Thread Ahead Health and Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

It is the policy of Thread Ahead to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees and volunteers, and it will establish procedures and systems necessary to implement such a policy. The Charity will also ensure that all relevant statutory duties and obligations are satisfied, including those duties set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

The Charity will provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment with the objective of minimising the number of instances of occupational accidents and illnesses and ultimately achieving an accident-free workplace.

All employees and volunteers will be provided with such equipment, information, instructions, training and supervision as is necessary to implement the policy and achieve the stated objective.

The Charity also recognises its duty to protect the health and safety of all visitors to the organisation, including contractors and temporary workers, as well as any members of the public who might be affected by the Charity's work operations.

While the Charity will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of its employees and volunteers, health and safety at work is also the responsibility of the employees and volunteers themselves. All employees and volunteers should be aware of, respect and adhere to the rules and procedures contained in this policy. It is the responsibility of each employee and volunteer to take reasonable care of their own and other people's welfare and to report any situation which may pose a threat to the wellbeing of themselves or of any other person. If an employee or volunteer is unsure how to perform a certain task or feels it would be dangerous to perform a specific job, then it is their responsibility to report this to their line manager (or in the case of volunteers, the relevant manager) or ultimately to the Chief Operating Officer (CEO).

An effective health and safety programme requires continuous communication between managers and employees and volunteers at all levels.

All injuries, however small or slight, sustained by a person at work must be reported to their manager and the CEO. Accident records are crucial to the effective monitoring and revision of the Health, Safety and Risk Policy and must therefore be accurate and comprehensive.

Breach of the Policy by an employee may lead to disciplinary action and in serious cases of breach of Health and Safety Policy and Procedures, may lead to dismissal.

Breach of the Policy by a volunteer may result in suspension or cessation of their volunteer role with Thread Ahead.

Full details of the Policy and Procedure are detailed in this document.

2. Health and Safety Policy Statement

It is the policy of Thread Ahead to:

a) Safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all its employees while at work, and to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, working environments which are safe and without risks to health.
b) Conduct its undertakings in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that people not in its employment but who may be affected, are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.
c) Recognise its obligations to meet all relevant legislative requirements pertaining to health and safety, which apply to any of the undertakings of the organisation.
d) Organise and arrange its affairs to ensure compliance with the policy and relevant legislation.
e) Ensure that the contents of this policy are reviewed at least every two years, with any proposed amendments recommended to the Board for approval.

3. Responsibility for Health and Safety

The Trustee Board has overall responsibility for the Health and Safety of the organisation and has delegated to the CEO the management responsibility for ensuring such Health and Safety.

Staff at all levels are charged with implementing their specific responsibilities and with regards to such matters as risk assessment and accident investigation as described by this policy and underpinning procedures.

All employees and volunteers must take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. They must also cooperate with Thread Ahead and their co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

4. Operation of the Policy

Thread Ahead will:

a) Maintain an active interest in the implementation of the Safety Policies throughout the Charity to ensure that all levels of management and employees carry out their duties in this respect.
b) Ensure that the managerial responsibility and accountability for the safety, health and welfare of its employees as well as for the health and safety of others that may be affected by its undertakings, is specified in writing.
c) Ensure that the appropriate safety training and instruction is provided, and that accident prevention is included in all relevant training briefings.
d) Sustain an awareness of the need to prevent accidents and risks to health in the minds of all employees and volunteers.
e) Take into account, when risk assessing its work, any aspects which may help to eliminate injury, industrial disease, pollution and waste.
f) Make appropriate accident prevention arrangements at the workplace and maintain liaison with all other employers who have employees working at the same workplace as the Charity.
g) Ensure First Aid kits are located and clearly marked in all relevant areas where Thread Ahead employees are permanently located.
h) Encourage the discussion of health and safety matters at all levels
i) Prepare, discuss, agree and review, as required, suitable amendments and conditions to the Health and Safety Policy as may from time to time be considered necessary. Not allow any person suffering a reduction in levels of alertness and/or ability due to illness or fatigue to work if this might jeopardise the health and safety of that person or any other person.

5. Employee and Volunteer Responsibilities

All employees and volunteers of Thread Ahead:

a) Have a legal duty to take reasonable care of themselves and others and to ensure that they cooperate fully on points of health, safety and risk.
b) Must ensure that they comply with all emergency arrangements that are communicated to them.
c) Must ensure that they report all accidents, near misses or damage to machinery and property as soon as possible.
d) Where applicable, must complete the Thread Ahead Health and Safety training provided.

e) Must refrain from willful measures or interference with anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.
f) Must maintain their electronic work calendars on a daily basis, detailing whereabouts and anticipated timings, including, where appropriate, addresses and contact numbers for offsite meetings.
g) Must undertake and document risk assessments for all Thread Ahead activities that take place offsite unless otherwise prepared by the establishment visited, in which case these must be reviewed and agreed in advance of the Thread Ahead activities taking place.
h) Must carry out tasks in a safe manner and follow the requirements of any instructions or safe systems of work that may be provided for them. Should an employee or volunteer feel that there are situations that may pose a hazard they have a duty to report such findings to the CEO.
i) Have a duty to ensure that any personal protective equipment provided for their protection is worn, maintained and stored in the correct manner.

6. Health and Safety Policy Enforcement

Failure to comply with Health and Safety laws can lead to serious consequences, both for the organisation and individuals. All employees and volunteers must comply with this policy. Breach of the Policy by an employee may lead to disciplinary action and, in serious cases may lead to dismissal.

Breach of the Policy by a volunteer may result in suspension or cessation of their volunteer role with Thread Ahead.

7. Reporting Accidents and Near Misses

Employees and volunteers must report all accidents and near-miss incidents that occur during work time immediately to the CEO and record the incident in Thread Ahead's 'Accident at Work' record sheet as soon as reasonably practicable. This includes incidents while working from home, at the office, travelling during work hours and activities on and off educational establishment sites. Thread Ahead's Accident at Work records are located with the Charity's online Airtable system. Alternatively, Accident at Work Forms can be located in the Health and Safety folder on the Thread Ahead Google Drive.

Employees and volunteers must seek appropriate medical attention for any injury they may receive, no matter how minor it may seem to be. Medical attention may include first aid or attendance at a hospital casualty department. Upon returning from treatment, Employees and volunteers must report the incident to either the CEO or the most senior person on site and enter details in the Accident at Work Book.

Where accidents involve young people participating in Thread Ahead events, employees and volunteers must notify the member of the referral organisation staff in charge of the event as a priority, as well as the relevant Thread Ahead staff member.

Employees must notify the person in charge of any incident in which damage is caused to either Thread Ahead's or a third party's property. Staff must report all accidents to the CEO.

Health and Safety reporting will form a standing item in Board of Trustees meetings quarterly.

Where an accident occurs at work, the Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for ensuring that RIDDOR guidelines are implemented and notification made to the appropriate authority.

Near Misses

A "near miss" is any incident, accident or emergency which did not result in an injury, but which could have done so.

Recording non-reportable near misses is not a statutory requirement but doing so and using the information provided is good safety management practice as reviewing the report (at the time and/or periodically) may help to prevent a re-occurrence.

Recording near misses can also help identify any weaknesses in operational procedures as deviations from normal good practice may only happen infrequently but could have potentially serious consequences.

A review of near misses over time may also reveal patterns from which lessons can be learned.

8. Health and Safety Procedure

The specific arrangements for the implementation of the Thread Ahead Health and Safety Policy are detailed below:

Training

Health and Safety training is an indispensable part of an effective health and safety programme. It is essential that every employee and volunteer is trained to perform his or her role effectively and safely. All employees and volunteers will be trained in safe working practices and procedures as part of their induction. In addition, health and safety will be routinely discussed during performance development reviews (PDRs) with each employee, and at volunteer refresher meetings for volunteers.

Work Equipment

The Charity will take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all employees using work equipment provided by the Charity, as well as ensure the safety of others who may be affected by the equipment. The Charity will liaise with suppliers to ensure that any new machinery is designed and supplied to work in a safe manner and will inform and train employees to use the equipment in a safe and efficient manner.

Should employees have any problems relating to the operation of equipment, or the safety of that equipment, they should immediately inform their line manager so that steps can be taken to remedy the situation promptly.

Manual handling operations

The Charity's objective is to minimise any risk to employees and volunteers of accident or injury resulting from manual handling operations. The Charity will endeavour to avoid the need for manual handling activities, so far as is reasonably practicable. Where it is not possible to avoid manual handling operations, an assessment of the operation will be made taking into account the task, the load, the workplace and the capability of the individual concerned. Employees and volunteers will be given appropriate and adequate online training on health and safety aspects of this work.

The following controls are in place and will reduce the risk of accident or injury to the lowest extent reasonably practicable:

- Lifting and moving of objects should always be done by mechanical devices rather than manual handling wherever reasonably practicable and necessary. The equipment used should be appropriate for the task at hand.
- The load to be lifted or moved must be inspected for sharp edges and wet or greasy patches.
- When lifting or moving a load with sharp or splintered edges, gloves must be worn. Gloves should be free from oil, grease or other agents which might impair grip.
- The route over which the load is to be lifted or moved should be inspected to ensure that it is free of obstructions or spillage which could cause tripping.
- Employees and volunteers should not attempt to lift or move a load which is too heavy to manage comfortably. Assistance should be sought if there is any danger of strain.
- Where team lifting or moving is necessary, one person should act as coordinator.
- When lifting an object off the ground, employees and volunteers should assume a squatting position, keeping the back straight. The load should be lifted by straightening the knees, not the back. These steps should be reversed for lowering an object to the ground.

9. Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Users

DSE is any work equipment having a screen that displays information e.g. computer screens, often called monitors or VDUs.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations aim to protect the health of people who work with DSE.

Under these regulations:

- Thread Ahead will make a risk assessment of all workstations which might be used by DSE 'users' employed by them.
- Thread Ahead will reduce risks to the lowest reasonably practicable level.
- Daily work routines of 'users' must be planned so that DSE work is periodically interrupted by rest breaks or other types of work.
- If they wish, 'users' are entitled to an eye test paid for by Thread Ahead. If it shows that glasses or lenses are needed for DSE work, Thread Ahead will

contribute towards the cost of prescription glasses up to a maximum of £30.00.

- Thread Ahead will provide 'users' with health and safety training on the use of their workstation and with information on the risks and the measures to control risks

10. Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH)

Within the working environment, many substances are routinely used that could potentially be injurious to health if not properly stored, handled or used correctly. The Charity is required by law to assess the risks from the use of substances at work. A risk assessment will be conducted of all work involving exposure to hazardous substances. The assessment will be based upon manufacturers' and suppliers' health and safety guidance, the Charity's own knowledge of the work process and any relevant information or guidance made available by the Health and Safety Executive.

The Charity will ensure that exposure of employees and volunteers to hazardous substances is minimised and adequately controlled in all cases. Those identified as likely to come into contact with hazardous substances will receive comprehensive and adequate training and information on the health and safety issues relating to that type of work. Assessments will be reviewed periodically whenever there is a substantial modification to the work process.

11. Employees and volunteers at special risk

The Charity recognises that some employees and volunteers may from time to time be at increased risk of injury or ill-health resulting from work activities. The Charity therefore requires that all employees and volunteers advise their manager if they become aware of any change in their personal circumstances which could result in their being at increased risk. This could include medical conditions, permanent or temporary disability, taking medication and pregnancy. Where personnel at special risk are identified, a further assessment of risk in addition to the general risk assessment will be undertaken.

12. Fire Safety Precautions for office-based employees

All employees have a duty to report immediately any fire, smoke or potential fire hazards to the fire service. Thread Ahead has a Fire Action Plan including risk assessments and a Fire Safety Marshal at the office. The Fire Safety Marshal is responsible for liaising with the responsible party for the maintenance and testing of fire alarms and firefighting, prevention and detection equipment in buildings which the Charity lease. Where the Charity is hosted by another organisation, it is the responsibility of the CEO to liaise directly with the Fire Safety person of the hosting office and ensure that up-to-date information is passed on relating to the current staff and that Thread Ahead employees are clear on fire evacuation procedures.

All employees have a duty to conduct their operations in such a way as to minimise the risk of fire. This involves keeping combustible materials separate from sources of ignition and avoiding unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials. Employees are advised not to use electric fires and other heaters. Employees are not permitted to bring into the workplace their own heating equipment. Employees must report any faulty electric cable or loose connection immediately to their line manager. All electrical equipment which does not require continuous operation should be switched off when not in use. Employees should never attempt to repair or interfere with electrical equipment or wiring themselves and should not use dual or other socket outlets unless these have been properly authorised by their line manager. All electrical equipment of this type must be subject to portable appliance testing.

Line managers are responsible for keeping their operating areas safe from fire, ensuring that their staff are trained in proper fire prevention practices and emergency procedures. Online training is provided in this regard.

Smoke detectors and manually operated fire alarms are located at strategic points throughout the workplace. If a smoke detector sounds, it is the responsibility of any employee present to activate the alarm and evacuate the building. Fire extinguishers are also located at strategic points throughout the workplace. Employees are expected to tackle a fire themselves only if it would pose no threat to their personal safety to do so. If the situation is dangerous or potentially dangerous, the employee should activate the alarm and evacuate the building immediately.

Exit doors and corridors must never be locked, blocked or used as storage space. Lifts should not be used in the case of an emergency evacuation. Employees should ensure that they are familiar with the position of the nearest firefighting equipment, alarms and emergency exits.

In the event of the fire alarm being activated, or in any other emergency situation (such as a bomb scare), all employees must leave the building by the nearest available exit in an orderly fashion and assemble at the designated assembly point. The designated assembly points for each department will be notified to all employees. Practice fire drills will be conducted on a regular basis to ensure employee familiarity with emergency evacuation procedures.

13. Thread Ahead Smoking Policy

Public health laws in the UK state that enclosed or substantially enclosed workplaces and public places must be smoke free. Thread Ahead complies with the current legislation, and smoking is not permitted in the Thread Ahead office.

14. Risk Assessments

Operational risk assessments must be completed or obtained and reviewed for all Thread Ahead Activities that take place offsite, including distribution events, volunteer days, and fundraising events.

Risk Assessment Templates are available on the Thread Ahead Drive for completion. All completed risk assessments should be signed off by a member of Thread Ahead Staff responsible for the event before the activity takes place. Copies of the completed Risk Assessments should be filed in the event folder.

All Risk Assessments, when completed, are not to be destroyed or removed from the Thread Ahead Drive.

Employee Maternity Risk Assessments will be filed on the individual's personnel record.

Risk Assessments for the Thread Ahead office are conducted annually by the CEO and are filed in the Risk Assessment folder on the Thread Ahead Drive.

15. Reporting of incidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations (RIDDOR)

Legislation requires that certain prescribed events, injuries and diseases be formally reported. Notwithstanding our legal obligations, the Charity views accident investigation as a valuable tool in the prevention of future incidents. In the event of an accident resulting in injury, a report will be drawn up by the line manager detailing:

- The circumstances of the accident including photographs and diagrams wherever possible
- The nature and severity of the injury sustained
- The identity of any eye witnesses
- The time, date and location of the incident
- The date of the report.

All eyewitness accounts will be collected as near to the time of the accident as is reasonably practicable. The completed report will then be submitted to the CEO who will attempt to discover why the accident occurred and what action should be taken to avoid a recurrence of the problem at the site in question and elsewhere. A follow-up report will be completed after a reasonable period of time examining the effectiveness of any new measures adopted.

Staff are responsible for reporting all cases of accident and contagious disease to the CEO.

16. First Aid

First aid kits are available in the office and in event kits. All first aid kits are clearly marked and are easily accessible by all employees during working hours. Where Thread Ahead leases the building, one person holding a current first aid certificate is responsible for the proper use and maintenance of each first aid kit.

Those working at off-site events should ensure they are aware of the first aid provisions at those locations and bring a first aid kit.

17. Housekeeping

- Worksites must be kept clean and tidy
- Any spillages must be cleaned up immediately
- Waste materials and rubbish must be placed in the receptacles provided and removed routinely

- All combustible waste materials must be discarded in sealed metal containers
- All holes must be covered when not in use and clearly marked with warning signs when in use
- All materials must be properly and safely used, and when not in use, properly and safely secured.

18. Access and egress

- Walkways and passageways must be kept clear from obstructions at all times
- If a walkway or passageway becomes wet, it should be clearly marked with warning signs and/or covered with non-slip material. Any liquid spilt on the floor should be wiped up immediately.
- Trailing cables are a trip hazard and should not be left in any passageway.
- Any change in the floor elevation of any walkway or passageway must be clearly marked.
- Where objects are stored in or around a passageway, care must be taken to ensure that no long or sharp edges jut out into the passageway in such a way as to constitute a safety hazard.
- Where a passageway is being used by any vehicles or other moving machinery, an alternative route should be used by pedestrians wherever possible. If no alternative route is possible, the area should be clearly marked with warning signs.

19. Other Risks

Thread Ahead will keep under review from time to time new and emerging risks and safety situations that may be brought to light in the sector and respond to these accordingly at the time following a risk assessment of the same.

20. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.