



Health and Safety Policy

Bittern Meadow CIC is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees and it will, so far as is reasonably practicable, establish procedures and systems necessary to implement this commitment and to comply with its statutory obligations on health and safety. It is the responsibility of each employee to familiarise themselves and comply with the Bittern Meadow CIC procedures and systems on health and safety.

While Bittern Meadow CIC will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of its employees, health and safety at work is also the responsibility of the employees themselves. It is the duty of each employee to take reasonable care of their own and other people's health, safety and welfare and to report any situation which may pose a serious or imminent threat to the well being of themselves or of any other person.

Bittern Meadow CIC is committed to;

1. Maintaining the workplace in a safe condition and providing adequate facilities and arrangements for welfare at work.
2. The provision and maintenance of equipment and systems of work that are safe.
3. Arrangements for ensuring safety to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
4. The provision of such information, instructions, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of its employees and other persons.

Bittern Meadow CIC also recognises its duty to protect the health and safety of all contractors and temporary workers, as well as any members of the public who might be affected by work operations.

The Directors of Bittern Meadow CIC have overall responsibility for Health and Safety in the company. The Directors will regularly inspect the workplace, maintain safety records and investigate and report on any accidents at work, and liaise with third party venue providers to ensure adequate Health and Safety measures are in place.

Training

Safety training is an integral part of an effective health and safety programme, every employee will be trained to perform their job safely. All employees will be trained in safe working practices and procedures. Training will include instruction on the safe use of any equipment provided.

First aid and reporting accidents at work

First aid equipment must be available at all times. First aid boxes will be checked and maintained regularly. There must be one or more trained first aiders present when service users are using the Bittern Meadow CIC service. First aid refresher courses are essential.

All incidents, whether injury is sustained or not, must be reported to the Directors and recorded in the accident book. Incidents may include the reporting of a significant hazard, a 'near miss' (where an incident occurred but no injury was sustained) which can include aggressive or threatening behaviour of a service user, minor injury, major injury or fatality.

If the incident involves an injury that results in lost time in excess of three days or a fatality it must be reported to RIDDOR.

Equipment, tools and materials

- All equipment, tools and materials must be properly and safely used and when not in use properly and safely secured

- Work should be well-planned to avoid injuries in the handling of heavy materials and while using equipment
- Employees should take care to ensure that all protective guards and other safety devices are properly fitted and in good working order and must immediately report any defects to the Directors.
- Suitable clothing and footwear must be worn at all times. Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn where appropriate
- Persons using tools or machinery must not wear clothing, jewellery or long hair in such a way as might pose a risk to their own or anyone else's safety
- Flammable or toxic materials must be stored and used in accordance with relevant guidance, utilising PPE where appropriate
- Employees and service users must receive thorough guidance, instruction and supervision regarding the use of tools, equipment and materials, including clear information about potential risks
- Unqualified persons must not operate machinery
- Tools and equipment will be inspected regularly (before each use) to ensure its safe condition
- Ensure a safe working distance around employees/service users using tools and equipment
- Carry tools, equipment and materials safely, e.g. tools face downwards, not misused or swung. Be aware of slippery and wet surfaces when using tools or equipment
- Always use tools away from the body
- All tools, equipment and materials to be returned at end of sessions

Manual handling

Staff members should not put themselves at risk of injury. The following guidelines should be followed when lifting or moving items:

- The load to be lifted or moved must be inspected for sharp edges and wet patches.
- When lifting or moving a load with sharp or splintered edges, gloves must be worn.
- The route over which the load is to be lifted should be inspected to ensure it is free of obstructions.
- Employees should not attempt to lift or move a load which is too heavy to manage comfortably. Employees should ask for assistance if there is any danger of strain.
- When lifting an object off the ground, employees should assume a squatting position, keeping the back straight. The load should be lifted by straightening the knees, not the back

Fire

Activities run by Bittern Meadow CIC include lighting and cooking on fires with service users. Adherence to simple practice guidance can minimise the risks associated with fire.

- A distance of 1.5 metres is maintained between the fire and seated service users
- Fire circle rules are clearly communicated prior to lighting
- Fires are lit within designated fire circles
- Move around the fire circle not through it
- Service users are supervised around the fire at all times
- Ensure availability of adequate supply of water/sand for fire extinguishing within easy reach of the fire circle at all times (Minimum 5 litres)
- Consider weather conditions and wind direction before lighting fires
- Store means to light fires securely away from service users when not in use
- Never leave fires unattended
- Do not allow throwing anything into the fire
- Ensure flammable liquids/gases are kept well away from fires

Risk Assessment

Bittern Meadow CIC is committed to conducting full risk assessment of each area and activity and where necessary, of a group or individual. Identifying possible hazards and acting to minimise risk

as soon as it is identified, is key to Health and Safety with Bittern Meadow CIC. In addition to preparatory risk assessments, employees should continually dynamically risk assess and communicate potential Health and Safety hazards appropriately.

Dealing with violence at work

Even where Risk Assessments of service users have been undertaken and there are Risk Management Plans in place, there is still the potential for incidents to occur which pose a threat to the health and/or safety of service users, staff or others. Staff members need to remain alert at all times to this potential and to deal with incidents according to the guidelines that are in Appendix 1.

Policy Review

This policy was last reviewed on: 17th January 2021

Date of next review: 17th January 2023 or sooner in the event of new legislation.

Appendix One

Guidance on dealing with violence at work

Dealing with Violent and Aggressive Situations

Violent and aggressive situations may occur at any time, they may span a range of seriousness and potential for danger and it will depend on the judgement of the staff and volunteers present at the time as to how the situation is best dealt with. The following guidelines should assist staff in responding to incidents, but each case should be dealt with as deemed appropriate by the staff involved at the time.

Potentially violent and aggressive situations will include incidents where a service user, a violent partner or a visitor to Bittern Meadow CIC premises:

- Verbally threatens or intimidates staff or others
- Physically threatens or intimidates staff or others
- Attempts to assault staff or others physically
- Carries out a physical assault on staff or others
- Brings a weapon onto the premises or to a meeting (whether or not its use is attempted)

If a potentially violent or aggressive situation develops, staff members should take the following steps:

Quickly assess the incident in terms of whether it is safe to intervene.

If it appears unsafe to intervene (for instance, the aggressor has a weapon or is otherwise unapproachable and/or the staff member is working alone and feels unsafe) they must contact the Police by dialling 999 and summoning emergency assistance. If possible, the staff member should ensure that they and other staff and service users present could be safe until the Police arrive. This may be possible by moving into an area which is lockable or evacuating the premises.

If it appears safe to intervene, attempt to calm the aggressor down and get them to start talking about what the problem is. If there is more than one aggressor (for example where a physical fight has occurred or appears imminent), staff should work together to separate the aggressors and attempt to calm them down in separate locations if possible.

Reassure other service users that the situation is under control and that they are safe, once the immediate situation has been dealt with by either staff or the Police. If a service user has been injured during the incident, staff members present will need to ensure that they can receive emergency medical treatment if required.

Debrief the staff members involved. The line manager will need to carry out this debriefing. They must:

- Check whether the staff member has sustained any injuries and seek medical attention for them if they have.
- Record details of the incident with the staff member, including details of any injuries.
- Assess whether there is a need to report the incident to the Police if they have not already been involved.
- Support the staff member to come to terms with the incident if they have been upset or shaken by it.
- Review and update the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan of any service user/s involved to ensure that they fully reflect Bittern Meadow CIC's knowledge and experience post-incident.

- Review the response to the incident as a way of learning lessons from it. This will include assessing whether policies and procedures provided adequate guidance, whether they were followed correctly, and identifying any improvements needed to ensure safety in the future such as additional staff training or a review of the operational framework of the project. This review will not take place immediately after the incident but should follow on within a reasonable time period.

Dealing with incidents involving self-harm

There may also be incidents in which a service user attempts to harm them self or does harm them self and staff dealing with these incidents should follow the guidelines below. Upon discovering a situation where a service user has harmed themselves or is threatening to harm themselves:

- **Quickly assess whether it is safe to intervene.** If it appears unsafe to intervene (for instance, the service user threatens the staff member or is otherwise unapproachable and/or the staff member is working alone and feels unsafe) they should contact the Police by dialling 999 and summoning emergency assistance.
- **If it appears safe to intervene, attempt to calm the person down.** Once they are calmer, the staff member should consider whether emergency intervention is required from other services such as Social Services or the Community Mental Health Team.

Once the incident has been dealt with, debrief the staff member/s involved. This will need to be done by a line manager who will:

- Check whether the staff member has sustained any injuries and seek medical attention for them if they have.
- Record details of the incident with the staff member, including details of any injuries.
- Assess whether there is a need to report the incident to the Police if they have not already been involved.
- Support the staff member to come to terms with the incident if they have been upset or shaken by it.
- Review and update the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan of the client/s involved to ensure that they fully reflect Bittern Meadow CIC's knowledge and experience post incident.
- Review the response to the incident as a way of learning lessons from it. This will include assessing whether policies and procedures provided adequate guidance, whether they were followed correctly, and identifying any improvements needed to ensure safety in the future such as additional staff training or a review of the operational framework of the project. This review will not take place immediately after the incident but should follow on within a reasonable time period.

This policy was reviewed on 01/03/2021

This policy will next be reviewed on 01/03/2023