



Health and Safety Policy

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CONTACT INFORMATION

If there are any questions relating to the policies and procedures set out in this document, then please contact the relevant staff member below.

GENERAL ENQUIRES, COMMENTS AND LIAISON:

Name	Role	email	Phone
Matt Jackson	Conservation Director	Matt.jackson@wildlifebcn.org	01604 405285

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Health and Safety Policy

Scope

This policy applies to every aspect of the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire's ("the Trust") activities. It describes the Trust's commitment to:

- Discharge its duty of care to anyone potentially impacted by its undertaking;
- The organisation roles and responsibilities of specified employees, and
- The arrangements in force to secure the health, safety and welfare of all people to whom it owes a duty of care.

The policy also sets out the expectations on employees, volunteers, and contractors to support the Trust's efforts to provide a safe and healthy workplace and to meet their own individual duty of care to others.

To enable everyone to understand what is expected of them, this Policy formally translates the Trust's duties laid upon it by legislation, civil law, and its own expectations in three ways:

1. As the Policy Statement which sets out the Trust's commitment to health and safety.
2. A statement of responsibilities for each role. These responsibilities cannot be delegated. However, the actions needed to fulfil them can be passed on-to other role holders.
3. In documented codes of practice, standard operating procedures, and guidance notes/documents which set out what must be achieved by all functional areas for each health and safety topic.

Introduction

Under The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (also referred to as HSWA) the responsibility for managing work-related risk falls upon those who create that risk. This applies whether the risk maker is an employer, an employee, self-employed, an occupier of a premise, a designer or a manufacturer or supplier of articles or substances.

For employers, this responsibility, or duty of care, extends to cover anyone who could foreseeably be harmed by any activities associated with the employer's undertaking. Whilst employers may delegate the performance of certain tasks to others, for example through the line management structure or by contracting out to third parties, the responsibility for ensuring that the duty of care has been met remains with the employer. Consequently, employers need to implement suitable governance arrangements to provide the necessary reassurance that delegated tasks, including those contracted out to third parties, have actually been carried out, and to take appropriate corrective action where this is found not to be the case. The extent of any monitoring should be proportionate to the degree of risk created.

The HSWA also imposes a duty of care on individuals to anyone who may be affected by their acts or omissions in the course of carrying out their employer's undertaking. The extent of this duty will depend on the degree of control that the individual has over the way in which work tasks are performed.

Definitions

Employee: for the purpose of this policy indicates paid staff including permanent, fixed term, and casual.

Volunteer: means any unpaid worker.

Undertaking: Case law has established that, in the context of the HSWA, "undertaking" has a very wide-meaning and includes not only core business activities and functions, but also any ancillary activities, such as the cleaning and maintenance and repair of buildings, plant or equipment associated with the employer's business regardless of who performs these activities.

"So far as is reasonably practicable": This principle is applied to the management of risks and whether a duty holder has done enough to meet their duty of care. Case law has defined this as being about weighing risk against the effort (time, expense, resources) needed to further reduce it. The law presumes that the balance of this judgement should be in favour of reducing the risk. It is only if the effort is grossly disproportionate to the risk that this standard can be deemed to have been met.

Competence: There is no legal definition of competence. However, in a health and safety context this is generally understood to mean having the required skills, expertise, experience and training to carry out a required task safely.

Heads of Function: All members of Leadership Team except those who are also members of the Executive Board.

Supervisors: this term refers to any member of staff and/or volunteer, regardless of seniority, who leads/supervises a task or activity.



Statement of General Policy

At the Trust, we recognise that good standards of health, safety and welfare are an integral part of good management. The sensible and proportionate management of risk supports innovation and sustainability.

We aim to meet our health, safety and welfare commitments, so far as is reasonably practicable, by:

- Providing effective leadership and resources and access to competent advice across the organisation to enable agreed health, safety and welfare standards to be met
- Clearly defining roles and responsibilities so that all employees, volunteers, and contractors are clear about the contribution they will make to securing their own health, safety and welfare and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions
- Achieving legal compliance, as a minimum, but striving for good or best practice where it is appropriate and proportionate to do so
- Assessing the significant risks associated with our business activities and implementing sensible and proportionate control measures to reduce the risk of injury and ill-health, and damage to property or the environment
- Developing and implementing a health and safety management system and associated arrangements, including arrangements to consult employees, to identify agreed performance standards, and the means by which the achievement of these will be monitored and reviewed in order to secure continuous improvement
- Embedding consideration of health, safety and welfare matters when planning and coordinating all business activities to enable the early identification of unacceptable risks and the implementation of satisfactory control measures
- Providing adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to our employees, volunteers, and contractors to encourage ownership of health, safety and welfare matters and to enable each person to carry out their duties safely and to contribute to the overall delivery of the aims of this policy
- Working with employees and their elected and appointed representatives, to make sure that they are consulted on matters of health and safety and can contribute to the development of our health and safety management system and arrangements
- Taking appropriate, timely and proportionate corrective and preventative actions to manage intolerable risks identified by monitoring, auditing and investigative activities.

We will review, and where necessary revise, our policy at suitable intervals (annually or following any significant health and safety event or material change in organisation or arrangements) to ensure that it continues to reflect our commitment and stated aims.

Original signed by

Original signed by

Chair of Council
Date:

Chief Executive
Date:

Statement of Responsibilities for Health and Safety

The following section sets out individual roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for managing health, safety and welfare issues within the Trust. All defined organisation roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are subject to the caveat of “so far as is reasonably practicable”. Responsibilities and accountabilities may be simply the core legal duty as an employee to co-operate with the Trust. However, any Trust employee or volunteer acting in a managerial, professional, or supervisory capacity bears additional management responsibilities. The more senior the appointment, the more onerous the responsibility. The level of that responsibility is directly linked to the level of control. In health and safety terms the manager/supervisor will be responsible for those people and activities they are expected to control.

This responsibility applies to all Trust activities wherever they take place.

1. Council of Management

Ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters within the Trust sits with the Council of Management; each Trustee has joint and several responsibility.

Council is the Trust’s governing body and as such is responsible for:

- Setting and monitoring the Trust’s strategy and policy, including the overarching health and safety policy
- Monitoring health and safety performance and seeking appropriate reassurance that health and safety performance is satisfactory
- Recommending and monitoring improvements where health and safety performance is found to be unsatisfactory.

Council has delegated management responsibility for health, safety and welfare matters to the Chief Executive.

2. Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is accountable to Council for the day-to-day implementation of the Trust’s health and safety policy and for monitoring health and safety performance.

The Chief Executive has executive authority to set the specific health and safety policy and for agreeing Trust performance standards for the management of health, safety and welfare matters. In addition the Chief Executive’s responsibilities include:

- Bringing to the Chair of Council’s attention any faults or areas of weakness in the policy or its implementation
- Ensuring that the relevant resources are made available to enable the policy to be implemented
- Chairing and facilitating the meetings of the Health and Safety Committee

The Chief Executive has delegated executive responsibility for the delivery of specific aspects of day-to day health and safety matters through the Trust’s three Directors - who are all members of the Executive Board - and their respective line management structures. The role of the Directors and individual members is described below.

3. Executive Board

The activities and operation of the Trust are directed and controlled by the Executive Board and associated line management structures. The Executive Board will consider and attempt to resolve health and safety implications arising from strategic and operational decisions made within that Board. The Executive Board receive regular reports on health and safety performance from the Health and Safety Manager. The Executive Board members are also members of the Trust's Health and Safety Committee.

Each Director is accountable to the Chief Executive for the health and safety management in each of their functional areas. This involves line management of the Heads of those functional areas through whom the responsibility for health and safety management in operational areas is cascaded down. The key responsibility placed on each Director is to make routine enquiries of direct reports, including, where necessary, making requests for supporting information to be provided, to satisfy him/herself that health and safety responsibilities are being correctly implemented. Where issues with health and safety performance are identified then the Director should agree actions with the relevant Head of Function. Feedback on health and safety performance should be provided to the Chief Executive as relevant.

4. Line Management

4.1 Heads of Function

(i.e. all members of Leadership Team except Exec Board)

Heads of Function are accountable for the health and safety and welfare at work of all the staff that they line manage, either directly or through their direct reports, and for others whose health or safety may be affected, to any extent, by the work of the functional area.

To properly carry out this role, they will need to:

- Have an appropriate awareness of the Trust's health and safety policy, standards and guidance and the minimum requirements of legislation as they relate to the work of their functional area.
- Have a broad understanding of the significant risks associated with the work carried out by their functional area and ensure that significant risks have been assessed and that suitable and sufficient control measures are implemented. This task may be delegated to individual line managers or specific individuals but the responsibility for ensuring this is done remains with the relevant Head of Function.
- Allocate sufficient resources to ensure that health, safety and workplace welfare issues, including any matters arising, are appropriately managed or resolved.
- Ensure that their staff and volunteers receive any necessary training, information, supervision and instruction required in order to carry out their work safely.
- Consult staff on significant matters that may affect health, safety or welfare at work. This requirement will either be satisfied by having a regular agenda item at management meetings, or, where the health and safety risk profile makes it appropriate, to establish a specific health and safety working group.
- Carry out a health and safety inspection of the premises occupied (as relevant) and/or the work carried out by their staff at suitable periods throughout the year and

ensure that the significant outcomes of these inspections are recorded. Remedial action taken in response to the inspection should be reported through departmental management meetings or the departmental health and safety working group where one is appointed.

- Satisfy themselves, by making suitable and sufficient enquiries, that any other duty holders providing services to the department (for example contractors) are competent and are adequately meeting their duties.
- Cooperate with other duty holders to enable them to meet their duties under this policy or any supporting policy, standards or guidance.
- Make appropriate reports to their line manager, on the health and safety performance achieved and on their plans to address any identified concerns.

4.2 Line Managers and Supervisors

(all line managers below the level of Leadership Team, and supervisors as defined in 'Definitions' above)

Employees in line management or supervisory positions, and volunteers in supervisory situations (e.g. task leaders) are accountable for the health and safety of the people, activities, and projects they supervise. They must be aware of the health and safety issues, including any significant risks and control measures, relevant to their activities and projects. It is the responsibility of the person supervising hazardous activities that are to be carried out by inexperienced volunteers, corporate working parties, and/or those under 18 years old to ensure that a risk assessment has been carried out and suitable and sufficient control measures implemented before commencement of that activity. This assessment should take due account of the inexperience or other reasonably foreseeable vulnerabilities that the individuals may have.

The supervision of volunteers should be appropriate to their experience or competence. Line managers and supervisors are required to comply with the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and associated standards and guidance and any other relevant arrangements within their area or activity. They must co-operate with their senior Line Manager (e.g. Head of Functional Area) or Director, and will be accountable for any tasks that may be delegated to them.

4.3 Individual Responsibility (All Employees and Volunteers)

The HSAWA states that everyone has a responsibility for their own health and safety, as well as that of others who may be affected by their work and their acts or omissions. Everyone has the right not to proceed with any activity if they feel it poses a danger to their safety or that of others and they must immediately raise their concerns with their line manager, Director, Representative of Employee Safety, or one of the Health and Safety Team.

All employees and volunteers must:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and co-operate with the Trust on health and safety matters;
- Carry out their work safely and in accordance with this Policy, protocols, local arrangements or any relevant legislation;
- Complete and follow the requirements of the risk assessment and implement any identified control measures;

- Use Trust arrangements to report an accident, incident, near accident, or work-related illness;
- Notify their line manager or volunteer support officer/task leader as appropriate if they have a disability or condition affecting health which may be caused or made worse by work activities;
- Undertake health and safety training and induction as directed by their line manager or volunteer support officer/task leader (as appropriate);
- Report any faults, damage, unsafe or unhealthy working conditions, practices or equipment using local arrangements;
- Use equipment for its intended purpose;
- Not interfere with or misuse anything provided for health and safety;
- On discovering a fire, raise the alarm;
- If emergency alarms sound, leave by the nearest exit;
- Notify their line manager or volunteer support officer/task leader (as appropriate) in advance, to set up a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) if they will need assistance to evacuate a building they are working in;
- Not damage or instruct works on the fabric of buildings, or connect directly to the services – other through standard electrical socket – without prior agreement from the Director responsible for the building/s in question; and
- Bring any breaches of this Policy, protocols or local health and safety arrangements to the attention of their line manager, volunteer support officer/task leader (as appropriate), their Representative of Employee Safety, or one of the Health and Safety Team.

4.4 Contractors

The Trust has a legal duty to provide a safe working environment for contractors working on Trust managed property. Contractors will have responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act for their own safety and for the safety of anyone else who may be affected by their work. This includes a responsibility to co-operate with other duty holders in order to discharge that responsibility. As such, contractors are required to observe the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and relevant standards and guidance whilst working under the direct control of the Trust.

5. Other Roles with Specific Health and Safety Responsibilities

5.1 Director of Finance and Administration; Director of Conservation; Director of Business Development and Engagement; All Designated Building Managers

The named Directors and Building Managers have responsibility for health and safety matters associated with the buildings and infrastructure falling under their control. This

includes the provision, and maintenance provision, of safe buildings, safe facilities, and safe grounds, and encompasses any statutory testing or monitoring of building fabric, services and infrastructure.

The designated Building Managers within the Trust (i.e. of the Manor House Cambourne, the Countryside Classroom and Office, Ramsey Heights Cambs; Lings House, Northants; Priory, Beds; Griffin Farm, Beds; Ringhaw, Old Sulehay Northants; 'the Bunker' Northants, and all tool stores, barns, and workshops across the three counties) have been appointed by their relevant Directors to carry out the tasks associated with their building-related maintenance and repair duties. However, this delegation of tasks does not remove the accountability on the relevant Director/s for the actual delivery of these duties.

The list of designated Building Managers and their corresponding Directors can be found on the Trust's shared ['S'] drive at: S\H&S\12. Buildings Mgt (H&S Aspects).

6. The Conservation Director; and the Health and Safety Officer

The Trust's Conservation Director has been appointed as the Trust's "Competent Person" and professional lead on occupational health, safety and welfare matters. The Conservation Director holds delegated authority from the Chief Executive to stop activities that put people at imminent risk of harm.

The Trust's Health and Safety Adviser is appointed as the Trust's "Competent Person" whenever the Conservation Director is absent from duty for any reason and, on these occasions holds delegated authority from the Chief Executive to stop activities that put people at imminent risk of harm.

The Conservation Director is responsible for:

- Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice
- Providing advice and guidance at a strategic level on all matters of occupational health, safety and welfare, including fire safety.
- Creating and maintaining a safety management system.
- Advising and communicating on the application of specific health and safety legislation.
- Investigating accidents, near accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences, or reports of occupational ill health in order to identify the potential for legal consequences and to identify action required to prevent recurrence.
- Management of the Trust's Occupational Health provider.
- Supporting the Trust's Health and Safety Committee, and any H&S Working Groups that may be set up from time-to-time.
- Monitoring health and safety performance across the Trust and providing quarterly reports to the Trust's Health and Safety Committee and an annual report to the Council of Management.
- Liaising with the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency and other regulatory authorities on matters of health and safety.

- Managing an ongoing programme of audits of compliance with the Trust health and safety policy on behalf of Council.

The H&S Officer has responsibility for:

- Acting as the Trust's "Competent Person" in the Conservation Director's absence.
- Supporting the Conservation Director in her/his day-to-day responsibilities relating to this policy and her/his other duties.
- Providing advice and guidance, at an operational level, on all matters of occupational health, safety and welfare, including fire safety.
- Liaising with the Trust's Occupational Health provider on all matters relating to the occupational health of individual Trust employees and volunteers where relevant.
- Liaising with the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency, and other regulatory authorities on matters of health and safety in the Conservation Director's absence.

Health and Safety Arrangements

This section explains the systems and procedures that will be used to form the basis of our health and safety regime.

Consultation with Employees

The Trust has a statutory duty, under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, to provide a suitable forum to formally consult employees on significant matters of health and safety. This duty is met by the establishment of the Trust's Health and Safety Committee and by the establishment of the roles of Representatives of Employee Safety (RES).

The main purpose of the H&S Committee is to:

- Provide a strategic forum for consultation on health and safety policy, standards and guidance.
- Support and monitor the implementation of the Trust's Health and Safety Policy.
- Agree health and safety standards and targets against which performance can be measured.
- Monitor workplace standards and health and safety performance and to discuss improvements to health and safety practice.
- To share information on emerging issues and areas of good or best practice.
- Consult with the Representatives of Employee Safety who represent Trust staff.

The full terms of reference are published on the Trust's shared drive in the Health and Safety Committee folder.

The functions of the RES within the Trust include the minimum functions set out in the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, together with several others.

The full terms of reference are published on the Trust's shared drive in the H&S BCN Policies and Guidelines folder.

Monitoring Health and Safety Performance

Health and safety performance will be managed proactively across the Trust through a plan of functional area and topic-specific inspections including planned checks, spot checks, and peer-reviews. The Trust will carry out an annual health and safety self-assurance exercise to enable all Directors, Heads of Function, and Managers to confirm that they are managing their health and safety responsibilities effectively.

The significant findings of proactive monitoring will be reported at functional level, through management meetings and communicated to the RESs. Matters arising should be recorded on an action plan setting out ownership of specific issues and timeframes for corrective action to be taken.

The Trust will also carry out reactive monitoring through the collection and reporting of work-related accident, near accident, incident, and ill-health data.

The results of all monitoring activities, including the significant findings of any accident, near accident, incident, and ill-health incident investigations, are submitted to the Trust's Health and Safety Committee on a quarterly basis. Statistics are included in the Chief Executive's report to each Trust Council of Management meeting, and an annual report on health and safety is submitted to Council each July.

Training

For the Trust to operate efficiently and effectively it needs to have a trained and competent workforce. We recruit employees and volunteers with the specific skills and qualifications appropriate for the roles they are to undertake. On starting work they are given induction training, which tells them about and how to recognise hazards and risks and what they need to do to eliminate, reduce and avoid identified risks. We also provide any additional training that may become necessary. All training is recorded.

Evacuation

We will make sure escape routes in our buildings are well signed and kept clear at all times. Evacuation plans are tested from time to time and updated if necessary.

All Other Arrangements

The arrangements for the management of all other health and safety issues are published on the Trust's Sharepoint site.