1. **Introduction**

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (the Council) has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and others who may be affected by activities on its premises.

This policy statement and associated Legionella Management Plan (Management Plan) have been developed to manage the risk associated with legionella bacteria, prevent exposure to and the spread of legionella bacteria and to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Legionella Pneumophila and other bacteria can cause an infection known as Legionellosis. Legionnaire’s disease is a pneumonia and may be fatal. It is not possible to contract Legionnaires disease by drinking or bathing in contaminated water. The spores of the bacteria must be airborne and breathed in to cause the pneumonia associated with Legionnaires disease.

Legionella bacteria are present in water systems and do not pose a health concern if the appropriate control measures are in place and maintained. The risk from Legionella bacteria increases if the water in the system is maintained at temperatures which encourage its growth, is stagnant and bio-film can develop on the inside of the water pipes. This bio-film provides nutrients and encourages growth of the bacteria. Legionella proliferation can be suppressed by controlling the water temperature and by keeping the flow of water through the system consistent.

1. **Policy Statement:**

The Council recognises that exposure to legionella bacteria can present a serious risk to health and is committed to protecting the health and safety of its staff, contractors, clients and visitors who may be affected by its activities, along with ensuring compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation including the HSE publication; Legionnaires’ Disease - The control of legionella bacteria in water systems (Approved Code of Practice and guidance, L8 (4th ed)).

# Policy Objectives

The Council, as the “Duty Holder”, by making this policy commits to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, the occurrence of legionella bacteria in breathable form, arising from its water systems, that can be inhaled by employees and others who may be present in the workplace.

The Council through the successful implementation of its Management Plan will meet this policy objective.

# Scope

This policy applies to all premises including temporary structures such as marquees and activities falling, to any extent, under the Council’s control. The Policy and associated Management Plan sets down the framework by which the Council, all employees, contractors and visitors will be expected to meet their legal duties.

The Management Plan details the requirements and standards that must be complied with to prevent the release of legionella bacteria in breathable form that can be inhaled by employees and others who may be present in the workplace and maintain compliance with all applicable health and safety legislation.

The Management Plan provides a standardised approach for all persons who are responsible for managing workplaces, premises and facilities and work activities, thus ensuring consistency across the Council.

# Definitions

**Duty Holder** – Organisation responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant legal duty.

**Approved Codes of Practice** (ACOPs) are guidance with specific legal standing. They deal with a wide range of hazardous materials and working practices. Employers who are prosecuted for a breach of health and safety law, who have not followed an ACOP, are likely to be found at fault by the courts.

**Legionellosis** is the collective name given to the pneumonia like illness caused by legionella bacteria, including the most serious, Legionnaires' disease. Infection is caused by breathing in small droplets of water contaminated by the bacteria.

# Related Policies and Guidance

This document should be read in conjunction with the following: -

* Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Health & Safety Policy.
* Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Health & Safety Organisational Procedure.
* Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Legionella Management Plan (the Management Plan).

Other relevant statutory regulations and documents to be consulted as part of the policy include: -

* HSE (2013), Legionnaires’ Disease. The control of legionella bacteria in water systems: Approved Code of Practice and guidance, L8 (4th ed).
* Health & Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978
* Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (Northern Ireland) 2013 (COSHH (NI))
* Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000
* Legionaries Disease: Technical Guidance HSG 274.

1. **Equality Screening & Good Relations**

The policy has been equality screened and the outcome is that it not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required).

1. **Rural Impact Assessment**

Due regard to rural needs has been considered and a rural needs impact assessment has been completed.

# Document Authorisation

SMT 3rd March 2020

CMT 28th February 2020

Corporate Health & Safety Committee 28th February 2020

Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee (for noting) 12th March 2020

# Document Owner

Assistant Director: Facilities Management & Maintenance, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Facilities Management and Maintenance Department.

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# Effective Date

12th March 2020

# Review Date

Review of Policy at least biannually.