



# **HSS 009**

## **Health and Safety Assurance, Audit and Investigation Standard**

KCC Health and Safety Standard – HS Assurance, Audit and Investigation Standard		
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### Introduction

Kent County Council (KCC) is committed to managing health and safety risks in a systematic, proportionate and risk-based manner to protect employees, service users and others who may be affected by its activities.

This Standard sets out KCC’s corporate framework for health and safety assurance, defining how KCC:

- Monitors and measures health and safety performance
- Gains assurance on compliance and effectiveness
- Investigates accidents, incidents, near misses and concerns.
- Uses assurance information to support escalation, review and continuous improvement.

The standard aligns with the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE’s) HSG65 – Managing for Health and Safety model and defines how KCC delivers the “Check” and “Act” elements through assurance, audit and investigation activity.

This standard establishes the overarching expectations under which health and safety detailed audit internal procedures and methodologies operate.

### Legislation and Guidance

This standard supports compliance with the relevant health and safety legislation, including:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

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It also aligns with:

- HSE guidance HSG65 – Managing for Health and Safety
- KCC Corporate governance, risk management and assurance arrangements.

### Definitions

This table provides the definitions for the purposes of this standard:

Term	Definition
Assurance	Activities undertaken to provide confidence that health and safety risks are being effectively managed.
Audit	A structured, evidence-based assessment of compliance within KCC health and safety standards and legal requirements
Investigation	A proportionate process to identify immediate, underlying and root causes of accidents, incidents, near misses or concerns.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Please find below the roles and responsibilities linked to the standard:

#### **Corporate Leadership, School Leadership and Senior Management**

- Provide visible leadership and support for health and safety assurance.
- Review and act on significant risks and assurance findings escalated through governance arrangements.

#### **Directors Heads of Service and Managers**

- Cooperate with audits and investigations.
- Ensure actions arising from assurance activities are completed within agreed timescales.
- Escalate significant or unresolved risks through appropriate management routes.

#### **Head of Health and Safety**

- Maintain this standard and supporting procedures.
- Approve audit and investigation frameworks and programmes.
- Ensure serious risks and systemic issues are appropriately escalated.

#### **Health and Safety Team**

- Deliver audits, investigations and assurance activities in line with approved procedures.
- Provide competent professional health and safety advice.
- Monitor, analyse and report assurance findings, trends and action closures.

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### Health and Safety Assurance Framework

KCC's health and safety assurance framework supports the "Check" and "Act" stages of the HSG65 model by providing confidence that:

- Risk controls are implemented and effective.
- Legal and corporate requirements are met.
- Weaknesses and systemic issues are identified.
- Learning and improvement are embedded.

This is achieved through:

- Active monitoring – planned audits and reviews
- Reactive monitoring – investigation of accidents, incidents, near misses and concerns
- Analysis and learning – identification of trends, themes and recurring issues
- Review and escalation – management and corporate review where risks or controls are ineffective.

### Health and Safety Audits

Health and safety audits provide independent, evidence-based assurance on compliance and the effectiveness of arrangements.

Audits will be:

- Risk-based and proportionate.
- Prioritises using performance data, risk and intelligence.
- Assess against KCC standards, approved procedures and legal requirements.

Audit findings will be used to:

- Confirm compliance.
- Identify gaps and weaknesses.
- Inform escalation, learning and improvement.

Detailed audit methodology and processes are defined in Health and Safety internal procedure.

### Health and Safety Investigations

Accident, Incidents, near misses and concerns will be investigated proportionately to risk and potential severity.

Investigations will:

- Identifying immediate, underlying and root causes
- Consider the adequacy and effectiveness of risk controls.
- Focus on preventing recurrence.

Learning from investigations will inform improvements to risk assessments, controls, procedures, training and standards.

### Monitoring and Review

Health and Safety assurance activity is monitored through established reporting and governance arrangements.

Significant risks, repeated non-compliance or failure to implement actions will be escalated through appropriate management and corporate governance routes, including the Corporate Safety, Health and Wellbeing Group.

Assurance information is used to inform:

- Directorate and service-level assurance
- Corporate oversight
- The Annual Health and Safety Report

This ensures leadership review and continuous improvement in line with the “Act” element of HSG65.

### Training and Further Information

Training is available via Learning Development Team, Delta eLearning and health and safety bitesize briefings.

**Health and Safety Advice Line [healthandsafety@kent.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@kent.gov.uk) or 03000 418456.**

### Related Documents

- KCC Health and Safety Policy
- KCC Health and Safety Standards
- HST029 Health and Safety Audit Methodology

This standard will be reviewed at least every two years, or earlier in response to legislative change, significant incidents, emerging risks or organisational requirements. Learning from audits and investigations will inform future revisions.

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### Appendix A – Alignment with HSE HSG65

This appendix provides a concise summary of how Kent County Council’s health and safety assurance, audit and investigation arrangements align with the “Check” and “Act” elements of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance HSG65 – Managing for Health and Safety.

HSG65 Element	Expectation	KCC Assurance Arrangements
Check – Active Monitoring	Planned checks on compliance and control effectiveness	Risk-based health and safety audits against legislation and KCC standards
Check – Reactive Monitoring	Learning from accidents, incidents and near misses	Proportionate investigation of accidents, incidents, near misses and concerns
Check – Performance Review	Use of information to identify trends and weaknesses	Analysis of Health and Safety audit findings, incident data, themes and action closure
Act – Review	Leadership review of health and safety performance	Directorate and corporate reporting and escalation arrangements
Act – Improvement	Continuous improvement of systems and controls	Findings inform improvements to standards, procedures, training and priorities

KCC’s health and safety assurance, audit and investigation arrangements provide confidence that health and safety risks are effectively controlled, legal and corporate requirements are met, failures and weaknesses are identified, and learning is captured to prevent recurrence. Assurance information is reviewed through management and corporate governance arrangements, supporting leadership oversight, escalation and continuous improvement in line with HSG65 principles.

Health and safety assurance is also supported through local management arrangements. While routine checks and inspections may be undertaken by nominated competent persons or designated roles, Directors, Heads of Service, School Leadership and managers remain responsible for ensuring appropriate local incident investigations are carried out, and that regular workplace and building based checks are in place and effective. This includes oversight of health and safety inspections, fire safety checks, statutory monitoring and assurance activity, with findings acted upon, escalated where necessary, and used to support continuous improvement.

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