

Health & Safety Policy

Safety Committee

Health and Safety Officer: **Mike Burrows**

Trustee: **Tracey Crutchley**

Section 1 – Introduction

This policy covers the arrangements for all matters concerning Health & Safety within Windmill Hill community Forum and Telematics Centre.

Access

Forum employees, volunteers and students are made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it:

- On paper in a folder in the Telematics Centre
- Electronically on the Forum website at www.whcf.org.uk/policies

This policy is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from employees, volunteers, students and external organisations.

Section 2 – Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Windmill Hill Community Forum Ltd to comply with the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and subsequent legislation, to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, volunteers and students; and to provide information, training and supervision for this purpose. The Forum also recognises and accepts its responsibility to protect the health and safety of all visitors to the workplace (including clients, contractors, temporary staff, volunteers and any members of the public) who might be affected by our activities. The Forum will also co-operate on health and safety matters with our landlords Halton Borough Council. Regular Forum meetings will routinely be held on health and safety matters.

The policy will be reviewed each year by the Trustees, along with risk assessments on all activities undertaken by the Forum.

Section 3 – Implementation

Responsibilities within the Organisation

1. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of Windmill Hill Community Forum Ltd as the employer has the overall and final responsibility for the health and safety matters of the Forum and for ensuring that health and safety legislation is complied with within the organisation. To this end, the Board will ensure the allocation of the resources necessary to maintain sound and efficient health and safety arrangements. The Board will be responsible for appointing a Safety Officer to oversee and implement its policies. 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. clients, students, volunteers, or members of the public.

2. Health and Safety Committee

The Board of Trustees will form the Health and Safety Committee and their role will include;

- The appointment of a Safety Officer
- Monitoring of the Forum's Health and Safety Policy including risk assessments.
- Receiving reports on all accidents and near misses which have occurred in the organisation and ensure that any necessary remedial action is taken.
- Annual monitoring and review of all health and safety incidents (including near misses) and make recommendations for risk assessments where appropriate.
- Present an annual report on the health and safety performance of the Forum.

3. Safety Officer

The Safety Officer is responsible for the effective day-to-day implementation of procedures and systems including monitoring, prevention of hazards and taking remedial action in their area of responsibility.

The Safety Officer will ensure that staff are appropriately trained and receive the support they need to perform their duties.

The Safety officer will also ensure that the health and safety policy and all associated procedures are brought to the attention of all staff and volunteers and that there are adequate signs about hazards and emergency procedures.

The Safety Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that the health and safety policy is put into practice at the Forum's premises. In particular the Safety Officer will ensure that;

- employees and volunteers receive sufficient information, training and supervision on health and safety matters

- risk assessments covering fire risk, safer systems of work, personal safety and assessments of hazardous substances are undertaken and the results written up and made available to all employees
- accidents and near misses are investigated and reported to the Board of Trustees and, where appropriate, the Health and Safety Executive
- there are arrangements in place to monitor the maintenance of the premises and equipment

4. Employees, volunteers and students

All employees, volunteers and students have the responsibility to:

- ensure that they are fully conversant with this policy
- co-operate with the Safety Officer and the Board to achieve a safe and healthy workplace
- take reasonable care of themselves and others

Employees, volunteers and students must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with anything provided for their health, safety and welfare. Serious breaches of the Health and Safety Policy and rules (e.g. misusing equipment, deliberately putting someone else's safety in danger) will be dealt with through the Forum's Disciplinary Procedure.

Whenever an employee, volunteer or student notices a health or safety problem which they are unable to put right, they must immediately inform the Safety Officer or a Trustee.

Health & Safety matters may be raised by any employee, volunteer or student at Forum meetings or directly with the Safety Officer at any time.

Organisational Arrangements

5. Risk assessments

The Forum's Health and Safety Sub-Committee will ensure that a competent person carries out risk assessments, as appropriate, in accordance with the 1992 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP). Risk assessment/s will be written up and be made available to all staff.

Written risk assessments will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure it covers all employees and volunteers against all risks and to ensure that any action identified as needed in the risk assessment has been carried out. Risk assessments will also be updated every time that there is a major change in working practices. Risk assessments will cover all the Forum employees and volunteers, wherever they may be based, and will cover all aspects of their activities. The Board will make, and implement, any appropriate

arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of any preventative or protective measures identified as a result of risk assessments.

The Forum will conduct an individual risk assessment for any employee under the age of 18. This assessment will specifically take into account the young person's possible lack of awareness of existing or potential risks. The Forum will conduct individual assessments for lone workers, which take account of personal safety. It will also offer individual risk assessments to any members of staff who show or report symptoms of stress.

6. Building Maintenance

The Forum has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for all employees, volunteers and students.

The Safety Officer will be responsible for liaising with our landlord HBC, and for ensuring that any repairs are carried out swiftly, and with the minimum of disruption.

7. Reporting Hazards

All Forum employees, volunteers and students are responsible for spotting and reporting hazards or potential hazards. If a hazard or potential hazard is seen, it should be removed or reported to the Safety Officer or a Trustee straight away.

8. Reporting Accidents and dangerous occurrences

- All accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be reported to the Safety Officer as soon as possible after the event and recorded in the accident book.
- All accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences will be investigated within 24 hours by the Safety Officer. The Safety Officer will then present a safety report with recommendations to the Safety Committee.
- The Safety Officer will report serious accidents and dangerous occurrences directly to the Health & Safety Executive.

9. First Aiders

- First Aider/s will be appointed in accordance with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.
- The First Aider/s will be responsible for taking prompt action following an accident, whether involving an employee or not.
- All accidents and near misses, no matter how minor, will be recorded in the Accident Book, held in the Forum Office.
- A First aid box is held in the Forum office.

10. Smoking

In line with current regulations smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises.

11. Overcrowding

The Forum will avoid unhealthy and overcrowded working or learning conditions, and will consult employees and volunteers on any changes in office layout. Rooms used as meeting places or classrooms shall not exceed their legal capacity.

12. Ventilation

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

13. Temperature

In office workplaces a minimum temperature of 16°C must be maintained. Efforts will be made so far as is reasonably practical to ensure the workplace temperature does not rise to an uncomfortable level. A thermometer will be provided in a conspicuous place and in such a position as to be easily seen. The Forum will do all in its power to ensure reasonable temperatures in the workplace at all times.

14. Lighting

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

15. Noise

The Forum employees and volunteers work within an open plan office and therefore a certain level of noise is unavoidable. However, the Forum will endeavour to ensure that noise levels are kept within acceptable limits.

16. Office Atmospheric Pollutants

Office equipment such as photocopiers and printers can emit pollutants into the atmosphere. The Forum will take reasonable precautions in ensuring that these levels are kept within acceptable limits. Employees 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.

17. Equipment and Materials Storage/Usage

Equipment must not be left untidy or spread around the floor but must be suitably stored after use.

Corridors 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.

18. Heating

Except in emergencies, and only with the permission of the Safety Officer, no paraffin, or bar electric, or bottled gas fires, will be used on the Forum's premises.

19. Electrical Equipment

Only skilled electricians should carry out maintenance work on electrical equipment. No unqualified employee, volunteer or student should endanger themselves, or others, by carrying out such work.

Employees, volunteers and students should not perform unsafe practices such as, leaving wires trailing across floors, using plugs with loose or chafed wiring, or overloading electrical sockets. Broken, ineffective or damaged electrical equipment must be clearly labelled as such and taken out of commission, then reported to the Safety Officer.

The Forum shall ensure all portable electrical appliances and equipment is periodically inspected and tested for compliance with The Electricity at Work Regulations (Health and Safety Act 1974). An up-to-date inventory of electrical equipment will be maintained by the Safety Officer, including dates of inspection.

20. Training

The Forum will ensure that new employees, volunteers and students, receive information on health and safety as part of their induction. The Forum will organise training for employees and volunteers on health and safety matters as appropriate, including: general health and safety, first aid, manual handling, fire safety, and risk assessment.

The Forum will also organise training for appropriate use of equipment and any special training needed to ensure safe systems of work. If employees and volunteers consider they have health and safety training needs they should inform the Safety Officer.

The Safety Officer will ensure that records of all health and safety training are maintained as part of the organisation's ongoing training and development plan.

21. Consultation

The Health and Safety Committee will be responsible for carrying out consultation on matters of health and safety as required or when the situation demands.

22. Resolution of health and safety problems

Any employee, volunteer or student with a health and safety concern must first inform their manager or tutor who will then inform the Safety Officer. If, after investigation, the problem is not corrected in a reasonable time, or if the Safety Officer decides that no action is required, and if the employee, volunteer or student is not satisfied, then the employee, volunteer or student may refer the matter to a Trustee who may make written representations to the Safety Officer.

If the employee, volunteer or student is still dissatisfied, the matter will be entered on the agenda for the next meeting of the health and safety committee.

General Welfare

23. Toilets

The Forum will seek to ensure that suitable and sufficient toilets and washing facilities are provided for all able or disabled employees, volunteers and students in accordance with the minimum requirements of Health and Safety legislation. Each 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.

An adequate supply of drinking water will be provided for all staff.

24. Universal Hygiene Controls

Halton Borough Council (HBC); as landlords, will ensure that the office and classroom are kept clean and tidy, also the toilets and wash-basins.

Disposal bins for sanitary products will be provided by an appropriate company appointed by HBC and will ensure that they are emptied and sanitised regularly.

All employees, volunteers and students are responsible for the cleanliness of their individual workstations.

25. Disabled Access

Disabled access for wheel chair users is provided, and clear access to all parts of the building will be maintained.

26. Hours of Work

The Forum's employees and volunteers should not work excessively long hours, and should take adequate breaks for meals as indicated in their contracts or terms of employment.

Hours worked will be routinely monitored through supervision and support meetings.

27. Working Alone and Security

When working alone, all employees and volunteers must fully concentrate on the task at hand. They should not undertake heavy lifting or climb above head height. They are not to undertake electrical repairs to the mains or lighting circuits.

They must monitor any person seeking to gain entry to the building and refuse entry if necessary. Before leaving the building all lights and electrical appliances are to be turned off and all windows and doors closed.

28. Visual Display Equipment

It is the policy of the Forum to comply with the law as set out in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

These regulations require employers to minimise the risks in VDU work by ensuring that work places and jobs are well designed. The Regulations apply where staff uses VDUs as a significant part of their normal work. Employees, volunteers and students who use VDUs only occasionally are not covered by the Regulation, but as employers we still have general duties to protect our staff under other Health and Safety at Work legislation.

The Forum will conduct health and safety assessments of all workstations staffed by employees or 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. Appropriate seating must be available to all users, who must take regular breaks (at least 10 minutes away for every hour at the screen). Short frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional longer breaks.

The Forum employees and volunteers are expected to:

- Talk to the Safety Officer if they have problems related to computer use and health and safety problems

- Not sit in the same position for long periods. If there are no natural breaks in your job, the Safety Officer should plan for you to have rest breaks; frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones

Employees and volunteers should:

- Adjust their chair and monitor to find the most comfortable position for their work. Forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes level with the top of the monitor.
- Try different arrangements of keyboard, monitor, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement.
- Arrange their desk and monitor to avoid glare; adjust brightness and contrast controls on your monitor to suit lighting conditions in the room.
- Ensure there is space to move legs freely. A footrest may be helpful.
- Adjust their keyboard to get a good typing position. Keep wrists straight, keep a soft touch on the keys and don't over-stretch the fingers.
- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight.
- Select fonts and text colours that are large enough to read easily on your screen.

Resources will be sought by the Forum to provide:-

- VDUs with a detachable and adjustable screen, i.e. in height, swivel etc, to allow for the individual preference of the operator
- VDU's computer cleaning supplies
- A wrist and foot rest at each workstation if required
- An anti-static mat at each workstation
- Keyboards which are separate from screens
- Anti glare screens, where direct light cannot be prevented from falling on the monitor
- Adequate workstation space.

29. Laptops

- Laptops should not be used in the office for extended periods of time.
- Laptops should not be connected to the network without the permission of the IT Project Manager.
- Do not use a laptop in a stationary car, where unsuitable seating and limited space increase the likelihood of injury.
- Do not overload a laptop bag. Distribute weight as evenly as possible.
- Position the laptop on a firm surface at the correct height for use.
- Ensure that there space in front of the laptop to rest wrists and forearms.

30. Eyesight Tests

Where any member of staff is experiencing eyesight problems attributable to their work with VDUs, he/she, will be entitled to an eyesight test paid for by the Forum. Where a test

shows that as a result of work with the Forum's VDUs a member of staff needs to purchase glasses, the Forum will pay for these. An optician must provide evidence and complete the appropriate form, which staff should obtain from the Safety Officer. At the time of issuing this policy, any such payment for corrective lenses is restricted and based on the provision of basic frames. Provision of frames excludes those normally used for purposes other than work with VDUs. Staff can obtain full details concerning conditions of payment from the Safety Officer.

31. WRULDS/RSI

Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (also known as Repetitive Strain Injury) are often associated with keyboard work. It is the intention of the Forum, by following best advice and practices, to provide VDU/keyboard equipment and furniture, which help prevent the development of these musculoskeletal disorders.

However employees should contribute to their own safety and welfare by:

- Avoiding sitting in the same position for long periods
- Adjusting equipment and furniture to appropriate/comfortable positions
- Taking a rest break from VDU work (at least 10 minutes every hour).

32. Maintenance

The Safety Officer will ensure that maintenance contracts for equipment in the Forum's office are adhered to and, where appropriate, renewed.

33. Manual Handling

The Forum employees and volunteers should avoid manual lifting where at all possible. However, they may occasionally be required to manually lift and handle heavy items. Correct manual lifting and handling reduces the effort required and prevents strain and risk of injury.

The most likely occurrences of manual handling for the Forum employees and volunteers are;

- the receipt and storage of stationery orders
- moving paper records into archive storage
- rearranging the office furniture and equipment
- handling deliveries of computer equipment
- handling computer equipment for delivery to clients
- moving equipment and records into the loft storage area

All employees should use all available aids, to reduce the risk of injury, e.g. sack trolley, slings, and lifts.

Employees should not put themselves at risk by attempting to lift heavy loads which could be divided into smaller quantities. The assistance of other employees should always be sought for moving large quantities or for lifting heavy and awkward loads. When lifting in a team take instructions from one person only.

Any employee feeling a strain should stop immediately and record the incident in the Accident Book. To continue may result in more serious injury.

34. Stress Management

The Forum recognises that stress at work is a serious issue and will do all it can to eradicate problems relating to stress at work. In particular the Forum will;

- Ensure close consultation with employees and volunteers to involve them in work distribution, particularly during periods of change.
- Give opportunities for the staff and volunteers to contribute to the planning and organisation of their own jobs.
- Ensure that employees and volunteers have work targets that are challenging, but not unreasonable.
- Implement effective policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and any other form of harassment
- Encourage good communications between management, employees, volunteers.
- Promote the maintenance of a supportive culture in the workplace.
- Where appropriate, take into consideration an employee's personal or home problems.
- Ensure employees avoid working long and unsocial hours.

The Forum will work to ensure that all policies, working practices, conditions of employment etc. do not conflict with the above statement.

Employees should become aware of the causes of stress, and ensure that they work in such a way that it would minimise stress on themselves and others.

Employees and volunteers must fully respect other members of staff, and ensure that interpersonal conflicts are avoided or dealt with sensibly.

Employees must not make unrealistic demands on other workers, by imposing impossible deadlines and/or increasing workloads to an unsustainable level.

Employees and volunteers should actively support, and participate in the Forum's aim of maintaining a pleasant and supportive workplace environment.

If an employee or volunteer is suffering from stress at work, they should discuss this with their immediate superior at the first opportunity. Where it is practicable and reasonable, the Forum will seek to provide support and assistance to the stressed employee, or volunteer.

Fire Safety

35. Fire Hazards

All employees, volunteers and students must become familiar with the fire drill instructions, which is part of the induction process.

All office gangways and access to corridors, fire doors, fire exits, fire extinguishers and other fire fighting equipment must be kept free of obstructions at all times.

Rubbish bins are to be emptied every day, and collections of flammable materials such as paper, and cardboard boxes are to be stored securely or removed from the building.

Smoking is not allowed in or around the building

It is the responsibility of all employees, volunteers and students to be aware of all fire hazards and bring them to the attention of a Trustee or the Safety Officer. They must also know the location of the fire alarms, fire extinguishers, emergency exits and their own assembly point.

36. Fire Drills

Employees, volunteers and students are to be made fully conversant with the escape routes and the appropriate assembly points.

The Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that employees, volunteers and students are aware of evacuation procedures. The Safety Officer will evaluate and review the success, or otherwise, of each evacuation in order to make improvements to the procedures.

On hearing the fire alarm employees, volunteers and students are to pick up their immediate belongings and leave the building under the supervision of the Office Supervisor or Tutor. They must file out in an orderly manner and once they have left the building may not re-enter until the all clear is given.

The Office Supervisor is responsible for supervising the evacuation of all employees, volunteers, and visitors, during fire drills, and accounting for them at the assembly point.

The Tutors will supervise the evacuation of students and will hold a roll call at the assembly point.

All fire drills and training will be recorded by the Forum.

HBC is responsible for carrying out Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting Tests at least twice each year. The Forum staff and volunteers will be notified of any testing taking place during office hours.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

37. COSHH Policy

Under the 1992 COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations, employers have a duty to make an assessment of the risks related to hazardous substances e.g. chemicals, noxious fumes etc. In accordance with the Approved Code of Practice this assessment will be carried out and written down by a nominated competent person appointed by the Forum's Health and Safety Committee. Following this assessment, in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) the Forum will:

- in the first instance take action to remove any hazardous substances
- If this is not possible then 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 then protective equipment will be issued to ensure the safety of staff.

38. Monitoring Exposure

If for any reason a member of staff has to be exposed to a possible 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.

39. Substitution and Protection

All members of staff shall avoid using hazardous substances at all times if at all possible. Where substitute materials are available they should be used. If there is no way of avoiding use of a hazardous substance, then staff must use the substance in an enclosed, ventilated environment away from other workers, and use proper protective equipment, which shall be made available by the Forum.

Supplementary policies and procedures

40. Policies and Procedures

All further policies and procedures issued by the Forum in the interests of health and safety will be regarded as supplementary to this policy

41. Reviews

This policy will be reviewed annually as set out above.

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Revised June 2008

Revised by Mike Burrows

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