council staff, tenants, leaseholders, contractors and visitors who use our services and where the activities of the Council may affect the activities of the other organisations.
- record all fire related incidents and review for any possible trends and implement appropriate actions to minimise re-occurrence.

#### **4.20 Risk Assessment & Safe Systems of Work (SSOW)**

Key Legislation – The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Regulations 3 & 4)

Under the requirements of legislation, SWT recognises its responsibilities to regularly assess the risk exposure, to employees and all others who are involved in, or come into contact with, day to day work activities. The main objective of risk assessment is to identify what could cause injury or illness in the organisation and to apply appropriate control measures to mitigate risk.

Risk assessments will be regularly completed to identify the hazards and associated risks of an activity, who may be harmed, and evaluate the likelihood and severity of potential harm. Subsequently by applying suitable control measure, the objective of the risk assessment will be to reduce the likelihood/severity to reduce/mitigate the overall outcome. Basic principles of prevention will be applied to reduce risk and where risk cannot be reduced to the lowest factor, then a Safe System of Work (SSOW) will also be incorporated.

The frequency of risk assessment review will depend on the frequency of the activity and the severity of risk. Part of the risk assessment process will be to assign a recommended review frequency. Reviews will also take place following changes to legislation, changes to organisational structure, building layout changes, workforce changes and changes to operational delivery.

SWT adopts the following risk assessment category structure (the F.A.C.E of risk assessment): -

- **F = Fabric** (assessment of buildings, sites, physical assets)
- **A = Activities** (all activities associated with day to day operational activity)
- **C = COSHH** (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health – assessments to protect the users of substances)
- **E = Executor** (all risk assessments ‘executed’ to keep a person safe, i.e. Young Persons, Expectant Mothers, Employees with Disabilities/Medical Conditions/prescribed medications that may affect role deliver). These risk assessments will be protected for data protection purposes.

SWT will ensure that risk assessments are accessible (within H & S SharePoint area and Intranet Page) to all individuals that they involve, that control measures are implemented, regularly reviewed and that all applicable PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), training and suitable equipment is provided, to ensure that tasks can be delivered as safely as possible.

From time to time, it may be necessary to link any significant risks to the corporate risk register, so that the necessary information can be provided to the Senior Management Team, for further advice and instruction.

#### **4.21 Safety Action Notices (SAN)**

Key Legislation – Management of Health & Safety at Work 1999 (Regulation 4)

SWT recognises the responsibility for applying basic principles of prevention; one very important key component is to ensure discipline within the live Health and Safety Management System (HSMS).

Continuous improvement is also a pivotal component of the HSMS structure relating to the Plan/Do/Check/Act methodology. Therefore, SWT has adopted a Safety Action Notice Policy to help manage H & S consequence, with an objective to empower ownership and accountability and assist risk management.

SAN's are issued in two forms: -

- RED CARDS – Prohibition Notices (stop dangerous activities until safer controls have been identified and implemented)
- YELLOW CARDS – Improvement Notices (do not stop activities but require improved controls being identified and implemented).

Both actions mirror the interventions that Health and Safety Executive can apply if there are concerns relating the H & S systems.

SWT's H & S Team will work with operational managers to discuss when a card is applicable and how it will be managed. Cards can be applied to teams or individuals (and contractors if applicable) and where necessary can be linked to performance management processes. Any issue of SAN will be reported through the H

#### **4.22 Training & Competent Person Register**

Key Legislation – Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (Regulation 13)

Under legislation, the organisation has a responsibility to ensure that Competent Person Registers are maintained in the form of Training Registers, to ensure that all employees are provided with sufficient training to conduct their duties safely.

SWT will ensure at onboarding, each new employee will attend a H & S Induction session and will also be required to complete a mandatory suite of e-learning H & S Modules. Attendance of the induction and completion of the e-learning modules will be reported through H & S Committee.

In addition, each role will require an assessment of H & S training requirements, for the employee to complete the role safely. The People Business Partners will assist the Manager to identify the requirements, to ensure that essential qualifications are identified at recruitment and also that new employees are incorporated into the Training Programme for 'must have' compliancy training.

SWT will ensure that training registers are continuously monitored, and that budget provision is identified to deliver all necessary refresher training.

Annual reviews of Training Needs Analysis (TNA) will be conducted by the Learning and Development Team and any necessary amendments/additions reflected in the training programme.

The H & S Team reserve the right to apply a SAN (Safety Action Notice) to anyone who fails to attend/complete mandatory training, fails to attend a refresher training session or following investigation is proved to have purposefully neglected H & S Training instructions.

#### **4.23 Visitors to Corporate Buildings**

Key Legislation – Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

SWT recognised its responsibility to ensure that anyone working or visiting their environment is aware of risks and controls for that workspace.

All visitors to corporate buildings will be signed in on arrival and briefed on incident reporting and emergency evacuation, then escorted by the person they are visiting (the escort then becomes responsible for the visitor for the duration of the visit and must ensure that they are signed out when leaving. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the escort will be responsible for the safe evacuation of the visitor (any special circumstances will be discussed with Facilities before visits).

See 4.2 for Contractor Management arrangements.

#### **4.24 Welfare Provision**

Key Legislation – Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulation 1992, Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (section 2 (2) e)

SWT recognises the responsibility under legislation to provide welfare facilities and a working environment that's healthy and safe for everyone in the workplace, including those with disabilities: -

- **Welfare Facilities** - toilets and hand basins, with soap and towels or a hand-dryer, drinking water, a place to store and dry clothing (and somewhere to change if special clothing is worn for work), somewhere to rest and eat meals
- **Healthy Work Environment** – good ventilation, reasonable working temperature, suitable light, suitable space and workstations, clean workspace with waste disposal
- **Safe Workspace** – maintained premises and equipment (adopting safe materials), safe egress/ingress, safe floor/routes.

Regular inspections and safety processes will be continually monitored to ensure suitable provision is maintained and also welfare will be monitored through the H & S Committee governance structure on a monthly basis.

#### **4.25 Wellbeing**

Key Legislation – Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (Regulation 6)

Wellbeing is one of the highest priorities within the organisation and SWT is committed to monitoring and reviewing this on a regular and ongoing basis. Our goal is to keep our people safe through effective leadership and management, promoting high standards of Wellbeing in the workplace and in all our activities.

We will:

- Continuously review the organisation for work related and personal stress, via sickness data. Identify individuals or teams that may need additional support and work to drive improvement of the health & wellbeing of our people.
- Continuously review and ensure wellbeing activities are targeted to address the current health issues and trends within our teams, to support the improvement of health and wellbeing inside and outside of work.
- Drive and sustain positive change through engagement and action with Wellbeing activities.
- Provide relevant tools, such as Wellbeing Action Plans, for employees who require extra support. This will help to create a safe and healthy workplace where people can thrive.
- The Council through its Occupational Health Service and its Employment Assistance Programme have specialist resources available to support and advise staff. In particular, the Carefirst EAP service provides for confidential counselling to employees.

#### **4.26 Working at Height**

Key Legislation - Work at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR)

The Employers will ensure that any persons responsible or in control of any work at height activity must make sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent/trained individuals. This includes identifying a suitable type of equipment for working at height, ensuring that specific works are further risk assessed and that attention is paid to variable conditions (i.e. changeable weather conditions) that may affect the suitability of control measures.

Consideration will also be given to ensuring that suitable fall arrest systems, edge protection, PPE and access equipment are available and that all equipment is regularly formally inspected and maintained.

Every effort will be made to eliminate the need to work from height in the first instance.

#### **4.27 Young Persons**

Key Legislation – Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (Regulation 19)

SWT recognises its duty under the regulation to ensure that young people employed by them/engaged with them, are not exposed to risk due to: -

- lack of experience
- being unaware of existing or potential risks and/or
- lack of maturity.

Any engagement with a young person (under the age of 18), whether that be via work experience, apprenticeship, voluntary work or employment contract, must be suitably risk assessed to ensure that risk is fully managed and sufficient control measures are in place (before commencement of activity).

In addition to risk assessment, SWT will also ensure that suitable supervision is allocated to monitor their progress, to help identify additional adjustments or controls that may be necessary, based on the young person's level of experience within the workspace and their attitude to risk.

When necessary, SWT will provide a buddy/mentor to ensure that sufficient support is in place to encourage further educational development.