
Health and Safety Policy Statement

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act) employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide:

- Safe equipment
- Safe substances
- Necessary information, instruction, supervision and training
- A safe and healthy workplace
- A safe and healthy working environment.

Volunteer-only youth organisations

If your organisation has no employees, it may not be able to achieve the same standards of health and safety as required for employees in the short term. But by setting a timetable to aim to accomplish this, you will be demonstrating to your volunteers and the outside world the value you place on them and their efforts to support your organisation.

Health and Safety Policies

Youth organisations with paid staff and volunteers

Employers with fewer than five employees are not obliged to have a written policy, but are strongly advised to do so. If an organisation involves volunteers, they should always be included in the health and safety policy as a matter of good practice. The Health and Safety Executive has examples of model health and safety policies which can be used as a template for creating your own health and safety policy.

Volunteer-only youth organisations

If your organisation has no employees, you are not obliged to have a written health and safety policy, but are strongly recommended to draw one up. Developing a health and safety policy is a positive step and will help you clarify your procedures and responsibilities. If you also involve volunteers in the process, it will make them much more aware of health and safety issues within your organisation.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is a technique for identifying and controlling hazards of an organisation's activities. It is not just about chemicals and dangerous factories, and is as relevant to the voluntary sector as it is to the private sector. Risk is assessed by looking at two key elements: hazards and harm.

- A **hazard** is anything that has the potential to cause harm, such as a faulty electrical socket.
- **Risk** is the likelihood of a hazard causing harm and the degree of harm it could cause, such as an electrical shock which could lead to a fatality, access to a busy road or a football pitch used by the club across a busy road, steps into an upstairs / downstairs area and so forth.

Risk assessment involves identifying all hazards, assessing the risks, and putting in place measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level. Assessing risk requires detailed knowledge of your organisation's activities and working practices that is normally only possessed by the people who actually do the work.

Youth Organisations with paid staff and volunteers

Employers should ensure that their risk assessment always involves employees and volunteers who are involved in the activities which are being risk assessed. It should never just be left to the 'experts'.

Volunteer-only youth organisations

Voluntary groups with no employees are not bound to do risk assessments, but if they take their duty of care seriously they would be well advised to carry them out. Risk assessments are an excellent way to identify and overcome health and safety problems.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Assessment is the key to evaluating potentially dangerous substances in the workplace.

Youth organisations with paid staff and volunteers

All employers have a legal duty to assess the workplace for risks to health which may be caused by substances hazardous to health. They must take all necessary steps to control any risks identified. Items such as household bleach may seem harmless, but in the hands of a small child are extremely dangerous. Assessment is the key to evaluating potentially dangerous substances in the workplace.

Volunteer-only youth organisations

If your organisation has no employees, it is not bound to do COSHH assessments, but if it takes its duty of care seriously it would be well advised to carry out such assessments, which are an excellent way to identify and overcome health and safety problems.

Fire Assessment

Youth organisations with paid staff and volunteers

All public and community buildings are obliged under various pieces of legislation to specify minimum levels of standards so that the risk of fire is reduced. You should consult with your local fire brigade for advice.

Volunteer-only youth organisations

This also applies to organisations with no employees. Your local fire brigade can advise you further.

Health, Safety and Welfare

Youth organisations with paid staff and volunteers

All employers must provide a safe place to work which is clean and free from risks, to reduce the risk of ill health or injury. A safe system of working is required: for example, having proper procedures for handling dangerous substances and adequate guards for machinery. All employers should provide adequate supervision. Employees must be given training and information to give them sufficient skills and knowledge to carry out their work safely.

Volunteer-only youth organisations

These regulations do not apply to organisations with no employees. However, they do need to ensure that their volunteers can work in a safe environment where levels of risk have been reduced to a minimum.

Insurance

Youth organisations with paid staff and volunteers

Every organisation should check its insurance cover at least once a year. There are several insurance options and policies to consider. Some are required by law, while others are optional. The more common insurance policies are listed below. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Employer's Liability Insurance

All employers are required by law to take out this insurance to cover employees in the event of an accident, disease or injury. It can also be extended to volunteers.

Public Liability Insurance

This insurance covers the organisation in the event of injury, death, and loss or damage to the property of non-employees. It only covers legal liability, so will not provide compensation where there is an accident that is not due to negligence. It is important to confirm with your insurers that this insurance extends to the acts of volunteers. Without this insurance, the organisation or the individuals responsible for the organisation could be held personally liable.

Other insurance policies which may be relevant:

- Personal Accident Insurance
- Professional Liability Insurance
- Product Liability Insurance
- Motor Vehicles Insurance

Groups or organisations with no employees still need to ensure adequate insurance cover, because members of the governing body or the group leaders could be held responsible if the insurance policy doesn't give appropriate cover in the case of an accident or problem.

Registering your organisation's activities

Youth organisations with paid staff and volunteers

Any organisation employing staff, regardless of size or location, must register its existence with the Health and Safety Executive or the local Environmental Health Department.

Volunteer-only youth organisations

Organisations with volunteers only do not normally have to register their activities with the enforcement authorities unless involved in dangerous activities, such as putting on a fireworks display. However, groups that control, or are responsible for premises and buildings, have to register with the local Fire Authority. If food is prepared, stored, supplied or sold on five or more days in any five-week period, they must register with the local Environmental Health Department.

You should always check with the authorities if you are in any doubt about the need for registering activities.

First Aid

Youth organisations with paid staff and volunteers

All employers have a duty under law to make a first aid assessment. The need for first aid will depend on the organisation's activities. For instance, an outward bound centre will have very different needs from a morning coffee club. Again, an assessment of the workplace is the key to deciding what first aid to provide. There are, however, minimum standards for organisations with employees.

There must be at least one first aid box and a notice displayed in the workplace that tells staff:

- the location of the first aid box
- who is the first aider or appointed person
- where the first aider or appointed person can be found.

An appointed person is someone who has basic first aid knowledge, and is available whenever people are at work. They can take charge in an emergency and are responsible for calling the emergency services. Details of one-day courses to train appointed persons are available from the Health and Safety Executive.

Volunteer-only youth organisations

Voluntary groups with no employees are not bound to do a first aid assessment, although it is clearly good practice. However, in certain circumstances, such as a large public fireworks display, there may be a legal duty to provide first aid facilities. For example, if you hold a public exhibition without first aid facilities and someone is injured, you may have broken your duty of care. If you have any doubts whatsoever you should always contact the local Health and Safety Executive office for advice.

Sample Health and Safety Policy Statement

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Redditch Youth and Community Enterprise:

Our statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities;
- to consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- to ensure safe handling and use of substances;
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for employees;
- to ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training;
- to prevent accidents and cases of workrelated ill health;
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions; and
- to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Signed

Chair of Trustees / management committee

Review date.....

Responsibilities

As the trustees / management committee you have overall responsibility for health and safety
You can delegate responsibility for day to day tasks to someone else, eg a manager or leader
Make sure they keep you informed about health and safety matters: they are still your overall responsibility.

You can delegate specific tasks to individuals in your organisation, by activity or by topic .

Responsibilities should be clearly set so that if there are any health and safety concerns, they can be reported to the right person.

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the trustees / management committee

Day to day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to.(name).....

(position).....

- cooperate with supervisors and managers 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
- report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person this policy statement).

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Risk assessment subjects specific to voluntary organisations

Once a health and safety policy has been adopted, the day to day management of health and safety should be based on undertaking risk assessments of all potential hazards within an organisation. A template risk assessment procedure follows the template health and safety policy on pp 32-34 of the "Introduction to Health and Safety" publication.

Many potential hazards are common to almost all organisations, but some are particularly pertinent to voluntary organisations. Further information on these can be found in the "Charity and voluntary workers" publication under the following headings:

- Information, instruction, supervision and training
- Accidents, sickness absence and returning to work
- Charity shops
- Driving and transport
- Fire safety
- Fundraising
- Hazardous substances
- Lone working
- Moving and handling
- Work-related stress
- Violence at work
- Work equipment (including electrical, lifting and display screen equipment)
- The workplace.

References

"Charity and voluntary workers - a guide to health and safety at work", HSE: priced publication available from www.hsebooks.com (alternatively, a copy is kept in the BCVS library)

"An Introduction to Health and Safety - health and safety in small businesses", HSE: free leaflet available from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg259.pdf

Additional guidance on Health and Safety at Work: Policies and Procedures specifically for voluntary organisations that employ paid staff can be found on this page:

<http://www.bradfordcvs.org.uk/policies.htm>