

Policies and procedures

Health and Safety

Reviewed:	May 2022
Originally approved by:	Governance Committee, 9/4/19
Updated by:	Governance Board, 10/5/22
Next review due:	May 2026



1. GENERAL STATEMENT

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of:

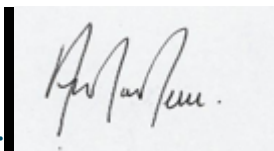
Healthwatch Havering

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

Our statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities
- to consult with our employees and volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for employees and volunteers
- to ensure all employees and volunteers are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training
- to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions
- to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Signed:



(Chairman)

Date: 10 May 2022

Review date: May 2026

2 RESPONSIBILITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT

The Directors

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all its employees and volunteers and other people who may be affected by their activities, e.g. users and members of the public.

The Directors on behalf of the Company ¹ as the employer have overall and final responsibility for health and safety matters at Healthwatch Havering, and for ensuring that health and safety legislation is complied with.

The Directors will periodically review the operation of its health and safety policy and will ensure:

- employees and volunteers as appropriate receive enough information, training and supervision on health and safety matters
- a risk assessment is undertaken, and the results written up and made available to all employees
- accidents are investigated and reported to the Management Board
- there are arrangements in place to monitor the maintenance of the premises
- there are adequate arrangements to liaise and co-operate on health and safety matters with the management team at Queens Court.

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Community Support Officer

All Employees and Volunteer Members

All employees and volunteer members must:

¹ Havering Healthwatch C.I.C.

- co-operate on health and safety matters
- not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety
- report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed in this policy statement).

Fire Officer

The Directors will appoint a Fire Officer who shall receive appropriate training, and comply with the arrangements of Queens Court management of the premises

At the time of issue of this policy this is the Community Support Officer.

The responsibilities of the Fire Officer are to:

- be instructed on potential fire hazards and the use of firefighting equipment
- co-operate with Queens Court management on the testing of fire alarms and fire drills
- assist with the efficient evacuation of staff and visitors
- if necessary, liaise with the Fire Brigade at the assembly point
- ensure staff and volunteers attending at the office are aware of the fire alarm and fire drill.

FOR DETAILED FIRE SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS SEE SECTION 9.

First Aid Person

At the time of issuing this policy, the Community Support Officer will ensure that the first aid box is kept in the correct place, containing items laid down in the code of Practice and Guidance Notes published by the HSE and is regularly checked and restocked.

FOR DETAILED FIRST AID AND ACCIDENT ARRANGEMENTS SEE SECTION 11.

Risk Assessment

The Directors will ensure that a risk assessment will be carried out by a competent person in accordance with the 1992 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP). This risk assessment will be written up and be made available to all staff and volunteers.

The written risk assessment will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure it covers all employees against all risks, and to ensure that any action identified as needed in the risk assessment has been carried out. The risk assessment will also be updated every time that there is a major change in working practices. The risk assessment will cover all employees of Healthwatch Havering, wherever they may be based, and will cover all aspects of their work.

SEE SECTION 15

Training

The Community Support Officer will ensure that new employees and volunteer members receive information on health and safety as part of their induction.

The Community Support Officer will organise training for employees and volunteer members on health and safety matters as appropriate, including: general health and safety training, first aid, manual handling, fire safety, risk assessment. The Community Support Officer will also organise training for appropriate use of equipment, and any special training needed to ensure safe systems of work.

If employees and volunteer members, consider they have health and safety training needs they should inform their manager or Lead volunteer member.

Buildings

The Company Secretary in conjunction with Queens Court management has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for staff and volunteers.

All the staff and volunteer members at Healthwatch Havering are responsible for spotting hazards or potential hazards. If a hazard is seen, it should be removed or dealt with as soon as possible, or if not, reports to the Community Support Officer of the Office Manager

Examples of Hazards

- Things Out of Reach:
 - Chairs or other furniture must not be used to stand on for the purpose of replacing light bulbs, reaching for things off top of cabinets, etc. A properly maintained, undamaged step ladder must be used.
- Damaged Equipment:
 - Regular checks must be carried out on furniture and equipment for damage which leaves sharp edges protruding or other hazards. Any damaged furniture must be reported for repair or condemnation straight away and must be removed from use.
- Damage to Fabric of Building, Windows, etc:
 - All such damage must be reported immediately to the competent person as named above.
- Misplaced Furniture, Equipment or Supplies:
 - Any furniture, equipment or supplies left in an inappropriate place, for example obstructing a gangway, must be removed immediately and placed in an appropriate, safe place.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Aisles & Gangways

Aisles & gangways must be kept clear from obstructions and

materials must be stored in safe areas. Under no circumstances must goods or materials be stacked immediately in front of or obstructing fire doors, fire exits, fire alarms or fire equipment.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed at any premises used or occupied by Healthwatch Havering.

Overcrowding

Healthwatch Havering will avoid unhealthy and overcrowded working conditions and will consult staff on any changes in office layout.

Ventilation

Healthwatch Havering will endeavour to provide a well-ventilated workplace in which staff have control over their local level of ventilation.

Temperature

In office workplaces a minimum temperature of 16⁰C must be maintained. Efforts will be made so far as is reasonably practical to ensure the workplace temperature does not rise to an uncomfortable level.

Lighting

Adequate lighting must be provided. If lights are found to be out of order, the fault must be corrected as soon as reasonably possible.

Noise

Healthwatch Havering will endeavour to ensure that noise in its

offices is kept to as low a level as is practicable.

Office Atmospheric Pollutants

Office equipment such as photocopiers and printers can emit pollutants into the atmosphere. The organisation will take reasonable precautions in ensuring that these levels are kept as low as possible. Employees and volunteer members will not be expected to work in enclosed spaces with equipment that emits atmospheric pollutants. Spaces where these pollutants are present shall be kept well ventilated.

Equipment Storage and Usage

- Equipment must not be left lying around but must be suitably stored
- No wires must be left trailing across floors
- Non-flammable rubbish bins must be positioned at various points
- Except in emergencies, and with the permission of the H&S Officer, no paraffin, bar electric or calor gas fires will be used at premises used by Healthwatch Havering at the Queens Court site

Electrical Equipment

All building maintenance such as electrical work, carpentry, painting, etc should be carried out by skilled people. Staff should not endanger themselves and others by carrying out such work.

Broken, ineffective or damaged electrical equipment must be reported. Staff should use electrical equipment in accordance with instructions.

Working at height

No employee, volunteer member or visitor is required to work at height, and it is forbidden to do so. Please refer to section 3.3.1 Things out of Reach

WELFARE ARRANGEMENTS

Toilet and Washing Facilities

Healthwatch Havering will ensure that suitable and enough toilets and washing facilities are provided for all staff in accordance with the minimum requirements of Health & Safety legislation.

The toilet will be in a separate, lockable room

Washing facilities will include a supply of clean hot and cold water, soap and suitable means of drying.

Drinking Water

An adequate supply of drinking water will be provided for all staff.

Rest Areas

So far as is reasonably practicable, Healthwatch Havering will provide its staff with a seating arrangement where, during rest periods, they may have a break away from their workstations. This is provided in the kitchen on the 3rd floor of Queens Court.

Pregnant Women

Suitable rest facilities will be provided for pregnant employees.

Hours of Work

The employees of Healthwatch Havering should not work excessively long hours and should take adequate breaks for meals and rest as indicated within their statement of terms and conditions of employment.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Office Security

It is in the nature of the organisation's work that staff or volunteer members may, on occasions, find themselves in potentially dangerous situations whilst on business. The following policy is concerned to minimise the risk to people working for Healthwatch Havering.

Staff or volunteers who are working on their own should not allow access to casual visitors who have no appointment. Such callers should be encouraged to make an appointment.

Where staff or volunteers are dealing with an individual but feel uneasy about being alone with him or her, they have the right to refuse to make an appointment or give access if it would put them in that position. In these situations, the management will put their trust in the feelings of the worker.

All windows and entry doors will be lockable.

WORKING AWAY FROM THE OFFICE

Staff and volunteers who are going to be working away from the office should make it clear to other staff or volunteers where they will be, how long for and how they can be contacted.

If in the course of a trip away from the office plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the office.

Staff should make clear who they wish to be informed (outside of work) in the event of an emergency and how they can normally be contacted.

The Community Support Officer/ Office Manager will keep a personal alarm for use by staff.

WORKING ALONE

The nature of the organisation means that there will inevitable be times when staff will be working alone in the office.

When working alone, staff must never lock the door to the office. Although there is a small risk of unauthorised persons entering the office, the greater risk is that a lone worker would be locked in and unable to get help in the event of a medical or other emergency occurring.

Personal alarms will be supplied as a means of summoning assistance in an emergency, in addition to the use of the office or Queen's Court telephones.

HOLDING OR CARRYING MONEY OR VALUABLES FOR THE ORGANISATION

Staff and Volunteers will not be asked to hold or carry money or valuables for the organisation

Under no circumstances should staff put themselves at risk on account of the property of Healthwatch Havering

PERSONAL AWARENESS

There are lots of things we already do that keep us safe but becoming more aware of our surroundings puts us in control of our environment. The following steps are recommended to all staff and volunteers as being helpful.

WHILST OUT AND ABOUT

- **Trust your intuition and listen to your feelings.** If you sense something is wrong, it probably is. Acting on intuition may prevent an aggressive situation.
- **Be prepared.** Do you know whom to contact and what to do if a difficult situation arises? Find out and if there is no one designated, ask for a supervisor or manager to be nominated.
- **Be observant.** Notice everything around you – exit doors, telephones, windows, sources of help. This will make you more aware of your surroundings and help you escape if you need to.
- **Assess potential risks.** Avoid dangerous short cuts, walk facing the traffic on the street side of pavements, think about where you park your car and remember where you have parked it.
- **Make sure you have all relevant information with you.** Have you checked to see if there is a known problem with whom you are or where you are going?
- **Look confident.** "Walking tall" and being aware of your surroundings deters assailants.
- **Never stay in a situation where you think you may be at risk.** Don't feel you have to stay because of your work. You can see the individual, arrange the visit or do the interview again. Don't be afraid to ask for
 - help.
- **Be aware of personal space** – yours and others. Encroaching on other people's personal space can make them aggressive. If other people are too close to you and making you uncomfortable, ask for more space or move away.
- **Don't get into lifts with people who make you feel uneasy.** If you are in a lift and feel uncomfortable, get out and use the stairs, or wait for another lift. Make sure you know where the emergency

button is and stand where you can reach it

- **Don't accept lifts in vehicles from, or offer lifts to, people you don't know.**
- **Think about what you are wearing. Can you run if you need to?**

REPORTING AND RECORDING

All incidents of aggression or violence should be reported to management and recorded in the accident book.

Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe working environment. Staff should report any current or potential situation at work which is a threat to personal safety. Talking about fear and other problems related to aggression or harassment are not marks of failure but good practice. A serious incident, even if it results in no physical harm, may cause feelings of fear, panic or despair which can carry on long afterwards.

The Directors of Healthwatch Havering recognise this and will be disposed to provide whatever support, counselling or time off work seems appropriate.

HOMEWORKING

When employees or volunteers are carrying out work for Healthwatch Havering at home all health and safety rules and guidance in this policy apply in the same way that they do in the workplace.

It is the responsibility of the employee or volunteer to ensure that their home working environment and equipment used in the home is safe. A risk assessment in accordance with the guidance given in this policy should be carried out.

The employee and volunteer will be asked to indemnify the organisation from damages caused by accidents in the home.

VISUAL DISPLAY EQUIPMENT

General

It is the policy of Healthwatch Havering to comply with the law as set out in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

Healthwatch Havering will at the request of any employee conduct health and safety assessments of all workstations staffed by employees who use VDU screens as part of their usual work. All workstations must meet the requirements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations.

Nature and Organisation of Work

Appropriate seating must be available to all users.

Staff will take regular breaks (at least 10 minutes away for every hour at the screen). Short frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional longer breaks.

Equipment

Resources will be sought by Healthwatch Havering to:

- provide VDUs with a detachable and adjustable screen, i.e. in height, swivel, etc, to allow for the individual preference of the operator
- provide computer cleaning supplies
- provide a wrist and foot rest at each workstation
- an anti-static mat at each workstation
- provide keyboards which are separate from screens
- provide anti-glare screens, where direct light cannot be prevented
- from falling on the screen
- provide adequate workstation space.

Maintenance

The Officer Manager and or the Company Secretary should hold copies of manufacturers' detailed instructions on the maintenance of machinery and will ensure that maintenance contracts are adhered to and, where appropriate, renewed.

Eye and Eyesight Tests

New staff are entitled to have eyesight tests paid for by Healthwatch Havering.

Where a member of staff is experiencing eyesight problems attributable to their work with VDUs s/he will be entitled to have an eyesight test paid for by Healthwatch Havering.

Where a test shows that as a result of work with the organisation's VDUs, a member of staff needs to purchase special corrective appliances (usually glasses), these will be paid for by Healthwatch Havering. This excludes those normally used for purposes other than work with VDUs and is subject to a maximum expenditure of £50.

WRULDS/RSI

Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (also known as Repetitive Strain Injury) are often associated with keyboard work. It is the intention of Healthwatch Havering, by following best advice, to provide VDU/keyboard equipment and furniture which help prevent the development of these musculoskeletal disorders. Staff should contribute to their own safety and welfare by:

- avoiding sitting in the same position for long periods
- adjusting equipment and furniture to appropriate and comfortable positions
- taking regular rest breaks from VDU work (at least 10 minutes away from the screen in every hour) by doing some other work.

FIRE SAFETY

General

It is not only the responsibility of the Fire Officer, but of all staff, Volunteer members working at Healthwatch Havering's offices to be aware of fire hazards, to know the location of fire exists and the assembly point. Everyone must know the fire drill instructions, and these will be part of the induction process for all new staff and volunteers.

Access to escape doors, extinguishers and other firefighting equipment must not be obstructed and the Fire Officer will be instructed on their use.

A register of those present in the office will be maintained and an entry will be made for all present.

Fire Drills

Healthwatch Havering's Fire Officer is responsible for co-operating with

the management of Queens Court on the carrying out of fire drills, although the responsibility for those arrangements' rests with Queens Court management. The Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the evacuation procedures and that the management of Queens Court are asked to remove obstructions from fire exists.

The Fire Officer will liaise with Queens Court management to ensure that regular fire alarm tests and fire drills are carried out.

Visitors and all staff, including volunteers, must be made fully familiar with the escape routes and Healthwatch Havering's assembly point in accordance with Queens Court management's requirements.

Fire Drill Procedure

If the Fire Alarm Sounds

- Evacuate the building immediately by the nearest exit
- Ensure any visitors leave the building
- Do not put yourself at risk
- Assemble in front of the building
- Do not re-enter the building for any reason until the Fire Officer or fire brigade confirm that it is safe to do so.

If You Discover A Fire

- Raise the alarm by operating the break glass switch at the nearest fire alarm call point.
- Evacuate the building immediately as above.

HYGIENE

- All areas must be kept clean and tidy.
- Toilets must be washed regularly and kept clean.
- All wash basins should be provided with hot water, soap, clean paper towels or hand dryers.
- Disposal bins for sanitary items should be provided. Bins should be emptied and sanitised regularly.

FIRST AID AND ACCIDENT REPORTING

First Aid

First Aid provision will always be available in an appropriate and accessible First Aid Box.

The First Aid Box is kept in the office area.

At least one employee will receive appropriate first aid training.

All new employees and volunteers will be told as part of their induction of the location of first aid equipment and the employee who has received first aid training.

A record of all first aid cases treated will be kept in the Accident Book, which will be kept with the First Aid Box.

Accidents and Emergencies

All employees and volunteers must report all incidents which resulted or nearly resulted in personal injury to themselves or others, to the Community Support Officer or Officer Manager whoever is present and make sure the accident is recorded in the Accident

Book.

The Community Support Officer or Officer Manager will ensure that personal details of individual(s) will be stored separately from the Accident Book in a secure location to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

It is the responsibility of the Community Support Officer/Office Manager to ensure that any necessary follow-up action is taken to reduce the risk of the accident or near accident recurring.

The Community Support Officer/Company Secretary is responsible for reporting incidents which come within the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), to the London Borough of Havering Environmental Health Department. RIDDOR covers the following incidents:

- fatal accidents
- major injury accidents/conditions
- dangerous occurrences
- accidents causing more than 3 days incapacity from work
- certain work-related diseases.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES (COSHH)

General Statement

Under the 1992 COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations employers have a duty to assess the risks related to

hazardous substances e.g. chemicals, noxious fumes etc. In accordance with the Approved Code of Practice this assessment will be carried out and written down by a nominated competent person.

The person responsible for carrying out this assessment will be The Company Secretary.

Following this assessment, in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) Healthwatch Havering will:

- In the first instance act to remove any hazardous substances
- If this is not possible, action shall be taken to find a substitute for the hazardous substance
- If this is not possible, such substances shall be enclosed within a safe environment
- If none of the above is possible, protective equipment will be issued to ensure the safety of staff.

Monitoring

If for any reason a member of staff or volunteer has been exposed to a possibly hazardous substance, levels of exposure will be monitored.

At all times levels of ill-health related to exposure to hazardous substances at work will be monitored.

Removal, Substitution, enclosure and Protection

All members of staff shall always avoid using hazardous substances if possible. Where substitute materials are available, they should be used (e.g. water based markers, correction fluid, etc). If there is no way of avoiding such use, staff must use the substance in an enclosed, ventilated environment away from other workers, and use proper protective equipment which shall be made available.

LIFTING AND HANDLING

The employees of Healthwatch Havering should avoid manual lifting where at all possible. However, employees may occasionally be required to manually lift and handle loads. Correct manual lifting and handling reduces the effort required and prevents strain and risk of injury.

Volunteers should not put themselves at risk by attempting to lift heavy

loads in any situation while on duty with Healthwatch Havering.

Any employee feeling a strain should stop immediately and record the incident in the Accident Book.

Aids to reduce the risk of injury (e.g. trolleys) must always be used if available.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress at work is a serious issue, which can result in under-performance at work and cause disruptions to the organisation.

Stress is a workplace hazard that must be dealt with like any other. Thus, the responsibility for reducing stress at work lies both with employer and employee.

Healthwatch Havering will do all it can to eradicate problems relating to stress at work. It will:

- ensure close employee involvement, particularly during periods of change
- give opportunities for staff to contribute in the planning and organisation of their own jobs
- ensure staff have work targets that are stretching but reasonable
- implement effective policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and any form of harassment
- encourage good communications between staff and

management

- promote the maintenance of a supportive culture in the workplace
- where appropriate take into consideration employees' personal situation/problems at home
- ensure employees avoid working long and unsocial hours.

Healthwatch Havering will ensure as far as practicable that its policies, working practices and conditions of employment support its commitment to the above.

Employees and volunteer members should ensure that they do not work in a way that could cause them to suffer an increase of stress, nor cause an increase of stress on others.

Employees and volunteer members must respect other members of staff and ensure that interpersonal conflict is avoided or dealt with sensibly.

Employees and volunteer members must not make unrealistic demands on other workers by increasing others' workload.

Employees and volunteer member should participate with the organisation's intention to maintain a supportive workplace environment.

If an employee or volunteer member is suffering from stress at work, s/he should discuss this with the Community Support Officer at the first opportunity. Where practicable and reasonable, Healthwatch Havering will seek to aid the employee or volunteer member

RISK ASSESSMENT

1. What is a Risk Assessment?

Risk assessment helps you protect your workers and everyone using your organisation. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter, the ones with potential to cause harm. A risk assessment is, as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) describe: "a careful examination of

what, in your work, could cause harm to people the aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill".

2. Carrying out a Risk Assessment:

Carrying out a risk assessment is a relatively straightforward process, simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, and what precautions need to be taken.

The HSE prescribes a 'Five Step' process:

Step One - Identify the hazards

Step Two - identify who is at risk

Step Three - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Step Four - Record your findings

Other considerations:

- * if you share a building with other groups, it is a **legal requirement** that you all co-operate with each other in carrying out assessments

CONTACTS

**Local health and safety inspector's office and telephone number:
Mercury House, Romford 01708 434343.**

What is Healthwatch Havering?

Healthwatch Havering is the local consumer champion for both health and social care in the London Borough of Havering. Our aim is to give local citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided for all individuals locally.

We are an independent organisation, established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and employ our own staff and involve lay people/volunteers so that we can become the influential and effective voice of the public.

Healthwatch Havering is a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee, managed by three part-time directors, including the Chairman and the Company Secretary, supported by two part-time staff, and by volunteers, both from professional health and social care backgrounds and lay people who have an interest in health or social care issues.

Why is this important to you and your family and friends?

Following the public inquiry into the failings at Mid-Staffordshire Hospital, the Francis report reinforced the importance of the voices of patients and their relatives within the health and social care system.

Healthwatch England is the national organisation which enables the collective views of the people who use NHS and social services to influence national policy, advice and guidance.

Healthwatch Havering is your local organisation, enabling you on behalf of yourself, your family and your friends to ensure views and concerns about the local health and social services are understood.

Your contribution is vital in helping to build a picture of where services are doing well and where they need to be improved. This will help and support the Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Services and contractors, and the Local Authority to make sure their services really are designed to meet citizens' needs.

***'You make a living by what you get,
but you make a life by what you give.'***
Winston Churchill

Joining Healthwatch Havering

Local people who have time to spare are welcome to join us as volunteers. We need both people who work in health or social care services, and those who are simply interested in getting the best possible health and social care services for the people of Havering.

Our aim is to develop wide, comprehensive and inclusive involvement in Healthwatch Havering, to allow every individual and organisation of the Havering Community to have a role and a voice at a level they feel appropriate to their personal circumstances.

We are looking for:

Members

This is the key working role. For some, this role will provide an opportunity to help improve an area of health and social care where they, their families or friends have experienced problems or difficulties. Very often a life experience has encouraged people to think about giving something back to the local community or simply personal circumstances now allow individuals to have time to develop themselves. This role will enable people to extend their networks, and can help prepare for college, university or a change in the working life. There is no need for any prior experience in health or social care for this role.

The role provides the face to face contact with the community, listening, helping, signposting, providing advice. It also is part of ensuring the most isolated people within our community have a voice.

Some Members may wish to become **Specialists**, developing and using expertise in a particular area of social care or health services.

Supporters

Participation as a Supporter is open to every citizen and organisation that lives or operates within the London Borough of Havering. Supporters ensure that Healthwatch is rooted in the community and acts with a view to ensure that Healthwatch Havering represents and promotes community involvement in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of health and social services.

Interested? Want to know more?



*Healthwatch Havering is the operating name of
Havering Healthwatch C.I.C.
A community interest company limited by guarantee
Registered in England and Wales
No. 08416383*

*Registered Office:
Queen's Court, 9-17 Eastern Road, Romford RM1 3NH
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