



Yorkshire and the Humber

Health & Safety Policy

November 2007

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RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

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POLICY STATEMENT

The Yorkshire & the Humber Strategic Health Authority is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, working on its premises at Blenheim House, Leeds; Don Valley House, Sheffield and East Villa, York and also fully accepts its responsibility for others who may be affected by the SHA's work activities. The organisation aims to promote a positive safety culture in which health and safety is managed proactively, on the basis of risk assessment, with the aim of minimising the potential for injury and ill-health.

It is recognised that high standards of health and safety are important to the achievement of the SHA's objectives.

Realistic resources will be allocated to manage health and safety on a proactive basis. In particular, the SHA will provide suitable information and training to enable managers and staff to discharge their responsibilities in accordance with this policy.

Health and safety performance will be regularly monitored and strategies and action plans formulated, implemented and reviewed to promote continuous improvement.

The assessment and control of risks to health and safety is a core management function, and responsibility cannot be delegated to others.

All members of staff have responsibility for their own and others' health and safety and must co-operate in health and safety arrangements, notably mandatory training to enable them to carry out their work safely.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The organisation has responsibilities as an employer under Section 2 of The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The organisation must ensure that, 'as far as reasonably practicable', it does the following:

- provides and maintains plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health;
- makes arrangements to ensure that substances and articles can be used, handled, stored and transported safely;
- provides information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff;
- ensures safe means of access and egress; and
- provides and maintains a safe and healthy working environment with the provision of adequate welfare facilities.

Under Sections 3 and 5 of the Act, the organisation has a duty to protect people who are not staff from being exposed to the risks of its activities, and under Section 4 it has a duty to other users of its premises, e.g. tenant organisations occupying Blenheim House.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 extend the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the organisation must undertake specific actions in accordance with these Regulations. Of key importance is the requirement to make and record 'suitable and sufficient' assessments of significant health and safety risks to staff and others affected by the organisation's work activities (notably visitors and contractors). The purpose of risk assessment is to determine the level of risk and identify appropriate risk control measures. In identifying what is 'appropriate', the costs and practical application of potential control measures will need to be considered.

The organisation will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place at all levels of the organisation for the effective planning, organisation, controlling, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures put in place following risk assessment.

The organisation will take steps to ensure compliance with all other relevant health and safety legislation.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall responsibility for health and safety lies with the Chief Executive. The Associate Director for Corporate Executive and the Corporate Business Manager (Facilities) have responsibility for the development and maintenance of a corporate system of health and safety management. This system will be audited on an annual basis and feedback given to the SHA Board, for action as appropriate.

The SHA recognises its responsibilities under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996. Staff representatives and union appointed safety representatives have an important and valued role in representing the interests of all staff (including those who are not in a union), consulting with management and supporting the organisation's health and safety arrangements.

The Staff Partnership Group deals with health and safety matters as part of the wider HR agenda. It monitors health and safety performance on at least a quarterly basis and provides a forum for consultation with staff on health and safety matters.

The subject of health and safety is also a standing item on the Tenants Group agenda, which provides a forum for communication, co-ordination and co-operation between users of the SHA's premises.

The organisation recognises its responsibility to appoint competent people to assist in the management of health and safety. The Associate Director for Corporate Executive and the Corporate Business Manager (Facilities) are trained in health and safety management and are responsible for obtaining specialist advice, support and training as necessary. External support is primarily sourced from Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Leeds Partnership Foundation Hospitals Trust.

Individual managers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of staff for whom they have managerial responsibility. Specifically, this means that they are responsible for:

- ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken for individual members of staff eg users of display screen equipment, pregnant workers, etc;
- ensuring that both they and the staff for whom they are responsible take action/co-operate with risk control measures as necessary;
- identifying and referring any actual or potential health and safety hazard beyond the scope of their management responsibility to the Associate Director Corporate Executive /Corporate Business Manager (Facilities), for action, as appropriate;
- identifying the health and safety implications of any proposed new working practices/equipment, and taking action as necessary;
- ensuring that all staff for whom they are responsible attend health and safety training (eg fire lectures) as required;
- ensuring that staff report incidents (including 'near misses') promptly and fully;
- ensuring that prompt action is taken following any incident to minimise the immediate effects and to reduce the likelihood of recurrence; and
- ensuring that relevant and comprehensible information is given to their staff on health and safety matters and that there is effective two-way communication on such matters.

All staff have a duty under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act not to endanger themselves or others by their 'acts or omissions' (i.e. what they do, or don't do) and to co-operate with their employer as necessary to comply with current legislation. In addition, under Section 8 they must not interfere with or misuse equipment provided in the interests of health and safety (e.g. fire extinguishers).

Specifically, all staff must:-

- comply with this policy and the supporting health and safety procedures;
- observe the fire prevention and evacuation procedures and be familiar with the position of fire fighting equipment, evacuation routes and fire exits;
- comply with work systems and instructions designed to protect their own and others' health, safety and welfare;
- bring to the attention of their manager any defective equipment or potential health or safety hazard, or any practice likely to cause an accident or incident;
- report all incidents (including near misses) as set out in the SHA's Incident Management Procedure;
- avoid improvisation which might create a risk to safety;
- attend, as requested, any mandatory health and safety training; failure to do so may ultimately result in disciplinary action; and
- take personal responsibility for ensuring that their workspace is kept tidy and free from health and safety hazards.

CONSULTATION WITH SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES AND STAFF

Functions of safety representatives

Safety representatives may be appointed by trade unions or professional associations. They have the functions of representation and consultation with the employer on behalf of all staff. These functions involve:

- investigation of potential hazards, dangerous occurrences and causes of accidents in the workplace;
- investigation of complaints by staff on health, safety or welfare matters;
- making representations to the employer on matters arising from the above or any general matters of health, safety or welfare;
- carrying out inspections of the workplace;
- following up notifiable accidents, dangerous occurrences or diseases;
- receiving information and inspecting statutory documents held by the organisation; and
- representing staff in workplace consultations with Health and Safety Executive inspectors and receiving information from those inspectors where appropriate.

The organisation is committed to providing such facilities and assistance as safety representatives may reasonably require to carry out their functions. It is recognised that safety representatives have the right to time off with pay during working hours and a reasonable amount of training in order to carry out their functions.

Although the Regulations give wide powers to safety representatives, they specifically impose no additional duty on them. Representatives are given immunity from prosecution for anything done in breach of safety law while acting as a safety representative.

The SHA Staff Partnership Group

The Staff Partnership Group (which includes staff representatives and a union appointed safety representative) incorporates the functions of a Health and Safety Committee.

The staff representatives and union appointed safety representative are empowered to represent the interests of staff who are not in a union, as well as those staff who are union members, on matters relating to health and safety.

The health and safety related terms of reference of the Staff Partnership Group are to:

- consider and make recommendations on the organisation's health and safety policies and procedures;

- monitor health and safety performance, notably studying accident/incident and sickness absence statistics, considering the circumstances and causes of accidents, dangerous occurrences, incidents and occupational illnesses (as specified by the Health and Safety Executive), making recommendations and monitoring follow up action;
- concern itself with the arrangements for the effectiveness of safety training, instruction and guidance of all new and existing staff;
- consider regulations, codes of practice and any other guidance or information produced by the Health and Safety Executive or other government bodies, and to consider means whereby these can be introduced;
- secure the co-operation of all staff in the promotion of health and safety through the provision of adequate publicity in the workplace;
- consider and make recommendations as appropriate on health and safety reports eg health and safety inspection and audit reports;
- consider the health and safety consequences of the introduction of new technologies, work practices, etc. and make recommendations as appropriate; and
- consider any other matters relating to health, safety and welfare of staff and others who may be affected by the organisation's activities and to advise, recommend and monitor action to improve performance.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTION PROCEDURE

The SHA is committed to the principle of proactive health and safety management, including physical inspection of the working environment. Health and safety inspections are intended to complement annual audit activities and also day to day observations and actions by managers and staff to improve and maintain health and safety in the workplace.

The Associate Director of Corporate Executive/Corporate Business Manager (Facilities) will ensure that a monthly inspection is undertaken of all areas of Blenheim House, Don Valley House and East Villa for which the SHA has responsibility.

Staff side health and safety representatives are invited to accompany the Corporate Business Manager (Facilities) during inspections. Safety representatives also have the right to inspect premises at other times.

Inspection visits will check previous inspection reports to ensure that any corrective measures identified as being necessary on the last inspection have been taken.

Inspections will normally take the form of a quick (ie. approximately one hour) walk around the workplace. Where possible, immediate action will be taken to address hazards observed eg. trailing wires/spillages. Any health and safety hazards identified will be documented on an inspection report.

Feedback on inspections will be given to the Staff Partnership Group, Tenants Groups and to individual managers and staff for action, as appropriate.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed in 5 years.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

At this time an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out on this policy. However, an EIA will be carried out as soon as possible and by no later than 6 months of the issue date stated on the policy cover sheet.