**HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES**

**COMMITMENT**

The trustees of Dorchester Municipal Charities are committed to ensuring a safe living and working environment for all those who have lawful access to the charity’s premises.

This commitment has four elements:

1. **Compliance**

Full compliance with current health & safety legislation and regulations.

1. **Risk assessment**

An assessment of the risks faced by everyone (residents, staff, visitors and contractors) who have access to the charity’s premises and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks. The five practical steps to risk assessment are:

* Identify the hazards
* Decide who might be harmed
* Evaluate and minimise the risks
* Record findings
* Review assessments

1. **Training and information**

* Provision of appropriate training and information to ensure that everyone is aware of the risks and knows how to respond appropriately.
* All members of staff receive a minimum level of health and safety training, achieved within six weeks of starting in post and followed-up by refresher training to ensure that knowledge is kept up to date.

1. **Quinquennial Inspections**

Regular inspections of the properties and subsequent maintenance programmes ensure that health & safety issues are given a high priority and defects with health and safety implications are addressed as a matter of urgency.

**POLICY**

**INTRODUCTION**

This is a statement of policy by Dorchester Municipal Charities about its intentions, organisation and arrangements for ensuring the health & safety of its employees, residents, visitors and contractors, whilst in the offices, communal areas including grounds and residents’ accommodation.

Supplementary to this general policy statement, there are specific policies and procedures describing in detail health and safety provisions in each part of the organisation.

**STATEMENT OF INTENT**

It is the policy of the charity to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees while they are at work, and of others who may be affected by the charity’s undertakings, and to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other allied relevant legislation, as appropriate.

**OBJECTIVES**

In order to achieve compliance with the statement of policy the charity has the following objectives, to:

* Set and maintain high standards for health, safety and the protection of the environment at its offices, communal areas including grounds, and in residents’ flats
* Identify risks and set in place programmes to remove or reduce these risks
* Ensure that these standards are communicated to all employees, residents, visitors and contractors
* Ensure that all personnel are given the appropriate equipment, necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to work in a safe manner
* Ensure that the appropriate resources are made available to enable the policy to be implemented.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

To ensure the prevention of ill health, the avoidance of accidents and the promotion of safe and healthy workplaces, the following responsibilities have been established:

**Board of Trustees**

The trustees are responsible for establishing the overall Health & Safety Policy for the charity and have ultimate responsibility for all health & safety matters. This involves the:

* Promotion of good practice
* Allocation of necessary resources
* Monitoring of the implementation of health and safety practice.

**Property Group Chairman**

The Chairman of the Property Group, authorised through the Board of Trustees, has personal responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy and will:

* Keep the Health & Safety Policy under review, bringing to the trustees’ attention any faults or areas of weakness in the policy and ensuring that it is revised as and when necessary
* Monitor the Policy’s implementation, set targets or objectives where appropriate and report progress to the Board
* Ensure the dissemination and discussion of relevant information on health & safety
* Report details to the Board of Trustees where an accident/incident has occurred which may result in prosecution
* Make annual reports to the Board of Trustees on the management of health & safety at the charity.

**Line Managers**

Line managers are responsible for:

* The practical implementation of the Health and Safety Policy, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other relevant legislation
* Ensuring that the operations under their control, so far as is reasonably practical, are conducted without detriment to the health & safety of employees or others who may be affected by their activities
* Ensuring that their area of responsibility is subject to risk assessment, regular inspections and audits
* Ensuring that all accidents, incidents and near misses, within their area of responsibility, are reported to the Management Team, reviewing all such reports and ensuring, where appropriate, that a full investigation is carried out and appropriate remedial action taken, where necessary.

**Employee Responsibilities**

All employees are required to:

* Co-operate in implementing the requirements of the Health & Safety Policy, legislation, related codes of practice and safety instructions
* Refrain from doing anything which constitutes a danger to themselves or others
* Bring to the immediate attention of their line manager/supervisor any situations or practices that are noted which might lead to injuries or ill health
* Ensure that any equipment issued to them, or for which they are responsible, is correctly used and properly stored
* Be responsible for good housekeeping in the area in which they are working
* Report all accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses, in accordance with the charity’s guidance.

**Contractors**

Contractors working on the charity’s premises are required to:

* Provide evidence of their competency in relation to the planned works eg Gas Safe
* Comply with appropriate rules and regulations governing their work activities. Contractors are legally responsible for their own workforce and for ensuring that their work is carried out in a safe manner.
* Provide evidence of suitable public liability insurance of at least £5 million
* Complete the Site Safety Rules for Contractors.

**Communication**

* The name of the person designated with the responsibility for health & safety is prominently displayed for the information of all employees.
* The policy statement is prominently displayed for the information of all employees, residents and visitors.

**Consultation and Training**

* The Board of Trustees and General Manager & Clerk to the Trustees are committed to involving employees at all levels in the maintenance of health & safety standards and to provide them with adequate information, instruction and training.
* External health & safety consultants are used to provide professional health, safety, environmental and occupational advice, as required.

**Policy Review**

The effectiveness of this general policy statement and other specific policies in use throughout the charity will be subject to regular review.

**SPECIFIC POLICY STATEMENTS**

**ASBESTOS**

* The Charity trustees have a duty to find out whether the business premises (and communal areas of flats) contains asbestos, where it is and what condition it is in; assess the risk from any asbestos present; make a plan to manage that risk and act on it; provide this information to other employers (eg building contractors) who are likely to disturb any asbestos present, so that they can put in place appropriate control while the work is being done.
* An Asbestos Survey was undertaken in 2016 that identified low risk and very low risk asbestos present in some areas on both sites. The locations are listed in the Asbestos Register and checked annually then every three years by a professional body.

**ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

* A risk assessment was undertaken to establish electrical hazards, the level of established risk plus precautions taken to control the risk.
* Employees are provided with training in the use of electrical appliances owned by the charity.
* Employees are reminded to take care when using electrical appliances, in particular, to ensure that trailing cables are not hazardous, appliances are switched off and unplugged before cleaning or adjusting.
* Employees are encouraged to use a residual current device (RCD) between the electrical supply and equipment particularly when working outdoors or in a wet environment.
* Regular visual checks are undertaken of electrical items owned by the charity and these are removed from use immediately if found to be unsafe eg damage to plug or cable, burns or marks are present.
* The Charity’s electrical items are maintained and repaired as necessary by a competent person.
* Annual Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is carried out by a competent person of portable electrical items owned by the charity such as office equipment and resident fridges. All residents’ items are checked when they move in and thereafter every 3 years. If staff or residents are concerned about a particular resident item, they may request it is tested.
* Fixed wiring installation (all circuits) is carried out by an electrician every 5 years. Defects are repaired/resolved as soon as practically possible.

**EMERGENCY PLANS**

Emergency procedures are in place for various issues including:

* + During an out of hours emergency, residents are asked to contact the Careline provider who will speak to someone from the emergency list.
  + Emergency trustees, warden and office keep the same emergency list
  + The fire system monitoring service is provided with phone numbers for trustees and staff to be contacted in an emergency.
* Each resident is provided with a fire emergency plan for their flat.
* Fire system fault.
  + The Warden’s mobile number is listed on the office door in case required out of hours.
  + A Disaster Recovery Plan is in the process of being devised.

**FIRE PREVENTION**

1. **Fire risk assessment**

* A full fire safety risk assessment is undertaken every 3 years by a suitable professional and reviewed annually.
* Records are kept in the Clerk’s office and displayed in the Chubbs Community Room.

1. **The Premises**

* Fire exits are marked throughout the premises. These are kept unobstructed at all times.
* Sources of ignition and flammable substances are kept separate.

1. **Smoke alarms and heat detectors**

* Each flat has smoke alarms located in the hall, living room and bedroom. There is a heat detector in each kitchen.
* Smoke alarms are also located in communal areas and the office.
* Alarms and detectors are checked regularly and batteries changed as part of the maintenance programme.

1. **Employees responsibilities**

* Employees are asked to take suitable precautions to minimise the risk of fires.
* Employees undertake fire safety training and regular refresher courses.
* The Warden acts as the charity’s Fire Officer.
* Bags of shredded paper are moved from the office to the bunker for storage until disposal.

1. **Fire alarm system**

* The fire alarm system is monitored by Southern Monitoring.
* Whetstones flats have a ‘2-minute’ button for the resident to press if they have set off the alarm accidentally. Nappers House flats have a new system which does not allow for this.
* The fire alarm system is tested weekly by the Warden and records kept in the Warden’s office.
* In the event of fire alarm system failure, the Procedure for Fire Alarm System Failure should be followed.

1. **Evacuation**

* In the event of fire, residents, employees and visitors are required to evacuate the premises and meet at the designated muster point. Each resident receives a copy of the procedure.
* Employees (during working hours) or Emergency Trustees will be on hand if possible to help during an evacuation, and follow the procedures set out in the Fire Log Book located in the Clerk’s office and in the Emergency Trustees Emergency Pack.

1. **Fire extinguishers**

Suitable fire extinguishers are available throughout the premises to aid escape in case of

fire. These are checked bi-monthly and maintained annually. Records are kept in the

Warden’s office.

1. **Emergency lighting**

Emergency lighting is in place and this is tested bi-monthly by the Warden and 6-

monthly by a fire professional (once for 3 hours and once a quick check).

1. **Fire drill**

Fire drills involving residents and employees are undertaken at each site annually and

records kept in the Warden’s office.

1. **Advice**

The Fire Safety Officer from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service has offered to visit the premises occasionally and provides advice as required.

**FIRST AID AT WORK**

The following provision is in place to comply with HSE recommendations:

* A risk assessment of first-aid requirements is carried out at regular intervals.
* The Warden, General Manager and Financial Clerk receive first aid training at recommended intervals
* Employees are advised of first-aid arrangements via a poster located in the office
* a suitably stocked first-aid kit is located in the office
* An Accident Book is available in the office to record accidents and first aid provided. A Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) report is completed if appropriate.

**FIRST AID: EMERGENCY**

* Employees who have undertaken first aid training may provide emergency first aid to residents, staff or visitors, if required, as recommended by HSE guidance.
* A defibrillator is available at each site. These may be used by anyone on site or in the local community.

**FOOD HYGIENE**

Food and drink is usually prepared for events and meetings in the Chubbs Room. The following precautions are in place:

* The Warden undertakes regular food safety training
* Staff and residents wear suitable clean clothing
* Staff and residents keep hair tied back if necessary
* Staff and residents wash their hands before preparing food, after touching raw food, after handling waste or emptying a bin, after cleaning, after blowing their nose, after touching phones, light switches, door handles
* Staff and residents are asked not to assist with food preparation if they are suffering from a disease likely to be transmitted through food, have infected wounds, skin infections or sores, have diarrhoea.

**GAS SAFETY**

* Gas boilers are the only gas appliances on-site. There are combi boilers in Whetstones flats and two boilers supply Nappers House.
* Gas Safe registered workers are contracted to install, repair and maintain gas appliances, pipework and flues as appropriate.
* As a landlord, DMC is responsible for ensuring an annual gas safety check is carried out within 12 months of the installation of a new appliance or flue and annually thereafter by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
* A record is kept of the safety check for 2 years and a copy issued to each existing resident within 28 days of the check being completed and to any new residents before they move in.

**HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

As an employer, DMC is responsible for taking effective measures to control exposure to hazardous substances in the workplace and protect health. The following measures have been taken:

* Risk assessments to identify potentially hazardous substances and appropriate control measures such as protective equipment
* Check and maintain control measures as required on a regular basis
* Adequate training for staff

**INSURANCE**

Insurances are held to cover the buildings including contents belonging to the charity, and management protection (trustees and employees).

Residents are not covered by DMC’s insurance and are encouraged to take out their own contents insurance.

**LEGIONELLA**

As a landlord, DMC has a duty to assess and control the risk to residents of exposure to Legionella. The risk in domestic settings is considered to be low owing to:

* Regular water usage and turnover,
* Cold water is directly from a mains supply: This is the case in all residents flats
* Hot water is fed from instantaneous or low volume water heaters (supplying outlets at 50 degrees celcius):

1. except 1-4 Whetstones where there is a cold water tank in the loft that provides hot water for sinks and the 1W shower
2. Instantaneous electric showers present less of a risk than over bath showers because they are cold water fed and heat small volumes of water during operation. All DMC showers are instantaneous except 1W
3. Small water heaters are being installed at Nappers house to replace the hot water cylinders heaters, however one or two are to be retained along with their associated cold water storage tanks
4. Combi boilers are in place in residents’ flats and Chubbs Room at Whetstones and the office toilet contains a small domestic hot water heater.

* The only outlets are toilets and kitchen sinks and hand basins: This is the case at Nappers and at Whetstones except 1-4 Whetstones where the shower of 1W is fed by water from the cold water tank.

Water sampling is not required for domestic properties and test certificates are not recognised by the Health & Safety Executive. Water temperature monitoring is recommended and is undertaken annually.

The following precautions are in place:

1. A risk assessment is carried out and reviewed periodically.
2. The Warden undertakes regular Legionella training
3. Residents are requested to undertake the following:

* Advise staff if hot water is not heating correctly so that remedial action can be taken.
* Whetstones: Maintain hot water temperature on the boiler at 55 degrees celsius
* Regularly and thoroughly disinfect and descale showerheads and hoses.

1. Water temperatures are monitored annually and a record kept in the office (cold water is kept below 20 degrees celcius and hot water at 50 degrees celcius within 1-minute from the outlet).
2. A sample of water at each site is tested annually by a professional body.
3. In vacant properties and Chubbs Room, hot and cold water outlets are used weekly and just prior to occupation to maintain flow. If vacant for an extended period, consideration is given to draining the system.
4. External cold water taps and pressure washer are used at least twice monthly
5. Redundant pipework is removed as a precaution.

**LONE WORKING**

* DMC employees often work alone and a risk assessment is carried out within 6 weeks of their starting in post, to identify the hazards and evaluate the risks this presents.
* Further information is available in the Lone Working Policy.
* The risk assessment is reviewed annually.

**LOW SURFACE-TEMPERATURE RADIATORS**

* It is the policy of the Trustees to install low-surface temperature radiators in residents’ flats to prevent accidental burning.
* The aim is for radiators to be installed gradually if existing residents are happy, subject to budgetary constraints.
* The trustees can override a resident’s decision if they consider that resident to be vulnerable.
* Flats shall be upgraded as they become vacant.  The aim is to install new radiators at 1-4W simultaneously due to the shared boiler, continuing with the remaining Whetstones flats.
* The Warden’s flat is not considered a priority.

**MAINTENANCE**

Maintenance is undertaken by suitably qualified contractors according to the Maintenance Schedule at Appendix 2, and as required.

**MANUAL HANDLING**

* Manual handling includes lifting, lowering, pushing pulling or carrying objects. If not carried out correctly there is a risk of injury.
* Employees are encouraged to avoid manual handling items in the workplace where possible and if this is not possible, to consider the following - their personal capabilities, the nature of the load, environmental conditions, training and the safety of others in the vicinity.
* Employees are encouraged to read the HSE tips for good lifting technique and use suitable equipment where appropriate.

**MOVING & HANDLING**

Employees are not trained in moving and handling techniques and are advised against moving and handling residents, employees or visitors. In the event of a situation like a fall, staff should assess the situation and phone the NHS 111 Service for emergency advice. If the situation is life-threatening, employees should phone 999.

**SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS**

* The Trustees consider the dangers of slips, trips and falls on-site, for residents, some of whom have walking difficulties, staff and visitors.
* Internal flooring in kitchens and bathrooms is changed to a slip resistant finish when flats are refurbished.
* The external pathways at Whetstones were made slip resistant when the garden was made accessible in 2015. The trustees intend giving the same treatment to the pathways at Nappers House when the garden is refurbished as part of a new development scheme.
* Entrance areas of buildings are fitted with coir to prevent slips caused by rainwater on floors.
* Adequate external lighting on site ensures safety at night.
* Fallen leaves are cleared from the site on a weekly basis.
* There is a risk assessment in place.

**Gritting and snow clearing**

* A supply of grit is located in bins on each site and is available for anyone to use as necessary.
* When ice and/or snow are expected, staff consider gritting the main thoroughfares at each site as listed:

Nappers: A pathway from the main gate to the stairs to the first floor; round the side to the left of the building and along the pathway outside resident’s front doors

Whetstones: From the gate along the pathway next to 5-8W and towards 12W; from the gate along the pathway outside 1-4W and towards the bin area; the steps down to the Clerk’s Office.

* A risk assessment is in place for gritting and clearing activity
* A record is kept of gritting and clearing activity.

**SECURITY**

The site is located centrally within Dorchester so there is the possibility of opportunistic crime. The site is open and the following measures are in place:

* Gates at the entrances to each site. The pedestrian gates are closed at Whetstones and open at Nappers House due to car park access.
* Window locks in all flats, sheds, office and community room
* Lighting on each site is switched off for a few hours in the middle of the night, otherwise it is left on during the hours of darkness.
* External doors to buildings (Nappers, 1-4 Whetstones and 5-8 Whetstones) are locked between the hours of 6.00 pm – 8.00 am nightly.
* Office inner and outer doors are locked when staff are off-site and office outer door when elsewhere on-site.
* The Whetstones storage area, ‘the bunker’ is kept locked unless in use.
* Chubbs Community Room is kept locked and the key is kept in a keysafe only accessible to staff, trustees, residents and trusted regular contractors
* Contractors are provided with a key to enable them to work on an empty flat, for which they sign. This is returned on completion of the work.
* A master key is held in a keysafe at each site for use by emergency services only, who are advised to phone the Careline provider to access the keysafe number.
* Residents may be provided with door chains if they wish
* A positive relationship is maintained with the local Neighbourhood Police Team who visit the site occasionally to talk to residents.
* Information about scams affecting local people is passed on to residents as a preventative measure.

**SMOKING**

Smoking is not permitted on site including communal hallways, stairways and gardens. The Trustees recognise that residents may choose to smoke in their own home. However they are advised against smoking in flats and advised to dispose of smoking materials safely if they choose to smoke.

**SOCIAL TRIPS**

A risk assessment is undertaken for every social trip with residents and kept in the office.

**STAIRLIFTS**

There are two stairlifts at the Whetstones site, one in 1-4 Whetstones hallway which is switched on at all times for residents’ use. The other is situated outside 14 Whetstones and is kept switched off when not in use; a key is required for its operation. Each stairlift is serviced annually as part of scheduled maintenance.

**VACCINATIONS & SELF-TESTING**

**Influenza**

* The Charity will pay for each member of staff to have a flu vaccination if they wish to have one, for the good of the residents.
* Staff may take advantage of the free vaccination from their GP but if a free one is not available staff may claim the cost through their expenses form.

**Covid-19**

* Staff are encouraged to take up the offer of free vaccination and boosters offered by the government and to self-test as per government guidance.
* Trustees are encouraged to use free self-test kits prior to meetings or any event involving residents, as per government guidance.
* Free self-tests kits can be accessed according to the latest government guidance.

Further information is available in the Pandemic Influenza Policy & Procedures.

**WORKING AT HEIGHT**

It is occasionally necessary for DMC staff to work at height for brief periods. They are advised to take the following precautions:

* avoid work at height where it's reasonably practicable to do so
* where work at height cannot be easily avoided, prevent falls using either an existing place of work that is already safe or the right type of equipment
* minimise the distance and consequences of a fall, by using the right type of equipment where the risk cannot be eliminated
* When working at height is the only option, staff are provided with Health & Safety Executive guidelines for working at height.
* DMC maintains a low level step and a step ladder for staff, trustee or contractor use.

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**Appendix 1**

**RISK ASSESSMENT REGISTER**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Risk assessment** | **Review period** | **Reviewed by** |
| Chubbs Community Room | Annual | General Manager & Warden |
|  |  |  |
| COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) | Annual | Property Group Chairman & General Manager |
|  |  |  |
| DMC equipment | Annual | General Manager |
|  |  |  |
| Fire risk assessment | Annual | Fire prevention contractor |
|  |  |  |
| Grounds | Annual | Property Group Chairman & Warden |
|  |  |  |
| Lone worker | Annual | General Manager |
|  |  |  |
| Health and Safety of residents (internal) | Annual | Warden |
|  |  |  |
| Legionella | Annual | Property Group Chairman & Warden |
|  |  |  |
| Slips, trips & falls | Annual | Property Group Chairman & General Manager |
|  |  |  |
| Social trips | Every trip | Warden |
|  |  |  |
| Storage of resident items | Annual | Property Group Chairman & General Manager |
|  |  |  |
| Water temperatures | Annual | Property Group Chairman & Warden |
|  |  |  |
| Working at Height | Annual | General Manager |

**Appendix 2**

**MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Maintenance type** | **Frequency** | **Undertaken by** |
|  |  |  |
| Asbestos: checklist | Annual  3 years | Property Group Chairman & General Manager  Professional body |
|  |  |  |
| Boundary walls: check | Annual | Surveyor |
|  |  |  |
| Careline system | Annual | Careline equipment contractor |
|  |  |  |
| Defibrillators: check | Weekly | Warden |
|  |  |  |
| Electrical installation | 5-years | Electrical contractor |
|  |  |  |
| Electrical testing – portable (PAT) | Annual | Fire prevention contractor |
|  |  |  |
| Emergency lights | Bi-monthly  6-monthly | Warden  Fire prevention contractor |
|  |  |  |
| Fire alarm testing | Weekly | Warden |
|  |  |  |
| Fire extinguishers | Bi-monthly  Annual | Warden  Fire prevention contractor |
|  |  |  |
| Gas safety check (boilers) | Annual | Gas Safe registered contractor (commercial and domestic) |
|  |  |  |
| Gutters – cleaned of debris | 6-monthly | Window cleaning company |
|  |  |  |
| Lawnmower service | 1-2 years | Service engineer |
|  |  |  |
| Locks oiled (all on site) | 2 years | Handyman |
|  |  |  |
| Porch arch stone 1-4W: check for movement | Annual | Surveyor |
|  |  |  |
| Quinquennial Survey | 5 years | Qualified Surveyor |
|  |  |  |
| Smoke alarms & heat detectors | Annual | Fire prevention contractor |
|  |  |  |
| Stairlift x 2 | Annual | Stairlift contractor |
|  |  |  |
| Window cleaning | Bi-monthly | Window cleaning company |
|  |  |  |