



Houghton Regis  
Helpers

07587 004514

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Houghton Regis Helpers are committed to ensuring the welfare of volunteers and clients and although legally not required to have a written Health and Safety Policy believe that it is good practice to do so. This policy ensures observance of, and compliance with, current UK Government legislation as set down in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (“HASAWA”) and all relevant regulations and codes of practice made under it.

### **Introduction - Health and safety for volunteers**

Although volunteers are not included in Health and Safety legislation in the same way as paid staff, any organisation involving volunteers has a legal responsibility and a ‘duty of care’ towards their volunteers.

‘Duty of care’ is a common law duty to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to others, including the delivering of an activity that might harm another person – physically, mentally, or economically. An organisation may face a legal liability if this duty is breached.

#### When civil law applies

Under the common law, voluntary organisations and individual volunteers have a duty of care to each other and others who may be affected by their activities. In some cases, people may sue you for damages using the civil law if they are injured as a result of negligence, for example a volunteer injuring a passer-by with a falling branch while carrying out tree maintenance.

### **Part 1: Statement of intent**

Houghton Regis Helpers Committee has overall responsibility for health and safety in the organisation, and for ensuring that it fulfils all its legal responsibilities. It recognises that it is the duty of Committee members and volunteers to uphold this policy and to provide the necessary funds and resources to put it into practice.

Houghton Regis Helpers Committee is committed to ensuring that all its activities are safe and it will do whatever it can to provide for the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers, clients and visitors ensuring that risks to volunteers, clients and visitors are minimised at all times.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the committee or sooner if there are changes in legislation or significant changes in practice.

### **Part 2: Responsibilities for health and safety**

#### **1 Overall responsibility for Health & Safety is the Chair**

- responsible for the implementation and monitoring of health and safety policies and recommending changes where necessary, ensuring compliance with Health & Safety legislation;
- investigating all accidents or unsafe incidents as soon as possible and reporting to the committee;
- recording accidents, unsafe incidents or near misses;
- ensuring adequate resources are made available to implement the policy and carry out remedial action or amendments to the policy as required;

## **2. The Secretary is responsible for**

- Assessing the risk to the health and safety of volunteers, clients and visitors and identifying what measures are needed to comply with its health and safety obligations;
- Reviewing the effectiveness of Risk Assessments at intervals not exceeding 12 months or when a significant change in circumstances occurs and following any incident;
- Ensuring that venues or vehicles used for meetings and events are safe and without risk to health including safe ways of entering and leaving;
- Ensuring that equipment is safe and well maintained;
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision to volunteers in safe working methods and procedures as required;
- Encouraging volunteers and clients to co-operate in ensuring safe and healthy conditions and systems;
- When planning changes in service provision, take account of possible risks to safety and make arrangements for their avoidance or control;
- Monitoring reports of accidents, incidents or near-misses to ensure that correct action is taken to prevent a recurrence;
- Establishing emergency procedures as required

## **3. Volunteer Responsibilities**

All Volunteers will ensure that they:

- are aware of the contents of this safety policy
- shall be personally accountable for their actions and responsible for ensuring they comply with the agreed procedure and comply with this policy;
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions
- shall consider the potential risks associated with tasks and are required to follow any specified procedures

- co-operate with the Officers and Committee on health and safety matters;
- will report all health and safety concerns or if they identify anything which they think could be in any way unsafe, to the Chair or Secretary
- will report all accidents, or unsafe situations, and any near misses (things which could have led to an accident), to the Chair, Secretary or another Officer of the Committee at once.
- are aware of all fire procedures for the area in which they are working

### **Part 3: Arrangements for health and safety**

#### **1. Risk Assessments**

- The responsible committee member will take reasonable steps to ensure that all tasks and activities undertaken by volunteers are assessed in line with the current relevant legislation;
- Our volunteers may be asked to undertake a number of different tasks and the nature of these tasks may not always be clear until the volunteer arrives at the home of the client. Therefore a regular review of risk assessments will be conducted to identify potential hazards;
- Mitigation strategies will be put in place to manage identified hazards and implement controlled risk management;
- Risk assessment will be repeated if or when there is a change in legislation; new technology is put in place; significant changes to work practice; or any other reason which makes original assessment not valid;

#### **2. Lone Working**

- Allocation of tasks will be made by the phone-holder or Secretary;
- Before making a home visit, volunteers must ensure they have all the details about the client and the job before accepting the job and be clear what will be expected of you by the client;
- If lone working volunteers should have a mobile phone with them;
- If a client offers to assist the volunteer with a task the volunteer should assess whether the client is putting themselves at risk and refuse assistance if this is likely;
- If a volunteer notices hazards while in a client's home that are a health and safety risk, e.g. an unsafe wire on an electrical appliance, the volunteer should draw the attention of the client to this risk and report any concerns they have to the Secretary;
- The phone holder should always know where volunteers are if out on a job. If the destination of the job or any other circumstances change, such as the client feeling unwell or behaving unpredictably, the volunteers must call the phone holder immediately;
- Volunteers should inform the Secretary of their location and expected return time when visiting clients alone.
- Where possible, initial visits should be conducted in pairs.

#### **3. Training**

To comply with legislation and to promote the health, safety and welfare of volunteers, health and safety training will be provided as follows:

- at inductions
- on the introduction of new technology
- when changes are made to practice
- when training needs are identified during risk assessments.

#### **4. COSHH**

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations require employers both to assess the workplace for risks which may be caused by substances hazardous to health and to take all necessary steps to control any risks identified.

- COSHH substances must not be used without prior agreement with the Secretary, volunteer and the client
- If a task involves the use of chemical substances or a risk of dust or other contaminants a risk assessment will be carried out..
- Appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) will be issued to volunteers if required;
- Instructions and manufacturer's guidelines must be followed when using chemical substances;
- The use of chemical substances will be kept to a minimum;

#### **5. First aid**

Voluntary groups with no employees are not bound to conduct a first aid assessment, but as good practice Houghton Regis Helpers ensure that:

- At public events volunteers are notified of First Aid arrangements;
- At events held by the group a first aid box will be on site and an appointed person will be responsible for managing accidents or incidents;
- Volunteer drivers are expected to carry a car first aid kit;
- All accidents, or unsafe situations, and any near misses (things which could have led to an accident), are reported to the Chair, Secretary or another Officer of the Committee at once;
- At least one Officer or Committee member has received basic / appointed persons first aid training;

#### **6. Insurance**

Houghton Regis Helpers has current insurance providing Employers' Liability Insurance (which covers volunteers) and Public Liability Insurance (which covers Clients). A copy of the insurance certificate is available for inspection on request to the Secretary.

## 7. Resolving health and safety problems


- Any volunteer with a health and safety concern must first tell the responsible Committee member.
- If, after investigation, the problem is not corrected in a reasonable time, or the responsible committee member decides that no action is required but the volunteer is not satisfied with this, the volunteer may then refer the matter to the management committee chairperson. This must be in writing.
- If the volunteer is still dissatisfied, the matter will be entered on the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee.

## 8. Health and Safety procedures

Procedures for safe practice by volunteers and clients are set out in the following documents and must be referred to in conjunction with this Health and Safety Policy:

- Volunteer Good Practice Guidelines
- Risk Assessment for Volunteer Activities
- Risk Assessment for stalls at outdoor community events
- Risk Assessment for the provision of Refreshments
- Safeguarding and Protection of Adults at Risk (of harm or abuse) Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Volunteer Gardening Policy

Volunteers will be notified as and when additional guidance is put in place and when policies and risk assessments are reviewed.

Chair's signature: 

Chair's Name: Yvonne Farrell

Policy Adopted on: 21<sup>st</sup> November 2025

Review Date: November 2026

Ref: [Volunteering: Guidance for employers - HSE](#)