

**NORTH DERBYSHIRE WOMEN'S AID  
POLICIES & PROCEDURES – HEALTH AND SAFETY  
(REVIEWED AND AMENDED October 2007)**

**PURPOSE:**

**To set out the approach of North Derbyshire Women's Aid in relation to maintaining a safe and healthy working and service delivery environment.**

**RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES:**

- Protection from abuse
- Lone Working

**INTRODUCTION**

This document contains a policy statement (Part One) and procedural guidance

(Part Two). The functions of each are set out briefly below.

**Part One – Policy Statement.** The policy statement sets out the broad framework of principles within which the particular area of work will be carried out. It sets out the organisation's broad style and approach to the issue, including any aims and guiding principles.

**Part Two – Procedural Guidance.** The procedural guidance sets out the details that staff will require to carry out their duties in this particular area of work. It also sets out the specific tasks involved in undertaking this area of work and identifies who is responsible for carrying them out.

**PART ONE**

**OUR STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY IS:**

- To ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its staff members. North Derbyshire Women's Aid also recognises its duty not to put at risk service users, contractors, the general public or the environment in the carrying out of its duties. Staff members also have a legal responsibility to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work and to co-operate with North Derbyshire WA in the discharge of its legal obligation.
- to remove hazards as and when they arise, where possible. Where this is not possible, NDWA will provide adequate procedures and training for those hazards which by their nature cannot be guarded against, or where such training will help reduce the possibility of hazards occurring.
- to consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety

- to provide information, instruction, supervision regarding health and safety matters to all employees.
- To revise and review this policy as necessary, as a minimum annually.

In implementing this policy and procedure, North Derbyshire WA will adhere to the requirements of the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 – as amended in 1993
- Consumer Protection Act 1987

Signature of management member for NDWA.....

Date.....

Review Date.....

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF**

1. The duties of staff with regard to health and safety are set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. In particular, staff have a duty to:
  - work safely, efficiently and without endangering the health & safety of themselves, their colleagues, the general public or any other person who has a right of access to the organisation’s premises at any time.
  - adhere to the safety procedures laid down by North Derbyshire WA and conform to all instructions given by those with a responsibility for health and safety.
  - report all accidents, ‘near-miss’ occurrences and hazardous situations to the appropriate persons.
  - wear safety and protective clothing, use protective equipment and use appropriate safety devices where these are provided for use at work.
  - meet their other statutory safety obligations including that laid down in Section 8 of the Act, which states ‘no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions’.

## **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

2. Risk assessments will be undertaken by senior workers and the findings reported to management committee.

Actions required to remove/control risks will be approved by management committee and senior workers will then be responsible for ensuring that appropriate actions are implemented.

## **WORKING ENVIRONMENTS**

3. North Derbyshire WA will work with staff to ensure that:

- floors, steps, stairs, passages and fire exits are kept clear of obstruction at all times.
- wires to telephones, electrical equipment etc., are not placed so that someone could fall over or covered with objects such as chairs, which could result in a tripping hazard.
- office layout is such that staff and others can use it safely. For example, filing cabinets will not open into passages or across doorways.

North Derbyshire WA will also ensure that:

- All offices have effective ventilation appropriate to the number of people and equipment in the room.
- When photocopiers are used, extra ventilation will be introduced. Appropriate protection will be provided through the use of rubber or plastic gloves to avoid skin contact with toner.
- Lighting will be adequate and appropriately situated so as not to cause eyestrain.
- The temperature is maintained at a minimum of 16 degrees Celsius one hour after office opening. Efforts must be made to keep the temperature below 23 degrees Celsius.
- Appropriate equipment is provided for moving objects safely. No member of staff should lift anything so heavy that it might cause injury. Staff will be instructed on how to lift safely without back strain.
- Pregnant workers are not expected to lift heavy items.

## **SMOKING**

4. North Derbyshire WA operates a non-smoking policy in all its offices and in refuges, Beryl and Celia House.

## **STORAGE OF MEDICINE AND DRUGS**

5. North Derbyshire WA will provide secure storage for medicines and drugs that have been prescribed for service users.

## **REPORTING OF INJURIES, DISEASES & DANGEROUS OCCURENCES REGULATIONS 1995 (R.I.D.D.O.R)**

6. As an employer, North Derbyshire Women's Aid has a legal duty under RIDDOR to report and record some work-related accidents by the quickest means possible, telephoning the HSE Incident Contact Centre 0845 300 99 23.

This includes:-

- deaths;
- major injuries;
- over-3-day injuries – where an employee or self-employed person is away from work or unable to perform their normal work duties for more than 3 consecutive days;
- injuries to members of the public or people not at work where they are taken from the scene of an accident to hospital;
- some work-related diseases;
- dangerous occurrences – where something happens that does not result in an injury, but could have done;

## **PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **GENERAL HEALTH OF STAFF**

1. All staff must take a regular lunch break and tea/coffee breaks.
2. Staff should not feel obliged to work more than their contractual number of hours.
3. Staff must stay at home if suffering from contagious infections such as flu.

### **TRAINING**

4. All staff will be given a copy of the Health and Safety Policy as part of their induction programme. Staff will also be advised by the person responsible for their induction programme of any specific hazards relating to their job and of relevant North Derbyshire WA practice in relation to these areas.
5. Staff will be informed of the security arrangements of the workplace during their induction.
6. At least one member of staff who spends most time in the workplace will be trained in First Aid.

7. Staff will be able, within the restrictions imposed by the training budget, to attend training courses such as coping with stress, First Aid, manual handling etc.
8. Health and Safety representatives must attend courses designed to train them in their responsibilities.

### **FIRST AID**

9. The First Aid boxes are located in the offices. They are checked monthly by the trained First Aid staff to ensure adequate stocks. Staff using their cars for travel as part of their daily work are provided with individual First Aid boxes and are trained in how to use them.
10. First Aid staff are responsible for:
  - administering First Aid in an emergency whilst awaiting the arrival of professional help
  - administering First Aid to minor cuts and abrasions that were either caused at work or require further attention during working hours.
11. Staff and service users are advised to seek treatment for every injury, no matter how small as any injury left untreated may become serious. All cases treated should be recorded on the accident sheets available at each NDWA work site.

### **FIRE**

12. Fire exits must be kept clear and free from obstruction at all times. Notices concerning fire exits or covering procedures in case of fire must not be removed.
13. Staff must make themselves familiar with the fire exits and location and operation of fire equipment including the alarm. Staff will receive instruction during their induction on how to use fire equipment.
14. On discovering a fire:
  - sound the alarm immediately
  - dial 999, say 'Fire' and give address
  - assist service users and staff to evacuate the premises
  - take a Roll Call at the assembly point
  - on the arrival of the Fire Brigade report immediately to the Officer In Charge.
15. In the case of fire:
  - fight the fire with an appropriate fire extinguisher ONLY where no personal risk is involved
  - close all doors surrounding the fire
  - on evacuating, close all doors behind you and never stop to collect files or personal belongings
  - never re-enter the building until you have been given permission by the Fire Brigade.

16. Fire alarms will be sounded weekly by a staff member. Fire Drills will be carried out monthly and details including date, response time etc. will be entered in the Fire Drill Book by a staff member who will sign this.
17. An appointed engineer will check all fire equipment twice yearly.

### **USE OF VDU EQUIPMENT**

North Derbyshire Women's Aid will adhere to the requirements of The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) 1992.

The objective of which is to improve working conditions at display screen equipment.

NDWA will:-

18. Identify users and conduct suitable and sufficient risk assessments.
19. Ensure that workstations comply with minimum standards.
20. Allow users to take breaks away from VDU work, before fatigue sets in.
21. Enable certain regular users of VDU's to obtain eye and eyesight tests.
22. Ensure the provision of training required to use workstations safely.
23. Provide information about the risk assessments and control measures, for example activity changes.

### **OFFICE SAFETY**

24. Staff must remember the following points:

- always ensure that the door into the building closes behind you
- take care of your office keys - if you do lose a key, report it immediately
- if you are answering the door, try to find out who it is and the purpose of their visit before opening the door
- ensure that the office is safe and secure when you leave it at night (e.g. ensure windows are locked, lights are switched off and the alarm is activated)
- take care of your personal belongings. North Derbyshire WA cannot accept responsibility for these items, so make sure you do not leave them lying around.
- Ask visitors/tradespeople/engineers to produce identity cards.
- There is no formal dress code at NDWA, however, we advise all staff and volunteers to dress sensibly for their role e.g. do not wear clothes that are easily damaged / hard to clean, or valuable expensive jewelry. Also think about loose, dangling jewelry, high heeled shoes, long or loose clothing which could result in injury to yourself or others.

## **ACCIDENT/HAZARD REPORTING**

25. It is essential that all accidents that occur at work, no matter how small, be properly recorded. This must be done, even if no apparent injury was received. In addition to reporting an actual accident, it is equally important that staff report a 'near-miss' or potential hazard, so that the senior worker for North Derbyshire WA can deal with it and help prevent another member of staff suffering injury.

26. As soon as possible staff must report the accident or 'near-miss' to a senior worker, giving the following details:

- where it occurred
- what happened
- if known, how it happened and any action taken.

27. The staff member making the report must also write an entry in the Accident Record Book confirming these details.

## **REPORTING OF INJURIES, DISEASES & DANGEROUS OCCURENCES REGULATIONS 1995 (R.I.D.D.O.R)**

28. North Derbyshire WA will inform the health and safety executive of the following:

- any fatal injuries to employees, service users or others in an accident connected with the organisation
- any major injuries to employees, service users or others in an accident connected with the organisation – Appendix 1
- any dangerous occurrence as listed in Appendix 2
- certain occupational diseases that have a direct link to work activity. Appendix 3.

29. A North Derbyshire Women's Aid senior worker will notify the Health and safety executive Incident centre during office hours 8.30-5, Monday - Friday who will complete a report form F2508 over the phone and send a copy for our records:- Telephone 0845 300 99 23 The report may also be made online, HSE website. Out of office hours telephone 0151 922 9235 if the issue is :-

- work related death
- major incident
- an accident at work where physical evidence would be lost if the reporting waited until normal hours.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

30. North Derbyshire WA will carry out a general health and safety inspection on a monthly basis and a detailed annual health and safety inspection of all its premises and service delivery environments using the format and guidance in Appendix 4. Persons who carry out these

inspections will be supported to gain training for this purpose.

31. The results of annual inspections will be reported to the Management Committee, along with any programme of action for controlling or eliminating hazards and risks.

32. Following any accidents or incidents North Derbyshire WA will review any health and safety implications and make necessary adjustments to control or eliminate the hazards and risks which were involved.

### **LONE WORKING**

33. All North Derbyshire WA staff, volunteers and management committee members are expected to adhere to the safe working guidelines which are in Lone Working Policy.

### **DEALING WITH VIOLENCE AT WORK**

34. Even where Risk Assessments of service users have been undertaken and there are Risk Management Plans in place, there is still the potential for incidents to occur which pose a threat to the health and/or safety of service users, staff or others. Staff members need to remain alert at all times to this potential and to deal with incidents according to the guidelines that are in Appendix Five.

35. North Derbyshire WA will also ensure that where panic alarms are installed in projects, they are tested weekly, logged and all staff are clear about their use and how to respond to them when they are activated.

## **APPENDIX ONE.**

### **List of designated major injuries.**

- Any fracture, other than to the fingers, thumbs or toes
- Any amputation.
- Dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine
- Loss of sight, whether temporary or permanent.
- A chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye
- Any injury resulting from an electric shock or electrical burn. This includes any electrical burn caused by arcing or arcing products that leads to unconsciousness, requires resuscitation or admitting to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- any other injury:
  - leading to hypothermia, heat induced illness or unconsciousness.
  - requiring resuscitation.
  - requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- Loss of consciousness caused by asphyxia or by exposure to a harmful substance or biological agent.
- Either of the following conditions that result from absorbing any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin:
  - acute illness requiring medical treatment
  - loss of consciousness
- Acute illness that requires medical treatment if there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a biological agent, its toxins or infected material

## **APPENDIX TWO**

### **Summarised list of dangerous occurrences.**

- Collapse, overturning or failure of load veering parts of lifts and lifting equipment
- Explosion, collapse or bursting of any closed vessel or associated pipework
- Plant or equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines
- Electrical short circuit or overload, causing fire or explosion
- Any unintentional explosion, misfire, failure of demolition to cause the intended collapse, projection of material beyond a site boundary, injury caused by explosion
- Accidental release of a biological agent likely to cause severe human illness.
- Collapse or partial collapse of scaffold over 5 metres high, or erected near water where there could be a risk of drowning after a fall
- Unintended collapse of
  - any building or structure under construction, alteration or demolition where over 5 tons of material falls.
  - a wall or floor in a place of work
- Explosion or fire causing suspension of normal work for over 24 hours
- Accidental release of any substance in a quantity sufficient to cause the death, major injury or any other damage to the health of a person.

## **APPENDIX THREE**

## **REPORTABLE DISEASES.**

Conditions caused by tools and the physical demands of work

1. Cramp of the hand or forearm due to repetitive movements.
2. Subcutaneous cellulites of the hand
3. Beat knee
4. Beat elbow
5. traumatic inflammation
6. Carpal tunnel syndrome
7. Hand arm vibration syndrome

Infections caused by biological agents.

1. Anthrax
2. Hepatitis
3. Legionellosis
4. Leptospirosis
5. tetanus
6. Tuberculosis
7. Any infection reliably attributable to the performance of the work specified below:-

Actively working with micro organisms,

Live or dead humans in the course of any treatment involving exposure to blood or bodily fluids

Animals or any potentially infected material derived from any of the above

Conditions caused by substances

1. Poisoning by lead or one of its compounds
2. Mesothelioma- working with asbestos
3. Lung Cancer – working with asbestos
4. Asbestosis – working with asbestos
5. Occupational dermatitis
6. Occupational asthma

## **APPENDIX FOUR**

### **HEALTH & SAFETY INSPECTIONS – GUIDANCE NOTES**

1. The health and safety inspection process is intended to prevent injury and ill health to staff, service users and others who may enter NDWA's premises. It involves a systematic approach to identify hazards, estimate the probability of harm arising and identify the appropriate control measures to reduce risk to an acceptable level.
2. Health and safety inspections should only be carried out by staff who have received training and have been authorized to undertake an inspection.
3. The steps set out below should be followed by anyone carrying out such an inspection. The inspection will need to be documented using the form below. The guidance notes below give additional explanations of the process.

#### **Steps In The Inspection Process**

##### **4. Step 1 Identify the hazards that could be reasonably expected to cause harm.**

- Hazards may be identified by conducting hazard-spotting exercises through an inspection of the workplace and also by learning from accidents.

##### **5. Step 2 Identify who might be harmed and how.**

- The larger the number of people who could be affected, the higher the degree of risk associated with the hazard.
- You must think of people who may not be around all of the time such as cleaners, maintenance workers, visitors and people with whom you may share the premises.

##### **6. Step 3 Note the control measures already in place and consider if they are adequate.**

- Are these controls doing what they were intended to do?
- Are they being properly maintained and used?
- You should also consider if there are now better means of controlling the risk.

##### **7. Step 4 Evaluate the level of risk that still remains and decide if it is acceptable.**

- If not you, should identify what further actions are necessary in order to reduce to a tolerable level of risk.
- This includes checking any control measures already in place.
- You should consider the risk control hierarchy described below.

#### **Definitions**

**Hazard** – This is something with the potential to cause harm. This can include substances, machines, behaviour or any other aspect of work activity.

**Risk** – This expresses the likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard is realised and the possible consequences of this.

In assessing risk you must consider the severity of harm that could result, the number of people affected and the frequency of the activity.

Risk assessment should address what actually happens. The level of detail should be in proportion to the risk, taking care not to exaggerate.

**Control measures** – These result from the inspection process and are designed to control risks to an acceptable level.

The following principles should be applied when selecting control measures:

- Wherever possible the risk should be avoided. This could mean the use of an alternative substance, or discontinuing the use of or replacement of equipment. A common solution is to simply avoid the activity giving rise to the risk.
- If this is not practicable, the risk should be controlled at source rather than by palliative measures. For example, if there are slippery steps, treating or replacing them is better than providing a warning sign.

### **Identifying the risks**

- The following list is intended to assist staff carrying out health and safety inspections to identify hazards in NDWA premises. It is not exhaustive and anyone using it must ensure that they take account of any other factors that they may be aware of when completing an inspection.
  - **Confined spaces**
  - Entrapment
  - Lack of oxygen
  - Toxic gases

### **Fire and explosion**

- Smoking
- Hot work
- Equipment
- Materials
- Waste
- Dust

### **Slips**

- Floors
- Stairs
- Spillage

### **Temperature and humidity**

- Hot/cold
- Environment
- Hot/cold surfaces
- Ovens
- Washers & driers
- Dry atmospheres

### **Display Screen Equipment**

- Computer
- (keyboard + monitor)
- Seating
- Lighting
- Noise
- Software

### **Manual handling**

- Moving loads
- Occasional lifts
- Repetitive
- Sharps

### **Substances**

- Cleaning
- Chemicals
- Copier toner
- Solvents/Thinners
- Paints

### **Work equipment**

- Moving parts
- Office equipment
- Guillotines
- Copiers
- shredders

### **Electrical**

- Water near
- Electrical
- Equipment
- Damaged leads/sockets
- Overloading
- Faulty equipment

### **Medical**

- Drugs/alcohol
- Infections
- Sharps and glass
- Stress

### **Trips**

- Uneven surfaces
- Objects on the floor
- Trailing leads

### **Working alone**

- Personal safety

### **Falls and falling objects**

## APPENDIX FOUR

### GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH VIOLENCE AT WORK

#### Dealing with Violent and Aggressive Situations

1. Violent and aggressive situations may span a range of seriousness and potential for danger and it will depend on the judgment of the staff members present at the time as to how the situation is best dealt with. The following guidelines should assist staff in responding to incidents but each case should be dealt with as deemed appropriate by the staff involved at the time.

2. Potentially violent and aggressive situations will include incidents where a service user, a violent partner or a visitor to NDWA premises:

- Verbally threatens or intimidates staff or others
- Physically threatens or intimidates staff or others
- Attempts to assault staff or others physically
- Carries out a physical assault on staff or others
- Brings a weapon onto the premises (whether or not its use is attempted)

**3. If a potentially violent or aggressive situation develops in refuge accommodation, staff members should take the following steps:**

- **Quickly assess the incident in terms of whether it is safe to intervene.** If it appears unsafe to intervene (for instance, the aggressor has a weapon or is otherwise unapproachable and/or the staff member is working alone and feels unsafe) they must contact the Police by dialing 999 and summon emergency assistance. The worker or other residents should activate panic alarms. If possible, the staff member should ensure that they and other staff and service users present are safe until the Police arrive. This may be possible by moving into an area which is lockable or evacuating the premises.
- **If it appears safe to intervene, attempt to calm the aggressor down** and get them to start talking about what the problem is. If there is more than one aggressor (for example where a physical fight has occurred or appears imminent), staff should work together, if possible, to separate the aggressors and attempt to calm them down in separate locations if possible.
- **Reassure other service users, if present, that the situation is under control and that they are safe,** once the immediate

situation has been dealt with by either staff or the Police. If a service user has been injured during the incident, staff members present will need to ensure that they can receive emergency medical treatment if required.

#### **For outreach/IDVA/Floating Support Home visits.**

- A health and safety risk assessment will have been done and some planning around action to be taken in the case of the abuser arriving or the service user becoming aggressive.
- If the abuser arrives at the house then the worker is advised to either stay in the property, lock the door and dial 999 or leave as quickly as possible, telling the woman she will be in contact with her. If the safety of the family is potentially jeopardised then the worker will telephone the Police and Social care to alert them.
- If a worker is fearful of a situation they find themselves in with a service user, then they will trust their feelings and leave the premises.

#### **□ Debrief the staff members involved.**

A senior worker will:-

- - Check whether the staff member has sustained any injuries and seek medical attention for them if they have.
- - Record details of the incident with the staff member, including details of any injuries.
- - Assess whether there is a need to report the incident to the Police if they have not already been involved.
- - Support the staff member to come to terms with the incident if they have been upset or shaken by it.
- - Review and update the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan of any service user/s involved to ensure that they fully reflect NDWA's knowledge and experience post-incident.
- - Review the response to the incident as a way of learning lessons from it. This will include assessing whether policies and procedures provided adequate guidance, whether they were followed correctly, and identifying any improvements needed to ensure safety in the future such as additional staff training or a review of the operational framework of the project. This review will not take place immediately after the incident but should follow on within a reasonable time period.

#### **Dealing with incidents involving self-harm**

4. There may also be incidents in which a service user attempts to harm themselves or does harm them and staff dealing with these incidents should follow the guidelines below. Upon discovering a situation where a service user has harmed themselves or is threatening to harm themselves:

- **Quickly assess whether it is safe to intervene.** If it appears un safe to intervene (for instance, the service user threatens the staff member or is otherwise unapproachable and/or the staff member is working alone and feels unsafe) they should contact the Police by dialing 999 and summoning emergency assistance.
- **If it appears safe to intervene, attempt to calm the person down.** Once they are calmer, the staff member should consider whether emergency intervention is required from other services such as Social Services or the Community Mental Health Team.
- **Once the incident has been dealt with, debrief the staff member/s involved** :- as above