

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

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1. Introduction

All staff have a right to perform their working role in an environment where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. All organisations which employ more than five people must have a written health and safety policy. Health and safety is primarily about preventing injury or illness to staff through work. This is achieved through the identification and management of risk and the creation of a working environment where the welfare and health needs of staff are accommodated.

This Health and Safety Policy is the overarching corporate policy for the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA). The purpose of this Health and Safety Policy is to ensure that RQIA complies with its statutory duties and common law duty of care in relation to health, safety and welfare at work. It provides the framework to enable the organisation and its employees to work together to create a safe and healthy workplace.

Achieving and maintaining good standards for health, safety and welfare at work is fundamental to RQIA. The organisation will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to meet its statutory obligations and common law duty of care.

This policy is supported by a Staff guidance handbook which provides detailed information on a range of health and safety issues and processes within RQIA.

2. Scope

The Health and Safety Policy applies to all RQIA staff, including fulltime, part time, temporary employees and Board members. It is also applicable to RQIA staff working outside the office when carrying out inspections, reviews, investigations, attendance at meetings, including travelling associated with undertaking the work of RQIA. In addition, it will be relevant to visitors to RQIA premises and those providing goods and services to RQIA.

This policy is intended to set a clear direction for all staff in the organisation. It should contribute to all aspects of RQIA's activity and is integral to our commitment to continuous improvement. Everyone associated with RQIA should be aware of the health, safety and welfare aims and objectives set out in this policy. Management are primarily responsible for health and safety but all staff have a part to play.

The successful implementation of this health, safety and welfare policy will require the commitment of employees at all levels within RQIA.

3. Health and Safety Statement of Intent

This Health and Safety policy is based on the following aims:

3.1 Aims

- To achieve compliance with the statutory requirements imposed by health, safety and welfare legislation including current and emerging requirements and guidance related to the Covid-19 pandemic
- To achieve compliance with the common law duty of care in relation health, safety and welfare in the work place
- To ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of vulnerable employees
- To develop a positive health and safety culture within RQIA
- To provide a positive contribution to the overall performance of RQIA.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives associated with the policy aims in Section 3.1 are detailed in **Appendix 3**.

4. Legislative Framework

This policy has been developed in the context of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and the associated regulations, and approved codes of practice. It also reflects current good practice standards for health, safety and welfare in the workplace.

A comprehensive list of statutory instruments in relation to health, safety and welfare at work, with particular relevance to RQIA, is set out in **Appendix 1**.

Appendix 2 includes a list of relevant approved codes of practice.

5. Relationship with other Policies

The Health and Safety Policy should be read in conjunction with other RQIA policies and processes. These include:

- Fire Safety Policy
- Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Abuse

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Accident/Incident Process
- Mobile Phones and Mobile Devices
- Risk Management
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Attendance at Work Policy
- Guidance relating to Covid-19

6. Health and Safety Organisational Responsibilities

The purpose of this section of the policy is to identify the health and safety responsibilities within RQIA and ensure effective lines of delegation and reporting. It identifies the people with specific responsibilities and duties in relation to health, safety and welfare in the workplace. See **Appendix 4** for Health and Safety Organisational Structure.

6.1 RQIA Board

The Board has overall responsibility to ensure that RQIA complies with statutory obligations detailed in health and safety legislation. The Board will receive health and safety reports from the Head of the Business Service Unit (BSU), the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Committee. Health and Safety will be a standing item on Board meeting agendas.

6.2 The Chief Executive

The Chief Executive, as the accountable officer, has overall responsibility for the effective management of health and safety. Functions associated with this role have been delegated to the Head of BSU.

6.3 Executive Management Team will:

- Be responsible for the implementation of the health and safety policy within the context of a positive health and safety culture
- Monitor and review the overall health and safety performance and receive an annual health and safety report
- Consider health and safety issues as they arise, which impact on the work of RQIA
- Ensure that corporate objectives for health and safety management are set within RQIA's performance management and assurance framework, including specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Update the corporate risk register.

6.4 **The Head of the Business Support Unit has operational responsibility for the implementation of the policy and will:**

- Ensure compliance with all aspects of the policy
- Take operational responsibility for the implementation of all aspects of the policy
- Report at regular intervals to the Board on health and safety performance
- Set targets for health and safety performance, as agreed with The Health and Well-being Committee
- Ensure that organisational arrangements within the health and safety policy are implemented
- Ensure that all necessary resources are made available to enable the implementation and support of the policy
- Advise on the development and review of health and safety policy
- Ensure that health and safety is considered in all key decisions of the Executive Management Team
- Manage risk by assessment, organisation, control, monitoring and review
- Promote consultation with employees and safety representatives
- Ensure the provision of suitable programmes of safety training
- Report to other relevant agencies where appropriate e.g. in respect of RIDDOR.

6.5 **Health and Well-Being Committee**

The role of the Health and Well-Being Committee is to promote co-operation between employers and employees to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff and others who use RQIA premises. The committee is established according to the requirements of Article 4(7) of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996. See **Appendix 5** for terms of reference.

6.6 Deputy and Assistant Directors/ Senior Managers will ensure that:

- All staff under their control understand and accept their responsibilities under the Health and Safety Policy and are equipped to perform their role
- All staff adhere to good health and safety working practices. Further guidance is available in the Staff Health and Safety Handbook
- A positive health and safety culture and compliance with statutory obligations is promoted within their teams
- All staff receive adequate and appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to perform their work safely and without risk to health
- All significant hazards are identified within the team and a risk assessment is carried out and control measures are put in place, as appropriate
- Any defective equipment, possible hazard, accident or near miss is reported to the Business Manager
- Report relevant information to EMT for consideration for updating of risk register
- Staff are afforded adequate time to participate in relevant health and safety functions e.g. participation in Health and Well-being Committee.

6.7 The Health and Safety Officer (Business Manager) will:

- Be a member of the Health and Well-Being Committee
- Ensure that all plant, machinery and equipment provided are suitable, safe and adequately maintained, with records kept of such maintenance
- In conjunction with senior management ensure, where appropriate, that risk assessments are undertaken in the planning stage of any new activity
- Report, as appropriate, and investigate accidents/dangerous occurrences, and take follow up action, as required
- Act as floor warden co-ordinator during office evacuations and document appropriate information

- Ensure that all first aid boxes are stocked, and compile a list of first aiders which is current and regularly updated
- Take positive action to identify and remedy any unsafe working practices or conditions and refer to line management where a satisfactory solution cannot be achieved with the resources immediately available.

6.8 All Employees

Effective health, safety and welfare in the workplace cannot be achieved without the active involvement of employees, when undertaking activities and by providing feedback on health and safety issues.

All employees have the following obligations under health and safety legislation:

- To take reasonable care of their own health and safety and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work
- Adhere to all guidance relating to the Covid-19 pandemic
- As regards any duty or requirement imposed on RQIA, or any other person, by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with RQIA, or any other person, in so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with
- Not to intentionally or recklessly interfere or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare at work in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions
- Wear and use personal protective clothing or equipment as specified by management
- Use all machinery, equipment, dangerous substances and safety devices in accordance with the information, instruction, training and supervision provided by RQIA
- Report to management any unsafe equipment or defects in the office, or other hazards that present serious and or imminent danger
- Use correct methods of work and do not improvise by using methods, tools or equipment which entail unnecessary risk
- Report and assist in any investigation of accidents, incidents, near misses or dangerous conditions.

- Report hazards and any deficiencies in risk control measures or other arrangements for health, safety and welfare in the workplace
- Keep the workplace clean and tidy
- If individuals become aware that they are in a situation involving immediate risk to themselves or others, they should, where possible, make the situation safe by stopping the work process if necessary and immediately contact their line manager
- Conform to rules and procedures regarding safe working practices.

6.9 Health and Safety Representatives and Representatives of Employee Safety (drawn from membership of Health & Welfare Committee depending on nature of issue) will:

- Investigate potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at the workplace and to examine the causes of accidents at the workplace
- Investigate complaints by any employee s/he represents relating to that employee's health, safety or welfare at work
- Make representations to the employer on general matters arising from the investigation of potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at work, or the investigation of complaints by employees in relation to health, safety or welfare at work
- Carry out health and safety inspections, as appropriate
- Represent employees in consultations at the workplace with inspectors of any enforcing authority
- Attend meetings of the Health and Well-being Committee to discharge any of the above functions.

6.10 Health and Safety Wardens

This role is discharged in Riverside Tower by the Floor Wardens and by Health and Safety Wardens in the Omagh office. Their primary responsibility is to ensure the safe evacuation of people from the building. See Staff Health and Safety Handbook for further information.

6.11 First Aiders

The duties of First Aiders are detailed in the Staff Health and Safety Handbook.

6.12 Health and Safety Advisor (RQIA Estates Inspectors)

This role will be discharged by a member or RQIA estates inspection staff who will provide specialist knowledge and expertise across a range of health and safety issues. Duties are detailed in the Staff Health and Safety Handbook.

6.13 Business Services Organisation (BSO)

RQIA will work in partnership with BSO in the delivery of Health & Safety functions within our organisation. BSO will provide support to ensure that RQIA's health and safety practices and procedures are in line with HSCNI's. This will include undertaking and reviewing a number of agreed risk assessments.

The BSO Health and Safety Manager will attend the RQIA Health and Wellbeing Committee meetings.

6.14 Occupational Health

RQIA has a service level agreement with the Business Services Organisation for the provision of an occupational health service. Details of this agreement are included in the Staff Health and Safety Handbook.

6.15 Contractors and other Providers of Goods and Services

The processes and procedures for engagement with contractors and providers of goods and services are detailed in the Staff Health and Safety Handbook.

7. Health and Safety Arrangements

This section of the policy is included in **Appendix 6**. It contains the details for the specific systems and procedures for implementing the policy to effectively achieve the aims and objectives set out in the policy statement of intent. For specific detail on each issue, reference should be made to the guidance contained in the Staff Health, Safety and Welfare Handbook.

8. Training

The Head of BSU will ensure that all staff receive information, instruction and training, as required, in relation to this policy. Regular updated Health and Safety training, as required for staff, will also be

provided to ensure that this policy is implemented in an effective manner.

Areas to be covered will include:

- Legislative framework
- Significant workplace hazards and control measures including IPC with particular focus on Covid-19 guidance
- Accident, incident and dangerous occurrence reporting
- First aid arrangements
- Fire awareness

9. Equality

An equality screening of this policy was completed on 14 March 2011 and it was considered to have a low impact implication for equality of opportunity. The policy therefore does not require a full equality impact assessment.

10. Monitoring

The Health and Well-being Committee will monitor the implementation of this policy and will report to the Head of BSU and the Board, as appropriate. The committee may undertake relevant audits of the implementation of this policy.

11. Review of the Policy

The Head of BSU will keep this policy under review to ensure that it remains compliant with all relevant legislation and guidance and continues to meet organisational requirements. Thereafter it will be reviewed three yearly. Any revisions to the policy will be brought to the notice of all RQIA employees.

12. Development and Stakeholder Consultation

The Health and Safety Policy has been developed in consultation with the following organisations and staff groupings. The policy has also been informed by the ongoing monitoring of health and safety issues within RQIA.

12.1 Health and Well-being Committee - This is the body with primary responsibility for the development of the Health and Safety Policy. The

group has membership from across RQIA and a wide range of disciplines and expertise is represented.

- 12.2 **Staff Forum** – Revised policy should be shared with staff for consultation period either through a Staff Forum or by general circulation.
- 12.3 **End users** - The policy has been influenced and informed by daily engagement with staff who work in Riverside Tower and the Omagh office. Health and safety issues are covered during staff induction.
- 12.4 **British Telecom and the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT)** - Whilst the Health and Safety Policy relates specifically to RQIA staff and those on its premises, the issues it deals with are framed within the wider context of British Telecoms and the WHSCT's responsibility to provide a healthy and safe environment for all occupants of Riverside Tower and the Omagh office respectively.
- 12.5 **Monitoring of accidents and incidents** - The Health and Safety Policy will be informed by the analysis of the cause of accidents and incidents and measures that need to be put in place to prevent further occurrences.

13. Staff Health and Safety Handbook

This document provides further information on the implementation of the Health and Safety policy.

Appendices

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| Appendix 2. | Approved Codes of Practice and Additional Health and Safety Guidance |
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Appendix 1.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

The following list of regulations in relation to health, safety and welfare at work will be of particular relevance to RQIA:

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety (Information for Employees) Regulations 1989
- Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- The Regulator Reform (Fire Safety) Order and associated regulations 2005

NB. This is not an exhaustive list

Appendix 2.

APPROVED CODES OF PRACTICE AND ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

The following codes of practice and additional guidance in relation to health, safety and welfare at work will be of particular relevance to RQIA. These documents and guidance can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

- Control of substances hazardous to health (fourth edition) – Approved Code of Practice and Guidance 2002
- Specific Covid-19 legislation and guidance issued by DoH, PHA and PHE 2020
- Memorandum of Guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991
- A Guide to the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 – Guidance on Regulations 91 HSA 97
- Safe use of lifting equipment 1998 – Approved Code of Practice L113
- Management of health and safety at work 2003 – Approved Code of Practice and Guidance. L21
- Manual Handling 1992 - Guidance on Regulations HSENI 02 03 A
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work 1989– Guidance on Regulations HAS 69
- A guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 HAS 31 (Rev 98)
- Safe use of work equipment 1998– Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L22
- Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare 1992– Approved Code of Practice 66/HAS/96
- Northern Ireland HSS (PPM) 8/2002 – Risk Management in the Health and Personal Social Services
- Consulting Workers on Health and Safety 1977 L146

- Legionnaires disease. The control of legionella bacteria in water systems 2013 L8

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

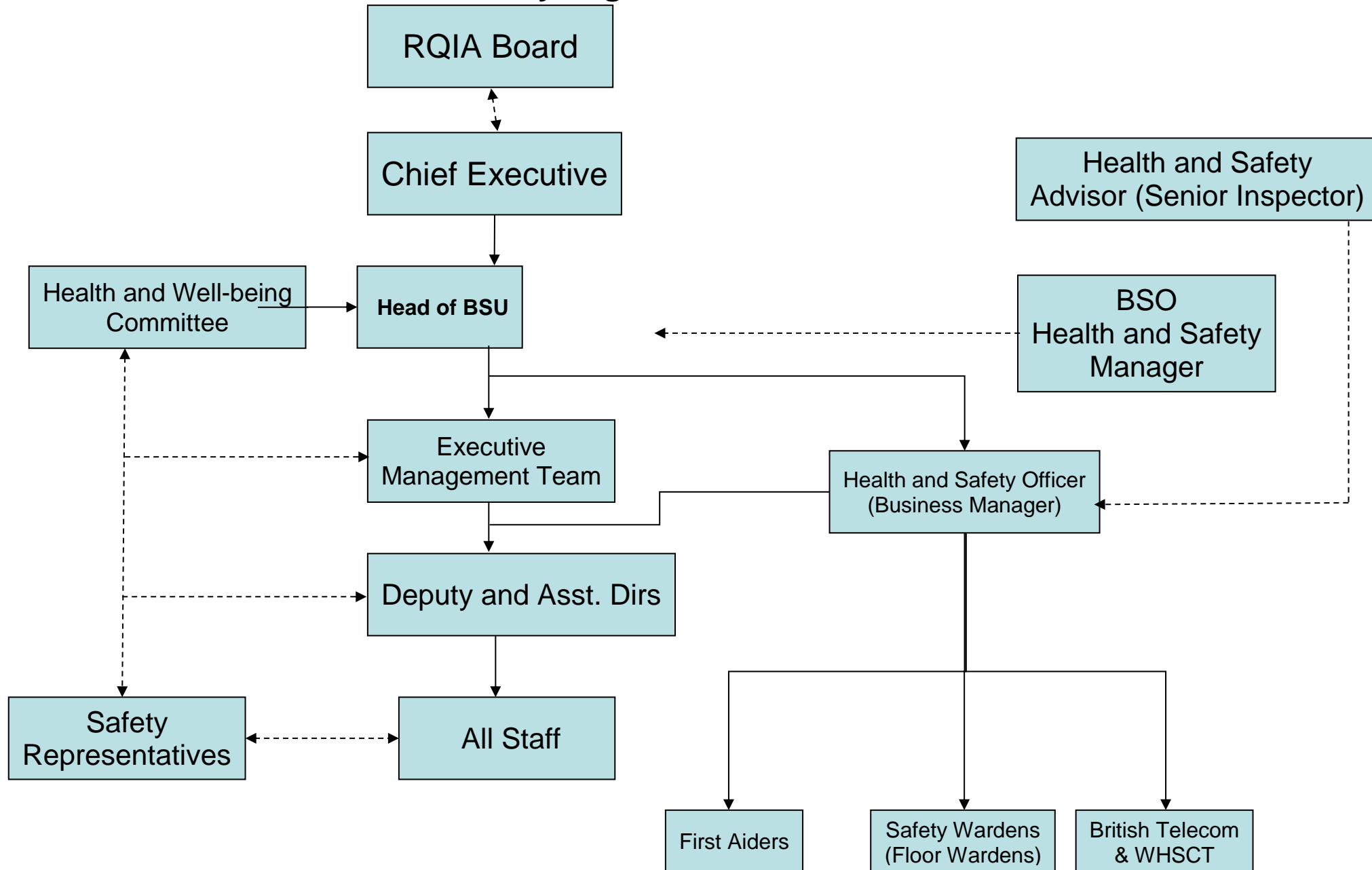
OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Health and Safety Policy are detailed in section 3.1. The objectives associated with these aims are detailed as follows:

- To ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all RQIA employees
- To ensure that all necessary and reasonable precautionary measures relating to the Covid-19 pandemic are incorporated into our working practices to protect staff, visitors to our offices, providers and service users who we come into contact with
- In addition to meeting the absolute, practicable and reasonably practicable duties imposed by the health and safety legislation, RQIA is committed to achieving good practice in all aspects of health, safety and welfare at work
- To consult with its employees with a view to the making and maintenance of arrangements which will enable RQIA and its employees to co-operate effectively in promoting and developing measures to ensure the health and safety at work of the employees, and in checking the effectiveness of such measures
- Ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of vulnerable employees and in particular people in the following categories:
 - People with disabilities
 - Expectant and nursing mothers
 - Lone workers
 - Young people
- RQIA will conduct its activities in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in our employment who may be affected thereby are not exposed to risks to their health or safety
- Provide adequate resources to ensure the effective implementation of this health and safety policy
- Ensure that RQIA has access to competent health and safety advice

- Ensure that the principal hazards in the workplace are identified and that all risks to health and safety associated with the workplace are properly assessed and effectively controlled
- To embed a process of continuous improvement to achieve ongoing compliance with the DHSS&PS Controls Assurance Standards for Health and Safety
- Achieve a level of sickness absence in line with the national average for similar organisations and continue to improve on this level in line with RQIA's policy on absence management
- Ensure that all accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences are reported, fully investigated and actioned by the appropriate manager, internal body or external regulatory authority
- To establish a Health and Well-being Committee having the function of keeping under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of RQIA employees and such other functions as may be prescribed
- Provide all employees with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure adequate levels of competence are achieved and maintained

RQIA Health and Safety Organisational Structure



Terms of reference

1. Introduction

A Health and Well-Being Committee has been established according to the requirements of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations.

RQIA recognises that the health and safety of all their employees is vital to the delivery of a quality service. The remit of the Health and Well-being Committee extends to:

- All employees within RQIA offices
- All visitors within RQIA offices
- All employees conducting RQIA business outside RQIA offices.

RQIA management and trade unions will work together to encourage a culture of partnership to promote good health and safety policies and practices across the organisation.

2. Membership

The composition of the Health and Well-being Committee shall be as follows:

- Chief Executive
- Head of BSU
- Business Manager
- Senior Estates Officer
- BSO Health and Safety Manager
- Directorate representatives (from both directorates)
- Five staff side representatives (invite nominations from Staff side the Trade Unions)

Representatives from other departments may be co-opted or be in attendance as required.

The chair for the Health and Well-Being Committee will be the RQIA Chief Executive.

3. Frequency of meetings

Meetings will be held twice a year or more frequently if required.

4.

Responsibilities

- Review the effectiveness of RQIA processes and structures for health and safety
- Receive reports on accidents, incidents and near misses so that suitable recommendations can be made to senior management for corrective action to be taken
- Examination of safety audit reports taking note where improvements can be made. Analysis of information and reports provided by enforcing authority inspectors, e.g. HSE. Consideration of reports from appointed safety representatives
- Assistance in the implementation of the key objectives of the Controls Assurance Standards for Health and Safety Management and Fire Safety
- Consideration of new legislation, approved codes of practice and guidance from the enforcement authorities
- Assistance in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of health and safety procedures and safe systems of work
- The review of risk assessments
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of health and safety training
- Ongoing assessment of the adequacy of health and safety communication and publicity
- Assistance in the production of the annual health and safety report.

5. Agenda of meetings

The agenda will be agreed at the inaugural meeting and may include the following standing items:

- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Matters arising from the previous minutes
- Issues raised by directorates within RQIA
- Safety audit reports/risk assessments
- Accident/incident reporting
- Matters raised by HSE or other enforcing authority
- Information and training on health and safety issues
- Any other business.

6. **Reporting**

Minutes of the Health and Well-Being Committee will be circulated to the Chief Executive and Head of BSU for circulation to all relevant groups/committees within RQIA. The minutes will also be posted on the RQIA intranet.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

This appendix contains the details for the specific systems and procedures for implementing the policy to effectively achieve the aims and objectives set out in the policy statement of intent, section 3.1. For the specific detail on each issue, reference should be made to the guidance contained in the Staff Health and Safety Handbook. Issues include:

- Identification of the principal workplace hazards
- Carrying out risk assessments using the Health and Safety Executives (HSE) Five Step Risk Assessment Model or equivalent approach. Specific risk assessments to be put in place for the following groups of people who would be considered to be at more risk than others:
 - Expectant and nursing mothers
 - Young persons
 - People with disabilities
 - Lone workers.

The risk assessments include the risks to safety and health (acute and chronic)

- Controlling exposure to specific hazards such as noise, stress in line with the hierarchy of risk reduction measures recommended in the guidance from the HSE
- Arrangements during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Work place health, safety and welfare inspections
- Monitoring standards for health, safety and welfare
- Use of personal protective equipment
- Reporting accidents, near misses and unsafe conditions
- Controlling contractors and other service providers
- Visitor safety
- Maintenance of the premises used by RQIA

- The provision of welfare facilities
- Dealing with emergencies including fire, explosion, flood
- Information, instruction, training and supervision
- Consulting with employees
- Environmental control including waste management
- Accident and incident investigations
- First aid provision
- Permits to work
- Method statements
- Safe systems of work
- Catering and food hygiene procedures
- Health and Well-being Committee
- Review arrangements
- Auditing arrangements
- Health surveillance arrangements
- Provision of welfare facilities