

## **Health and Safety Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA) will take all reasonable and practical steps to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment on its premises for all its employees, volunteers, service users and visitors.

WVA will ensure:

- The provision and maintenance of a safe working environment for its employees, volunteers, customers and visitors, without risks to health and with adequate facilities
- A safe means of access to and exit from the workplace
- The provision and maintenance of equipment and systems of work that are safe and without undue risks to health
- Safety in the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
- The provision of information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety of its employees, volunteers and service users.

### **Responsibilities**

The Trustee Board must ensure that members of staff, for whom they have responsibility, work in a safe manner and understand their respective responsibilities within the Health and Safety Policy.

The Chief Officer is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and is responsible for:

- ensuring inspection of machinery and equipment is regularly undertaken
- regular inspection of the working areas to ensure safe working procedures are being carried out by staff
- ensuring new members of staff are competently trained in the use of equipment and are conversant with the safety policy
- ensuring that existing members of staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the safety policy
- the investigation of any complaints by any staff member in relation to health and safety or welfare at work
- keeping the Trustee Board informed of any relevant changes in legislation and issues from the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy
- arranging Health and Safety inspections regularly, and acting promptly on the results
- undergo suitable training on safety management, advise employees on job safety and accident prevention and organise any required training

All employees and volunteers must conform with the Health and Safety Policy, they are required to :

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- Complete a health and safety check list at start of employment or volunteering.
- co-operate on health and safety matters
- not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work
- familiarise themselves and comply with the charity's procedures on health and safety
- work to the highest possible standards of safety with regard to customers
- report all health and safety concerns to the Office Manager or Chief Officer.
- report all accidents or injury that are caused by the working environment are reported to the Office Manager or Chief Officer.
- report to the Office Manager or Chief Officer if they are unsure how to perform a task safely, believe it would be dangerous to perform a specific job or use specific equipment

A breach of the Health and Safety policy or procedures could result in disciplinary action being taken.

### **Reporting**

The initial responsibility for dealing with accidents and emergencies will lie with the Chief Officer. S/he can delegate where appropriate to an appointed person. The responsibilities of the appointed person will be:

- ◆ to administer where possible any emergency treatment of casualties
- ◆ ensure an ambulance or doctor is called when appropriate
- ◆ ensure the first aid box is clearly identified and readily accessible
- ◆ record all incidents
- ◆ inform the Trustee Board of any reportable occurrences as soon as possible

The Chief Officer has responsibility for meeting the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 and reporting such incidents to the Health and Safety Executive.

### **Monitoring health and safety**

Responsibility for carrying out regular Health and Safety inspections will be the Chief Officer, S/he can delegate this role to ensure the safety changes are carried out. The Chief Officer should report findings of the inspections to the Board of Trustees. The Chair will also do occasional health and safety spot checks.

Accidents will be investigated by the Chief Officer and the safety systems will be reviewed to try and prevent a recurrence. Sick leave will be reviewed by the Chief Officer who will investigate any work-related absences.

### **Review**

The Health and Safety policy and procedures will be reviewed every three years or when risk assessments indicate policy and procedures should be amended, whichever is the soonest.

**Useful Contacts**

Further advice on Health and Safety can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive on 0845 345 0055 or email [hse.infoline@connaught.plc.uk](mailto:hse.infoline@connaught.plc.uk)

## PROCEDURES

### **Accidents, first aid and work-related ill-health**

First aid boxes are located on both floors of the office. All employees will be shown the location of the nearest first aid box and will be given the names of the designated first aid personnel. This information is also displayed on works notice boards.

All injuries, however small, sustained by a person at work, or visitor must be reported to the Chief Officer or in their absence an appropriate substitute and recorded in the Accident Report Book, located in the front office. All accidents will be investigated as necessary, with any required action being taken to prevent a recurrence of the problem.

The Chief Officer is responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority (see Reporting section).

### **Alcohol, Drugs or Substance misuse**

Any staff member thought to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be subject to a disciplinary investigation as per the disciplinary procedure.

### **Display screen equipment**

Computer screens will be provided with anti-glare screens. All staff defined as regular users of VDU's will be offered an eye test at the expense of WVA at two-yearly intervals. (Regular indicates that the main function of the job role is at the computer). A five to ten minute break will be implemented for users after every hour of continual VDU use. Where an eye test shows that spectacles are necessary specifically for VDU work, the cost of a basic NHS pair of spectacles will be met by WVA. This provision does not apply where normal corrective appliances, glasses or contact lenses, prescribed for reading printed material will suffice.

### **Electricity**

WVA abides by the current Electricity at Work regulations. The Chief Officer will arrange for the electrical testing of all portable appliances by a suitably qualified electrician every 2 years. No untested electrical appliance will be used within their area of work.

Staff and volunteers must ensure that they use electricity in the safest possible way:

**Never** tamper with electrical equipment or electrically powered equipment,

**Do not** attempt to repair it or to remedy an electrical problem.

**Do not** overload sockets

**Do not** use taped joints to connect cables

**Do not** ignore obvious tell-tale signs such as faulty switching

**Do not** adjust, move or otherwise tamper with any electrical equipment or machinery in a manner not within the scope of their job duties

**Do not** handle electrical appliances, plugs and flexes with wet hands

**Do** switch off equipment before unplugging and cleaning

**Do** report electrical equipment to the line manager which is not working properly

**Do** ensure they are aware of safety precautions

### **Employees at Special Risk**

WVA recognises that some workers may from time to time be at increased risk of injury or ill-health resulting from work activities. All employees must advise the Chief Officer if they become aware of any change in their personal circumstances which could result in their being at increased risk. This could include medical conditions, permanent or temporary disability, taking medication and pregnancy.

As an equal opportunities employer WVA would ensure that they make reasonable adjustments of their employment arrangements or premises in order not to place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people.

WVA will make special arrangements for the supervision of young workers and volunteers in accordance with good practice guidelines.

### **Equipment**

All employees will be instructed in the safe use of office equipment in their induction programme and as part of Health and Safety training. Employees should report any equipment failure to the Office Manager.

Any tools or equipment which are defective must be reported to the Office Manager. In addition, new or second-hand equipment must be checked to ensure that it meets health and safety standards before it is purchased.

No tool should be used outside of the manufacturer's guidance. Employees are prohibited from using any tool or piece of equipment for any purpose other than its intended purpose. Approved personal protective equipment must be properly used where appropriate. Persons using machine tools must not wear clothing, jewellery or long hair in such a way as might pose a risk to their own or anyone else's safety. All tools must be properly and safely stored when not in use.

### **Fire**

The Chief Officer is the named fire warden, the Office Manager is delegated in the absence of the Chief Officer.

Fire instructions are displayed at various points around the building. All employees have a duty to conduct their operations in such a way as to minimise the risk of fire and they are under a duty to report immediately any fire, smoke or potential fire hazards, such as faulty electric cable or loose connections. Employees should never attempt to repair or interfere with electrical equipment or wiring themselves.

Smoke detectors and manually operated fire alarms are located at strategic points throughout the workplace. If a smoke detector sounds or fire is discovered, it is the responsibility of any employee present to raise an alarm and evacuate the building. Fire extinguishers are also located at strategic points throughout the workplace. Employees are only expected to tackle a fire themselves if it does not pose a threat to their personal safety. If the situation is dangerous or potentially dangerous, the

employee must raise the fire alarm and evacuate the building immediately. The assembly point is detailed on the posters in the office.

Fire doors are designed to slow the spread of fire and smoke throughout the workplace. Fire exit doors and corridors must never be locked, blocked or used as storage space. All employees must ensure they are familiar with their evacuation route and designated assembly point in case of fire. Practice fire drills are conducted on a periodical basis.

WVA is based in a serviced building that meets all fire regulations.

### **Housekeeping**

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to ensure the following:

- Materials and equipment must be stored safely and tidily at all times
- Walkways and passageways and exits must be kept clear and free from obstructions at all times
- If a walkway or passageway becomes wet the floor should be wiped up immediately
- Trailing cables should not be left in any passageway

### **Infectious Diseases**

For these guidelines an infectious disease is defined as one which could be transmitted either deliberately or unknowingly to another person / persons.

- All employees or volunteers who may have contact with bodily fluids should seek guidance from their GP regarding vaccinations and should wear the appropriate protective clothing i.e. gloves / aprons / masks.
- The Chief Officer must be advised if any staff, volunteer or service user is suspected of or diagnosed as having a contagious disease which may be passed to others in everyday occurrences. The member of staff or volunteers should not come into the office until medical advice has been sought. This does not contravene our equal opportunities policies and procedures including staff declarations of HIV and Aids status.
- Once the member of staff or volunteer has sought medical advice they should inform the Chief Officer of the circumstances, who will discuss the implications with them.
- Confidentiality and dignity of the individual will be respected at all times and details of their condition will not be revealed to any third party without their agreement unless there is a significant risk to a third party
- WVA shall take appropriate care to prevent cross infection or contamination

### **Information and instruction**

The Health and Safety Law posters are displayed in the front office.

Further health and safety advice is available from the Health and Safety Executive helpline.

### **Insurance**

The Trustee Board is responsible for insuring the activities of the organisation. Insurance certificates are displayed in the front office, reception area.

## **SECURITY OF PERSONNEL**

WVA must not be opened to the public unless at least two members of staff are present.

On no account must individual workers' home addresses or telephone numbers be disclosed to anyone outside the WVA team.

Interview rooms must be so arranged that the adviser is nearest the exit door. If at any time an adviser feels uneasy about a particular client they should inform other staff members of the situation, and ensure they can make a quick exit if necessary.

Guidelines for personal security and safety are given in the Lone Working policy.

### **Manual Handling**

In all cases where WVA staff and volunteers have to regularly carry, lift, push or pull items as part of their duties, a risk assessment should be undertaken and recorded.

Manual handling operations which involve the risk of injury should be avoided. Employees should not attempt to lift or move a load which is too heavy to manage comfortably. Employees should ask for assistance if there is any danger of strain.

Employees should not attempt to obtain items from shelves which are beyond their reach. A ladder or stepping stool should be used as long as the staff member has been instructed how to use this safely. Employees should not use chairs or any makeshift device for climbing and should never climb up the shelves themselves.

### **Mobile phones**

The use of mobile phones, with or without a hands-free adaptor, is prohibited whilst driving on WVA business. The use of a mobile phone whilst driving is not only an illegal offence but will also be seen as a disciplinary offence.

### **Risk assessments**

It is a requirement of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 that WVA undertakes and records risk assessments. Risk assessments will be undertaken by the Office Manager for the office premises and by individual Officers at the outset of their service delivery and where new activities are introduced. Risk assessments will be reviewed on an annual basis. Where the assessor is unable to minimise the risk to an acceptable level, the findings of the risk assessment will be reported to the Chief Officer.

The action required to remove or control risks will be approved by the Chief Officer. Although risk assessments are undertaken prior to the activity being carried out, all staff and volunteers have a responsibility for not undertaking activity if they consider that the risks to themselves or others is significant.

### **Safe Handling of Substances**

WVA is required to carry out an assessment under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health regulations 2002 in order to assess the workplace for risk to health from substances used on their premises.

Any hazardous substance or equipment would be kept within a locked storage.

A hazardous substance can be liquid, solid, dust powder, or gas which can damage health when it comes into contact with skin or eyes; or enters the body through the skin; or is breathed in, swallowed or even transferred to the mouth via contaminated hands.

In order to comply with CoSHH regulations WVA are required to take the following steps:-

- Identify the hazardous substance present. Consider the risks they present to people's health if the risk is significant.
- Decide who might be harmed or if others maybe affected indirectly.
- Evaluate the risk arising from the hazard and decide whether existing control measures are adequate or if more should be done.
- Record the findings and arrange for details to be inserted into the health and safety file and inform all staff and volunteers.

Assessments should be reviewed annually or until new guidance is given whichever is sooner.

Staff and volunteers required to use certain substances / chemicals will be required to comply with the following procedures:

- To use substances /chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If in doubt, they should check before use with the Office Manager.
- To use protective clothing / footwear /gloves / masks / eye protection as appropriate.
- To clean any spillage / soiling of such substances in an appropriate manner.
- To report any accidents / incidents or injuries to the Chief Officer or a designated person if the Chief Officer is absent.

### **Training**

All employees and volunteers will receive health and safety training as part of their induction on joining the organisation. Training will include instruction on the safe use of any equipment provided and other information which is relevant to their specific



role and responsibilities. Specific training sessions will be arranged if there is a change to health and safety procedures; if it is agreed as part of a member of staff's training and development plan or to inform staff of a specific health and safety concern.

Any training and development needs should be reported to the Chief Officer.

### **Violence against staff**

WVA will provide training and support to staff and volunteers who may be at risk from threats or violence from their client group.

WVA as an employer will:

- Undertake a systematic general examination of all their work activities (including the threat of violence to staff), record the significant findings of their assessment and implement all appropriate actions to prevent incidents.
- Provide appropriate training to employees on dealing with difficult customers, should it be required or requested.
- Report all violent incidents which lead to a major injury, or to three days' absence from work, or if the person assaulted or involved in the incident is unable to do their normal work for three days as a result of the incident.

Guidelines for personal safety are in the dealing with the public policy

## **HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE**

WVA aims to protect its staff and volunteers' health from injury or long term illness; ensuring their safety by affording protection from immediate danger and their welfare by providing facilities for personal comfort at work.

### **Lighting**

WVA should ensure that there is adequate lighting, preferably natural light to avoid visual fatigue.

### **Temperature**

WVA is expected to maintain workroom / office temperature of at least 16° C after the first hour of work where employees do most of their work sitting down or where the job does not involve serious physical effort.

If this temperature is not reached, the employee should ask for additional heating facilities to be provided immediately and, if this is not possible, should transfer to a place of work where an appropriate temperature prevails.

There is no maximum temperature.