



Health and Safety Policy (incorporating Lone Working)

1. General Statement of Policy

1.1. The Blackdown Support Group (BSG) has a comprehensive Health and Safety Policy and is bound to abide by the Health & Safety at Work Act. This Act lays down certain duties on all employees, volunteers and Trustees. The duties are to take care of their own safety and that of other employees, volunteers and visitors, and to co-operate with the Trustee Board and its officers to enable it to carry out its responsibilities.

1.2. In particular employees and volunteers have a duty to:

1.2.1. Work safely, efficiently and without endangering the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues or any other person who has a right of access to the organisation's premises at any time.

1.2.2. Adhere to safety procedures laid down by the Blackdown Support Group from time to time and conform to all instructions given by those with a responsibility for Health and Safety

1.2.3. Record all accidents, near miss occurrences and hazardous situations in the Health and Safety Accident Book and report to the designated person.

1.2.4. Meet any other statutory safety obligations including those 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".

2. Organisation and Responsibilities

2.1. Trustee Board

Overall and final health and safety responsibility within the organisation lies with the Trustee Board.

2.1.1. The Trustee Board shall, at its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting appoint one Designated Trustee who will take responsibility for drawing to the attention of the Trustee Board, employees and volunteers any Health and Safety matters that need to be discussed and or acted upon.

- 2.1.2. The Trustees of the charity have a general responsibility to ensure a safe working environment.
- 2.1.3. The Policy will be fully reviewed every year and will be subject to approval by the Trustee Board.

2.2. The Designated Trustee

The Designated Trustee shall be given delegated responsibility for ensuring that the Health and Safety Policy is carried out within the organisation. In particular, the Designated Trustee will be given delegated responsibility for:

- 2.2.1. Carrying out periodic safety inspections in the offices utilised by the BSG .
- 2.2.2. Ensuring employees are provided with suitable seating and appropriate workstations
- 2.2.3. Ensuring that floors and aisles are kept clear of trailing wires, equipment, stationery etc as far as practicable
- 2.2.4. Ensuring that the general fabric of the offices, including office items and equipment used by employees is appropriately maintained.
- 2.2.5. Investigating and reporting accidents
- 2.2.6. Ensuring the relevant "Health and Safety Law" poster is displayed in the Blackdown Support office
- 2.2.7. Making employees and volunteers aware of alarm systems in the building and the procedures in the event of fire
- 2.2.8. Ensuring employees and volunteers have a copy of this Policy and understand its contents
- 2.2.9. Drawing to the attention of the other Trustees, Manager, employees and volunteers any new legislation on health and safety relevant to the BSG
- 2.2.10. Informing the Trustee Board of any matters they are unable to attend to personally, or which require wider discussion.
- 2.2.11. In conjunction with the Manager, keeping this Policy under constant review to reflect any changes in legislation.

2.3. Employees and Volunteers

It is incumbent upon employees and volunteers to co-operate with safe systems of work and follow any instructions or advice given and reasonably seek to avoid any situation that may result in an accident or incident.

The Blackdown Support Group has a Health and Safety Accident Book located in the office and all accidents or incidents, no matter how small, must be recorded as soon as practical after the incident.

All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to:

- 2.3.1. Read and fully understand the Blackdown Support Group's Policy Statement and the procedures to be carried out in the event of an emergency, which will be provided to them in summary form in literature issued at induction. If there is any doubt about the meaning, clarification must be sought from the Designated Trustee.
- 2.3.2. Co-operate with the Trustee Board and the Manager as appropriate to achieve a healthy and safe workplace and to take reasonable care of themselves and others
- 2.3.3. Report within 24 hours to the Manager, or any employee deputising for the Manager or acting in a managerial capacity, any accident occurring either on or off any BSG premises whilst acting on behalf of the Blackdown Support Group. In the event of a more serious incident it should also be reported by the Manager or Deputy Manager to the Designated Trustee.
- 2.3.4. In addition to reporting accidents or incidents, it is equally important to report near misses and potential hazards so as to enable preventive action to be taken before any actual incident or near-miss occurs
- 2.3.5. Bring to the notice of the Designated Trustee any potentially dangerous circumstances that they are unable to put right themselves.

3. Accidents, near-miss occurrences and hazardous situations

- 3.1. The Blackdown Support Group has a Health and Safety Accident Book located in the office and all incidents, no matter how small, must be recorded as soon as possible after the incident.
- 3.2. The incident should also be reported to the Manager, or any employee deputising for the Manager or acting in a managerial capacity, who will inform the Designated Trustee in the event of a more serious incident.
- 3.3. In addition to reporting accidents, it is equally important to report near misses and potential hazards so as to enable preventive action to be taken before any actual incident or near-miss occurs.

4. Personal Safety and Lone Working

4.1. Principles

- 4.1.1. Employees and volunteers should give priority to their own personal safety and comfort. The BSG does not knowingly accept referrals of people with a history of violence but other people or animals within the household may pose a risk.
- 4.1.2. Employees and volunteers should continually make their own assessment of the situation. If a person is, or appears to be, aggressive or intoxicated, they should not enter the premises, or leave immediately.
- 4.1.3. Employees and volunteers do not have to accept abusive or racist language, and guidance on how they should respond to such behaviour is issued on induction.
- 4.1.4. Employees and volunteers have a right to leave any situation that makes them feel uncomfortable. They should trust their intuition, act on any warning signs and leave immediately then contact the Manager as soon as possible. If the employee or volunteer

lives alone they may like to tell a friend or neighbour where they will be, and when they expect to be back.

4.1.5. The BSG will always support an employee or volunteer should their intuition warn them of a potentially risky situation

4.2. Recommended procedures

4.2.1. Employees or volunteers who are working on their own in the office should not allow access to casual visitors who have no appointment.

4.2.2. All windows and entry doors to the office will be lockable

4.2.3. Employees who are going to be away on Blackdown Support Group business should make it clear to other employees (and have put in the diary) where they will be, for how long, and how they can be contacted.

4.2.4. Employees and volunteers are routinely asked to inform the Blackdown Support Group who they wish to be contacted in the event of an emergency, giving contact details, on induction. They should notify the office in the event of any change in these details.

4.2.5. Employees and volunteers who carry money for the BSG have the right to be accompanied by another person.

4.2.6. Visits to the bank should not be at a regular time.

4.2.7. Employees and volunteers should never put themselves at risk for the Blackdown Support Group

4.2.8. All incidents of aggression or violence and any threat to personal safety must be reported to the Manager and Designated Person and recorded.

4.3. Risk Assessment

4.3.1. Employees must undertake a risk assessment when arranging an appointment with a client. They should ask the following questions:

4.3.1.1. Where exactly is the property? Is the property difficult to find, or in a particularly rural area?

4.3.1.2. Are there any access issues?: e.g., are there any steep steps?

4.3.1.3. What name does the client like to be known by?

4.3.1.4. Is parking available?

4.3.1.5. Are there any potentially dangerous animals or pets?

4.3.1.6. Does the client wish to have a relative or friend present?

4.3.1.7. Is there any history of violence, aggressive behaviour or domestic violence within the household? Any relevant information will be shared with the employee or volunteer.

4.3.1.8. If the visit is to apply for a benefit on behalf of the client, does the client have the relevant documents, such as their National Insurance Number, medical letters and their current prescription list?

4.3.2. The employee or volunteer should also:

4.3.2.1. Confirm the date and time of the appointment.

4.3.2.2. Consider any potential additional issues of appointments taking place during the hours of darkness.

4.3.2.3. Ensure the client has the office telephone number, should they need to cancel the appointment.

4.3.2.4. Ensure someone the volunteer knows and trusts is aware of the appointment and the expected time of return to the office or home

4.4. Risk Mitigation

4.4.1. The recommendations below apply to employees and volunteers alike.:

4.4.1.1. Prioritise their own personal safety. This could mean leaving the premises, seeking another person for support or calling the police. Do not take off coats or unpack any papers until the situation feels comfortable. Remember - when in doubt get out.

4.4.1.2. Employees and volunteers are urged to leave a risky situation immediately. Where this is impossible, help must be summoned, including calling for police support when appropriate.

4.4.1.3. Consider arranging to meet the client outside of their home if this might be preferable.

4.4.1.4. Do not enter any property, particularly a client's home, if feeling unsure or uncomfortable with the situation. If already inside the property, make an excuse and leave.

4.4.1.5. It may be preferable to make the first contact by telephone. During this contact information such as whether it is likely that other people will be there and who they are should be obtained.

4.4.1.6. Be punctual. Delayed or early arrival (even by a few minutes) can be upsetting to the client. If you are unavoidably delayed, you must ring and explain and reassure.

4.4.1.7. Ask the client to lead the way so you are behind them, not the other way round.

4.4.1.8. ID cards should be carried at all times and shown to the client on arrival.

4.4.1.9. Always be prepared to leave immediately.

4.4.1.10. Ask the client to turn off the TV or radio if you consider them a distraction.

- 4.4.1.11. If appropriate, the client should be reminded that everything discussed will be treated in confidence.
- 4.4.1.12. When leaving ensure that all belongings and relevant documents are taken away.
- 4.4.1.13. Any concerns about anything arising from the visit, should be advised to the Manager as soon as possible after the visit.

4.5. Boundaries

- 4.5.1. Clients will have the nature and limits of our services explained to them. If the client asks an employee or volunteer to do something that they are not happy with then they must advise the client that they will consult with the Manager first.

4.6. Stress Management

- 4.6.1. Stress at work, whether paid or voluntary, is a serious issue and is treated as such by the Trustee Board. The Blackdown Support Group will do all it can to eradicate problems relating to stress incurred fulfilling the services provided by its employees and volunteers.
- 4.6.2. The responsibility for reducing stress at work lies with both the employer and employee or volunteer. All parties should be aware of the common causes of stress and should take all reasonable steps to avoid working in a way which could cause them to suffer an increase in stress themselves, or contribute to an increase in stress on others.
- 4.6.3. If an employee or volunteer is suffering from stress through their contact with the BSG they should discuss this with the Manager or a Trustee at the first opportunity. Where practicable and reasonable the Blackdown Support Group will seek to provide suitable assistance to the employee.

Review date: 16 MAY 2023

Approved by Trustees on: 16TH MAY 2023

Signed by Chairman: 

Next Review Date: January 2024