



Risk Assessment Policy

Our Commitment

Dorset Pathways believes that the safety and protection of all children, young people, staff and any other visitors to our spaces is of utmost importance.

As an organisation, we commit to doing the best we can to ensure that Dorset Pathways is a safe place for those we work with.

This includes ensuring that we risk assess all areas we use and the activities we undertake so that our staff are aware of any risks to health and safety as well as the resulting mitigations and processes we have in place to address any such challenges.

This document

- Defines the role and responsibilities of individuals in the organisation
- Applies to all people who work for and with Dorset Pathways, including our staff, stakeholders, volunteers and contractors
- Supports our aims as an organisation
- Is based on current legislation, government guidance and best practice. The documents are referenced at the end of the policy
- Contains the relevant contact details at the end of the policy

Obligations

This policy is designed to assist Dorset Pathways in fulfilling their legal duties in assessing risks. Risk management is defined as the consideration of the risks that arise in the workplace and then putting in place sensible health and safety measures to control them. In accordance with our duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2000, we are required to undertake regular risk assessments and take any necessary action arising from these according to provisions set out in the Health and Safety policy and elsewhere.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Health and Safety Officer and/or Operations Director are responsible for making sure that risk assessments are completed, logged and effectively monitored with assistance from Site Hosts. Reviews are conducted when there is any change to equipment or resources, identified risks from review of accident records, any change to the sites or premise, or when particular needs of a child, young person, staff member or other visitor necessitate this. The Directors ultimately have responsibility for conducting any necessary reviews or making changes to the policies or procedures in the light of any



potential risks that they or other members of staff discover. The Health and Safety Officer has ultimate responsibility, for ensuring that any necessary action is taken. As already stated, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 require that suitable and sufficient assessments of the risk arising out of work are carried out. Put simply, a risk assessment is finding out what could cause harm to people and deciding if you have done enough or need to do more to protect them.

Process of Risk Assessment - What do we risk assess

At Dorset Pathways we undertake risk assessments on a location, an activity, a process or a person. It is a five step process:

- Step 1: Identify the hazards
- Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how
- Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- Step 4: Record your findings and implement them
- Step 5: Review your assessment and update if necessary

What is a hazard?

A hazard is anything which can cause harm e.g. electricity, chemicals, etc

What is risk?

Risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

Evaluating the risk

Having spotted the hazards, we then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires us to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm.

So first, we look at what safety measures are already in place and how the work is organised. Then compare this with good practice and see if there's more that should be done to bring up the standard. Consideration is given to the following:

- Can we get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can we control the risks so that harm is unlikely

When controlling risks, apply the principles below, if possible in the following order:



- try a less risky option (e.g. switch to a different location, use a different product);
- prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding);
- organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard (e.g. put barriers between pedestrians and traffic);
- issue personal protective equipment (e.g. clothing, footwear, goggles etc); and
- provide welfare facilities (e.g. first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination).

We acknowledge it is best practice to Involve staff, so that we can be sure that what we propose to do will work in practice.

All staff at Dorset Pathways are expected to carry out risk assessments on all activities they undertake and to inform Site Hosts or the Health and Safety Officer should they believe that the site risk assessments require adjustments. The Operations Director and Assistant Operations Manager are responsible for producing the Individual Risk Assessments for our young people. Learning Leads are responsible with support from Learning Mentors for updating the Individual Risk Assessments for their young people.

What is included in our Risk Assessments

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines a risk assessment as “a careful examination of what in your work could cause harm to people so that you can weigh up whether or not you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm”. The assessment helps us to identify the likelihood of harm and whether we can reduce the risk to a reasonable level, through the introduction of control measures.

Step 1: Identify the hazards - consider the location, activities, equipment and people

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how - identify the groups of people - staff, young people, visitors or members of the public. Identify the possible harm - what type of injury or ill health might occur.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions - consider how likely it is that each hazard will occur and what control measures we already have in place. Have the control measures in place got rid of the hazard altogether or reduced the risk so that harm is unlikely? If the risk has not been adequately controlled, what further actions are required? If any further actions are required, the name of the person responsible for actioning the task is recorded along with the projected completion date.

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them - putting the results of your risk assessment into practice makes a difference when looking after staff and young people.



Writing down the results of our risk assessments, and sharing them with the staff, encourages us to do this.

Step 5: Review your assessment and update if necessary - risk assessments are reviewed and updated every year. However, a review will be required sooner if an incident or accident occurs, or there are significant changes to the premises, staff or procedures.

Authored by Directors

Last Reviewed : August 2023

Next Review : August 2024