

<b>TITLE:</b>	Health and Safety Strategy (2025-28) Progress Report & Appendix 1
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## PURPOSE

This paper presents the first quarterly report on the implementation of the Scottish Canals Health and Safety Strategy (2025-28) following approval by the Board in March 2025.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Board is invited to:

- a. Note the progress with delivering the agreed actions for year one of the Health and Safety Strategy (2025-28) as reflected in the Health and Safety Strategy Development Plan.

## BACKGROUND

The Board approved the Scottish Canals Health and Safety Strategy (2025-28) (strategy) in March 2025. This strategy builds upon the successes of previous strategies and development plans and is aligned to the wider Corporate Plan (2023-28). The strategy is designed to support the three corporate values of We Care, We Collaborate, and We Create alongside a clear vision for health and safety: *"We want everyone who works for, volunteers with, is contracted to, or visits Scottish Canals, properties, or land, to be able to do so without risk of harm to their health, safety, and wellbeing from avoidable hazards"*.

Ownership of the strategy remains with the Board. However, the Executive Management Team (EMT) has retained responsibility for the successful delivery of the strategic outcomes.

## ASSESSMENT

The Health and Safety Strategy Delivery Plan contain 13 actions, and progress has been made in all areas. At present, there are sufficient resources and capabilities to ensure that all strategic commitments are honoured in this financial year. A progress narrative for each of the 13 actions is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

## CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS ANALYSIS

<b>Strategic Priorities</b>	The strategy aligns with and supports the delivery of strategic outcomes outlined in the Corporate Plan (2023-28).
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	The strategy has a direct impact on health and safety and Scottish Canals ability to maintain a safe place of work for workers and safe spaces for visitors.
<b>Financial</b>	There are no direct financial implications with the implementation of this strategy out with normal budget setting processes, approvals, and activities.
<b>Legal</b>	The strategy introduces a framework to improve and safeguard compliance with several statutory obligations and reduce the risk of enforcement and regulatory activity because of non-compliance.
<b>Risk / Risk Appetite</b>	The strategy reflects the risk appetite adopted by the Board in that it is averse to risks associated with health, safety, and compliance.
<b>Sustainability</b>	The strategy has no direct impact on sustainability
<b>Environment</b>	The strategy has no direct impact on the environment out with compliance with relevant legal standards which may impact human health.
<b>People</b>	The strategy will have limited impact on HR policies, procedures, and practices.
<b>Fair Work</b>	The strategy has no direct impact on fair work
<b>Communication</b>	The strategy will have a positive impact on stakeholders' perception of Scottish Canals, including regulatory bodies, and on Scottish Canals abilities to manage strategic and operational risks effectively.
<b>Community &amp; Third Sector</b>	The strategy enhances Scottish Canals abilities to meet its strategic objectives relating to partnerships and collaboration
<b>Commercial</b>	The strategy will have a positive impact on Scottish Canals commercial aspirations.
<b>Asset</b>	The strategy will have a positive impact on Scottish Canals asset management arrangements.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Board is invited to:

- a. Note the progress with delivering the agreed actions for year one of the Health and Safety Strategy (2025-28) as reflected in the Health and Safety Strategy Development Plan.

**OUTCOME**

## Appendix 1 – Health and Safety Strategy Development Plan

No	Activity	YEAR ONE Q1 Progress (2025-26)	RAG
<b>WE CARE (PEOPLE)</b>			
01	Publishing a Scottish Canals Wellbeing Strategy and action plan to support a whole person-centred approach to physical, mental, and social health in the workplace.	The Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Culture Committee are progressing with the design of the Wellbeing Strategy and action plan. A benchmarking exercise with other comparable organisations is underway. A first draft will be considered by the Executive Management Team (EMT) in Q3.	
02	Undertaking deep dives into the risk from fatigue, Critical Safety Work (CSW) and driver safety across the organisation and implement suitable and sufficient, risk-based, and proportionate management response in collaboration with the workforce.	Work has begun to explore all three risks including data collection and analysis from across the canal network. Driver safety management, including a formalised and structured approach to driver checks will be delivered via a phased process during Q3 and Q4. Work will begin shortly to explore and define CSW with the People Team and engagement with Heads of Service. Recent data from the staff survey (2025) on fatigue will be explored further during this financial year.	
03	Publishing the Scottish Canals Health and Safety Culture Development Plan in response to the safety culture assessment undertaken in 2024.	The Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Culture Committee are progressing with exploring organisational culture. A benchmarking exercise involving other NDPBs is now complete and work to align values with positive behaviours is underway. A staff engagement exercise is planned for Q3 alongside alignment with the organisations Performance Review and Development Plan with roll out from Q4 and full implementation from Q1 (2026-27).	
04	Finalising a robust framework to support individuals with appropriate equipment including hybrid and blended working and personal protective equipment.	The organisations approach to hybrid working is outlined in the newly updated Hybrid Working Policy (2025). An amendment to include the supply of routine equipment will be considered by EMT in Q2. Requests for specialised or adapted equipment will only be considered via an Occupational Health referral and report and supplied to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Work is underway to update the PPE Minimum Safety Standards to ensure allocation of PPE is based on role requirements and risk and to ensure equality in terms of quality and comfort.	

No	Activity	YEAR ONE Q1 Progress (2025-26)	RAG
<b>WE CREATE (PLACE)</b>			
05	Publishing an updated and integrated framework for water and visitor safety risk management.	Updated framework in development. Benchmarking against legal obligations, statutory guidance and updated professional body guidance complete. Draft framework to be considered by EMT in Q3	
06	Completing visitor and water safety risk assessments for 25% of all locations across the canal network.	Implementation across the Lowland Canals underway and on track to complete 25% of all canal locations by March 2026.	
07	Undertaking a detailed review of occupational exposure to dust and fumes across all operational locations and where necessary, implement appropriate risk based and proportionated risk reduction measures	Monitoring continues across key operational activities for dust and fumes. New personal and environmental dust and fume monitors have been procured, and a risk-based approach has been applied to usage. A new integrated Occupational Health screening and assessment contract is currently in the final stages of procurement.	
08	Working collaboratively with key stakeholders, publish an updated Towpath Code of Conduct to reflect the changing needs of the communities that we serve.	Work has commenced to design a stakeholder and public engagement process to identify areas of key risk and concerns alongside solutions to improve towpath safety. This will go live by the end of Q2 with an updated Towpath Code of Conduct published by the end of March 2026.	
09	Continuing to support the delivery of the welfare facilities improvement plan and define standards for desk-based workplaces across the canal network.	Implementation with the welfare improvement programme led by the Placemaking Team. New standards for desk-based workplaces in development in consultation with the Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Culture Committee. New standards to be finalised by Q3 with audits completed by Q4.	

No	Activity	YEAR ONE Q1 Progress (2025-26)	RAG
<b>WE COLLABORATE (PERFORMANCE)</b>			
10	Publishing and implementing a Scottish Canals Compliance Framework to reflect both health and safety and wider regulatory compliance obligations relevant to the organisation.	A methodology has been agreed and approved by EMT to establish a Compliance Forum led by the Head of Legal. Work to explore the compliance landscape across all business and professional areas has commenced. Framework Development will begin in Q3.	
11	Undertaking Phase 1 of the Health and Safety Governance and Arrangements Review focusing on structures, relationships, accountability, and assurance in line with legal requirements and best practice.	A scoping exercise has now been undertaken and a review of policy and governance structures for health and safety is underway. A report to the Board will be presented in Q4 with recommendations to strength governance for health and safety.	
12	Scoping and defining a new approach to health and safety induction for new workers and those moving roles within Scottish Canals.	Initial discussions with the People Team to explore content and design requirements has been undertaken. This work will be progressed during Q2 and Q3.	
13	Publishing an updated Scottish Canals Public Rescue Equipment (PRE) Strategy including measures for inspection, monitoring, upgrading and replacement.	Work to explore contemporary provision of PRE has been undertaken with reference to updated industry standards. The roll out of the Christopher Speirs Life Saving programme across the lowlands has progressed with seven ropes now installed. The strategy will be developed and finalised during Q3 and Q4.	