

Health and Safety

The application of Health & Safety management systems within Wokingham Town Council

(V1.x revised 19/12/2022 12:56:00 by Town Clerk)

Review: Finance and Personnel Committee 15 Nov 2022



Contents

Contents	2
Overview	3
Policy Statement	3
Organisation and responsibilities	5
Staff Structure Chart	8
Policy	9
General policies	
Accountabilities	17
References	20
Advice and Consultancy	20



Overview

Policy Statement

Wokingham Town Council recognises and accepts its responsibilities as an employer to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, volunteers, customers and others affected by its activities.

The Council will establish and maintain a proactive Health & Safety Management System across its business to protect the health and safety of employees, volunteers, customers, contractors and any other persons affected by its activities.

The Council intends to reduce the risk to employees and those who could be affected by its activities to as low a level as is reasonably practical. This will be achieved through the Council's H&S Management systems.

The Council is committed to the provision of information, instruction, supervision and training for all employees in line with their duties, to allow all members of staff to effectively exercise their responsibilities in ensuring a safe environment is maintained at all its locations.

Employees will be encouraged and expected to take personal responsibility to ensure that appropriate practices are correctly implemented at all times.

Wokingham Town Council will ensure that:

- Management, members of staff and consultants are given adequate information, instruction, supervision and training in safe working procedures and that those procedures are fully implemented in practice.
- 2. Systems of working that are established are safe and minimise the risk to health and safety.
- 3. Performance of management, employees and consultants in identifying and implementing safe working procedures are monitored on a regular basis.
- 4. Machinery and equipment is provided to enable work operations to be carried out safely, that such equipment is fit for purpose and maintained in a safe condition.
- 5. Premises and associated buildings and areas are maintained in a safe condition.
- 6. Records are maintained to demonstrate that the Health & Safety Management System is being effectively implemented.
- 7. There are clear and effective two-way lines of communication. These will enable members of staff and consultants to both be given information that will allow them to work safely and to allow them to raise any issues that they believe require action.
- 8. There are sufficient time and resources made available to achieve and maintain a positive health & safety culture.





This policy and the Health & Safety management systems will be accessible to all persons engaged by Wokingham Town Council and will be the subject to annual review with the objective of seeking continual improvement in Health & Safety standards.

The undersigned endorses this Health & Safety Policy on behalf of Wokingham Town Council.

Town Clerk



Organisation and responsibilities

An Organisational Chart is included at the end of this section.

The Elected Council

The overall and final responsibility for health & safety across the Council's functions and services and for compliance with the Health & Safety at Work Act and Regulations made under the Act and the Occupiers Liability Act is that of the Town Council of Wokingham.

The Council will ensure that there is an effective policy and arrangements to ensure health and safety within areas and functions under its control and that all liabilities are covered by adequate insurance. Further the Council acknowledges its intent to ensure sufficient resources to implement the policy are budgeted for annually.

The Town Clerk

The Town Clerk has delegated responsibility for ensuring the provision and implementation of the Health and Safety policy and its review. The Grounds & Bloom Officer is functionally responsible both for its implementation, certification and for the policy in the absence of the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will:

- 1. Review, and update, when necessary, the Council's Health and Safety policy and arrangements in line with changing legislation and working practices. The review of the policy and arrangements to take place at least annually.
- 2. Periodically appraise the effectiveness of the policy and ensure that any necessary changes are made to it.
- 3. Ensure that sufficient resources are available to provide all necessary health and safety equipment, personal protective equipment, training and, where appropriate and as required by legislation, free health assessments.
- 4. Ensure that all reasonably foreseeable risks are assessed and evaluated within the areas under the Council's control
- 5. Provide regular reports to the Council.

Grounds & Bloom Officer

The Grounds & Bloom Officer under the overall direction of the Town Clerk, is the designated Health and Safety lead, who will be responsible for ensuring that the Health and Safety policy of the Council is implemented at an operational level. The responsibilities cover:

1. Assessment, control and regular monitoring of all health and safety aspects of the service to ensure they are kept up to date.



- 2. Ensuring that appropriate health and safety education and training are coordinated and carried out, using both in house and external resources.
- 3. Ensuring that adequate fire protection and prevention measures are established.
- 4. The maintenance and safe keeping of records pertaining to the Health and Safety management systems.
- Investigation of accidents and dangerous occurrences, with a view to prevention of future occurrences and to ensure that appropriate statutory notifications are properly completed.
- 6. Providing staff with regular updates and relevant information on risks to health and safety.
- 7. Completion of risk assessments and development of safe operating procedures for Council facilities, functions and activities.
- 8. Establishing a regime of regular monitoring of all Council facilities for defects or health and safety issues and recording, reporting and acting on them.
- 9. Ensure that all accidents are investigated and that accident reports are completed promptly where required.
- 10. Any health or safety problems which cannot be resolved immediately are raised quickly with the Town Clerk.
- 11. Provide regular reports to the Town Clerk.

Managers

Managers have the responsibility to ensure their direct reports are both made aware of, and comply with, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and procedures. The responsibilities include:

- Ensure each new employee is given suitable and sufficient induction training, including
 the precautions and procedures appropriate to their specific jobs, and that adequate
 supervision is available, particularly when young or inexperienced employees are
 concerned.
- 2. Ensure that all persons within their charge are aware of the procedures to be adopted in case of fire.
- 3. Ensure that all persons within their charge know the location of the first aid facilities and who are first aiders.
- 4. Ensure that only safe working practices are used in order to provide maximum safety for all personnel who are within their charge.



Employees, Volunteers and Elected or Co-opted Members

All employees, whether permanent or casual, volunteers and elected and co-opted members have a duty as laid down in Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 to:

- Make themselves familiar with the Health and Safety Policy of the Council and Health and Safety literature which is posted on notice boards in the workplace, or which is drawn to their attention by their immediate supervisor. If for any reason there is a problem with understanding these documents, the supervisor, through 1-1 meetings, will ensure that employees understand what they contain.
- 2. Take reasonable practicable care for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst at work.
- 3. Co-operate with the Council to enable it to carry out its responsibilities fully and comply with relevant statutory legislation.
- Make full use of the appropriate safety equipment, protective clothing and safety devices
 provided by the Council and not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any
 such items.
- 5. Carry out all duties in accordance with safe systems of work, adhering to training and instructions to ensure compliance with legal requirements.
- 6. Report any accident, incident, dangerous or potentially dangerous situations in the workplace, unsafe practice, or systems of work, or damage to plant or equipment to their immediate supervisor.

Visitors and Contractors

- All visitors and contractors must be informed of any hazards or dangers on Council premises, and the precautions they should take to minimise risks to their health and safety.
- 2. The Grounds & Bloom Officer will ensure a safety code (e.g. smoking regulations, noise, harassment, fire procedures, waste disposal, accident reporting) is prepared and made available to visitors and contractors.
- 3. All contractors, working within Town Council facilities will be required to complete a site-specific risk assessment. They will be met by the lead/contact officer before work begins in order to discuss how any risks to employees or visitors can be avoided/minimised, and/or oversee works to ensure Health and Safety compliance.
- 4. All contractors engaged by individual Town Council officers will be the responsibility of the engaging officer while performing their duties on behalf of the Town Council. The engaging officer will ensure that contractors are informed of, and comply with, the Town Council's Health and Safety Policy and, whilst on site, undertake periodic site inspections of the contractor's works during the period of works.

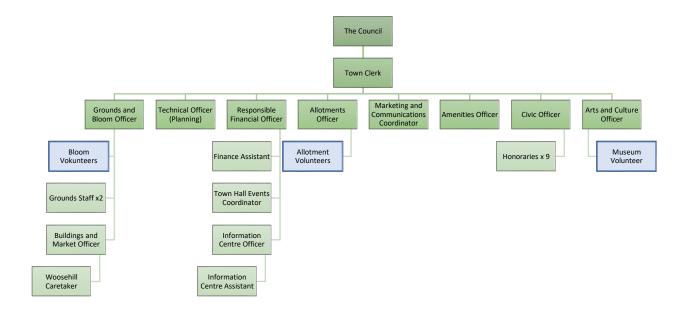




5. All hirers of facilities will be made aware of WTC's Health and Safety requirements through its Terms & Conditions of Hire. They will assure the Council that they have read the Terms & Conditions of Hire and accept the requirements.

Staff Structure Chart

Revised April 2022





Policy

General policies

1. Statement of general policy on occupational Health and Safety

Regulation 5 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999 requires that appropriate arrangements be made for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures for health and safety.

The Policy Statement, together with the Town Council's overall policy on health and safety will be reviewed annually and updated in accordance with any legislative changes and/or operational regulations or procedures. When this happens, it shall be brought to the attention of employees.

2. Safety management system

The Town Clerk is to ensure that a systematic approach is adopted to the management of Health and Safety. The system includes:

- The organisation of Health and Safety in the Council duties and responsibilities of persons responsible.
- Control minimum standards, safe systems of work, risk assessments together with disciplinary procedures, checks and monitoring of those procedures.
- Co-operation consultation and involvement with staff, development of performance standards.
- Communication about the policy, information about safety and how it is managed will be undertaken through the regular 1-1 and appraisal meetings between managers and reportees.
- Competence team meetings, circulation of e-updates and refresher information together with appropriate training.

2.1. Objectives and Targets

At the beginning of each year the Town Clerk and Grounds & Bloom Officer will, set specific objectives and targets to be met for continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

2.2. Risk Assessment

The safety management system should be built on a careful assessment of risks of all the activities carried out by all sections of the Council workforce. The management system should record who is responsible for carrying out assessment(s), what training they will



receive, what system they will use, how they will record findings and how often will risk assessments be carried out.

2.3. Measuring Performance

The Town Clerk is to measure safety performance against the objectives established in addressing 2.1.

The safety management system is to detail the frequency, nature and extent of safety inspections and how these are recorded. Performance will then be measured against this.

Monitoring should involve checking the safety management system against the Council's policy ensuring it is adequate and is being fully implemented. Reactive monitoring e.g. accident statistics, ill-health records, insurance claims, defect reports should also be measured.

2.4. Audit and Reviews

In addition, the in-house routine, regular monitoring and annual audit will support all elements in the safety management system.

All components of the safety management system should be subject to review from time to time to ensure they remain valid and effective. It should consider changed factors e.g. new legislation, new working practices, availability of equipment, new personnel, audit results, etc.

Once a year the written document containing details of the safety management system, duly updated, is to be sent to the Elected Council. Where no change has taken place this should be reported by exception.

3. Assessment, control and monitoring

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring the Council's obligations are met in respect of assessment, control and monitoring of:

- HEALTH AND SAFETY ADMINISTRATION including the appointment and support of competent persons, basic documentation and records.
- EMERGENCY PROCEDURES accidents, first aid, exit and exit routes, evacuation procedures, fire.
- GENERAL RISKS AND CONTROLS manual handling, display screen equipment, personal protective equipment, portable electrical appliances, managing visitors, work equipment, slips trips and falls, substances hazardous to health.



 PREMISES MANAGEMENT – electricity, gas and water supply, the work environment, lifts and mechanical lifting equipment, ladders, waste disposal, vehicle inspection and maintenance.

3.1. Risk Assessment

The Town Clerk has a responsibility to ensure that all areas of risk within the Council have been considered. The Grounds & Bloom Officer is to ensure a schedule of activities and potential areas of risk in the workplace be produced; to include:

- The potential dangers (hazards which might be identified and associated with causes of harm)
- The persons at risk
- The risk rating
- Action already taken to control risk
- Action/procedures to be taken to minimise danger

From this schedule a comprehensive risk assessment that is suitable and sufficient to comply with legal requirements should be drawn up.

3.2. Workplace/Equipment Inspections

An Inspection Log for each building/open space to be compiled by the Buildings & Market Officer and Grounds and Bloom Officer. The Log gives details of:

- Workplace areas that require inspection
- Equipment and, in particular, safety equipment
- The frequency of inspections of workplace/equipment
- The dates of inspection with the signature of the person undertaking the inspection
- Outcomes of inspection
- Maintenance contracts with dates of inspection

3.3. Accident, Incident and Near-Miss Reporting

Every accident or incident giving, no matter how minor, is to be reported to the responsible officer or officer onsite. For safety monitoring purposes and with a view to future prevention, "near miss" accidents/incidents should also be reported.



The Town Clerk is to ensure that an accident reporting system is in place and is understood by all employees. Reports are to be completed immediately by the responsible officer or officer on site after emergency treatment of the injured person and must be signed by the injured person, if possible, and/or by the person making the report. Accident report file stored in the office kitchen.

These reports should be examined when completed, with a view to understanding the root cause of the incident, and recommendations made to prevent a recurrence. The recommendation(s) are to be noted on the accident report file and followed up as art of the wider H&S monitoring and KPIs.

Fatal accidents, major injury accidents, dangerous occurrences and accidents causing more than three days incapacity for work are "reportable" to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). Reporting to the HSE must be coordinated through the Town Clerk.

3.4. Further Monitoring

The Town Clerk will organise regular review meetings of Health and Safety, details of which should be minuted, and once a year the Town Clerk & Grounds & Bloom Officer will compile a report on accident statistics, recommendations, etc., which is to be submitted to the Finance & Personnel Committee.

4. Procedures

After an assessment of the workplace and potential hazards in it, the Town Clerk will have drawn up a procedures manual/code of safe systems of work as part of the information, instruction, training and supervision to be given to employees. This should enable them to understand and avoid hazards arising in the work they undertake and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work.

Wokingham Town Council Minimum Standards. See Appendix 1.

The Town Council Minimum Standards are detailed for those areas most relevant to the Council's business.

4.1 COSSH

Wokingham Town Council has effective arrangements in place to manage the risks from substances hazardous to health across all service areas. Hazardous substances include mainly chemical agents in the Council's setting.

4.2 DSE

Wokingham Town Council commits to minimising the risk of eye injury, repetitive strain injury, other musculoskeletal disorders and stress among employees as far as is reasonably practicable.



4.3 Electrical (including Fixed Wiring & PAT)

Wokingham Town Council ensures, as far as is reasonably practicable, to minimise electrical injuries recognising they can be caused by a wide range of circumstances and can have fatal consequences.

4.4 Engaging with Contractors

Wokingham Town Council has effective arrangements in place to manage and coordinate contractors working on its estate. This will mitigate against poorly managed activities which could result in major injuries and ill health to employees, volunteers and visitors, in addition to the damage to the property and the environment.

4.5 Events

To protect the public, employees, volunteers & contractors Wokingham Town Council ensures robust event planning for both its own events and those delivered through external partners (ref 4.4 above).

4.6 Fire

Fire has the potential to cause death and serious injury as well as extensive damage to property and the environment. Wokingham Town Council ensures the safety of its workforce, contractors and the public by minimising the risk of fire in all its buildings and parks and open spaces.

4.7 First Aid

Wokingham Town Council has effective arrangements in place to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure that employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

4.8 Legionella

Wokingham Town Council has effective arrangements in place to manage the risks from Legionella as far as reasonably practicable. These will mitigate against infection for WTC employees, visitors, hirers, contractors and volunteers who may be vulnerable to the risks from Legionella bacteria.

4.9 Lone Working

WTC ensures adequate measures are in place to protect those working alone. They will be safe and equipped with appropriate training to remain so. They will be at no more risk than other employees.

4.10 Manual Handling

Wokingham Town Council manages all risks related to manual handling and/or musculoskeletal disorders comprehensively across the workforce as far as reasonably practicable.



4.11 Stress

Wokingham Town Council recognises the potential for stress at all levels of the Council. This can be contributed by the demands of both work and home-life. WTC will concentrate on early identification and prevention as far as is reasonably practicable. Interventions will be made as necessary.

4.12 Working at Height

Wokingham Town Council protects its employees, volunteers and contractors by ensuring appropriate equipment is deployed for the relevant tasks involving height.

4.13 Work equipment

Wokingham Town Council ensures work equipment is suitable for the purpose for which it is used.

Employees will be expected to familiarise themselves annually with the detail of the procedures and confirm that they have done so by signing a document to this effect.

5. Welfare

To ensure the continued welfare of employees, facilities are provided at the following sites: The Council Offices within the Town Hall, Langborough Changing Room and Woosehill Community Hall. Staff must co-operate in maintaining a high standard of hygiene.

Employees are reminded that:

- Any person who is under medical supervision or on prescribed medication and who has been certified fit for work, should notify their manager of any known side effects or temporary physical disabilities which could hinder their work performance and which may be a danger to either themselves or others. The manager will make reasonable adjustments for that person in the interim.
- Drug and alcohol abuse employees are not allowed to attend the premises or carry out duties whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Any person found breaking this rule may be liable to disciplinary action.
- Employees are provided with hand cleaners, for use in personal vehicles used for the purposes of carrying out Council duties and are expected to use them and report when replacements are required.

6. Training

All new employees will be shown the location of first aid equipment, fire exits and fire equipment and are to be well instructed on safety issues. They may not undertake any professional duties until instruction has been completed. The Town Clerk will ensure that a Health and Safety



Awareness programme is incorporated into the induction programme. A record of completion is held on an employee's personnel record.

All staff must be made aware of their responsibilities for health and safety as defined in this document and the procedures in place. They must be instructed that failure on their part to act in accordance with Health and Safety policies and procedures is subject to disciplinary action.

Staff's health and safety awareness must also include the fact that, under their duty of care, they are bound to report any equipment or premises defects they discover, and/or any malpractice they identify in the course of their work.

Safety training, such as fire awareness and prevention, moving and handling, first aid, are to be considered as essential training for all employees and must be built into the overall training and staff development programme. Training in the identification of hazards in the workplace should also be given to staff at all levels, while formal risk assessment training is to be organised for all persons in supervisory or management posts, or where particularly relevant to their role.

Attendance at all health and safety training/instruction is to be well documented and recorded on employees' personnel files.

Training to be refreshed every three years or sooner dependant on requirements and legal responsibilities.

7. Information and Communication

It is mandatory that the statutory poster "Health and Safety Law – What You Need to Know" is displayed in an accessible place in the workplace. To promote a safe and healthy workplace a supply of the numerous health and safety leaflets published by the Health and Safety Executive should be made available to staff.

The Town Clerk must ensure that all employees, including temporary and casual workers, are provided with comprehensive and relevant information on any health and safety risks identified by assessments and the necessary preventative and protective measures, as they affect them.

The Grounds & Bloom Officer must ensure that they keep up to date with changes in health and safety legislation, e.g. by obtaining regular up-dates from the Health and Safety Executive.

8. Disciplinary Action

The Town Clerk must make it clear to all employees that contravention of the Health and Safety Policy and related documentation will constitute a disciplinary offence which may lead to termination of employment for serious or repeated breaches.

Any employee leaving his/her workplace because of concerns of serious, imminent or unavoidable danger, will not be dismissed or placed at any disadvantage. Any circumstance of this nature arising must be reported to line management in accordance with Section 3.3 Accident, Incident and Near Miss reporting.



9. General Requirements to Ensure Safety

The aim of the Council is to provide a healthy and safe working environment. This can be achieved with the help and assistance of all employees by:

- Observing the general rules of safety
- Using all plant, machinery and equipment in a safe and proper manner
- Employing and following the proper laid out procedures when carrying out tasks and ensuring that no practices are used which may act as a source of danger to themselves or to others
- Keeping work areas clean and tidy at all times
- Making sure all corridors and passageways, particularly those leading to escape routes, are always kept free from obstruction
- Taking care that fire points are not blocked or covered up in any way and that they are ready for use if the need arises

The Council reminds all employees of their own duties under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, to take care of their own safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions, and to co-operate with the Council so as to enable it to carry out its own duties and/or statutory requirements successfully.

Employees also have additional duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to use any equipment, material or substance provided to them in accordance with any training and instruction, and to report any risk situation or shortcoming in protection arrangements to management.

A copy of this statement will be issued to all employees. It will be reviewed, added to or modified from time to time and may be supplemented by further statements relating to the duties of particular groups of workers



Accountabilities

1. Grounds Staff

- 1.1. Only authorised members of staff, who have received training and instruction in the operation of machinery and equipment may do so.
- 1.2. All dangerous moving parts of machinery must be guarded. Guards must not be removed except for the purpose of repair and maintenance. All machinery must comply with statutory regulations for guarding and use.
- 1.3. The engines of any motorised equipment must be stopped before any inspection or adjustment is carried out. In case of electrically operated machines the plug lead must be disconnected.
- 1.4. Children must not be allowed to play in an area where machinery is in use. Machinery must not be left unattended where children (or others) may interfere with them.
- 1.5. Stones and similar objects must be cleared from the path of equipment to prevent such objects being projected from machinery.
- 1.6. Fuel tanks must only be filled in the open, with the engine stopped. No risk of naked flames, or smoking is allowed in the vicinity of a fuel tank or storage can.
- 1.7. Fuel may only be stored in a safety can of a type approved, and in a store designated by the Fire Officer.
- 1.8. The manufacturer's instructions regarding the safe use of chemicals must be adhered to
- 1.9. Appropriate protective clothing such as gloves and overalls, face masks and boots must be used when operating machinery and chemicals that include herbicides and pesticides.
- 1.10. Ladders and stepladders must be in good condition and free from defects and securely positioned at all times when in use. They must be used in accordance with the Working at Heights Regulations.
- 1.11. Pathways on Council owned premises shall be inspected annually.



2. Caretaking and Cleaning Staff

- 2.1. It is essential that care is exercised to follow all labelled instructions on containers and packages. Products should be stored away from extreme low temperatures, heat sources and naked lights, particularly those products containing hydrocarbon and other flammable solvents.
- 2.2. Appropriate protective clothing, such as gloves and overalls must be worn when handling corrosive substances.
- 2.3. Care must be taken to avoid ingestions, inhalation and skin contact of all chemical substances. Spillage must be cleaned up immediately while observing all precautions.
- 2.4. Consideration must be given to the possibility of hazardous by-products that may arise from reaction between various products, or from products exposed to heat or fire. Particularly in the case of bleach which will produce chlorine gas if mixed with acidic cleansers (e.g. Harpic) or other acidic substances.
- 2.5. Stepladders which are used to gain access to heights must be in good condition and free from defects.
- 2.6. All electrical cleaning equipment must have been wired up by a competent person. Any deterioration in electrical connections or wiring should be reported immediately.
- 2.7. Floors must be treated only with approved non-slip products. The method of application and quantities to be applied should be that recommended by the manufacturer.



3. Contractors

For Wokingham Town Council to comply with Health and Safety Legislation, all outside contractors employed to do work on Council Premises are to be made aware of the expected requirements related to health and safety. A contractor accepting a contract from the council shall be deemed to have agreed to comply with the following requirements:-

- 3.1. As a contractor, you will supply and ensure that your employees wear and use protective equipment or anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare of any of the relevant statutory provisions.
- 3.2. You and your employees will ensure that all equipment, plant machinery and apparatus brought onto or used on the Council premises are safe and without risk to health and are maintained to a standard that will not constitute an offence under the Act or any of the relevant statutory provisions.
- 3.3. You and your employees will conform, in all respects, to your legal duties and responsibilities as laid down by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and relevant statutory provisions.
- 3.4. The Council will retain the right to stop any operations, plant or equipment, or the action of any of your employees if it is considered that there is a hazard to the safety and health of employees or others. The Council will not accept any responsibility for any increased costs arising out of such action.
- 3.5. In the event of the Council taking this action, your site representative will be notified verbally and will have confirmation in writing by the Councils' representative to order such a stoppage.
- 3.6. The Council will be indemnified by you or your insurers in respect of any claims, costs or expenses arising out of any incidents on Council premises involving you or your employees.
- 3.7. The Council may notify an inspector, appointed under the Authority of the Act, of any breach of the Regulations.



References

www.hse.gov.uk

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

Electricity At Work Regulations 1989

The Management of Health & Safety At Work Regulations 1992

Manual Handling Operations 1992

The Personal Protective Equipment At Work Regulations 1992

The Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

The Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations '1992

The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations '1992

The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1992

The Health & Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1992

Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2007

Advice and Consultancy

Local Area Inspector

Health and Safety Executive Priestly House Priestly Road Basingstoke Hampshire RG24 9NW

Wokingham Borough Council

Gallagher Insurers

Phoenix Court Jacob's Well Lane Wakefield WF1 3NT