SANDOWN TOWN COUNCIL

Health and Safety Policy

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1. PURPOSE

1.1 Sandown Town Council takes health and safety issues seriously and is committed to protecting the health and safety of its staff and all those affected by its activities and attending its premised. This policy is intended to help the Council achieve this by clarifying who is responsible for health and safety matters and what their responsibilities are.

1.2 This is a statement of policy only and does not form part of your contract of employment. This policy may be amended, by the Council, at any time at its absolute discretion. The Council will review this policy at regular intervals to ensure it is achieving its aims effectively.

2. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY?

2.1 Achieving a healthy and safe workplace is a collective task shared between the Council and staff. This policy and the rules contained in it apply to all staff of the Council, irrespective of seniority, tenure, and working hours. It includes all employees and officers, consultants and contractors, casual agency staff, trainees, homeworkers, fixed-term staff and any volunteers. Specific responsibilities of staff are set out below in the section headed "Responsibilities of all staff" below.

3. COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Council is responsible for:

a. Taking reasonable steps to safeguard the health and safety of staff, people affected by the Council's business activities, and people visiting its premises.

b. Identifying health and safety risks and finding ways to manage or overcome them.

c. Providing a safe and healthy place of work and safe entry and exit arrangements, including during an emergency situation.

d. Providing and maintaining safe working areas, equipment, and systems and, where necessary, appropriate protective clothing.

e. Providing safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of equipment and substances.

f. Providing adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all staff to do their work safely, to avoid hazards and to contribute positively to their own health and safety at work.

g. Ensuring any health and safety representatives receive appropriate training to carry out their functions effectively.

h. Providing a health and safety induction and safety training appropriate to your role.

i. Promoting effective communication and consultation between the Council and staff concerning health and safety matters.

j. If an epidemic or pandemic alert is issued, providing instructions, arrangements, and advice to staff as to the organisation of business operations and steps to be taken to minimise the risk of infection.

k. Regularly monitoring and reviewing the management of health and safety at work, making necessary changes, and bringing those to the attention of all staff.

3.2 The Council will give you the opportunity to ask questions and advise who best to contact regarding health and safety or if you are unsure about how to safely carry out your work.

3.3 Overall responsibility for health and safety lies with the Council. They have appointed the Clerk as the Health and Safety Officer with day-to-day responsibility for health and safety matters.

3.4 Any concerns about health and safety matters should be communicated to the Health and Safety Officer.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

General Staff Responsibilities

4.1 All staff must

a. Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions.

b. Co-operate with the Health and Safety Officer and the Council generally to enable compliance with health and safety duties and requirements.

c. Comply with any health and safety instructions and rules, including instructions for safe use of equipment.

d. Keep health and safety issues in the front of their minds and take personal responsibility for health and safety implications of their own actions and omissions.

e. Keep the workplace tidy and hazard free.

f. Report all health and safety concerns to the Health and Safety Officer promptly, including any potential risks, hazards, however minor or trivial they may seem.

g. Co-operate in the Council's investigation of any incident or accident which either has led to injury or which, in the Council's opinion, could have led to injury.

Staff responsibilities relating to equipment.

4.2 All staff must:

a. Use equipment as directed, following any instructions given by representatives of management or contained in any written operating manual or instructions for use, and adhering to any relevant training.

b. Report any fault with, damage to, malfunctioning equipment, or concern about any equipment (including health and safety equipment) or its use to the Health and Safety Officer, who is responsible for ensuring the maintenance and safety equipment.

c. Ensure that health and safety equipment is not interfered with.

d. Not attempt to repair equipment unless authorised to do so.

Staff responsibilities relating to accidents and first aid.

4.3 All staff must:

a. Promptly report any accident at work, however trivial, involving personal injury, and on any of the Council's premises, to the Health and Safety Officer so details can be

recorded in the Accident Book. They must also co-operate with any associated investigation.

b. Familiarise themselves with the details of first aid facilities and trained first aiders, which are: The Clerk, The RFO and the Administrator.

c. If an accident occurs, seek help from a first aider.

d. The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for investigating any injuries or work-related illnesses, preparing, and keeping, accident records, and for submitting reports under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2023 (RIDDOR) where required.

Staff responsibilities relating to national health alerts, including the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

4.4 If an epidemic or pandemic alert is issued all staff must comply and co-operate with all instructions, arrangements and advice issued by the Council as to the organisation of business operations and steps to be taken by staff to minimise the risk of infections. Any questions should be referred to the Health and Safety Officer.

4.5 Given the outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19), it is important that all staff members follow guidelines set out in this policy to ensure maximum safety and to minimise the risk infections. We will review these guidelines regularly to ensure they are kept up-to date with Government guidance.

4.6 Please see the section headed "Staff returning to work - Coronavirus (Covid-19)" below for health and safety measures which specifically address the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Staff responsibilities relating to emergency evacuation and fire

4.7 All staff must:

a. Familiarise themselves with the instructions about what to do if there is a fire which are located on the notice board displayed in the Clerk's office.

b. Ensure they are aware of the location of fire extinguishers, fire exists and alternative ways of leaving the building in an emergency.

c. Comply with the instructions of the fire wardens if there is a fire, suspected fire or fire alarm (or a practice drill for any of these scenarios).

d. Co-operate in fire drills and take them seriously (ensuring that any visitors to the building do the same). Fire drills will be held at least once every 12 months.

e. Ensure that fire exits, fire notices or emergency exit signs are not obstructed or hidden at any time.

f. Notify the Clerk immediately of any circumstances (for example, impaired mobility) which might hinder or delay evacuation or fire. This will allow the Clerk to discuss a personal evacuation plan for you, which will be shared with fire wards and colleagues working near you.

4.8 On discovering a fire, all staff must:

a. Immediately trigger the nearest fire alarm and, if time permits, call the Clerk and notify them of the location of the fire.

b. Attempt to tackle the fire ONLY if they have been trained or otherwise feel competent to do so. Nominated members of staff will be trained in the use of fire extinguishers.

4.9 On hearing the fire alarm all staff must:

a. Remain calm and immediately evacuate the building, walking quickly without running, and following any instructions from the fire wardens.

b. Leave without stopping to collect any personal belongings.

c. Stay out of any lifts.

d. Remain out of the building until notified by a fire warden that is safe to re-enter.

4.10 The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that fire risk assessment taken place, that changes are made where required, and for making sure there are regular checks of fire extinguishers, fire alarms, escape routes, signage, and emergency lighting.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT, HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND MANUAL HANDLING

5.1 Risk assessments are essentially a careful examination of what in the workplace could cause harm to people. The Council will assess any risk and consider measures to best minimise any risks. The Council will carry out general workplace risk assessments when required or as reasonable requested by staff. Managers must ensure that any necessary risk assessments take place and the resulting recommendations are implemented. The Clerk is responsible for workplace risk assessments and any measures to control risks.

5.2 The use of hazardous substances will be avoided where possible and less hazardous alternatives will used where available. Training on the control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) will be provided where required.

5.3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is provided where risks cannot be otherwise effectively controlled.

5.4 Guidance on manual handling (for example, lifting and carrying heavy objects) can be obtained from the Health and Safety Officer and where necessary training will be provided by the Council, but the Council will try to minimise or avoid the need for manual handling where there is a risk of injury.

6. STAFF RETURNING TO WORK – CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

6.1 Although Government restrictions introduced in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have been lifted, the pandemic is ongoing and appropriate safety measures must be adhered to. Employees must adhere to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) mitigation provisions which are still relevant to our workplace. These include:

A household member has a positive test for Covid-19.

6.2 If a house hold member tests positive for Covid-19, the employee is asked to complete a Lateral Flow Tests and advise the Clerk of the result.

a. If the result is negative, a risk assessment will be taken to determine if it is safe/possible for the employee to attend the work place or work from home. The Clerk will advise the employee of the decision.

b. If the employee is attending the work place the employee is aske to complete a lateral flow test before doing so for the next five days.

An employee tests positive for Covid-19

6.3 If the employees tests positive for Covid-19 the employee should not attend the workplace for 5 days.

a. If they are well enough and their role enables them to, they may work from home but are not obligated to whilst unwell.

b. They should take a further lateral flow test after 5 days and the following day. They can return to the workplace if both tests are negative.

c. If the results are still positive the employee should not return to work until they have two consecutive negative tests.

Hygiene practices at work

6.4 Staff must follow all hygiene measures which we implement. When appropriate, these may include frequency of hand washing, wearing protective clothing, sanitising workstations and desks.

6.5 We will provide adequate handwashing facilities (or hand sanitiser where not possible) at entry/exit points and when appropriate we expect all staff to use these facilities frequently whenever entering and exiting the workplace.

6.6 If you suspect you have Coronavirus (COVID-19) you must take a lateral flow test and if positive work from home to protect vulnerable centre users and members of staff.

Mental health whilst working during Coronavirus (COVID-19)

6.7 We take the health of our staff seriously, including their mental well-being. Whether you are working remotely or returning to the workplace, we strongly encourage you to speak to your line manager, a colleague, or a member of the HR committee regarding any concerns or issues you have.

6.8 If you are working remotely from home or returning to the workplace, we encourage staff to:

a. Connect with their fellow colleagues for informal chats or video calls.

b. Get regular exercise and sunlight outdoors.

c. Take regular breaks away from their workstation.

d. Ensure to drink sufficient water and eat properly.

7. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY RULES

7.1 Any breach of health and safety rules or failure to comply with this policy will be taken very seriously and is likely to result in disciplinary action against the offender, in accordance with the Council's disciplinary policy, up to and including immediate dismissal.