

Meeting of:	Democratic Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 30 June 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Health, Safety and Well-being for Councillors
Purpose of Report:	To provide advice to Councillors surrounding a range of support tools available to support their health, safety and well-being.
Report Owner:	James Langridge-Thomas, Head of Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	James Langridge-Thomas, Head of Democratic Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Chief Executive Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager Head of Human Resources
Policy Framework:	Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report Vale of Glamorgan Council Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy 2024 Hybrid Working Strategy
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of elected members is crucial, given their public-facing roles and potential risks they face. This report sets out some useful guidance so that Councillors understand the steps they should take to keep themselves healthy and safe whilst undertaking their role. Attached at Appendix A is a guide relating to the Personal Safety of Councillors. This guide aims to help Councillors carry out their role safely and effectively. The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Annual Report states that the Authority must support the work of its Councillors and Statutory Co-opted members to enable them to carry out their duties and includes the safety of Councillors. The report also outlines a range of tools in place to support Councillors in undertaking their role from a well-being perspective, and how to access them. 	

Recommendations

1. T H A T the Guidance be endorsed and placed on the Authority's website and emailed to all Councillors
2. T H A T the Guidance be shared with Town and Community Councillors to signpost to available tools and resources
3. T H A T Councillors reflect upon the provisions identified within the report and consider any other areas to which they feel would be of benefit in supporting their individual health, safety and well-being.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To support Councillors in carrying out their various elected roles.
2. To support Town and Community Councillors in understanding some of the resources available to them in supporting their health, safety and well-being.
3. To allow for Councillors to inform the development of future arrangements to support individual health, safety and well-being.

1. Background

- 1.1 Incidents of violence towards public figures is rare, however, Councillors have high profile public roles, are constantly interacting with members of the community and can be the victims of verbal or written abuse. They may experience harassment and stalking and online abuse.
- 1.2 Whilst incidents of physical violence are rare, recent years have seen an increased amount of abuse and intimidation, which is often anonymous, to Elected Members through social media platforms. Research on the workload of County Councillors in Wales indicated that Councillors also raised concerns with the emergence of social media, with public scrutiny of Councillors becoming increasingly persistent, and occasionally abusive.
- 1.3 This research also indicated that Councillors largely agreed that their work life balance and that they struggle to "shut off" from the role. This is supported by research from the Centre for Mental Health around the need to support Councillor's well-being, which states that "For councillors to be an advocate and a strong voice for our residents, we must feel mentally healthy and well supported."
- 1.4 Whilst the report outlines and signposts to a range of potential guidance documents and resources, it is important to note that not all documents relate to Town and Community Councils, who are for example unable to access resources such as the Council's intranet tools. However, should these Councils want to seek further advice and support, they are welcomed to contact the Head of Democratic Services.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** This report sets out some useful guidance so that Councillors understand the steps they should take to support their health, safety and well-being. Additional guidance is available from the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Head of Human Resources and the Head of Democratic Services.

Personal Safety

- 2.2** Councillors should be mindful of the risks involved when carrying out their role, for example: Visiting people in their homes; Receiving callers to your home; Holding surgeries; Travelling, whether on public or private transport and when alone; and Communicating online.
- 2.3** Attached as Appendix B to this report is a useful guide relating to the Personal Safety of Councillors. This guide aims to help Councillors carry out their role safely and effectively. The purpose of Personal Safety of Councillors guide is to set out what personal safety measures can be taken to prevent and to deal with those rare circumstances when they might find themselves in situations where they become anxious for their safety. In general terms the guidance follows advice given to others who, by virtue of public duties or employment, meet many people whom they do not know. Some Councillors are concerned that their home address is published on the Authority's Website. Should a Councillor wish for their home address to be removed, they should contact the Head of Democratic Services. The Head of Democratic Services will arrange for the home address to be replaced by the Democratic Services Team details. However, the Councillor's email address and telephone number should remain on the Authority's website and promoted as necessary save in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.4** To support Councillors to handle abuse and intimidation, the LGA has developed the following SHIELD principles to reduce risks and handle incidents as they occur:

Safeguard - Where possible, protect yourself online and in person. For example, by making clear in any online biography or page that abusive, threatening or intimidatory behaviour will be reported, utilising security features, taking personal safety precautions and having a point of contact in the local police for any incidents.

Help - Ensure you are safe before you take further action and get help if needed. If the threat is not immediate, you can contact officers at the Council or someone in your political group who have been given the responsibility to support you.

Inform - Tell the individual or group that you consider their communication or action to be intimidating, threatening or abusive. There is a growing movement of 'digital citizenship', which encourages the labelling of poor online conduct as a way of challenging unacceptable behaviour.

Evidence - If you consider that a communication or action is intimidatory, threatening or abusive - gather evidence. For example, photos, recordings, screenshots, letters, emails or details of witnesses.

Let People Know - Report the incident to the relevant person, according to the nature and severity of the incident(s). Be prepared that the police and courts will determine if the incident is intimidation based on the theoretical opinion of the average person.

Decide - Determine whether you want to continue receiving communications from the individual or group and block or mute if on social media where appropriate. Decide if you want to pursue any action to inhibit the ability of the individual or group to approach you.

There are also a range of online tools available to support Councillors including:

i) [Councillors' guide to handling intimidation | Local Government Association](#) (Welsh version)

ii) [Personal safety | Local Government Association](#) (Welsh version)

Social media

2.5 Whilst social media is able to be a force for good, allowing a space for open space for Members and the public to have a meaningful dialogue surrounding topics which may impact upon them, research on the workload of County Councillors in Wales indicated that Councillors raised concerns with the emergence of social media, with public scrutiny of Councillors becoming increasingly persistent, and occasionally abusive.

2.6 To support Councillors, there are a range of guidance documents such as:

- i) Rules of engagement' [infographic](#) for Councillors to use on social media to give all users a clear 'code' by which they should operate (also in [Welsh](#)).
- ii) 'Handling online abuse' [infographic](#) - a quick reference guide for Councillors with steps they can take to protect themselves online and seek support where needed (also in [Welsh](#)).
- iii) [Improving digital citizenship: A practical guide for councillors | Local Government Association](#) ([Welsh](#) version)
- iv) Research and Good Practice [Improving digital citizenship: Research and good practice | Local Government Association](#) ([Welsh](#) version).
- v) [WLGA Social Media-A Guide for Councillors](#) ([Welsh](#) version)
- vi) [LGA Guide to the role of Councillors on Social Media](#)

2.7 Members should be mindful of the Council's Code of Conduct when using social media, acting with professionalism, maintaining the same standards of conduct as they would in face-to-face interactions. This includes being respectful and not engaging in behaviour that could be seen as bullying or harassment; being transparent about your identity and role when posting online; ensuring the information shared is accurate and not misleading is crucial; as in your general

duties, members must not disclose confidential information on social media; ensuring compliance with all relevant laws, including data protection, copyright and defamation, as publishing an untrue statement about a person which is damaging to their reputation may lead to a defamation action for which you will be personally liable. Members are also reminded of the Council's [Local Dispute Resolution Protocol](#), which aims to deal with low level disputes between Members (as outlined within Section 18 of the Council's constitution) which aims to support :

- resolve allegations of breaches of the Code and Protocol locally and quickly
- avoid unnecessary escalation of the situation which might impact on personal relationships within the Council and damage the Council's reputation
- avoid unnecessary involvement of the Ombudsman so that his resources are devoted to the investigation of more serious or repeated complaints.

- 2.8** The LGA and WLGA are also leading a “Civility in Public Life Programme”, working alongside the Jo Cox Foundation. An overview of this programme of work is available here - [Standards Committee, Thursday 26th September 2024](#), providing an overview of work being undertaken nationally to support Members.

Display Screen Equipment/Eye tests

- 2.9** As the Council continues to adopt hybrid working arrangements, a range of members are now working remotely on a regular basis.
- 2.10** To prevent or reduce the risk of workstation related injuries from poor posture and workstation design, it is essential that you consider the layout of your workstation and the equipment being used.
- 2.11** Members who habitually use screen equipment qualify for an eyesight test every two years and a contribution towards glasses. To access this provision, members should liaise with the Head of Democratic Services.

Individual Well-being

- 2.12** Individual well-being, encompassing physical, mental and social aspects, plays a crucial role in various facets of life and has positive impacts upon Members.
- 2.13** In June 2024, the Local Government Association (LGA) launched [A councillor's workbook on stress management and personal resilience](#). This workbook is aimed at helping councillors to understand the signs of stress and to develop strategies to deal with it, as well as building up their own personal resilience in the role. Councillors are encouraged to consider reviewing this workbook and reflecting upon their own individual experiences accordingly.
- 2.14** The Council has its own established Health and Well-being hub which is available to Members via the Council's intranet page. This hub includes elements such as the below alongside updates surrounding wider sessions and activities:

- i) Physical Health

- ii) Mental Health
- iii) Emotional Health.

- 2.15** Additionally, Councillors have access to the Council's Stress Risk Assessment Form, which can be considered if a Member feels that they are feeling stressed and requiring additional support. This can be undertaken in consultation with the Head of Democratic Services. A copy of the form is available in Appendix C.
- 2.16** The Council also has access to Westfield Health, a 24-hour Advice and Information Line, a service which provides confidential guidance on medical, legal or domestic issues from qualified counsellors, legal advisors and nurses.
- 2.17** If required, Members who may be seeking further support, for example in stress management, to undertake their role may consider alternative means of accessing support through accessing the Council's Occupational Health provision via the Head of Democratic Services and/or HR support.
- 2.18** The Council's learning platform, iDev, which is accessible to all Members has a range of modules within its "Health and Well-being" section. These are available to be undertaken at individual's discretion on a self-service basis. Any members requiring support in accessing can contact the Democratic Services Team. Example modules include areas such as burnout, developing resilience, stress awareness and building better habits.
- 2.19** Councillors are also able to access Cardiff and Vale Recovery and Well-being College, hosted by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. The College's aim is to support front line workers who may be exposed to various challenges within their roles, particularly those within health and social care settings. As such, enrolment on these courses by Councillors should be done in consultation with the Head of Democratic Services and/or the Head of Human Resources.
- 2.20** The College's [prospectus](#) outlines the offering available, which includes a range of thematic courses surrounding developing understanding, peer support skills, well-being, trauma and activities.
- 2.21** Members are also reminded of the Council's [Local Dispute Resolution Protocol](#), which aims to deal with low level disputes between Members (as outlined within Section 18 of the Council's constitution) which aims to support :
- resolve allegations of breaches of the Code and Protocol locally and quickly
 - avoid unnecessary escalation of the situation which might impact on personal relationships within the Council and damage the Council's reputation
 - avoid unnecessary involvement of the Ombudsman so that his resources are devoted to the investigation of more serious or repeated complaints.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social,

environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the “well-being” goals.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

4.1 None as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

5.1 None as a direct result of the contents of this report.

Employment

5.2 None as a direct result of the contents of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

5.3 The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 amended the Local Government Measure 2011 to provide that Democratic Services Committees may review any matter relevant to the support and advice available to Members of that Authority. The IRPW clearly view considerations for safety and funding of security measures to be within the remit of the Committee.

5.4 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the Socio-Economic Duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage

6. Background Papers

Background Papers:

[Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru – Research on the workload of County Councillors in Wales](#)

Appendices:

Appendix A Health, Safety and Well-being Policy

Appendix B Personal Safety - Councillors Guide

Appendix C Stress Risk Assessment Form

POLISI IECHYD, DIOGELWCH a LLES
HEALTH, SAFETY and WELLBEING POLICY



Cyngor Bro Morgannwg Polisi lechyd, Diogelwch a Lles

Vale of Glamorgan Council Health, Safety and Well-being Policy



Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
Swyddfeydd Dinesig
Heol Holton
Y Barri CF63 4RU
www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk

The Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices
Holton Road
Barry CF63 4RU
www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Policy statement

1. The Vale of Glamorgan Council attributes the utmost importance to the health, safety, and well-being of its employees and those for whom it provides a service. It also fully accepts its responsibilities not to endanger the employees of other employers, members of the public, or others that may be affected by the Vale of Glamorgan Council's activities and is committed to the creation and embedding of a positive health and safety culture throughout the organisation.
2. The Vale of Glamorgan Council will take all reasonable steps to discharge its responsibilities by:
 - providing a safe and healthy place of work and working environment;
 - Undertaking risk assessments and implementing their findings;
 - Consulting with employees on matters affecting their health, safety, and well-being;
 - Providing and maintaining safe working systems, plant, and equipment;
 - Ensuring the safe handling and use of substances;
 - Providing information, instruction, training, and supervision to enable employees and others to work safely;
 - Ensuring all employees are competent to do their tasks, with the provision of learning and development;
 - Investigating accidents, incidents, near misses and work-related ill-health to learn lessons.
3. Health, safety, and well-being is the direct concern of us all and we all have a duty of care for our own safety, the safety of fellow workers, and of any other person affected by the Vale of Glamorgan Council's work activities. We also all have a duty, as employees to co-operate with the Council to enable it to carry out its responsibilities. The Vale of Glamorgan Council looks to every employee to maintain continuous safety awareness, be alert to existing and potential hazards and the need to minimise and report them.
4. The Vale of Glamorgan Council recognises that the management of health, safety and well-being is an integral part of modern management practice at all levels and provides a competent Health, Safety and Well-being Team.

¹ This policy is applicable to schools where the Local Authority is the employer; it can also be adopted by other schools where the Governing Body is the employer

5. The Vale of Glamorgan Council also recognises that its activities are diverse and that the management of health, safety and wellbeing is important across all its activities.
6. This statement will be regularly reviewed, and any revision brought to the notice of employees and others.

Signed:



Date:

Rob Thomas
Chief Executive Officer
16th July 2024

Purpose of the Policy

This policy establishes the responsibilities of elected members, directors, heads of service, managers, and staff, together with the corporate arrangements by which the Council intends to improve its safety performance.

The Council is also committed to a programme of compliance and to that end will review, monitor, and manage all legislative compliance processes.

This policy applies to all Council employees and workplaces including schools where the Council is the employer.

Responsibilities

Health & Safety Management Function

Health, safety, and well-being will be treated as an integral part of the management function of the council. To achieve this there will be adequate organisation, arrangements, and resources to implement this policy and to plan, monitor and review the health, safety, and well-being activities of the Council.

All staff should be safe and well at work but how everyone behaves impacts upon the Council, this section sets out key responsibilities for all. The management of health safety and well-being is working partnership between the Council and its employees, including contractors, volunteers and others who are expected to be accountable for their actions.

Elected Members

- Elected members take key decisions and have a varying portfolio of responsibilities, they agree the budget and policy framework of the council and in reaching these decisions will take health, safety, and well-being into account.
- Elected members will have an overall performance monitoring role for the Council's health and safety management systems.
- The Cabinet member for Human Resources will undertake the role of "champion."

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- They will work with the Joint Consultative Forum to enable detailed consultations, challenge, change and communications with officers and unions to create a positive and transparent safety culture.
- Follow the health, safety and well-being arrangements as set out in this policy will report any issues and be able to access support mechanisms when required.

The Chief Executive Officer will

- maintain overall responsibility for all matters regarding health, safety, and well-being;
- provide leadership and will take responsibility for health, safety, and well-being performance and direction;
- will facilitate and promote a positive health safety and well-being culture within the Council.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will

- be responsible for health, safety, and well-being performance within their individual directorates;
- provide strategic direction and oversight of health, safety and well-being policies, strategies, and plans;
- ensure that robust health safety and well-being management systems, arrangements and organisation exists within each directorate and inter-directorate liaison takes place;
- monitor the overall performance of the council's health, safety and well-being systems including all compliance based or linked elements, seeking regular and timely reports;
- seek reassurance of the compliance of the council's health, safety, and well-being systems;
- respond to HSE investigation request and Enforcement Notices;
- chair directorate health and safety fora or delegate to a relevant Head of Service or Operational Manager
- support the Chief Executive in meeting health, safety, and well-being responsibilities for the Council as a whole.

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Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development will

- lead in the continuous improvement in health, safety, and well-being standards;
- lead in the development application and review of corporate health, safety and well-being, occupational health, and counselling
- lead in the organisational development for health, safety and well-being ensuring that staff have the learning opportunities to be competent to conduct their health, safety, and well-being responsibilities.
- ensure the development of a corporate health, safety, and well-being training programme to ensure that all staff have access to relevant and appropriate training so that the Council is compliant.

Heads of Service and Operational Managers (including relevant Head Teachers) ¹ will

- be responsible for all matters regarding health, safety, and well-being within their school/ service area;
- allocate duties and responsibilities for health, safety and well-being within their school/service area and will ensure that staff are competent to undertake these duties making appropriate use of the corporate health, safety, and well-being training provision;
- ensure that compliance targets for health, safety and well-being are met and that there is regular reporting, monitoring, and management of compliance. This will include any statutory compliance for example, gas servicing but will also include any specific health, safety and well-being compliance targets set within your service area.
- arrange for audits and inspections within their school/service area and those identified actions are completed;
- consult with and be advised by the Health & Safety/ Fire Officer allocated to their service area;
- ensure that suitable and sufficient records are kept on all health, safety, and well-being matters;
- respond to HSE and or any other enforcement authority investigation request and Enforcement Notices;
- agree and implement remedial action required by enforcement Notices, on behalf of the Director and ensure that adequate up to date information is passed to the Corporate Health, Safety and Well-being team.

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Managers and Supervisors will

- be responsible for the implementation of both corporate and directorate health, safety and well-being policies and the general health and safety performance within their areas of control.
- identify hazards and ensure that risk assessments are completed and there are adequate control measures in place for the health, safety and well-being of the council, staff, and any other persons that they may affect;
- stop work where an emergency or other condition arises which presents an immediate risk of serious harm;
- ensure all employees are aware of emergency procedures;
- enforce safe working methods and procedures including the wearing and use of personal protective equipment, where required;
- ensure the protection of the public;
- conduct their own inspection and monitoring programme (together with trade Union Safety Representative if possible) to keep workplace conditions under review, thus enabling early identification of hazards so that they can be eliminated and controlled;
- ensure that all equipment is safe and well-maintained and that accurate records are kept of all inspections and tests;
- implement occupational health's recommendations for reasonable adjustments as far as reasonably practicable;
- ensure that suitable and sufficient records are kept on all health, safety, and well-being matters
- maintain a working relationship with the corporate health, safety, and well-being team;
- investigate accidents, incidents and near miss situations, liaise with the corporate health safety and well-being team and feedback outcomes to staff teams;
- ensure that all staff receive timely health, safety, and well-being training
- Where involved in procuring services via contractors will ensure this policy is brought to their attention and followed

Premises managers (Facilities Management/Directorate appointed persons

Designated premises managers shall have the additional duty of overseeing safety issues relating to premises some examples of duties include:

- on site first aid provision (except for corporate buildings which is co-ordinated centrally)

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- access/egress control
- security
- emergency procedures and drills
- safety checking of plant and equipment
- ensuring that all compliance testing is complete and action plans implemented
- the first point of contact for any buildings especially if there are any works undertaken.
- accurate records are kept

Corporate Health, Safety and Well-being Team will

- Maintain information relating to accidents, incidents and near misses including providing quarterly statistics for Directors and Health & Safety Fora;
- Provide professional and up to date advice and support on health, safety and well-being to all staff and managers alike;
- Further investigate and provide reports on accidents, incidents, near misses where there is a high level of risk/injury making clear and concise recommendations;
- Report accidents, incidents, diseases and near miss situations to the HSE under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013)
- Undertake health and safety audits within service areas as and when necessary, providing reports to managers with concise action plans;
- Undertake fire risk assessments and keep pace with fire safety legislation communicating this to all levels of the council;
- Produce an annual report of health and safety performance within the Council;
- Develop policies, procedures and guidance relating to specific health, safety, and well-being matters;
- Monitor health safety and well-being performance;
- Consult with safety representatives and enforcing authorities whenever appropriate;
- Provide advice on the suitability and relevance of procured training and development for health, safety, and well-being. Will where appropriate and where there is resource provide health, safety, and well-being training;
- Stop any activity or operation which, in their professional opinion, poses a serious risk to persons or property – including situations of potential risk and immediately report the situation to the relevant Director or to the Chief Executive.

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Occupational Health Service will

- Process pre-employment health questionnaires;
- Provide advice and support for sickness absence in relation to staff referred to them, including provision of reports;
- Provide advice and guidance to managers and staff;
- Arrange counselling and other necessary support;
- Provide health surveillance and health screening;
- Provide health promotion and education;
- Provide immunisation and vaccination;
- Provide statistical information as and when required
- Support the development of the overarching Well-being strategy.

Trade Union Safety Representatives will

- be nominated and trained by the trade unions to inspect the workplace, investigate accidents, and represent employees at safety meeting and fora;

Employees, agency staff, volunteers, and work experience staff, etc.

The above are all individuals working on behalf of the Council and will

- follow the correct working procedures as instructed, including the wearing of personal protective equipment/clothing and their identification badge;
- co-operate with managers to ensure their own, their colleagues and public safety. conduct and document user checks and inspections of plant and equipment, report defects and ensure proper use;
- not deliberately damage, modify or deface any item of PPE or workplace equipment
- report accidents, incidents and near misses immediately to their line manager and highlight any concerns in health safety and well-being arrangements
- attend health and safety training and make their manager aware if their compliance training is out of date or if they do not consider themselves competent to conduct any task or activity
- stop work and report to a line manager if they feel that the condition/situation is unsafe.

The Council as a landlord will

- ensure that there are mechanisms in place for all council owned or leased premises to be maintained to a safe condition by ensuring that tenants are

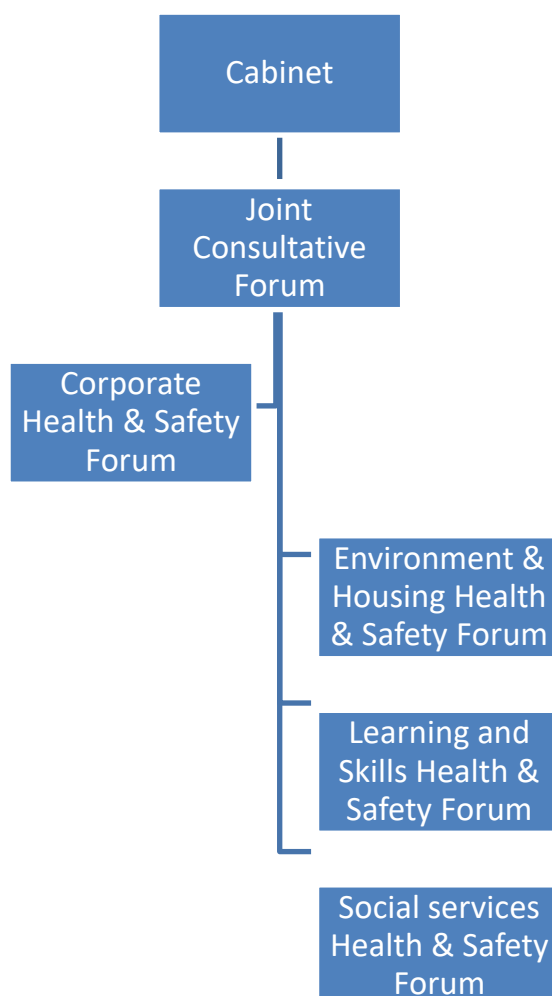
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clear about their repairing obligations.

- ensure there are policies and procedures for the management of asbestos, electrical safety, fire safety, gas safety, mechanical safety, radon, and water safety to keep the Council safe as a landlord.

Health & Safety Fora

The council has established the following health and safety fora structure to ensure that there is suitable and sufficient consultation on health, safety, and well-being matters at all levels.



There are separate constitutions in place for all the health and safety fora which are regularly updated by the chairperson.

Minutes of Directorate Health & Safety forum meetings will be made available and will be referred to the Joint Consultative Forum.

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General Arrangements

The general arrangements give practical effect to the Policy and the Policy statement. They are not exhaustive, and Directorates may issue arrangements covering operations particular to their function. Constant observance of the Policy, and maintenance of good practice and procedure, will minimise personal accidents, incidents and near misses, unsafe situations will be recognised early, and suitable precautions can be put in place. The consequential cost savings can be significant as well as maintaining a positive safety culture.

A-Z of arrangements

The Council as an employer will plan via policies, procedures, guidelines, and the statements made below for the following:

- **Accident, incident, and near miss reporting:** that ensures that all accidents, incidents, and near misses are recorded and reported appropriately, both internally and externally. This will also include the reporting of any occupational diseases. All lost time accidents are investigated by the HSW team to promote a lessons learnt approach.
- **Consultation and communication structures:** the council will provide mechanisms for engagement with staff in addition to the health and safety forum including effective means to raise concerns.
- **Display Screen Equipment (DSE):** recognising that the incorrect use of DSE may result in ill health and regular assessment and advice will mitigate the risk whether the employee is home working or working in a Council building.
- **Drug and Alcohol use:** recognising the potential impacts of their use in the workplace.
- **First Aid:** ensuring adequate first aid provision in the workplace.
- **Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS):** recognising the potential consequences of exposure to powered hand-held tools as well as risks of whole-body vibration for driving large plant. The council is committed to reduce that risk to staff and others.

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- **COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health):** ensuring that all substances in the workplace are managed under the regulatory controls outlined in the COSHH Regulations (Control of Substances hazardous to Health Regulations 2002)
- **Hybrid working** refer to Appendix 3 of the Hybrid Working Strategy
- **Infection control:** minimising the risk to colleagues from exposure to infectious disease in the workplace.
- **Lone working:** acknowledging that certain work-related tasks require lone working, recognising the risks and seeking to minimise these.
- **Manual handling:** preventing musculoskeletal disease and injuries resulting from manual handling and the incorrect handling of loads. There is a stand-alone Policy which covers all aspects of Manual handling.
- **Menopause:** ensuring that there is provision in the workplace for staff suffering from the symptoms of menopause and acknowledging the affect that this can have on their well-being.
- **Mental health and Wellbeing:** committing to the provision of processes to manage and support mental health in the workplace for the well-being of all staff.
- **Mobile phones whilst driving** setting out clear standards for the use of mobile phones whilst driving for all staff.
- **Monitoring and audit:** all directorates will have suitable processes in place for monitoring, audits and reviews of health, safety, and well-being. Directorates also have an inspection and monitoring service via the HSW Team.
- **Noise:** identifying when and how the council can mitigate the risks of exposure to loud noise having a detrimental impact on hearing.
- **Occupational Health:** providing advice and guidance from occupational health specialists to support good health and well-being at work.
- **Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE):** ensuring that all employees have the correct PPE and RPE for the

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tasks that they carry out and that they wear it.

- **Risk assessment:** committing the Council to a system that effectively assesses and manages hazards and risks to health, safety, and well-being.
- **Smoking and smoking cessation:** that the Council has suitable processes in place for staff who smoke and those who want to quit. This will include the use of vapes, electronic cigarettes etc.
- **Sharing of information:** recognising that information is shared to reduce the risks of challenging behaviour to colleagues the Council will work towards suitable systems for achieving this. Whilst there is currently no central system for sharing of information all Directorates will work together to support the health, safety, and well-being of colleagues by sharing information which may be required to prevent incidents.
- **Stress:** recognising workplace stress as a health and well-being matter and committing to reduce the factors which may induce that stress
- **Tools, equipment, and plant:** recognising the risks to health, safety and well-being associated with these and committing to their management, maintenance, and use.
- **Training:** ensuring that staff receive training appropriate for the tasks they perform as well as general health, safety and well-being induction and awareness.
- **Vehicle, fleet management and driving:** ensuring that vehicles are maintained in a safe condition and that staff understand their responsibilities for driving safely.
- **Violent Behaviour:** supporting colleagues who have experienced verbal or physical aggression, learning from incidents to minimise future risks. Domestic violence ensuring that staff understand this and have suitable arrangements in place for staff who work with those that have experienced this and if staff themselves have experienced this.
- **Welfare and well-being:** recognising the council's responsibility an environment that is conducive to the welfare of staff and the contribution that well-being makes to health and safety.

¹ This policy is applicable to schools where the Local Authority is the employer; it can also be adopted by other schools where the Governing Body is the employer

- **Working at height:** recognising the risks of falling, avoiding or minimising opportunities for falls to occur.
- **Young person at work:** acknowledging the increased risks and need to additional measures for young people in the workplace.

The council as a landlord and employer will put in place policies, procedures, and guidelines for:

- **Asbestos:** recognising the Council's responsibilities to protect staff, contractors, pupils, and the public from the harmful effect of asbestos and to have robust procedures in place to identify and manage asbestos.
- **Electrical safety:** committing the Council to a regular programme of testing electrical services across all Council owned property.
- **Fire Safety:** recognising that the Council's responsibilities for the assessment of risk and for maintaining suitable fire arrangements in all building under its control.
- **Gas Safety:** recognising the Councils responsibility to ensure that all gas appliances are tested regularly, are safe and that risks to health, safety and well-being including risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, is managed effectively.
- **Mechanical safety:** ensuring that all equipment and plant in public areas is safe for both staff and members of the public to use.
- **Radon:** acknowledging the Council's responsibilities to identify areas with high radon levels and to manage risks to health through exposure.
- **Water safety:** protecting all from the risks associated with water borne disease including legionella.

Contractor arrangements – the Council will

- **Manage all contractors:** delivering its responsibilities to ensure that contractors working for the Council always work safely. The Council will make health and safety a key element of the procurement process for contractors and will ensure that Council staff monitor and manage contractors

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appropriately.

- **Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 (CDM):** – any contractor carrying out work for the Council will have appropriate safety arrangements in place to meet the requirements of CDM. No work will commence without a suitably developed and agreed Health and Safety Plan, all works will be monitored, and records will be retained via a Health & Safety file.

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Appendix to HSW Policy – Index of arrangements

Employees

Arrangement	Lead officer/s	Sign off Lead
Accident, incident, and near miss reporting	HSW Manager	Director of Corporate Resources
Consultation and communication structures	HSW Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Display Screen Equipment (DSE)	HSW Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Hybrid working which is Appendix 3 of the Hybrid Working Strategy	HSW Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Drug and Alcohol Management	HSW Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
First Aid	HSW Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)	HSW Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Hazardous Substances	HSW Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Infection control	HSW Manager & Occupational Health Nurse Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Lone working	HSW Manager	Director of Social Services
Reference Manual handling Policy	Manual handling co-ordinator & Operational Manager OD & Learning	

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Menopause	HSW Manager & Occupational Health Nurse Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Mental health and Wellbeing	HSW Manager & Occupational Health Nurse Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Mobile phones whilst driving	HSW Manager	Director of Learning and Skills
Monitoring and audit	HSW Manager	Director of Corporate Resources
Noise	HSW Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Occupational Health	Occupational Health Nurse Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory protective Equipment (RPE	HSW Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Risk assessment	HSW Manager	Director of Learning and Skills
Smoking and smoking cessation	HSW Manager & Occupational Health Nurse Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Stress	HSW Manager & Occupational Health Nurse Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Tools, equipment, and plant	HSW Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Training	HSW Manager & Organisational Development & Learning Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Vehicle, fleet management and driving	HSW Manager & Fleet Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Violent Behaviour	HSW Manager	Director of Social Services

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Welfare and well-being	HSW Manager & Occupational Health Nurse Manager	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Working at height	HSW Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Young persons at work	HSW Manger	Director of Learning and Skills

The Council as a landlord and employer

Arrangement	Lead officer/s	Sign off lead
Asbestos	HSW Manager & Compliance Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Electrical safety	HSW Manager & Compliance Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Fire Safety	HSW Manager & Fire Safety Officer	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Gas Safety	HSW Manager & Compliance Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Mechanical safety	HSW Manager & Compliance Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Radon	HSW Manager & Compliance Manager	Director of Place
Water safety	HSW Manager & Compliance Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services

Contractor arrangements

Arrangement	Lead Officer/s	Sign off lead
Management of contractors	HSW Manager & Commercial & consultancy Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services
Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 (CDM)	HSW Manager & Commercial & consultancy Manager	Director of Environmental & Housing Services

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

¹ This policy is applicable to schools where the Local Authority is the employer; it can also be adopted by other schools where the Governing Body is the employer

Personal Safety - Councillors Guide

The relationship between Councillors and their communities is at the heart of what being a Councillor is all about. The face-to-face contact when constituents can share problems and concerns is vital to enhancing that relationship. This guide aims to help Councillors carry out their role safely and effectively. An important role of Councillors is to keep in touch with their communities. This includes helping individuals with any problems they might have. Often this extends beyond just the delivery of Council services. These contacts are usually rewarding and non-adversarial. Councillors become experienced in calming down and treating with respect and sympathy angry and frustrated residents who often resort to their elected representative when they feel that they are getting nowhere in resolving their problems through other channels. The purpose of this guide is not to make Councillors nervous, but to set out what personal safety measures can be taken to prevent and to deal with those rare circumstances when they might find themselves in situations where they become anxious for their safety. In general terms the guidance follows advice given to others who, by virtue of public duties or employment, meet many people whom they do not know.

Car Safety and Parking

You need to take the same precautions as most car owners do:

- Have your keys in your hand or easily accessible;
- Consider whether an area will be dark and isolated when you return to your car;
- Park where possible, under street lighting;
- Lock the car doors when you get into the car;
- Take boxes/bags to the car when other people are around;
- Try to park on the left hand side of the road facing the way you want to drive off;
- In a cul de sac do not park facing the dead end;
- Try to park in a space where you will not be blocked in;
- At service stations always lock the car when you go to pay.

Dealing with Emotional Constituents

It is inevitable that some of the people you will meet will be angry or upset. You need to be prepared to handle all types of emotion. For example, it is worth having some tissues on hand. Councillors have to develop the quiet skill of being concerned about constituents'

problems without being so involved that they become too emotional to be of help. Calmness in the face of whatever comes up will help you and your constituents. You may find that racist or offensive remarks are made. If they are directed at you - do not respond - this will only make the situation worse. Instead, bring the interview to an end as quickly as possible. If they are more general remarks, you should state that this is not acceptable and that you cannot continue the interview. Often this will elicit an apology. Otherwise ask the person to leave. However, you must use your own judgement and if you are alone and in a vulnerable situation do not put yourself at risk no matter how angry the remarks make you.

Ward Surgeries Where ward surgeries are held, the arrangements each Councillor makes will vary according to local circumstances and it will be a fortunate Councillor who can find premises for their surgery which meet every aspect of good practice and are also accessible to their constituents. What follows are suggestions about how to make a surgery safe and effective. Most Councillors will go through their entire service on the Council without experiencing any problems but a little time given to preparation and planning can reduce the already small risk further.

The Basics

1. Do not hold surgeries alone in an otherwise empty building. Try to get someone to act as receptionist. This not only makes you safer, but also makes it much easier to manage a busy surgery. If you are currently doing surgeries alone, discuss how this can be changed with fellow Councillors or Council Officers.
2. If you cannot avoid doing surgeries on your own, make sure you remember a few simple guidelines. The layout of the room should suit you, i.e. you should sit nearest to the door with the constituents seated on the other side of the table. Seating is best set out at an angle of 45 degrees (seating directly opposite can be confrontational).
3. If there is no separate waiting room, try to ensure that the waiting constituents are as far as possible away from those whom you are talking to.
4. Make sure there are no heavy items in the room that could be used as weapons.
5. Inform the Police when and where your surgeries are held.
6. If you are at the stage of looking for suitable premises in which to hold a surgery, try to get a space with as many as possible of the following features:
 - Council premises (e.g. community centres) during opening hours or other premises where there are many other people about.
 - Premises where the names of any visitors for Councillors are recorded.
 - Premises where there is a comfortable waiting area.

- Try to ensure the surgery (interviewing) room:
 - o Is in view of the reception or public area;
 - o Is connected to the reception by an alarm and there is a procedure for dealing with call for assistance;
 - o Has a vision panel in the door;
 - o Has a swift means of escape and any visitors are not able to lock the door from the inside.

Personal Callers

Most Councillors seek to maintain a balance between their personal and public lives and do not want to encourage any callers at their private homes. Good publicity as to how to contact Councillors and details of ward surgeries reduces the chances of unwanted callers.

Mail

As with telephone calls, Councillors on rare occasions can become the target of malicious anonymous letters. Any such letters should be given immediately to the Police.

Home Visits

Councillors do sometimes visit residents in their homes, especially those who are elderly, disabled or where they simply want to see for themselves the conditions that are the subject of complaints. It is for each Councillor to decide whether a particular visit should be made, especially if the person to be visited is unknown to the Councillor. Most Councillors trust their own instincts as to whether to meet someone alone. Sometimes the Councillor might prefer to be accompanied by a ward colleague or invite the person to a more public place. It is always advisable for you to keep a record of your whereabouts. If necessary, you can let the person whom you are visiting know there is such a record or that you are expected at another place by a certain time etc. or make a call on your mobile phone during the visit.

Malicious and Nuisance Telephone Calls

Councillors occasionally get the odd nuisance or abusive call. Although such calls are likely to be rare, you might become the target of a persistent, anonymous caller with a grudge against the Council. These calls need to be dealt with in accordance with Police advice:

- Keep the caller talking;
- Note any clues the caller may provide as to sex, age, accent, etc.;
- Listen for any clues as to the caller's motive and intention;

- Write down the details immediately to assist police at a later stage;
- Listen for background noise that may provide valuable information (e.g. railway sounds, industrial noises, machinery, music, animals);
- Inform the Police;
- Inform the Council.

Reporting Incidents

Any incidents of concern, even if fairly minor or 'near-misses', should be reported to the Police and Head of Democratic Services. This enables the authority to undertake proper monitoring and decide if any action is needed to prevent a recurrence. You may also consider it advisable to warn ward colleagues.

Emergency Contact Details

It is advisable to provide this information to the Head of Democratic Services should it be necessary to contact your family / next of kin in the event of an emergency.

Additional Useful Guidance Personal Safety for Members:

Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) guidance.

Personal Safety Guidance for Councillors: Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) guidance.

Personal Safety Advice: Susie Lamplugh Trust guidance covers canvassing and campaigning, dealing with aggression, stalking, lone working, personal alarms, hate crime and internet safety.

Online Abuse Guidance for Councillors: WLGA guidance.

Get Safe Online guidance: Government supported website, Get Safe Online. This covers everything from protecting your devices to social networking to information security.

Recognising the Terrorist Threat Guidance: The national counter terrorism security office guidance - dealing with suspect packages and what to do in the event of terrorist threats.

Vale of Glamorgan Council - Corporate Health and Safety Policy. Authority's StaffNet Page

RISK ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN FOR WORK RELATED STRESS

Name		Team:	
Job title		Date:	
Manager/ Assessor		Review Date	

Part 1 This form is solution based. Please use this section to identify what you need and then risk assess with your manager what the solutions are for you.

Possible Solutions To DEMANDS	(Yes, if current practice)	
	Yes	No
• Sufficient resources		
• Prioritise work (are you able to priorities work or are there continual competing deadlines)		
• Re-negotiate deadlines (are you able to do this if needed?)		
• Able to strike a balance so staff are not overloaded, underloaded or confused about jobs		
• Re-allocate work (does this happen if required?)		
• Training - (do you have regular training, so you feel confident carrying out your duties?)		
• Are you encouraged to talk at an early stage if you feel you are struggling or cannot cope with work/workloads		
• Can you talk as a team about what needs to be done, who is doing what and ways of sharing the workload		
• Shift work systems/hours of work/service cover are agreed with staff and are fair		
• Risk assessments are in place for the physical environment and steps to control the risks		
• Risk Assessments in place for the risk of physical violence and verbal abuse and steps to control the risks		

Possible Solutions To CONTROL	(Yes, if current practice)	
	Yes	No
• Able to plan your own work and make decisions how work should be completed, and problems tackled		
• Enabled to use various skills to carry out work		
• Work as a team		
• Output only monitored with support if this is essential for example, missing deadlines, service provision falling short		

Possible Solutions To SUPPORT	(Yes, if current practice)	
	Yes	No
• Do you get support and encouragement even when things go wrong		
• As a member of staff are you listened to and involved in decisions		
• Are you encouraged to talk about work related stress at an early stage		
• Awareness raised for Employee Assistant Programme currently Westfield Health		
• Referred for specialist assistance if needed e.g., Occupational Health, Human Resources, Health and Safety or General Practitioner		
• Encouraged to attend appropriate coping skills training e.g., stress awareness, assertiveness, time management		
• Always have a return-to-work interviews after sickness absence		

Possible Solutions To RELATIONSHIPS	(Yes, if current practice)	
	Yes	No
• Work in partnership with staff to ensure that bullying and harassment never emerge as an issue – policies and procedures in place to deal with instances of unacceptable behaviour		

• A culture where members of the team trust each other and can be themselves while they are at work		
• Encouraged to recognise the individual contributions of other team members and the benefits of the whole team pulling together		
• Encouraged to communicate effectively and provided with appropriate training to aid skill development e.g., listening skills, confidence building		

Possible Solutions To ROLE	(Yes, if current practice)	
	Yes	No
• You have a defined role		
• You have up-to-date and relevant job descriptions		
• Encouraged to talk at an early stage unclear about priorities or tasks		
• You have clear direction and instructions		
• Team meetings		
• Performance appraisal (It's about me)		

Possible Solutions To CHANGE	(Yes, if current practice)	
	Yes	No
• It is explained why it is happening, what is happening, the timetable and how it will occur		
• Provided with appropriate training (if needed)		
• You are involved and supported		
• Open door management		

Part 2

Use this section for planning the changes, please remember that the solutions must be agreed, achievable and manageable.

Outstanding Area	Existing Issues	Practical Solutions / Control Measures Required	Action Required by Whom	Action Required by When	Date Action Completed
DEMAND Includes issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment					
CONTROL How much say does the person have in the way they do their work?					
SUPPORT Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues					
RELATIONSHIPS Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour					

ROLE Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures they do not have conflicting roles					
CHANGE How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation					

Part 3 - Other factors that may impact

Are there any stressors outside of work that you would like to share?	Yes/No (if yes please describe)
Do you have any health conditions that may be a factor that you would like to discuss	Yes/No (If yes please describe and indicate whether a Well-being action plan is required.)

Agreed by: Team Manager:		(Signature)
Individual:		(Signature)

Send your completed form to: Stress Risk Assessments stressriskassessments@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

This form is available in Welsh / Mae'r ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg