

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

REPORT OF INTERIM CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



For Approval

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Elected Members of the Authority's revised Health and Safety Policy attached as Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the revised Health and Safety Policy, attached at Appendix 1.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed in line with the annual review schedule to ensure legal compliance and alignment with current policies and procedures.
- 3.2 The Policy sets out Cleveland Fire Authority's commitment to meeting its statutory health and safety duties and provides the framework for managing health, safety, welfare, and associated risks across Cleveland Fire Brigade.
- 3.3 Cleveland Fire Authority has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and associated regulations to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of employees and others who may be affected by its activities.
- 3.4 The Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed to ensure it remains current, fit for purpose, aligned to organisational governance arrangements, and reflective of emerging risks, sector learning, and recognised good practice.
- 3.5 Research nationally continues to expand into the long-term health risks of firefighter exposure to contaminants; Cleveland Fire Brigade has implemented a range of control measures to protect personnel. Continuous review and improvement of procedures, advancements in technology and PPE, and a shift in workplace culture remain vital in reducing risks.
- 3.6 The revised Policy now strengthens the Authority's approach to the management of contaminant-related risks and exposure.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- 4.1 The Health and Safety Policy revised key changes include:
- Confirms the Authority's commitment to a safe and healthy working environment and a positive health and safety culture.
 - Clarifies roles, responsibilities, and accountability across the Authority, Executive Leadership Team, managers, employees, and governance groups.
 - Strengthens arrangements for leadership, assurance, monitoring, audit, and review.
 - Embeds responsibility for identifying, assessing, and managing risks arising from exposure to contaminants.
 - Reinforces the importance of training, competence, consultation, employee engagement, and organisational learning.
 - Aligns the Policy with the Corporate Plan, Community Risk Management Plan, and the Health and Safety Delivery Plan.
- 4.2 Consultation has been undertaken, with recognised representative bodies Unison and the Fire Brigade Union. Feedback received has been considered as part of the review process and incorporated where appropriate.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Ethical

The Policy applies to all employees and others who may be affected by the Authority's activities. Any supporting procedures, guidance, or implementation activity will continue to be assessed to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations are addressed appropriately.

5.2 Financial

There are no additional financial implications arising directly from approval of this Policy. Any resource requirements associated with the implementation of supporting procedures, training, assurance activity, or improvement plans will be managed through existing budgetary and governance processes.

5.3 HR / Training

During the review of the Policy a training gap has been identified, this is as a result of the changes in the Leadership team and some temporary postings. These have been immediately actioned, and training is planned within the next six months.

5.4 Health and Safety

The revised Policy supports compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated health and safety legislation. It provides the strategic framework through which the Authority demonstrates leadership, accountability, and assurance in relation to health, safety, and welfare.

5.5 Risk

Approval supports the effective management of organisational health and safety risks. Failure to maintain an up-to-date and effective Policy could increase the risk of non-compliance, inconsistent practice, reduced assurance, injury or ill health, and reputational impact.

- 5.6 The strengthened focus on contaminant exposure supports the Authority's commitment to managing emerging and foreseeable occupational health risks affecting fire and rescue service personnel.

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