



Vital Village Health & Safety Policy

1. Introduction

- Vital Village is committed to protecting staff, volunteers, participants and visitors from risks of injury or ill health.

2. Policy Objectives

- To ensure the safety and protection of everyone in our community, this policy covers:
 - Vital Village's health & safety policy statement.
 - Roles and responsibilities for health & safety.
 - Reporting and training.

3. Scope and Definitions

- The policy applies to all individuals involved in Vital Village, including staff, volunteers, participants, and visitors.
- Everyone should have an awareness and understanding of health & safety hazards and risks that could impact how they operate. All organisations using the Vital Village facilities should consider their own policies, including specific health & safety risk assessments, as appropriate.
- In this policy:
 - Volunteers: Individuals who offer their time and services to support Vital Village.
 - Employees: Those individuals formally employed by Vital Village.
 - Visitors: Community members that visit Vital Village's Community Hub either to attend a specific event or just for casual use of the space.

4. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This is the Health & Safety Policy Statement of Vital Village.

Our statement of general policy is to:

- Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health by managing health & safety risks.
- Provide clear instructions and information, and adequate training, to ensure employees and volunteers are competent to do their work.
- Engage and consult with employees and volunteers on day to day health & safety conditions.

- Implement emergency procedures e.g. evacuation in case of fire or other significant event.
- Maintain safe and healthy working conditions, and provide safe and appropriate equipment and protection.
- To review the policy annually to remain up-to-date with legal requirements, best practices, and the evolving needs of the Vital Village community.

5. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for health & safety is that of the Director of Vital Village.

All employees and volunteers must:

- Co-operate with instructions given on health & safety.
- Not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health & safety.
- Take responsibility for their own health & safety and that of others.
- Report all concerns to the Director of Vital Village.

6. Consultation with employees and volunteers

Vital Village will consult with employees and volunteers on:

- any new measure which may substantially affect their health & safety at work, for example new equipment, new ways of working and new procedures.
- arrangements for getting competent people to satisfy health & safety requirements.
- planning and organising health & safety training.

The information provided to employees and volunteers will be in a form that can be easily understood

7. Safe equipment

The Director of Vital Village will have overall responsible for:

- identifying all equipment needing maintenance.
- ensuring effective maintenance procedures are drawn up.
- ensuring that all identified maintenance is implemented.
- ensuring that new equipment meets health & safety standards before it is purchased.

Any problems found with equipment should be reported to the Director of Vital Village or in their absence the most senior member of staff available immediately.

8. Safe handling and use of substances

The Director of Vital Village will have overall responsibility for checking that new substances can be used safely before they are purchased. Vital Village does not currently use or store any substances which need a COSHH assessment.

9. Safe use of VDU equipment

The Director of Vital Village will have overall responsibility for ensuring that use of work stations is analysed and risks reduced including putting controls in place, providing information and training to staff and volunteers, ensuring that eye and eyesight tests and special spectacles are provided if needed to regular users of VDUs who use the equipment for more than an hour continuously. The Director of Vital Village will ensure that VDU risk assessments are completed as necessary.

10. Manual handling

The Director of Vital Village has responsibility for ensuring that hazardous manual handling operations are avoided so far as is reasonably practicable. Where possible, mechanical assistance, for example, a sack trolley or hoist, will be provided. Where these are not reasonably practicable changes to the task, the load and the working environment will be explored.

A risk assessment of potential injury from any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided will be made and any risk of injury from those operations will be reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

11. Training and Development

The Health & Safety Law poster is displayed in the entrance to the Vital Village Hub.

The Director of Vital Village is responsible for ensuring that our employees and volunteers working at locations under the control of other employers are given relevant health & safety information.

Induction training will be provided for all employees and volunteers. Training records, including health & safety training, must be kept.

12. Accidents, first aid and work-related ill health

The first aid boxes are kept at the Director's office, the kitchen and the Eco Shop at the Vital Village Hub.

The appointed first aider is Laura Pring.

All accidents and cases of work-related ill health and health & safety incidents are to be recorded in the accident book. The book is kept at the Director's office at the Vital Village Hub.

The Director of Vital Village is responsible for ensuring reporting of relevant accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to relevant external agencies and to the Advisory Board.

13. Emergency procedures – fire and evacuation

The Director of Vital Village is responsible for ensuring a fire risk assessment is undertaken, implemented and regularly reviewed. Specifically:

- Escape routes are checked regularly
- Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked every year.
- Alarms are tested every week.
- Emergency evacuation drills are organised on a regular basis

A Fire Drill Procedure is carried out periodically and the procedure is on display situated in the Vital Village Hub. The evacuation assembly point is at the car park, 2/3s down the side of the building.

14. Review and Compliance

To check our working conditions, and ensure our safe working practices are being followed, the Director of Vital Village will:

- Carry out inspections and spot checks.
- Investigate any accidents or sickness absences that occur.
- Ensure accidents are investigated.
- Ensure work-related causes of sickness absence are investigated

The Board of Vital Village is responsible for ensuring action is taken on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence and that appropriate individuals are kept informed and consulted about action taken.

Compliance with the policy is mandatory, and non-compliance is addressed through the Vital Village disciplinary policy

15. Conclusion

Vital Village's health & safety policy reflects our commitment to a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all. It is a vital component of our broader mission to foster holistic well-being and sustainable living within the community.

16. Useful contacts

Further information about health and safety can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

A basic office risk assessment form here: [Risk assessment: Template and examples - HSE](#)

Information about regulations related to reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>