Bury Council

Health and Safety Strategy
2024 - 2027

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Bury Council is the local authority for the Metropolitan Borough of Bury in Greater Manchester, providing or commissioning the full range of local government services to Bury's nearly two hundred thousand residents. Bury consists of six towns: Bury, Prestwich, Radcliffe, Ramsbottom, Tottington and Whitefield and the shared vision of the borough for 2030 is set out in the LET'S Do It! Strategy.

1.2 There are established moral, legal compliance and financial reasons for adopting high standards of health and safety and it is important to recognise that there are benefits to the Council in adopting a pro-active, good practice approach to management of this key area.

1.3 The Council, as an employer and service provider, has a range of statutory responsibilities for health and safety as set out in health and safety legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999).

1.4 In addition, effective health and safety management is essential in order to:
- Reduce risk
- Reduce accidents and incidents
- Increase productivity, because employees are healthier, happier and better motivated (think this should be further up the list)
- Reduce employee absence and turnover rates
- Lower the threat of legal action
- Improve our reputation
- Reduce costs

1.5 This document sets out the overarching strategy for health and safety at Bury Council for the three-year period to March 2027. It aims to be forward-looking and build on the improvements in health and safety management systems already achieved by the Council over recent years.

1.6 The health and safety management systems within the Council are well established. Ongoing reviews and improvements are essential to meet new and emerging challenges, including changing approaches to work through the adoption of agile working. Opportunities for increasing productivity through supporting improvement to work related health and wellbeing, and ensuring the procurement of contracted services take health and safety into account are also important considerations.

1.7 This strategy will also support, where possible, the national strategies developed by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

1.8 This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Health and Safety Policy and Annual Reports.

2   Aims and Objectives

2.1   This strategy aims to protect our greatest assets – our people. It sets out how we will achieve this over the next 3 years, by concentrating our work on the areas of greatest health and safety challenge and where we can make the biggest difference to benefit the Council and the borough of Bury. Designed to challenge, it will ensure we improve standards and will inform our activity and approach to the delivery of our work. It is developed in line with Bury's Let's Do It strategy and has at its core the message 'Let's Do It safely!'

2.2   Our key objectives over the next 3 years are:

1.   Review the Council's risk assessment processes and ensure full compliance

In year one, our priority is to review the risk assessment process and ensure it is fit for purpose. This involves reviewing the risk assessment needs checker template and ensuring all services complete this to ascertain and prioritise risks. Also, launching a new risk assessment template and guidance that is fit for purpose and suitable for all to use to gain a uniform approach. Services will be required to upload all risk assessment documentation to a central Teams folder. This will be monitored corporately, and services will continue to be able to access their master risk assessments from this folder.

A percentage of the risk assessments will be quality assured to ensure suitability and sufficiency. Challenge will be given to services that are weaker, and support provided wherever necessary.

Over the 3 years we aim to have full compliance with the risk assessment process, with documentation completed to a high standard.

2.   Develop a system to centrally monitor compliance with health and safety training and work towards full compliance

Our aim is to equip the workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their tasks in a safe and healthy way. This will include:
- Ensuring all employees complete the Health & Safety in the Workplace e-learning training so that they have an increased awareness of risks and controls to carry out their duties without harm to themselves or others.
- Ensuring all line managers attend in-person health and safety training as part of the Council's core Management Development Programme
- Offering managers and supervisors with responsibility for assessing risks accredited IOSH Managing Safely training
- Involving employees in the reviewing of risk assessments and safe working procedures.

Furthermore, we will carry out a training needs analysis for all services to determine where we are now and what training needs to be put in place. The training will be prioritised according to risk. A system will be

developed to record training records centrally on iTrent, which will allow continual monitoring and reporting. This process has already begun, starting with the higher risk services in the Council which are in the Operations Department.

3. Develop a robust health and safety culture

Over the lifespan of this strategy, we will ensure that the Council develops a positive, proactive approach to health and safety, where everyone understands their responsibilities and takes action to protect their own safety and that of others.

We will achieve this by:
- Ensuring proactive and visible leadership of health and safety by Leaders and Members and a consistent 'health and safety first' stance.
- Involving employees in taking decisions about health and safety and ensuring they can influence it through their own actions. Employees are often the best people to understand the risks in their workplace.
- Continuing to work closely with the trade unions.
- Producing regular communications for the workforce to raise awareness and encourage engagement in relevant health and safety matters.

A positive and robust health and safety culture will support everyone to work together to identify joint solutions to problems and manage risks sensibly, which ultimately will reduce accidents and ill health plus the associated costs to the Council. It will also show that the Council prioritises the safety and wellbeing of its employees, making them feel valued, involved and empowered.

4. Integrating Housing Service's into our approach to health and safety

In the first year, it is essential that a baseline audit is carried out within Housing Services so that the Council can fully understand the current position in terms of health and safety performance. From there, an action plan will be developed and steps taken to make improvements and integrate approaches.

5. Take action to minimise work related violence and aggression

The Council has seen an increase in incidences of workplace violence and aggression over recent years. This is a common theme across the public sector. However, as an employer, the Authority must ensure that it is taking all appropriate steps to protect the workforce. Improvements here will be supported via strengthened risk assessments, specialist training a clear zero tolerance culture and communications and identifying implementing best practice from elsewhere.

6. Take action to help reduce work related ill health, with a specific focus on mental health and stress

Incidences of work-related ill health are increasing across Great Britain, and the most reported causes are stress, depression, or anxiety. This is

reflected in the Council's sickness absence figures, where 39.16% of all long-term absences and 14.51% of all short-term absences in 2023-24 were related to mental wellbeing. In both cases, they were the top reason for absence.

The Council has recently produced a new stress risk assessment guide for managers and associated stress risk assessment templates. This latest guidance has been communicated to all staff along with guidance and information from outside bodies such as the HSE, but further communications will be issued to maintain awareness.

Further planned interventions include:
- The HR Team will work proactively to manage sickness absence, including making use of the EAP and Optima occupational health service. Also making available to all employees the Counselling and Family Centre where appropriate.
- Continue to raise awareness of support options through global communications.
- Supporting managers to proactively carry out individual stress risk assessments, wherever needed.
- A review of the Council's sickness absence policy
- Targeted responses to areas of specific concern as identified through absence data and the staff Pulse Survey.

7. Occupational health

The Council moved to a new, external occupational health provider in July 2023 and the aim over the next 3 years is to fully embed this new approach and ensure a high performing, high quality service.

The provider will also deliver a managed health surveillance programme, which is essential to identify ill health caused by work and to ensure employees in safety critical roles are fit to work. The Council will ensure all employees in scope are up to date with the relevant checks and develop an effective and smooth-running process.

8. Property

Work to deliver building condition surveys of all Council owned properties is underway as part of the Future Asset Programme (FAP). This is a large task that will need to be tackled in sections, beginning with the key properties used by employees to deliver Council services. It will allow a strategic approach to be progressed around the size and shape of the Council's future estate, informed in the first instance by health and safety assurance and the current state and sustainability of buildings. It is essential that the Council ensures buildings comply with all legal requirements including electrical safety, legionella, gas safety, fire safety and asbestos management. Work to assure compliance corporately has begun and is being led by the Facilities Management Team.

3   Strategy Context

3.1   The Council has based its health and safety management structures and arrangements on the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Executive's documents:

- Managing for Health and Safety (HSG 65)
- Leading health and safety at work (INDG417), issued jointly by the Institute of Directors and the Health and Safety Executive.
- Protecting people and places (HSE Strategy 2022-32)

4   Strategy Action Plan

4.1   Key Actions
The Strategy Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 sets out the key actions that will be undertaken as part of this strategy.

4.2   Performance Management and Monitoring
The Council will maintain a range of performance indicators (see Appendix 2) to enable:

- Development and maintenance of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, Strategy, Guidance and action plans.
- Monitoring of compliance with the Health and Safety Policy, Strategy and guidance.
- Monitoring that staff have received the appropriate Health and Safety training.
- Implementing initiatives and corrective action for areas of concern.

Delivery and amendment to the Strategy Action Plan will be monitored by the Director of People and Inclusion and formally reported to the Health and Safety JCC.

An annual corporate health and safety performance report will be formally presented to the Health and Safety JCC and Cabinet at the end of each financial year.

4.3   Roles and Responsibilities
The Chief Executive has the overall accountability for ensuring that Bury Council operates in a safe and healthy manner, however responsibility for coordinating its delivery lies with the Director of People and Inclusion and the Corporate Health and Safety Team.

Ultimately though, all employees have a responsibility for health and safety, and they are accountable for co-operating with the Council in meeting its obligations and taking all reasonable steps to protect people and resources.

4.4   Funding
Delivery of this strategy will be met using existing resources within the Health and Safety service and, where appropriate, elsewhere within the Council.

Where recommendations are made to services, any improvements must be sourced from the specific service budgets.

Appendix 1: Strategy Action Plan

Ongoing actions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2024-25				
▪ Review and update the health and safety guidance on the intranet (15% per year) ▪ Monitor incidents and make recommendations to counteract any identified trends or concerns. ▪ Monitor the implementation of recommendations arising from health and safety audits and inspections. ▪ Conduct an effective health surveillance programme ▪ Produce regular health and safety communications for the workforce	▪ 3-year health and safety improvement strategy developed ▪ Full council-wide risk assessment needs analysis complete ▪ All health surveillance up to date and a rolling programme started ▪ Training needs analysis undertaken and mandatory health and safety training plan in place for the Operations Department ▪ Audit School Crossing Patrol service	▪ First quarterly report 24/25 published ▪ Launch 3 year strategy – global communications ▪ Require all non-personal risk assessments to be stored centrally for sample checking and QA ▪ Ensure health and safety is effectively included in the procurement process ▪ Recruit H&S Advisor (Housing) ▪ Start audit of Repairs and Refurbishments (Housing Services)	▪ Second quarterly report 24/25 published ▪ Schools' model health and safety and annual compliance exercise ▪ Review of first aid provision within the Council ▪ Review of incident reporting process ▪ Complete audit of Repairs and Refurbishments (Housing Services) and produce an action plan ▪ Managed health surveillance programme up to date	▪ Third quarterly report 24/25 published ▪ Review of mental wellbeing within the Council ▪ Audit Highways service ▪ Training needs analysis undertaken and mandatory health and safety training plan in place for Housing Services ▪ Training session at Senior Managers Forum on how to complete a risk assessment, with supporting information they can cascade. ▪ All high risk staff to have received work-related violence and aggression (WRV&A) training
2025-26				
▪ Review and update the health and safety guidance on the intranet (15% per year)	▪ Annual report for 24-25 published ▪ Progress against 3 year strategy to be shared with the workforce with	▪ First quarterly report 25/26 published ▪ Training needs analysis undertaken and mandatory health and	▪ Second quarterly report 25/26 published ▪ Senior leaders to audit health and safety within their service areas (HST	▪ Third quarterly report 25/26 published ▪ Training needs analysis undertaken and mandatory health and

▪ Audit Council services (4 per year), developing action plans to address areas of concern. ▪ Monitor incidents and make recommendations to counteract any identified trends or concerns. ▪ Monitor the implementation of recommendations arising from health and safety audits and inspections. ▪ Conduct an effective health surveillance programme ▪ Produce regular health and safety communications for the workforce	health and safety campaign ▪ Senior leaders to require managers to involve staff and trade unions in all health and safety matters affecting them, including the review of risk assessments ▪ Quality check building condition survey	safety training plan in place across Health and Adult Care ▪ Quality check that all risk assessments are in the correct format then return and assist with corrective actions	will provide a checklist) and include staff and unions ▪ Repairs and Refurbishments (Housing Services) to have completed all actions from the audit action plan	safety training plan in place for all Council services
2026-27				
▪ Review and update the health and safety guidance on the intranet (15% per year) ▪ Audit Council services (4 per year), developing action plans to address areas of concern. ▪ Monitor incidents and make recommendations to counteract any	▪ Annual report for 25-26 published ▪ Review progress against this Strategy and take remedial action where needed over the year and respond to lessons learnt ▪ Progress against 3 year strategy to be shared with the workforce with	▪ First quarterly report 26/27 published ▪ 100% of non-personal risk assessments in a consistent format stored centrally	▪ Second quarterly report 26/27 published ▪ Review and consult to inform the next 3 year strategy	▪ Third quarterly report 26/27 published ▪ All health and safety training up to date and regular monitoring process in place

identified trends or concerns. ■ Monitor the implementation of recommendations arising from health and safety audits and inspections. ■ Conduct an effective health surveillance programme ■ Produce regular health and safety communications for the workforce	health and safety campaign			

Appendix 2: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI	Further information	Target	Baseline at 31/12/23	Outcome at 31/3/24
Compliance and risk assessment				
% return of risk assessment needs checkers from all Council services annually	RANC's last completed in Spring 2023	100%	Spring 23 = 100%	2 July 24 = 97.7% (86/88 services)
% of services who have up to date risk assessments in place and uploaded to the corporate storage portal for **all** the risks identified in their risk assessment needs checker	Corporate storage portal only made available from 2024	100%	N/A	2 July 24 = 21.6% (19/88 services)
% response to schools' health and safety assurance check	Issued to 33 maintained schools on 19 September 2023	100%		7 Mar 24 = 100% return (33 schools)
Training				
% compliance with mandatory health and safety e-learning	First issued to staff November 2023 % of Organisational Compliance for all contracted internal staff and agency staff	100%	7 Dec 23 = 33.3%	3 June 24 = 58.6%
% compliance with mandatory fire safety e-learning	% of Organisational Compliance for all contracted internal staff and agency staff	100%	7 Dec 23 = 64.6%	3 June 24 = 61.2%
% compliance with mandatory first aid awareness e-learning	% of Organisational Compliance for all contracted internal staff and agency staff	100%	7 Dec 23 = 53.4%	3 June 24 = 69.2%
% of employees who are up to date with mandatory work-related health and safety training	Monitoring process currently being developed for the Operations Department. This will then be rolled out across the Council. Monitoring to be in place by end of Sept 25.	100%	N/A	N/A
% of managers to have completed the Management Development Programme, including the health and safety module	Management development programme launched in January 2023	100% by March 2027	N/A	4 July 2024 = 45.7%

KPI	Further information	Target	Baseline at 31/12/23	Outcome at 31/3/24
Sickness absence				
Average days lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee		9.85	2022-2023 = 14.5	2023-2024 = 13.71
Occupational health and health surveillance				
Occupational Health appointments within 10 days of the referral		95%	N/A	2023-24 = 99.56%
Completion of health surveillance requirements for existing Council employees	Optima led health surveillance programme began 12 February 2024	100%		As at 24 April 24, 89.1% (295/331) have attended appointments.
Organisational culture				
% positive response to 'I have confidence in my employer's arrangements to protect my health and safety at work'	To be included in the October 24 pulse survey	95%	N/A	N/A
Incidents				
Number of accidents reported each year		Lower is better	2022-23 = 195	2023-24 = 203
Number of near misses reported each year		Higher is better	2022-23 = 7	2023-24 = 29
Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents each year		Lower is better	2022-23 = 6	2023-24 = 5
Guidance				
% of intranet guidance reviewed annually		15%	Over 15%	23.7% reviewed including stress, asbestos, fire safety, COSHH, health and safety tool, induction, risk assessments.

Bury
Council