



Health and Safety
Information for
Employees of
Home-Start.....

FOREWORD

Health and safety is a condition free from risk of injury or threat to our health and well being. It is an objective to be achieved, not a natural state of affairs.

Health and Safety is a shared responsibility within Home-Start Bristol. Both employers and employees have statutory responsibilities for their own health and safety, for the health and safety of people working with them and individuals who may be affected by the activities of the organisation.

This guide has been written with the health and safety of all employees in mind and should be read carefully and be used as a reference book. It not only details the responsibilities of the trustees of Home-Start Bristol but if read carefully will ensure your own health and safety and the safety of others in all the activities you do.

There may be specific risks attributed to your activities which are not covered by this guide. These will be addressed directly with you by your manager. If you have any concerns in respect of your wellbeing or your health and safety, or those of others with whom you are working, you are requested to raise these at your earliest opportunity with your manager so that they may be addressed without delay.

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1. POLICY

The Trustees of Home-Start Bristol recognise and accept their responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions which are safe, healthy and comply with all statutory requirements and codes of practice and to ensure the health and safety of any other person who may be affected by our activities.

Home-Start Bristol will endeavour to create and develop a working environment in which there is an awareness of the vital importance of health and safety and which encourages all employees and volunteers to participate in developing and practising safe working methods and to have regard for the welfare of themselves and others.

Signed..... Chair of Home-Start Bristol

Date.....

1. PROCEDURE

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees of Home–Start Bristol have the following responsibilities

- the provision and maintenance of a safe place of work with safe access to and egress from it;
- a working environment that is free from hazard and risk to health;
- equipment and systems of work that are safe and free from risk to health;
- such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees at work;
- formal systems for identifying hazards;
- adequate first aid facilities;
- adequate means of preventing and fighting fires;
- the monitoring and review of the implementation of the health and safety policy;

EXECUTIVE

The trustees have overall responsibility for the implementation of the health and safety policy. The scheme Chair has delegated responsibility to the [.....] He/she will:–

- Maintain safety records
- Conduct accident investigations, assessments and inspections
- Ensure the health and safety policy is implemented and adhered to
- Familiarise him/herself with all relevant health and safety legislation in order to advise the trustees

MANAGERS

All managers are responsible for the health and safety of their staff and will:

- Ensure that on joining Home–Start Bristol all new employees are given training in health and safety matters appropriate to their duties, including accident reporting, emergency procedures, fire precautions, code of safe conduct and location of first aid box.
- Ensure that all employees are provided with adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure health and safety of employees and volunteers.
- Ensure that all employees are familiar with Home–Start Bristol’s Health and Safety Policy.
- Co–operate with and participate in the investigation of all accidents and the conduct of assessments and inspections.
- Within their area of authority, regularly inspect the workplace with regard to the suitability of equipment provided for health and safety of employees, check work methods and practices to ensure safe systems of work.

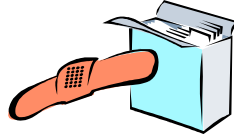
EMPLOYEES

All employees have a statutory duty to promote their own health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by their actions. All employees:

- Shall make themselves familiar with and conform to the health and safety policy and observe safety rules at all times.
- Will work safely and efficiently and with due regard for the health, safety and welfare of others including the public.
- Must report accidents and incidents promptly that may lead to injuries.
- Must report all unsafe conditions that may arise.
- Shall co-operate with management when accidents require investigation.
- Shall comply with statutory obligations and requirements of the codes of practice.
- Shall not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of safety.
- Shall use any equipment provided in accordance with the training and instruction that they have received.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 FIRST AID AND ACCIDENT REPORTING



First Aid

During the induction programme employees will be advised where the first aid box is and of the name of first aider with information on how to contact him/her.

Accident Reporting

All accidents, however minor, must be reported by employees to their manager who will complete an accident report form (near misses, potential hazards and any damage must also be reported immediately).

The manager is responsible for notifying [.....] of all accidents (near misses, potential hazards and damage) and submitting the appropriate accident/incident form. This should be done within one working day of the accident/incident. The manager will investigate the incident and will take responsibility for ensuring that corrective action is taken where appropriate to prevent a recurrence.

[.....] will compile an annual report to the trustees in respect of accidents/incident within Home-Start..... and remedial action which has been taken.

[.....] will notify the appropriate authorities where necessary.

3.2 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire procedures



On discovering a fire you should:

- Sound the Alarm
- Leave the building as quickly as possible (without running) by the nearest exit. Go straight to your assembly point.
- DO NOT stop to collect your personal belongings
- DO NOT re-enter the building until advised by the Fire Service or a senior member of staff that it is safe to do so.
- Ensure that the Fire Brigade have been called.

In addition, please ensure that:-

- You are aware of the location of all exits
- You know the location of the fire alarm and fire appliances and how to use them
- You know where to assemble in the event of an evacuation

3.3 FIRE PRECAUTIONS



Potential fire risks need not be dangerous provided that some simple but important precautions are required to be observed by all employees and volunteers.

- Memorise the evacuation procedure, your emergency exit and assembly point in case of fire.
- Familiarise yourself with the position of fire fighting equipment and the correct method of operation of extinguishers and never interfere with, or misuse, the fire equipment.
- Keep fire exits, routes and access to fire fighting equipment clear from any obstructions; do not wedge fire doors open.
- Keep your working area free of waste as far as possible and in particular those areas which are not easily accessible, e.g. under desks, behind radiators, etc. Keep all combustible materials a safe distance from heating appliances and do not place anything on heaters.
- There is NO SMOKING on the premises.
- If you do see anything which may be a fire hazard, correct it yourself if easy and safe to do so, or report it immediately.

3.4 CODE OF SAFETY CONDUCT

All employees are requested to conform to the health and safety at work policy and all health and safety rules and signs, fire precautions and emergency procedures. In addition, you are requested to ensure that you:-

- Understand and follow the safe operation of your duties; ask if you do not understand any aspect of these.

- Report all accidents, near misses, potential hazards and damage immediately.
- Do not interfere with or misuse anything provided for the health and safety of employees or volunteers.
- Do not act in a way that could endanger yourself or others; do not play practical jokes.
- Do not run, especially on stairs or steps. Use handrails; never read while walking.
- Keep your work area tidy and clear of obstructions; do not leave things lying around.
- Clean up any spilt liquids, tracked in rain, etc immediately.

In the event of your being called upon to handle bulky or heavy objects, only lift or move what you can easily manage; always bend your knees and keep your back straight – take the stress in your legs, not your back. GET ASSISTANCE if in doubt. Do not overreach; do not climb on anything not meant for the purpose; use a ladder, ensuring that it is in good condition.

Electrical equipment is regularly checked and is normally safe when properly used,

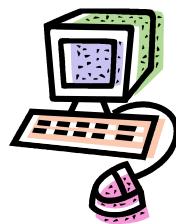
BUT:

- never touch electrical equipment with wet hands
- always disconnect electrical equipment before moving it

- never attempt electrical repairs unless authorised
- always keep electrical supply cables and wires away from wet areas or from where they could be walked over, etc.
- always switch off equipment if not in use; disconnect from the main outside normal hours unless instructed otherwise.

Information on any specific hazards and precautions will be issued as appropriate. Training in dealing with hazards will be conducted as appropriate.

3.5 DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT(DSE) – PRECAUTIONS



It is the policy of Home–Start Bristol to optimise the use and application of DSE whilst safeguarding the health, welfare and job satisfaction of those involved in operating such equipment. The following should be observed:

- Employees engaged on intensive VDU work will be allowed a 10 minute break following 2 hours of continuous VDU operation.
- Where the employee’s workload includes the operation of a VDU as well as other duties, they should organise their working time so that VDU work is interspersed with other activities whilst maintaining an acceptable level of efficiency and productivity.

- Upon recruitment to jobs involving a significant amount of VDU work, employees will be advised that they are eligible to have regular eye tests, the cost of which will be reimbursed to the employee. If an employee wishes to have an eye test, please speak to your manager. Where an employee is advised that glasses are needed, these must be obtained and worn. This procedure will also apply to current employees.
- All VDU users are reminded that regular eye sight check-ups are advisable and should not be neglected.
- In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for an employee to obtain spectacles for use in VDU work that differ from those worn at other times. Where this is the case, your scheme may, at its discretion, meet part or all of the cost of the spectacles obtained for use at work.
- Adapt the furniture to fit your body. The lower back needs support; adjust the backrest if necessary. Place feet flat on the floor or use a footrest and use a document holder if necessary.
- Adjust the VDU to increase your comfort. The top should be just below eye level. Contrast and brightness may be adjusted for your individual preference. Position the VDU at a 90° angle to windows if possible.
- Dim the lights or adjust blinds/curtains if necessary but do not make the room too dark.
- Avoid wearing light coloured clothing which can reflect light on to the screen.
- Look into the distance periodically – at something at least 20 feet away.

- Do some stretching exercises during the day (neck, shoulder, back, wrists, hands and fingers).

3.6 INFORMATION AND TRAINING



New Employees

On joining the organisation, all employees will be informed of the general health and safety aspects of their employment and of any specific information appropriate to them.

All Employees

All employees will be informed about, and trained in, health and safety matters including exposure to any identified risks. Such information and training will be given in the event of there being a change in circumstances affecting health and safety, and otherwise will be adapted and repeated periodically where appropriate. Training will be conducted during working hours if at all possible.

3.7 RISK ASSESSMENT



Regular and systematic inspections and risk assessments of all potential hazardous substances and work activities will be undertaken and will take into account all the relevant regulations and codes of practice. Specialist advice will be obtained if necessary and the risk assessment will be reviewed periodically. The significant findings will be recorded and appropriate preventative and/or protective measures taken as necessary.

If an employee becomes aware of a health and safety hazard during the course of their work, the employee should inform their manager without delay so the appropriate measures can be taken.

3.8 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ABUSE

Over-indulgence in alcohol and drugs can lead to dependency and resultant health problems. It can impair an individual's performance at work, adversely affecting the efficiency of the organisation and jeopardising the safety of others.

Managers who identify potential sufferers are required to consult the [.....]for guidance on how to deal with the matter.

When an employee admits having a problem of this nature and agrees to undergo treatment for it, the organisation will regard the matter in the same way as any other illness and will support the individual's efforts to overcome the problem.

Should the individual not co-operate with treatment or suffer a relapse, or if it appears that recovery is unlikely, a warning will be issued to the employee requiring a full recovery. If this does not materialise, then dismissal is likely.

This policy in no way relieves an employee from the requirement not to consume alcohol or drugs, nor be under their influence, on the organisation's premises. Failure to comply with this rule is likely to result in dismissal without notice.

3.9 SMOKING



It is illegal to smoke within the workplace and smoking is prohibited at all Home-Start offices. Smoking constitutes a fire hazard and can be unpleasant and dangerous for the smoker and colleagues.

3.10 INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Job applicants and existing employees who have an infectious disease or condition will be treated in the same way as any other person except in so far as it puts the health and safety of themselves or others at risk or otherwise adversely affects their ability to perform their duties.

3.11 MOBILE TELEPHONES



When travelling, staff must be free from using the phone and mobile phones should therefore be switched off whilst driving a car. Use of the mobile phone with a hands free facility is also not recommended as it can cause distraction and lack of concentration.

A mobile phone can be set up to take messages which can then be checked at the start or end of a journey when the car is parked.

3.12 PERSONAL SAFETY

It is the policy of Home-Start Bristol to ensure that everyone in the organisation is aware of and fulfils their responsibilities for safety from violence at work. To this end, Home-Start Bristol is committed to:

- Introducing as necessary, preventative measures to minimise the risk of violence at work.
- Making all new members of staff aware of the personal safety policy and their responsibilities within it.
- Providing after care procedures such as counselling and time off work.
 - Training staff to ensure that they can fulfil their responsibilities safely.

All employees must:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omission.

- Use sensible measures to ensure their safety when working alone or travelling to keep appointments with people they have never met.
- Attend any health and safety training events such as those concerned with the policy.
- Not endanger themselves or their colleagues. In particular, they are warned against using provocative language or gestures towards fellow employees or members of the public.
- Not put at risk his or her life or the lives of others whilst attempting to prevent an act of violence.
- In an emergency ensure that the police/emergency services are summonsed
- If subjected to any potential violence whatsoever (including verbal abuse, threats and actual physical assault) the employee must complete a report form at the earliest possible opportunity and return it to their manager.

3.13 STRESS



It is the aim of Home–Start Bristol to ensure that all employees are kept safe and healthy at work and are not subjected to excessive workloads, onerous working practices or a detrimental working environment which might, if unchecked, cause the employee stress. It is also the aim of Home–Start Bristol to identify and assist those employees who are suffering from stress, for whatever reason, and finding it difficult to cope by offering reasonably practical alternatives and support mechanisms.

Employees may seek help themselves from a GP, counsellor or colleague. If it is the employee's belief that their work or the working environment is the problem, the employee is encouraged to raise it with his/her manager at the earliest opportunity. Any such complaint will be dealt with sympathetically, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate, fully investigated and appropriate steps taken to assist.

An employee may initially not recognise the symptoms of stress. There are a variety of symptoms which may indicate a tendency to stress which has an adverse impact on the employee's work. If an employee is prone to accidents, constantly feeling drowsy, has an inability to concentrate, feels or becomes violent or aggressive, experiences mood swings or erratic behaviour, or depression, these may be signs of stress. A manager may recognise symptoms associated with stress and discuss these in confidence with the employee.

The employee is encouraged to seek help to identify the cause and take appropriate steps to deal with it.

3.14 LIFTING AND HANDLING LOADS



Lifting and handling loads incorrectly can cause serious injury including twisted and torn muscles, dislocation and bone fractures, slipped discs and hernias in addition to general fatigue.

All employees should observe the following good handling techniques:

- Examine the object – for size, shape and weight. Decide how and where to hold. Check for grease, oil and sharp edges.
- Clear your path – of obstructions and tripping hazards.

- Know – where and how you will let the object down.
- Get help – if you have any doubts about lifting objects.
- Employees should be aware of their own limitations. Lifting or moving an object should not be attempted unless the employee is absolutely sure that it is within his/her capabilities. When under pressure at work it is easy to take on more than you can safely handle.
- Lift smoothly, avoid jerky motions and look for alternatives for lifting, pushing or pulling. Wherever necessary use a mechanical aid. Stop work if you feel strain and report to your manager immediately.
- Wherever possible try to break down a heavy load, which can be handled more easily. However, it should be noted that several lighter loads may increase the risk if awkward movements have to be repeated.
- Where the centre of gravity is not in the middle of the load it must be handled more carefully to avoid injury. Before you attempt to handle an unfamiliar load try to get an idea of its weight distribution so that it can be handled more safely. The best way to test the load is by lifting up a corner or rocking it.
- Where a load is bulky or unwieldy, for example where it is too large to fit between your knees when you crouch to pick it up from the floor, then it will probably be necessary to get help. Generally, if a load exceeds 75cm in diameter assistance should be sought, as there is an increased risk of injury. It may be possible to break down the load into smaller loads. It must be remembered that both repetitive handling and team handling have their own risks.

Handling Techniques

- Place your feet: Stand close to the object – feet should be a little way apart and the leading leg as far forward as is comfortable. This should give a stable and balanced base for lifting.



- Adopt a good posture: Stand with shoulders facing the same direction as hips. The back should be straight, knees bent and the load grasped with both hands as near to waist level as possible. Lean forwards a little over the load if necessary to get a good grip.
- Get a good grip: Grasp the object firmly, always try to hook fingers under the load to make sure your grip won't slip as this is less fatiguing than keeping fingers straight.
- Lift with the legs: Stand up slowly and slowly straighten legs. After they are straight, bring the back to a vertical position. Lift smoothly and avoid jerky motions.
- Hold the object close: Keep the heaviest part of the load as close to the body as possible. When changing direction, move the feet rather than twisting the body.
- Put down before adjusting: Place load and then move into the desired position.

- Lifting Overhead



- Avoid lifting objects above shoulder height. Where it is necessary to lift objects overhead, a platform or sturdy ladder should be used. Never use a chair or a box. If in doubt, always get help.
- Lifting Heavy Objects – If an object is too heavy, large or hard to handle, get help. Ensure that one person is the leader, that moving the object is done one step at a time and the load is distributed evenly. On a stairway, the carrier of the lower end of the load should take most of the weight. This is especially hazardous if he or she is also walking backwards.

3.15 GENERAL OFFICE SAFETY

Office Safety

Office accommodation within Home–Start Bristol is generally considered “low risk” in health and safety terms. However, hazards are still present in the office environment. In order to reduce or eliminate accidents in the workplace the following guidelines should be observed:

- Electrical leads should not be allowed to trail where someone may trip over them. Power outlets should be switched off overnight.



- Drawers in desks and filing cabinets should not be left open. Filing cabinets can become top heavy if more than one drawer is open. Heavy materials should be kept in bottom drawers of filing cabinets. If this is inconvenient, take care to open only one drawer at a time.



- Gangways and passages should be clear.
- Employees should report to their manager any defect they are aware of in floors.
- Care should be taken when climbing or descending stairs. No running is permitted.
- Shelves should not be overloaded
- Where it is necessary to move heavy office equipment, care must be taken to avoid personal injury and if necessary assistance should be sought.
- The greatest cause of absence from work is back trouble. Employees must take special care to control their posture especially when sitting down. An upright position should be maintained if possible and the chair should support the small of the back.

Exits and Routes

In an emergency, the building may need to be evacuated quickly – in the event of a fire for example. It is therefore vital that all exits and routes are maintained free of obstructions at all times and that the following guidelines are observed:

- Boxes or equipment should not be abandoned in corridors, or directly in front of fire doors.
- Fire Doors should not be propped open, they are designed to restrict the spread of fire.

- Extra care must be taken on staircases especially when carrying objects.

Storage and Stacking

- Heavier items should be placed on lower shelves and lighter items on higher shelves and heavier items under lighter ones.
- Materials should be stacked securely, not too high and cross stacked making sure they will not topple or overhang and that no sharp edges stick out.
- Articles should not be stacked or stored causing an obstruction to fire exit routes.
- Employees and volunteers should never stand on balanced boxes or chairs to reach stored items.
- When removing items from a stack the top items should always be removed first and safety steps used as necessary.

3.16 TRAVEL



It is the policy of Home–Start Bristol to ensure that all business travel undertaken is carried out safely and in compliance with legal requirements.

Employees driving on Home–Start Bristol business have a responsibility to:–

- Hold a valid, full driving licence and insurance which must include cover for business use. If the employee has been identified as an essential car user the employee should hold fully comprehensive car insurance. It is also recommended that employees hold roadside breakdown recovery.
- Drive at all times with care and in accordance with the Highway Code.
- Ensure that their car is roadworthy and regularly maintained and has, if required, a valid MOT certificate.
- Advise their manager without delay of any medical condition or other circumstance which may affect their ability to drive. The employee is responsible for determining his or her fitness to drive taking into account road conditions, length of travel, tiredness and health. An employee must not attempt to drive on Home-Start Bristol business if unable to give full concentration to his or her driving.
- Ensure that any medication or prescribed drugs do not have any side effects which could impair driving ability.
- Ensure that the employee and all occupants wear seatbelts at all times.

The payment of all fines an employee incurs will be the employee's responsibility, as will all legal costs associated with defending any driving charge.

Planning

Employees should not attempt a journey without prior planning of the route. Employees should plan their journeys to ensure, if possible, travel during daylight hours. When visiting an unknown area all attempts should be made to plan this during daylight hours and employees should avoid parking in unlit areas where possible.

If an employee's journey will involve travel at night, particularly if alone, the employee should discuss this beforehand with his or her manager to see if alternative arrangements can be made.

Breakdowns



If a employee's vehicle breaks down the employee should:-

- Get his or her vehicle off the road as soon as possible
- Warn other traffic by using hazard warning lights if the vehicle is causing an obstruction
- Put a warning triangle on the road, if available.
- Keep sidelights on if dark or visibility poor
- Not stand (or permit anyone else to stand) between the vehicle and oncoming traffic, if at night or in poor visibility where the vehicle's lights will be obscured to other road users.
- Use a mobile phone to summon help.

In addition, when on a motorway employees should:-

- Pull onto the hard shoulder and stop as far to the left as possible
- Use a mobile phone to summon help

- Give full details to the police, also informing them if you are a woman travelling alone

Accident Reporting

All accidents, however trivial, must be reported as soon as possible to your manager.

3.17 PREGNANCY AND WORK



An assessment will be made of workplace risks that could pose a health and safety risk to new and expectant mothers and appropriate action will be taken to address these risks.

Employees who are pregnant are requested to advise their manager as soon as possible so that further consideration can be given to their health and safety and that of their unborn child. It is important that the pregnant employee discusses their working conditions with their manager and identifies any risk which may cause health problems for her or her child.

As an employee's pregnancy progresses there may be new health risks to both mother and child. The employee should inform their manager as soon as there is any change in their condition which could pose a risk which has not previously been considered so that a further assessment can be made including an assessment as to whether the employee is able to continue at work.

Any worries regarding the health of a pregnant employee and/or their unborn child should be discussed with a line manager as soon as possible.

3.18 HOMEWORKING



An employee's place of work will be identified in their terms and conditions of employment and will normally be placed within a Home-Start office or his or her home. If the employee is required to work from home it is important that the employee has a suitable place of work at his or her home.

An access visit to the employee's home will normally be arranged prior to the employee commencing work. The purpose of this visit is to ensure that the employee's working area is suitable and does not pose any risk to the employee's health and safety whilst carrying out their duties. It also gives an opportunity to explore the furniture that is present or which may need to be purchased.

If there are any changes to the employee's working environment following the access visit the employee is required to report such changes to their manager so that further consideration can be given to the health and safety of the employee whilst undertaking work for Home-Start Bristol.

3.19 WORKERS WITH A DISABILITY

It is the policy of Home-Start Bristol to comply with its statutory obligations in a positive manner and it strives to create a working

environment that allows people with a disability to feel comfortable and supported when talking about their disability.

Workers with disabilities or long term health conditions are encouraged to discuss with their managers any difficulties they encounter in carrying out their duties at the earliest opportunity. This will enable their manager to assess what reasonable adjustments could be put in place to meet these difficulties.

Home-Start Bristol

[address]

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