

Health & Safety Policy Statement and Responsibilities -version 2

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Rationale

- 1.1 A robust Health and Safety Policy is fundamental to our organisation's operations and ethical commitment as we support individuals with physical and learning disabilities, and sensory impairments. This policy isn't just a legal obligation, ensuring our compliance with UK legislation like the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; it is paramount to our duty of care for a particularly vulnerable population. By prioritising the highest safety standards, we safeguard our beneficiaries, protect our teams, enhance our professional reputation, and foster trust and confidence among all stakeholders, enabling us to deliver high-quality, person-centred care in a secure and dignified environment.

Scope

- 2.1 The scope of this policy is comprehensive, encompassing all our premises, activities, and services, from personal care and equipment use to emergency procedures and detailed risk assessments. Crucially, it applies to everyone involved with our organisation. This includes, first and foremost, the individuals we support, whose unique vulnerabilities are at the heart of our safety protocols. It also extends to all employees, volunteers, trustees, contractors, and even occasional visitors, ensuring a consistently high standard of safety across every facet of our operations.

Policy statement

3.1 Health and Safety Policy Statement

The Board of Trustees, Chief Executive and the SeeAbility Leadership Team recognise their legal duty of care towards protecting the health and safety of our customers, employees/volunteers and all those who may be affected by our work activities. This includes people we support who have learning disabilities and autism, many of whom have sight loss, visitors, contractors, and the general public, both when within SeeAbility's work locations and in the community.

SeeAbility assesses the health and safety risks within all its operations, and develops, implements, and monitors the effectiveness of suitable working standards to minimise such risk, so far as is reasonably practicable.

3.2 It is our policy to:

- Observe health and safety laws and promote best practices.
- Provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment, ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our operations and support are conducted in such a manner as to prevent harm or injury to people, property, and the environment.
- Make sure that all employees and volunteers are given the appropriate equipment, necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision to enable them to work safely.

- Establish processes, including regular inspections at all our locations, to identify risks and to set in place control measures to remove or reduce these risks.
- Provide an organisational structure within which health and safety responsibilities and competencies are clearly defined.
- Ensure the Health & Safety Committee sets clear objectives through a formal action plan, which will strive to achieve best practice.
- Promote communication of health & safety as a two-way process, with health and safety being a regular agenda item at team meetings and Staff Forum.
- Ensure, by way of control measures, that any person or company contracted to carry out work on behalf of the organisation is able to demonstrate commitment to health and safety matters.
- Bring this policy statement to the attention of all team members and seek their co-operation in supporting SeeAbility to achieve and maintain a safe workplace.

This policy statement and associated policies and procedures, which describe in detail health and safety arrangements across the organisation, will be subject to continuous review by the Health & Safety Committee, in order to reflect SeeAbility's commitment to health and safety.

Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Introduction

- The Chief Executive holds the ultimate executive responsibility for all matters relating to SeeAbility's legal obligation to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who may be affected by its working activities.

4.2 Criteria for Delegation of Responsibilities

- The delegation of responsibilities for health and safety will extend through all levels of the organisation. In order to achieve a satisfactory organisational arrangement, the following criteria have been applied:
 - The term 'responsible' has not been used unless commensurate authority has also been delegated.

- The person to whom responsibilities are delegated will be competent to carry them out, with this achieved through training and/or experience, or a combination of both.
- Responsibilities are clearly defined and understood by those who carry them out through training and experience.
- In order to avoid frequent changes and revisions of the organisational arrangements, responsibilities are delegated to job positions rather than named persons.

4.3 **Council of Trustees**

The Council of Trustees has an overall, strategic authority for providing health and safety leadership for the Organisation, and this involves:

- Approving the Health & Safety Policy Statement and holding the Chief Executive accountable for its implementation.
- Using its influence to ensure that the organisation's business decisions reflect the broad intentions of the health and safety policy, which it has approved.
- Monitoring the implementation of health and safety practice, through the Chief Executive and reviewing the organisation's health and safety performance against the policy and health & safety management action plan on an annual basis.
- Promoting best practice within health and safety.
- Allocating necessary resources to implement the Health & Safety Policy.
- Setting a personal example at all times.

4.4 **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive, on the authority of the Council of Trustees, is accountable for protecting the health, safety and welfare of the people we support, employees/volunteers and all those who may be affected by our activities; and has responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy. The Chief Executive is supported and advised in this by the organisation's Competent Person, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Health and Safety Committee.

The Chief Executive will:

- Together with the Council of Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team, allocate such financial resources as are required to ensure that the Charity operates in full and complete compliance with UK health and safety laws.

- Seek continuous improvement aligned with HSE guidance document HSG65, the strategy described within the health and safety policy statement, and the detailed policies/procedures which support this.
- Promote best practice within health and safety.
- Establish and maintain effective arrangements for the management of health and safety.
- Ensure adequate line management structures to comply with health and safety responsibilities.
- Chair the Health & Safety Committee and ensure health and safety is a regular agenda item at SLT/Council meetings.
- Provide an annual report to the Council on the management of health and safety throughout SeeAbility.
- Maintain oversight and coordination of the Risk Assurance & Control Framework
- Where an accident/incident has occurred, which may result in prosecution and/or a safeguarding review, the Chief Executive will immediately report the details to the Chair and Council of Trustees. This will include identifying any onward reporting required to the Charity Commission.
- Set a personal example at all times.

Whilst retaining overall accountability for health and safety, and to ensure that the standards laid down in policies and procedures are applied throughout all levels of the organisation, the Chief Executive has adopted the organisational arrangements described as follows.

4.5 Directors, Heads of Department, Regional Heads of Operations, and Line Managers

All directors, heads of department, regional heads of operations and line managers are responsible for:

- The practical implementation of the Health & Safety Policy, the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and other relevant legislation.
- Ensuring that the operations under their control are, as far as is reasonably practicable, conducted without detriment to the health and safety of people supported by SeeAbility, employees or others who may be affected by their activities.
- Ensuring that their areas of responsibility are subject to risk assessment, regular inspections and audits.

- Ensuring that all accidents, incidents and near misses, within their area of responsibility, are recorded and reported to the appropriate person(s). Reviewing all such reports and ensuring, where appropriate, that a full investigation is carried out and appropriate remedial action taken, where necessary.
- Liaising with the Health & Safety Manager on matters of health and safety.
- Encouraging colleagues under their management to be involved in matters of health and safety.
- Ensuring health, safety and well-being is a regular agenda item at team and individual meetings and is included in each employee's annual review (appraisal) process.
- Incorporating, as appropriate, health and safety in the Annual Development Plan for each service/department.
- Setting a personal example at all times.

4.6 Individual Responsibilities

All employees and volunteers are required to:

- Co-operate in implementing the requirements of health and safety legislation and related codes of practice, policies, procedures and safety instructions.
- Take care of the health and safety of themselves, colleagues, the people we support and any other persons who may be affected by their work.
- Refrain from doing anything which constitutes a danger to themselves or others.
- Immediately bring to the attention of their line manager/supervisor any situations or practices that are noted which might lead to injuries or ill health.
- Use protective clothing and equipment supplied.
- Ensure that any equipment issued to them, or for which they are responsible, is correctly used, maintained and properly stored.
- Maintain good standards of housekeeping in the area in which they are working.
- Report all accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses, in accordance with SeeAbility guidance.
- Set a personal example at all times.

Where an employee of SeeAbility is found to be in breach of their health and safety responsibilities in a manner that may or has the potential to endanger themselves or others due to their actions, they may face performance management or disciplinary action, which could result in instant dismissal.

4.7 Volunteers

All volunteers will be expected to follow the health and safety responsibilities laid out for employees and will, where required, receive an appropriate level of training so as to ensure their safety and the safety of the individuals with whom they may come into contact. At no time will volunteers be expected to carry line management responsibility for employees of SeeAbility. Should volunteers breach health and safety policy and procedures, whilst not subject to disciplinary action, the matter would still be investigated and may lead to cessation of the volunteer's involvement with SeeAbility.

4.8 Health & Safety Manager (Competent Person)

The Health & Safety Manager carries delegated responsibility as the 'competent person' appointed under Regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. The Health & Safety Manager is responsible for supporting the implementation and monitoring of health and safety practices throughout SeeAbility. This will involve:

- Having an understanding of relevant Health, Safety and Fire legislation.
- Assisting and advising the Council of Trustees and Chief Executive in areas of health and safety and identifying where improvement is required.
- Providing advice and support to any Manager/Team Member with health and safety issues as they arise.
- Keeping SeeAbility informed/made aware of any changes in health and safety legislation, policy, or practice.
- Undertaking Health & Safety Audits at each service location 6 months after becoming operational and every 12-24 months or more frequently as required.
- Ensuring appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are provided and subject to regular review.

- Ensuring appropriate processes for risk assessment and management are in place and monitored.
- Promote learning from adverse events and ensure follow-up actions are taken to minimise reoccurrence.
- Maintaining awareness and keeping Managers and team members informed of matters affecting health and safety.
- Providing an annual report to the Chief Executive and Council of Trustees on progress made with health and safety across all areas of the organisation.
- Coordinating the development and implementation of an annual Health & Safety Management Action Plan and monitoring its progress.
- Implementing as appropriate, in conjunction with Managers and their teams, any health and safety recommendations received from the Council, Chief Executive, Health & Safety Executive (HSE) or other regulatory body.
- Liaising, as appropriate, with the Head of Property Services and the Head of Compliance & Safeguarding on matters of health and safety.
- Liaising, as appropriate, with the Health, Safety and Fire Authorities.
- Where a significant risk to team members or others is identified or is believed to exist, the Health & Safety Manager will liaise with and recommend in writing to the Chief Executive the resources and requirements to reduce the risk, where reasonably practicable, to an acceptable level.
- Providing reports and other support as required to the Health & Safety Committee.
- Setting a personal example at all times.

The Health & Safety Manager may request the assistance of external specialist support where required.

4.9 **Health and Safety Committee**

The Health and Safety Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that SeeAbility complies with relevant legislation, regulations and guidelines.
- Establishing and monitoring the implementation of an annual Health & Safety Management Action Plan, setting targets or objectives within this as appropriate.

- Keeping the Health and Safety Policies and Procedures under review and ensuring that it is revised as and when necessary.
- Reviewing any health & safety issues arising in practice and ensuring these are appropriately addressed/resolved.
- Bringing to the Chief Executive's attention any faults or areas of weakness in the policy or its implementation.
- Considering on a quarterly basis a series of key performance indicators relating to health and safety, including: RIDDOR reports, safeguarding reports and main causes of absence from work; and from this, make recommendations for changes in practice as appropriate.
- Reviewing summary information from any health and safety monitoring, audits or reviews undertaken and ensuring that any shortfalls or trends identified are addressed and recommendations implemented.
- Providing a forum at which managers/team members may raise any health and safety matters for consideration.

4.10 Consultation, Information and Training

- 5.1 The Chief Executive and Directors are committed to involving employees at all levels in the maintenance of health, safety and environmental standards and to providing them with adequate information, instruction and training. Health and safety training requirements for all employees are identified individually through assessment of knowledge, competence and prior experience with appropriate learning provided to meet any gaps or to promote continuous development. Information and instruction are provided through the Health & Safety policies, procedures and guidance, which are subject to review as required by changes in legislation and practice. External Health and Safety consultants will be used to provide professional health, safety, environmental and occupational advice, as required. In addition to team meetings, SeeAbility's Staff Forum provides an opportunity for consultation about health and safety policies, procedures and practices and can be used by colleagues as a way of highlighting health and safety issues affecting the work activities of the charity as a whole. The Lead Representative of the Staff Forum will be invited to attend meetings of the Health & Safety Committee from time to time where this would facilitate specific consultation.

Monitoring

- 6.1 We ensure the continuous and effective implementation of our health and safety policies and procedures through proactive and reactive monitoring. This rigorous oversight occurs internally, at all organisational levels, and is complemented by external scrutiny from bodies such as our insurers. Comprehensive details can be found in our Health & Safety Management & Audit Policy.

Communication and cooperation

- 7.1 The Health and Safety Committee is integral to our organisation's commitment to safety, serving as a critical forum for both communication and cooperation. Meeting formally four times a year, this committee allows us to proactively address health and safety matters, ensuring we continuously enhance the well-being of the individuals we support and our dedicated colleagues. It's where we disseminate vital information, raise awareness of potential risks, and most importantly, listen to the valuable insights and concerns from all levels of our team. This collaborative approach fosters shared responsibility, promotes joint problem-solving, and ultimately reinforces our unwavering dedication to maintaining a safe, supportive, and dignified environment for everyone connected with our charity.

Health and Safety Committee Members

- Lisa Hopkins – CEO (Chair)
07368 490056
- Brian Robinson - Executive Director of Operations
07720 088798
- Martin Boyce - Executive Director of People
07841 211261
- Ashley Stagg - Head of Property Services
07710 043498
- Paul Pargeter - Head of Quality and Innovation
07842 027704
- Clayton Lister - Head of Quality and Safeguarding
07484 904729
- Matthew Congdon- Regional Head of Operations (South-West)
07483 367534
- Lia Davies - Regional Head of Operations (North)

07719 050956

- Katherine Ashworth - Regional Head of Operations (Central)
07483 330547
- Jon Bellasis - Interim Head of People
07889 599520
- Emma Burtenshaw - Head of Behaviour Support
07483 330506
- Kostadin Karagyozev – H&S Manager
07703 735182

Note: Membership may change from time to time to reflect changes in organisational structures and personnel. Invitations will also be extended to colleagues as appropriate to attend and contribute to specific meetings or agenda items.

Relevant legislation

- 8.1 This policy is developed in accordance with, but is not limited to, the following UK legislation (primarily as applicable in England):
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all relevant regulations introduced under the act.
 - The Health and Social Care Act 2008
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Care Act 2014

Equality statement

- 9.1 We promote equality, diversity, and human rights by treating all people we support and employ equally and fairly, whatever their:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex

- Sexual orientation.

Data protection statement

- 10.1 This policy involves handling personal data. So, when you carry out any procedures this policy describes, you should also think about what our Data Protection policy says.
- 10.2 Our Data protection policy is our promise to handle personal data correctly under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data Protection Regulation (UK-GDPR). It tells you how to keep that promise. It balances everyone's rights to data privacy with the work we do.
- 10.3 For information on how we handle sensitive personal data, see our privacy notices.

Review and version control.

- 11.1 We will review this policy three-yearly. But if changed or new legislation, regulation, or best practice guidance means we need to, we will review it sooner.
- 11.2 For minor changes made mid-scheduled review, we will update this version. We will record this in the version control section below.
- 11.3 Policy owner: Lisa Hopkins, Chief Executive
- 11.4 Policy author/reviewer: Kostadin Karagyzov, Health and Safety Manager
- 11.5 People/groups consulted: Health and Safety Committee

Version number	Approved date	Communication date	Summary of changes
2	09/07/2025	30/07/2025	New Version of the Policy
2.1	15/10/2025	15/10/2025	Updated with new RHO details for the North Region