

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 2.1 It is the policy of Community Links Training & Enterprise Ltd ('Community Links') to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of staff, learners and others who may be affected by its undertakings.
- 2.2 Health and Safety must be one of the primary concerns for everyone. It is essential that all personnel maintain constant vigilance to the safety of themselves and others.
- 2.3 Community Links is committed to promoting high standards of health and safety across all areas of its operations. To achieve this we:
- Work to continually develop and maintain a positive health and safety culture
 - Ensure a minimum level of compliance with all relevant duties in respect of health and safety legislation and regulation and strive to maintain continual improvement
 - Provide adequate resources for planning, provision and maintenance of safe conditions and safe systems of work
 - Have robust procedures in place to respond to emergencies

2. Policy Aims

- 3.1 Community Links is committed to the following aims:
- Provide a safe and healthy environment through consultation and communication with staff, learners and others
 - Establish and maintain safe working procedures amongst staff, learners and visitors to our sites
 - Develop health and safety plans which are reviewed regularly
 - Continually improve health and safety performance
 - Identify and reduce levels of risk to as low as reasonably practicable
 - Provide sufficient training and support staff to fulfil their health and safety obligations

3. Legislation and Guidance

- 4.1 This policy is based on information from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the following legislation:
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
 - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
 - Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
 - Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
 - Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
 - Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - Work at Height Regulations 2005

- National guidance published by UK Health Security Agency (formerly Public Health England) and government guidance on living with COVID-19 when responding to infection control issues.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Accident	Harm or potential harm has occurred to a person, property or vehicle
COSSH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
COVID-19	Coronavirus including different variants
DSE	Display Screen Equipment
Harm	Injury or damage to health or property
Hazard	An item, event, activity or situation
HSE	Health & Safety Executive
Impact	Estimate of the severity of harm which might occur as a result of an event
Incident	Something that had the potential to cause harm but on this occasion did not lead to harm, including: • An unsafe act • An unsafe condition • A near miss
Likelihood	Estimate of the probability of a risk occurring based on the description and consequences of the risk
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
Risk	Combination of likelihood and impact
Risk assessment	Systematic process of identifying hazards and evaluating any risks associated with the hazards
Risk Controls	Measures that are taken to reduce the possibility of a risk arising or to reduce the effect of any risk that arises. Community Links uses the hierarchy of risk controls; • Elimination • Substitution • Engineering controls • Administrative controls • PPE
Safe System of Work (SSoW)	A method of work which puts in place controls arising from a risk assessment. Within Community Links, SSoWs form part of our Administrative Controls
SFAIRP	So Far as is Reasonably Practicable

5. Scope

- 6.1 This policy applies to all staff employed by Community Links and to external organisations or individuals working on our behalf. Staff who do not comply with the policy may face disciplinary action.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Directors	• Overall responsibility for health and safety matters but will delegate to day to day responsibility to the Operations Manager • Duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and learners are not exposed to risks to their health and safety • As an employer, Community Links has a duty to: • Establish a health and safety statement • Assess the risks to staff and others affected by Community Links's activities and introduce risk controls necessary to manage those risks • Inform staff about risks and risk controls • Ensure that adequate health and safety training is provided
Health and Safety Lead	Day to day responsibility is held by Steve Woods, contact: steve.woods@mycommunitylinks.com This involves: • Implementing the health and safety policy • Ensuring that Community Links buildings and premises are safe • Providing adequate training for staff • Ensuring reporting to the Directors on health and safety matters • Ensuring appropriate evacuation procedures are in place and regular fire drills are held • Ensuring that where health and safety responsibilities are delegated to another member of staff that the responsibilities are executed appropriately • Ensuring risk assessments are completed and reviewed
All staff	All staff must: • Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do at work • Co-operate with Community Links and the Directors on health and safety matters • Work in accordance with training, risk controls, safe systems of work and instructions • Not interfere with, or misuse anything provided within the work environment for health, safety and welfare purposes • Report immediately all incidents, accidents and defects in equipment or PPE • Wear appropriate clothing at all times • Model safe practice for learners at all times • Understand emergency evacuation procedures and feel confident in implementing them
Learners	Learners should: • Follow Community Links's health and safety advice and training, on and off site • Report any health and safety incidents and accidents to a member of staff
Contractors	Contractors should: • Agree health and safety practices before starting work • Provide evidence, before work begins, that they have completed an adequate risk assessment of planned work

7. Communications relating to health and safety

8.1 Participation and consultation are vital aspects of this policy. Staff are encouraged and expected to:

- Discuss health, safety and welfare matters,
- Contribute to the successful implementation of this policy. It is recognised that this is dependent upon the wholehearted cooperation of all staff. Staff have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and others, and to co-operate at all times, contribute good ideas and improvements; report defects, incidents and accidents.
- Ensure this policy is promoted

8. Training

9.1 Community Links will arrange safety training and/or refresher training for all staff including specific training as appropriate.

9.2 Each member of staff is also responsible for drawing attention to their own personal needs for training and for not undertaking duties unless they are confident that they have the necessary competence. All staff will have some understanding of health and safety issues even if they do not go on specific courses but information will be cascaded down from others who do know. Staff will be expected to have knowledge on what to do when an incident or accident occurs, know the fire and first aid procedures and understand the basics of infection control and manual handling.

9.3 Community Links will keep records of the training which has been undertaken and have a system for ensuring that refresher training is undertaken.

9. Monitoring

9.1 Health and safety performance will be monitored by reviews and through awarding organisation EQA visits.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Accident reporting

- An accident report must be completed, as soon as possible after an accident occurs, by the member of staff or manager or first aider who deals with it.
- Accidents are reported using the Community Links reporting procedure.
- Information should be factual and not opinion

RIDDOR

- The Operations Manager will keep a record of any accident which results in a reportable injury, disease, or dangerous occurrence as defined in the RIDDOR 2013 legislation (regulations 4, 5, 6 and 7). Such an accident will be reported to the HSE as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any event within 10 days of the incident – except where indicated below. Fatal and major injuries and dangerous occurrences will be reported without delay (i.e., by telephone) and followed up in writing within 10 days.

Reportable injuries, diseases, or dangerous occurrences for staff include:

- Death
- Specified injuries, which are:
 - Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs, and toes
 - Amputations
 - Any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight.
 - Any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
 - Serious burns (including scalding) which: covers more than 10% of the whole body's total surface area; or causes significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system, or other vital organs.
 - Any scalping requiring hospital treatment
 - Any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
 - Any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness or requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
- Work related injuries that lead to a member of staff being away from work or unable to perform their normal duties for more than 7 consecutive days (not including the day of the incident). In this case the HR Manager will report these to the HSE as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within 15 days of the accident.
- Occupational diseases where a doctor has made a written diagnosis that the disease is linked to occupational exposure. These include:
 - Carpal tunnel syndrome
 - Severe cramp of the hand or forearm
 - Occupational dermatitis, e.g., from exposure to strong acids or alkalis, including domestic bleach
 - Hand-arm vibration syndrome
 - Occupational asthma, e.g., from wood dust
 - Tendonitis or tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm
 - Any occupational cancer
 - Any disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent

Reportable injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences for learners and other people who are not at work (e.g., visitors) include:

- Death of a person that arose from, or was in connection with, a work activity

- An injury that arose from, or was in connection with, a work activity and the person is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment. An accident “arises out of” or is “connected with a work activity” if it was caused by:
 - A failure in the way a work activity was organised (e.g., inadequate supervision)
 - The way equipment or substances were used (e.g., vehicles, trailers, lifts, machinery etc); and/or the condition of the premises (eg, poorly maintained or slippery floors)

Asbestos

- A record is kept of the location of asbestos that has been found on a Community Links managed property
- Staff are briefed on the hazards of asbestos, the location of any asbestos in a site and the action to take if they suspect they have disturbed it
- Arrangements are in place to ensure that contractors are made aware of any asbestos on a Community Links managed property and that it is not disturbed by their work
- Contractors will be advised that if they discover material that they suspect could be asbestos, they should stop work immediately until the area is declared safe.

Catering and Vending

- Community Links ensures employees and learners have reasonable access to hot food and drink. This will be through the provision of meals, snacks and drinks. Community Links acknowledges hazards associated with food hygiene, and will exercise all reasonable precautions and due diligence in maintaining the highest standards of food hygiene and safety in catering and vending.
- When an employee / learner experiences a problem regarding catering or vending, they should inform a responsible person immediately and Community Links Training will take the necessary measures to investigate and remedy the situation

Cleaning

- We maintain a clean environment, including equipment and vehicles.
- All spillages of blood, faeces, saliva, vomit, nasal and eye discharges are cleaned immediately
- When spillages occur, cleaning uses a product that combines both a detergent and a disinfectant and is used as per manufacturer’s instructions. We ensure it is effective against bacteria and viruses, and suitable for use on the affected surface.
- Disposable paper towels only are used to clean up blood and body fluid spillages.

Communicable Diseases

- Community Links recognises that the spread of communicable diseases is a concern to its employees in relation to the provision of services and their individual responsibilities. Community Links recognises it has a statutory and moral responsibility to employees, and the public.
- Community Links will endeavour, so far as is reasonably practicable, to manage these responsibilities in a sympathetic. and caring manner.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

- Community Links is required to control hazardous substances, which can take many forms, including chemicals and products containing chemicals, fumes, dusts, vapours, mists, gases and asphyxiating gases, germs that cause diseases, such as leptospirosis or legionnaires disease

- COSHH risk assessments and risk controls including safe systems of work are completed and circulated to all employees who work with hazardous substances. A separate COSHH Policy supports this area of operations.
- Any hazardous products are disposed of in accordance with specific disposal procedures.

Display screen equipment (DSE)

- All staff who use computers daily as a significant part of their normal work have a display screen equipment assessment. 'Significant' is taken to be continuous/near continuous spells of an hour or more at a time.
- Staff identified as DSE users are entitled to an eyesight test for DSE use upon request, and at regular intervals thereafter, by a qualified optician (and corrective glasses provided if required specifically for DSE use)

Equipment

- Equipment, plant and machinery is maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. In addition, maintenance schedules outline if and when extra checks including re-calibration should take place
- When new equipment is purchased, it is checked to ensure it meets required standards
- All equipment is stored appropriately
- Where equipment is used but which belongs to a third party, Community Links gains assurance that the equipment is maintained to appropriate standards.

Electrical equipment

- All staff are responsible for ensuring they use and handle electrical equipment sensibly and safely
- Permanently installed electrical equipment is connected through a dedicated isolator switch and adequately earthed
- Only trained staff members can check plugs. Where necessary, a portable appliance test (PAT) will be carried out by a competent person in line with a planned schedule
- Isolator switches are clearly marked to identify their machine
- Electrical apparatus and connections will not be touched by wet hands and will only be used in dry conditions
- Maintenance, repair, installation, and disconnection work associated with permanently installed or portable electrical equipment is only carried out by a competent person

Fire

- Risk assessments of premises will be reviewed regularly
- Emergency exits, assembly points and assembly point instructions are clearly identified by safety signs and/or notices
- Fire Wardens will be trained and in place at each Community Links location
- Emergency evacuations are practiced at least once annually
- New staff will be inducted in fire safety and all staff and learners will be made aware of any new fire risks
- In the event of a fire, alarm will be raised immediately – either by electric fire system or vocally - by whoever discovers the fire and emergency services contacted. Evacuation procedures will begin immediately
- Fire extinguishers may be used by staff only, and only then if staff are trained in how to operate them and are confident, they can use them without putting themselves or others at risk
- Staff, learners and any visitors should congregate at site designated assembly points.

- Staff, learners and visitors should remain outside the building until the emergency services say it is safe to re-enter.

First Aid

- The Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.
- The Regulations do not place a legal duty on employers to make first aid provision for non-employees such as the public or learners. However, Community Links ensures these individuals are considered in our assessment of first aid needs and will ensure adequate provision is made.
- Our approach to first aid is based on a first aid needs assessment within which we consider the workplace, our workforce and the hazards and risks which are presented.
- Community Links sites will have named first aiders.

Gas

- Installation, maintenance and repair of gas appliances and fittings will be carried out by a competent Gas Safe registered engineer
- Any gas pipework, appliances and flues are regularly maintained
- All rooms with gas appliances are checked to ensure they have adequate ventilation.

Incidents

- An incident is an event which does not result in an accident and/or harm but could have done. An incident includes:
 - An unsafe condition
 - An unsafe act
 - A near miss
- An incident report must be completed, as soon as possible after an incident occurs, by the member of staff or manager who experiences or observed it.
- Incidents are reported using the Community Links reporting procedure.
- Information should be factual and not opinion

Infection prevention and control

- We follow national guidance published by the UK Health Security Agency when responding to infection control issues
- We will encourage staff and learners to follow good hygiene practice

Infectious disease management

- We will ensure adequate risk reduction measures are in place to manage the spread of acute respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. This includes carrying out risk assessments, reviewing them regularly and monitoring effectiveness of measures put in place.
- We will follow local and national guidance on the use of control measures including:
 - Following good hygiene practices
 - Implementing an appropriate cleaning regime
 - Keeping rooms well ventilated
 - In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, we will follow advice from the UK Health Security Agency and other government departments

Legionella

- Risk assessment will be reviewed every two years and when significant changes have occurred to a water system and/or building footprint.
- Where Community Links hires or leases property, we may ask the landlord or managing party for a copy of their risk assessment

Lifts

- Lifts may be in place to enable access to different levels of a building where Community Links occupies space in a third party site. Maintenance of any such lifts are the responsibility of that third party.

Lone working

- Lone workers spend some or all of their working hours alone for a variety of reasons: they may work in an isolated location, be at a customer's premises, be alone in a training vehicle with a learner, work from home or simply be working outside normal office hours. In any case, Community Links recognises that working alone may involve an increased risk to the health and safety of its employees. As a consequence, Community Links assesses and controls the risks to As Low as Practicably Possible.
- Potentially dangerous activities, such as those where there is a risk of falling from height, will not be undertaken when working alone. If there are any doubts about the task to be performed, then the task will be postponed until other staff members are available
- If lone working is to be undertaken, a colleague, friend or family member will be informed about where the member of staff is and when expected to return
- The lone worker will ensure they are medically fit to work alone.
- All lone workers must comply fully with our policy and any risk controls.

Manual handling

- Community Links recognises manual handling risk exists in all locations including administrative offices. It is included in each site's risk assessments with risk controls.

Near Misses

- See Incidents above

New and expectant mothers

- Risk assessments will be carried out whenever any employee notifies Community Links that that they are pregnant
- Appropriate measures will be put in place to control risks identified.

Noise

- Community Links will act if any of the following apply:
 - The noise is intrusive for most of the working day.
 - Employees or learners have to raise their voices to carry out a normal conversation when about 2m apart for at least part of the day.
 - Employees, learners, visitors and/or contractors use noisy powered tools or machinery for more than half an hour each day.
 - A particular working area is one known to have noisy tasks, eg construction, demolition or road repair; engineering; general fabrication; waste and recycling.
 - There are noises due to impacts (such as abrasive wheels, impact tools etc).

- Community Links's employees, learners, visitors and contractors must report any concerns about noise as an Incident (see Incident above).

Occupational stress

- We are committed to promoting the positive health and wellbeing for our staff and recognise the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors
- Systems are in place within Community Links for responding to individual concerns and monitoring staff workloads

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is a risk control method within Community Links.
- Where a risk assessment or learning activity requires appropriate PPE to be worn, it must be used by all employees, learners and visitors in whatever capacity irrespective of position.
- Whilst carrying out duties on any telegraph poles, vehicles, machinery, equipment or tools the PPE requirements may change. Prior to activities being undertaken, staff must ensure they are familiar with the relevant risk assessments, controls, SSoWs and PPE requirements.
- PPE requirements for tasks carried within Community Links may include (but not limited to) Hi-Viz (high visibility vest), Safety boots, Harness, Eye protection, Hard Hat and Gloves (various types)
- Failure to wear the PPE when required may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- PPE, where required, must be worn in accordance with and guidance issued by the manufacturer. The wearer of the PPE is to properly maintain and keep clean any PPE issued for use by them. Should PPE become damaged or no longer fit for purpose this is to be reported to the respective manager immediately.
- The use of PPE must not increase the overall level of risk, PPE must not be worn if the risk caused by wearing it is greater than the risk against which it is meant to protect. Should the use or combination of PPE hinder or affect staff, they must reported this immediately

Risk Assessments

- UK health and safety legislation requires employers to make sure, so far as reasonably practicable (SFAIRP), the health and safety of employees and anyone else who may be affected by a work activity is not compromised. This is commonly referred to as the 'duty of care'. The legislation requires employers to fulfil their 'duty of care' responsibilities by reducing the risk of harm as low as is reasonably practicable
- Reducing a risk to ALARP does not always require activities to stop; it means balancing level of risk against the measures to control the risk (in terms of time, money or difficulty)
- In addition to a risk being reduced to SFAIRP, the principle of tolerability also needs to be considered and a decision made whether the risk can be tolerated (accepted). So, a risk may be both SFAIRP and tolerable.
- Site and activity risk assessments are undertaken, recorded and communicated.

Safeguarding

- Community Links has a safeguarding policy which is reviewed at regular intervals
- A trained Designated Safeguarding Lead is in place
- All staff receive safeguarding training which is updated on a regular basis.

Smoking

- Smoking is known to be a cause of life limiting disease and is not encouraged

- Staff and learners who do smoke are allowed to do so only away from Community Links premises. Some third party locations where Community Links operates will have their own rules for smokers and Community Links staff and learners will comply with these rules at all times

Transport

- Community Links is committed to ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable any employee who drives a Community Links owned or hired vehicle on Community Links business does so without risk to the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Drivers of vehicles will have:
 - Attained the age of 21 years.
 - Undertaken a relevant course (eg; MIDAS for Minibus)
 - Register a current copy of their driving licence
- Community Links will ensure that:
 - Any employee who uses their own vehicle for use on Community Links business registers and confirms they have business insurance and a valid driving licence.
 - Community Links employees who use their own vehicles for use on Community Links business whether they claim expenses or not **must** ensure their vehicle insurance covers business use

Vehicles and Pedestrians

- Community Links's provision includes teaching telecoms courses and this includes observing infrastructure in public spaces and in a designated training space next to a car park. Community Links also provides transport for learners. So, we recognise our staff, learners and visitors sometimes must share spaces with vehicles.
- Where associated risks are identified, risk controls including safe walkways for pedestrian movement are put in place. Staff, learners and visitors are expected to follow all risk controls and safe movement around sites.
- All non-public footpaths are designated as safe walkways with pedestrians having priority over vehicles.
- All pedestrians must remain aware of surroundings at all times.

Violence at work

- We believe that our staff should not be in any danger at work and will not tolerate violent or threatening behaviour towards our staff.
- All staff will report any incidents of aggression or violence directed to themselves (see Incidents above). This applies to violence from learners, visitors or other staff.
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Waste

- Community Links is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees, and others who may be affected by waste materials which result from its work. Community Links policy is to arrange for the disposal of all waste products regularly, safely and in accordance with current environmental legislation.
- Recycling and reuse initiatives will be taken where reasonably practicable in order to help protect the environment and make better use of resources.
- All employees, learners, visitors and contractors are required to dispose of waste products in receptacles specifically provided for that purpose taking note of any segregation requirements.

Working at height

- We will ensure that work is properly planned, supervised, and carried out by competent people with the skills, knowledge, and experience to do the work.
- Access to high levels, such as roofs (including flat roofs) is only permitted by trained persons or by learners under close supervision of appropriately qualified staff.
- Ladders, harnesses and telegraph poles will be subject to routine inspection and maintenance.

Version Control

Version history	Content changed
1 – 29/06/2024	• Amendments to contract statement
2 – 25/04/2025	• Annual review
3 – 26/10/2025	• Definitions added • Responsibilities moved into a table format • Additional Arrangements added • Paragraphs numbered
23/10/26	• Policy reviewed and agreed

Review and Ratification

Next Review Date	Reason for Review
October 2027	Annual Review

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