

Office/Workplace Safety - Procedure

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1. Introduction.

NHS Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) wishes to ensure that all office and workplace environments within its operations are both managed and used in a manner that is conducive to the safety of all CCG employees and other parties who may have cause to work in the offices, for whatever reason.

2. Purpose.

This COP has been developed to support the CCG's Health and Safety Policy and the aim of this COP code is to introduce guidance to managers and employees involved in office and workplace activities on how their legal and moral duty may be discharged.

This COP applies to all employees of the CCG including partner agencies, visitors, contactors and agency staff. Managers at all levels are expected to take an active lead to ensure that health and safety and systems of internal control are of the highest standard and integral to the operation of the organisation. All employees and other persons are expected to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other persons. If safe systems of work have been introduced, employees are expected to follow them, and any other relevant instructions.

3. Safe Working Arrangements for Office Work

The key to a healthy and safe workplace is the risk management process. This will enable hazards to be recognised and risks removed or controlled before an accident or ill health has occurred. The risk management process requires a thorough review of working practice to identify potential hazards, the identification of who and how people could be harmed, the assessment of risk and decisions made on how they could be reduced and the ongoing monitoring and review of the process.

The results of the assessment must be explained to those who may be affected and be formally recorded as they may be needed to demonstrate that we have acted in a reasonable manner in protecting the health and safety of our workers.

4. General Housekeeping

Poor housekeeping is a common cause of accidents especially slips, trips and falls and fires in the workplace. In order to ensure that satisfactory standards of housekeeping are achieved the following arrangements are to be adhered to by all employees within CCG premises:

- Check that the workplace is free from hazards at the beginning of each day;
- Always put office equipment away immediately after use;
- Clear up any spillages or spills etc. immediately as per local procedures;
- Report to the building manager any loose carpet or any damaged floor coverings;
- Do not allow objects to protrude into walkways;
- Ensure that waste materials are properly stored and are removed on a regular basis;
- Ensure that special arrangements are made for the removal of unusual or extra-large items;
- Do not store office equipment anywhere other than in designated areas;
- Ensure that your work area is kept tidy at all times;

- Trailing leads will be avoided wherever possible or otherwise ramped or protected to avoid potential tripping hazards;
- The bottom drawers of filing cabinets should be filled first and, in the absence of safety devices to prevent it toppling, only one drawer at a time should be opened to avoid the risk of toppling;
- Defects such as broken chairs, faulty drawers, trailing cables etc. should be reported immediately to your line manager;
- Chairs - routinely inspect chairs for condition, do not use chairs for climbing – a stepping stool or step ladder only should be used.

5. Electrical Risks

Electrical accidents can have very serious consequences. To help prevent them employees are to remember these three basic rules:

- Always check electrical equipment visually before use and report faulty or damaged equipment; do not attempt to use it;
- Do not try to repair faulty equipment; Leave it to a competent person;
- Never use electrical equipment in damp surroundings unless you know that it is suitable for that purpose.

5.1 Fixed Wiring Systems

The integrity and safety of the electrical installation from supply into the building to the electrical socket outlet is the responsibility of the Landlord/ NHS Property Services. Fixed wiring will be subject to routine examination and testing by a NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) accredited company at a minimum of every five years. Work on fixed systems must only be done by persons who are competent to do this.

5.2 Portable Appliances

The responsibility for the safety of equipment from the electrical socket to the equipment is the responsibility of the CCG.

The CCG will only purchase electrical appliances and equipment from reputable suppliers, manufactured to an appropriate standard and where possible they must be CE marked. The equipment should be used correctly and not abused, there should be no unauthorised repairs and the equipment should be periodically subject to a Portable Appliance Test (PAT). The CCG will, through NHS Property Services, will ensure that all portable appliance equipment is tested in accordance with current guidelines. Nearly 75% of electrical faults are caused by faulty leads or plugs. Long extension leads are to be avoided wherever possible. If their use is unavoidable, ensure that the connector is manufactured to BS EN 60309. No unauthorised electrical equipment is permitted on the CCG's premises without authorisation from the building manager. Further guidance on Portable Appliances can be obtained from the Health and Safety Advisor.

Note: Plug in Block Adaptors are prohibited in all CCG premises.

6.0 Lighting

The CCG will ensure that there is sufficient light to enable work to be undertaken without risks to the occupants. There are standards contained in HSE publications that offer guidance to the lighting levels in workplace environments (ACOP L24 –Workplace Health,

Safety and Welfare). The provision of adequate light can be by natural or artificial means. Where possible natural light should be utilised, but because the quality of light in this country is variable, and often poor during the autumn and winter months, there is a great reliance on artificial means. Any artificial lighting should be fully diffused where DSE equipment is in use. The quality of light is important and a mixture of good natural light and artificial systems is the best method of providing the correct lighting level. It is also important that the direction of natural light can be controlled to ensure an absence of reflections on the DSE screens.

7. Ventilation/Air Quality

Workplaces need to have an adequate supply of fresh air. In most cases suitable ventilation can be achieved by opening windows and doors. The CCG will ensure that any mechanical ventilation systems provided are maintained to an appropriate standard by a competent person.

8. Temperature

Thermal comfort is subjective but describes an individual's satisfaction with their temperature environment. There are a number of factors that can affect thermal comfort including air movement, humidity, type and amount of clothing worn, and the type of work being undertaken.

The law does not state a minimum temperature, but the temperature in workrooms should normally be at least be at least 16°C unless much of the work involves severe physical effort in which case the temperature should be at least 13°C.

Although there is no legal maximum temperature limit within a workroom, the CCG will endeavour to provide a reasonably comfortable temperature throughout the workroom by providing either local cooling systems, increasing ventilation, or fans.

These temperatures may not however ensure reasonable comfort, depending on other factors such as air movement and relative humidity. If you feel that you have a problem with the temperature within your workroom please contact your line manager or building manager for further advice and guidance.

9. Adequate Space to Work

Workrooms should have enough free space to allow people to get to and from workstations and to move within the room, with ease. The number of people who may work in any particular room at any one time will depend not only on the size of the room, but on the space taken up by furniture, fittings, equipment, and on the layout of the room. Workrooms, except those where people only work for short periods, should be of sufficient height (from floor to ceiling) over most of the room to enable safe access to workstations. In older buildings with obstructions such as low beams the obstruction should be clearly marked.

The total volume of the room, when empty, divided by the number of people normally working in it should be at least 11 cubic metres. The figure of 11 cubic metres per person is a minimum and may be insufficient if, for example, much of the room is taken up by furniture etc.

The floor space per person indicated above will not always give sufficient unoccupied space, as required by the Regulations. Rooms may need to be larger, or to have fewer people working in them, depending on such factors as the contents and layout of the room and the

nature of the work. Where space is limited careful planning of the workplace is particularly important.

10. Work Equipment

There are a number of machines that are commonly used in an office environment that could cause harm if used incorrectly or are poorly maintained. Apart from the electrical safety requirements, there are other hazards which could be present. Photocopiers are essential office machines that use electrical, electronic and mechanical parts to work. Unauthorised repairs or servicing from an untrained person could create unnecessary risks and should not be permitted. Office staff should only carry out basic functions recommended by the machine supplier, such as changing toner cartridges, unless properly trained. The CCG will ensure that all office machines are subject to a regular maintenance in conjunction with manufactures guidelines.

11. Noise

Noise at work is controlled by legislation to prevent harm to hearing. Action levels are prescribed where an employer should instigate protective measures. These action levels would not normally be expected to be exceeded in an office. However noise can be a nuisance and a distraction if concentration is required. Office layouts can prevent unnecessary noise e.g. large photocopiers being placed in their own machines room. Desk printers are now much quieter than they were several years ago, and this has helped reduce the overall noise level in offices. Where noise is a problem then other control methods can be considered. Further advice on noise can be sought from the Health and Safety Advisor.

12. First Aid Arrangements

The CCG is under a general duty to provide a safe place of work, with suitable arrangements for welfare. The CCG must ensure that there is adequate first aid provision for employees who may become ill or are injured at work. A suitable person must be appointed to take responsibility for first aid provision and maintenance of any first aid boxes under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 (as amended).

The CCG will consider the nature of activities at the workplace when determining the number and types of first aiders to appoint. As a minimum, a low-risk workplace such as a small office should have a first-aid box and a person appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements, such as calling the emergency services if necessary.

Employees will be informed of arrangements, which have been made for first aid, including the location of equipment, facilities and appointed personnel.

Further information and guidance on First Aid requirements can be found at Appendix A

13. Manual Handling

Poor lifting and carrying technique contribute to manual handling related injuries of staff every year. Although there are some members of staff who lift objects on a daily basis as part of their employment, nearly all staff will lift some objects during their working week. Good technique is vital in preventing injury. Short courses are available via the Skills for Health online training website that will provide some basic skills, which if implemented, will help to prevent injury. If the object to be lifted is large, awkward or heavy then an assessment should be undertaken. The first part of any assessment should consider whether the object needs to be lifted at all. Engineering methods e.g. lifting appliances, or

trolleys etc., should be considered next, if this is not possible a method for manual lifting with the assistance of other staff can be used. Many people use poor techniques and have escaped injury due to their general fitness and age. However there will be a risk of eventual injury as these conditions change. A serious back injury could cause substantial pain and be extremely debilitating.

Some tips on efficient lifting:

- Is it necessary to lift the load? If not – don't!
- assess the lift and decide if help is needed;
- obtain a firm grip on the load (use gloves if necessary);
- bend at the knees not from the waist;
- use your legs not your back to thrust upwards (the leg muscles were designed for power and strength);
- keep the load near to your body;
- Do not twist your spine when lifting or carrying loads.

Further advice and guidance on Manual Handling Operations can be sought through the Health and Safety Advisor.

14. Welfare Facilities

Welfare facilities include the provision of adequate sanitary and washing facilities. The CCG will ensure these facilities will be in sufficient numbers, be clean, well maintained and have adequate ventilation. Hot and cold water, soap and hand drying facilities will also be in place. The provision of suitable drinking water is also a statutory requirement and will be supplied.

15. CCG Workplace Inspections

The CCG will undertake a full safety inspection of their workplace at least annually. The CCG will organise the support of the Health and Safety Advisor to undertake this inspection on their behalf. A report will be prepared and submitted to the nominated person for action.

16. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

The use of chemical substances in any environment requires strict control procedures to ensure the safety of personnel and visitors. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) requires employers to make arrangements to control the exposure of their employees to all substances which may affect their health.

The CCG will endeavour, wherever possible, only to use substances classified as non-hazardous. Where this is not possible and a hazardous substance cannot be substituted, strict controls will be enforced as list below:

- If using a hazardous substance a COSHH assessment on its use must be prepared;
- Before using a new product, managers must ensure that they are in possession of the COSHH assessment. The content of which must be provided to those employees who are likely to come into contact with the product;
- Always work to the systems that are in place and follow the guidance given in the material safety data sheet (MSDS) and COSHH Assessment Form;
- Always wear the supplied PPE if necessary for the task;

- Always work in a safe and professional manner;
- DO NOT USE any hazardous substance for anything other than its intended use;
- Report to management any issues/concerns that you may have;
- Ensure hazard information is kept up to date;
- All substances that have the potential to cause harm to health must be stored safely and securely and with regards to the suppliers' recommendations;
- Ensure that employees are trained in all areas mentioned above.

The CCG requires all contractors (i.e. cleaners) using COSHH items within CCG premises to ensure that they comply with the arrangements above.

Further advice and guidance on using COSHH can be sourced from the Health and Safety Advisor.

17. Office Lone Working

It is often necessary for employees of the CCG to have to work on their own. In the vast majority of cases, this poses no problem. Within the CCG there are various work activities that involve solitary working to a greater or lesser degree. Many employees by necessity have to work alone and unsupervised. The CCG is committed to the safety of all employees as far as is reasonable practicable and will ensure that measures are in place to manage staff who may be lone working and to minimise any foreseeable resultant risks to those staff.

There is no precise definition of the term 'Lone Worker' although in this context it can be regarded as meaning 'a person whose work activity involves a significant part of their working time in situations where there is no regular, close involvement with other personnel or supervision'.

This can involve employees in premises where:

- the person is in the building on their own;
- the person works separately from others in the same building; or
- the person works outside normal hours

All employees should ensure that any equipment issued for lone working is in good condition and is suitable for the task. They should be aware of the procedures to obtain replacements as necessary, ensuring that equipment is exchanged as soon as possible if it does not function correctly.

Generally there are no specific prohibitions on staff working alone. However, some health and safety legislation stipulates that a minimum of 2 people must be involved in certain work activities and particular safe systems of work must be followed. In other legislation a minimum level of supervision is required and limits the extent to which personnel may work on their own, for instance, young persons under the age of 18.

Lone working is specifically **not** permitted within the CCG for employees under the age of 18 or expectant mothers in the later stages of pregnancy.

From time to time there may be a need for staff to be within a building on their own. The following in particular should be taken into account:

- The room layout should be designed to ensure that wherever possible and practical there is an adequate physical barrier between personnel and any potential attacker;
- The room layout should have clear and accessible escape routes from the area;
- Where personnel are alone in a building they should where possible lock all entry doors, although they should ensure that they still have a means of escape in the event of a fire.
- Personnel will have access to a phone and personnel will be provided with emergency contact numbers to call for assistance or advice.

Any increased risk should be taken into account when undertaking the risk assessment for the activity.

18. Young Persons

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, the CCG will ensure that risk assessments take into account the employment of young persons, before they start work. This will apply to all young people including long-term employees, temporary staff, those on government-funded schemes and those on work experience programmes. The extent of the risk will determine whether the work of young people should be restricted. **In the case of young people under the minimum school leaving age, their parents (or those having the parental responsibility) will be informed of the key findings of the risk assessment and the control measures taken.**

Young persons may be exposed to additional risks at work due to their lack of knowledge, experience and possible immaturity. The following procedures should be implemented to by line managers to ensure their safety.

- Additional training, instruction and supervision should be provided until the young person has demonstrated a satisfactory degree of competence;
- Both the young person and the Line manager should pay careful attention to any restrictions placed on the type of work, which may be undertaken.

19. Expectant and New Mothers

The CCG accepts its responsibilities as set out within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to protect new, expectant and breastfeeding mothers.

Line managers are responsible for completing a New and Expectant Mothers risk assessment to ensure that the employee and the unborn child are not exposed to any significant risk.

The CCG will provide suitable facilities for nursing mothers to rest, express milk and store milk within a fridge. This facility must be situated conveniently in relation to sanitary facilities.

Further information and guidance can be obtained from the HR department.

20. Staff Inductions

In order to secure the health and safety of all employees, the CCG will provide health and safety training to new employees, which will be incorporated into general induction training.

Induction training will commence on the first day of employment so that employees are familiar with basic procedures once they are at their place of work. Where this is not possible, induction training will take place as soon as possible after the employee has started work. The person responsible for this will always be the Line Manager.

The health and safety component of induction training will contain the following:

- **CCG's health and safety policy** — the contents of CCG's policy statement will be covered in detail, including the responsibilities set out in the policy, this will enable the employee to become acquainted with the organizational arrangements;
- **Accident reporting procedures/first aid** — this will cover the action to be taken when an accident has occurred, the person to be informed and where to acquire first aid treatment (this section will also cover the CCG's procedure as to the investigation of accidents: the reporting procedure will be explained so that the employee is aware as to what will happen when an accident occurs);
- **Fire procedures and precautions** — this section covers action to be taken in a fire situation and will include:
 - the location of the fire exit;
 - the assembly point;
 - the responsible person the employee must report to;
 - further instructions on the action to be taken in the event of discovering a fire;
 - what to do with machinery or processes left prior to evacuating an area.
- **Safety rules** — this section will cover CCG's and local safety rules;
- **Safety procedures** — items for discussion in this section could include;
 - use of display screen equipment;
 - safe manual handling of loads.

Once the induction training has been completed, a record of the training will be kept. The name of the employee, the date and subjects covered should be included.

21. Contractors and Visitors

Visitors must report to reception and be escorted to their destination. They should be made aware of any local safety procedures and, in the event of fire evacuation, escorted out of the premises to the assembly points.

If contractors or visitors are seen acting unsafely this should be reported to the building manager so that the matter may be raised with the individual or company concerned.

22. References

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992;
- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR);
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER);
- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992;

- The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989;
- Maintaining portable electric equipment in low-risk environments INDG236 (REV2);
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH);
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended);
- The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005;
- The Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979;
- The Data Protection Act 1998;
- The Health Act 2006;
- ACOP L24 – Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare;

Appendix A

First Aid Requirements Guidance

The aim of first aid is to reduce the effects of injury or illness suffered at work caused either by the work itself or by some other factor outside The CCG's control. First aid provision must be 'adequate and appropriate in the circumstances'. This means that sufficient first aid personnel and facilities should be available to:

- Give immediate assistance to casualties with common injuries or illness and injuries likely to arise from specific hazards at work;
- Provide first aid and offer assistance to a member of the public, resident, guest or service user who is on CCG premises, including those visiting or attending any CCG events; and;
- Summon an ambulance or other professional help.

The extent of the first aid provision required depends on the circumstances in each workplace.

As with risk assessments, first aid assessments shall be reviewed on a regular basis, that is, every year and whenever there is a material change either to the amount and type of work carried out or to the number of staff members employed on the site.

In assessing needs, the following need to be taken into account:

- Workplace hazards and risks;
- The number of staff members employed on the site;
- The accident record of the site;
- The nature and distribution of the workforce;
- The remoteness of the site from emergency medical services;
- The needs of travelling, remote and lone workers;
- Annual leave and other absences of First Aiders and, if applicable, appointed persons

Suggested numbers of first –aid personnel to be available at all times people are at work

Degree of Hazard	How many employees	What First Aid personnel are recommended
Low Hazard e.g. offices	Less than 25	At least one appointed person
	25 -50	At least one first – aider trained in EFAW
	More than 50	At least one first – aider trained in FAW for every 100 employed (or part thereof)

Appointed Person

When an employer's first-aid needs assessment indicates that a first-aider is unnecessary, the minimum requirement is to appoint a person to take charge of first-aid arrangements. The roles of this appointed person include looking after the first-aid equipment and facilities and calling the emergency services when required. They can also provide emergency cover, within their role and competence, where a first-aider is absent due to unforeseen circumstances (annual leave does not count).

Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)

Provides basic lifesaving first aid including:

Understanding of Health and safety (first aid) regulations;	Resuscitation;
Managing an incident;	Shock;
The priorities of first aid;	Choking;
Treatment of an unconscious casualty;	Seizures;
Bleeding;	Common workplace injuries;

First Aid at Work (FAW)

Provides comprehensive set of practical skills for first aid situations including:

Accidents and illness;	Choking;
Treatment of an unconscious casualty;	Bleeding;
Heart attacks;	Burns and scalds;
Resuscitation;	Poisoning;
Shock;	Fractures
Seizures;	Eye injuries;
Asthma;	Low blood sugar;
Severe allergic reaction	Fainting.

Qualified physicians and nurses can act as fully qualified First Aiders without having to attend specific training courses. To be counted as part of the CCG complement of first aiders a doctor and nurse must:

- be in clinical practice;
- maintain competency in resuscitation techniques;
- be willing to attend incidents on request;
- be included on lists of first aiders;

First Aid equipment

There is no mandatory list of items that should be included in a first aid kit (only a suggested contents card as a minimum). As a guide, where no special risk arises in the workplace, a minimum stock of first aid items would normally be:

A leaflet giving general guidance on first aid (for example, HSE's leaflet No 6, <i>Basic Advice on First Aid at Work</i>);	Four individually wrapped triangular bandages (preferably sterile);
20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes), appropriate to the type of work;	Six safety pins;
Two sterile eye pads;	Six medium sized individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings – approximately 12 cm x 12 cm;

This is a suggested contents list only; equivalent but different items will be considered acceptable.

Additional materials and equipment may be necessary, for example scissors (blunt nose type), disposable aprons, and individually wrapped moist wipes. These may be kept in the first aid kit container, if there is room, but they may be stored separately as long as they are available for use if required.

Where mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, at least a litre of sterile water or sterile saline (0.9%) in sealed, disposable containers should be provided. Once the seal is broken, the containers should not be kept for reuse. The container should not be used after the expiry date.