

Item 6 Appendix E

DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Health and Safety Policy

The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (DWFRA) is the combined fire and rescue authority for its area, as defined within sections 1 and 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This document is the Health and Safety policy statement for the Authority. It will be overseen by the Chief Fire Officer. It is underpinned by a set of procedures.

The Authority is the corporate body upon which the duties of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974 are placed and recognises and accepts its responsibilities as an employer to:

- Provide for the health, safety, and welfare of all staff and those who may be affected by what we do.
- Establish clear direction for the organisation through this policy and the implementation of effective procedures which aim to minimise injuries and ill health; protect the environment and reduce unnecessary losses and liabilities.

The Authority is committed to the continuous improvement of the occupational health, safety, and welfare of our staff and those we come into contact with. The management of health, safety and welfare is an integral part of our business processes. This ensures that it is given the highest priority across the organisation. We recognise that successful management in this area also results in greater value for money and the efficient delivery of services to our communities.

The Authority is committed to working in partnership to make Dorset and Wiltshire safer. This partnership and delivery of safety starts with all staff, regardless of role. We are fully committed to our staff and will make sure they are competent and given the highest possible level of protection and personal safety. All staff must take care of their own and others health and safety at work and recognise the important part they play in implementing this policy and its underpinning procedures effectively.

Health and safety is an integral part of all our daily work. Our safety philosophy focuses on the way we do things, the sum of the values, attitudes, and behaviours of all our staff. As a result, health and safety is the concern, responsibility, and right of every member of the organisation. The Authority is committed to the appropriate application of safe working practices and procedures to meet its responsibilities.

Within an operational environment, there is a balance between ensuring firefighter safety and carrying out the role of a Fire and Rescue Service. It is the Authority's policy to adopt the Firefighter Safety Maxim to control health and safety risks to our firefighters:

- "At every incident the greater the potential benefit of fire and rescue actions, the greater the risk that is accepted by commanders and firefighters.
- Activities that present a high risk to safety are limited to those that have the potential to save life or to prevent rapid and significant escalation of the incident."

It is the Authority's policy to adopt the national guidance on operational discretion. Most situations that incident commanders are faced with are not unique and are foreseeable; however, incident commanders may occasionally be presented with a situation that is extremely unusual and not reasonably foreseeable. In these circumstances they may have to make decisions using their professional judgement.

Operational discretion relates to rare or exceptional circumstances where strictly following an operational procedure would be a barrier to resolving an incident, or where there is no procedure that adequately deals with the incident.

Outcomes which would justify applying operational discretion include:

- Saving human life.
- Taking decisive action to prevent an incident escalating.
- Where taking no action at all may put themselves or others in danger.

The overarching principle should be that in the opinion of the incident commander the benefit of taking unusual, unorthodox or innovative action justifies the risk.

Why is this policy needed?

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of our staff.
- Ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of others who may be affected by our activities.
- Satisfy the requirements of all relevant legislation and regulations.

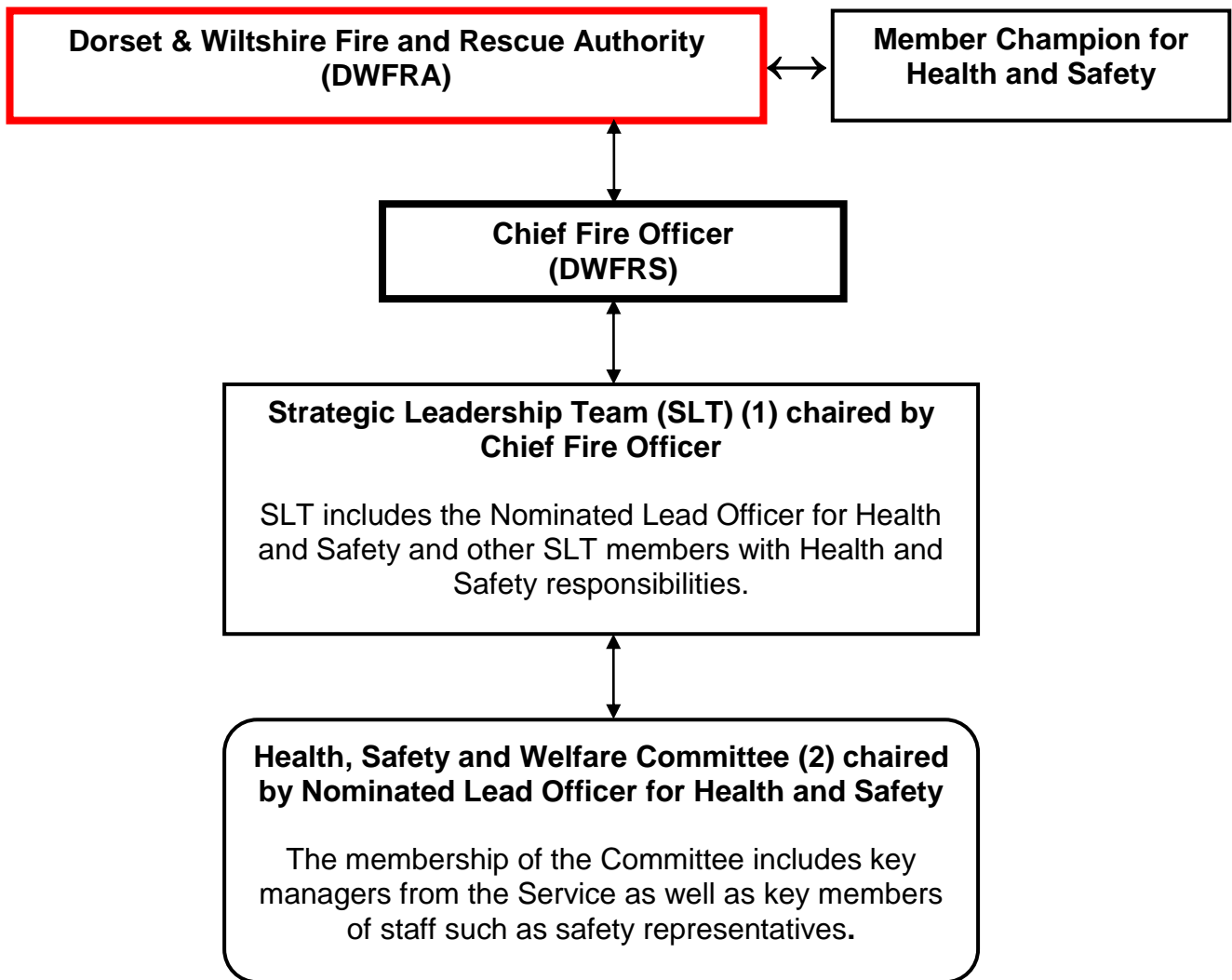
How we will meet the above requirements?

The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively. Through the Chief Fire Officer, the Authority will make sure there are arrangements in place for effective policy development, organisation, planning, monitoring, performance management, audit, and review of our health and safety practices in order to maintain our compliance with relevant Statutes, Regulations, and Codes of Practice.

The Chief Fire Officer is accountable to the Authority and chairs the Service's Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Chief Fire Officer will appoint a member of SLT to be the nominated lead officer for health and safety. The nominated lead officer for health and safety will chair the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee and will report back in to SLT.

These strategic arrangements are outlined in figure 1. Further responsibilities will be delegated and allocated to staff in support of these strategic arrangements. Responsibilities will only be given to staff who are competent to carry them out and have received adequate training and instructions regarding their duties.

Figure 1: Health and Safety Arrangements – Organisational Arrangements



(1) Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) – SLT acts as the advisory body on matters relating to health, safety, and welfare within the Service. Where necessary, they will make recommendations on health, safety, and welfare matters to the Chief Fire Officer and give direction to the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee.

(2) Health Safety and Welfare Committee – This committee promotes co-operation between employers and staff in developing, promoting and implementing measures to make sure the health, safety, and welfare at work of all staff and those who may be affected by our activities. We acknowledge the importance of staff involvement in health, safety, and welfare matters and the positive contribution made by Safety Representatives. It is our intention to provide a reasonable level of facilities and assistance in order for Safety Representatives to carry out their duties.

Through these strategic arrangements, we will:

- Develop and deliver an Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare management system that is implemented across the Service.
- Actively seek staff participation in achieving occupational health, safety and welfare improvements.
- Allocate proportionate financial and physical resources to address the risks identified.

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- Establish and maintain practical, effective systems of communication.
- Set challenging occupational health, safety and welfare objectives and monitor progress to ensure continuous improvement.
- Develop and integrate a quality assurance and audit process that feeds into a plan to deliver continuous improvement.
- Review our legal compliance and occupational health and safety management system periodically to make sure it remains relevant and appropriate for our undertakings.

We will ensure:

- The Service complies with all relevant aspects of health, safety, and welfare legislation including appropriate codes of practice.
- Equipment and safe systems of work are provided and maintained so that risks to health and safety are as low as reasonably practicable.
- The necessary information, instructions, training and supervision are provided to allow all staff to carry out their duties effectively and safely.
- Operational staff are prepared for the foreseeable hazards associated with emergency incidents through operational training where risk is both assessed and managed.
- The locations staff work at are safe and without risks to health and where, in the case of emergency operations this is not possible, to protect them from readily identifiable hazards.
- There is safe handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- Staff are able to contribute positively to their own and others health and safety at work whilst recognising the importance they play in policy implementation.
- All accidents, incidents and near misses are properly investigated with the purpose of establishing root causes and preventing reoccurrence.
- Adequate welfare facilities are provided for all staff at work.
- Competent health, safety, and welfare advice is readily available.
- Staff are consulted on health and safety matters. We recognise staff can make a vital contribution to the implementation of this policy and its associated procedures.
- Suitable and sufficient assessments of all significant risks to staff, and those who may be affected by the Service's activities, are undertaken, recorded and applied by competent staff.
- All activities involving children, young persons and other vulnerable groups only take place after undergoing our formal risk assessment process.

General Arrangements

There are specific areas of legal compliance under health and safety legislation that are applicable to Fire and Rescue Services. Each Service within the combination has specific procedures and practices in place and these will be maintained by the new organisation post 1 April 2016 until they can be aligned as part of the Health and Safety Strategy work. However, the procedures on the Management of Health and Safety and on Accident Reporting and Investigation will be aligned prior to combination.

Success of the Policy – How is this Policy assured?

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The effective implementation of this policy will be monitored and assured through our initial governance arrangements.

We will undertake an annual review as part of our annual statement of assurance.

We will also:

- Review performance against key indicators and outcomes which are used to direct the development of future improvements and procedural documents
- Align our assurance to an external accredited Occupational Health and Safety Standard and show continual improvement against this standard.
- Monitor compliance through our audit programme.
- Carry out quarterly accident analysis to identify any significant trends and feed the results into our performance management arrangements to ensure we identify and react to emerging issues.
- Monitor all non-conformances and corrective action identified.
- Ensure Health, Safety and Welfare Management team meetings are held within timescales set out in our procedures.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be brought back to Members if requirements change.