**Vibration at Work Policy**

**Policy Purpose**

Vibration can cause harm to the hands and arms through the use of vibrating tools and equipment at work. It leads to Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome or Vibration Induced White Finger, and can lead to or affect Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

This is the Council’s policy on vibration at work. It aims to make sure:

* work activities involving exposure to vibration are adequately controlled to prevent damage to health
* safety risks from vibration are adequately controlled.

Document Control

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Implementation date |  |
| Author | Chris Newbold, Health and Safety Team |
| Equality impact assessment date |  |
| Version Control | 1.2 - New policy |
| Review required |  |

**Policy application**

1. The policy applies to:

* work activities undertaken by Council employees, contractors, volunteers and agency workers and the locations they may visit in the course of their work, and
* members of the public who may be affected by our work activities.

**Principles**

1. The Council will comply with the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005.
2. Employees must not be exposed to harmful levels of vibration. If vibration levels reach legal exposure limit values, then protective action must be taken **immediately**.
3. Directorates must devise, implement and monitor appropriate local arrangements to meet the requirements of this policy, and manage any risks from vibration at work. These arrangements **must** include the long-term storage of risk assessments, vibration measurement data and action plans.
4. Risk assessments must be carried out and recorded when any employee or group of employees is exposed to vibration at legal action levels. Also personal and specific risk assessments **must** be completed for employees highlighted as at risk with or without known symptoms of Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome, HAVS. Risk assessments must be reviewed regularly (at least annually), whenever there are legislative changes, significant alterations to work activities, equipment or arrangements and when individuals report signs and symptoms of hand-arm vibration.
5. Action to reduce vibration levels must:

* aim to eliminate or reduce vibration to levels that are as low as reasonably practicable
* follow the standard hierarchy of control. This means organisational and technical measures which give collective protection should be implemented first, whenever possible.

1. Monitoring systems will be introduced to test the effectiveness of control measures used to manage any risks from vibration at work. These will include supervisory and management checks, as well as periodic audits by the Health and Safety Team.
2. Only competent individuals will carry out vibration measurements used for risk assessments or give advice on risk control measures.
3. Any equipment used to measure vibration levels must meet the requirements of current regulations and standards.
4. All equipment, including dampers and handle grips, provided for work activities **must** be maintained in good condition. Employees must report any defects to supervisors and managers as soon as possible. Maintenance records must also be kept.
5. Procurement decisions about buying or hiring equipment, machinery and power tools must include an evaluation of the vibration levels they’re likely to create. The equipment least likely to cause hand-arm damage should always be selected unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise. Procurement decisions and rationale must be recorded.
6. Risk assessment findings will be used to identify employees and job roles that require health surveillance for hand-arm vibration.
7. Baseline health surveillance **must** be carried out before a new employee, or an existing employee, or long-term agency staff is employed for the first time on activities involving the use of vibrating tools and equipment*.* This might be as part of the recruitment process to jobs involving high vibration levels or when tasks or equipment change. The frequency of health surveillance will be determined by the vibration risk assessment and / or Occupational Health.
8. Employees, including agency workers, must be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep themselves warm in cold or wet environments.
9. Employees must cooperate with procedures, measures and testing aimed at preventing vibration-induced harm.
10. Employees will receive appropriate information, instruction and training on vibration at work. This will vary according to role, risk and individual needs.
11. Information on likely vibration levels will be shared with contractors, agency workers and volunteers.

**Roles and responsibilities**

1. Everyone shares a responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, and for that of their colleagues. Appendix 1 details individual responsibilities under this policy. The Corporate Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent outlines the main roles and responsibilities that underpin all health and safety policies.
2. A separate guidance document for managers is available on iDerby and the Schools’ Information Portal. See paragraph 20.

**Support and information**

1. Occupational Health (OH) gives advice and support to managers and employees on health issues, including vibration-induced harm. They also carry out health surveillance. Contact OH by:

* calling 01332 **640543**, or
* emailing [occupational.healthservice@derby.gov.uk](mailto:occupational.healthservice@derby.gov.uk).

1. The [Health and Safety Team](https://iderby.derby.gov.uk/occupational-health-and-safety/meet-the-team/) (HST) provides advice and training on vibration at work. Contact HST by:

* calling 01332 **640748**, or
* emailing [employee.healthandsafety@derby.gov.uk](mailto:employee.healthandsafety@derby.gov.uk)

The team has also developed a range of documents to help managers and employees. Copies can be found on the Occupational Health and Safety pages on [iDerby](https://iderby.derby.gov.uk/occupational-health-and-safety/) and the [Schools’ Information Portal](https://sip.derby.gov.uk/restricted/ohs/), or by contacting the HST.

1. The Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 and supporting information and guidance, published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), can be found on their website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/index.htm>.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Strategic and Service Directors**

1. Strategic Directors and their Senior Management Teams are responsible for ensuring their departments meet the requirements of this policy. To do this they must…

* Oversee and actively monitor the development and implementation of departmental arrangements and action plans.
* Show their positive and visible commitment to ensuring employees are not exposed to harmful levels of vibration.

**Heads of Service and Managers**

1. Heads of Service and Managers must…

* Carry out and ensure suitable and sufficient vibration risk assessments are undertaken on any service activities that are likely to involve vibration at or above the exposure action value of 2.5 m/s2 A(8).
* Carry out suitable and sufficient personal risk assessments for those employees with identified symptoms of Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome.
* Set up robust arrangements for the long-term storage of risk assessments, vibration measurement data, action plans, plant maintenance, PPE supplied, inspections, health surveillance and details of information, instruction and training given.
* Involve staff and their health and safety representatives in the risk assessment process and in the development of risk control measures.
* Ensure vibration is reduced to as low a level as is reasonably possible, prioritising organisational and technical measures before the introduction of personal protection ones.
* Ensure where PPE is introduced that it is suitable and effective to make sure that hands are kept warm and dry.
* Develop and implement vibration controls and vibration action plans with clear priorities and timescales.
* Ensure no employee is exposed above the daily exposure limit value of 5 m/s2 A(8).
* Mark or label tools and equipment with appropriate tagging to identify risk and to indicate the maximum time limit for using them.
* Organise information, instruction and training to those who could potentially be exposed to vibration at the exposure action level.
* Ensure that, if duties under this policy are delegated to others, they are competent to undertake them.
* Consider and assess the vibration levels of equipment **before** they purchase or hire it.
* Implement maintenance programmes for equipment which generate high vibration levels.
* Ensure work which generates high vibration levels is regularly supervised and monitored to make sure vibration controls are implemented and effective.
* Provide information on likely vibration levels within their services to contractors, agency workers and volunteers.
* Identify employees who require health surveillance based on the assessment of vibration risk, and provide the details to Occupational Health.
* Act on advice from Occupational Health if signs of hand-arm vibration syndrome have been noted.
* Report identified symptoms of hand arm vibration syndrome and carpal tunnel syndrome to the Health and Safety Team immediately.
* Act on advice from the Health and Safety Team if inspections or audits identify failures in vibration controls or if legal requirements are not being met.

**Employees**

1. Employees must…

* Help managers to complete vibration risk assessments and develop effective protective measures.
* Comply with vibration control measures designed to reduce vibration exposure and minimise risks to health.
* Tell their manager about any health concerns they have, including symptoms that may be linked to workplace vibration exposure.
* Report immediately any faulty or damaged tools or equipment.
* Use equipment, including PPE, correctly.
* Attend Occupational Health appointments and participate in health surveillance.
* Attend and participate in training.
* Complete vibration monitoring forms accurately when requested to do so.

**Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)**

1. HSRs have legal rights in the workplace. These include the right to:

* Be consulted about any planned changes that could affect their members’ health, safety and wellbeing, HSWb, such as vibration control measures and equipment procurement decisions
* Monitor and review policies, procedures and directorate / departmental arrangements
* Investigate vibration hazards, cases of vibration-related harm and complaints reported to them by their members
* Do inspections and take copies of any documents linked to HSWb in the workplace.

**Occupational Health**

1. Occupational Health will…

* Undertake or provide health surveillance for those employees identified as being at risk.
* Record and store medical records, including from vibration health surveillance.
* Provide reports and advice to managers relating to the health effects of vibration.
* Report immediately to the Health and Safety Team any cases of hand-arm vibration syndrome identified as requiring reporting under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

**Health and Safety Advisers**

1. Health and Safety Advisers will…

* Provide advice to managers on all aspects of vibration control, including vibration measurement, risk assessments and action plans, vibration protective measures and training.
* Periodically audit and report on departmental vibration management systems and arrangements.
* Assist in the investigation of reported incidents of workplace vibration induced harm.
* Report cases of HAV’s and CTS to the HSE within the required timescales required by RIDDOR.