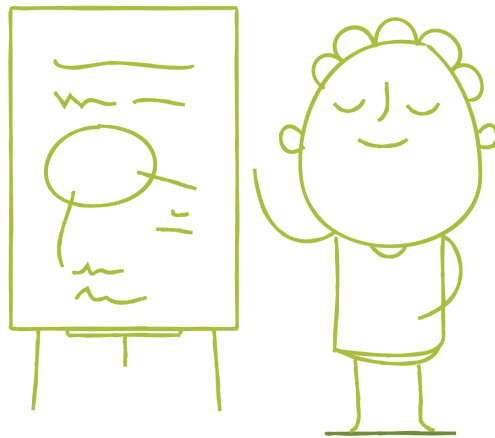


CARE CERTIFICATE

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

STANDARD 13 **Health and safety**



Support workers, managers, service users and organisations all have responsibilities for health and safety.

When we talk about health and safety we mean things like first aid, how to deal with hazardous substances, infection control, security and emergency situations.

There are many laws about health and safety, which are there to keep everyone in the workplace safe. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the main law about health and safety. Others include:

- Manual Handling Regulations 1992
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002
- Report of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995
- Health and Safety First Aid Regulations 1981
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Food Safety Act 1990

Health and safety responsibilities

There are many regulations, laws and guidelines dealing with health and safety. You do not need to know the detail, but you do need to know where your responsibilities begin and end.

The laws place certain responsibilities on both employers and employees. The employer must provide a safe place in which to work, but the employee also has to show reasonable care for his or her own safety.

Employers have to:

- Provide a safe workplace
- Ensure safe access to and from the workplace
- Provide information on health and safety
- Provide health and safety training
- Undertake risk assessments for all hazards

Employees must:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety
- Take reasonable care of other people's safety
- Cooperate with the employer regarding health and safety matters
- Not intentionally damage any equipment or materials provided by the employer

During your induction you receive health and safety information. This outlines your health and safety responsibilities. Detailed information about organisational policies and procedures can be found in the staff section of the company website <http://www.jrhsupport.co.uk/staff-section>. It's very important that you familiarise yourself with and work in line with these policies and procedures.

Health and safety risk assessments

By law, employers must assess any risks in the workplace and any risks to do with work activities. This means all potentially hazardous activities, from walking on wet floors to dealing with violence. Once the employer has carried out a risk assessment, they must then apply risk control measures. This means that action must be taken to reduce the risks. Environmental risks can then be removed.

The person carrying out the risk assessment should look at:

- All the potential hazards (this means all the things that may cause harm)
- How likely the hazards are to occur
- Who is likely to be affected
- What can be done to reduce the likelihood of the hazards occurring

The greater the harm and the greater the likelihood of that harm, the greater the precautions needed.

Once all these factors have been assessed, a decision is then made as to whether the risk is worth taking. Common workplace risk assessments can be found in the staff section of the company website.

Reporting potential health and safety risks

Risk assessments are vitally important in order to protect the health and safety of both you and the service user. You should always check whether a risk assessment has been carried out before you undertake any task, and then follow the steps identified in the assessment in order to reduce the risk.

When you are at work, you might identify potential health and safety risks. Remember that the law says that you have a responsibility to take reasonable care of your own safety and the safety of others, and to report and respond appropriately to any health and safety risks.

Manual handling

Every day, whether you are at work or at home, you will carry out some kind of manual handling. This might be moving an object such as a vacuum cleaner or carrying bags of shopping. You might also move a person e.g. pick up a child.

Manual handling involves transporting and supporting loads (this might be things or people) by hand or bodily force. Many accidents and injuries occur each year due to manual handling, especially back injuries.

When you carry out manual handling in a work setting, both you and your employer have duties in law.

The Manual Handling Regulations 1992 were introduced to reduce the high incidence of back injury caused by poor manual handling. Back injuries were a particular problem for people working in care professions such as support workers.

It is your employer's responsibility to ensure that you are not exposed to a foreseeable risk of injury from manual handling. Your employer must provide you with suitable guidelines, equipment and training.

It is your responsibility to alert your employer to any situation at work which might present a danger to you or others, to follow any guidelines and training and to use any equipment as directed.

Essentially, manual handling operations should be avoided as far as is reasonably possible. Where they cannot be avoided, an assessment must be carried out which identifies the hazards and risk of injury. Steps must then be taken to reduce the risk of injury as far as possible.

Correct manual handling is a vital part of your role. It is essential that you learn how to do this correctly; otherwise you could hurt yourself and others.

For more information, see the Moving and Handling Policy in the staff section on the company website.

Accidents and sudden illness

Accidents at work have many causes. Some of the most common causes are slips, trips, falls, manual handling, being injured by machinery, harmful substances, electricity burns and scolds.

Many accidents are preventable and are a result of people being careless or not aware of potential hazards. Making changes to our working environment or the way we do things will help prevent accidents.

When you are at work, there may be an emergency situation such as accident or sudden illness involving a service user, a colleague or someone else.

You should not attempt to deal with any illness or first aid emergency unless you have been trained to do so. In emergency situations you should:

- Assess the situation
- Make the area safe
- Contact the emergency services and inform your line manager

Do not delay and do not put yourself in danger.

Handling medication

Service users may take medication. Some medication is given for long term illnesses such as Parkinson's disease or diabetes. Other medication is prescribed for short term problems, for example chest infections and tonsillitis.

Some service users may be able to manage their own medication safely; others may need support with storing and taking their medication.

Without the appropriate training you must not administer medication. You will be provided with further information regarding handling medication during your induction.

Healthcare tasks

Healthcare tasks include any medical procedures carried out as part of the support plan, including those relating to colostomy bags, catheter care, peg feeding, injections, applying ointments, giving medication.

Without the appropriate training you must not assist with healthcare tasks.

Hazardous substances

At work, people may be exposed to all kinds of hazardous substances, such as:

- Substances used during work activities e.g. adhesives, cleaning materials
- Substances produced by work activities e.g. fumes
- Naturally occurring substances e.g. dust
- Biological agents such as bacteria and other micro-organisms

Exposure can happen by:

- Inhalation (breathing in)
- Contact with the skin
- Splashing into the eyes
- Ingestion (swallowing)

If exposure is not prevented, it can cause serious effects, such as:

- Skin irritation or dermatitis as a result of skin contact
- Asthma as a result of developing an allergy to substances used at work
- Losing consciousness as a result of being overcome by toxic fumes
- Cancer, which may appear long after exposure to the chemical that caused it
- Infection from bacteria and other micro-organisms

If you use hazardous substances you must be made aware of the dangers. You must be trained in how to use hazardous substances, what to do if there is accidental spillage or ingestion and the risks associated with prolonged use.

As part of your job, you may need to handle cleaning materials such as disinfectant. It is important that you know how to store, use and dispose of these substances.

You may need to take precautions, such as:

- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, aprons and goggles
- Limiting the time you are exposed to the substance
- Only using the substance in certain circumstances

For more information, look at the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Policy in the staff section of the company website.

Fire safety

Fire requires three conditions to survive and spread: heat, fuel and oxygen. If any of these are reduced or removed, a fire will reduce or cease.

Common sources of fire include:

- Electrical faults e.g. faulty wiring, sockets being overloaded
- Cooking, e.g. leaving fat or flammable liquids on an open flame
- Smoking/naked flames e.g. stubs, hot ash or matches
- Chemicals e.g. storing paint cans where they might overheat

Simple housekeeping helps to reduce the amount of material for a fire to get started or spread. Empty boxes and litter can assist a fire to spread. Always ensure that empty boxes are discarded safely outside the building, and clutter is kept to a minimum. Also, always remove 'fluff' from tumble dryers after each use.

Fire doors are designed to stop a fire spreading from one area to another. Fire doors should be kept closed at all times, unless they are fitted with automatic door release linked to the fire alarm system. Doors should never be blocked or wedged open.

If you ever find a fire, you need to be able to respond quickly. In order to do this, it's helpful to think through all the possible situations you may be faced with and to plan out your response beforehand.

There are a variety of pieces of equipment designed to help prevent, warn or fight against fires. These include fire alarm systems, fire doors, firefighting equipment, emergency lighting and fire exits.

When supporting people in their own homes, you should always be aware of where your exits are in the event of a fire. For example, if there's a back door is it usually locked? If so where is the key usually kept?

Security

A safe environment is not just about the safety inside the building. You must also ensure that properties you work in are secure from intruders or other possible dangers.

Security measures may include burglar alarms, security lighting, secondary locks on doors, door chains, procedures for checking the identity of visitors, emergency telephone numbers, use of mobiles and panic alarms.

Stress

Stress can affect us all in our work or personal life. There are two types of stress – negative and positive, and the line between them can be very fine.

Positive stress can help you; it can motivate you to do your best and to challenge yourself and others. It can help improve performance and some people thrive on it. It stimulates the brain to help you work things out and think more clearly and alerts the body to react quickly.

Negative stress is harmful to the individual. Long term or excessive pressure can lead to negative stress. Signs and symptoms of negative stress may include:

- Back ache
- Neck ache
- Sleeplessness
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Negative thoughts
- Chronic fatigue
- Muscular tension
- Tense jaw
- Teeth grinding

The Health and Safety Executive's definition of stress is 'the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them'.

These 'excessive pressures' and 'demands' are very specific to the individual. One person may thrive on work pressure whilst another person may find this too much and become ill.

Some of the causes of negative stress include:

- Demands – the feeling that too much is being asked of you. These demands could be at work, at home, from relatives, from partner etc.
- Control – how much 'say' a person has in the way they live or the choices in their personal life and work.
- Support – not being supported by managers, colleagues, family
- Relationships – conflict, bullying and harassment at work or at home
- Role – lack of clarity or conflicting roles, being unsure about what you are supposed to do or what you have been asked to do.
- Change – within your staff team, having a new role at work, moving house, getting divorced.

Whether it's you or the person you're supporting who is suffering from stress, you first need to try to find the situation that is causing the negative stress.

You need to understand the situation, obtain the right support and develop a plan to tackle the pressures that are causing the problem.

There are many things that can be done to reduce your levels of stress. You must raise any concerns with your line manager promptly. Use your one to one supervisions to talk about any concerns you have and try to ensure you have some time to relax after work.

Stress may be relieved by using relaxation therapies, talking to friends or colleagues, improving diet and exercise, avoiding excessive alcohol and tobacco.