



Health and Safety Policy

Includes guidance on:

- The overall management of the Health and Safety requirements
- Responsibility within the organisation
- Procedures

Document Type: Operational Policy

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Document Purpose: This policy outlines MCS general obligations with regard to Health and Safety and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Responsible Group: Trustees

Date Ratified:

Where this is to be held: In the main MCS office: a hard copy in the MCS policy folder

Abbreviations used in this document:

Information from/sourced/referenced:

The master copy of this policy, and others referenced, is in the indexed and referenced Policies Handbook. This is held in the office digitally (PDF) and in hard copy. The validity of this copy can be ensured by date checking with the office where any updates are recorded. To ensure its validity, if this document is printed into hard copy or saved to another location it should be;

- a) clearly marked as a copy
- b) checked against the reference number in the handbook

If you would like this document in other languages or formats (i.e. large print) please contact the MCS main office.

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Introduction

Marches Counselling Service (MCS) will take all steps necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all clients, staff and volunteers at work.

In this context Marches Counselling Service will adhere to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and other relevant health and safety legislation, codes of practice and government guidelines.

The health and safety of clients is a primary consideration in our normal work. In extra-ordinary circumstances, such as a pandemic, concerns over mental health need to be balanced with external issues around physical health.

This policy will be reviewed annually at the beginning of each financial year. However, a review may occur if there are changes in relevant Health and Safety legislation, or following an accident or incident, or simply to reflect changes in industry best practice.

1. Principles

- 1.1 To establish, maintain and regularly review safety plans and risks.
- 1.2 To provide adequate and competent supervision of all activities involving risk.
- 1.3 To ensure appropriate training in health and safety is delivered.
- 1.4 To establish and maintain systems for consulting paid and voluntary workers about health and safety issues i.e. health and safety will be an agenda item at quarterly business meetings.
- 1.5 To establish and maintain systems for risk assessment of clients' physical health as well as mental health on a regular basis as needed.
- 1.6 To maintain accurate records of client attendance, infection, accidents and other events with health and safety implications.

2. Levels of Responsibility

- 2.1 The Trustees have overall responsibility for health and safety. Issues with regard to the building will be taken to the landlords for remedial action.
- 2.2 The Health and Safety Officer (The Administrator), with the assistance of the Clinical Director and Clinical Co-ordinator, is responsible for the effective implementation of procedures and systems including monitoring, prevention of hazards and taking remedial action.
- 2.3 Clinical supervisors, as the people in regular contact with counsellors and their work, should bring any concerns regarding Health & Safety to Clinical Management Meetings, or if more urgent, to the attention of the Health and Safety Officer (Administrator) and/or Clinical Director.
- 2.4 All paid and voluntary staff must co-operate with Marches Counselling Service in
 - the regular assessment of risk
 - maintaining safe working practices
 - complying with statutory regulations and government guidelines
 - checking with the Health and Safety Officer if there are any uncertainties about relevant procedures as situations change

- informing the Health & Safety Officer is aware of any unsafe situation

3. Inspections and Hazards

- 3.1 The Health and Safety Officer and a Trustee will carry out a full inspection of the premises and safeguards in place at least once a year in normal conditions, and quarterly in unusual conditions such as the pandemic. Reports on health and safety will be presented at quarterly business meetings.
- 3.1.1 Any hazards identified in this way are discussed by the appropriate staff group and remedial action taken
- 3.2 Any hazards identified by a member of staff should be reported to the Health & Safety Officer immediately.

4. First Aid (Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981)

- 4.1 There is a first aid kit situated in the kitchen area on top of the storage cupboard and a further kit is available in the office.
- 4.2 These will be monitored and restocked by the Health and Safety Officer.
- 4.3 All new staff will be informed of first aid procedures as part of their induction.

5. Incident Reporting

Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations (2013) RIDDOR

- 5.1 Incident forms are kept in the filing cabinet in the hallway.
- 5.2 Marches Counselling Service will report any work related deaths, dangerous occurrences and certain injuries (over 7 days) to the relevant people and agencies.
- 5.3 Serious accidents within the premises must be reported as soon as possible to the Administrator and/or Clinical Director and an Incident Report Form completed.

6. Fire and Emergency Evacuation (Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005)

6.1 Prevention

- 6.1.1 Fire precautions are covered at induction of all staff
- 6.1.2 A fire safety risk assessment will be undertaken at least once every 12 months.
- 6.1.3 There should be no obstructions to fire exits or fire extinguishers.
- 6.1.4 Fire doors should not be wedged open.

6.2 Alarms

- 6.2.1 The fire alarm is the responsibility of C.F. Roberts (landlord)
- 6.2.2 There is an annual test undertaken by the landlord.

6.3 Extinguishers

- 6.3.1 The extinguishers in the shared hallways are under the responsibility of the landlord who has them serviced annually.
- 6.3.2 All other extinguishers are the responsibility of Marches Counselling Service and the landlord arranges to service these annually too.
- 6.3.3 Fire extinguishers in the offices occupied by Marches Counselling Service are situated:
- i. CO2 Extinguisher (for use on electrical and flammable liquid) located next to the Fire Exit door in the kitchen area

- ii. Foam Extinguisher (for use on wood, paper, cloth etc.) located next to the Fire Exit door in the kitchen area
- iii. Foam and CO2 located at the top of the stairs

6.4 Evacuation

- 6.4.1 In case of fire, there should be an immediate and orderly evacuation. Leave the building by the nearest and safest available route. here are stairs at front (internal) and rear (external) of the building. The list of those in the building is kept on the filing cabinet in the hall. If accessible this should be taken by a staff member to facilitate a roll call.
- 6.4.2 The assembly point is: *The public car park (opposite entrance to MCS Car Park)*
- 6.4.3 The evacuation procedures are displayed in all counselling rooms, admin office and the kitchen area. All staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with these.
- 6.4.4 On evacuation information should immediately be passed to the fire brigade and any other properties likely to be effected.

6.5 Fire Drills

Fire drills will take place at least once a year and the results recorded, reported and discussed at the next business meeting. Any recommendations will be reviewed at the next Board meeting and implemented as appropriate.

7. Security

- 7.1 An electronic entry system is installed to the main access door.
- 7.2 Monitors are located in the office and the upper hall and should be switched on when in the building to allow identification of visitors.
- 7.3 An intercom at each point enables communication with the person outside the building and the door to be opened remotely.
- 7.4 All individuals who wish to enter the Counselling Suite are required to identify themselves before entry is permitted and access should never be given to anyone who has not made a prior appointment.
- 7.5 Visitors should be informed of infection controls procedures on entering the building.
- 7.6 Staff should accompany visitors through the building to familiarise them with the relevant sanitisation points when required. (See P-019 Covid New Working Protocol)

8. Computers and Visual Display Units (Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992)

- 8.1 Marches Counselling Service will use the Display screen equipment (DSE) workstation checklist to risk assess and comply with this policy which aims to prevent eye strain, headaches and back problems caused by a poor working position.

If any member of staff or volunteers feels that extra provisions and/or adjustments are required they should inform the Health and Safety Officer.

9. Manual Handling (Manual Handling Regulations 1992)

- 9.1 Every effort should be made in order to reduce or eliminate the injuries which can result from manual handling. As far as reasonably practicable, every manual handling task which could in all probability give rise to risk of injury will be subject to a formal risk assessment and, if necessary, avoided.

- 9.2 Regulations are aimed at preventing injuries resulting from lifting, pushing and pulling loads. This is rarely applicable during the normal working conditions at Marches Counselling Service.
- 9.3 Where minor manual handling tasks are carried out by staff each day to ensure the smooth running of the service, staff involved must take all reasonable care for themselves and others whilst carrying out these activities.
- 9.4 See also protocol for Management of Aggression for 'breakaway' techniques.

10. Electricity (Electricity at Work Regulations 1989)

- 10.1 All portable electrical equipment (PAT) used in Marches Counselling Service is PAT tested annually and labelled with the date of the last inspection.
- 10.2 All staff have a responsibility to ensure:
- circuits must not be overloaded
 - wiring and sockets they use appear safe
 - equipment they use has been appropriately maintained

Any uncertainty about equipment or wiring should be reported immediately to the Health & Safety Officer.

11. COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)

- 11.1 Potential substances that may cause a hazard to health encompass and where they are stored when not in use:
- office material such as whiteboard cleaner, toner and inks for printer – in stationary cupboard
 - domestic cleaning materials – in the sink cupboard in the kitchenette
 - art materials – in dedicated cupboard
- 11.2 Staff are advised to check containers before using to ensure that any substance with the potential to be harmful to health is handled in line with the manufacturers instructions. Staff are also advised to be aware of any allergies or known skin sensitivities before using an substance that has a hazard warning on the container.
- 11.3 Reporting of harm in this area should follow the procedure set out in section 5 above.

12. Additional MCS Information and Guidance

This Health and Safety Policy should be read in conjunction with:

Covid – New Working protocol for changing times (P-019)

Lone Working Policy (S-004)

Management of Aggression Policy (C-004)

MCS Staff Handbook

Vulnerable Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy (C-001)

Social Media Protocol (P-018)

13. Other External Policies and Guidance

Health and Safety Executive guidance on the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (amendments 2015) <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

Working Safely During Coronavirus <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>