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| **Health and Safety Policy Statement** |
| **Date this policy comes into effect:****Next review** | **January 2025****January 2028** |

**ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS MUST BE ISSUED WITH THIS POLICY AND MUST SIGN TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE READ IT**

**Volunteer Action** has responsibilities in respect of health and safety towards both paid staff, volunteers and service users. Equally, staff, service users and volunteers have an obligation to take reasonable care in all they do and to comply with any instructions or guidance given to them on health and safety issues relating to Volunteer Action’s services.

**Within the office**

The risks associated with the administration of the organisation from its offices in Fletton House are no different from those of any other small office, and relate primarily to the use of equipment (computers, copiers and kitchen equipment) and emergency evacuation of the building. **Volunteer Action** will ensure that all equipment is maintained in good order and electrical items are tested in line with best practice, such that any risk to staff and volunteers during proper use in accordance with any instructions given is minimised. **Volunteer Action** will ensure that staff and volunteers are trained in the safe use of the equipment; it will also ensure that any hazardous substances (e.g. cleaning materials) are clearly identified. All staff must be aware of the evacuation procedures both as issued by Volunteer Action and Oundle Town Council. Staff must take responsibility for advising visitors to the office of the correct procedures.

See appendix ii and appendix iii.

**While carrying out tasks for clients**

The work of Volunteer Action volunteers on behalf of clients may be undertaken in a wide variety of environments. A volunteer risk assessment is included with this policy, which will be updated as and when any new risks are identified. V**olunteer Action** will strive to identify any specific risks which might be encountered and will maintain a set of guidance notes to mitigate any identified risks as much as is possible. Equally, it is for staff and volunteers to take particular care in examining and assessing the risks attached to any particular assignment and, if these risks give grounds for any concern whatsoever, to refer to the Operations Manager for advice. Volunteer Action includes training in Lone Worker safety as part of the induction process and offers training in Manual Handling and the use of the wheelchair as and when required. Where appropriate we will carry out individual risk assessments and always in the case of face-to-face befriending.

See appendix I

**Service users**

Services users are expected to comply with the law and with reasonable requests to protect themselves and others. Examples of this may include:

* Wearing seat belts when being transported.
* Smoking is not permitted in the vehicle for the duration of the service being provided.
* Keep animals secure.

**Insurance**

Volunteers and staff carrying out tasks allocated to them by **Volunteer Action** are covered by our public and employers liability insurance policy against claims for compensation in respect of injury to themselves or others or damage to property occurring while completing those tasks, except where such claims would be covered by compulsory insurance. Specifically, this means volunteer drivers will be covered by their own car insurance for the time when a Volunteer Action passenger is in their car. Our insurance only covers limited protection of no claims bonuses and the time when our volunteer drivers are supporting passengers outside their vehicle. Our insurers require all volunteers who are in contact with our members to update their safeguarding training every 3 years.

Anyone using their car in connection with **Volunteer Action** work should inform their motor insurer (this should not usually affect their insurance premium). Failure to do so may invalidate the policy during such journeys.

**Volunteer Action** does not insure against the loss of personal property of staff and volunteers; this remains the responsibility of individuals.

An accident book is kept in the Volunteer Action office. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to ensure that any accident in which they are involved or of which they are aware is recorded in that book.

**Appendix i: RISK ASSESSMENT FOR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS**

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| ****ACTIVITY**** | ****POTENTIAL HAZARD**** | ****-------**** ****likelihood****  | ****DEGREE OF RISK********Severity**** | ****---------********total**** | WHAT YOU/WE WILL DO TO MINIMISE THESE RISKS | ****ADDITIONAL NOTES**** |
| **SHARING INFORMATION** | **Revealing personal data** | **2** | **3** | **6** | Destroy all printed information containing member data by shredding or burning as soon as possiblePassword protect any electronic device receiving or storing members’ personal data and only allow access for yourselfPermanently delete any electronic copies of members’ personal data as soon as possibleKeep printed material away from sight eg do not allow passengers or passers-by to see the information in your carNever share anything you know about our members where it was learnt in the course of volunteering for us | **New volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement as part of their signing up documentation****All new volunteers undergo a training module covering their role in GDPR** |
| **DRIVING** | **Vehicle breakdown****Accident****Children under 14 accompanied by a parent** | **1****1****1** | **1****3****1** | **1****3****1** | **Maintain vehicle properly****Hold suitable breakdown cover****Advise another person of your whereabouts****Carry a phone that is charged****You must have up-to-date insurance which allows for volunteer driving.**Children under 14 will only be driven when accompanied by a parent or guardian.The law makes drivers responsible for the child’s safety – in particular that they use the correct restraint in the car.If you agree to such drives, you must have clearly stated that you understand this responsibility. We will be relying on the accompanying adult to provide an appropriate restraint BUT the driver must assure themselves that this does comply with the law. | **We have system checks which will remind you.****We have a transporting children policy which provides all the details of what a driver must check**  |
| **MANUAL HANDLING** | **Back injury** | **2** | **2** | **4** | **Inform staff of preferences****Wear appropriate footwear****Don’t lift if in doubt** | **Manual handling training available** |
| **MENTAL HEALTH** | **Low mood** **Disengagement of volunteering****PTSD** | **2** | **4** | **6** | Recognise the emotional challenges volunteers may face when dealing with sensitive or distressing situations. We offer mechanisms for emotional support, such as debriefing sessions, access to peer support meetings. Encourage self-care practices and stress management techniques. | Encourage volunteers to take regular breaks and rest when needed, especially during extended or physically demanding projects. |

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| **IN PEOPLE’S HOMES** | **Trips and falls****Electrical items and wiring****Unexpected/unknown people at property** | **1****1****1** | **1****2****2** | **1****2****2** | **Assess every time you visit****Avoid using electrical items unless you can determine they are safe****Know your exits****Make an excuse to leave****Call the emergency out of hours number to alert a member of staff** | **We will conduct a risk assessment as part of initial visit** |
| **CONFLICT WITH DIFFICULT SERVICE USERS** | **Verbal abuse** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **Report all incidents****Leave as soon as possible****Be self-aware and try to stay calm** | **Lone worker training available** |
| **MANUAL HANDLING** | **Back injury** | **2** | **2** | **4** | **Inform staff of preferences****Wear appropriate footwear****Don’t lift if in doubt** | **Manual handling training available** |
| **CONTACT WITH ANIMALS** | **Bites & scratches** | **1** | **3** | **3** | **Avoid contact****Ask owner to secure animal in another room or appropriate carrier** |  |
| **MENTAL HEALTH** | **Low mood** **Disengagement of volunteering****PTSD** | **2** | **4** | **6** | Recognise the emotional challenges volunteers may face when dealing with sensitive or distressing situations. We offer mechanisms for emotional support, such as debriefing sessions, access to peer support meetings. Encourage self-care practices and stress management techniques. | Encourage volunteers to take regular breaks and rest when needed, especially during extended or physically demanding projects. |

**Appendix ii: RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE OFFICE**

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| ACTIVITY | POTENTIAL HAZARD | ------- likelihood  | DEGREE OF RISKSeverity | ---------total | WHAT YOU/WE WILL DO TO MINIMISE THESE RISKS | ADDITIONAL NOTES |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **ACCESSING PERSONAL DATA** | **Revealing personal data** | **1** | **3** | **3** | Destroy all printed information containing member data by shredding as soon as possibleAll computers are password protected. All databases are separately password protected. Staff and volunteers will be limited in their access to certain information.Our Data Protection policy states how we will secure personal data and how long it can be kept.Keep printed material away from sight Never share anything you know about our members where it was learnt in the course of working/volunteering for us except as necessary for the function of the service. | **There is a shredder in the office.****New staff and volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement as part of their induction****All new staff and volunteers undergo a training module covering their role in GDPR****We encourage a ‘clear desk’ policy** |
| MANUAL HANDLING | Back injury | 2 | 2 | 4 | Heavy items are accessible at a reasonable heightStaff trained in manual handling where necessary | **Manual Lifting course to be completed** |
| USING COMPUTERS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT | Posture problems, pain and discomfort to backs, hands and armsHeadaches or sore eyes | 2 | 2 | 4 | Desks, chairs and equipment is accessible and appropriateBasic eye tests fundedGlare controlled by blinds |  |
| **MENTAL HEALTH** | **Low mood** **Disengagement of volunteering****PTSD** | 2 | 4 | 6 | Recognise the emotional challenges volunteers may face when dealing with sensitive or distressing situations. We offer mechanisms for emotional support, such as debriefing sessions, access to peer support meetings. Encourage self-care practices and stress management techniques. | Encourage volunteers to take regular breaks and rest when needed, especially during extended or physically demanding projects. |
| LONE WORKING | Injury or ill health | 1 | 2 | 2 | If out of office, record details of visit in desk diaryIf alone in the building, member of staff must lock all outside doors, know what to do in a fire alarm and have notified someone when they are expected home |  |

**Appendix iii: Emergency Evacuation Procedure at Fletton House**

1. All volunteers and employees are required to sign to say that they have read this procedure and the fire evacuation procedures recommended by the landlord, Oundle Town Council (OTC).
2. In the event of a fire or other need to evacuate the building, all office personnel should follow the procedure provided by OTC (attached).
3. Only attempt to leave the building if there is safe passage. This will NEVER include using the lift. Remember the fire doors are there to keep you safe.
4. There are fire doors on every office and stairwell that will keep people save for a minimum of 30 minutes. These doors MUST all be closed on hearing the fire alarm.
5. The central stairwell and the fire escape stairs in The Oundle Suite are protected by fire doors and provide a safe passageway to the muster points. You will be safe behind these doors for a minimum of 30 minutes. If you have limited mobility, Volunteer Action recommends that you wait behind a fire door, only attempting to use the stairs if you can do so unaided.
6. Volunteer Action do not recommend that you stop to fight a fire with an extinguisher. Fire marshals are provided by OTC.

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