

Health, Safety, Well-being and Equality Statement

This statement is the over-arching policy statement for health, safety, well-being and equality in Herefordshire Council. All other documents at a corporate or directorate level will match or exceed the principles set out here. Everyone who works for or with the council has a personal responsibility to ensure that their actions and decisions are compliant with the aims of the organisation and model our values.

Health, safety, well-being and equality, when proactively addressed, are all matters which improve the working environment for our employees and ensure that the council remains an attractive, safe and equitable place to work. In turn, this will support the efficient delivery of services to the people of Herefordshire.

Cllr Jonathan Lester
Leader of the council

Alistair Neill
Chief executive

Objectives

The council has a stand-alone Equality Policy, Health and Safety Strategy, and Well-Being Strategy, each with a detailed action plan. However there are a number of over-arching corporate objectives:

1. to make sure that the work of the council is managed so that it does not adversely affect the health, safety or well-being of employees or those affected by our work
2. to ensure that employees (and others as appropriate) are adequately informed of any identified risks and, where appropriate, receive relevant instruction, training and supervision
3. to ensure that those who deliver services or carry out work on behalf of the council are competent and legally compliant with their health and safety and equality responsibilities
4. to develop a positive culture maintaining appropriate health, safety, well-being and equality management systems and arrangements which are monitored and reviewed transparently in order to drive improvement

Herefordshire Council will be guided in its work by the following values which are designed to shape our culture, guide the way we act, and aid us in making choices and decisions:

- **People** – treating people fairly, with compassion, respect and dignity
- **Excellence** – striving for excellence and the appropriate quality of service, care and life in Herefordshire
- **Openness** – being open, transparent and accountable
- **Partnership** – working in partnership, and with all our diverse communities
- **Listening** – actively listening to, understanding and taking into account people's views and needs
- **Environment** – protecting and promoting our outstanding natural environment and heritage for the benefit of all.

Organisational responsibilities

The **leader and cabinet (the executive)** sets the direction for health, safety, wellbeing and equality and allocates resources.

The **cabinet member finance and corporate services** has the portfolio lead for health and safety, employee wellbeing (as HR lead), and equality, but all **cabinet members** will consider the implications of decisions relating to their own portfolios.

The **chief executive and leader** together provide overall leadership on health, safety, wellbeing and equality for the council. Together with **cabinet members and directors** they will provide visible leadership.

The **chief executive** has overall responsibility for ensuring the policies and strategies are implemented effectively across the organisation.

Management board will:

- support the chief executive in meeting his responsibilities
- ensure that robust management systems are in place and operating effectively
- encourage and promote positive actions and approaches to improve employee well-being
- review reports, agree improvement action where necessary, and make recommendations as appropriate

Directors will ensure arrangements are in place within their own directorates to:

- manage health and safety issues (such as identifying hazards, and assess and record risks)
- manage equality issues (such as reasonable adjustments and equitable recruitment processes)
- ensure that managers are competent and trained
- ensure that employees are involved and consulted as appropriate
- review performance and provide reports as required

- report to the chief executive any situation where the objectives in this statement cannot be achieved
- ensure that decision-makers are fully informed of the health and safety, and equality implications of options under consideration
- model the council's values and provide constructive challenge to ensure others do so

Managers will:

- ensure that they and their teams are compliant with all health and safety and equality legislation
- ensure that their teams are competent and trained
- report and investigate incidents as necessary
- model the council's values and provide constructive challenge to ensure others do so

Employees will:

- take reasonable care for their own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others
- engage in consultation and contribute positively to identifying activities which would improve employee wellbeing
- co-operate with managers to achieve compliance with legislation
- report any health, safety, wellbeing or equality concern
- model the council's values and provide constructive challenge to ensure others do so

Area specialists include the health and safety advisor, the head of human resources and organisational development, and the corporate customer information and equality manager. They will provide:

- advice and support
- relevant training
- appropriate liaison with recognised union or other employee representatives

Employee consultation

Employees or their representatives will be consulted with regard to the arrangements to control significant health and safety risks and to comply with relevant legislation. This will be done informally by managers and formally, either through the health and safety committee or the council's joint consultative machinery.

Monitoring and review

Health, safety, wellbeing and equality performance will be reported to cabinet on a quarterly basis as part of the corporate performance reporting process. In addition, an annual report will be provided to the general overview and scrutiny committee summarising the results of monitoring activities carried out in directorates and proposed actions for improving performance.