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1. General Statement

Social Material CIC is bound by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and all relevant UK and EU health and safety legislation. This policy demonstrates our duty of care to employees and non-employees (participants, customers, contracted staff, volunteers) by ensuring that Social Material's activities and services are provided in such a way as to not put them at risk.

2. Aim of the Policy

The aim of our policy is to prevent accidents, incidents and cases of work-related ill health; and to promote and implement safe systems of work, a safe working environment, and a safe and healthy workforce.

So far as is reasonably practicable, it is the intention of Social Material to:

- a. Comply with the requirements of relevant legislation.
- b. Provide systems of work that are safe and without risks to health, by assessing risks and implementing appropriate measures to reduce risk.
- c. Provide a safe working environment for our staff and participants
- d. Ensure that staff, participant and others are adequately informed of the identified risks and where appropriate receive instruction, training and supervision.

In particular staff have a duty to:

- At all times work safely, efficiently and without endangering the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues or any other person who has right of access to the organisation's premises or is attending activities undertaken off-site
- Adhere to safety procedures laid down by Social Material and conform to all instructions given by those with a responsibility for health and safety
- Report all accidents, near-miss occurrences and hazardous situations to the Health and Safety Officer at the first available opportunity, and record all accidents, near-miss occurrences and hazardous situations in the Health and Safety/Accident Book
- Meet their other statutory safety obligations including those laid down in Section 8 of the Act, which states that *"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"*

3. Definitions

The key definitions of this Policy are as follows:

1. **Health** – The wellbeing of employees. This encompasses conditions of body and mind, which could affect the health and safety of employees and others.
2. **Safety** – Preventing injury or damage to any person or property affected by a work activity through the development of suitable and sufficient working practices.

3. **Welfare** – The provision and maintenance of facilities to ensure good hygiene, a comfortable working environment and appropriate support for the wellbeing of the individual.
4. **Wellbeing** –The subjective state of being healthy, happy, contented, comfortable and satisfied with one’s quality of life. It includes physical, material, social, and emotional (‘happiness’) dimensions.

Please Note: Where the term ‘staff’ is used throughout, it is used to refer to any person or persons who are employed, contracted or volunteering for Social Material CIC (Social Material), whether as permanent employees, freelancers, volunteers, contractors or short-term employees; and during on-site activities or outreach on another premises.

4. Organisation and Responsibilities

The allocation of responsibility within the organisation for health and safety matters is as follows:

Overall and final health and safety responsibility within the organisation lies with the Management Committee. The Management Committee shall appoint a Health and Safety Officer who will take responsibility for drawing to the attention of the Management Committee and staff any health and safety matters that need to be discussed and/or acted upon.

4.1 Delegated Responsibility

Social Material’s Health and Safety Officer shall be given delegated responsibility for ensuring that the Health and Safety Policy is carried out within the organisation. In particular they will be given delegated responsibility for:

- Carrying out regular safety inspections in the premises utilised by Social Material
- Carrying out risk assessments for all relevant activities, events, trips and projects
- Carrying out risk assessments for any processes, materials or equipment that may be deemed a health and safety risk
- Organise induction and ongoing training for all staff in Health and Safety policy and procedures
- Maintaining accessible First Aid Kits on the premises and portable First Aid Kit for off-site activities, when relevant
- Ensuring that staff are provided with suitable seating and appropriate computer work stations
- Ensuring that floors and aisles are kept clear, as far as reasonably practical, of trailing wires, equipment, stationery, etc.
- Ensuring that the general fabric of the premises (including office items, materials & equipment used by staff) is maintained
- Investigating and reporting accidents to the Management Committee and / or any other relevant stakeholders and authorities
- Investigating and reporting any suspected breaches or non-compliance with the Health and Safety policy and procedures
- Ensuring that a Health and Safety Workplace Poster on ‘Health and Safety Law’ is displayed

- Making staff and participants aware of the specific fire escapes and fire extinguishers within the premises
- Ensuring staff and participants are given a copy of this Policy and understand its contents
- Ensuring that staff and participants are made familiar with the alarm systems within the premises and action to be taken in the event of a fire
- Drawing to the attention of the Management Committee and staff any new legislation on health and safety relevant to the work of Social Material
- Drawing to the attention of the Management Committee any matters with which he/she is unable to deal
- Cooperating with partner organisations and groups to ensure their Health and Safety practices are understood and followed by any staff and volunteers working off-site

4.2 Staff

In particular all staff have a responsibility to:

- Read and fully understand Social Material 's Policy Statement and the procedures to be carried out in the event of an emergency. If there is any doubt about the meaning, staff must seek clarification from Social Material's Health and Safety Officer.
- Co-operate with the Management Committee and Social Material's Health and Safety Officer, as appropriate, to achieve a healthy and safe workplace and to take reasonable care of themselves and others
- Report to Social Material's Health and Safety Officer within 24 hours any accident occurring on the premises or off the premises whilst acting on behalf of Social Material
- Bring to the notice of Social Material's Health and Safety Officer any potentially dangerous circumstances that the employee is unable to put right.

5. Review

Social Material's Health and Safety Officer, in conjunction with the Management Committee, will keep this Policy under constant review to reflect any changes in legislation. The Policy will be fully reviewed annually and will be subject to approval by the Management Committee.

The Policy, procedures and risk assessments will also be reviewed under the following circumstances:

- Any relevant material change to the premises
- Any change to the operation of services within the premises
- The introduction of a new service or service user group

6. General Arrangements

6.1 First Aid

The aim of first aid is to reduce the effects of injury or illness suffered at work, whether caused by the work itself or not. First-aid provision must be 'adequate and appropriate in the circumstances'. This means that sufficient first-aid equipment, facilities and personnel should be available at all times, taking account of alternative working patterns, to:

- Give immediate assistance to casualties with both common injuries or illnesses and those likely to arise from specific hazards at work;
- Summon an ambulance or other professional help.

Social Material will make an assessment of first-aid needs appropriate to the circumstances (hazards and risks) of each working environment (part of specific and ongoing risk assessments).

Social Material will have at least one trained First-aider present at all activities with the public or other participant groups. The First-aider will be fully trained by an accredited body, and kept up-to-date with any necessary refresher courses. Any First-aiders will hold a valid certificate of competence in either first aid at work (FAW) or emergency first aid at work (EFAW).

Social Material will maintain at least two First Aid kits: one for the office environment, and one for any workshop or offsite environments. The kits will be compliant with current HSE guidance.

Social Material will work in close partnership with Peabody and other partners to ensure that their environments provide adequate First Aid provision.

6.2 Accidents, Near-Miss Occurrences and Hazardous Situations

Social Material has a Health and Safety Accident Book located in the Social Material Office and all incidents, no matter how small, must be recorded as soon as possible after the incident. The incident should also be reported to Social Material's Health and Safety Officer. In addition to reporting accidents it is equally important to report near misses and potential hazards so as to enable preventative action to be taken before it is too late. Once an incident has been recorded in the Accident Book the sheet must be removed and stored separately. It is the responsibility of Social Material's Health and Safety Officer to ensure that any necessary follow up action is taken to reduce the risk of the accident or near accident recurring.

Social Material's Health and Safety Officer is responsible for reporting incidents which fall within the remit of the 'Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences' regulations (RIDDOR) to the London Borough of Hackney Environmental Health Department. RIDDOR covers the following incidents:

- Fatal accidents
- Major injury accidents/conditions
- Dangerous occurrences
- Accidents causing more than 3 days incapacity for work
- Certain work-related diseases.

6.3 General Fire Safety

The organisation will ensure that clear instructions or action to be taken in the event of fire are available for all staff and visitors. This will include (but is not limited to):

- What action is to be taken in the event of fire
- Whereabouts of the fire alarms
- Whereabouts of the fire assembly point
- The location of fire extinguishers

The organisation will ensure that there is adequate training on fire procedures. The organisation will comply with any requirements to carry out Fire Risk Assessment.

Social Material's Health and Safety Officer is responsible for the maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and lead contact with Peabody's Fire Officer on the arrangement of regular fire safety checks and fire drills within the premises. The Peabody Fire Officer holds a Fire Certificate for the premises.

All staff must also read and understand the Fire Procedure. A fire notice is located in the premises.

6.4 Personal Safety

Staff or volunteers should only allow access to members of the public, participants and others during official workshop hours or for appointed meetings and should not allow access to the office to casual visitors who have no appointment at any time. All visitors must sign in at the main Link Street reception, staffed by Peabody staff.

- All windows and entry doors will be lockable.
- Staff who are going to be away on Social Material business should make it clear to other staff where they will be, how long for and how they can be contacted.
- Staff should inform the office who they wish to be contacted in the event of an emergency and provide contact details.
- Staff who carry money for Social Material have the right to be accompanied by another person. Visits to the bank should not be at a regular time.
- Staff should not put themselves at risk on account of Social Material's property.
- All incidents of aggression or violence and any threat to personal safety should be reported to Social Material's Health and Safety Officer and recorded in the accident book.
- Staff should be vigilant with regards to terrorist incident warnings e.g. unattended bags.

6.5 Stress Management

Stress at work is a serious issue: workers can suffer severe medical problems, which can result in under-performance at work, and cause major disruptions to the organisation.

The responsibility for reducing stress at work lies both with employer and employee. Employees should be provided with information and guidance about the causes of stress, and ensure that they do not work in a way which could cause them to suffer an increase in stress, nor cause an increase in stress on others.

If an employee is suffering from stress at work, they should discuss this with their Line Manager or Social Material's Health and Safety Officer at the first opportunity. Where practicable and reasonable, Social Material will seek to provide assistance to the employee.

Social Material will do all it can to eradicate problems relating to stress at work.

6.6 Display Screen Equipment (VDUs)

All staff should read the guidance booklet produced by the Health and Safety Executive on Working with VDUs (which can be downloaded free of charge from the HSE website) and follow the guidance, including the guidance on organisation of your workstation, the way you sit, and taking regular short breaks from your computer.

6.7 Offsite Activities

Social Material is committed to maintaining effective systems to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff and participants during all activities undertaken at external venues. During all off-site activities Social Material aims to provide a safe environment, in which risks are managed so far as is reasonably practicable so that injuries and other harmful circumstances are prevented. To ensure health and safety is maintained during off-site activities Social Material will:

- Ensure that Risk Assessments are completed for all off-site activities, including use of transport, premises, materials, equipment, risks to the public and all other hazards
- Ensure that appropriate first aid measures are taken- including the presence of a trained First-aider and a first aid box where appropriate
- Ensure that the Health and Safety guidelines of each partner organisation are understood and followed by staff
- Ensure that all staff have emergency contact details and the contact details for the Health and Safety Officer of partner schools or organisations where they are operating
- Ensure that staff are appropriately trained for each task
- Ensure that appropriate materials are used, full guidance and information is provided to staff and participants about hazardous materials, and suitable equipment/clothing distributed to participants
- Comply with legislation regarding safeguarding, child protection policy and guidelines for working with vulnerable adults (see Social Material's Child Protection Policy and Vulnerable Adults Policy)

- Report any relevant incidents during external activities to Social Material's Health and Safety Officer and record them in the Health and Safety/Accident book

6.8 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidelines

Risk assessment:

- A COVID-19 risk assessment should be carried out prior to any workshops, on-site working, public engagement or similar activities. The Covid Risk Assessment will use up-to-date Government and Public Health announcements and data to assess the risk of staff and participant safety, mental and physical wellbeing in the context of COVID-19.

General Guidelines:

- Prior to workshops or co-working, spaces, surfaces and other sites of transmission (door handles, tools and equipment) should be cleaned with anti-viral cleaner
- Workshop participants should be given their own set of materials and equipment, which should be cleaned prior to use and after activities have finished.
- Workshop participants / staff / attendees should maintain 2 metre distance, where appropriate (following current legislation)
- Extra care must be taken with vulnerable adults- particularly those with pre-existing medical conditions. Where appropriate, these adults may be advised not to attend group events. Additional care should be taken when communicating with adults with learning difficulties- ideally in partnership with their primary carer / support worker, to ensure that they have understood the risks, and to avoid unnecessary distress and fear.
- All staff, participants, volunteers, visitors, should wash hands prior to any activity, and frequently during an activity.
- Appropriate anti-viral hand sanitiser should be made freely available to all staff, volunteers, freelancers, participants, visitors.
- Where appropriate (following relevant public health guidance) medical face masks should be worn for co-working and activities in indoor spaces. Free face masks should be made available to any staff member, freelancer, volunteer or participant who wants to wear one.
- Where appropriate (following relevant public health guidelines) staff and freelancers should test for Covid-19 in the 12 hours prior to working with a group, or running an activity. Tests will be provided free of charge by Social Material.

- All staff, freelancers, volunteers, support workers and participants whom are experiencing symptoms, including a persistent cough, fever, digestion issues, loss of taste or smell (also see any current Govt & public health guidance); should be advised to self isolate, and not to attend work or other activities.
- Workshop, activity, and co-working spaces should be kept ventilated from two sources at all times- i.e. a window and a door / two windows, to maintain a flow-through of air; and / or with full air conditioning system. Spaces where this is not possible should only be occupied by one person at a time (i.e. storage room / kiln room etc.)
- Staff, freelancers, volunteer and staff of partner organisations should be fully informed about, and consulted on, Social Material's up-to-date Covid Guidelines and agree in writing to follow them for the duration of any activity or working period
- Any staff whom are working from home should be provided with the necessary equipment and resources to continue to work safely and effectively (i.e. laptop / costs for phone calls). Regular contact should be maintained (once per week where appropriate) with workers to discuss their wellbeing and any support needs.

6.9 Training and Induction

All staff will complete an induction programme with information about health and safety policy and procedure within the organisation.

Social Material's Health and Safety Officer will ensure that all staff fully understand the policy and are made aware of all fire alarm points, fire extinguishers, fire blankets and fire exits in the premises.

7. Non Compliance and Breaches of Health and Safety Policy

Social Material's Management Committee has the ultimate responsibility to ensure compliance with relevant health and safety legislation and to take appropriate action to safeguard the health and safety of its staff, participants and the wider community.

The Health and Safety Officer has the day-to-day responsibility to manage and monitor the actions of all staff to ensure compliance with the relevant policies, systems and procedures.

Where a breach or potential breach of health and safety or non-compliance with health and safety policy has been identified, the Management Committee should ensure that an adequate investigation is conducted to establish whether or not it would be appropriate to initiate the disciplinary procedure.

The purpose of the investigation is to:

- Enquire into the circumstances surrounding the alleged breach or non-compliance

- Provide those involved the opportunity to offer an explanation
- Based on the information collected, the Management Committee is expected to take a balanced and objective view of what action, if any would be appropriate
- The Management Committee should follow Social Material's Disciplinary Procedure in taking any further actions

Whilst the initial investigation should be sufficiently adequate to enable a decision on whether more formal action may be required, the general principle is that exhaustive examination of every possible aspect is not required.

8. Social Material Health and Safety Policy Checklist

The following is a list of things to be checked in Social Material 's office every six months.

Check:

- Workstations (including Display Screens) are safe. [Follow separate checklist VDU Workstation Inspection Checklist].
- Lighting is adequate for each task (no glare should be transmitted)
- Environment (noise levels, temperature, humidity, any anti-static device)
- User takes regular breaks from long tasks/positions [and ensure VDU users are aware of availability of free eye tests].
- Staff have been appropriately trained to carry out their tasks.
- First Aid box is in place and adequately stocked.
- Accident book and procedure is in place and staff are informed of these.
- Exits and walk-ways are kept clear and accessible to wheelchair users.
- Electrical and other equipment are safe to use and are not misused.
- For trailing wires and damaged floor coverings.
- Warning notices, where necessary, are clearly displayed.
- Heavy or dangerous items are not stored above shoulder height.
- Ensure heavier items are stored in lower drawers of filing cabinets and / or on lower shelves
- Stepladders are provided and used where necessary.

- Hazardous materials are stored properly and are clearly marked.
- Staff and volunteers are not expected to lift heavy items above their individual capability.
- Security/confidentiality arrangements are adequate (e.g. place for valuables).
- Office procedures relating to hygiene and cleanliness are complied with.
- Radiators are kept clear.

9. Key Contacts:

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