



HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

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CONTENTS	PAGE
1. General	2
2. Risk Assessment	2
3. Workplace Issues	4
4. Personal Protective Equipment	5
5. Work Equipment	6
6. Manual Handling	6
7. Visual Display Units	7
8. Fire Safety	7
9. Electrical Apparatus	8
10. Hazardous Substances	8
11. First Aid	8
12. Accidents and Diseases	9
13. Asbestos	9
14. Stress	10
15. Equal Opportunities	10
16. Monitoring	11

1. GENERAL

1.1 Manchester Deaf Centre Ltd. recognises its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. We will take all steps reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of all employees, Board members, trainees, volunteers, self-employed workers and others working on our premises.

1.2 Responsibility for setting and reviewing this Policy and receiving reports on its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees, for whom training will be provided.

1.3 Responsibility for implementation, preparing reports on the implementation and monitoring the Health and Safety Policy will be delegated to a Health and Safety Officer, currently the Centre Manager, for whom we will provide, as necessary, full training together with relevant publications from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and other resources.

1.4 We will seek the active collaboration of trade-union appointed safety representatives and others drawn from different operational areas in reviewing and monitoring this Policy, and in identifying hazards and potentially safer practices. We will encourage the formation of a safety committee. We will seek to promote a “health and safety culture” throughout the organisation.

1.5 We will take responsibility for costs reasonably incurred in promoting and ensuring health and safety, and will consider such costs when budgets are set.

1.6 We will supply all staff with copies of this Policy and of agreed Health and Safety procedure documents. Compliance with these will be a condition of employment for all staff.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT

2.1 We will carry out an initial risk assessment for all aspects of our work, in particular, taking account of specific activities in each operational area. We will consider not only prescribed activities and precautionary measures, but also actual custom and practice. We will consider the risk not only to staff but also to

all who come in contact with our activities. We will seek to identify any significant hazard and the people at risk, and to gauge the effectiveness of any existing control measure.

2.2 We recognise our responsibilities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999. In assessing risks, we will take particular account of the risks affecting new or expectant mothers or their children. Alternative work or suspension on full pay will be offered, where necessary.

2.3 We recognise our responsibilities under the Health and Safety (Young Persons) Regulation 1997. In assessing risks, we will take particular account of the risks surrounding staff and trainees who are under 18 or who are otherwise inexperienced, immature or lacking in awareness of risk.

2.4 Once a risk assessment is carried out, the Health and Safety Officer is responsible for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of measures preventing and protecting people from these risks and for recording these in writing.

2.5 The risk assessment will identify what constitutes an emergency and the procedures to be taken in response. The procedures will identify people's emergency roles and their responsibilities to themselves and will seek to ensure that all those affected at the time are made fully aware of what to do.

2.6 Where the risk assessment identifies a health problem relating to the work, with a reasonable likelihood that this may arise, and where the health problem may be detected and protected against, we will introduce health surveillance.

2.7 Wherever possible, we will seek to eliminate risk rather than warning against it; we will seek to adapt work situations to people, not people to work situations; we will take advantage of any relevant technical advances or technological aids that enable safer practice; we will prioritise measures that benefit the whole workplace; we will seek to ensure that all staff, trainees and volunteers understand what is expected of them; we will seek to develop a concerted approach to minimizing risk and promoting a positive attitude to health and safety.

2.8 We will provide all staff (including temporary, self-employed, agency and visiting workers) with information that is understandable, relevant and accessible to them. This will cover: risks identified, preventive and protective measures, emergency procedures, and names of those responsible in the event of evacuation.

2.9 We will take into account the capabilities of staff regarding health and safety when allocating work. We will provide adequate health and safety training as part of the induction of new staff and whenever staffs are exposed to new or increased risks.

3. WORKPLACE ISSUES

3.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. We will obtain the Approved Code of Practice and be guided by its terms. The HSE Code of Practice implementing the Regulations is the Approved Code of Practice.

3.2 We will maintain both premises and equipment in good working order. We will either rectify defects immediately or take steps to protect anyone at risk. We will run a maintenance system, which identifies and records both defects and servicing.

3.3 We will ensure that all rooms can be appropriately ventilated and that windows can be opened and closed.

3.4 We will maintain reasonable working temperatures of no less than 16°C and provide thermometers to measure this.

3.5 We will provide adequate lighting, using natural light where possible, ensuring windows and skylights can be cleaned safely and are cleaned regularly. Where necessary we will provide emergency lighting, lighting for individual workstations and lighting for places of particular danger. Windows will be strong enough to resist easy breakage. Other transparent surfaces will be marked so they are apparent.

3.6 We will maintain a standard of cleanliness appropriate to the use of each working area. We will keep furniture and fittings, walls, floors and ceilings clean, with additional cleaning where spills, breakages or soiling occurs. We will provide adequate rubbish bins and require them to be used.

3.7 In planning personal workspace, we will set a minimum in excess of the standard 11 cubic meters in order to ensure that the workspace as a whole remains fully wheelchair accessible.

3.8 Workstations will be designed to suit the needs of the individual as well as the demands of the work. They will be protected from the weather and easy to vacate in an emergency. Work equipment and materials will be within easy reach without undue bending or stretching, and there should be no danger of slipping or falling. We will provide a suitable seat/ and or footrest as necessary.

3.9 We will maintain internal traffic routes with an even non-slip surface and ensure it is free of obstructions. We will take particular account of the needs of wheelchair users and of those with visual or other sensory impairments.

3.10 We will minimize the risk of objects falling on people by checking on their safety and limiting the height of any stacking. We will ensure storage units are strong and stable and not over-filled. Similarly, we will identify any risk of people falling and install fencing as necessary.

3.11 Outside our premises within the contours of our boundary we will, as far as possible, segregate pedestrian and vehicular routes, and we will take particular account of the needs of wheelchair users and those with impairments.

3.12 We will ensure that doors and gates are aptly constructed, with appropriate devices to prevent sliding doors from becoming derailed, upward-opening doors from falling back down, and powered doors from trapping people. We will ensure that people can see through doors which open both ways.

3.13 We will maintain WC's and washing facilities for men and women separately. These will be adequately ventilated, lit and cleaned, and will be equal to or in excess of the statutory requirements relative to staff numbers.

3.14 We will provide drinking water, with cups, and mark the place with a sign.

3.15 Where staff need to change for work, we aim to provide secure facilities for storing and drying clothes. Where health or hygiene demands, we will provide separate lockers for home and work clothes. Where privacy is needed, we will aim to provide separate changing facilities for men and women.

3.16 We will aim to provide suitable rest areas away from the workstation, and ensure that there are areas where people can eat.

3.17 We will not permit smoking in our premises.

4. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

4.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. We will obtain and be guided by the HSE's Guidance Notes.

4.2 We will make readily available personal equipment and clothing to protect staff from weather and from risks to their health and safety, unless those risks are controlled by other equally effective means. Such equipment and

clothing will (a) be appropriate for the risks involved and the place where the risks may occur; (b) take account of the practicality of its use and the state of health of the person using it; (c) be capable of fitting the wearer correctly; and (d) be effective in preventing or controlling the risks involved.

4.3 Before supplying protective equipment, we will assess its suitability both in general and for the individual concerned. Where different items are supplied, we will ensure their compatibility. All equipment will be maintained in good working order and safely stored when not in use.

4.4 We will inform, instruct and train staff in the use of such equipment, so that they understand its purpose, the risks it is designed to avoid or limit, and how to maintain it properly. We will take steps to ensure that such equipment is used. We will expect staff to use it and to report any defects or loss.

5. WORK EQUIPMENT

5.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992. We will obtain and be guided by the HSE's Guidance Notes.

5.2 We will ensure that all work equipment is suitable for the task we are using it for and for the people who are using it. When selecting equipment, we will take into account working conditions, existing risk, and any additional risk posed by the equipment.

5.3 We will keep equipment in good repair and record its maintenance in a log book.

5.4 Where any equipment is likely to present a specific health and safety risk, we will restrict its use to authorised staff.

5.5 We will supply staff using equipment and those managing their work with clear health and safety information and training, and where appropriate, written instructions, covering how the equipment should be used, potential problems and action to be taken, including comments from others who have used the equipment.

6. MANUAL HANDLING

6.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. We will obtain and be guided by the HSE's Guidance Notes.

6.2 We will seek to avoid wherever reasonably practicable, the need for staff to undertake manual handling, which involves a risk of injury. Where such tasks are unavoidable, we will carry out a risk assessment, taking into account the task, the load, working environment, individual capacity, physical effort involved, team handling, rest periods, improved layout and other factors. We will seek to reduce as far as possible any risks identified.

7. VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS

7.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992. We will obtain and be guided by the HSE's Guidance Notes.

7.2 We will assess all computer workstations for risks to health and safety. We will review those assessments whenever changes take place.

7.3 Visual display screens will be of adequate size for the type of work, with legible characters and adjustable brightness and contrast. Both screens and keyboards will be detachable from computer cases. We will place screens so as to avoid reflection – where possible, at right angles to windows. Work chairs will be stable and adjustable for both heights and back position, with sufficient space for each user to alter their position comfortably. The work-desk itself will be non-reflective, with adequate space on work surfaces surrounding computers. We will provide screen wipes and expect staff to use them regularly. We will provide wrist and foot rests, anti-static mat, lamp and document holder for each workstation.

7.4 We will seek to ensure that all jobs are designed to allow for changes in activity. Where jobs require extended work at a computer we will require staff to take frequent breaks for at least ten minutes for every hour at the screen. In the case of staff that use computers for more than ten hours per week, we will pay for eye tests annually and/ or whenever their work is causing eyestrain. We will pay for any glasses needed exclusively for working with display screens.

7.5 In order to minimise the risk of repetitive strain injuries, staff are expected to make use of the adjustable furniture and equipment provided and to avoid sitting in the same position for long periods.

7.6 We will provide staff with information and training covering the health and safety risks associated with visual display screens.

8. FIRE SAFETY

8.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997. We will obtain and be guided by the Home Office's Guidance Notes.

8.2 We will ensure that all our workplaces are equipped with fire detectors, fire alarms, and fire-fighting equipment. If fire-fighting equipment is not automatic, it will be easily accessible and simple to use. We will seek and act on the recommendations of fire prevention officers in respect of such equipment, which will be regularly and efficiently maintained.

8.3 We will identify emergency exit routes, which lead as directly as possible to places of safety, and which enable staff to evacuate the workplace as safely and quickly as possible. We will ensure that these routes are adequate in number, distribution and dimensions, that they are clearly signed and that they have emergency lighting. We will ensure that all emergency doors open in the direction of escape and are left unlocked.

9. ELECTRICAL APPARATUS

9.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Electricity and Work Regulations 1989. We will obtain and be guided by the HSE's Memorandum of Guidance.

9.2 We will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all electrical systems are constructed, maintained and used in such a way as to prevent danger arising. We will offer appropriate training and supervision to those using electrical equipment.

9.3 We will ensure that all electrical appliances are routinely Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) tested by a qualified electrician.

10. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

10.1 We recognise our responsibilities under Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. We will obtain and be guided by the HSE's guide.

10.2 We will identify hazardous substances in use and assess the risks involved. We will seek to prevent or control exposure to such substances, issuing protective equipment if necessary.

11. FIRST AID

11.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981. We will obtain and be guided by the HSE's code of practice.

11.2 We will encourage staff to undertake training in first aid. Our target will be to have two trained first-aiders at our workplace. One trained first-aider will be appointed to take charge of the situation in an emergency.

11.3 We will provide a first aid box at the workplace. These boxes will contain only those items which members of staff are competent to use. They will not contain medication.

12. ACCIDENTS AND DISEASES

12.1 We recognise our responsibilities under Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. We will obtain and be guided by the HSE's guide.

12.2 We will maintain an accident book setting out the date, time and circumstances of all accidents and reportable diseases, together with details of steps taken to prevent any recurrence. We will ensure that all reported accidents are kept confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act. All reports will be kept for three years.

12.3 We will report to the environmental health officer at Manchester City Council any incident at work, including assault or violence, which results in a worker being off sick for more than three calendar days or spending 24 hours or more in hospital. Any fatality or major injury will be notified immediately by telephone.

13. ASBESTOS

13.1 We will recognise our responsibilities under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. We will obtain and be guided by the approved Code of Practice.

13.2 We will ensure that in every building, including new premises, a check is done for asbestos.

13.3 If asbestos is present, then a record will be kept of its location and condition.

13.4 An assessment of the risk will be done. E.g. Is it likely to release fibres?

13.5 If asbestos is discovered, a 'Managing of Asbestos' plan will be implemented. The plan will consist of:

- Areas where asbestos is present
- Any asbestos that needs "sealing", encapsulating, or as a last resort removal.

13.6 The plan will warn people coming to work in the building, to prevent accidental exposure.

14. STRESS

14.1 Of all work-related risks, stress is arguably the least tangible and the most likely to happen. We recognise our responsibility as an employer in combating stress.

14.2 In order to keep stress to a minimum, we will seek to:

- ensure close employee involvement, particularly during periods of change;
- ensure variety in work;
- implement proper hazard control methods;
- ensure staff have work targets that are demanding but reasonable;
- implement effective systems for dealing with bullying and for racial, sexual or other harassment;
- encourage good communication between staff and management;
- ensure the maintenance of a supportive culture in the workplace;
- be understanding about the pressures on staff with personal or domestic problems;
- ensure employees avoid working long and anti-social hours;
- regularly examine all policies, working practices and conditions of employment and remove components that may lead to stress.

14.3 We will ensure staff are made aware of the causes of stress and that they do not work in ways which increase their own stress or that of their colleagues. Managers should not make unrealistic demands of their staff by imposing impossible deadlines and/or increasing workloads to an unmanageable level.

14.4 We will seek to develop an atmosphere of mutual respect among staff and ensure that interpersonal conflicts are avoided or dealt with effectively.

14.5 Where stress does occur, we will offer support and informal counselling to the staff member concerned, whilst exploring possible organisational causes (using HSE checklist) and considering remedial action.

14.6 We will neither discriminate nor tolerate discrimination against employees suffering stress. We will seek to help them recover their health.

15. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

15.1 In assessing risks and devising health and safety procedures, we will take into account the diverse needs of the range of individuals using our premises. They are all equally entitled to stay safe and healthy. As a disabled people's organisation, we are particularly aware of the need to consider the accessibility of information, of workstations and equipment, of alarm signals and escape routes, as well as more mundane items like window catches and drinking water.

16. MONITORING

16.1 We will revise risk assessments and health and safety systems as necessary. We will ensure that the Health and Safety Officer (currently the Centre Manager) receives regularly updated information, and that the implementation of this Policy is monitored annually against both original intentions and against any new circumstances (new kinds of work, new premises, new equipments, changes in good practice). Where possible, we will carry out this monitoring in association with staff safety representatives.