



HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

LEADS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY:

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This is the Health and Safety Policy of the Dorcas Befriending Project

Everyone is entitled to live and work free from the threat of harm or injury. The type of work that the Dorcas Befriending Project (DBP) is involved in requires a significant amount of one to one contact with others and lone working with many of whom may be vulnerable. This makes it extremely important that employees, volunteers and clients of the DBP are thoroughly aware of all the safety precautions and guidelines.

It is the policy of the DBP to comply with the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and subsequent legislation, to provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment. We recognise and accept our duty to protect the health and safety of all users of the DBP, including employees, temporary workers, and volunteers, as well as any members of the public who might be affected by our operations.

While the Executive Committee of the DBP will do all that is within its powers to ensure the health and safety of its employees, volunteers and clients, it is recognised that health and safety is the responsibility of each and every individual associated with the DBP. It is the duty of each individual to take reasonable care of their own and other people's welfare and to report any situation that may pose a threat to the well-being of any other person.

Our statement of general policy is:

- To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our volunteering activities.
- To consult with our employees, volunteers, clients and Executive Committee 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 take steps to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health.
- To take steps to maintain safe and healthy working conditions.
- To review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

The DBP will provide every employee and volunteer worker with the training necessary to carry out his or her tasks safely. However if anyone is unsure how to perform a certain task, or feels it would be dangerous to perform a specific job, then it is their duty to report this to the Project Coordinator and/ or Executive Committee.

An effective health and safety programme requires continuous communication between members at all levels. It is therefore every member's responsibility to report immediately any situation, which could jeopardise the wellbeing of themselves or any other person.

Volunteers should not ask their clients to make journeys to see or meet with them. If their activity involves a venue away from the client's home then the volunteer befriender should make adequate arrangements to meet the client and travel with them accordingly.

All injuries and/ or near misses, sustained by a person at work or during befriending volunteering activities must be reported to the Project Coordinator and/ or Chair.

Accident records are crucial to the effective monitoring and revision of the safety procedure and must therefore be accurate and comprehensive. The DBP incident form can be found in the volunteer handbook, and is also available on our website <http://dorcas-befriending.org.uk/>

It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee:

- To ensure that this policy is reviewed and updated every three years, or as required.
- To ensure that all volunteers are given training as part of their induction on health and safety and lone working.
- To ensure that all appropriate members are made aware of the results of any risk assessments, and are aware of any special precautions or actions that are needed to minimise risk.
- To ensure that all incidents are accurately recorded and monitored, and are then held by the Secretary.
- To ensure all members are provided with appropriate training (e.g. manual handling, use of a wheelchair) as required.

It is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator and/ or Chair:

- To report any incidents related to health and safety and lone working to the Executive Committee.
- To liaise with other relevant agencies and inform them of any incidents as appropriate.
- To ensure members are updated regarding safe working practices and the results of any relevant risk assessments.
- To ensure any incidents are accurately recorded and monitored.
- To arrange any training necessary for members of the charity.

It is the responsibility of all members of the DBP:

- To co-operate with the Executive Committee, Project Coordinator and/or Chair on health and safety matters.
- To ensure they have read and understood this policy.
- To not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety.
- To take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their clients, and the general public.
- To adhere to any safe working practices provided to reduce risk to health and safety.
- To report all health and safety concerns to the Project Coordinator and/or Chair.

All members must inform the Project Coordinator and/or Chair of any concerns, issues, questions or incidents relating to health and safety, lone working and risk assessments whilst carrying out the work of the charity.

Members can contact the Chair by calling 07954100179 to discuss any of the above. All members must also put their concerns in writing by completing an incident report (available in the volunteer handbook and on our website) and forwarding this to the Chair by email to chair@dorcas-befriending.org.uk or by post to:

FAO Chair,
Dorcas Befriending Project,
The Bridge, 80 Arran Walk,
Marquess Estate, Canonbury,
Islington, N1 2TL.

In an emergency all members should contact local services, such as the police, social services as appropriate.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments shall be carried out for all activities where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk to Health or Safety. As a minimum a risk assessment will be carried out for all new clients, with their consent.

Wherever a generic risk assessment has been carried out by an authority that may reasonably be expected to be competent, (for example a risk assessment carried out by a Church), the DBP should adopt that assessment and inform the people affected of the hazards and preventative steps identified. Where no assessment exists, the Executive Committee shall appoint a suitable person to carry out a risk assessment.

Copies of all risk assessments, carried out by the DBP shall be kept by the Secretary.

The Chair or the Executive Committee (as appropriate) shall inform volunteers, clients or employees of any information or steps that they must observe as identified by the risk assessments.

- Risk assessments will be undertaken by the Chair of the Executive Committee and/ or the Project Coordinator.
- The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to the Chair and/or the Executive Committee as appropriate.
- Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by the Chair and/or Executive Committee.
- The Chair will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented.
- The Chair will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.
- Assessments will be reviewed if the situation changes or at the request of the volunteer and/ or client or other relevant person.

Lone Working Policy

The DBP has a legal and moral responsibility to effectively manage the risks associated with individual members of the charity working on their own.

The DBP must try to ensure the safety of all members who work alone, whilst carrying out their duties for the organisation.

Using the Risk Assessment process, the DBP must raise awareness amongst all appropriate members, procedures and equipment that must be utilised to reduce the levels of risk associated with working alone.

A lone worker is defined as any member, including but not restricted to Executive Committee members, employees, volunteers etc. who carries out the work of the DBP in isolation from the DBP's members, either in an office, clients homes or in the community. This may be on a regular or occasional basis.

It is the responsibility of the Chair, Executive Committee and/or Project Coordinator:

- To put into place safe working practices to minimise risk associated with lone working.
- To provide training to all volunteers as part of their induction into the charity for lone working.
- To record, monitor and report all incidents related to lone working to the Executive Committee.
- To share information regarding risk assessments and incidents with other agencies who are also working with the same client as appropriate.
- To ensure that risk assessments for lone working are carried out for all clients.
- To ensure that all appropriate members are informed of any practices required to reduce risks from lone working whilst carrying out the work of the DBP.

It is the responsibility of all of the members of the DBP:

- To ensure they have read and understood this policy and any relevant risk assessments for the work they carry out.
- To abide by all safe working practices put in place to reduce the risk of lone working.
- To report any incidents concerning lone working to the Project Coordinator and/or Chair.
- To notify the Project Coordinator and/or Chair if the situation changes and a new risk assessment is required.

Personal Safety

In order to ensure the safety of all members of the DBP, members are asked:

- To inform a significant person to them (e.g. partner, relative) of when they will be visiting their clients, how long for and to contact them after the visit.
- To ensure they are aware of how to get to the relevant location.
- To ensure they are aware of any relevant travel information that may change their expected travel plans and time.
- To be aware of the location of local services, and how to contact them in an emergency (e.g. police).
- If at any time they feel unsafe whilst working alone, leave the situation and report the incident to the Project Coordinator and/or Chair.

In an emergency all members should contact local emergency services, such as the police as appropriate.

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