

# Healthwatch Reading Health & Safety Policy

## Statement of general policy

HWR will take all steps necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and volunteers at work.

Reading Voluntary Action will take responsibility for the health and safety of visitors to the premises and will adhere to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and other relevant health and safety legislation and codes of practice. To achieve those objectives it has appointed designated members of staff to be responsible for health and safety; to keep workplace health, safety and welfare procedures under constant review; to liaise with the Health and Safety Executive where necessary; and to keep the staff, volunteers and Trustee Board abreast of new legislation, EU directives, Regulations and British Standards, in order to ensure ongoing compliance with the law.

HWR will:

- Establish, maintain and regularly review safety systems and risk assessments
- Make regular risk assessments available to employees
- Take appropriate preventative/protective measures
- Provide adequate and competent supervision of all activities involving risk
- Ensure appropriate training in health and safety is delivered
- Establish and maintain systems for consulting staff and volunteers about health and safety issues
- Take health and safety considerations into account when planning developments in the service, purchasing equipment and occupying new premises
- Maintain accurate records of accidents and other events with health and safety implications and review and monitor these records to establish what remedial action, if any, should be taken

## Organisation

### HWR's Trustee Board

The Board has overall responsibility for health and safety of its employees at work and for ensuring that legal responsibilities are fulfilled, that policy objectives are achieved and that effective machinery is in place for the achievement of policies concerned with health, safety, welfare and environmental protection. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that procedures and systems are agreed and implemented. To these ends the Board will ensure the allocation of the resources necessary to maintain sound and efficient health and safety arrangements.

### Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for the effective implementation of procedures and systems including monitoring, prevention of hazards and taking remedial action.

The Chief Executive will ensure that all staff and volunteers are informed about safety issues and that there are adequate signs about hazards and emergency procedures.

The Chief Executive will bring the health and safety policy and all associated procedures to the attention of all staff and volunteers.

### **Competent Person**

The Trustee Board shall note the competent person at Reading Voluntary Action who will undertake the measures required to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed by the relevant statutory provisions for office premises. A person shall be regarded as competent when he/she has sufficient training or knowledge to enable him/her to assist in this task.

The following individuals have been designated competent person for the responsibilities shown:

- 1 x RVA Health & Safety Officer
- 2 x RVA First Aiders
- 2 x RVA Fire Wardens

### **Employees and volunteers**

All employees and volunteers will ensure that:

- They are fully conversant with this safety policy.
- They comply with this policy.
- They co-operate with supervisors or managers and RVA staff on health and safety matters.
- They take care of their own health and safety and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- They report all accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences immediately to the manager.
- They are fully conversant with all fire procedures applicable to the area in which they are working.
- If they identify any condition, which in their opinion is hazardous, they will report the situation to the manager.

## **Arrangements**

### **Risk assessments**

The Chief Executive will work with RVA to ensure that all premises and activities subject to risk assessment are assessed in accordance with the relevant legislation. Assessments will be regularly reviewed and repeated whenever any of the following factors occur:

- Change in legislation
- Change of premises
- Significant change in work carried out
- Transfer to new technology
- Original assessment is no longer valid

Assessments will be recorded and records maintained by the RVA Chief Executive/competent person.

The findings of risk assessments will be reported to the RVA Chief Executive who will approve action to remove or control risks.

## **Reporting and investigating of accidents and dangerous occurrences**

- All accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be reported immediately to the manager as soon as possible after the event
- All accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences will be investigated within 24 hours by the manager, and he is also responsible for acting on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence.

## **First Aiders**

- First Aiders will be appointed for the premises in accordance with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.
- First Aiders will be responsible for taking prompt action following any accident, whether involving a member of staff, volunteer or a member of the public.
- All accidents, no matter how minor, will be reported on the correct accident report form and entered in the accident file.

## **Emergency procedures - fire and evacuation**

The Chief Executive of RVA is responsible for fire risk assessment.

Escape routes are checked by the Fire Wardens.

Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked by Chubb.

Alarms are tested by Fire Wardens every week

Emergency evacuation (fire drill) is tested every six months

## **Safe plant and equipment**

The Health and Safety representatives are responsible for identifying all equipment/plant needing maintenance and will be responsible for drawing up effective maintenance procedures. The manager is responsible for ensuring that all identified maintenance is implemented.

## **Safe handling and use of substances**

The Health and Safety representatives will be responsible for identifying substances which need a COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessment and to undertake COSHH assessments. The Chief Executive will be responsible for ensuring that all actions identified in the assessments are implemented and will inform relevant employees about the COSHH assessments.

Health and Safety representatives will also check that new substances can be used safely before they are purchased.

COSHH assessments will be regularly reviewed by the Health and Safety representatives.

## **Training**

To comply with the general duty to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as are necessary to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, welfare and safety of staff and volunteers, health and safety training will be provided as follows:

- At inductions
- On transfer to work at other premises
- On the introduction of new technology
- When changes are made to systems of work
- When training needs are identified during risk assessments

Repeat training will be provided at regular intervals.

Managers at all levels will be included in the health and safety training programme.

Records will be maintained of all health and safety training.

### **Planning and control**

The RVA 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.

### **Consultation with staff**

Consultation with employees is provided by regularly reviewing health and safety as a standing item on staff meeting agendas.

### **Review**

This policy and health and safety procedures will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive, with a nominated trustee. The review will be reported to the HWR Trustee Board.