



Health & Safety Policy

1. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to comply with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, a healthy and safe environment for all individuals who work, use or visit Widgit's premises.

2. Policy Statement

Widgit accepts in full its responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, and will act positively to minimise the incidence of all workplace risks. This forms part of its commitment to take all reasonably practicable steps to protect the health and safety of its staff, service users and others who may be affected by company activities.

3. Responsibilities

Each and every staff member at Widgit has a responsibility to ensure everyone is working in a safe environment.

These responsibilities include:

- Providing adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from everyday work activities.
- Consulting with staff on matters affecting their health and safety.
- Providing / maintaining safe equipment.
- Ensuring safe handling and use of substances.
- Preventing accidents and cases of work-related ill health.
- Maintaining safe and healthy working conditions.
- Reviewing / revising this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Office Manager Responsibilities

The office manager is responsible for:

- Day-to-day actions and activities concerning health and safety.
- Maintaining an accident reporting system and investigating all health and safety accidents and 'near misses' in conjunction with line managers.
- Inducting new staff (whether permanent, temporary, full or part-time), and third-party contractors on health and safety arrangements.
- Ensuring sufficient staff with training in First Aid and Fire Safety are based at Widgit premises.
- Ensuring maintenance arrangements are in place for equipment, systems and facilities (e.g. emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, portable electrical equipment (PAT) testing, signage, etc.) and appropriate records are kept.

Line Manager Responsibilities

Line managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff under their direction are aware of all relevant health and safety procedures.
- Cooperating with the office manager to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are performed for any activities undertaken by staff in carrying out their role.

- Where staff are working flexibly outside of normal office hours (including travel arrangements when working off-site), ensuring that all risks have been discussed with staff and minimised as far as practicable.
- Ensuring that work carried out by their teams is to a satisfactory standard of safety, resulting in minimal risk to people, equipment and materials.
- Ensuring that all accidents and 'near misses' are reported to the office manager.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff at Widgit, whether full or part-time, temporary or permanent, or contract workers will take all reasonable steps to identify and reduce hazards to a minimum and will:

- Take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others, co-operating fully with the arrangements in place for Widgit to meet its legal responsibilities for health and safety.
- Report any health and safety hazards or unsafe practices to the office manager or their line manager, including any building and / or equipment defects, shortfalls in cleanliness, or issues / concerns which could be detrimental to themselves and others.
- Comply with the Health and Safety Policy and related procedures. Any wilful breach will be considered a disciplinary matter and may in some cases lead to dismissal.
- Not attempt to repair any item of electrical equipment (unless properly authorised to do so), but will report any faults to the office manager or their line manager.
- Keep a tidy workstation, ensuring that passageways are kept clear and that cables are not allowed to trail across open floor spaces.
- Not attempt to lift heavy, awkward or dangerous loads. The property manager should be contacted to arrange for the removal of loose items, or to organise any heavy lifting.
- Bring to the attention of their line manager any work-related activities (e.g. driving, flexible working, travelling arrangements) in order that any potential risks can be identified.
- Ensure that all accidents and 'near misses' are reported to the office manager.

4. Working Environment: Office and / or Homeworking

Staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety whilst working. However, Widgit will always ensure that staff are able to work in a safe environment, whether working at the office or from home. You must talk to your line manager if you feel your working environment doesn't feel safe or needs adjusting in any way. A risk assessment can be arranged if necessary.

When working from home, your line manager must consider how you will keep in touch with them, whether you can carry out your duties safely, and if any control measures should be put in place to protect you.

5. Ergonomic Workstations

It is our priority to ensure preventative measures are taken to avoid ergonomic-related injury in the workplace. We will offer each and every staff member equipment tailored to their everyday requirements, ensuring a safe and comfortable work set-up in the office and when working at home. This includes providing:

- Monitorisers
- Input devices such as mice, trackballs and trackpads
- Risk supports
- Height-adjustable desks
- Ergonomic office chairs

Our hot desk workstations already come with height-adjustable monitors. You are welcome to bring your own peripherals. For any equipment required in addition to the above, please speak to your line manager. Permanent workstations can be provided for anyone with specific access needs.

6. Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Widgit's policy is to provide safe working conditions in compliance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 – the objective being to minimise the risk of occupational ill health.

- Most staff are dependent on the daily and prolonged use of DSE and are classed as essential users under the guidelines. Widgit will ensure that risk assessments are carried out as and when required to identify and minimise any workstation hazards and risks that the user may be exposed to.

- Risk assessments will cover the whole working environment including IT equipment, workstations, work patterns, and lighting.
- Health and safety guidance recommends that anyone working regularly at a computer screen should take regular breaks. A five-to-ten-minute break is advised approximately every hour, as opposed to sitting at a keyboard and screen for several hours without a break. Short frequent breaks are more effective than long, infrequent breaks.
- Staff should report any health issues associated with the use of display screen equipment immediately to their line manager or office manager.

7. Eye Tests For Staff

As an employer, Widgit has a responsibility to ensure that all staff look after their eye health, therefore all staff are encouraged to get their eyes tested when convenient. Widgit will reimburse the cost of the eye test once a year.

All eye tests can be claimed back, as we have a duty of care to staff irrespective of whether glasses are prescribed.

In the meantime, you can minimise the effects of VDUs by:

- Taking frequent breaks away from the screen.
- Ensuring your screen is at least 35-60cm from your eyes.
- Minimising your screen glare, keeping it clean, and adjusting the brightness and contrast.

Please refer the staff handbook for more details.

8. Eye Tests For VDU Users

If you have been given a prescription for glasses as a VDU user, Widgit will also contribute up to £175 towards the cost of these glasses. In order to process this expense, you will need to retain a copy of the receipt **and your prescription** for uploading to Breathe. Your prescription must state that glasses are required for **VDU** or **Workstation** use. This expense should be logged the under DSE Glasses (display screen equipment).

In the meantime, you can minimise the effects of VDUs by:

- Taking frequent breaks away from the screen.
- Ensuring your screen is at least 35-60cm from your eyes.
- Minimising screen glare – keep it clean and adjust the brightness and contrast.

9. Accident Reporting and Investigation

Widgit's policy is to use preventative measures to stop accidents occurring. When accidents, incidents, near misses (an event which under slightly different circumstances could have resulted in an accident) and occupational ill-health occur, the circumstances should be reported and investigated promptly. When the underlying causes have been identified, action should be taken to prevent recurrence.

Reporting Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure:

- All accidents, incidents, near misses and instances of occupational ill-health are reported.
- That the accident reporting form is completed, before sharing with your line manager or office manager.

Line managers / the office manager must ensure that instances are adequately investigated and remedial action is taken.

10. First Aid

First aid boxes are located in the main kitchen area, storing a sufficient quantity of first aid material. Please let the office manager know if supplies are running low.

Widgit's current list of First Aiders and Mental Health First Aiders are listed on the notice board in the kitchen.

For non-emergency medical issues, call 111.

For serious medical issues, call 999.

The nearest Accident & Emergency:

Warwick Hospital, Lakin Road, Warwick, CV34 5BW Tel: 01926 495 321 ext. 4032 (open 24/7).

11. Fire, Emergency Evacuation and Emergency Lighting

It is Widgit's policy that its premises will be subject to a fire risk assessment to determine the level of fire precautions.

- All staff should be aware of the office evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.
- Risk assessments are carried out annually to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, all fire hazards and / or risks are minimised.
- All escape routes are easily identified and kept clear of obstructions at all times. Emergency lighting, fire alarms, and firefighting equipment is suitably maintained and tested at regular intervals.
- Fire alarms are tested on a weekly basis (usually on a Thursday morning). The alarm is serviced twice a year (usually April and October).
- Fire extinguishers in communal areas are serviced annually (usually in January).
- Designated fire assembly points are in place in the rear car park for Bishops House and the adjacent Nicholls House.
- Emergency lights are tested monthly and serviced annually.

12. Fire Marshals

A fire marshal's main responsibility is to ensure the safe evacuation of the office in the event of a fire emergency. Widgit fire marshals regularly review the evacuation plan to ensure it is effective, and that all staff members are familiar with our evacuation procedure and assembly points.

In the event where there is no fire marshal present, staff should follow the correct procedure:

- Stay calm and leave the building immediately, without stopping to collect belongings.
- Use the nearest available exit.
- Close all doors as you leave, especially fire doors, which can hold back fire for up to 30 minutes.
- Proceed to the designated assembly point (rear car park for Bishops House and the adjacent Nicholls House: 'Regus').
- Once having congregated, assign one staff member to call the fire brigade as soon as possible, even if you suspect there is not a fire.
- Do not re-enter the building until you are authorised to do so by the fire brigade.

Widgit's current list of fire marshals are listed on the notice board in the kitchen.

13. Manual Handling

Widgit's policy in respect of manual handling is to identify and minimise risks in compliance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. Staff should:

- Never attempt to lift heavy, awkward or dangerous loads. Always ask for help or get suitable equipment to lift the load.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others.
- Inform their line manager when they believe that there is a risk of injury.

14. Portable Electrical Equipment

All portable electrical appliances will be inspected and tested (PAT) annually by a competent person. with all appropriate records kept.

15. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

As a matter of policy, Widgit does not use strong chemicals and hazardous substances as part of day-to-day activities. For example, materials such as washing up liquid, handwash and air fresheners are normal household products. Widgit's cleaning company use their own products, and some may be of industrial strength, therefore please refrain from using them. If a potentially hazardous substance is to be used, a risk assessment must be undertaken.

16. Hygiene and Waste Disposal

Facilities for the disposal of waste materials must be kept in a clean and hygienic condition. Waste must be disposed of in an appropriate manner, and in accordance with any special instructions relating to the material concerned.

17. Food Hygiene

When handling or preparing food, specific hygiene requirements must be followed:

- Clean as you go. Keep all equipment and surfaces clean.
- Keep food covered and either refrigerated or put away in a cupboard.
- Ensure food waste is disposed of properly. Keep the lid on the rubbish bin and wash your hands after putting waste in it.
- Inform the office manager if you find any defects or concerns regarding the facilities, e.g. uncleanliness, refrigeration, microwave malfunction, etc.

18. Pregnant Workers and New Mothers

On receipt of the formal notification of pregnancy, Widgit shall arrange for a risk assessment relevant to that staff member's work to be completed. For any potential risks that are identified and which could represent an additional risk, every effort will be made by Widgit to eliminate or minimise them.

Staff should report any changes in their health, and / or specific advice given by a medical practitioner during the course of their pregnancy immediately to their line manager.

19. Bullying and Harassment

As an employer, Widgit is under a legal obligation of a duty of care to provide both a safe place and safe system of work. Please refer to the separate Bullying and Harassment Policy for further details.

20. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every **3 years**, or sooner if changes in legislation occur or new best practice evidence becomes available.

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