DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1.0 DEFINITIONS

1.1 **"The Diocese"** refers to the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle including its constituent Parishes and Partnerships.

1.2 **'Diocesan personnel'** refers specifically to trustees, employees, Clergy, Religious and volunteers.

1.3 **"The Diocesan family"** refers to trustees, employees, Clergy, Religious and volunteers, including congregations and visitors.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 The policy is applicable to all activities within the Diocese.

2.2 The policy should be read in conjunction with the Diocesan Health and Safety Guidelines which are contained in the Diocesan Health and Safety Manual.

3.0 PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to state the commitment of the Bishop and the Diocesan Board of Trustee Directors towards health and safety.

3.2 It sets out the responsibilities of Clergy, employees and volunteers and summarises the arrangements in place to keep all of the Diocesan family safe.

4.0 BISHOP'S FOREWORD

4.1 The love, care and support that we offer to one another is central in all that we do as a Church community. It is therefore important to consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all those connected to our work and ministry by following the basic principles of good health and safety.

4.2 As a Diocese we have certain responsibilities under Health and Safety law whilst having a strong moral obligation to set a lead in this important area. Collectively we must work together to reduce health and safety risks and promote best practice to ensure our Clergy, employees, volunteers, parishioners and visitors remain safe. We can achieve this with everyone's commitment and involvement.

4.3 We have a framework of support and guidance to help all Clergy, staff and volunteers carry out our roles in the service and protection of others to the highest standards. This policy outlines the commitment of myself as Diocesan Bishop and my fellow Trustees to the health, safety and welfare of our Diocesan family. We all have a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that we do not put ourselves or others at undue risk by what we do, or what we fail to do.

4.4 It is particularly important that those who have a pastoral or leadership role ensure that everyone they are responsible for is aware of and follows both the Diocesan

Safeguarding Policy and the Diocesan Health and Safety Policy, arrangements and guidance.

4.5 Thank you in anticipation of your support for one another and the implementation of this Health and Safety Policy in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Right Reverend Stephen Wright
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle
September 2025

5.0 POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 The Board of Trustee Directors of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle accepts ultimate responsibility for health and safety and is committed to ensuring that this responsibility is effectively discharged throughout the Diocese. The Diocese is committed to preventing accidents and ill health by providing a safe and healthy working environment.

5.2 It is our objective to achieve and maintain health and safety standards which comply with legal requirements and may match or lead national best practice as a result of the application of proportionate risk controls. We will do this through a planning process which will set clear, measurable objectives and ensure progressive improvement.

5.3 Adequate control of the risks created by the Diocesan activities is a core function and we will ensure that health and safety is integrated into the Diocesan management systems and into all parish and other Diocesan activities. Appropriate resources will be provided to implement the policy. Periodic audits will be undertaken to measure the Diocesan health and safety management systems and performance against recognised standards.

5.4 The Board has delegated the primary responsibility for implementing this policy to the Chief Operating Officer but all members of the Clergy, employees and volunteers have an important contribution to make. The Diocese is committed to developing competence in health and safety management and practice at all levels. We recognise and value the contributions of all members of our church community and we will ensure that we maintain an effective means of communication and consultation on health and safety issues.

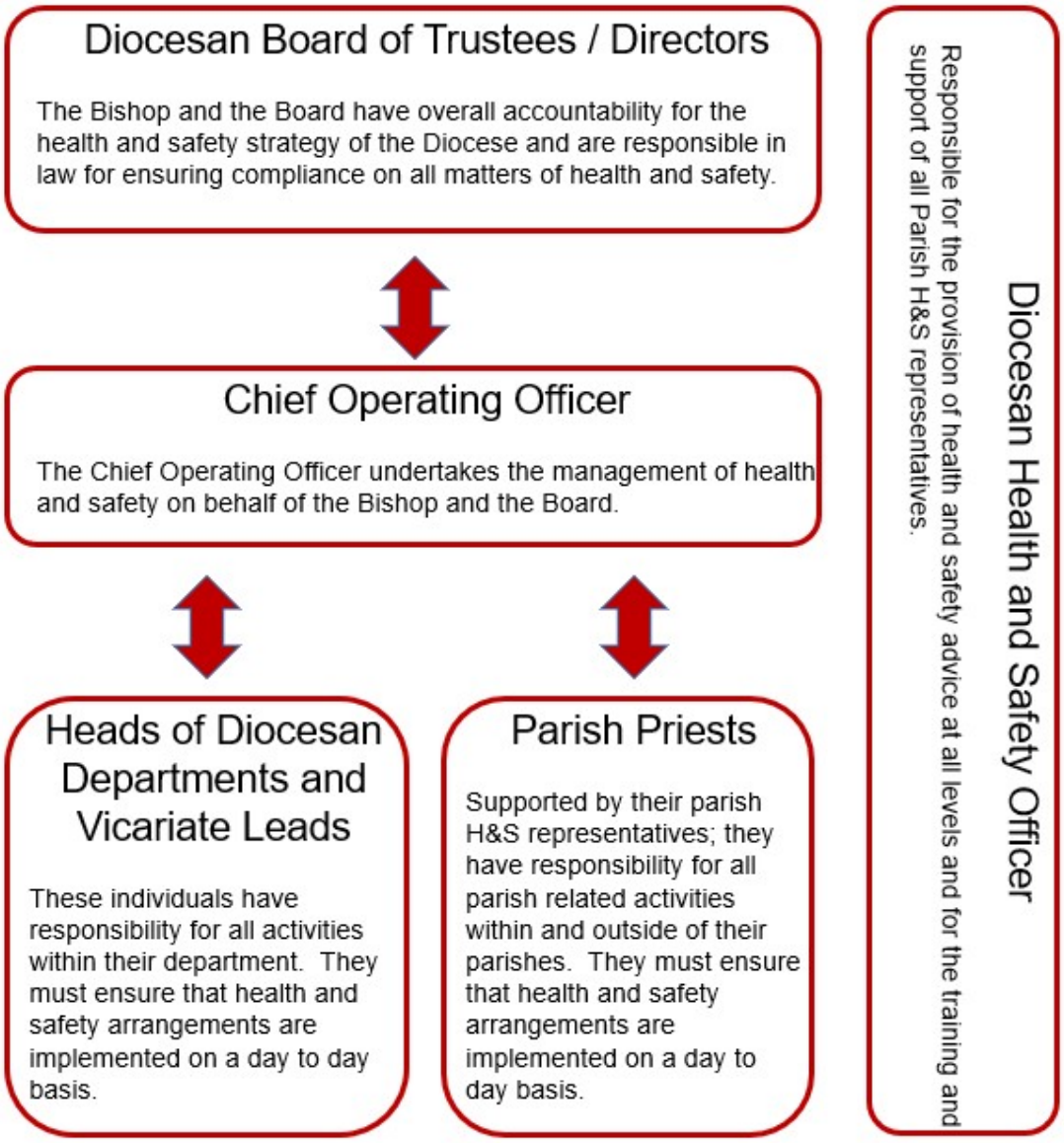
5.5 This policy will be reviewed annually, updated when necessary and any revisions brought to the attention of all Clergy, employees and volunteers.

Right Reverend Stephen Wright
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle
September 2025

Fiona Standfield
Chief Operating Officer

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 SUMMARY OF HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES



6.2 DIOCESAN BOARD OF TRUSTEE DIRECTORS

The Bishop and the Board have strategic oversight of all matters related to health and safety (H&S) for the Diocese and should seek assurance that effective arrangements are in place and are working. The information below details practical guidance that will assist in ensuring members of the Board satisfy themselves that the Diocese meets its H&S responsibilities.

6.2.1 PLAN

- Ensure that H&S matters are relayed in a timely manner to and from the Board.
- Review the Diocesan H&S Policy on a regular basis.
- Review the Diocesan H&S objectives/KPIs on a regular basis.
- Ensure that H&S appears regularly on the agenda of the Diocesan Board.
- Be aware of significant H&S risks faced by the Diocese.
- Consider the H&S implications of strategic decisions.
- Ensure that the emergency planning arrangements are kept up to date.

6.2.2 DO

- Seek assurances that H&S arrangements are adequately resourced.
- Risk control measures are in place and acted upon.
- There is an effective process to identify training and competency needs in keeping with H&S responsibilities.
- There is a process to review emergency and fire evacuation plans for effectiveness.
- There is a process for auditing H&S performance.
- There is a separate H&S Committee set up which reports to the Diocesan Board, chaired by a member of the Board to oversee H&S.
- The Diocese has access to competent H&S advice.
- There is a process for Clergy, employees and volunteers to be involved and engaged in decisions that affect their H&S.

6.2.3 CHECK

- Receive and reasonably evaluate leading and lagging data relevant to H&S; and where appropriate ask for data on process and competency indicators.
- Ensure that management systems allow the Board to receive assurances about all Diocesan activities (including partnerships and collaborations).

6.2.4 REVIEW

- To be satisfied that there are regular independent reviews of H&S across the Diocese.
- Be satisfied that lessons are learnt from accidents and near misses.
- Review audit processes to ensure that they are appropriate.
- Regularly review the Diocesan H&S risk profile.
- Respond to feedback and audit reports etc. and communicate actions taken.

6.3 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is accountable for the strategic management of H&S on behalf of the Bishop and the Board of Trustee Directors but delegates the responsibility for operational implementation to Parish Priests and Heads of Department and Vicariate Leads. The COO implements a process to gain assurances that these responsibilities are being fulfilled.

6.3.1 PLAN

- Establish a Diocesan H&S Committee.
- Sign up to the Diocesan H&S Policy statement as a demonstration of ownership and communicate its values throughout the Diocese.
- Agree how the policy will be measured, monitored and reported.
- Allocate sufficient resources to the management of H&S.
- Agree H&S strategy and objectives with the Episcopal Council and the Curia Senior Leadership team.
- Agree the H&S risk register by using a risk profiling exercise.
- Consider the H&S implications of strategic decisions.
- Determine what H&S risks should be included in the Diocesan risk register.
- Agree a Diocese-wide H&S competency framework.
- Agree the Diocese-wide H&S internal auditing programme based on the H&S risk profile.
- Ensure emergency procedures encompass all relevant risks.

6.3.2 DO

- Implement the Diocesan H&S Policy.
- Have regular meetings with a competent H&S professional (Diocesan H&S Officer).
- Define the membership and terms of reference of the Diocesan H&S Committee.
- Lead on campaigns to raise H&S awareness and behaviour change.
- Discuss H&S issues and performance with those who have H&S responsibilities.
- Lead by example, e.g. take an interest in H&S activities.
- On tours or visits; follow local procedures and ask about H&S issues.

6.3.3 CHECK

- Check that H&S processes are working.
- Review deployment of resources; e.g. are they sufficient and effective.
- Confirm that those with H&S responsibilities are aware of inspections and investigations in their areas and any resulting recommended actions.
- Take part in an inspection or investigation during the year.
- Check if you are delivering on your own H&S objectives.

6.3.4 REVIEW

- Review your H&S performance and that of others with H&S responsibilities.
- Share the results across the Diocese, as appropriate.
- Respond to reports, audits, committee recommendations and external stakeholders etc. and use the information to review your future H&S plans.

6.4 HEADS OF DEPARTMENT / VICARIATE LEADS

Heads of Departments / Vicariates Leads in the Diocese are responsible for implementing this H&S policy on a day to day basis within their area of responsibility. Some of the activities of departments may take place within the same area (e.g. Curia offices). In this case some of their responsibilities are shared with other Heads of Departments/Vicariate Leads.

6.4.1 PLAN

- Identify the H&S risks within their area and agree a risk register.
- Provide opportunities for all staff and volunteers to talk about H&S matters.

6.4.2 DO

- Put processes in place to ensure all activities are risk assessed & controls implemented.
- Support the safety culture within the area by setting an example of good H&S practice.
- Include H&S as a regular item on the agenda of team meetings.
- If appropriate, ensure that statutory examinations are completed and action taken.
- Record all accident/incident investigations and report to the Diocesan H&S Officer.
- Agree H&S competency needs of all staff and volunteers.
- Assess the H&S impact of new projects and activities at the planning stage.
- When purchasing equipment; consider the H&S requirements/implications.
- Consider H&S arrangements during procurement and engagement of contractors.
- If appropriate, ensure that all relevant statutory records and other documents concerning the provision, installation, testing and maintenance of equipment are kept.

6.4.3 CHECK

- Check that all area H&S processes are being carried out.
- Check that all actions from H&S processes are implemented.
- If appropriate, check that all statutory examinations have been carried out and actions closed out.
- Check that risk assessments have been carried out for all departmental activities.
- Seek advice from the Diocesan H&S Officer on H&S matters as required.

6.4.4 REVIEW

- Review risk management systems and arrangements regularly.
- Take action to implement recommendations from your risk management review.
- Consider information from internal and external sources to make improvements.

6.5 PARISH PRIESTS

Supported by their local Health and Safety Representative (H&SR); Parish Priests are responsible for implementing this H&S policy on a day to day basis. They are expected to implement the local safety management arrangements and manage H&S risks to protect employees, volunteers, congregation, visitors and any contractors working within the parish. Additionally, they should consider the H&S risks associated with any external parish activities.

6.5.1 PLAN

- Identify the H&S risks within the parish and make a list.
- Ensure that a H&SR is appointed for each church site to assist with H&S matters.
- Ensure that the H&SR has access to training and support by the Diocesan Health and Safety Officer.
- Ensure that the H&SR is provided with suitable and sufficient resource to carry out their role.
- Provide the opportunity for the H&SR, employees and volunteers to talk about H&S.

6.5.2 DO

- Put processes in place to ensure that all activities are risk assessed and control measures are implemented.
- Support the safety culture within the parish by setting an example of good H&S practice.
- Include H&S as a regular item on the agenda of the parish finance committee. (It is recommended that a H&SR attends the parish finance committee.)
- Ensure that statutory examinations are completed and appropriate action taken.
- Have regular meetings with the parish H&SR to discuss H&S matters.
- Record all accident/incident investigations and report to the Diocesan H&S Officer.
- Agree H&S competency needs of parish employees and volunteers.
- Assess the H&S impact of new projects and activities at the planning stage.
- When purchasing equipment; consider the H&S requirements/implications.
- Consider H&S arrangements during procurement and engagement of contractors.
- Ensure that all statutory records and other documents concerning the provision, installation, testing and maintenance of equipment are kept as appropriate.

6.5.3 CHECK

- Attend H&S inspections at appropriate intervals.
- Check that all actions from H&S processes are implemented.
- Check that all statutory examinations have been carried out and actions closed out.
- Check that risk assessments have been carried out and recorded for all parish activities.
- Seek advice from the Diocesan H&S Officer on H&S matters as required.

6.5.4 REVIEW

- Review risk management systems and arrangements regularly.
- Take action to implement recommendations from your risk management review.
- Consider information from internal & external sources to make improvements.

6.6 ALL OTHER CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

All other Clergy, employees and volunteers have a legal responsibility for the H&S of themselves and for others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. They must co-operate with the Diocesan H&S Policy and guidance as well as local procedures and arrangements to ensure that the Diocese is able to fulfil its statutory requirements.

6.6.1 PLAN

- Ensure that you understand your local H&S arrangements and procedures.
- Ensure that you understand any risk assessments for tasks that you carry out.

6.6.2 DO

- Comply with local H&S arrangements and procedures.
- Report any accidents/incidents/near misses/unsafe conditions to your Parish Priest or Head of Department/Vicariate Lead.
- Take part in any relevant H&S training.
- Use any equipment provided by the parish or Diocese to keep you safe. Report any faults to the Parish Priest or your Head of Department/Vicariate Lead.

6.6.3 CHECK

- That you are working to the most recent version of the local H&S arrangements and procedures.

6.6.4 REVIEW

- Contribute to the parish or departmental H&S review.
- Consider the work that you are doing and review your H&S training needs.

6.7 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES (H&SRs)

In addition to the general responsibilities of all volunteers; the parish H&SRs support the Parish Priest to carry out his H&S responsibilities.

It should be noted that the H&SR is not ultimately responsible for H&S matters.

6.8 DIOCESAN HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER

In addition to the general responsibilities of all employees; the Diocesan Health and Safety Officer is responsible for the provision of H&S advice at all levels across the Diocese.

This includes the responsibility to advise the Board and the COO regarding the H&S competency of the Diocesan clergy and employees.

Additionally, the post holder is responsible for the training and support of all of the parish H&SRs.

7.0 ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 All Diocesan personnel have a responsibility to behave in a way, which does not put themselves or others at risk of harm; this responsibility increases incrementally through the religious and managerial levels of the Diocese.

7.2 To enable Clergy, employees and volunteers to understand what is expected of them, the Diocese translates the duties laid upon it through legislation, civil law, canon law and its own expectations in three ways:

7.2.1 As the Diocesan H&S Policy Statement which sets out the Diocesan commitment to health and safety.

7.2.2 As a set of H&S responsibilities for each role.

7.2.3 As a series of arrangements which are documented in H&S Guidance. These documents set out what the Diocese expects to be achieved for each H&S topic.

7.3 A summary of each guidance document is provided in this arrangements section of the Policy. More detailed guidance is provided in the H&S Manual or is available from the Diocesan H&S Officer. A copy of the H&S Manual is held by each parish, and is also available on the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle website.

7.4 The responsibility to achieve H&S compliance is delegated through the existing religious and Diocesan line management structures.

7.5 Sometimes a topic requires a specific piece of H&S guidance to be followed, a particular form to be completed, or a certain level of training achieved. In this way all Clergy, employees, volunteers, congregation and visitors are protected from harm.7.6 These documents and the associated resulting actions combine with the responsibilities to form a health and safety management system.

7.7 Accident reporting, recording and investigating

- All accidents/incidents and near misses should be recorded, no matter how minor.
- Actions should be taken with a view to minimising the chance of a further similar incident occurring.
- A copy of all accident reports should be sent to the Diocesan H&S Officer at the earliest possible opportunity.
- If necessary, an investigation should be carried out by the Parish Priest or Head of Department/Vicariate Lead with the assistance of the Diocesan H&S Officer.
- All records should be held confidentially in the parish or Diocesan office and retained for at least 3 years.

Blank accident forms are available in the forms section of the H&S Manual.
Further advice is available in Guidance G1.

7.8 Asbestos management

- An asbestos survey should be carried out in all parish or Diocesan buildings to establish if there are any asbestos containing materials (ACMs).
- An asbestos register is in place for all parish or Diocesan buildings confirming the location and condition of all ACMs.
- If asbestos is identified or suspected, the recommendations contained within the asbestos register should be followed. Recommendations will typically include to

retain and monitor, retain and mitigate (e.g. encapsulation) or removal. The Diocesan Property Department can be contacted for further advice.
- The parish H&SR should make annual checks of the condition of any ACMs to ensure that there is no deterioration and it remains safe. Records should be kept.
- Information regarding the location of ACMs must be given to all contractors before they commence any building or maintenance works, however small.
- The asbestos register and all other related records should be kept in the parish H&S Manual located in the parish office and be readily accessible.

Blank ACM survey forms are available in the forms section of the H&S Manual.

Further advice is available in Guidance G2.

7.9 Building and maintenance works

- All works should be carried out in a safe manner by competent persons whether they are parish employees, volunteers or contractors.
- "Dangerous Work" must be completed by competent contractors with an appropriate level of insurance, examples include work on roofs, work with utilities (gas/electric/water), or work involving the application of heat.
- All contractors & parish H&SRs are required to co-operate and exchange information with each other to ensure that both parties remain safe.
- Some building, refurbishment and maintenance works may require compliance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, it is advisable to contact the Diocesan Property Department for advice.

Further advice is available in Guidance G3.

7.10 Buildings and grounds condition

- Parish buildings and grounds should be inspected on a regular basis so that they remain safe for everyone to use. This should be carried out at least annually by the parish H&SR but may be more frequent depending upon their condition.
- The inspections should be recorded using the forms provided and the records kept in the records section of the H&S Manual.
- The Diocesan Property Department will carry out a comprehensive quinquennial inspection and report the results to the parish.
- Outside of the formal inspections, if a defect is discovered it should be reported to the Parish Priest who may choose to include the Diocesan Property Department.

Blank inspection forms are available in the forms section of the H&S Manual.
Further advice is available in Guidance G4.

7.11 Communication and consultation

- Parish Priests should consult with their H&SR on a regular basis to offer support and ensure that local H&S arrangements are being carried out.
- Information should be provided to all of the parish community as required, to keep them safe e.g. signs, notices, training etc.
- The Diocese will hold regular H&S Committee meetings and will ensure that all relevant information is communicated to the parishes.
- The Diocesan H&S Officer will visit the parishes as often as possible to advise and consult and is always available for individual advice on H&S matters.

Further advice is available in Guidance G5.

7.12 People with a disability

- Reasonable adjustments should be made in all Diocesan premises/buildings to allow everyone to fully engage in the full range of parish/department activities.
- Individual needs should be taken into consideration and a local plan put in place to make reasonable adjustments to premises and introduce any other arrangements that may reasonably be required.
- In particular a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) should be put in place for any individual who requires additional assistance to leave the premises safely in any emergency situation.

Blank PEEP forms are available in the forms section of the H&S Manual. Further advice is available in Guidance G6.

7.13 Display screen equipment

- The Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy is in place and applies to all individuals classed as users. A user will typically use a computer for an hour or more each day on behalf of a Parish, or the Diocese.
- Assessments should be carried out on all computer workstations and other display screen equipment, (e.g. laptops and tablets) to reduce any risks to the lowest possible level.
- Any problems must be reported immediately to the Parish Priest or line manager to enable an appropriate solution to be found.
- All records should be held in the assessment section of the H&S Manual.

Blank DSE assessment forms are available in the forms section of the H&S Manual. Further advice is available in the DSE policy and in the H&S Manual section G7.

7.14 Driving for Diocesan or church activities

- The Diocese is committed to ensuring that all Clergy, employees and volunteers who are required to drive for Diocesan or church activities do so in a safe and responsible manner.
- Diocesan personnel who 'drive for the church' (visiting parishioners, travelling to meetings, travelling to other church buildings, taking Holy Communion to parishioners etc.) must be authorised to do so by their Parish Priest or Head of Department.
- On an annual basis, employees and volunteers driving on behalf of a Parish or the Diocese must confirm they can drive legally on behalf of the Diocese; they must provide evidence of:
    - a full driving licence
    - suitable cover on their personal motor insurance

Employees must submit their supporting evidence via Breathe HR. Parish volunteers should submit their annual declaration to the Parish Priest, or the H&SR.

Further advice is included in section G8 of the H&S Manual, along with the annual declaration form (F8).

7.15 Electricity

- The fixed electrical system should be inspected and tested every 5 years by a competent contractor who is a member of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC), Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) or other approved body. This work will be organised by the Diocesan Property Department but records should be held by the parishes.
- All parish employees and volunteers should be encouraged to report any deficiencies with the electrical system. All damage and faults should be dealt with immediately by a competent contractor
- Testing of portable appliances should be carried out on a rolling bi-annual programme.

Further advice is available in Guidance G9.

7.16 Events and large gatherings

- H&S issues are integral to the planning and delivery of events organised by the parish or the Diocese.
- A risk assessment should be developed for the event and regularly reviewed to ensure it remains accurate and up to date.
- Parishes should establish a process for the planning and delivery of parish events held both on parish premises and away from the parish. Such events include fetes and celebrations which are open to members of the public and where larger than usual numbers are likely to attend.

Further advice is available in Guidance G10.

7.17 Fire

- The Diocesan Property Department will arrange for a fire risk assessment of all parish buildings by a competent person.
- Each parish is responsible for making sure a regular review of the fire risk assessment takes place and actions highlighted are completed.
- All reasonable measures will be taken to prevent a fire occurring. In the event of fire, the safety of life will override all other considerations.
- A fire evacuation plan must be in place at each site and will be regularly reviewed. The plan should be practised on a regular basis.
- Regular checks should take place to make sure the level of risk associated with fire is at an acceptable level, and any fire safety equipment is operational. Examples of checks will include:
  - Escape routes clear and accessible
  - Smoke alarms, fire detection and emergency lighting is operation (if fitted)
  - Candles are used appropriately, with control measures applied
  - Other checks may be appropriate

Further advice is available in Guidance G11.

7.18 First aid

- The parish H&SR should review the first aid arrangements to ensure first aid supplies are suitable for the size and use of the premises. As a minimum the premises should have a basic first aid kit in line with guidance in the H&S Manual.
- A person should be appointed to take charge of first aid arrangements.
- Notices should be displayed with details of first aid provision.
- Records should be kept of all first aid treatment using the accident form.

Further advice is available in Guidance G12.

7.19 Food

- Parishes should follow good hygiene practice for the buying, storage, preparation and service of food.
- Specific local practices should be established for all food events and all food handlers should be made aware of how they can keep everyone safe.
- All food handling areas and surfaces should be fit for purpose, kept clean and well maintained.
- Following training, all food handlers should be authorised by the Parish Priest or his authorised delegate.
- Depending upon the extent of the food offering, it may be appropriate to seek registration with the Local Authority.

Further advice is available in Guidance G13.

7.20 Hazardous substances

- Hazardous and dangerous substances may be stored and used in parish properties; however, guidance provided by the manufacturer must be followed. Hazardous substances may include cleaning substances, glues and paints.
- Activities at parishes may generate hazardous or dangerous substances such as during building and maintenance works.

Further advice is available in Guidance G14.

7.21 Heating systems and appliances

- Heating equipment should be checked regularly (at least yearly) by a competent person; e.g. a Gas Safety Registered engineer for gas equipment.
- Records of checks should be kept on file and supplied to the Diocese.
- Any recommended remedial works should be implemented.
- Portable heating appliances should be avoided wherever possible.
- Hot surfaces should be protected by a suitable guard.

Further advice is available in Guidance G15.

7.22 Legionella management

The health risk presented by the growth of legionella bacteria in water systems is very unlikely to be an issue in the vast majority of Diocesan properties.

- You should carry out an initial screening to decide if legionella is a problem. A legionella screening form (F16) is available in the forms section of the H&S Manual.

- If necessary, the Diocesan Property Department will introduce a scheme of control measures to control the risk.

Further advice is available in Guidance G16.

7.23 Lifting equipment

There is very little lifting equipment across the Diocese. Most lifting equipment will be brought into churches by contractors who are carrying out a specific task.

- Where there is a lift on site, it must be inspected and maintained at least twice a year, in line with guidance.
- Exceptions to this may be the lifting chains attached to a sanctuary lamp or suspension wires holding large crucifixes. These types of lifting and suspension equipment should be checked annually by a competent person.
- All lifting operations associated with a specific task must be planned, supervised and assessed for risk. This will usually be carried out by the contractor.

Further advice is available in Guidance G17.

7.24 Lighting

- Lighting should be suitable for the tasks being carried out.
- Lights should be regularly maintained so that everyone can move around safely reducing the likelihood of an accident. E.g. trip in poor lighting conditions.
- Regular function checks should be carried out; especially outside.
- If faults are found, all remedial works should be completed in a timely manner.
- Only authorised volunteers or contractors are allowed to replace lamps or carry out repairs to light fittings.
- Records of maintenance, repairs and inspections should be held locally.

Further advice is available in Guidance G18.

7.25 Manual handling

- The Parish or Department/Vicariate should aim to eliminate lifting and handling objects as far as reasonably practicable.
- If this is not possible, the task should be assessed by considering the task, the individual, the load, and the working environment. (TILE)
- This should result in a safe way to lift or handle the load.
- Where a safe way cannot be found to complete a manual handling task, the activity must not be completed until further guidance is sought from the Diocesan H&S Officer.
- If manual handling is a regular part of the role of an employee or volunteer, training should be provided.
- Good practice:
  - think before doing the task; plan the task
  - move obstacles from the intended route, including opening doors
  - make sure your vision is not blocked by the object being carried
  - how heavy is the object? – get help if too heavy
  - bend knees whilst keeping back as straight as possible
  - ensure a stable safe footing and the ground is even and not slippery

- carry the object close to the body

Further advice is available in Guidance G19.

7.26 Personal safety and working alone

- The aim of the parish or department is to ensure that all employees and volunteers are provided with a safe working environment.
- Full consideration should be given to the risks of working in parish/departmental buildings, travelling between these buildings, working alone, accepting people into parish/departmental buildings, visiting people's homes and handling cash and valuables.
- A contact strategy should be in place for individuals who work alone.
- Risk assessments should be carried out and procedures created to establish safe ways of working alone.
- The safe ways of working should be communicated to employees and volunteers.
- All concerns should be reported to the Parish Priest or Head of Department/Vicariate Lead.

Further advice is available in Guidance G20.

7.27 Plant and equipment

- Any plant or equipment should be suitable for the purpose for which it is intended and regularly maintained and serviced.
- The following guidance applies:
  - do not use any equipment if training has not been received
  - do not use the plant or equipment for a purpose for which it was not intended
  - always switch off the plant and equipment before any adjustments are made
  - always check the equipment is in safe working condition, correctly adjusted and without any defects before use
  - always wear the appropriate personal protective equipment
  - all defects must be reported to the Parish Priest or the Head of Department/Vicariate Lead

Further advice is available in Guidance G21.

7.28 Pregnant workers

- The Diocese recognises that the general precautions taken to protect the H&S of Diocesan personnel may not in all cases be sufficient to protect new and expectant mothers.
- Employees should inform their line manager and the Department for Human Resources of their pregnancy at the earliest possible opportunity and make it clear if they wish this information to remain confidential.
- A risk assessment should be carried out and if necessary additional control measures should be put into place.

Blank risk assessment forms are available in the forms section of the H&S Manual.
Further advice is available in Guidance G22.

7.29 Risk assessment

- All parish/departmental/vicariate tasks and activities undertaken by employees or volunteers should be assessed for hazards. Each parish should complete the Risk Profile document F23, to help decide if any formal risk assessments are required.
- A risk assessment will typically include:
  - description of the identified hazard
  - who is at risk?
  - what controls are in place to reduce the risk
  - whether additional controls are needed
  - what action is required, who will take it and by when
  - a review process

Blank assessment forms are available in the forms section of the H&S Manual. Further advice is available in Guidance G23.

7.30 Slips, trips and falls

- All parish and departmental premises should be regularly checked to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls. These checks include:
  - floors and stairs in buildings
  - driveways, paths and steps in grounds
  - handrails associated with steps and ramps
  - features placed to highlight hazards e.g. warning signs, warning tape, contrasting material
  - guarding to protect persons falling from height
  - temporary hazards e.g. maintenance works, moving offices
  - lighting; in particular external lighting on steps, walkways and paths
- All employees and volunteers are encouraged to report all defects to the Parish Priest or Head of Department so that action can be taken.
- All inspection records should be kept by the parish or the department.

A 6 monthly inspection form is available in the H&S Manual and further advice is available in Guidance G24.

7.31 Working at height

- The parish or department will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all employees or volunteers who have to work at height can do so safely.
- Where possible working at height should be avoided and other ways of completing the task should be explored.
- Where it is not possible to avoid working at height, a risk assessment should be carried out and control measures put in place.
- Working at height equipment must be regularly inspected and checked before use.
- If in doubt; it may be appropriate for a competent contractor to carry out the work.

Further advice is available in Guidance G25.

8.0 CONTACTS

8.1 Any queries regarding the Health and Safety Policy should be referred by post to the Diocesan Health and Safety Officer, St Cuthbert's House, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE15 7PY; or by telephone on 07483012611.

9.0 COMPLIANCE

9.1 Compliance with this policy is mandatory for Diocesan employees, volunteers and agents. Such personnel are responsible for knowing and understanding this policy.

9.2 Where violation of this policy is found to be through wilful disregard or negligence, Diocesan employees, volunteers and agents may be subject to a disciplinary process.

10.0 APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION

Name	Role	Date
Author: Michael McElroy	Diocesan Health and Safety Adviser	February 2021
Reviewer: Jonathan Henry	Diocesan Health and Safety Officer	September 2023
Reviewer: Jonathan Henry	Diocesan Health and Safety Officer	September 2024
Reviewer: Jonathan Henry	Diocesan Health and Safety Officer	September 2025
Approved:	Diocesan Board	September 2025

11.0 CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Date	Reason	Initials
2	July 2022	New leadership and new Health and Safety Officer	JH
3	Sept 2023	New Foreword added by Bishop Stephen Wright	JH
4	Sept 2024	Minor changes	JH
5	Sept 2025	Minor changes	JH

12.0 REVIEW

This policy is due for review in September 2026.