



Southern Health
and Social Care Trust
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Health & Safety at Work Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy describes the Southern Health & Social Care Trust (hereafter known as the Trust) approach to the management of health and safety in the workplace. The principles of this policy apply to the holistic management of health and safety across the Trust.

2. Purpose and Aims

This policy is to ensure compliance with the legal requirement of Health & Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

The Trust aims to:

- Provide and support a safe and healthy environment for its employees, service users, visitors, contractors and others who may be affected whilst at work, by the services it provides or whilst on its premises.
- Ensure that health and safety management in the Trust is based on a continuous improvement model and embraces the Trust risk management strategy and processes.
- Actively promote a positive health and safety culture.

3. Policy Statement (see Appendix 1)

The Trust has adopted this policy to:

- ensure compliance with its statutory responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and all other related legislation and approved codes of practice,
- promote and develop a positive health and safety culture through consultation and cooperation with internal and external stakeholders,
- promote best practice in health and safety management,
- confirm its commitment to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable:
 - provision and maintenance of safe plant and equipment,
 - safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances,
 - provision of information, instruction, training and supervision for employees,
 - provision and maintenance of a safe place of work including access and egress,
 - adequate facilities and welfare arrangements,
 - adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from work activities,
 - support the prevention of accidents, incidents of harm, or work related ill health,
 - a safe workplace and promote a positive safety culture at all levels across the Trust.

Other procedures and guidance documents support this policy.

4. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all employees and those undertaking work on behalf of the Trust (e.g. agency/external locum staff, volunteers, students on placement, contractors and sub-contractors) and refers to all services and activities provided under the Trust.

Staff failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary procedures.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. Trust Board

The overall responsibility for health and safety resides with Trust Board. The Trust Board has a collective role in providing committed leadership and ensuring adequate resources are allocated for the continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

5.2. Chief Executive

The Trust Board's responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy will be managed through the Chief Executive who, on behalf of the Trust Board will:

- ensure the Trust's policy on health and safety is prepared, reviewed and updated as necessary and is suitably communicated to all staff,
- ensure adequate resources are allocated to improve and maintain health and safety standards,
- obtain commitment and leadership from senior management to the health and safety risk management process and encourage SMT to foster and promote health and safety awareness across all directorates,
- assign lead responsibility for Health and Safety to an Executive Director, Director of Finance, Procurement & Estates.

5.3. Director of Finance, Procurement and Estates

The Chief Executive has appointed the Director of Finance, Procurement & Estates as Lead Director with responsibility for establishing and monitoring the implementation of the Health and Safety at Work Policy and the organisational arrangements within the Trust.

The Lead Director will:

- ensure provision of adequate resources to enable the implementation and continual development of the health and safety management system,

- ensure integration of health and safety management into the Trust's governance and assurance arrangements,
- inform the Chief Executive of significant risks in relation to health and safety,
- maintain and monitor the effectiveness of the Health and Safety Committee by ensuring that it fulfils its agreed terms of reference,
- establish the Safety and Risk Management Group and monitor the effectiveness of the Group by ensuring that it fulfils its agreed terms of reference,
- ensure the provision of appropriate health and safety training as required by staff/employees to undertake their roles safely and without risk to health,
- advise the Governance Committee on health and safety matters,
- ensure the Trust has access to a competent person or persons who will assist in undertaking the measures needed to comply with legislative health and safety requirements relevant to the organisation and the services it provides.

5.4. Directors

Directors are responsible for implementing this policy within their directorates, promoting and operating a positive safety culture and maintaining strong communication of health and safety matters throughout their divisions. Each Director within the Trust is responsible for the management of health and safety within their directorate and must address the Directorate's specific health and safety concerns. In particular this will include:

- ensuring that adequate resources, time and facilities are available to ensure achievement of health and safety objectives,
- delegating appropriate staff specific duties relating to the implementation and monitoring of the health and safety at work policy,
- ensuring that those staff with delegated safety responsibilities receive adequate training, information and support to discharge their duties,
- ensuring health and safety management responsibilities are included within all job descriptions, identified as part of individual performance reviews and that personal development plans are prepared following appraisals which will identify any specific areas of training and development required in relation to health and safety,
- obtaining commitment from their managers to the health and safety risk management systems and encouraging them to manage and promote good health and safety awareness. Directors must ensure that detailed health and safety risks are identified, assessed, controlled and monitored within their area of responsibility. This includes the employment of safe working methods,
- ensuring that divisional/directorate health and safety procedures are developed, reviewed and maintained which reflect local specified risks and other issues,

- prioritising identified unacceptable risks, managing and detailing these on the appropriate risk register,
- ensuring that all incidents and reports of ill health are reported in a timely manner within the Trust's processes and systems. Such incidents must be fully and proportionately investigated and, where necessary, appropriate remedial action taken including application of lessons learned or, where indicated the implementation of longer term objectives,
- ensuring annual audits are completed on the effectiveness of the health and safety management system within the directorate and that any shortcomings identified are actioned and recorded.

Directors may assign these duties to appropriate Assistant Directors or Heads of Service but they remain accountable to the Chief Executive for health and safety matters within their directorate.

5.5. Assistant Directors

In support of the Director, the Assistant Director will be responsible for the implementation of this policy within their area of responsibility. This includes:

- ensuring suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out and are kept up to date and under review,
- ensuring any actions or recommendations arising from the risk assessment process are monitored and complete. Where health and safety risks have been placed on the directorate risk register they will be regularly reviewed,
- ensuring health and safety management responsibilities are included within all job descriptions, identified as part of individual performance reviews and that personal development plans are prepared following appraisals which will identify any specific areas of training and development required in relation to health and safety,
- ensuring staff within the division have received relevant health and safety training commensurate to their work activities and level of exposure to risk,
- ensuring any lessons learnt from incidents, reports of ill health, claims or complaints are appropriately shared and embedded within the directorate,
- lead and participate in the investigation of significant incidents and to liaise with the enforcement agencies (HSENI, PSNI or Local Authority) when required,
- ensuring Heads of Service and Line Managers have considered and implemented where necessary local safe systems and working procedures,
- ensure health and safety audits or inspections are facilitated to enable continued improvements, and ensure all Heads of Service and Managers participate,

- ensuring any cause for concern in health and safety practice is escalated in a timely manner in line with the Trust's Risk Management Strategy,
- identifying and ensuring the provision of adequate and reasonable resources.

5.6. Heads of Service

Heads of Service will be responsible for implementing health & safety policy within their divisions by operating, promoting and supporting a positive safety culture at work and:

- ensuring suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out and are kept up to date and under review,
- ensuring any actions or recommendations arising from the risk assessment process are monitored and complete. Where health and safety risks have been placed on the service risk register they will be regularly reviewed,
- ensuring the implementation of the trust divisional/directorate health and safety policies & procedures,
- ensuring health and safety management responsibilities are included within all job descriptions, identified as part of individual performance reviews and that personal development plans are prepared following appraisals which will identify any specific areas of training and development required in relation to health and safety,
- ensuring that managers implement the health and safety risk management process within their department and escalate inadequately controlled risk, using the Trust's risk management process,
- delegating appropriate staff specific duties relating to the implementation and monitoring of the health and safety at work policy,
- ensuring that those staff with delegated health and safety responsibilities receive adequate information, training, support and time to discharge their duties,
- in conjunction with the Health and Safety Department supported by Organisational Development and other Departments, will ensure appropriate mandatory and role-specific health and safety training is identified and completed,
- ensuring that arrangements are made for the induction of newly appointed and transferred staff so that they are made aware of the health and safety procedures in their specific area of work. Such induction training should take place at the earliest practicable time following appointment or transfer,
- ensure the health and safety audits or inspections are facilitated to enable continued improvements, and ensure all managers participate as required,
- ensuring that any remedial actions arising from health and safety audits and inspections are managed and actioned appropriately.

5.7. Managers / Supervisors / Team Leaders

Managers/Supervisors/Team Leaders are responsible for implementing this policy on a day-by-day basis by leading, operating and maintaining safe methods of work, promoting safety culture and ensuring adequate information, instruction, training, supervision including the assessment and monitoring of identified risk. In particular this will include:

- assisting senior management in developing clear achievable health and safety objectives and criteria to monitor performance, and advising them of all serious adverse incidents and unacceptable risks,
- ensuring health and safety management responsibilities are included within all job descriptions, identified as part of individual performance reviews and that personal development plans are prepared following appraisals which will identify any specific areas of training and development required in relation to health and safety,
- developing, maintaining and reviewing departmental health & safety procedures which reflect local or specific risks and other issues. This should detail the organisational arrangements for identifying, assessment and preventing or controlling risks and the arrangements for management of health and safety,
- undertaking health and safety risk assessments in accordance with Trust guidance and ensuring that risks are managed and controlled or, if required, escalated in line with the Trust's Risk Management Strategy,
- ensuring that the need for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances is identified and management through a CoSHH risk assessment and where appropriate appoint a CoSHH assessor to oversee this aspect,
- ensure there is adequate assessment and provision for first aid arrangements,
- consulting with employees and advising on new controls and the outcome of risk assessments or changes to working practices that may affect their health and safety, and ensuring that account is taken of their views,
- ensuring that all incidents and reports of related harm, damage or near miss are recorded within the Trust incident management systems (including Datix), and where appropriate investigated in accordance with Trust policy and guidance to ensure any necessary action to prevent recurrence is implemented as soon as reasonably practicable,
- ensuring that all machinery and work equipment is stored, operated and maintained in a safe condition and checked before use, reporting any defects and take the necessary corrective action to make safe,
- ensuring that staff induction, all mandatory training and appropriate refresher training on health and safety issues is provided, including policies/procedures, safe systems of work and safe operation and maintenance of equipment,

- ensure that staff training records are suitably maintained and kept up to date,
- ensuring that all staff are made aware of Trust and departmental health and safety policies/procedures, hazards and any other safety information which they require in order to perform their duties safely,
- engagement in regular health and safety audits and inspections to ensure any opportunities for improvement are actioned. Progress reported regularly to the relevant Head of Service.

5.8. Employees

Employees must:

- comply with this policy and related procedures and co-operate with managers, supervisors and team leaders on all health and safety matters,
- familiarise themselves with local health and safety procedures and practice especially when notified it has been renewed or updated,
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work,
- not interfere with or misuse any item provided to safeguard their health and safety,
- attend as required, all necessary health and safety training sessions which will be identified in accordance with the corporate training matrix, including mandatory and/or role specific training, see Health and Safety SharePoint site – [Training](#) tile,
- report all health and safety related incidents or concerns in a timely manner to their line manager,
- ensure that when driving on Trust business, using either a fleet vehicle, lease car or private vehicle (including motorcycles and bicycles) that they are aware of their responsibilities under the health and safety legislation and road traffic legislation.

5.9. Health and Safety Department

The Health and Safety Department (Assistant Director Estate Services, Head of Service Specialist Estate Services, Health and Safety Manager and associated others) has responsibility for promoting understanding and compliance with health legislation and the Trust's Health and Safety at Work Policy and will:-

- provide competent professional and technical health and safety advice within the Trust,
- lead and manage the Health and Safety Department,
- develop and maintain a suitable organisational health and safety management system (SMS),
- report significant findings to the Lead Director for health and safety,

- ensure that the Trust is kept informed of any relevant regulatory or legislative changes,
- ensure the maintenance of incident records and reporting to the statutory enforcing agencies as required under RIDDOR in support of the Trust's Incident Management Procedure,
- support in conjunction with any incident investigation team and suitably trained experienced staff, the facilitation of root-cause-analysis and with the investigation of serious adverse incidents where required,
- in conjunction and cooperation with other professionals and specialists within the Trust, contribute towards the development of health & safety related guidance,
- provide specialist risk assessment advice and support as requested,
- in conjunction with the Health and Safety Department identify, develop and facilitate health and safety training,
- develop, lead and maintain a strategic health and safety programme,
- develop, lead and maintain a health and safety audit and inspection programme.

6. Health and Safety Arrangements

6.1. Health and Safety Delivery and Competency

The Trust will ensure it has access to a competent person or persons who will assist in undertaking the measures needed to comply with legislative health and safety requirements relevant to the organisation and the services it provides.

- The CEO and SMT will provide and demonstrate senior management leadership taking overall responsibility for and oversight of the management and control of health and safety within the Trust.
- Directors and Assistant Directors will lead and manage all aspects of health and safety within their respective directorates.
- Heads of Service and Managers will lead and manage all aspects of health and safety within their respective teams and service areas.
- The Health and Safety Manager will be a competent experienced health and safety professional, who will lead the Health and Safety Department supporting, guiding and advising the Trust where necessary.
- The H&S Department will comprise adequate resource of trained competent health and safety professionals supporting the Health and Safety Manager.
- Administrative support will be provided within the H&S Department.

- All employees will cooperate and support the management and delivery of health and safety across the Trust and specifically within their work areas, roles and activities.

6.2. Health and Safety Committee

A Trust Health & Safety Committee operates in accordance with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978, which facilitates consultation on all health and safety matters. The committee includes representation from recognised Trade Unions and professional bodies/associations. This group will collate the information necessary to provide evidence to the Trust Board and the Governance Committee giving assurance that robust health and safety management systems are in place.

Refer to the Committee's "Terms of Reference" for details.

6.3. Safety and Risk Management Group

The Safety and Risk Management Group is the strategic group that will be responsible for overseeing the strategic and operational implementation of all health and safety related policies and guidance in operational areas and seeking assurance that the activities of the Trust are managed in a manner where health and safety is of primary importance. In doing so this group will provide the Health and Safety Committee with assurance that robust health and safety management systems are in place and to collate the information necessary.

Refer to the group's "Terms of Reference" for details.

6.4. Training and Information

Training is an integral and effective part of a health and safety management system. The Director of Finance, Procurement & Estates will ensure that general aspects of health and safety are incorporated in the Trust's mandatory training programme. Compliance statistics for relevant health and safety elements of Corporate Mandatory Training will be collated by the Organisational Development Service and will be reported to the Health and Safety Committee. The Subject Lead will provide statistics in relation to role special mandatory training.

As skill needs are identified, appropriate training will be arranged and employees consulted accordingly. Where new systems of work or products are introduced that require specialist training, appropriate instruction and advice will also be provided to those employees involved. In line with Human Resources processes, line managers

are required to review, consider and discuss with the individual all training needs including new or refresher requirements to ensure staff have the appropriate skills, knowledge and learning appropriate for their role, tasks and activities.

6.5. Incident Reporting

All health and safety related incidents must be reported via Trust management systems (Datix Web) in a timely manner and in accordance with the Trust Incident Reporting Procedures. All incidents must be promptly investigated by managers in a proportionate manner to identify the cause, any remedial action required, and highlight and record any lessons learned. Findings of investigations must be recorded on Datix.

The Health and Safety Department will undertake the statutory reporting of incidents to the relevant enforcing authority (Health & Safety Executive, Northern Ireland (HSENI) / Local Authority) which fall under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NI) 1997 (RIDDOR).

6.6. Specific Arrangements

Specific arrangements are located on the Health and Safety Department's SharePoint site.

These arrangements include:

- a register of legislation
- a register of competent persons
- a catalogue of Safety Guidance Notes and
- other arrangements

7. Monitoring

Methodologies for assurance and monitoring of this policy will include:

- Issue of a health and safety audit plan,
- Production of an Annual Health & Safety Report to the Governance Committee,
- Investigation of all incidents and reports of work-related ill-health under RIDDOR,
- Regional benchmarking with other Trusts on key incident areas and metrics such as, but not limited to; incident numbers, sharps injuries, musculoskeletal injuries, violence and aggression.

8. Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Director of Finance, Procurement and Estates within two years or earlier if required, or after any significant organisational or structural change.

9. Sources of Advice & Further Information

Further advice and information regarding this policy document can be obtained from the Health & Safety Manager.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with related policies and procedures.

10. Equality & Human Rights Considerations

This policy has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Using the Equality Commissions screening criteria, no significant equality implications have been identified. The policy is therefore not subject to equality impact assessment.

This policy has been considered under the terms of the Human Rights Act 1998 and was deemed compatible with the European Convention Rights contained in the Act.

11. Legislative Compliance, Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance

This policy complies with:

- The Health & Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000
 - The Northern Ireland Regulations on Safety Representatives and Safety Committees (1979)
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (NI) 1996
- Trust's Risk Management strategy.

Appendix 1

Health and Safety at Work Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and other applicable legislation as a minimum.

Overall responsibility for health and safety resides with Trust Board. The Trust Board have a collective role in providing committed leadership and ensuring that adequate resources are allocated for the continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

We acknowledge that we have operational responsibility for ensuring that the Southern Health and Social Care Trust meets its statutory obligations and that effective arrangements for the management of health and safety are put in place.

We are dedicated to achieving high standards of health and safety through the provision of a safe and healthy working environment, safe working arrangements with the cooperation of all employees.

The SHSCT will provide leadership through commitment to a health and safety culture and will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- provision and maintenance of safe plant and equipment,
- safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances,
- provision of information, instruction, training and supervision for employees,
- provision and maintenance of a safe place of work including access and egress, adequate facilities and welfare arrangements,
- adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from work activities,
- support the prevention of accidents, incidents of harm, or work related ill health,
- a safe workplace and promote a positive safety culture at all levels across the Trust.

Signed:



Dr Maria O'Kane

Chief Executive

Date:

24/8/23