

# Thanet District Council

## Health & Safety Strategy 2024-2027

### TBC 2024 Version 1

#### Draft -HR/Legal/CHSC/Risk Mng

Under the Management of Health at Safety at Work Regulations, every employer must have arrangements for 'effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review' of measures to protect people.

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A copy of this Strategy shall be brought to the attention of all employees. This Strategy supersedes the previous Strategy and shall be reviewed in 2027 or revised as necessary in light of operational or strategic developments.

## Review History

Health and Safety Compliance Manager will ensure that this strategy is reviewed and updated as determined by the needs of the Council, changes in legislation/regulations and best practice.

Owner	Head of Finance and Procurement
CMT Sign-Off Date	
Head of Service Sign-Off Date	
Draft Date	February 2024
Implementation Date	
Last Review Date	
Next Review Date	

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# Health and Safety Strategy

## 1.0 Introduction

The Health and Safety Strategy for 2024-2027 has been developed to support our aim of promoting and ensuring high standards of Health and Safety (H&S) in all that we do.

The Strategy aims to support the strategic and operational management of the Council and looks to go beyond the traditional health and safety role of simply preventing harm. The Strategy commits the Council to continually improve the health and safety of its staff and any other person affected by its activities.

The Strategy is not just about achieving compliance, it aims to develop, implement and embed:

- Efficient, proactive and pragmatic systems of delivering H&S
- A safe and healthy environment for staff and those affected by our activities
- A robust health and safety culture across all departments of the Council
- Effective means of protecting stakeholders, including staff and all those affected by our activities from harm.

The Strategy describes in broad terms what our approach to health and safety is and what we intend to do, which in turn is supported by an action plan and a robust H&S Policy.

## 2.0 Background

All the Council's corporate objectives are more effectively realised in an environment that is both healthy and safe, where a positive safety culture is encouraged, legislative compliance is achieved and all staff and stakeholders are fully and meaningfully engaged.

A recent health and safety audit by East Kent Audit Partnership in 2023 and a follow up in May 2024 provided a limited assurance opinion and found the Council to be "Reactive" based on the Hudson Ladder with systems in place to manage hazards not being used to their full potential. This means that there is some good work going on, but that it tends to be in reaction to specific events rather than a more systematic approach. The Council is committed to progressing towards a "Proactive" and ultimately a "Generative" culture and the actions identified in this strategy build on the issues identified in the EKAP audit.

The Hudson Ladder (see figure infographic) is an evolutionary ladder, which plots the development of an organisation's safety culture. Each level has distinct characteristics and is a progression from the previous level. The range runs from the pathological, through to the reactive, to the calculative, on to the proactive and then the final stage of generative.



Robust and comprehensive health and safety management underpins all the work of the Council. This is achieved by ensuring staff work in a safe and healthy environment, and are aware of their responsibilities with regard to their own and their colleagues' health and safety and the duty the Council has to safeguard health and safety.

The Council must ensure that it complies with all health and safety legislation and requirements of enforcing authorities. The Council will continue to work with all relevant bodies including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Kent Fire & Rescue Service to improve the standards of health, safety and wellbeing across the Council.

### **3.0 Developing Key Themes of the Strategy**

The key challenge for the successful implementation and delivery of the strategy is how we build upon the progress we have made so far and further embed health and safety into the operations of the Council. The ability to not only maintain but develop further the effectiveness of our health and safety management system gained through the significant progress achieved so far is vital.

### **4.0 Strategic Health and Safety Themes**

Health and safety policies and legislative drivers are crucial for ensuring the protection of workers and the public from workplace hazards and risks. Several key national policies and legislative frameworks govern health and safety practices in the UK:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA): The HSWA is the primary piece of legislation governing occupational health and safety in the UK.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: These regulations provide further details on how employers should manage health and safety in the workplace.
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE): The HSE is the national regulatory body responsible for enforcing health and safety legislation
- Health and Safety Regulations specific to industries: Various regulations exist to address specific hazards and risks in different industries, such as the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002, and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.
- National Health and Safety Strategies and Initiatives: The UK government periodically develops national health and safety strategies and initiatives to address emerging risks and priorities.

These legislative drivers and national policies form the framework for promoting and maintaining health and safety standards across workplaces in the UK, with the aim of preventing accidents, injuries, and work-related illnesses.

The adoption of the under-noted key strategic themes and associated performance indicators will support, embed and further enhance what we have achieved to date.

These themes will assist us in achieving an improved balance between systems and behavioural aspects of management. In addition, they will ensure that health and safety is an integral part of management generally rather than perceived as being separate to, and not part of, day-to-day activities.

The Key themes identified for our 2024-2027 strategy are:



#### 4.1 Leadership and Management

Successful health and safety management and leadership comes from and is driven by the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service. Visible and active commitment to health and safety demonstrates a strong and clear commitment which will be embraced by other members of staff.

Proactive management and ownership of health and safety is a clear indication of a positive health and safety culture.

The activities/key performance indicators necessary to promote this theme are:

1. Maintaining and strengthening an effective communication system through the Council's management structure.
2. Demonstrating that Health and Safety management is integrated into all business decisions
3. Maintaining regular reviews of health and safety performance.
4. Ensuring appropriate resources are provided for the effective management of health and safety.
5. Ensuring all staff receive appropriate Health and Safety induction and training.
6. Ensure strategic health and safety aims are communicated and embedded throughout the Council
7. Develop a communications plan in conjunction with the Communications Team to ensure ongoing delivery of key health and safety messages.

#### 4.2 Competence

Effective health and safety management requires competence at every level of our organisation.

Competence is defined as having the training, skills, knowledge and experience to work safely. In this context, every member of staff can recognise foreseeable risks and can take steps to control them. For the Council, competence also means having health and safety practices, procedures and standards which are used consistently across every service area.

The activities/key performance indicators necessary to promote this theme are:

1. Ensuring we have competent staff who ensure all policies and procedures are up to date and reflect best practices.
2. Making sure internal policies, procedures, guidance and advice are understood and easily accessible to staff and, where applicable, visitors and contractors.
3. Ensuring staff are aware of how they can access competent and professional advice
4. Using appropriate risk management/risk assessment techniques across all departments/service areas
5. Ensuring comprehensive training programs and opportunities are available to staff to ensure they develop the right skills and knowledge.

### **4.3 Collaborative and Partnership Working**

Successful health and safety management is a collective responsibility in which we all must play a part. This responsibility must be embedded through a clear demonstration of management standards.

The activities/key performance indicators necessary to promote this theme and support staff are:

1. Developing initiatives to encourage collaboration/partnership working with key stakeholders, partners and union colleagues.
2. Ensuring appropriate and effective communications channels exist for the dissemination of all health and safety information
3. Developing occupational health and safety systems following HSE H&S management system (HSG65) principles.
4. Identify, develop, implement and embed technological solutions to improve compliance monitoring and reporting arrangements.
5. Maintaining effective and efficient management and control of contractors within our premises and on our work sites.

### **4.4 Risk Management**

Strategic Risks:

Strategic risks are those risks that stem from decisions made at the highest levels of our organisation, affecting our long-term goals, and overall direction. Strategic risks can also come from external sources as well as internal

Operational Risks:

Operational risks are identified from the 'bottom-up' through service planning for the year and arise from the day-to-day activities and processes within our organisation, these affect the ability to execute the core mandate effectively and efficiently.

Effective and proportionate risk management should ensure both legal compliance, lowered insurance risks and the safety of staff. This is achieved partly through the current Google Sites application used by the whole organisation to identify, assess, mitigate, and monitor risks across various departments.

Ownership of a Risk Management System (RMS) involves collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including:

- Risk Management Function: This team consists of the health and safety team and our risk management team (Insurance) who are primarily responsible for overseeing the organisation's overall risk management framework, including the selection, implementation, and maintenance of the RMS. They ensure the system aligns with the organisation's risk management objectives and supports its strategic goals.



- The Risk Manager: Plays a key role in driving the adoption and utilisation of the RMS. They provide leadership in identifying key risks, maintaining the Risk Registers, defining risk tolerance levels, and establishing risk mitigation strategies.
- Information Communications Technology (ITC) and Digital Department: Since the RMS is a software application, the ITC/Digital departments are involved in the technical aspects of implementing and maintaining the system. They ensure that the system is properly integrated with existing systems, secure, and accessible to authorised users.
- Departments: Different departments within the organisation utilise the RMS to assess and manage risks specific to their areas of operation. They provide input on risk assessments, risk registers, mitigation plans, and ongoing monitoring activities.
- Chief Executive, Directors and the Corporate Management Team including the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, have oversight responsibilities for the organisation's risk management efforts. They rely on the RMS to receive regular updates on key risks, mitigation measures, and the overall effectiveness of the risk management program.

Overall, while the RMS involves collaboration among multiple stakeholders, successful risk management requires collaboration and engagement from all levels of the organisation. It's essential for stakeholders to work together to ensure that the RMS effectively supports the organisation's risk management objectives and contributes to its overall success.

The activities/key performance indicators within the RMS necessary to promote this theme and support staff are:

1. Systematically identifying all hazards across the Council
2. Ensuring that health and safety is always an integral part of the planning and review processes at Council and also directorate/service area levels
3. Ensuring the effective implementation of the council fire safety management standards in all premises
4. Developing a suite of lagging/leading health and safety performance indicators
5. Ensuring a robust Health and Safety inspection programme is in place.
6. Improving reporting, recording and investigation of accidents, incidents and near misses.

#### **4.5 Health and Wellbeing**

Positive health and well-being can support a reduction in absenteeism, improve physical fitness and mental well-being and as a result can increase productivity.

The activities/key performance indicators necessary to promote this theme and support staff are:

1. Promoting and encouraging participation and support initiatives that enhance occupational health and well-being for staff
2. Implementing the measures outlined in the Health and Wellbeing for Staff Policy is in development and is part of the stage four HR policy review in February 2025.

#### **4.6 Making it Happen**

The main responsibility for the health and safety of staff and visitors rests with the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors. The day-to-day operational management of health and safety is delegated to Heads of Service, Managers, line managers and supervisors. Employees while at work must take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

The Health and Safety Team has a pivotal role to play in the development, monitoring and assurance of the implementation of the Health and Safety Strategy.



The day-to-day management of health and safety is the responsibility of line managers but the Health and Safety Team, in partnership with others, including our union colleagues, will work to enable and empower managers and others to actively manage health and safety with the same degree of expertise to the standards of other core Council activities.

The Health and Safety Team will work closely with all directorates and services, Trade Unions and other stakeholders to promote ownership of health and safety across the Council and will develop the corporate health and safety action plan supporting this strategy.

During the first year of the plan (2024/27) we will focus on embedding and targeting risk, including:

1. Introduction of the new Google safety management system
2. Start of the agreed health & safety inspection programme
3. Introduction of health & safety training programme
4. Ensuring all key activities have suitable and sufficient risk assessments in place.

For this strategy to be effective senior management has roles and responsibilities:

Role	Responsibility
Chief Executive & Strategic Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Owner of health and safety strategy.</li> <li>● Review progress against the plan</li> <li>● Ensure sufficient resources are allocated to achieve objectives</li> </ul>
Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure effective implementation of strategy within their sphere of influence</li> <li>● Report service/directorate progress against the plan</li> </ul>
Health & Safety Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor progress against the plan</li> <li>● Report to the Corporate Management Team and Corporate H&amp;S Committee</li> </ul>

## 5.0 Reporting and Governance

Incorporating reporting and governance into a health and safety strategy is crucial for ensuring transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in managing workplace risks. This is the structure in place:

### Health and Safety Reporting

- Regular Reporting Mechanisms:
  - Established clear procedures for reporting health and safety incidents, near misses, hazards, and concerns.
  - Defined frequency and format of reporting, so that it aligns with regulatory requirements and organisational needs.
  - Encouraging a culture of reporting by promoting open communication, non-punitive reporting systems, and recognition of proactive reporting behaviour.
- Incident Investigation and Analysis:
  - Outline procedures for investigating and analysing health and safety incidents to identify root causes and contributing factors.
  - Defined roles and responsibilities for conducting investigations, gathering evidence, and documenting findings.
  - Emphasis is placed on the importance of learning from incidents to prevent recurrence and improve health and safety practices.

- Performance Metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):
  - Defined relevant KPIs and performance metrics to measure health and safety performance effectively.
  - Included are leading indicators (e.g., safety observations, near-miss reporting, training participation) and lagging indicators (e.g., injury rates, lost time incidents) to provide a comprehensive view of performance.
  - Regular monitoring and reviewing of performance against targets, identifying trends, areas for improvement, and opportunities for intervention.

### **Governance Structure:**

- Leadership and Accountability:
  - Clear roles and responsibilities for senior leadership, managers, supervisors, and employees in driving health and safety performance.
  - Emphasise on the accountability of line managers for implementing and enforcing health and safety policies and procedures within their areas of responsibility.
  - Ensuring that health and safety responsibilities are integrated into job descriptions, performance evaluations, and management objectives.
- Health and Safety Committees:
  - Established formal health and safety committees and local forums that facilitate consultation, collaboration, and decision-making on health and safety matters.
  - Established composition, mandate, and meeting frequency of these committees, ensuring representation from management, employees, and relevant stakeholders.
  - These committees are chaired by Directors, and Heads of Service to review health and safety performance, discuss emerging risks, and recommend actions for improvement.
- Risk Management Oversight:
  - A Risk Management System is in place to identify, assess, prioritise, and control health and safety risks across the organisation.
  - A defined governance structure for overseeing risk management activities, including the CHSC, roles of risk owners, risk champions, and risk management coordinators.
  - The risk management processes are integrated into strategic planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes at all levels of the organisation.

By integrating reporting mechanisms and governance structures into this health and safety strategy, the organisation can effectively manage risks, drive continuous improvement, and foster a culture of safety throughout the workplace.

## 6.0 Health and Safety KPIs

KPI Category	KPI	Description	Target	Frequency
<b>Leading Indicators</b>	Number of Safety Inspections	The number of regular safety inspections conducted.	Minimum Inspections 12 per year Actions Follow up 12 per year	Annually, with 3 monthly Actions follow up
	Training Completion Rates	Percentage of employees who have completed mandatory training.	100%	Quarterly
	Near-Miss Reporting	The number of near-miss incidents reported and investigated.	Increase reporting by 10%	Quarterly
	Risk Assessments Conducted	Number of comprehensive risk assessments completed and in date.	100% completion of scheduled assessments	Quarterly
	<b>Lagging Indicators</b>	Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR)	Number of lost time injuries per million hours worked.	Less than 2
<b>Compliance Indicators</b>	Compliance with Regulatory Requirements	Number of non-compliance incidents with health and safety regulations.	Zero non-compliance	Quarterly
	Completion of Corrective Actions	Percentage of corrective actions completed on time after an incident or audit.	100%	Quarterly
<b>Behavioural Indicators</b>	Safety Culture Surveys	Results from surveys assessing the safety culture and employee perceptions of safety.	Improvement in survey scores	Annually

## 7.0 Action Plan

To achieve the objectives of the Strategy a Health & Safety Action Plan has been developed.

7.1 Theme 1: Leadership & Management			
Objective	Action	Success Indicator	Owner
7.1.1 Maintaining and strengthening an effective communication system through the Council's management structure	Record of corporate and directorate health and safety meetings, and publication of health and safety briefings. The number of Toolbox talks delivered at service levels. <i>(A toolbox talk, is a short periodical consultation at work intended to make everybody aware of the different safety aspects and dangers at the work site, The purpose of a toolbox talk is to increase safety in the workplace).</i>	Meetings are being held and accurate minutes are kept and published. Toolbox talks are recorded and uptake is reported through the Google Management system.	Heads of Service/H&S Team
7.1.2 Demonstrating that Health and Safety management is integrated into all business decisions.	Inclusion of health and safety considerations as part of the decision-making process	Documented evidence that health and safety is being considered e.g. where there is a planned reduction in staff have H&S considerations been considered and risks identified.	Heads of Service
7.1.3 Maintaining regular reviews of health and safety performance.	Health and safety inspection programme in place including monitoring of service areas.	Successful completion of inspections programme. One inspection per year and publication of all completed health and safety management inspection findings. Three monthly follow ups on action plans progress.	H&S Team
7.1.4 Ensuring appropriate resources are provided for the effective management of health and safety.	Inclusion of appropriate health and safety considerations as part of the budget-setting process.	Evidence of resource allocation for compliance with health and safety legislation.	Head of Finance, Procurement & Risk

7.1.5 Ensuring all staff receive appropriate Health and Safety induction and training.	All new staff complete the health and safety induction programme.	Records of completed training are up to date and reported to management.	HR, Managers/Line Managers. Comms Project H&S Team Monitor
7.1.6 Ensuring strategic health and safety aims are communicated and embedded throughout the Council.	Strategy communicated across the Council on approval.	The strategy is communicated to all staff via health and safety briefings. Engage with staff during premises and site visits to ensure cascaded, understood and is being effectively implemented.	Heads of Service Line Managers/H&S Team
7.1.7 Develop a communications plan in conjunction with the Communications Team to ensure ongoing delivery of key health and safety messages	Number of the Comms campaigns successfully delivered	Health and Safety messages are communicated to all levels of the organisation using the most effective channels	Comms Team / H&S Team
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Theme 2: Competence</b>		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Success Indicator</b>	<b>Owner</b>
7.2.1 Ensuring we have competent staff who ensure all policies and procedures are up to date and reflect best practices.	Development of health and safety competency matrix for each job role.	Progressive implementation of competency matrix. Up-to-date policies, procedures and risk assessments are in place.	Heads of Service Support H&S Team
7.2.2 Making sure internal policies, procedures, guidance and advice are understood and easily accessible to staff and, where applicable, visitors and contractors.	Development of learning and development tools and information sources suited to the needs of all levels of staff within the Council.	Increased understanding and widespread use of the learning and information resources provided.  Regular reporting of toolbox talks and uptake of mandatory core H&S training to CMT.	Line Managers  Support-H&S Team
7.2.3 Ensuring staff are aware of how they can access competent and professional advice.	Level of contact established between staff and the Health and Safety Team.	Increased contact with the Health and Safety Team from staff at all levels within the Council. Promotional Campaign of who the	H&S Team

		H&S Team are, their role and how they can be contacted.	
7.2.4 Using appropriate risk management/risk assessment techniques across all service areas.	Level of use of the health and safety risk management tools and forms provided by the Health & Safety Team	Increase in the number of appropriate forms used and submitted to the H&S Team. Increased use of technological solutions.	Heads of Service
7.2.5 Ensuring comprehensive training programs and opportunities are available to staff to ensure they develop the right skills and knowledge.	The number of appropriate Health & Safety courses available to staff.	Increased take-up of health and safety training opportunities in all formats i.e. e-learning, classroom-based learning and blended learning formats.	Line Managers Support-H&S Team
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Theme 3: Risk Management</b>		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Success Indicator</b>	<b>Owner</b>
7.3.1 Systematically identifying all hazards across the Council.	A risk assessment programme on Google Docs needs to be developed and in place, to replace the current H&S management system system	The year-on-year increase in the number of risk assessments documented with their findings implemented appropriately on the Google platform.	Line Managers
7.3.2 Ensuring that health and safety is always an integral part of the planning and review processes at the Council and department/service area levels.	Documented evidence of the inclusion of relevant health and safety matters e.g. minutes, Union meetings, Management meetings, CMT H&S, Operational H&S, and Budget discussions	Evidence of the positive impact of health and safety considerations has been made during the processes	CMT  H&S Team Quarterly Report
7.3.3 Ensuring the effective implementation of the Council's fire safety management standards in all premises	Implementation of actions from fire risk assessment programme for all Council-owned buildings.	Fire risk assessment findings/recommendations effectively implemented. Escalation process in place for any continued non-compliance	Premises Duty Holders / Property Teams

7.3.4 Developing a suite of leading health and safety performance indicators.	A suite of indicators is to be developed for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incident/Near Miss Reporting Rates</li> <li>● Compliance and Regulatory KPIs</li> <li>● Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment</li> <li>● Safety Inspections and Audits</li> <li>● Training and Competency</li> <li>● Emergency Preparedness</li> <li>● Equipment and Machinery Safety</li> <li>● Contractor Safety</li> </ul>	Staged introduction of indicators based on service area maturity levels.	Heads of Service Support-H&S Team
7.3.5 Ensuring a robust Health and Safety and compliance Inspection programme is in place.	Areas inspected according to the inspection programme plan agreed by the Corporate H&S Committee and CMT.	Year-on-year improvement in inspection outcomes measured with the inspection findings implemented by the agreed time scale.	Line Managers Support-H&S Team
7.3.6 Improving reporting, recording and investigation of accidents, incidents and near misses.	All incidents are reported timeously and investigated.	Levels of reporting & investigation increased. No adverse outcomes from enforcement agency follow-up.	Heads of Service Support-H&S Team
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Theme 4: Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Success indicator</b>	<b>Owner</b>
7.4.1 Promoting and encouraging participation and support initiatives that enhance occupational health and well-being for staff.	Greater awareness amongst staff of occupational health and wellbeing issues.	Introduce an Employee Health & Wellbeing Policy.  Reduction in reporting of occupational health and wellbeing issues. Increased uptake in wellbeing initiatives.	HR/Heads of Service Support from Policy Manager
7.4.2 Implementing the measures outlined in the Health and Wellbeing for Staff Policy.	Increased competence in supporting mental ill-health-related issues	Increase in managers and staff trained to support mental ill-health.	H&S Team



<b>7.5 Theme 5: Collaborative and Partnership Working</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Success indicator</b>	<b>Owner</b>
7.5.1 Developing initiatives to encourage collaborative/ partnership working with key stakeholders, partners and union colleagues.	Progress is to be made with joint working between employee representatives, management and the Health and Safety team.	Effective joint inspections, task-based risk assessments and health and safety initiatives. Number and frequency to be agreed.	Unions/H&S Team
7.5.2 Ensuring appropriate and effective communication channels exist for the dissemination of all health and safety information.	Increased take-up of available health and safety resources.	Greater health and safety awareness throughout the workforce, evidenced through health and safety management inspections, risk assessment reviews and training outcomes. Improved performance in Behavioural Safety Culture.	Comms Team/H&S Team
7.5.3 Developing occupational health and safety system following HSE H&S management system (HSG65) principles.	Quarterly update reports and annual meetings with managers.	Increased awareness and ownership of the safety system, evidenced through health and safety management inspections, risk assessment reviews etc.	H&S Team/Strategic Directors/Heads of Service
7.5.4 Identify, develop, implement and embed technological solutions to improve compliance monitoring and reporting arrangements	Solutions reduce the burden of compliance monitoring.	Evidence of improved compliance is recorded through systems.	H&S Team
7.5.5 Maintaining effective and efficient management and control of contractors within our premises and on our work sites.	All contractors engaged by the Council have been subject to a health and safety management system/competency assessment evaluation.	All contractor HS documentation was evaluated before the commencement of work and the results were published. Effective cooperation and consultation are maintained with contractors regarding Council expectations.	Heads of Service  H&S Team Monitoring