



# HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Version adopted February 2018  
Review February 2021

## **BEACON Health and Safety Policy**

*Note: Much of BEACON'S work takes place in Touchstone, where BEACON has its office. BEACON takes responsibility for the BEACON office. The structure of the building and all other areas are the responsibility of Touchstone and so BEACON follows the Touchstone Health and Safety policy and reports any concerns to the Touchstone Team Leader. Everything following refers to the BEACON Health and Safety policy.*

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## **1. General policy statement**

BEACON is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all its workers (employed and voluntary), service users and visitors and to this end it will always:

- provide adequate control of the Health and Safety risks arising from our work activities.
- consult with our workers and volunteers on matters affecting their Health and Safety, including work related stress.
- provide and maintain safe plant and equipment.
- provide information, instruction and supervision for workers.
- ensure that all workers and volunteers are competent to carry out their tasks and to provide them with adequate training.
- maintain safe and healthy working conditions.
- review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

## **2. Responsibilities**

2.1 The overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the BEACON trustees. The trustees will monitor the operation of the policy as a routine agenda item at board meetings and will appoint a trustee annually to the role of Health and Safety Officer to support the BEACON Team Leader and Project Coordinators in its implementation.

2.2 Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice belongs to Project Coordinators for project-specific activities and to the BEACON Team Leader for the office and general BEACON activities. Project Coordinators should report any concerns which have arisen to the Team Leader who should consult the Health and Safety Officer as required.

2.3 All staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- co-operating with line managers and project coordinators on health and safety matters;
- taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of colleagues, service users and visitors;
- informing the appropriate line manager or project coordinator if they suffer from any medical condition likely to affect the health and safety of themselves or others
- reporting all health and safety concerns to their Project Coordinator, BEACON Team Leader or a BEACON trustee;
- not interfering with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety.

2.4 Visitors and service users are responsible for:

- co-operating with BEACON staff and volunteers on health and safety matters;
- taking reasonable care of their own health and safety;
- reporting all health and safety concerns to a BEACON staff member or volunteer;
- not interfering with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety.

2.5 All staff and volunteers are covered under BEACON's Public Liability insurance.

## **3. Risk assessments**

3.1 Risk assessments for their areas of responsibility will be undertaken by the BEACON Team Leader and Project Coordinators with the support of the Health and Safety Officer, and repeated annually or when new methods or processes are introduced.

- 3.2 Action required to remove or control risks will be approved and implemented by the BEACON Team Leader and Project Coordinators with the support of the Health and Safety Officer.
- 3.3 The findings of risk assessments will be reported in writing to the trustees and actions required to remove or control risks will be approved by the trustees. In situations of urgency this approval may be retrospective.
- 3.4 In order to reduce risks to workers, procedures/guidelines which should be followed by all workers, have been drawn up regarding the following areas:
- Working with VDUs (Section 16)
  - Manual handling/lifting (Section 17)
  - Working alone (Lone working policy)
  - Work-related stress (Section 9)
- 3.5 This policy and associated procedures/guidelines will be issued to all current and new workers and volunteers, usually in electronic form but volunteers will be given paper copies if they request them.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 In order to encourage and facilitate consultation with workers, there will be an agenda item for health and safety at every regular staff meeting.
- 4.2 Health and safety will be an agenda item at every regular Trustees meeting.

#### **5. Smoking**

BEACON works in a no-smoking environment. Staff, volunteers, service users and visitors are not allowed to smoke or use e-cigarettes inside any premises which BEACON is using, including the toilet areas.

#### **6. Safe equipment**

- 6.1 The BEACON Team Leader and Project Coordinators will identify equipment that needs maintaining and ensure that it is properly maintained. They will ensure that any new equipment meets Health and Safety standards.
- 6.2 The BEACON Team Leader and Project Coordinators will ensure that all electrical equipment owned by BEACON is PAT tested annually.

#### **7. Safe handling of and use of substances**

Currently covered by the policies of Touchstone or any other premises which BEACON uses.

#### **8. Information, instruction and supervision**

- 8.1 Health and Safety Law posters will be displayed in the office. Health and Safety advice is available from PersonaliseHR.
- 8.2 Supervision and instruction, including any Health and Safety requirements, of new workers will be arranged, undertaken and monitored by line managers. Supervision and instruction, including any Health and Safety requirements, of new volunteers will be arranged, undertaken and monitored by Project Coordinators.

## **9. Work-related stress**

9.1 Risk assessments should include consideration and identification of possible workplace stressors. Measures to eliminate, reduce or control risks from stress in line with the HSE Management Standards for Work Related Stress ([www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards)) should be adopted where possible. The standards encourage attention to factors such as:

- Demands – workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- Control – how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- Support – the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- Relationships – promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Role – whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- Change – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

9.2 Line managers must ensure that no staff or volunteers work excessively long hours and that allocated rest breaks and holidays are taken as appropriate. They must monitor workloads to ensure that staff are not overloaded. They have a responsibility to be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work – e.g. bereavement or separation.

9.3 Issues of work-related stress should be addressed by line managers during supervision.

9.4 Rearranging work allocation, flexible working patterns and work-related training/mentoring should be considered as health measures where work-related stress is identified. Bullying and harassment must not be tolerated and should be treated as serious disciplinary matters.

9.5 Counselling or stress management courses may be considered amongst other options for supporting employees.

## **10. External events**

It is the responsibility of the person booking any external venue (such as for meetings or training) to clarify the arrangements for obtaining the information listed below. It is the responsibility of the Project staff leading the event to check the following on arrival at external premises and provide details to all attendees:

- Location of fire exits, alarms and extinguishers
- Details of the emergency evacuation procedure
- Location of any first aid box, any appointed first aiders and how to report any accident.

## **11. Accidents, first aid and work-related ill-health**

11.1 The BEACON Team Leader must ensure that the first aid box is adequately stocked with up-to-date equipment and that it is kept in an accessible location of which all staff are aware.

11.2 All accidents, near misses and cases of work-related ill-health are to be recorded in the Accident Book.

11.3 The BEACON Team Leader will report all incidents recorded in the Accident Book

to the next trustees meeting.

11.4 The person responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority is the BEACON Team Leader.

## **12. Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations (RIDDOR)**

12.1 The BEACON Team Leader will inform the Health and Safety Executive of the following if they occur at work:

- any fatal injuries to employees, service users or others in an accident connected with the organization
- any major injuries to employees, service users or others in an accident connected with the organization
- any dangerous occurrence
- any injury to an employee which results in their absence from work or being unable to do their normal work for more than seven days (including days which would not normally be working days)
- work related diseases, such as carpal tunnel syndrome. For a full list see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm>

12.2 The BEACON Team Leader will notify the Health and Safety Executive within ten days of the accident. All incidents can be reported online but a telephone service remains for reporting fatal and specified injuries (RIDDOR 2013) only.

12.3 Accidents resulting in absence from work for more than three but less than seven days must be recorded in the accident book.

## **13. Monitoring**

13.1 To check our working conditions and ensure safe working practices are being followed, the BEACON Team Leader and Project Coordinators will make spot checks of specific risk areas which have been identified as often as appropriate to the level and nature of the risk identified.

13.2 The trustees will review the Health and Safety Policy and risk assessments every two years.

13.3 The person responsible for investigating accidents, near misses and work-related causes of stress or sickness absence and for acting on the findings to prevent recurrence is the BEACON Team Leader or appropriate Project Coordinator.

13.4 Written reports of all investigations into accidents, near misses and work-related causes of stress or sickness absence will be provided to the Trustees by the BEACON Team Leader or appropriate Project Coordinator.

## **14. Fire evacuation and emergency procedures**

It is the responsibility of staff, volunteers and service users to follow the policies and procedures of the premises in which we work.

## **15. Working in an office environment**

15.1 To avoid tripping hazards, all office accommodation and associated storerooms and stairs must be maintained in a neat and tidy condition and access and egress to all areas must remain unimpeded by any files, equipment or other items, for

example, umbrellas left open to dry out. No objects should be stored on the treads of any staircase.

- 15.2 Cables must be routed so as to avoid creating tripping hazards or must be protected with suitable cable covers to reduce the tripping hazards and to prevent damage to the cable.
- 15.3 Storage facilities must be organised in such a way that files or other materials can be stored and retrieved without risk. Only lightweight goods should be stored above shoulder height or below knee height. Where goods are stored at high level, means must be provided so that they can be reached safely, that is by office steps. Where such equipment is provided it must be maintained in good order.
- 15.4 Filing cabinets can tip if more than one drawer is opened at any one time. Drawers should be kept closed when not in use. Whenever possible, heavy/bulky files should be stored in the lower half of the filing cabinet.
- 15.5 All furniture and equipment should be maintained in a good state of repair. Defective furniture and equipment, particularly sharp edges on metal furniture, can be hazardous. Any such defects must be reported to BEACON Team Leader without delay.
- 15.6 Many items of electrical equipment are in use in the office environment. No worker should attempt to rectify any electrical defect. All servicing and maintenance of electrical equipment should only be undertaken by a suitable and qualified competent person. Records must be kept of such servicing and maintenance.

## **16. Working at computer workstations**

- 16.1 Working at computer workstations is a necessary part of most workers' duties. BEACON will provide appropriate equipment to reduce the risk of injury, including wrist rests, footrests, document holders, appropriate seating and workstations.
- 16.2 The BEACON Team Leader must ensure that a DSE risk assessment is conducted for every new member of staff or when a substantial change is made to an existing workstation or the way it is used. Assessments should be repeated if there is any reason to suspect they may no longer be valid – for example, if users start complaining of pain or discomfort.
- 16.3 BEACON will pay for annual eye tests for all workers who use VDUs for a significant part of the day. The responsibility for arranging such a test lies with individual workers. The fee must be in line with the standard NHS fee.
- 16.4 The following guidelines should be followed by all workers to reduce the risk of injury/damage to health, regardless of the amount of time spent working at computer workstations:
  - reduce the risks of visual fatigue and repetitive strain injury by
    - taking regular breaks from the screen (at least once an hour).
    - when possible, trying to vary the type of work you do on the VDU so that you are not, for example, inputting data for long periods of time.
  - adjust your seat or stop working if you feel uncomfortable.
  - report to your line manager any physical symptoms which could be associated with working at a computer workstation (e.g. headaches, problems with vision, sore hands and/or wrists, back pain).
  - follow guidance to ensure your workstation is set up correctly and that you are sitting properly. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/vdu-checklist.htm> for a checklist.

## **17. Guidelines on manual handling**

There is some lifting and handling involved in most workers' tasks (e.g. carrying display boards, boxes of leaflets). In order to reduce the risk of injury the following guidelines should be followed by all workers:

- do not lift or handle any object which they perceive would put themselves at risk of injury.
- seek assistance or guidance from another worker if in doubt
- use mechanical aids where possible, e.g. trolley, sack cart
- use common sense to minimise risk, e.g. carry the minimum weight possible, minimise the amount of time you spend walking with the load by involving other people in a "human chain".
- follow the good handling techniques as advised and if in doubt don't lift the object and speak to your line manager for guidance.

The Health and Safety Exec produce a number of free guidelines on the subject. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/manlinde.htm>

## **18. Working with service users**

18.1 BEACON staff and volunteers will refuse to work with any client who they believe to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or with whom they feel unsafe. Such instances must be reported as soon as possible to the appropriate line manager / project leader.

18.2 In addition to this policy each of the BEACON projects has its own guidelines for working with clients.

## **19. Project-specific guidance**

### **19.1 Hosting**

- Health and safety is included in the assessment of hosts (see Host Assessment form)
- Basic health and safety assessments are carried out on accommodation offered by hosts
- Hosts are provided with Guidance for Hosts notes, updated as needed (see document)
- Clear referral criteria and guidelines are issued to all referring agencies
- Two character references are always sought for guests referred
- Referrals are approved by a sub-group appointed by the BEACON board of Trustees
- Introductory visits are arranged for each potential guest to their host before a placement is agreed
- Individual risk assessments are completed where any relevant issues are identified
- Single male guests are not normally placed with single female hosts or in households with teenage girls
- The project strongly advises hosts not to leave their children, grandchildren or any other children who may visit their home, with the guest unsupervised for any



length of time until or unless a strong relationship of mutual trust has been established

- Hosts have 24/7 contact with the project coordinator – or a member of the sub-group when the coordinator is on leave
- Full induction training is provided to all hosts, including basic personal safety training
- All placements have an initial trial period and are then regularly reviewed.

#### 19.2 CHAT Phoenix House

- The Project Coordinator and all volunteers should be aware of Phoenix House's Health and Safety policy, especially regarding emergency exits. In addition, CHAT
- volunteers should be aware that the responsibility of delivering First Aid to anyone in the building lies with Phoenix House staff and not CHAT volunteers
- The Project Coordinator must ensure that all BEACON equipment used for the project is maintained and safe to use and that Phoenix House maintains their own equipment, including PAT testing of electrical appliances in accordance with their policies
- The Project Coordinator and volunteers must ensure Thermos flasks are used safely, kept out of reach of children, never left unattended and that only one full Thermos flask is carried at a time and the lift is used whenever possible
- Volunteers should always work in groups of two or more and never deliver the service on their own
- Volunteers should avoid giving small toys to young children as this could be a choking hazard
- Volunteers should consider the risks associated with allergies and keep biscuit packaging for service users to check if in doubt. Whenever possible, volunteers should avoid buying biscuits containing nuts

#### 19.3 CHAT English Club

- Volunteers receive training and have a good understanding of their role
- Volunteers never work in rooms alone with service users
- Volunteers follow the Touchstone Health and Safety policy and are made aware of emergency exits
- BEACON must ensure that all equipment used for the project is maintained and safe to use, including annual PAT testing of electrical appliances
- Staff should consider the risks associated with allergies. Packaging for biscuits should be checked to avoid having biscuits with nuts in them available.
- Individual risk assessments will be carried out when trips/visits off the premises are made.

#### 19.4 McKenzie Friends

- Volunteers receive comprehensive training and have a good understanding of their role
- Volunteers work in twos when meeting with service users, unless agreed in advance with the Project Coordinator
- New volunteers are always matched with a more experienced partner
- Meetings are arranged at a neutral venue – not in volunteers' or service users' homes
- Basic personal safety training is provided for all volunteers

- All volunteers are provided with a McKenzie Friends Handbook which includes guidance on aspects of health and safety for themselves and their clients.
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## **20. Other relevant policies and further information**

### 20.1 Other relevant policies:

- Equality and diversity policy
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Disciplinary rules and procedures
- Grievance policy
- Lone working policy
- Volunteering policy
- Complaints policy

### 20.2 Other relevant BEACON documents:

- Host Assessment
- Guidance for Hosts
- McKenzie Friends Volunteer Handbook

### 20.2 Further information:

- [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- [www.workstress.net](http://www.workstress.net)
- [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)
- [www.worksmart.org.uk](http://www.worksmart.org.uk)
- [www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)