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Health and Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Wales Audit Office endeavours to provide and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for all of our employees, contractors and visitors.

2. Health and safety policy statement

2.1. The Wales Audit Office statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities so as to eliminate or minimise the risks to the health, safety and welfare of our employees and users of our premises;
- to provide a forum through the Health and Safety Committee for employer/employee discussion and consultation on health and safety matters and for the committee to escalate to the Board and Management Committee as necessary matters relating to health and safety;
- to risk assess the work of the Wales Audit Office and instigate appropriate preventive and protective measures and policy guidance in relation to them;
- to provide all staff with information, assessments and training with regard to health, safety and well-being issues which may affect their work, to ensure that all employees are competent to perform their roles;
- to make arrangements to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions;
- to review and revise this policy as necessary; and
- to ensure health and safety policies are seen to be working in action, through review of performance information.

2.2. The Wales Audit Office Board will ensure that 'competent people' have been appointed to advise on legislative requirements and that policy and working practices remain compliant with all current health and safety regulations. A 'competent person' is someone who has sufficient skills, training, experience, knowledge and other qualities that will ensure compliance with legislation.

2.3. When applying the Health and Safety Policy, consideration will be given to the Public Sector Equality Duty, particularly in relation to risk assessment and the provision of training and guidance. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that health and safety should not be used as an excuse to justify discriminating against certain groups of people. The Health and Safety Policy should therefore, be read in conjunction with the Wales Audit Office Diversity and Equality Policy.

3. Health and safety responsibilities

- 3.1. The Wales Audit Office Board understands and accepts its overall responsibility for health and safety under the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant health and safety legislation.
- 3.2. The Board will:
- Approve this Health and Safety Policy and provide health and safety leadership. This is especially relevant following the introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.
 - Assure itself that that the necessary controls are in place and that health and safety risks are effectively managed in line with corporate governance arrangements.
 - Ensure that all Board decisions reflect health, safety and well-being intentions, as articulated in the health and safety policy statement.
 - Formally consider the health and safety annual report and provide feedback and direction on health and safety issues as a result of the report.
 - Assure itself of the mechanism for reporting health and safety risks and unsafe practices and, in the measurement of performance against this policy.
- 3.3. Specifically, the HSE's guidance for Board members and directors is accessible via this link: [leading health and safety at work](#). This provides information to Board members and directors to be able to satisfy themselves that this policy document and the working practices in place provide the necessary assurances on health and safety matters.

Director of Corporate Services

- 3.4. The day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Director of Corporate Services. The director represents the Management Committee on the Health and Safety Committee. It is the role of the director to communicate with the Board and Management Committee on matters relating to health and safety and to provide leadership to the Wales Audit Office on health and safety issues. This will include ensuring that health and safety risks are adequately assessed and managed in order to minimise their impact.

Health and Safety Advisor

- 3.5.** The Health and Safety Advisor is the organisation's appointed 'competent person'.
- 3.6.** The role of the Health and Safety Advisor is to:
- act as a champion on health and safety matters;
 - engage with the Health and Safety Committee in compiling the annual health and safety report;
 - present the annual health and safety report to the Board;
 - ensure performance records are maintained;
 - administer arrangements for employee health and safety training;
 - implement the Fire Safety Programme in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
 - ensure risk assessments are carried out when appropriate in accordance with the equality act by a competent assessor and any relevant actions are implemented;
 - prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health by managing the health and safety risks in the workplace, including carrying out specific risk assessments and reasonable adjustments including display screen equipment (DSE) assessments;
 - ensure that health and safety information is provided in an accessible format for staff so that the needs of staff are considered ie, advising disabled staff on appropriate action to be taken in the event of a fire; and
 - be involved in scheduled and unscheduled office area inspections and risk assessments.

Wales Audit Office managers

- 3.7.** Managers have a wide range of health and safety responsibilities, in particular they must:
- Be aware of the Wales Audit Office's Health and Safety Policy and Procedure and arrangements and ensure their staff, contractors or visitors comply with them.
 - Ensure that any audit rooms in their control are assessed for potential risks on an annual basis to the minimum standard, as laid down in the guidance note issued by Business Services and the Health and Safety Advisor.
 - Through HR, ensure that all staff receive adequate training to include a health and safety induction and regular updates.
 - Encourage an environment which supports the health, safety and well-being of their team.

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- Notify the Health and Safety Advisor or an employee health and safety representative, if any adjustments need to be put in place for any member of staff eg, display screen assessments.
 - Liaise with corporate service teams as necessary in order to keep representatives up to date regarding changes in the workplace, which might affect the health and safety of staff.
 - Instigate appropriate action against any employee or contractor who fails to comply with their duties and responsibilities for health and safety. For staff, the disciplinary procedures should be followed; for contractors, liaison with HR or Business Services depending on the nature of the contract. Failure by managers to take such action could be considered negligence and may in itself be subject to disciplinary action.
 - Attend any relevant competency based training that maybe required.

Wales Audit Office staff

- 3.8.** All Wales Audit Office staff, wherever based, must be aware that health and safety is the responsibility of every employee. Staff should:
- be aware of the Wales Audit Office's Health and Safety Policy and Procedure and the health and safety policy of their host (if working from a client site or visiting the premises of any other organisation) and carry out their work in accordance with these requirements;
 - co-operate with management on all matters relating to health and safety including complying with all relevant guidance;
 - ensure that they attend all organised health and safety instruction/training and they use all office machinery, equipment as trained and instructed, and comply with the safe use of such equipment at all times;
 - report any incident or accident including a near miss to the Health and Safety Advisor;
 - report a potential hazard or danger to their Health and Safety Advisor, manager or staff representatives as soon as the hazard has been identified;
 - be aware of the arrangements for first aid treatment, fire and emergency evacuation and to be aware of the fire assembly point in relationship to the building in which they are working;
 - follow the office workers' risk assessment when performing their duties;
 - take reasonable care of their own health and safety and well-being; and
 - inform their manager and the Health and Safety Advisor as soon as possible if they feel they require reasonable adjustments to their working environment.

The Health and Safety Committee

- 3.9.** The Health and Safety Committee functions as a channel through which the Wales Audit Office considers and consults general health and safety policy and current issues.
- 3.10.** The committee reports to the Management Committee, through the Director of Corporate Services and will produce an annual report.
- 3.11.** Membership of the Health and Safety Committee includes representatives from across the office (**details can be found on the Wales Audit Office intranet**). It meets quarterly and has the following objectives and responsibilities:
- to provide a forum for discussing and consulting on an agreed agenda of health and safety matters for management and staff side representatives;
 - to monitor the Wales Audit Office's compliance with health and safety legislation and regulations and to consider changing requirements, for example through proposed or actual changes in legislation, and recommend appropriate action;
 - to monitor performance information such as absence, accident statistics and trends, and advise the Management Committee on practices or conditions that require improvement;
 - to monitor the provision of appropriate health and safety training for Wales Audit Office staff;
 - to review and monitor risk assessments and safety statistics, and discuss welfare issues; and
 - to review the effectiveness of communication with regard to health and safety matters in the workplace.

Staff health and safety representatives

- 3.12.** The health and safety representatives:
- represent staff in discussions with the Wales Audit Office on health, safety or welfare issues;
 - attend the Health and Safety Committee meetings;
 - notify the Health and Safety Advisor of hazards and dangerous occurrences in the workplace;
 - on staff's behalf, make representations on health and safety consultations;
 - advise and reinforce health and safety messages to staff; and
 - undertake appropriate health and safety training and maintain their awareness of requirements.

4. Health and safety risks arising from our work activities

- 4.1. While the work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office is relatively low risk when compared with other industries such as construction or manufacturing, there are some key risks and as such risks assessments will be completed primarily by the Health and Safety Advisor. The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to the Director of Corporate Services and in turn the Health and Safety Committee.
- 4.2. All actions to manage key risks will be approved by the Director of Corporate Services and the Health and Safety Committee.
- 4.3. The Health and Safety Advisor, line managers, health and safety representatives and staff all have a key role in ensuring the actions required to minimise risk are implemented. Specific responsibilities may be assigned to individual members of staff.
- 4.4. The risk assessments will be reviewed at least annually or when the work activity changes, whichever is the soonest. Further information on the key risk areas can be found in **Appendix 1**.

5. Visitors to the Wales Audit Office

- 5.1. All visitors should receive accessible information relating to the following:
 - the relevant health and safety arrangements that apply at the Wales Audit Office;
 - arrangements for obtaining passes and for access to, and egress from, the building;
 - the smoking ban enforced by legislation;
 - what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation, including the location of fire assembly points; and
 - how to request adjustments as necessary in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2. **Note** – it is a legal requirement that all injuries and accidents, including visitors, whilst in the workplace, are reported.

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- 5.3.** It is a legal requirement that all contractors used by the Wales Audit Office must:
- upon request provide relevant documentation, including identification and proof of qualifications and competence, to carry out the tasks they have been asked to perform;
 - be made aware of any hazards relating to the task they have been asked to perform (for example, the location of asbestos);
 - use a safe system of work where the nature of the task produces significant risks to themselves and other employees;
 - at any time whilst working on Wales Audit Office premises, inform the Wales Audit Office Health and Safety Advisor of any health and safety concerns or should any accident or incident occurs; and
 - work within the parameters of the agreed safe working practices including permit to work, issued by the Health and Safety Advisor as and when required.

6. Information, instruction and training

- 6.1.** Health and safety law posters are displayed at all Wales Audit Office (Cathedral Road, Penllergaer and Ewloe) offices. Staff at client site audit rooms should be familiar with local arrangements for access to health and safety information as part of their induction process.
- 6.2.** Health and safety advice is available on the intranet or from the Health and Safety Advisor and/or staff representatives. In addition, staff are provided with health and safety information in newsletters/notice boards and through other communication methods such as team meetings.
- 6.3.** The Health and Safety Advisor will call on specialist advice and support where necessary including specialist workplace assessors or organisations with specialist skills to complete certain risk assessments and tasks.
- 6.4.** Health and safety training is included in the induction programme for all new staff including contractors. Periodic refresher training is mandated for all staff, with specific health and safety training for drivers. Training records are kept by HR.
- 6.5.** Specialist training and support is also offered where necessary. Identification of these training needs is normally a result of the specific role or the changing requirements of the individual.
- 6.6.** In addition, there is a specific programme of health and safety checks for young workers and the Health and Safety Advisor is responsible for carrying out specific young person's risk assessments.
- 6.7.** Where applicable, training for fire wardens, first aid personnel and health and safety representatives is also provided.

7. Accidents, first aid and work-related ill health

- 7.1. The Wales Audit Office is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its staff. To ensure compliance with this aim the Health and Safety Advisor, in liaison with colleagues in HR, will monitor the levels of sickness absence and in particular if there is any specific issue with work-related stress.
- 7.2. No work environment can be completely risk free and therefore there is always a risk of workplace accidents. However, the Wales Audit Office has a number of trained first aid staff in all main office locations who will be able to attend any workplace accidents/incidents. The list of qualified first aid staff can be found on the intranet and also on staff notice boards in Wales Audit Office main offices. All first aid staff are provided with a first aid box.
- 7.3. All accidents must be reported to the Health and Safety Advisor, who is the custodian of the accident book. The Health and Safety Advisor is responsible for recording the accident, and where necessary, reporting the accident in line with the RIDDOR requirements.

8. Emergency procedures – fire and evacuation

- 8.1. The Health and Safety Advisor has delegated responsibility for ensuring that the fire risk assessment is undertaken and implemented.
- 8.2. Fire evacuation details are displayed and an emergency evacuation drill is carried out annually at Wales Audit Office offices. Different arrangements will be in place at audit rooms within client sites.
- 8.3. The Health and Safety Advisor, supported by fire wardens, completes a weekly fire alarm test at Wales Audit Office offices.
- 8.4. Fire extinguishers are available at all Wales Audit Office main office locations and are checked and tested annually.

9. Monitoring and review

- 9.1. To check that our working conditions and safe working practices are being followed, we will:
 - complete a general assessment to identify significant risk requiring further assessment or control;
 - investigate all workplace accidents, incidents and near misses, and take appropriate action to rectify any risks identified;
 - review sickness absence figures, driver mileage and staff working hours, and alert management where necessary of any issues emerging;
 - complete annual risk assessments at all office locations, including client offices;

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- review all completed risk assessments and any subsequent action plans to ensure that arrangements remain effective and any significant issues requiring preventive or corrective actions have been completed; and
 - produce an annual health and safety report for the Board and Management Committee.
- 9.2.** The Director of Corporate Services is ultimately responsible for ensuring that appropriate actions are taken in relation to any identified significant issues. The person responsible for completing any actions may vary depending on the nature of the issue.

Appendix 1

Legislation and guidance for reference

The following statutory regulations are used to set the standards for health, safety, welfare and first aid:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Regulations) 1992
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations (as amended) 2002
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Safety Representative and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended)
- Safety (Consultations with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Office, Shops and Railways Premises Act 1963
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Health and Safety Information for Employees (Amendment) Regulations 2009
- Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

The following guidance may help from an equality and diversity perspective:

- [Health and Safety Executive](#)