



Gwynedd Health & Safety Policy

Section 1: General statements of policy and intent

Our statements of general policy and intent are to:

1	Provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities.
2	Consult with our employees and volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety.
3	Provide and maintain safe equipment.
4	Ensure safe handling and use of substances and remove any unnecessary substances or materials that are not necessary in the bureau environment.
5	Provide information, instruction and supervision for employees.
6	Ensure all employees and volunteers are competent to do their tasks, and give them adequate training.
7	Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health by maintaining safe and healthy working conditions.
8	Implement emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident.
9	Review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Section 2: Designation of responsibility

The Trustee Board of Cyngor ar Bopeth Gwynedd Citizens Advice (CAB Gwynedd) has overall and final responsibility for health and safety matters and for ensuring that health and safety legislation is complied with. However, day-to-day responsibility and functions are delegated as follows:

Area of responsibility	Name of individual/role
Health and safety officer: Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented and complied with as:	Chief Executive
Trained first aider or Designated first aid officer	[Insert name for each site]
Fire safety officer	[Insert name for each site]

Section 3: Status of this policy and health and safety posters

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all its employees at work and other people who may be affected by their activities, e.g. users, volunteers, members of the public. Nothing in the application of this organisational policy shall be construed to confer or grant employment rights or status in its application to volunteers.

All employees and volunteers must:

- co-operate with supervisors and managers on health and safety matters
- not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety
- take reasonable care with regard to their own health and safety
- report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed in this policy).

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The health and safety information poster(s) shall be positioned in a prominent place in the reception area and details of the bureau's Employers' Liability Insurance Certificate shall be displayed in each office. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/fags/lawposter.htm>

Section 4: Arrangements and actions	
Policy statement 1: to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities.	
Person responsible:	Chief Executive
Arrangements and actions: Activities shall be risk assessed in accordance with the procedure set out in Appendix 2. Actions arising as a result of the risk assessment must be implemented. Risk assessments shall be reviewed every 12 months or sooner if required.	
Policy statement 2: to consult with our employees and volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety.	
Person responsible:	Trustee board, all employees and volunteers.
Arrangements and actions: Employees and volunteers are routinely consulted on health and safety matters as they arise but also formally consulted at regular health and safety performance review meetings or sooner if required. Such review meetings shall be conducted by the trustee board every 12 months as part of the review of this policy.	
Policy Statement 3: to provide and maintain safe equipment.	
Person responsible:	Chief Executive
Arrangements and actions: Toilets, washing facilities and drinking water provided. System in place for routine inspections and testing of office equipment and for ensuring that action is promptly taken to address any defects. Appendix 1 Parts 5, 6 & 7.	
Policy statement 4: to ensure safe handling and use of substances and remove any unnecessary substances or materials that are not required in the bureau environment.	
Person responsible:	Chief Executive
Arrangements and actions: It is the bureau's policy that hazardous materials and substances must not be used whilst at work. Alternative non-hazardous substitutes must be used instead. However, in the event that hazardous substances cannot be avoided, the COSHH procedure must be followed below. See Appendix 1 Part 3	
Policy statement 5: to provide information, instruction and supervision for employees.	
Person responsible:	Chief Executive
Arrangements and actions: Employees and volunteers (and contractors) are given necessary health and safety induction. We will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to cover employees and volunteers engaged in work remote from the main bureau offices. See Appendix 1.	

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Policy statement 6: to ensure all employees and volunteers are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training.	
Person responsible:	Chief Executive
Arrangements and actions: Appropriate training is given where necessary and relevant to the bureau's working environment. All staff and volunteers shall undertake display screen equipment assessments and work in accordance with the practices laid out within this policy. Training will be provided to ensure that the bureau meets its obligations to provide a safe working environment. See Appendix 1 and Part 9 in particular.	
Policy statement 7: to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health by maintaining safe and healthy working conditions.	
Person responsible:	Chief Executive
Arrangements and actions: periodic risk assessments of the working environment and ways of working. Arising actions from the risk assessment are implemented and incidents resulting in accidents are investigated and reviewed to ensure that lessons are learnt and the risks are better managed. See Appendix 1 generally.	
Policy statement 8: to implement emergency procedures – fire evacuation or other significant incident.	
Person responsible:	Chief Executive
Arrangements and actions: Escape routes well signed and kept clear at all times. Evacuation plans are tested from time to time and updated as necessary. Fire risk assessments are carried out in accordance with the policy guidance within this document: See Appendix 1 Part 1 in particular.	
Policy statement 9: to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.	
Person responsible:	Trustee board, Chief Executive in consultation with employees and volunteers
Arrangements and actions: This policy shall be reviewed at least once every 12 months and should be included into the trustee board's annual timetable. However, a change to the working environment, ways of working or the legal requirements for health and safety at work may also trigger a requirement for a review within this timeframe.	

Signed: _____ (Chair of the trustee board)

Date: _____ Review date: _____

This policy shall be reviewed every 12 months unless there is a specific need to do so sooner such as a change in premises, ways of working or a requirement to do so by law.

This draft 24 January 2017

Appendix 1: Further information and specific procedures

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1. Fire safety

In the event that a bureau is sharing premises, please refer to the building management’s fire safety policy and procedure.

1.1 The trustee board will appoint a fire safety officer who shall receive appropriate training.

1.2 The fire safety officer shall conduct a fire risk assessment at regular intervals. The risk assessment shall be carried out in accordance with published guidance (see further reading at 1.7) and shall:

- identify the fire hazards.
- identify people at risk.
- evaluate, remove or reduce the fire related risks (including risks created to the access and evacuation of the building).
- record the findings, prepare an emergency plan and provide training where necessary.
- be reviewed and updated regularly.

1.3 The responsibilities of the fire safety officer are to:

- Make arrangements for the installation and testing of fire safety equipment and alarms. Employees and volunteers will be notified of any testing taking place during office hours.
- Ensure that he / she is adequately trained including the use of suitable fire-fighting equipment.
- Conduct regular fire safety drills involving all employees and volunteers. These shall be reviewed to determine the success or otherwise of the evacuation and make recommendations for improved practices. He / she is responsible for ensuring that employees and volunteers are aware of the evacuation procedures and has the power to remove obstructions from fire exits.
- Assist with the efficient evacuation of employees, volunteers and visitors to the fire assembly point where it is safe to do so (in the event of an emergency no one is expected to endanger their own personal safety in the process of ensuring the safe evacuation of the building).

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- Liaise with the Fire Brigade at the assembly point.
- Ensure all bureau employees, volunteers and contractors are aware of the fire alarm and fire evacuation procedure (including the fire assembly point).

1.4 Fire safety is not only the responsibility of the fire safety officer. All employees, volunteers and trustees must be aware of fire hazards, know the location of fire exits and the assembly point and be familiar with the fire evacuation plan. This will form part of the induction for all employees, volunteers and trustees.

1.5 Access to escape doors, extinguishers and other suitable fire-fighting equipment must not be obstructed and the fire safety officer will be instructed on their use.

1.6 Fire drill procedure

If the fire alarm sounds:

- Evacuate the building immediately by the nearest exit.
- Ensure any visitors leave the building.
- Do not put yourself at risk.
- Assemble in front of the building (or other suitable place).
- Do not re-enter the building for any reason until the fire safety officer or Fire Brigade confirm that it is safe to do so.

If you discover a fire:

- Raise the alarm by operating the break glass switch at the nearest fire alarm call point. These are located in **[insert locations]**.
- Evacuate the building immediately as above.

1.7 Further reading (including a template fire risk assessment for offices):

www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities

2. First aid and accident reporting

2.1 First aid

2.1.1 First aid provisions will be available at all times in an appropriate and accessible first aid box.

2.1.2 The first aid box shall be kept well stocked with items that are suitable for the bureau environment. The Health and Safety Officer shall review this periodically and after each accident in the bureau. The content of the box shall follow the recommended guidance published by the Health and Safety Executive. (See further reading at 2.3).

2.1.3 The first aid box is kept in **[insert specific details at each location]**. The first aid box must not be removed from this area unless required and must be returned immediately after use.

2.1.4 At least one person will receive appropriate first aid training in accordance with the recommended guidance published from time to time by the Health and Safety Executive. Otherwise, the bureau shall appoint at least one designated person to take responsibility for first aid issues.

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2.1.5 All new employees and volunteers will be told of the location of first aid equipment and given details of the first aider/designated first aid person as part of their induction.

2.1.6 A record of all first aid cases treated will be kept in the accident book, which will be kept with the first aid box.

2.2 Accidents and emergencies

2.2.1 All employees and volunteers must report all incidents which resulted or nearly resulted in personal injury to themselves or others, to the Health and Safety Officer and make sure the accident is recorded in the accident book detailing the required particulars of the incident (See HSE guidance at 2.3).

2.2.2 It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer to ensure that any necessary follow-up action is taken to reduce the risk of the accident or near accident recurring. This may include a risk assessment review.

2.2.3 The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for reporting incidents which come within the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), to the relevant statutory authorities with the relevant time-limit.

RIDDOR covers the following incidents:

- accidents resulting in the death of any person
- accidents resulting in specified injuries to workers
- non-fatal accidents requiring hospital treatment to non-workers
- dangerous occurrences
- certain occupational diseases.

The Health and Safety Officer shall refer to the following guidance to determine what to report and the time limit in which to report it: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm

2.2.4 In line with RIDDOR, the Health and Safety Officer shall report any reportable incident to the local authority's environmental health department. For more details, please see section 2.3.

2.2.5 A written record of the accidents as mentioned in point above will be kept for at least 3 years.

2.2.6 In the event of a medical emergency the emergency services must be contacted.

2.3 Further reading

RIDDOR Reporting Guidance: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm

RIDDOR General Guidance: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/

First Aid FAQs www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/faqs.htm

First Aid Guidance: www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/

3. Control of substances hazardous to health

3.1 Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1992 (COSHH) employers have a duty to make an assessment of the risks related to hazardous substances e.g. chemicals, noxious fumes etc. **There is no working requirement or need to work with hazardous substances in the bureau and alternative non-hazardous solutions should be used in order to avoid this.** However, in accordance with the approved code of practice this assessment will be carried out and written down by a nominated competent person where such substances cannot be avoided. We also require volunteers to operate within this framework.

3.2 The person responsible for carrying out this assessment will be the Health and Safety Officer.

3.3 Following this assessment, in accordance with the approved code of practice (ACOP) the bureau will:

- In the first instance take action to remove any hazardous substances. There is no need for the bureau to use or store such substances as most products can be substituted for safe or safer material. For example, non-solvent based correction fluids and cleaning products.
- If this is not possible, action shall be taken to find a substitute for the hazardous substance.
- If this is not possible, such substances shall be enclosed within a safe environment.
- If none of the above is possible, protective equipment and training will be issued to ensure the safety of employees and volunteers.
- Any storage or user instructions shall be provided in the first language of the individual intended to use them.

3.4 If for any reason an employee or volunteer has been exposed to a possibly hazardous substance, levels of exposure will be monitored. At all times levels of ill-health related to exposure to hazardous substances at work will be monitored.

3.5 Removal, substitution, enclosure and protection

All employees and volunteers shall avoid using hazardous substances at all times if at all possible. Where substitute materials are available they should be used (e.g. water based markers, non-solvent based correction fluids and safe cleaning products). If there is no way of avoiding the use of hazardous substance or materials, employees and volunteers must use the substances in an enclosed, ventilated environment away from other workers, and use proper protective equipment which shall be made available. However, it is the bureau's expectation that this should never be required.

3.6 Further reading

HSE COSHH Guidance: www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/

4. Manual handling

4.1 All employees and volunteers should avoid manual handling where at all possible. However, employees and volunteers may occasionally be required to manually handle loads. Correct manual handling reduces the effort required and prevents strain and risk of injury.

4.2 All employees and volunteers should not put themselves at risk by attempting to manually handling heavy loads which could be taken apart or divided into smaller quantities. The assistance of other employees and volunteers should always be sought for moving large quantities or for manually handling heavy and awkward loads. When manual handling is done by a team, instructions should be given by one person only.

4.3 Any employee or volunteer feeling a strain should stop immediately and record the incident in the accident book. Further medical advice should be sought if appropriate in order to reduce the impact of any injury. Aids to reduce the risk of injury (e.g. trolleys) must always be used if available.

4.5 Further reading

HSE Guidance on Manual Handling: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/manual.htm

5 Hygiene and sanitation

5.1 All areas must be kept clean and tidy. This includes food preparation and storage areas. Users of the kitchen space must ensure that they wipe down and clean up after each use to prevent cross contamination of bacteria in food and to prevent the attraction of unwanted pests

5.2 Unwashed plates, cups and utensils must not be left in the kitchen or at desks for longer than necessary. Uncooked meats should be avoided but may be stored in the fridge with the permission of the Health and Safety Officer ensuring that it is stored on the bottom shelf in a safe manner to avoid a risk of cross contamination with cooked foodstuffs.

5.3 Toilets must be washed regularly and kept clean. All wash basins should be provided with hot water, soap, clean paper towels or hand dryers.

5.4 Vending machines for sanitary products and disposal bins should be provided. Bins should be emptied and sanitised regularly.

5.5 Further reading

HSE Guidance on toilets: www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/toilets.htm

HSE Case Studies: www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/officecleaning.htm

See also Section 6 for more information of welfare arrangements

6. Building facilities and housekeeping

6.1 The bureau has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees and volunteers.

6.2 All the employees and volunteers are responsible for spotting hazards or potential hazards. If a hazard is seen, it should be removed or dealt with as soon as possible, or if not, reports to the Health and Safety Officer.

6.3 Examples of hazards

- Things out of reach: chairs or other furniture must not be used to stand on for the purpose of replacing light bulbs, reaching for things off tops of cabinets, etc. A properly maintained, undamaged step ladder must be used.
- Damaged equipment: regular checks must be carried out on furniture and equipment for damage which leaves sharp edges protruding or other hazards. Any damaged furniture must be reported for repair or condemnation straight away and must be removed from use.
- Damage to fabric of building, windows, etc: all such damage must be reported immediately to the Health and Safety Officer as named above.
- Misplaced furniture, equipment or supplies: any furniture, equipment or supplies left in an inappropriate place, for example obstructing a gangway, must be removed immediately and placed in an appropriate, safe place.
- Damaged electrical equipment: frayed electrical cord, damaged socket or plugs or other unsafe damage to electrical circuitry. (See electrical equipment in Section 7 below).

6.4 Aisles and gangways must be kept clear from obstructions and materials must be stored in safe areas. Under no circumstances must goods or materials be stacked immediately in front of or obstructing fire doors, fire exits, fire alarms or fire equipment.

6.5 Smoking is not allowed at anywhere in the bureau. It is illegal to smoke inside the premises or any other place of work.

6.6 The bureau will avoid unhealthy and overcrowded working conditions, and will consult employees and volunteers on any changes in office layout.

6.7 The bureau will endeavour to provide a well-ventilated workplace in which employees and volunteers have control over their local level of ventilation.

6.8 The law does not stipulate a minimum acceptable temperature for the office environment. In office workplaces a reasonable temperature shall be maintained. Efforts will be made so far as is reasonably practical to ensure the workplace temperature does not rise to an uncomfortable level. The Health and Safety Executive advise that a minimum temperature of 16 degrees centigrade should be maintained. A thermometer will be provided in such a position as to be easily seen.

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6.9 Adequate lighting must be provided. If lights are found to be out of order, the fault must be corrected as soon as reasonably possible.

6.10 The bureau will endeavour to ensure that noise in its offices is kept to as low a level as is practicable.

6.11 Office equipment such as photocopiers and printers can emit pollutants into the atmosphere. The organisation will take reasonable precautions in ensuring that these levels are kept as low as possible. Employees and volunteers will not be expected to work in enclosed spaces with equipment that emits atmospheric pollutants. Spaces where these pollutants are present shall be kept well ventilated.

6.12 Equipment storage and usage:

- Equipment must not be left lying around but must be suitably stored.
- No wires must be left trailing across floors.
- Non-flammable rubbish bins must be positioned at various points.

6.13 Working at height

Injuries are often caused by falls from ladders, gangways and catwalks, vehicles shelving and storage areas. The poor selection, use and maintenance of equipment are the main causes of falls. For example, using a chair instead of a suitable stepladder to reach for the top shelf. The Working at Height Regulations place duties on employers, to ensure:

- all work at height is properly planned
- those working at height are competent or supervised
- the risks of working on or near fragile surfaces are properly controlled
- equipment for working at height is properly inspected and maintained.

Working at height should be avoided where possible and equipment should be used to prevent or minimise the consequences of falls where working at height is the only option. Therefore, all employees and volunteers should avoid storing items at height unless it is absolutely necessary.

6.14 Welfare arrangements

6.14.1 The bureau will ensure that suitable and sufficient toilets and washing facilities are provided for all employees and volunteers in accordance with the minimum requirements of health and safety legislation.

- The toilet will be in a separate, lockable room.
- Washing facilities will include a supply of clean hot and cold water, soap and suitable means of drying.

6.14.2 An adequate supply of drinking water will be provided for all employees and volunteers.

6.14.3 So far as is reasonably practicable, the bureau will provide its employees and volunteers with a seating arrangement where, during rest periods, they may have a break away from their workstations.

6.14.4 Suitable rest facilities will be provided for pregnant employees and volunteers.

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6.14.5 Employees should not work excessively long hours, and should take adequate breaks for meals and rest as indicated within their statement of terms and conditions of employment and in accordance with the Working Time Regulations. Volunteers should also take adequate breaks for meals and rest.

6.15 Further reading

HSE Guidance of office health and safety: www.hse.gov.uk/office/

HSE Guidance on welfare: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg293.pdf

HSE Guidance on temperature: www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/

7. Electrical & Gas safety and equipment

7.1 All building maintenance such as electrical work, carpentry, painting, etc should be carried out by skilled and qualified people. Employees and volunteers should not endanger themselves and others by carrying out such work.

7.2 Broken, ineffective or damaged electrical equipment must be reported. Employees should use electrical equipment in accordance with instructions.

7.3 The bureau will comply with any legal requirement to carry-out periodic Portable Appliance Testing on the relevant electrical equipment on the premises or otherwise ensure that electrical devices are maintained safely in accordance with HSE guidelines.

7.4 The bureau shall ensure that any gas appliances, flues, pipe work and safety devices are maintained and in a safe condition. An inspection of these appliances shall be carried out annually (or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions) by a competent person.

7.5 Further reading

HSE Guidance on electrical safety: www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/maintenance/safety.htm

Maintaining portable electric equipment in a low risk environment:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.htm

HSE Guide (Electrical Safety at Work): www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg85.htm

8. Homeworking

8.1 All health and safety rules and guidance in this policy apply in the same way to homeworkers as that they do to those who work on bureau premises and other places of business.

8.2 It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to ensure that their homeworking environment and equipment used in the home is safe. A risk assessment in accordance with the guidance given in this policy should be carried out before permission is given to work from home. Should it be needed, advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Officer.

8.3 It may be necessary that the employee or volunteer will be asked to indemnify the bureau against damages caused by accidents in the home.

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8.4 Further reading:

HSE Guidance on homeworkers: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg226.pdf

9. DSE assessments and health and safety training

9.1.1 The bureau shall comply with the law as set out in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992. The bureau will endeavour to extend the provisions within this part of the policy to volunteers where it is able to do so.

9.1.2 The bureau will conduct health and safety assessments of all workstations used by employees and volunteers who use VDU screens as part of their usual work. All workstations must meet the requirements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations.

9.2 Nature and organisation of work:

- Appropriate seating must be available to all users.
- Employees and volunteers will take regular breaks away from the computer screen.
- Short frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional longer breaks.

9.3 Resources will be sought by the bureau to:

- provide VDUs with a detachable and adjustable screen, i.e. in height, swivel, etc, to allow for the individual preference of the operator
- provide computer cleaning supplies
- provide a wrist and foot rest for those who require it
- an anti-static mat at each workstation
- provide keyboards which are separate from screens
- provide antiglare screens, where direct light cannot be prevented from falling on the screen
- provide adequate workstation space.

9.4 The Health and Safety Officer shall hold copies of manufacturers' detailed instructions on the maintenance of equipment and machines, and will ensure that maintenance contracts are adhered to and, where appropriate, renewed.

9.5 Eye and eyesight tests

9.5.1 The bureau is legally required to pay for any of its employees who habitually use display screen equipment (DSE) at work to receive regular eyesight tests, if they so request. DSE users should be advised of their right to free eyesight testing and the cost of basic corrective appliances when they receive their DSE assessment.

9.5.2 Where a test shows that as a result of work with the organisation's VDUs, an employee needs to purchase special corrective appliances (usually glasses), these will be paid for by the bureau. This excludes those normally used for purposes other than work with VDUs.

9.5.3 For the avoidance of doubt, section 9.5.1 and 9.5.2 only apply to paid employees employed under a contract of employment. However, the bureau will endeavour to provide similar provisions for other employees and volunteers at the discretion of the management.

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9.6 WRULDS or, Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (also known as repetitive strain Injury (RSI)) are often associated with keyboard work. It is the intention of the bureau by following best advice, to provide VDU / keyboard equipment and furniture which help prevent the development of these musculoskeletal disorders. Employees and volunteers should contribute to their own safety and welfare by:

- avoiding sitting in the same position for long periods
- adjusting equipment and furniture to appropriate and comfortable positions
- taking regular rest breaks from VDU work away from their work station.

9.7 Health and safety training

9.7.1 The bureau recognises that it owes a legal duty to information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety in the workplace. The bureau will review the training needs of employees and volunteers as part of the 12 month review of this policy and will be determined in accordance with the guidance set out by the Health and Safety Executive (see 9.8 HSE Training Provisions below).

9.7.2 The Health and Safety Officer, Fire Safety Officer and any first aider (or designated first aid officer) shall undertake regular training and accreditation as is required to meet the bureau's health and safety obligations and needs. Such training will also enable them to fulfil their respective responsibilities set out in this policy including the requirement to ensure that all members of staff are adequately informed, instructed, supervised and trained to meet our health and safety requirements.

9.8 Further reading

HSE Guidance on WRULD: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg171.pdf
HSE Homepage on DSE: www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/
DSE Checklist: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.htm
HSE Training Provisions: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.pdf

10. Personal safety

10.1 Office security

10.1.1 It is in the nature of the bureau's work that employees or volunteers may, on occasions, find themselves in potentially dangerous situations whilst on bureau business. The following policy is concerned to minimise the risk to employees and volunteers.

10.1.2 Lone working is not permitted unless it is absolutely essential and with the approval of the management. Lone workers should not allow access to casual visitors who have no appointment whether on bureau premises or other places of business (such as an outreach). Such callers should be encouraged to make an appointment.

10.1.3 Where employees or volunteers are dealing with an individual but feel uneasy about being alone with him or her they should discuss their concerns with a member of the bureau management team. The bureau will take into account the guidance from Citizens Advice or excluding clients and violence in the bureau (on BMIS) and ensure that employees and volunteers are not put in a dangerous or unsafe position.

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10.1.4 An alarm buzzer is sited in [insert places]. Employees and volunteers will be inducted in how the alarm sounds, how to set it off and how to respond on hearing it.

10.1.5 All windows and entry doors will be lockable.

10.2 Working away from the office

10.2.1 Employees and volunteers who are going to be working away from the office should make it clear to other employees where they will be, how long for and how they can be contacted.

10.2.2 If in the course of a trip away from the office plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the office.

10.2.3 Employees and volunteers should make clear who they wish to be informed (outside of work) in the event of an emergency and how they can normally be contacted.

10.3 Holding or carrying money or values for the bureau

10.3.1 Employees who carry bureau money should be accompanied by another person.

10.3.2 Large amounts of cash, over and above petty cash should not be kept on the premises.

10.3.3 The bureau will endeavour to use electronic banking to minimise the amount of money kept on the premises. Visits to the bank should not be at a regular time.

10.3.4 Under no circumstances should employees or volunteers put themselves at risk on account of bureau property. If money is demanded with threats it should be handed over.

10.4 Personal awareness

There are lots of things we already do that keep us safe, but becoming more aware of our surroundings puts us in control of our environment. The following steps are recommended to all employees as being helpful. Whilst out and about:

- **Trust your intuition and listen to your feelings.** If you sense something is wrong, it probably is. Acting on intuition may prevent an aggressive situation.
- **Be prepared.** Do you know whom to contact and what to do if a difficult situation arises? Find out and if there is no one designated, ask for a supervisor or manager to be nominated.
- **Be observant.** Notice everything around you - exit doors, telephones, windows, sources of help. This will make you more aware of your surroundings and help you escape if you need to.
- **Assess potential risks.** Avoid dangerous short cuts, walk facing the traffic on the street side of pavements, think about where you park your car and remember where you have parked it.
- **Make sure you have all relevant information with you.** Have you checked to see if there is a known problem with whom you are or where you are going?
- **Look confident.** "Walking tall" and being aware of your surroundings deters assailants.
- **Never stay in a situation where you think you may be at risk.** Don't feel you have to stay because of your work. You can see the client, arrange the visit or do the interview again. You can ask a colleague to come in or be with you. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

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- **Be aware of personal space** - yours and others. Encroaching on other people's personal space can make them aggressive. If other people are too close to you and making you uncomfortable, ask for more space or move away.
- **Don't get into lifts with people who make you feel uneasy.** If you are in a lift and feel uncomfortable, get out and use the stairs, or wait for another lift. Make sure you know where the emergency button is and stand where you can reach it.
- **Don't accept lifts in vehicles from people you have no reason to trust.**
- **Think about what you are wearing.** Can you run if you need to?

10.5 Dealing with aggression

If you find yourself in an aggressive situation, what can you do?

- **Try to stay calm** if someone is starting to get angry. Your body language, voice and response can help to defuse a situation. Take a deep breath, keep your voice on an even keel, and try to help.
- **Offer an angry person a range of options** from which they can choose the one they prefer. They will find it difficult to stay angry.
- **Do not be aggressive back** - this is how anger can escalate into violence.
- **Are you the best person to deal with this situation?** Going to get someone else is often helpful particularly if they can solve a problem that you can't.
- **Get on the same level as the aggressor.** If they are standing so should you. It makes you feel less vulnerable and makes it easier for you to get away or fetch help if necessary.
- **Keep your balance and keep your distance.**
- **Do not touch someone who is angry.**
- **Don't let your escape route be blocked.**
- **Keep yourself between an escape route and an aggressor** so you can still get away.
- **If the situation is dangerous, then get away as fast as you can.** Never remain alone with an actively violent person.
- **If you cannot get away, then scream or use the panic alarm.**

10.6 Reporting and recording

10.6.1 All incidents of aggression or violence should be reported to management and (if required) recorded in the accident book.

10.6.2 Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe working environment. Employees and volunteers should report any current or potential situation at work which is a threat to personal safety. Talking about fear and other problems related to aggression or harassment are not marks of failure but good practice. A serious incident, even if it results in no physical harm, may cause feelings of fear, panic or despair which can carry on long afterwards. The trustee board recognises this and will make available any support, counselling or leave of absent as reasonably appropriate.

10.7 Further reading:

HSE Guidance on Violence at Work: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg69.pdf

BMIS Guidance on Violence in the Bureau:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/BMIS/Back-office/Health-and-safety/Violence-in-bureaux/

HSE Guidance on Lone Working: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

11. Stress management

11.1 Stress at work is a serious issue. Workers can suffer severe medical problems, which can result in under-performance at work and cause major disruptions to the organisation.

11.2 Stress is a workplace hazard that must be dealt with like any other. Thus the responsibility for reducing stress at work lies both with employer and employee.

11.3 The bureau will do all it can to eradicate problems relating to stress at work. In particular it will:

- ensure close employees' involvement, particularly during periods of change
- give opportunities for employees to contribute in the planning and organisation of their own jobs
- ensure employees have work targets that are stretching but reasonable
- implement effective policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and any form of harassment
- encourage good communications between employees and management
- promote the maintenance of a supportive culture in the workplace
- where appropriate, take into consideration employee's personal situation / problems at home
- ensure employees avoid working long and unsocial hours.

11.4 The bureau will ensure as far as practicable that its policies, working practices and conditions of employment support its commitment to the above.

11.5 Employees should ensure that they do not work in a way which could cause them to suffer an increase of stress, nor cause an increase of stress on others.

11.6 Employees must respect other colleagues, and ensure that interpersonal conflict is avoided or dealt with sensibly.

11.7 Employees must not make unrealistic demands on other workers by increasing others' workload.

11.8 Employees should participate with the organisation's intention to maintain a supportive workplace environment.

11.9 If an employee is suffering from stress at work, s/he should discuss this with their line manager at the first opportunity. Where practicable and reasonable, the bureau will seek to provide assistance to the employees.

11.10 Volunteers affected with stress management issues should also raise this with their line manager. The bureau and volunteers should aim to work within the guidelines of this policy.

11.10 Further reading

HSE Guidance on stress: www.hse.gov.uk/stress/resources.htm

ACAS Guidance on stress: www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=815

Appendix 2: Health and safety risk assessment guidance

1. What is a risk assessment?

Risk assessment helps you protect your workers and everyone using your organisation. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter, the ones with potential to cause harm. A risk assessment is, as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) describe: "a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people.... the aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill".

2. Carrying out a risk assessment:

Carrying out a risk assessment is a relatively straightforward process, simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, and what precautions need to be taken. The HSE proscribes a 'Five Step' process:

Step 1 – Identify the hazards

First walk around the workplace identifying anything that could be potentially hazardous - **write everything down - make a list.**

Include *everything* you can think of: not just things that are currently obviously dangerous, but anything with a *potential* risk. It is a good idea to get two people to do this separately (one of these could be a trade union safety representative if there is one) and to compare lists afterwards, in case either of you have missed anything out.

Then think about **invisible** hazards - for example, in the voluntary sector one of the biggest risks people endure is stress (often related to working long hours, under pressure, to tight deadlines) or physical assault. Invisible hazards often include fumes - for example, photocopiers and laser printers emit ozone when in use. Finally consider whether things that might not normally be hazardous might be in relation to specific people – e.g. pregnant women, disabled workers.

Step 2 – identify who is at risk

Once you have identified and listed all the hazards, you need to

- identify what the specific risk is, and
- who is particularly at risk.

Some people will be more at risk from particular hazards than others - for example a VDU user will be more at risk of suffering RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury - also known as WRULDs - Work Related Upper Limb Disorders), a cleaner might have specific risks related to the chemical cleaning agents being used, etc. And there will be those particularly at risk in some circumstances for example because they may be working alone, or they may have a disability. **List those potentially at risk.**

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Step 3 – Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Think about what you can do to remove the risk. Compare what you currently do with what is accepted as good practice. (You may need to seek advice on this from experts) The main purpose of doing a risk assessment is to be aware of the risks, so that you can take action to eliminate or at least reduce the risks. On a simple level if an electrical wire is exposed, you could replace it, or cover it with insulating tape. On a more proactive level, for example, if your cleaner is using potentially dangerous chemical agents - change the cleaning product - use something water-based. **Write down the actions currently taken and those actions you propose to be taken, and write down who will take the action, by when.**

Step 4 – Record your findings

If you employ five people or more, the law requires you to record your findings. Ensure the written record of your findings is made available to employees, and that they co-operate with the carrying out of the recommendations made as a result of the assessment. This might involve a change in working practices, a change in machinery or equipment, and **appropriate training** being undertaken.

Step 5 - Review your assessment.

Few workplaces remain the same. You **must** review your assessment when there are major changes in the workplace, such as the introduction of new machinery, or new ways of working - but you must carry out regular reviews anyway – possibly annually. If your original assessment was properly recorded the review should be a relatively simple job but be aware of changing working practices.

Other considerations:

- If you share a building with other groups, it is a **legal requirement** that you all co-operate with each other in carrying out assessments.
- If your workers have a trade union health and safety representative, you should consult with them before carrying out the assessment, and again after carrying out the assessment - in case they strongly disagree with the results of the assessments, or the proposals you may be making to remedy a potential hazard.