

Health & Safety Policy (HS_P1)

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Policy owner:	Head of Business Support
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Signed:	
Print name:	Peter Tallantire
Position:	Chair
Reviewed:	April 2025
Amendments:	General review and update. Explicit responsibilities have been added as documented in the existing Health and Safety Handbook and to reflect the change in governance arrangements.

Policy

1. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust ('the Trust') is aware of its duties as an employer under the Health & Safety at Work Act etc.1974, and its policy is to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its staff and volunteers. The Trust will take all reasonably practicable steps to achieve this commitment, to comply with our statutory obligations and to promote a positive health and safety culture throughout our organisation. Similarly, the Trust recognises its duty to protect the health and safety of all visitors, including contractors and temporary workers, as well as any members of the public who might be affected by the Trust's operations.
2. Health and safety is an integral part of the Trust's activities, and while the Chief Executive takes overall day-to-day responsibility, the Board of Trustees, Heads of Departments, line managers, employees and others that are representing the Trust share the responsibility for implementing this policy.
3. The Trust will provide a safe and healthy working environment for staff and volunteers with the objective of minimising the risk of injury or ill-health. The Trust will pay particular attention to:
 - Undertaking risk assessments in order to review the health and safety of our activities and premises and implementing safe systems of work as a result
 - Providing and maintaining machinery, equipment and work systems which are as safe as reasonably possible to use and without risk to health
 - Making arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of health risks for the use, handling, storage and transport of livestock, goods, materials and substances
 - Providing necessary information, instruction, training and supervision needed to minimise health and safety risks

- Maintaining arrangements for emergency response, including fire and first aid.
 - Investigating accidents, incidents, near misses and incidences of work-related ill health.
 - Consulting with staff on matters affecting their health and safety.
4. The Trust will take steps to check the competence of any contractor before their services are engaged and will ensure that third parties are provided with appropriate information on entering its premises and in relation to its work activities.
 5. The Trust will maintain a health and safety database on its server which will give details of Trust policies, codes of practice, risk assessments and safe working procedures.
 6. Any accidents, incidents or near misses involving a member of staff, volunteer, visitor or other person which occur on Trust premises or sites and are related to a Trust work activity, must be recorded on the Trust's Accident / Incident Form. They are to be promptly investigated in accordance with the accident / incident reporting procedure to ensure lessons are learnt and to prevent a re-occurrence. Cases of work-related ill health are recorded as part of the Trust's HR record-keeping procedures. The Trust will ensure it complies with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013.
 7. The Trust will ensure effective mechanisms are in place for the proactive monitoring of safety systems and control measures through appropriate monitoring and inspection programmes. The Trust will also ensure suitable Health Surveillance is in place as identified by risk assessment.
 8. The Trust will ensure robust arrangements are in place for managing wellbeing as outlined in our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Responsibilities

9. Responsibility for implementing the Trust's Health and Safety Policy lies with the Council of Management (Trustees who are Company Directors). They will have due regard for the Institute of Directors (IoD) / HSE Guidance: Leading health and safety at work - Leadership actions for directors and board members.

Day to day responsibility for health and safety management is delegated to the Chief Executive. They will:

- Provide leadership to ensure good standards of health and safety performance
 - Ensure the provision of competent health and safety advice
 - Ensure adequate resources are available for health and safety (such as the delivery of training, provision of systems and procedures), as necessary
 - Ensure that the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the Trust health safety and wellbeing policies and other statutory requirements are sufficient
10. The Senior Management Team / Heads of Departments are ultimately responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Trust's Health and Safety Policy, systems and procedures under their areas of control.
 11. The Directors of Nature Recovery and Development are responsible for taking a strategic role in ensuring third party arrangements under their areas of responsibility are

appropriately articulated, documented and clarified where necessary to ensure suitable health and safety standards are achieved so far as is reasonably practicable.

12. The Head of Business Support is responsible for the Trust headquarters, including contractor management, fire safety and evacuation, security, insurance, the asbestos register and maintaining suitable health and safety records and reporting. They are also responsible for central health and safety training, first aid needs assessment and the development of health, safety and wellbeing policies. In practice the day-to-day responsibility for implementation is shared, where appropriate, between the Facilities, Human Resources and Health Safety and Wellbeing Managers.
13. The Head of Finance, supported by the Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager where necessary, is responsible for ensuring suitable health and safety standards are embedded and maintained within the Trust's contractor procurement and selection procedures and monitoring arrangements.
14. The Nature Reserves Manager is responsible for health and safety matters relating to Trust reserves (including events held on reserves and guided walks on reserves led by Trust Reserves staff or volunteers under their control) and for reporting to the Director of Nature Recovery on all relevant health and safety matters where necessary.

Those visiting our reserves, including members of public, are responsible for complying with relevant Trust signage, guidelines and other procedures where necessary. Non-Reserves staff organising events or undertaking activities on nature reserves must inform the Nature Reserves Manager or their designated seniors.

Nature Reserves are the designated team for the day-to-day management of Beech Farm in consultation/liaison with the wider countryside (Nature Recovery) staff and Business Support.

15. The Nature Reserves Manager, Conservation Manager and Planning and Policy Manager are responsible for ensuring all activities under their respective control are adequately risk assessed and that suitable safe working procedures are in place to protect staff, volunteers and others so far as reasonably practicable.
16. All managers are responsible for ensuring that activities carried out under their control are conducted safely and in accordance with relevant safety legislation, safety policies and their local procedures. Some of these responsibilities may be delegated to supervisors or other competent staff, as appropriate. Delegation does not remove responsibility.
17. The Trust has a dedicated Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager who reports to the Head of Business Support. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager acts as the Trust's "Competent Person" as required under Regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Chief Executive will be advised by the Trust's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager and the Internal Health and Safety Group.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager is responsible for developing policy and guidance for the Trust in consultation with stakeholders. They will provide advice and guidance, investigate accidents and incidents, and make recommendations where necessary.

18. Health and safety at work is also the responsibility of staff and volunteers. It is the duty of each individual to take reasonable care of their own and other people's health, safety and welfare and to report any situation which may pose a threat to the wellbeing of themselves or of any other person. They must not recklessly interfere with or misuse any equipment or systems intended for ensuring health and safety.
19. If an employee or volunteer is unsure how to perform a certain task or feels it would be dangerous to perform a specific job or use specific equipment, then it is the employee's / volunteer's duty to report this as soon as possible to their line manager, their health and safety representative or the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager. Alternatively, an employee may, if they prefer, invoke the Trust's formal grievance procedure. A volunteer may make a written complaint. Employees and volunteers can invoke the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy if they reasonably believe that underhand or illegal practices are taking place. The Trust will protect them from victimisation, harassment or bullying occasioned as a result of the disclosure.
20. This policy will be drawn to the attention of all new employees and volunteers as part of their induction. It is the duty of each employee to familiarise themselves with and implement Trust procedures and to report any perceived shortcomings in the arrangements.
21. Disciplinary action under the Trust's disciplinary procedures may be taken against any employee who fails to perform their duties under health and safety legislation. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to potential gross misconduct rendering the employee liable to summary dismissal.
22. Volunteers are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and others who may be affected by activities under their direct control (e.g. work party volunteer leader). Volunteers must cooperate with the Trust on all matters of health and safety, following all relevant safe working procedures and guidance. They must not undertake any activities outside of the agreed scope of their volunteering with the Trust and must bring to the Trust's attention any health and safety concerns. Volunteers must also comply with the procedures and guidance as documented within the Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteers will be treated with dignity and fairness. Volunteers who fail to comply with the Trust's policies, procedures and guidance, or reasonable direction via line management may be suspended from volunteering whilst an investigation is completed. The Trust reserves the right to terminate volunteering as a last resort.