

Health and Safety Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Wrekin Housing Group (the 'Group') is a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority under the Co-operative & Community Benefit Society Act 2014. The Group's main business is the provision of social housing, care and support, adding social value to the lives of the people who receive our services and live in our communities.
- 1.2 The Wrekin Housing Group has three subsidiaries – Choices Housing Association (Choices HA), our care provider; Old Park Services – a trading subsidiary; and Strata Housing Services – a development subsidiary.
- 1.3 The Group operates within Shropshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Cheshire and the West Midlands. It has a growing portfolio of over 12,500 properties. These buildings range from offices, commercial, general domestic housing, specialist housing (including extra care), care homes, low rise and high-rise blocks of flats.
- 1.4 The Group is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). Choices HA is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The Executive Management Group (EMG) and Group Board set and oversee the corporate strategy, including the approval of all compliance policy principles.
- 1.5 This policy sets out the management arrangements and responsibilities to deliver on our health and safety commitments, under the current Group structure.

2.0 Policy Statement

- 2.1 The Group attaches great importance to the health and safety of its employees, tenants, service users, contractors, volunteers and visitors. Health and safety is the responsibility of all individuals.
- 2.2 It is the policy of the Group to provide safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and to enlist the active support of employees in fulfilling their own health and safety responsibilities in order to achieve a continuous improvement to health and safety performance.
- 2.3 The objectives of the policy are:
- To promote standards of health, safety and welfare that complies with the provision and requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other statutory provisions, ACOP's (approved codes of practice) and guidance. With regard to our registered care activities, the policy seeks to ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014;

- To provide and maintain safe and healthy workplaces and working environments, the safe transportation and handling of articles and substances, safe systems and methods of work and to protect employees, and others, including tenants, service users and members of the public, in so far as they come into contact with foreseeable hazards;
- To specify mandatory health and safety training types, including initial induction, refresher courses, and role-specific training. Competence will be assessed through regular evaluations and practical assessments.
- To ensure that all employees, especially those in roles where technical and safety competency is critical, hold the necessary qualifications and in-date certifications, with monitoring in place to ensure compliance.
- To ensure employees only perform safety-critical and technical tasks for which they are competent and authorised.
- To provide all employees with the information, instruction, findings from incident investigations, training and supervision that they need to work safely and efficiently and to develop safety awareness amongst employees;
- To monitor key metrics such as incident rates, training completion, and compliance audit results, and report the performance, findings and corrective actions to senior management, and;
To maintain a constant and continuing interest in health and safety matters applicable to the Group activities, involve and consult with employees on relevant matters and achieve continuous improvement by monitoring incident trends and engaging employees in safety discussions and feedback.

2.4 The statements above will be combined into a strapline that will underpin all of our future Health and Safety communications to help embed Health and Safety awareness into the business. This will be *“the right people, with the right equipment, following the right procedures”*.

2.5 The Group Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed and revised as often as is necessary in light of changing circumstances and statutory requirements, as well as annually to promote our ongoing commitment to the health and safety of our employees and third parties.



Wayne Gethings
Group Chief Executive
September 2024

3.0 Policy Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all employees of The Wrekin Housing Group, contractors, agency staff and volunteers.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Any employee, including Executive Directors, Senior Managers, Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders, may be found criminally liable if he/she has not fulfilled their duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 or relevant legislative requirements.

4.2 The **Group Board** and **Group Chief Executive** have overall responsibility for the Health and Safety policy and for ensuring that adequate funds and resources are available to meet our health and safety obligations. The Group Board and Group Chief Executive will ensure that the effectiveness of the policy is continually reviewed.

4.3 The **Executive Directors** and **Senior Managers** have overall responsibility for giving effect to health and safety and will:

- Ensure that the policy on health and safety (H&S) is implemented;
- Ensure that a positive culture surrounds the management of, and compliance with, health and safety and staff welfare, by delivering communications to employees that positively promotes safety in the workplace and wellbeing of employees;
- Be responsible for the effective management, monitoring and progression of health and safety issues within their directorate or service area;
- Ensure that effective management systems are in place to achieve high standards of health and safety;
- Ensure H&S is fully considered during times of acute organisational stress (as experienced with the recent COVID pandemic), and risk assessment and method statements are reviewed as required as a response to dynamic service changes;
- Attend and take part in the relevant H&S Committee or Group in their directorate or service area, to develop, monitor and implement the H&S improvement plans for the organisation;
- In addition, for Care & Support the 'nominated individual' under the Care Act, is responsible for ensuring under regulation 12 and 13 of the HSCA 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regs 2014 for the provision of safe care and treatment and safeguarding service user from abuse and improper treatment – sections 13[1] to 13[4].

4.4 **The Executive Director of Operational Services** is the Designated Health and Safety Lead in accordance with The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, Section 10. This identifies the need for a registered provider to designate an individual to carry out the functions in section 126B [1] to 126B [5] and the duties of the registered provider described under section 126C [1] & 126C [2].

4.5 The **Head of Property** will:

- Be responsible for the provision of an effective health and safety service to the business, including staff and service users;
- Ensure adequate resource is available to deliver the health and safety service and annual health and safety plan;
- Be responsible for the appointment of a suitably qualified Health and Safety professional to act as the “competent person” in health and safety matters;
- Lead and develop the health and safety service, ensuring continuous professional development; and
- Ensure an adequate framework exists for employee consultation and involvement in health and safety matters, liaising with trade union representatives.

4.6 The **Health and Safety Partner (Competent Person)** will:

- Be responsible to the Head of Property for continually monitoring and improving the Groups health and safety standards;
- Implement projects and actions in accordance with the Health and Safety plan, co-designed with operational managers;
- Ensure that the Group Health and Safety policies are in line with legislative requirements and updated when necessary;
- Maintain a system for the reporting of near-misses and accidents, produce associated statistics and arrange a common procedure for the reporting and investigation of incidents;
- Act as the recipient of, and be responsible for, the distribution of all documentation and guidance from the members of the team on health and safety related matters;
- Liaise with and advise the Group Board, Directors, Senior Managers, Team Leaders and others on all aspects of health and safety legislation and precautions necessary to ensure good safety practice;
- Liaise with and advise People Services on the key H&S training needs of the organisation and the frequency required to demonstrate continued competence and professional development related to changes in legislation and good practice;
- Give appropriate input to the design and delivery of health and safety training courses arranged; and
- Liaise with the Health and Safety Executive and other external bodies with a direct interest in the health and safety of the Group's employees;
- Liaise as necessary with -and maintain a register of Safety Representatives- all members of the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee.

4.7 Senior Managers will:

- Have a responsibility for the management and monitoring of the Health and Safety policy for ensuring its effectiveness for the area they Lead or manage;
- Liaise and ensure full co-operation not only with, but also between, managers and supervisors to ensure that they comply with their responsibilities, company policies and procedures;
- Will ensure full co-operation with appointed safety representatives and other personnel appointed in matters relating to health and safety whilst maintaining and encouraging a positive attitude towards health and safety; and
- Adopt and maintain the health and safety culture within the organisation.

4.8 **Managers** are directly responsible for ensuring that rules, regulations, procedures and codes of practice relating to the health and safety of employees, and others affected by the work of their section, are correctly interpreted and implemented in all activities within their area of responsibility.

4.9 The Manager must therefore:

- Be responsible for developing, where appropriate, section specific policies and procedures to complement the Group's Health and Safety policy in order to adequately control known health and safety risks. Guidance will be sought from the Health and Safety Team where appropriate;
- Ensure that all employees are aware of the Health and Safety policy when they start at the Group and periodically via team briefings/meetings. They must subsequently ensure that health and safety is a standing item on meeting agendas and that this is covered effectively;
- Understand and ensure the implementation the Group Safety policy rules and statutory requirements applicable to all operations under their control;
- In order to comply with the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, they must ensure that for their section there is adequate provision for:
 - Safe articles, protective clothing, plant tools, equipment and systems of work.
 - Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transportation of substances and materials.
 - Premises used by employees and members of the public being safe and not presenting a hazard to the users or service users.
 - Sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision, to enable all employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work.
 - A safe access and exit to and from the place of work.
 - Adequate health and welfare facilities.
 - A healthy working environment.
- Represent and advise the appropriate Executive Director and Senior Managers as requested on all matters of health and safety;

- By undertaking risk assessments for all activities carried out by employees under their control, ensure that all risks to the health and safety of employees, service users, tenants and members of the public which may arise from the work of the section are identified and adequately controlled by whatever means identified as appropriate by the risk assessment;
- Ensure that all health and safety records, certificates, licenses, and reports pertaining to their area of responsibility (employee and equipment) are satisfactory and up to date;
- For those Accountable Persons responsible for safety-critical and technical tasks, ensure that they are only carried out by persons authorised to perform the duties and establish suitable monitoring to maintain compliance with competency requirements.
- Ensure that all appropriate remedial action is taken in respect of all reported near-misses, defects and complaints relating to health and safety;
- Keep up to date with, and implement where applicable, any new health and safety measures and circulate any relevant information to each level of employee;
- Ensure full co-operation with the appointed safety representatives and other personnel appointed in matters relating to health and safety;
- Require and encourage a positive attitude towards health and safety within their area of responsibility:
 - Ensuring there is a positive culture of actively reporting near-misses and accidents immediately.
 - ensuring that there is a regular formal means to pass health and safety information to employees and also allowing employees to raise health and safety matters with their manager. Regular feedback on matters raised must also be provided;
- Take whatever disciplinary action is necessary against any employee not carrying out their responsibilities under health and safety legislation or the Health and Safety policy; and
- Ensure that all employees are aware of first aid arrangements.

4.10 **Other Supervisory Staff** will:

- Ensure that all employees are aware of this policy;
- Understand and ensure the implementation of the Group Safety policy rules and statutory requirements applicable to all operations under their control;
- In order to comply with the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, ensure that for their section, there is adequate provision for:
 - Safe articles, protective clothing, plant tools, equipment and systems of work.
 - Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transportation of substances and materials.
 - Safe premises used by employees and members of the public that do not present a hazard to the users or service users.

- Sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work.
 - A safe access and exit to and from the place of work.
 - Adequate health and welfare facilities.
 - A healthy working environment.
- By undertaking risk assessments for all activities carried out by employees under their control, ensure that all risks to health and safety of employees, service users and members of the public which may arise from the work of the section are identified and adequately controlled by whatever means identified as appropriate by the risk assessment;
 - Ensure that all appropriate remedial action is taken in respect of all reported defects and complaints relating to health and safety;
 - Ensure that all near-misses and accidents are reported immediately to the Health and Safety Team.
 - Ensure full co-operation with the appointed safety representatives and other personnel appointed in matters relating to health and safety, seeking specialist advice from the Health and Safety Team as required;
 - Require and encourage a positive attitude towards health and safety within their own area of responsibility;
 - Ensure that employees are only instructed to carry out tasks for which they are competent (and where applicable authorised) to do so; and
 - Ensure that all employees are aware of first-aid arrangements

4.11 **Statutory Safety Representatives** are statutory representatives of employees. They are recognised by the Group to keep under review measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of employees and to consult with management on the development of the Health and Safety policy.

4.12 In particular, Statutory Safety Representatives may:

- Investigate hazards, dangerous occurrences and accidents occurring in the workplace;
- Make representation on matters affecting the health, safety and welfare of employees;
- Make workplace inspections, as they consider necessary;
- Consult with Health and Safety Executive inspectors;
- Be given time off work, with pay, in order to pursue their function or undertake training necessary to effectively fulfil their role.

4.13 All **Fire Marshals** located throughout our office locations and schemes have a specific duty to:

- Ensure the safe evacuation of the building(s) in the event of an emergency procedure;

- Report any malfunctions with an actual evacuation procedure to the Health & Safety Team to ensure that the appropriate remedial measures can be implemented. This also includes the 6 monthly fire drills.

4.14 **First Aiders** are to administer first aid to injured persons within the workplace. The Learning and Development Team will ensure that first aiders are enrolled on the required course and on any refresher, training required for their role.

4.15 All **Employees** have an equal responsibility for ensuring and maintaining health and safety in the workplace. All employees **MUST**:

- Take personal responsibility for ensuring they understand the contents of the Health and Safety policy -a copy of which is readily available on the Group SharePoint- and also be aware of health and safety arrangements for their particular job and place of work;
- Use correct and safe tools and equipment for their job, use all safety equipment \ protective clothing provided and adopt a safe method of working at all times;
- Keep tools, equipment, plant, machinery and protective equipment in good condition to prevent injury to themselves or others;
- Report any hazards, near-misses or accidents immediately to their manager/supervisor, or the Health and Safety Team;
- Develop a personal concern for safety, both for themselves and for others around them, particularly for trainees and young persons;
- Suggest ways of eliminating hazards by reporting these to their immediate manager, supervisor, or the Health and Safety Team;
- Co-operate with the Group Health and Safety Team and immediate manager or supervisor on matters relating to health and safety;
- Set a personal example and ensure safe working practices are observed at all times; and
- Be aware of, and carry out, the requirements of health and safety legislation and the safety instructions issued to them.
- Only undertake tasks within their roles and responsibilities for which they are qualified and competent to do so. Employees must not perform tasks requiring specific safety competencies unless unauthorised to do so. Non-compliance will result in disciplinary action.

5.0 Health and Safety Committees and Working Groups

5.1 These groups are split across the housing and care side of the business as follows:

- Health, Safety and Welfare Committee (Group Wide); to monitor leading and lagging indicators on safety and health and raise any concerns.
- Health and Safety in Care Group (Care Services): to ensure lessons are learnt from lagging indicators and monitor CQC and safeguarding compliance.

5.2 Each group will have its own Terms of Reference. In general, the groups will oversee and monitor a specific area of the business to ensure that the Group is following its regulatory duties, has effective control measures, safe systems of work and measures and reports on health and safety related matters.

6.0 Health and Safety Arrangements

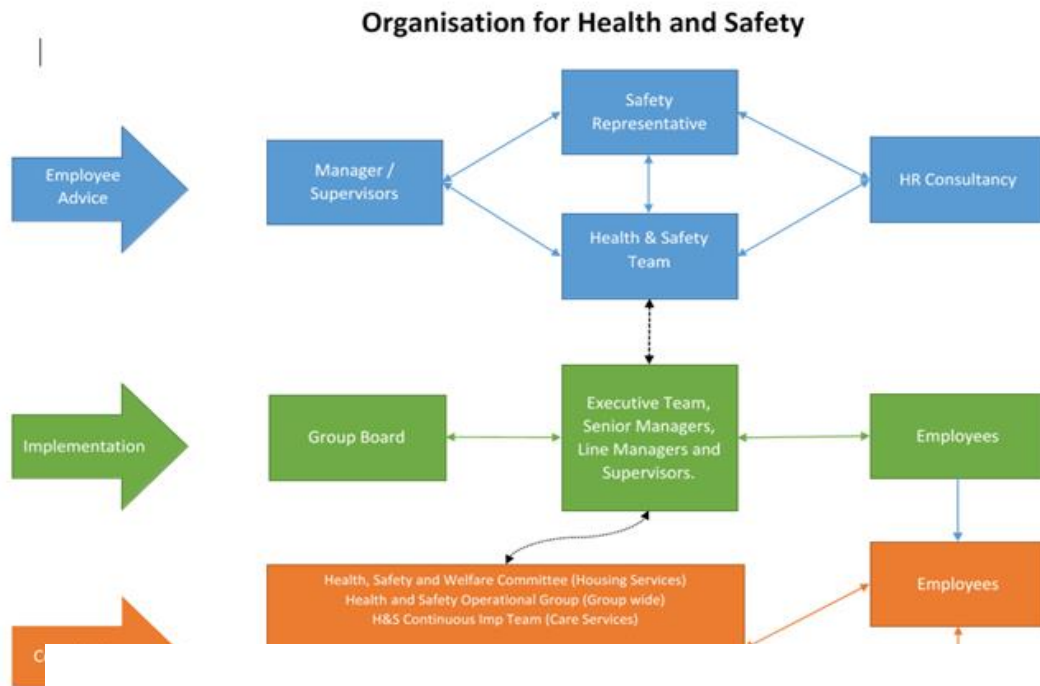
6.1 This overarching Health and Safety policy forms the initial part of the wider and more specific suite of health and safety policies.

6.2 These corporate arrangements will be supplemented by additional corporate health and safety policies which detail further specific legal and Group requirements on particular health and safety issues. For example, the use of display screen equipment, control and management of contractors, personal safety, control of asbestos, manual handling, hand-arm vibration, lone working and property compliance. All Health and Safety Policies and Procedures can be found on Sharepoint - [Wrekin Policies & Procedures - Policies and Procedures - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

6.3 All contractors are subject to the requirements included in the Group's Management of Contractors procedure.

6.4 It will be necessary for each manager to ensure that local policies are implemented to enable these corporate requirements to be put into practice in all areas of work for which that manager is responsible.

The attached flow charts demonstrate the organisation for health and safety and the policy structure.



The Wrekin <u>Housing Group</u>	Policy Control Sheet Health and Safety Policy Policy reference number – 2024/022
Policy Author	Libby O'Neill Health and Safety Partner
Direct Lead	David Hall Head of Property
Version	V4.0 - September 2024
Target audience	All Wrekin Housing Group employees
Consultation	Senior Managers Trade Unions Executive Management Group
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	No individuals or groups of people are disadvantaged by the adoption of this policy
Date of Data Privacy Impact Assessment	No personal data is processed as a result of the adoption of this policy
Approving Body	The Wrekin Housing Group Board
Date of final approval	25 th September 2024
Implementation date	September 2024
Monitoring arrangements	Monthly – Executive Management Group (EMG) Monthly – Health and Safety Operational Group Quarterly - Health, Safety and Welfare Committee Quarterly – Continuous Care Improvement Group Quarterly - Audit and Assurance Quarterly - Group Board
Reporting	Monthly – Executive Management Group (EMG) Quarterly - Health, Safety and Welfare Committee Quarterly - Audit and Assurance Quarterly - Group Board
Review date	June 2025
Expiry date	September 2025
Review cycle	Annual
Policy category	Health and Safety
Associated policies and procedures	All Group wide health and safety policies operate from this policy Wrekin Policies & Procedures - Policies and Procedures - All Documents (sharepoint.com)
Policy location	SharePoint The Wrekin Housing Group website

Summary of changes table

Revision history			
Author	Summary of changes	Version	Authorised by & date
Libby O'Neill	Reviewed in line with review date	V3.0 – September 2023	The Wrekin Housing Group Board – September 2023
P Lewis	Reviewed in line with review date H&S responsibilities of Executive Director of Operational Services Location of H&S policies and procedures added	V4.0 – September 2024	The Wrekin Housing Group Board – 25 th September 2024