

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

MAY 2017

Part 1: Statement of intent

The Chief Executive, management and staff of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) are committed to achieving and maintaining a high level of health and safety at work, complying with all relevant legislation and continuously seeking to improve our management of this important aspect of our operations. We will strive to provide effective management of health and safety risks at all workplaces and fieldwork sites where there are NERC staff and ensure co-operation between management, staff and other employers to this end. We will discharge our health and safety duty of care and legal obligations to students and other non-NERC personnel who are involved with or may be affected by our activities. We will produce clear policies, procedures and guidance which will be regularly reviewed and improved to cover NERC staff and other persons under NERC control wherever they work and ensure a consistent approach throughout NERC. Health and safety is a line management responsibility.

The aims will be met by implementing and maintaining a health and safety management system that will include:

- Assigning clear management responsibilities
- Planning safety activities and setting clear objectives
- Assessing and regularly reviewing risks in advance of any significant personal exposure to identify suitable precautions
- Eliminating or reducing risks by implementing appropriate, effective control measures
- Appointing suitable competent persons
- Providing appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision
- Regularly reviewing and monitoring our health and safety management and performance
- Providing suitable occupational health support and, where necessary, health surveillance
- Learning from experience to continuously improve our health and safety best practice
- Promulgating best practice by feedback from sites and liaising with other organisations
- Providing and maintaining effective routes of consultation and open channels of communication with our employees and others who are affected by this policy
- Co-operating and co-coordinating activities with other employers who share the same workplace
- Gaining accreditation to BS/OHSAS 18001 (or its successor ISO 45001) in all research centres where NERC staff are employed.

It will be ensured that there are adequate resources for implementation of this Policy.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and kept up to date in light of any significant changes to legislation and / or operational conditions.

Part 2 of this statement gives details of the organisation for achieving our aims.

Part 3 lists the arrangements, Policy, Procedures and Guidance and other key documents.


Signed:

Date: 5th June 2017

Prof Duncan Wingham, NERC Chief Executive

Part 2: Organisation for Health and Safety

To ensure that the aims set out in the statement of intent are effective in promoting safe and healthy workplaces and that both the organisation and employees are able to comply, as a minimum, with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant legislation, the following organisation has been established and responsibilities assigned.

1. NERC CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The NERC Chief Executive (CE) has ultimate responsibility for Health and Safety in the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). As chair of the NERC Management Board, the Accounting Officer and most senior member of staff within the legal entity the CE has the duty to make sure NERC meets its health and safety obligations and that board members take due account of health and safety when making their management decisions. The CE will ensure that:

- Adequate resources both in personnel and material are made available to ensure that we meet our health and safety obligations
- Health and safety is a standing item on the agenda for NERC Management Board (NMB) and Centre Assurance Board (CAB) meetings
- The NMB regularly reviews health and safety performance.

2. NERC CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The NERC Chief Operating Officer (COO) is the appointed board member with responsibility for health and safety. The COO will chair the NERC Safety Management Team and the NERC Health and Safety Committee. The COO will act as the 'champion' for health and safety at board level. The NERC Health and Safety Advisor will report to the COO.

3. DIRECTORS and NOMINATED SENIOR MANAGERS

All NERC Directors and Nominated Senior Managers have health and safety duties and take a lead role in ensuring that a positive health and safety culture is promoted and maintained in their areas of responsibility. Nominated Senior Managers will be appointed by each research centre and Head Office with assigned responsibility for overseeing health and safety in their part of the organisation. The Nominated Senior Managers with responsibility for health and safety will ensure that the strategic importance of a positive health and safety culture is understood in their part of the organisation and that NERC Policy, Procedures and Guidance are implemented and followed as appropriate.

4. NERC SAFETY MANAGEMENT TEAM

The NERC Safety Management Team (SMT) is responsible for the management and planning of health and safety across NERC. The SMT is comprised of the Nominated Senior Managers with responsibility for health and safety from NERC, its research centres and the closely related research institutes who have agreed to abide by this Policy. Each individual SMT member is the Nominated Senior Manager with primary day-to-day responsibility for health and safety within their specific area. The SMT will: advise and assure the CE and the Centre Directors on health and safety, review health and safety performance; oversee the NERC Safety Management System; oversee the Safety Management Group (SMG); provide guidance for NERC competent

health and safety persons; consider learning points from significant accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses; report important health and safety issues to NMB and, where necessary, to the Centre Directors; set corporate health and safety objectives and approve NERC Health and Safety Policy, Procedures and Guidance after two-way communication with the NERC Health and Safety Committee (NHSC).

5. NERC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The NHSC is the formal mechanism for consulting staff on health and safety issues and planned improvements or changes to the safety management system. The committee is comprised of the SMT as official side and appointed safety representatives from Union side, supported by corporate NERC Health and Safety staff, the NERC Welfare Advisor and nominees from the SMG. The NERC COO is the appointed NERC Director with responsibility for health and safety and is a member of the NMB and all CABs and will chair both the SMT and NHSC. The NHSC will, amongst other matters, consider reports, review training, consider accidents and statistics, endorse Policy, Procedures and Guidance produced by the SMG and assist in developing guidance on safe methods of working.

6. NERC SAFETY MANAGEMENT GROUP

The NERC SMG, comprising the full-time professional Health and Safety Advisors from all components of NERC and the chair of Union side safety representatives, is responsible for advising the SMT and drafting NERC Health and Safety Policy, Procedures and Guidance for consideration by SMT. In addition, the SMG is to establish, maintain and develop a safety management system, check compliance, plan improvements, monitor performance, review accidents, review audits, identify and implement training.

7. MANAGERS

A line manager is “any member of staff who supervises at least one other member of staff or co-worker or manages a significant area of work”.

All managers must:

- a. Identify hazards associated with the operations for which they are responsible
- b. Ensure that the health and safety risks created by those hazards have been assessed and that appropriate precautions to adequately control them have been put in place for all activities under their control, wherever their staff may work
- c. Manage staff and co-operate with peers to enable a positive safety culture to be promoted and maintained throughout the organization, ensuring safety training needs are identified for their staff and safety courses attended
- d. Be accountable to their line manager for health and safety issues under their control
- e. Report to their manager on the discharge of these responsibilities
- f. Ensure accidents, incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences, occupationally related illnesses and occupational health problems involving their staff have been investigated as appropriate and actions to prevent their recurrence identified

- g. Implement recommendations for improved control of risk and other remedial actions as agreed with senior managers and appointed competent health and safety persons
- h. Have any health and safety responsibilities described in their job plan / description and be assigned objectives on these in their appraisal process if they fulfil an important role.

8. STAFF

All staff, including managers, must:

- a. Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the safety of other persons who might be affected by what they do, or don't do; to co-operate with their employer on health and safety issues and not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health and safety
- b. Co-operate with managers in carrying out safety arrangements
- c. Use machinery, equipment, dangerous substances and safety devices (including personal protective equipment) safely, properly and report any defects, failure or loss
- d. Comply with the requirements of risk assessments and report it to their manager as soon as possible if they consider a risk assessment's review or modification is necessary
- e. Report accidents, incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences, occupationally related illnesses and occupational health problems to the locally recognised system
- f. Attend safety training as required
- g. Inform their manager, appointed competent person or appointed safety representative of any concerns about health and safety
- h. Have any health and safety responsibilities described in their job description and be assigned objectives on these in their appraisal process if they fulfil an important safety role.

9. CENTRE ASSURANCE BOARDS

The Centre Assurance Boards (CABs) meet at least twice a year for each research centre to provide assurance to the CE, part of which will be on the health and safety performance of the centre including reporting on serious health and safety risks and responses to, or prevention of, serious or reportable occurrences. The COO, who is the assigned NERC Director with responsibility for health and safety, is a member of all CABs. Where the NMB requires actions by research centres with regard to health and safety, this will be communicated directly and implementation reviewed via the next CAB or SMT meeting or as appropriate.

10. LOCAL SAFETY COMMITTEES

Local safety committees will be established in each research centre and Head Office and are an important element in meeting the need for consultation with employees and must:

- a. Monitor all aspects of health and safety arrangements for the area and activities within their remit

- b. Consider reports from safety advisors, other specialist advisors and (where relevant) other safety committees
- c. Provide the normal route for discussion and consultation on health and safety matters between management and employee representatives
- d. Consider and make recommendations for improvements in health and safety arrangements in their area and, where appropriate, for consideration by NERC Health and Safety Committee
- e. Meet at least twice a year.

11. HEALTH and SAFETY ADVISORS

The NERC Corporate Health and Safety Advisor is the appointed competent person for NERC, reporting to the COO and:

- a. Acts as the NERC competent person and 'Head of Profession' for health and safety but does not directly manage the centre health and safety advisors
- b. Advises and assists directors, managers, safety professionals and staff on health and safety
- c. Oversees the implementation and management of the NERC Safety Management System and development of the arrangements for health and safety
- d. Provides training for NERC managers and directors on health and safety matters
- e. Provides corporate auditing on NERC's health and safety performance to provide assurance to the NERC SMT, CE, COO and NERC Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- f. Chairs the NERC Safety Management Group
- g. Supports the NERC Safety Management Team and NERC Health and Safety Committee.

Centre Health and Safety Advisors are appointed as competent persons for each centre advising the senior appointed person for health and safety within their centre. They comprise both full time safety professionals and part time Local Safety Advisors (LSAs) and:

- h. Provide competent and informed advice for management and staff
- i. Establish and administer the safety management system for their area of responsibility
- j. Investigate and keep records of accidents, incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences, occupationally related illnesses and occupational health problems
- k. Ensure details of reportable events as required by legal codes are submitted to the relevant regulatory authority and information provided to local management, NERC Corporate Health and Safety and Safety Representatives
- l. Supply management with information and trends on health and safety performance
- m. Keep management informed of good practice and proposed legislation

- n. Advise managers on the development of policy, procedures and guidance
- o. Help management to carry out audits and inspections
- p. Take part in health and safety committee meetings
- q. Work with managers to promote awareness of health and safety throughout their sphere of influence
- r. Issue a prohibition for any work areas they believe to be unsafe
- s. Help represent their part of the organisation in any dealings with the health safety regulatory and enforcing authorities
- t. Liaise with the NERC Corporate Health and Safety Advisor.

12. SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

Safety Representatives are appointed by recognised trade unions to represent employees on health and safety matters under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and are consulted in discussions on issues that affect the health and safety of staff. They have representation on the SMG, NHSC and local safety committees. It has been agreed that for the purposes of consultation on health and safety matters under the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, appointed trade union safety representatives will represent all staff across NERC research centres and closely related research institutes.

13. OTHER PERSONS WORKING UNDER NERC CONTROL

Students and other persons who are not employees but work under the direct control of NERC staff will be treated in the same way as if they were employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. They will be afforded the same protection and have the same responsibilities for their own and other person's health and safety as other NERC employees.

14. CONTRACTORS, COLLABORATORS AND CONSULTANTS etc.

Other parties who are working on NERC premises such as contractors, visiting scientists, collaborators and consultants but who are not NERC employees and are not working under the direct control of NERC staff will be informed of the high standards required of them in relation to health and safety. They will be monitored on their compliance with all aspects of achieving those standards. They will be expected to follow NERC Safe Systems of Work where agreed as appropriate, receive training, provide risk information on their work to NERC as required and information where necessary and ensure their own safety and the safety of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

Part 3: Arrangements for Health and Safety - NERC operational procedures

The arrangements for health and safety that establish the minimum standards for health and safety which are expected to be applied across NERC are contained in [NERC policies, procedures and guidance notes](#).

Individual research centres may establish their own Safety Policy within the spirit and intent of this document. They may also devise their own procedures and guidance which, whilst complying with the minimum standards laid down in NERC ones, give more specific direction and reflect their own particular organisational arrangements, activities and risks.

In addition to following the NERC policies, procedures and guidance for health and safety, it is NERC policy that all research centres and closely related research institutes which follow the NERC Safety Management System and have NERC staff employed within them either hold, or are working towards holding, accreditation to BS/OHSAS 18001 'Occupational Health and Safety Management' or its intended replacement ISO 45001 'Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems'.

The NERC arrangements are posted on the internet so that collaborators and researchers who may work with NERC are able to view what standards NERC expects to be applied to its own work.

These will be added to, updated and reviewed periodically.

In addition a [NERC Health and Safety Organisational chart](#) giving details of the senior management appointees, competent persons and relevant safety representative(s) for each NERC research centre and closely related research institute will be posted on the NERC website. This chart will be regularly updated.