

Natural England Occupational Health & Safety Policy and Strategy

October 2006

Occupational Health and Safety in Natural England

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PART 1: NATURAL ENGLAND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

Natural England is committed to conducting its business in a manner that protects the health and safety of our employees, contractors and the public. In addition to complying strictly with the health and safety measures required by legislation, it is the Natural England's policy to promote and take all reasonably practicable steps to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who may be affected by its actions.

To meet the requirements of this policy Natural England will work with all employees and strive for continuous improvement in health and safety performance. We will operate an integrated, structured and documented system of management control over all its operations. This system of control commits us to :

- Undertaking of appropriate reviews and assessments of its operations and undertakings to measure progress, manage risk, and ensure compliance with this policy.
- Ensuring that its employees are fully competent to perform the tasks allocated to them by careful recruitment, ongoing development, including specialist training, and by provision of the necessary resources.
- Maintaining the health and safety awareness of all employees by the establishment of sound health and safety practices and operations through competent management and good communications, leading to continuous improvement in health and safety performance.
- Ensuring that the contractors we engage are competent to perform the work contracted and encouraging good safety practice within such companies in compliance with this policy.
- Designing and maintaining our premises and facilities so as to minimise the risks associated with their maintenance and use.
- Effective response to, and investigation of accidents, incidents and near misses, to establish root causes and take reasonable actions to prevent their reoccurrence.

Natural England will provide information to, and ensure appropriate consultation with, health and safety representatives on matters relevant to this policy. We will discuss and exchange ideas relating to health and safety with our employees on a local basis and will, in addition, operate an organisation which will maintain adequate communications and action in these matters.

Prime responsibility for these matters lies with ourselves. Executive Directors, National and Regional Directors, Area Managers and all other managerial and supervisory staff equally have responsibility for matters within their control. (See Part 3). We all have a duty to ensure that health and safety issues are

given the fullest consideration at all times, and for providing a safe and healthy working environment for their employees. The Head of Occupational Health and Safety is directly accountable to the Executive Board for monitoring and reporting on our health and safety performance, and providing such advice as the organisation needs to maintain and improve its performance in this area.

In addition all Natural England employees have a responsibility to themselves and others for the safety and prevention of ill health at work. We must all work together in the spirit of participation and co-operation to ensure the success of this Policy and hence the maintenance of human health and well being while carrying out our important work to protect and improve the environment.

Sir Martin Doughty
Chair

Helen Phillips
Chief Executive

PART 2 : NATURAL ENGLAND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Policy Objectives

Natural England will provide and promote healthy and safe working environments for its employees and will work to ensure the minimum incidence and severity of occupational injury and disease for all its employees, people affected by our work, volunteers, visitors and contractors, so far as reasonably practicable.

The objectives of successful health and safety management are to:

- Ensure that health and safety policy is managed coherently and maximises the contribution of individuals and groups through communication and participation;
- Organise our employees to achieve the aims of the health and safety policy by identification of key personnel;
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment with adequate welfare facilities;
- Set up safe systems of work for employees;
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision for all employees;
- Provide, operate and maintain buildings, facilities, plant and machinery and equipment that are safe;
- Make arrangements to safeguard the occupational health and safety of our employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors and third parties affected by our work through risk assessment and the control of hazards;
- Produce occupational health and safety plans covering all Teams and Work Centres to ensure effective health and safety management across all Natural England sites and activities;
- Ensure that Natural England employees working in other persons' premises are trained in recognition of hazards that they may encounter;
- Monitor performance on health and safety and publish the results annually;
- Regularly evaluate the success of the overall health and safety policy and revise, if necessary;

- Employ competent health and safety professionals to assist in undertaking the measures needed to comply with the requirements of the relevant statutory provisions and to assist management and staff in the implementation of the health and safety policy;
- Work closely with staff and trade union safety representatives in developing and implementing health and safety policies.

Natural England will provide sufficient resource to ensure that all our health and safety objectives can be met.

PART 3 : NATURAL ENGLAND ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Accountabilities and Responsibilities

The following accountabilities and responsibilities for occupational health and safety will apply in Natural England.

The Board :

The Board of Natural England is responsible for:

- approving the Natural England Occupational Health and Safety Strategy and Policy;
- ensuring Natural England complies with all relevant Health and Safety legislation.
- monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Strategy.
- appointing a member of the Board to act as the 'health and safety champion' on behalf of the Board.

The Chief Executive:

The Chief Executive is accountable for:

- leading and promoting the effective management of Health and Safety across Natural England;
- Implementing the Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Strategy;
- Ensuring that the objectives of the Health and Safety Policy are achieved;
- Ensuring that adequate arrangements are in place for consultation with members of staff and union representative on Occupational Health and Safety matters;
- Ensuring that all Natural England policies and procedures in respect of occupational health and safety are kept under continual review and are updated in line with organisational and legislative changes.

The Executive Board:

The Executive Board is accountable for:

- Providing individual and collective leadership in achieving Natural England's health and safety objectives;
- Establishing the occupational health and safety systems and processes necessary to implement Natural England's Health and Safety Policy and Strategy;

- Ensuring that all decisions taken by Natural England reflect the Health and Safety Policy and Strategy;
- Ensure that an appropriate budget is available to deliver the Health and Safety Policy and Strategy;
- Ensuring that Occupational Health and Safety Plans are in place for all Teams and Work Centres across Natural England.

The Executive Leadership Group

The Executive Leadership Group is accountable for:

- Providing individual and collective leadership in achieving Natural England's health and safety objectives;
- Ensuring a consistent approach to implementing Natural England's Health and Safety Policy and Strategy across the organisation;
- Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of Natural England's occupational health and safety systems and processes;
- Proactively identifying and resolving organisation-wide occupational health and safety issues;
- Take on individual responsibilities as Senior Responsible Officers for particular Work Centres and Sites as outlined in schedule X.

Directors and Heads of Teams

Directors and Heads of Teams are individually accountable for:

- Ensuring the full implementation of the Health and Safety Policy and Strategy within their Teams;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are fully aware of the Health and Safety Policy and Strategy and provided with all necessary support and training to ensure its successful implementation;
- Preparing and maintaining a Health and Safety Plan for the Team, including carrying out necessary risk assessments and documenting resulting actions;
- Allocating the resources necessary to achieve the objectives of the Policy and Strategy;
- Ensuring appropriate consultation with staff and local Trade Unions.

Occupational Health and Safety Team

The purpose of Natural England's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Team is to ensure we are able to comply with all Health & Safety legislation, and in adopting best practice enable us to become a top quartile performer.

The OHS Team is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining Natural England's Health & Safety Policy and Strategy;
- Developing systems and procedures to implement the Policy and Strategy including compliance with all relevant legislation;
- ensuring adequate organisational capacity and capability to discharge Natural England's responsibilities;
- ensuring the provision of Natural England's occupational health service;
- leading and maintaining relationships with the Health and Safety Inspectorate and approved providers of specialist health and safety services

The OHS Team will work particularly closely with:

- all teams across Natural England to ensure the health and safety policy and strategy is understood, applied and embedded;
- the Regional Business Management Teams to support them in discharging their health and safety accountabilities;
- The Board and the Executive Board to ensure that they are able to discharge their responsibilities with regard to health and safety;
- The Board's Risk and Audit Committee to advise on the adequacy of the health and safety control systems;
- The Risk and Governance Team to ensure Health and Safety is incorporated into a coherent and aligned approach to corporate risk management.

Estates and Facilities Team

The Estates and Facilities team will be responsible for:

- Designing and maintaining Natural England's Work Centres and facilities so as to minimise the health and safety risks associated with their maintenance and use;
- Developing and implementing a strategy for the on-going assessment and improvement of our Work Centres and facilities with respect to health and safety,
- Supporting Directors in fulfilling their responsibilities as Senior Responsible Officer for individual Work Centres and Sites;
- Working with Regional Business Management Teams to ensure the implementation of the Regional H&S programme for Work Centres and Sites.

Regional Business Managers:

Regional Business Managers are individually accountable for:

- Ensuring the implementation of Natural England's Health and Safety Policy and Strategy across all Regional Teams, Work Centres and Sites;
- Ensuring that all Regional staff, contractors and volunteers are fully aware of the Health and Safety Policy and Strategy;
- The development and delivery of a Regional OHS Implementation Plan covering all Work Centres and Sites;
- The development and delivery of a Regional OHS Training Programme to ensure all staff have the capacity and capability to implement the Policy and Strategy.

Managers and Team Leaders

Managers and Team Leaders are individually accountable for:

- Provide adequate safeguards for the health and safety of all staff for whom they have line management responsibility at all times;
- Ensure adequate safeguards for the health and safety of all contractors, volunteers and the general public engaged in any Natural England activity which is under their control;
- Ensure that all staff for whom they have line management responsibility are aware of all relevant safety policies, procedures, risk assessments and management plans;
- Ensuring that all staff for whom they have line management responsibility are given adequate information, instruction, training and supervision in all health and safety aspects relevant to their work;
- Supporting the Regional Business Manager, OHS Team and Estates and Facilities Team to fulfil their OHS responsibilities;
- Ensuring that all health and safety incidents affecting staff, contractors, volunteers of the general public are reported in a timely manner and in accordance with relevant legislation;
- Consulting the Regional Business Manager or relevant nominated Competent Senior Health and Safety Specialist on any health and safety matter on which they are unsure or are in need specialist guidance.

National Nature Reserve (NNR) Site Managers

National Nature Reserve Site Managers are responsible for:

- Provide support to the Senior Responsible Officer for the Site by implementing Natural England's Health and Safety Policy and Strategy on the Site;
- Providing support to the Regional Business Manager by implementing all relevant actions from the Regional Health and Safety

Implementation Plan, including implementing actions arising from risk assessments, informing individuals of appropriate control measures and keeping relevant documentation;

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers under their day to day supervision are given adequate information, instruction, training in all health and safety aspects relevant to their work and activities;
- Ensuring that all health and safety incidents in a NNR affecting staff, contractors, volunteers of the general public are reported in a timely manner and in accordance with relevant legislation.

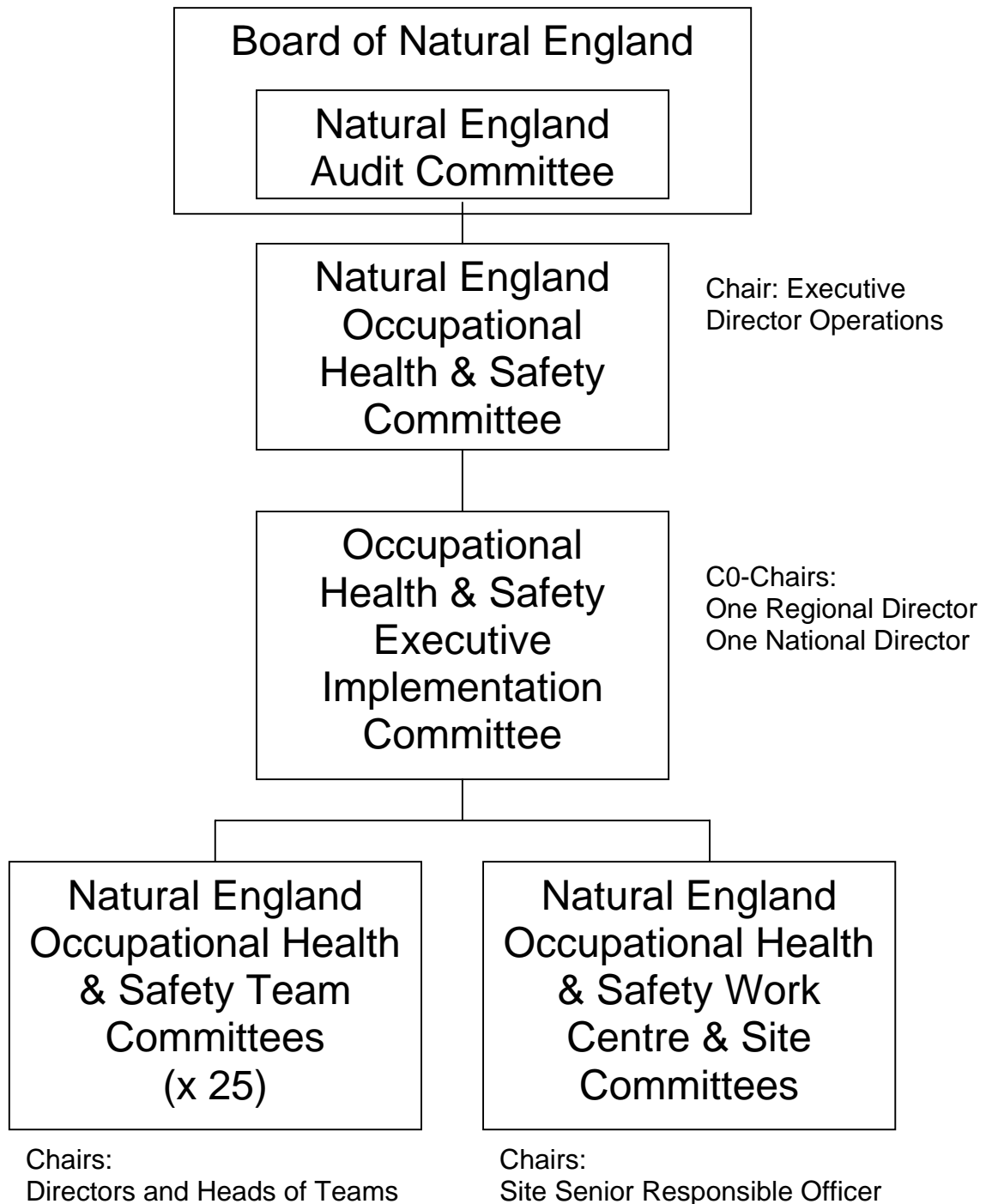
General Responsibility of all Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Taking all reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts and/or omissions at work;
- Reading, understanding and complying with Natural England's Health and Safety Policy and Strategy and all supporting procedures, plans and instructions;
- Co-operating with staff who have particular responsibilities under Natural England's Health and Safety Policy and Strategy, including the discharge of responsibilities under Health and Safety at Work Act and other relevant legislation
- Actively contribute to the maintenance and operation of anything that has been provided by Natural England in the interests of their health and safety, and that of other employees.
- Consult with their line manager in respect of any health and safety matter of which they are unsure.

PART 4: NATURAL ENGLAND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ORGANISATION

Natural England has put in place the following organisation arrangements to be accountable for the implementation of our Health and Safety Policy and Strategy. These arrangements complement but do not replace the individual and team responsibilities outlined above.



Health and Safety Competence

Natural England employs competent persons in accordance with Regulation 7 of the Management of Health & Safety Regulations 1999. Responsibilities of nominated competent persons are detailed below:

- Fire Warden
- First Aid Officer
- Workplace OHS Assessor
- Others TBC

Trade Union and Staff Health and Safety Representatives

Under the Safety Representative and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended), safety representatives will be appointed to the following Committees by recognised trade unions and from amongst the employees:

- The Natural England Occupational Health & Safety Committee;
- Occupational Health and Safety Team Committees;
- Occupational Health and Safety Site Committees.

PART 5: NATURAL ENGLAND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974, Natural England is responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and of other people who may be affected by its work activities, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Natural England's Strategy for implementing the Health and Safety Policy is outlined below:

- Natural England is committed to a system of health and safety management based on a common understanding of risks and how to control them.
- Health and safety will be a management responsibility of equal importance to all other aspects of our business;
- Effective control of health and safety will be achieved through co-operation at all levels within the organisation;
- Health and Safety procedures will be developed which address particular aspects of our work.

The following list of Occupational Health and Safety procedures will form the commencing procedures for Natural England. These are based on Founding Body practice and will be reviewed by March 2007.

Premises and Accommodation	Driving at Work
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)	Mobile Phones
Fire and Emergency Procedures	Health Risk management
First Aid	DSE Assessments
Control of Contractors	Stress at work Management
Office Working	VDU Eyesight Testing
Lone and remote Working	Visitors to NNRs
Violence and Aggression	Coastal/Diving
Volunteers	Accident/Incident Reporting
Provision of Information	Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems
Assessing the risk	Children & Vulnerable adults
Asbestos management	Interim Protecting the person procedure
Home working	Safe Lifting and Handling