

## **“RIGHT FIRST TIME, SAFE EVERY TIME” HEALTH & SAFETY STRATEGY 2022 - 2025**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The H&S Strategy 2022-25 has been created to support SHG achieve its vision for a safe and compliant workplace, during a period of considerable growth and diversification of services. The strategy commits the organisation to keep under review and deliver a proactive and innovative H&S culture, that puts the safety of its employees, contractors, visitors and its customers first. It is not just about achieving compliance, but will assist in realising:

- Focused, and pragmatic ways of delivering H&S;
- A safe and healthy environment for all;
- A robust H&S culture across the group;
- Effective means of protecting stakeholders, including employees, contractors, visitors and customers, from harm.

1.2 This Strategy will:

- Ensure that an objective and transparent approach to safety management is delivered by having a centralised team to oversee and report on all H&S activity;
- Support the group through this period of considerable change and ensure core H&S practices remain a strategic focus and priority for all areas of SHG operational activity;
- Ensure that all aspects of H&S are fully integrated into the management approach of SHG so “enabling” the work of the group through the principals of robust risk management practices;
- Provide the Board and SHG’s stakeholders with assurance and confidence that SHG continually seeks to exceed legislative requirements and follow best practice to deliver a safe and healthy working environment.

## 2 CONTEXT

2.1 Nationally this is a time of great challenge for the housing sector, with a sharpened focus on effective and transparent health and safety management, driven by the lessons learned from the Grenfell Tower inquiry, Hackett Review and the introduction of new Building and Fire Safety legislation. Whilst this has given rise to significant changes in H&S legislation, which will lead to improved standards of competency and skill, SHG will continue to be vigilant and keep under review and respond to any further changes and improvements in building standards that may emerge during the life of this Strategy and ensure changes are incorporated to reflect this.

2.2 Over the coming years the business plans to grow and diversify further, particularly in Threesixty, will include insourcing and incorporating different work streams. This will be supported by this Strategy with the focus on H&S culture, management and competency.

2.3 The “Right First Time, Safe Every Time” Strategy goes above and beyond legislation and what is expected by regulation and will embed and enhance the initiatives implemented following on from the H&S Strategy 2018-21,

“workWISE, Working in a Safe Environment”. All actions were delivered from the previous strategy most notable milestones include:

- 2.2.1 A review of H&S resources in line with business development and growth across SHG, resulting in additional H&S support for the business, particularly construction;
- 2.2.2 The procurement and implementation of a centralised SHG H&S Management System, including accident, incident and near miss reporting to enable data to be analysed on the causes of accidents to identify any trends and put in place solutions;
- 2.2.3 Supported managers in mitigating the risk of COVID 19 to SHG employees, contractors and public, including development of risk assessments and guidance;
- 2.2.4 Introduction of an auditing and inspection programme of SHG work premises and building safety processes;
- 2.2.5 Creation of a training needs analysis matrix to match an employees role to the required compliance training and tracked refresher dates;
- 2.2.6 Introduction of a H&S ‘health check programme’ to ensure compliance across the group;
- 2.2.7 Three Sixty Maintenance and Three Sixty were awarded ROSPA Gold, in recognition of the high level of performance, well developed occupational H&S management systems and culture, outstanding control of risk and very low levels of error, harm and loss;
- 2.2.8 Introduction of Constructionline for contractors working on behalf of SHG, a government-run scheme, which collects, assesses and monitors contractor’s safety information;
- 2.2.9 Establishing H&S business partnering within all directorates to improve communication and understanding of H&S priorities and issues;
- 2.2.10 Developing a positive H&S culture and embedding this through attendance at directorate management team meetings and seminars.

### 3 VISION

- 3.1 The Health and Safety (H&S) strategy 2018-21, “workWISE Working in a Safe Environment”, set out a vision for Stockport Homes Group (SHG) to go beyond compliance, creating a positive safety culture which encouraged ownership and responsibility, at all levels for health and safety.
- 3.2 The new H&S Strategy 2022-25, “Right First Time, Safe Every Time” builds on the achievements of the previous strategy by embedding the culture created and delivering excellent H&S performance, against a backdrop of significant growth and diversification of services. This supports and enhances SHG’s position as an “employer of choice” who put employees and customer safety at the forefront of everything it does.
- 3.3 This three-year Strategy identifies the key priorities and areas of focus to strengthen SHG’s approach to H&S. It aims to promote the highest practical standards of safety, health and welfare throughout the group in the performance of its activities.

## 4 STRATEGIC THEMES & OUTCOMES

4.1 SHG's H&S Strategy is focused around four key strategic themes, which will ensure delivery of its vision of "Right First Time, Safe Every Time".

### 4.2 Embedding an excellent H&S culture and mindset

The H&S Strategy is led from the top with active and visible leadership. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are committed to ensuring H&S is embedded across all areas of the group. Whilst the previous strategy strengthened the foundations in terms of systems, practices and partnering, this strategic theme aims to take that further and ensure the culture is fully embedded and maximised across all operations. SHG are committed to continually improving the attitudes, perceptions, competencies and behaviours that determine the groups commitment to achieving H&S excellence.

4.2.1 To achieve this SHG will ensure:

- Managers demonstrate a commitment to working safely;
- Enhanced communication on H&S matters, including targeted information through a range of media, is provided;
- Employees take ownership for risks created by their work;
- Managers and employees have the right level of competency to carry out their work safely;
- Employees understand what is expected of them in terms of H&S;
- Consultation are clear and consistent, encouraging SHG's "One Team" approach;
- Regular good practice pieces are shared on the Huddle and other staff communication and engagement forums;
- H&S is viewed as both an individual and collective responsibility;
- Employees are encouraged to report issues by promoting a supportive culture;
- Lessons are learned from incidents and near misses, improving ways of working in the future.

4.2.2 Outcome:

SHG will have a H&S culture that is embedded throughout the group that delivers ownership and responsibility for H&S and a safe environment for all employees, customers and partners.

4.2.3 Success will be measured by:

- Reduction in loss time incidents;
- Reduction in Occupational Health referrals;
- Reduction in non-compliance H&S investigations;
- Reduction in H&S audit actions;
- Increase in near miss reporting.

### 4.3 **Deliver excellent H&S performance and risk management across the group**

Delivering performance that demonstrates legislative compliance, best practice and robust risk management which encourages colleague challenge and creativity.

#### 4.3.1 To achieve this SHG will ensure:

- H&S themes are included in colleague surveys;
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in H&S goes beyond legal compliance, supporting and inspiring employees to take ownership of risks;
- Safe working environments are provided where staff wellbeing is put at the forefront of any proposed changes;
- There are opportunities for managers and employees to provide feedback and support is provided for them to achieve appropriate and practical control measures.
- Performance measures are linked to the main areas of risk to employees, customers and partners, reviewing them regularly to ensure they remain relevant;
- Performance is reported regularly to SLT and Board and swift action is taken to correct any underperformance;
- An annual programme of H&S audits focussing on key service areas is in place;
- The approach and delivery of H&S compliance within SHG is supported through strong governance and auditing which is monitored and reviewed by the H&S team;
- H&S successes will be recognised and promoted across the group.

#### 4.3.2 Outcome:

S SLT and Board have confidence that H&S risks are pro-actively managed and mitigated by having robust systems in place. Managers and employees will take ownership for improvement of H&S standards and overall performance through their individual contribution.

#### 4.3.3 Success will be measured by:

- Feedback from surveys, focus groups and committees;
- Addressing gaps identified through colleague surveys;
- Reduction in non-compliance issues;
- Increase in CPD activity and individual engagement with CPD, identified through auditing of the management system.
- Regular monitoring of performance measures;
- Safety audits monitored by safety committees;
- Safety updates and annual reports delivered;
- Achieving and retaining H&S awards e.g RoSPA Gold.

## 4.4 Embedding sound systems and controls

SHG's H&S Policy outlines a systematic approach to H&S management. It aligns with the HSE's "Plan, Do, Check, Act" approach. It established H&S as part of good management – not an "add on". It recognises the need for balance between systems and management behaviour.

4.4.1 To achieve this SHG will ensure:

- Risks are actively managed, and a comprehensive risk register is maintained;
- Review and deliver a suite of clear and practicable H&S Policies and procedures, where required;
- A comprehensive risk assessment database is available, and all appropriate managers and employees are trained to access and update it;
- Technology is embraced to support SHG's digital agenda, which will simplify H&S processes and maximise efficiency;
- Safety data and information is kept secure;
- H&S management systems are embedded across the group.

4.4.2 Outcome:

H&S is recognised as a key feature of management responsibility and is embedded across the group, with robust H&S systems in place to support this.

4.4.3 Success will be measured by:

- Risk assessments in place for all identified risk areas;
- Policies and procedures are in date and compliant;
- Centralised and digitally based H&S systems are in place;
- Users are competent in the use of H&S management systems.

## 4.5 Supporting the growth of the group

SHG supports the H&S requirements from growth within the business by keeping under review new workstreams and insourcing through business partnering and discussions at directorate management teams. Initiatives developed and implemented will address skills gaps and build competency within the workforce together and address any new or emerging risks.

4.5.1 To achieve this SHG will ensure:

- H&S support needs are kept under review and sufficient resources made available;
- Emerging risks and competency gaps in new areas of the business are identified and addressed;
- H&S business partners are involved at an early stage with growth and insourcing plans to offer advice and support.

#### 4.5.2 Outcome:

New areas of the business have adequate controls and support in place to ensure H&S compliance and best practice is achieved.

#### 4.5.3 Success will be measured by:

- Early intervention by H&S in growth plans through consultation;
- Risk assessments and safe working practices are in place;
- Policies and procedures are in place to support new workstreams;
- Successful audits of new business areas;

## 5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation sessions were undertaken with each Directorate Management Team (DMT) and Colleague Voice to ensure the proposed themes of this strategy support organisational direction and priorities. These sessions also enabled new ideas to be explored and strategy actions and outcomes to be developed. External benchmarking has also taken place with other housing organisations, to share thoughts and ideas. Internet research was undertaken to understand other organisations' approaches to developing H&S Strategies and to ascertain up to date HSE advice regarding best practice.

## 6 H&S ACTION PLAN 2022-25

- 6.1 A full and detailed action plan outlining how the H&S Strategy Actions and Outcomes will be achieved can be found in Appendix I. This action plan contains timescales and responsible individuals to support monitoring and progress.

## 7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 7.1 An EIA was carried out which led to the following two actions being included to ensure equality and inclusive goals within the embedding an excellent H&S culture and ensuring a robust approach to H&S management – reviewing the annual occupational health screening programme to include other high risk groups and keeping under review any new or emerging risk that could have an impact on SHG employees and operations.

## 8 LINKS TO POLICIES

- 8.1 The H&S Strategy 2022-25 is supported by suite of H&S policies and procedures overarched by the Group Health and Safety Policy which sets out SHG's general approach and commitment together with the arrangements in place for managing health and safety.

## 9 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING & REVIEW

- 9.1 The H&S Team will work closely with all Directorates, Trade Unions, and other stakeholders to promote ownership of H&S across the group and will deliver the detailed group H&S action plan that supports the achievement of the themes in this strategy.

- 9.2 Outcomes from the actions undertaken will be monitored by the H&S Committee, with annual progress reports presented to the Audit and Risk Committee, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Colleague Voice Groups.