



# **Health and Safety Policy and Procedure**

**January 2025 update**

# Introduction

It is the policy of the Charity - Newbiggin Arts Centre (NAC) - to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its Employee(s) and volunteers, and it will establish procedures and systems necessary to implement such a policy. The Charity will also ensure that all relevant statutory duties and obligations are satisfied, including those duties set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

The Charity will provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment with the objective of minimising the number of instances of occupational accidents and illnesses and ultimately achieving an accident-free workplace.

All Employee(s) and volunteers will be provided with such equipment, information, instructions, training and supervision as is necessary to implement the policy and achieve the stated objective.

The Charity also recognises its duty to protect the health and safety of all visitors to the organisation, including participants, contractors and temporary workers, as well as any members of the public who might be affected by the Charity's work operations.

While the Charity will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of its Employee(s) and volunteers, health and safety at work is also the responsibility of the Employee(s) and volunteers themselves. All Employee(s) and volunteers should be aware of, respect and adhere to the rules and procedures contained in this policy. It is the responsibility of each Employee and volunteer to take reasonable care of their own and other people's welfare and to report any situation which may pose a threat to the wellbeing of themselves or of any other person. If an Employee or volunteer is unsure how to perform a certain task or feels it would be dangerous to perform a specific job, then it is their responsibility to report this to their line manager (or in the case of volunteers, the relevant Trustee), or ultimately to the Chair of the Board of Trustees

An effective health and safety programme requires continuous communication between Trustees and Employee(s) and volunteers at all levels.

All injuries, however small or slight, sustained by a person at work must be reported to their NAC staff or Trustees. Accident records are crucial to the effective monitoring and revision of the Health, Safety and Risk Policy and must therefore be accurate and comprehensive.

Breach of the Policy by an Employee may lead to disciplinary action and in serious cases of breach of Health and Safety Policy and Procedures, may lead to dismissal. Breach of the Policy by a volunteer may result in suspension or cessation of their volunteer role with NAC.

Full details of the Policy and Procedure are detailed in this document.

# **Newbiggin Arts Centre Health and Safety Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Newbiggin Arts Centre (NAC) to:

- a) Safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all its Employee(s) while at work, and to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, working environments which are safe and without risks to health.
- b) Conduct its undertakings in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that people not in its employment but who may be affected, are not exposed to risk to their health and safety.
- c) Recognise its obligations to meet all relevant legislative requirements pertaining to health and safety, which apply to any of the undertakings of the organisation.
- d) Organise and arrange its affairs to ensure compliance with the policy and relevant legislation.
- e) Ensure that the contents of this policy are reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Trustees, with any proposed amendments recommended to the Board for approval.

## **Responsibility for Health and Safety**

The Board of Trustees of NAC has overall responsibility for the Health and Safety of the organisation and has delegated to the Chair the management responsibility for ensuring such Health and Safety.

Day to day responsibility for overseeing, implementing and monitoring the policy is delegated by the Chair to the Administration Officer who is the designated Safety Officer.

All Employee(s) and volunteers must take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. They must also co-operate with NAC and their co-workers (staff and volunteers) to help everyone meet their legal requirements under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

## **Operation of the Policy**

Newbiggin Arts Centre will:

- a) Maintain an active interest in the implementation of the Safety Policies throughout the Charity to ensure that all levels of management and Employee(s) carry out their duties in this respect.
- b) Ensure that the managerial responsibility and accountability for the safety, health and welfare of its Employee(s) as well as for the health and safety of others that may be affected by its undertakings, is specified in writing.
- c) Ensure that the appropriate safety training and instruction is provided, and that accident prevention is included in all relevant training briefings.
- d) Sustain an awareness of the need to prevent accidents and risks to health in the minds of all Employee(s) and volunteers.
- e) Take into account, when risk assessing its work, any aspects which may help to eliminate injury, industrial disease, pollution and waste.

- f) Make appropriate accident prevention arrangements at the workplace and maintain liaison with all other employers who have Employee(s) working at the same workplace as the Charity.
- g) Ensure First Aid stations are located and clearly marked at both Centres (Front Street and Gibson Street)
- h) Encourage the discussion of health and safety matters at all levels.
- i) Prepare, discuss, agree and review, as required, suitable amendments and conditions to the Health and Safety Policy as may from time to time be considered necessary.
- j) Not allow any person suffering a reduction in levels of alertness and/or ability due to illness or fatigue to work if this might jeopardise the health and safety of that person or any other person.

## **Employee & volunteer Responsibilities**

All Employee(s) and volunteers of Newbiggin Arts Centre:

- a) Have a legal duty to take reasonable care of themselves and others and ensure that they cooperate fully on points of health, safety and risk.
- b) Must ensure that they comply with all emergency arrangements that are communicated to them.
- c) Must ensure that they report all accidents, near misses or damage to equipment and property as soon as possible.
- d) Where applicable, must complete the NAC Health and Safety training provided.
- e) Must refrain from wilful measures or interference with anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.
- f) Must undertake and document risk assessments for all NAC activities that take place offsite unless otherwise prepared by the establishment visited, in which case these must be reviewed and agreed in advance of the NAC activities taking place.
- g) Must carry out tasks in a safe manner and follow the requirements of any instructions or safe systems of work that may be provided for them. Should an Employee or volunteer feel that there are situations that may pose a hazard they have a duty to report such findings to Trustee who should report the facts to the Board.
- h) Have a duty to ensure that any personal protective equipment provided for their protection is worn, maintained and stored in the correct manner.

## **Health and Safety Policy Enforcement**

Failure to comply with Health and Safety laws can lead to serious consequences, both for the organisation and individuals. All Employees and volunteers must comply with this policy. Breach of the Policy by an Employee may lead to disciplinary action and, in serious cases may lead to dismissal.

Breach of the Policy by a volunteer may result in suspension or cessation of their volunteer role with NAC.

## Reporting Accidents and Near Misses

- a) Employee(s) and volunteers must report ALL accidents and near miss incidents that occur immediately to a Trustee and record the incident in NAC Accident at Work Books as soon as reasonably practicable. NAC Accident at Work Books are located in First Aid Work Stations
- b) Employee(s) and volunteers must seek appropriate medical attention for any injury they may receive, no matter how minor it may seem to be. Medical attention may include first aid or attendance at a hospital casualty department. Upon returning from treatment, Employee(s) and volunteers must report the incident to the most senior person on site and enter details in the Accident at Work Book.
- c) Employee(s) must notify the person in charge of any incident in which damage is caused to either NAC's or a third party's property.
- d) NAC's Employees will keep the Chair informed of all accidents and report them to the Board.
- e) Health and Safety reporting will form a standing item in the NAC Board Meetings.

### Near Misses

A "near miss" is any incident, accident or emergency which did not result in an injury, but which could have done so.

Recording non-reportable near misses is *not* a statutory requirement but doing so and using the information provided is good safety management practice as reviewing the report (at the time and/or periodically) may help to prevent a re-occurrence.

Recording near misses can also help identify any weaknesses in operational procedures as deviations from normal good practice may only happen infrequently but could have potentially serious consequences.

A review of near misses over time may also reveal patterns from which lessons can be learned.

## Health and Safety Procedure

The specific arrangements for the implementation of the NAC Health and Safety Policy are detailed below:

### Training

Health and Safety training is an indispensable part of an effective health and safety programme. It is essential that every Employee and volunteer is trained to perform his or her role effectively and safely. All Employees and volunteers will be trained in safe working practices and procedures as part of their induction.

If any Employee or volunteer has a health and safety training issue they should address their concerns to their line manager/regional manager in the first instance. In addition, health and safety will be routinely discussed during performance development reviews (PDRs) with each Employee, and at Local Volunteer Board meetings for volunteers.

### Work equipment

The Charity will take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all Employee(s) using equipment provided by the Charity, as well as ensure the safety of others who may be affected

by the equipment. The Charity will liaise with suppliers to ensure that any new machinery is designed and supplied to work in a safe manner and will inform and train Employee(s) to use the equipment in a safe and efficient manner.

Should Employee(s) have any problems relating to the operation of equipment, or the safety of that equipment, they should immediately inform a Trustee so that steps can be taken to remedy the situation promptly.

## **Manual handling operations**

The Charity's objective is to minimise any risk to Employees and volunteers of accident or injury resulting from manual handling operations. The Charity will endeavour to avoid the need for manual handling activities, so far as is reasonably practicable. Where it is not possible to avoid manual handling operations, an assessment of the operation will be made taking into account the task, the load, the workplace and the capability of the individual concerned.

The following controls are in place and will reduce the risk of accident or injury to the lowest extent reasonably practicable:

- The load to be lifted or moved must be inspected for sharp edges and wet or greasy patches
- When lifting or moving a load with sharp or splintered edges, gloves must be worn. Gloves should be free from oil, grease or other agents which might impair grip.
- The route over which the load is to be lifted or moved should be inspected to ensure that it is free of obstructions or spillage which could cause tripping
- Employee(s) and volunteers should not attempt to lift or move a load which is too heavy to manage comfortably. Assistance should be sought if there is any danger of strain
- Where team lifting or moving is necessary one person should act as co-ordinator
- When lifting an object off the ground, Employees and volunteers should assume a squatting position, keeping the back straight. The load should be lifted by straightening the knees, not the back. These steps should be reversed for lowering an object to the ground.

## **Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Users**

DSE is any work equipment having a screen that displays information e.g. computer screens, often called monitors or VDUs.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations aim to protect the health of people who work with DSE.

Under these regulations:

- NAC will make a risk assessment of all workstations which might be used by DSE 'users' employed by them.
- NAC will reduce risks to the lowest reasonably practicable level.
- Daily work routines of 'users' must be planned so that DSE work is periodically interrupted by rest breaks or other types of work.
- NAC will provide 'users' with health and safety training on the use of their workstation and with information on the risks and the measures to control risks.

## **Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH)**

Within the working environment, many substances are routinely used that could potentially be injurious to health if not properly stored, handled or used correctly. The Charity is required by law to assess the risks from the use of substances at work. A risk assessment will be conducted of all work involving exposure to hazardous substances. The assessment will be based upon manufacturers' and suppliers' health and safety guidance, the Charity's own knowledge of the work process and any relevant information or guidance made available by the H&S Executive.

The Charity will ensure that exposure of Employee(s) and volunteers to hazardous substances is minimised and adequately controlled in all cases. Those identified as likely to come into contact with hazardous substances will receive comprehensive and adequate training and information on the health and safety issues relating to that type of work. Assessments will be reviewed periodically whenever there is a substantial modification to the work process.

## **Employee(s) and volunteers at special risk**

The Charity recognises that some Employee(s) and volunteers may from time to time be at increased risk of injury or ill-health resulting from work activities. The Charity therefore requires that all Employee(s) and volunteers advise a Trustee if they become aware of any change in their personal circumstances which could result in their being at increased risk. This could include medical conditions, permanent or temporary disability, taking medication and pregnancy. Where personnel at special risk are identified, a further assessment of risk in addition to the general risk assessment will be undertaken.

## **Fire Safety Precautions for office-based Employee(s)**

All Employee(s) have a duty to report immediately any fire, smoke or potential fire hazards to the fire service. NAC has a Fire Action Plan including risk assessments for each location.

Each NAC Centre has a Fire Safety Marshal. The Fire Safety Marshal is responsible for liaising with the responsible party for the maintenance and testing of fire alarms and firefighting, prevention and detection equipment in buildings which the Charity lease.

All Employee(s) have a duty to conduct their operations in such a way as to minimise the risk of fire. This involves keeping combustible materials separate from sources of ignition and avoiding unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials. Employees are advised not to use electric fires and other heaters. Employees are not permitted to bring in to the workplace their own heating equipment. Employee(s) must report any faulty electric cable or loose connection immediately to their line manager. All electrical equipment which does not require continuous operation should be switched off when not in use. Employee(s) should never attempt to repair or interfere with electrical equipment or wiring themselves and should not use dual or other socket outlets unless these have been properly authorised by their line manager. All electrical equipment of this type must be subject to portable appliance testing.

Smoke detectors and manually operated fire alarms are located at strategic points throughout the workplace. If a smoke detector sounds, it is the responsibility of any Employee present to activate the alarm and evacuate the building. Fire extinguishers are also located at strategic points throughout the workplace. Employees and volunteers are expected to tackle a fire themselves only if it would pose no threat to their personal safety to do so. If the situation is dangerous or potentially dangerous, the Employee/volunteer should activate the alarm and evacuate the building immediately.

Fire doors designed to slow the spread of fire and smoke throughout the workplace have been installed at strategic points. Fire doors are designed to close automatically after opening and must never be blocked, jammed or tied open. Fire exits are located at strategic points throughout the workplace. Exit doors and corridors must never be locked, blocked or used as storage space. Emergency lighting has been installed in exit corridors, above emergency exit doors and throughout Front Street in case of power failure. Employee(s) should ensure that they are familiar with the position of the nearest firefighting equipment, alarms and emergency exits.

In the event of the fire alarm being activated, or in any other emergency situation (such as a bomb scare), all Employee(s) must leave the building by the nearest available exit in an orderly fashion and assemble at the designated assembly point. The designated assembly points for each department will be notified to all Employees.

Practice fire drills will be conducted on a regular basis to ensure Employee familiarity with emergency evacuation procedures.

## **NAC Smoking Policy**

Public health laws in the UK state that enclosed or substantially enclosed workplaces and public places must be smoke free. NAC complies with the current legislation, and smoking is not permitted in any NAC premises.

## **Risk Assessments**

Operational risk assessments must be completed or obtained and reviewed for all NAC Activities that take place offsite, including trade fairs, workshops and competition finals.

Risk Assessment Templates are available on the NAC SharePoint for completion. All completed risk assessments should be signed off by a member of NAC Staff responsible for the event before the activity takes place. Copies of the completed Risk Assessments should be filed under Risk Assessment Folder under the relevant Business Unit.

All Risk Assessments, when completed, are not to be destroyed or removed from the NAC SharePoint.

Risk Assessments for NAC offices are conducted annually by the responsible person at each location, and are filed in the Risk Assessment folder on the NAC SharePoint.

## **Reporting of incidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations (RIDDOR)**

Legislation requires that certain prescribed events, injuries and diseases be formally reported. Notwithstanding our legal obligations, the Charity views accident investigation as a valuable tool in the prevention of future incidents. In the event of an accident resulting in injury, a report will be drawn up by the line manager detailing:

- The circumstances of the accident including photographs and diagrams wherever possible
- The nature and severity of the injury sustained
- The identity of any eye witnesses
- The time, date and location of the incident
- The date of the report.

All eye witness accounts will be collected as near to the time of the accident as is reasonably practicable. The completed report will then be submitted to the relevant Trustee who will attempt to discover why the accident occurred and what action should be taken to avoid a recurrence of the problem at the site in question and elsewhere. A follow up report will be completed after a reasonable period of time examining the effectiveness of any new measures adopted.

Staff and lead volunteers are responsible for reporting all cases of accident and contagious disease to the Chair.

## **First Aid**

First aid stations are located in relevant areas of all NAC Centres. All first aid stations are clearly marked and are easily accessible by all persons during working hours.



## Housekeeping

- Work sites must be kept clean and tidy
- Any spillage must be cleaned up immediately
- Waste materials and rubbish must be placed in the receptacles provided and removed routinely
- All combustible waste materials must be discarded in sealed metal containers
  
- All holes must be covered when not in use and clearly marked with warning signs when in use
- All materials must be properly and safely used, and when not in use, properly and safely secured.

## Access and egress

- Walkways and passageways must be kept clear from obstructions at all times
- If a walkway or passageway becomes wet, it should be clearly marked with warning signs and/or covered with non-slip material. Any liquid spilt on the floor should be wiped up immediately
- Trailing cables are a trip hazard and should not be left in any passageway
- Any change in the floor elevation of any walkway or passageway must be clearly marked
- Where objects are stored in or around a passageway, care must be taken to ensure that no long or sharp edges jut out into the passageway in such a way as to constitute a safety hazard

## Other Risks

NAC will keep under review from time to time new and emerging risks and safety situation that may be brought to light in the sector and respond to these accordingly at the time following a risk assessment of the same.

Signed for, and on behalf of, the Board of Trustees of Newbiggin Arts Centre



Steve R Wilkinson  
Chair

5<sup>th</sup> January 2025