

OPTIONS FOR LIFE

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

It is the policy and objective of Options for Life to:

- comply with existing or new legislation (including European directives and case law) and adhere to best practice guidelines
- provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities
- protect the health and safety of employees, volunteers, service users and visitors
- consult with our employees, volunteers and service users on matters affecting their health and safety
- provide and maintain safe equipment
- ensure safe handling and use of substances
- provide information, instruction and supervision for employees, volunteers and service users as appropriate
- ensure all employees and volunteers are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training
- prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- maintain safe and healthy working conditions
- review and revise this policy and the associated procedures annually, and update it as and when new legislation is brought into effect, when it is no longer thought to be valid or when new working practices are undertaken

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety lies with:

- The Board of Trustees, who have particular responsibility for:
 - ensuring that resources are available to implement the Health and Safety policy and the associated procedures
 - setting a good example on Health and Safety matters

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy and the associated procedures are put into practice is delegated to:

- Chief Executive
- Individual senior managers and service co-ordinators have delegated day-to-day responsibility in the areas they supervise and oversee. Service co-ordinators may in turn delegate some areas of responsibility to other staff members, provided that they consider them competent to take on the role.
- All employees and volunteers have a duty to:
 - co-operate with line managers and comply with all notices and procedures 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 to ensure that they do not endanger other people's welfare by their activities
 - convey health and safety information to the members of their group (in the case of group leaders, organisations and contractors using Options for Life's premises)
 - report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person
 - report any incident which has led to or could have led to personal injury or property damage

Health and safety risks arising from our work activities

- Risk assessments will be undertaken by the senior manager/coordinator of each service (who may in turn delegate some areas of responsibility to other staff members, provided that they consider them competent to take on the role).
- The findings of the risk assessments will be recorded in the Health & Safety Record Book, or reported to the senior manager/coordinator's line manager (as appropriate) and always if a proposed control measure requires further approval.

- Any action required to remove/control risks will be approved by the senior manager/coordinator's line manager.
- The senior manager/coordinator who performed the initial risk assessment is responsible for ensuring that the actions required to remove or control risks have been implemented, and that these actions have reduced or removed risk effectively. Risk assessments will be reviewed annually or whenever the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

Consultation with employees, volunteers and service users

- Health and safety is a standing agenda item at the staff and volunteer meetings that are held regularly within each service.
- Issues arising from these meetings are in turn addressed as a standing agenda item at the organisation's monthly co-ordinators' meetings.
- Outside of this system, staff and volunteers are expected to raise any urgent health and safety matters directly with their line manager as and when they arise.
- Service users are consulted on health and safety matters via means appropriate to each particular service – this may be via service users' meetings, individual discussion, joint health and safety checks, etc. The senior manager/service co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that suitable arrangements are in place.
- To ensure that health and safety standards are maintained and/or improved, Options for Life has convened a Health and Safety Committee (which is a sub committee of the Board of Trustees) in accordance with the requirements of section 2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The core membership of the Sub Committee is as follows:
 - a member of the Board of Trustees
 - at least one member of the Senior Management Team
 - at least one member of staff from each of the two main services
 - at least one member of staff from every service base

Monitoring and reporting

- As a minimum requirement, the senior manager/service co-ordinator will undertake and record quarterly health and safety audits at their own service base.
- The Chief Executive will report on significant Health and Safety matters to the Board of Trustees monthly through the Dashboard report.
- The Chief Executive and the Health and Safety Committee will report to the Board of Trustees at every Board of Trustees meeting, and will provide the Committee meeting.

Information, instruction and supervision

- The Health and Safety Law poster is displayed at all service bases.
- A copy of the Health and Safety policy will be posted on the Health and Safety notice board at each service base.
- As necessary, health & safety bulletins will be included in the internal staff and volunteer newsletter.
- Supervision of staff and volunteers will be undertaken by the line manager.
- Health and Safety advice for senior managers/service co-ordinators is available from the Chief Executive or the Administration Manager.

Competency for tasks and training

- New staff and volunteers receive guidance on basic health and safety as part of their induction programme.
- Ongoing training in health and safety is then provided to all staff and volunteers as part of the organisation's training programme.
- Any specific training needs in this area that are not covered by the organisation's training plan should be reported to the individual's line manager, or identified during formal supervision sessions.
- Training records will be kept by the Administration Officer.

This policy and the associated procedures must be construed and have regard to the fact that Options for Life do not have exclusive use of some premises, and will therefore work with other occupiers to promote this policy and the associated procedures.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any members of staff who do not comply with the organisation's Health and Safety policy and the associated procedures. Appropriate action will also be taken in the case of any volunteers, service users or other persons who do not comply with the Health and Safety policy and the associated procedures.

This policy was approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees on 15th February 2010, with next review due on 15th February 2011.