

Health and Safety Policy

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Policy Statement

The directors recognise that they have a responsibility to ensure all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions which are safe, healthy and comply with all statutory requirements and codes of practice. This includes ensuring:

- The provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work that are safe and healthy.
- Arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- The provision of information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety at work of employees, learners and visitors.
- The control and maintenance of the place of work in a safe condition.
- The provision of safe means of access to and egress from the place of work.
- The maintenance of a working environment that is safe, without risks to health, and provides adequate facilities and arrangements for welfare at work.
- The implementation of contingency plans to ensure the safety and welfare of employees, learners and visitors in response to pandemics and other significant disruptions.
- Assessment of the health and safety of employer locations used by trainees and apprentices.
- Ensuring employers of trainees and apprentices hold appropriate insurance and liability cover.
- Active promotion of employee and learner mental health and wellbeing alongside physical safety.

Organisation and Responsibilities

The table below sets out the key roles and their corresponding health and safety responsibilities. Named post-holders are held on record in the organisation's intranet system, MyAC, and are updated following any change in personnel.

Role	Responsibilities	Reports To
Board / Directors	Strategic oversight; resource allocation; policy approval	—
Safety officer	Accident investigation; records; legislation monitoring; training guidance	CEO
Head of business	Recruitment compliance; induction; onboarding H&S obligations	CEO
Departmental / line manager	Operational H&S; risk assessments; audits; staff awareness	Senior leaders (CEO, head of business, head of education)
All employees	Safe working practices; reporting hazards and incidents	Line manager

Role	Responsibilities	Reports To
Learners / Apprentices	Adhere to host employer and Apprenticeship Connect H&S procedures	Course teacher

Board / Directors

The Board is responsible for safety across the organisation and will monitor this policy regularly. The Board will be apprised of health and safety matters to ensure sufficient resources are available for equipment, personal protective equipment, manual handling training, and eye tests for habitual display screen equipment users. Information and training for employees will be provided, as far as is reasonably practicable, to achieve and maintain a high standard of safety proficiency.

Safety Officer

1. Maintenance of safety records, investigation of accidents, production of accident statistics, and monitoring of changing safety legislation. A full investigation of accidents will be carried out under the direction of the appropriate manager with a view to preventing future occurrences.
2. Advising management on its legal obligations and providing guidance, training and monitoring to ensure the organisation complies with those obligations.
3. Monitoring the organisation's compliance in respect of the workplace, work equipment, manual handling operations, personal protective equipment, display screen equipment, and hazardous substances.

Head of Business

The Head of Business is responsible for ensuring the organisation fulfils its duty to employ, onboard and induct employees in line with statutory responsibilities.

1. Ensure recruitment, search and selection practice is carried out in accordance with relevant legislation.
2. Ensure any employee, before they commence work, is supplied with comprehensible information about any special occupational qualifications or skills required to carry out their work safely.
3. Ensure each new employee receives induction training covering the rules, precautions and procedures appropriate to their specific role. All new staff will be shown the location of first aid boxes, fire exits and fire-fighting equipment.

Departmental / Line Manager

Departmental and line managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of health and safety and for promoting responsible attitudes. Each manager will:

1. Ensure all staff are made aware of procedures in place if they, or a learner they support, face serious or imminent danger, and the name of the competent person(s) designated to implement those procedures.

2. Ensure all staff for whom they are responsible understand this policy and relevant risk assessments.
3. Keep up to date with health and safety matters applicable to the organisation's operations.
4. Investigate all accidents, including those involving learners whilst in the presence of an Apprenticeship Connect employee, with the assistance of the Safety Officer.
5. Ensure good housekeeping standards are maintained.
6. Review periodically all new and existing equipment regarding mechanical and operational safety.
7. Carry out regular safety checks and audits as required by the organisation.
8. Monitor staff activity to ensure contingency procedures are being implemented and adhered to.
9. Pay particular regard to: plant and machinery; safe handling, storage and movement of materials; provision of sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision; and regular inspection of lighting, passageways, fire alarms, fire escapes, extinguishers, first aid facilities, and work practices.

Employees

1. All employees must do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves, fellow employees, learners they support, and others affected by their actions or omissions at work. They are expected to follow the organisation's procedures and to report any incidents which have, or may have, led to injury or damage.
2. Employees must use equipment in accordance with the training and instruction they have received, inform their supervisor about any serious or imminent danger, and report any shortcomings they observe in protection arrangements. If the supervisor is unavailable, an employee may stop work and proceed to a place of safety in the event of serious, imminent and unavoidable danger.

Risk Assessments

The organisation conducts risk assessments for all activities, workplaces and roles that present a foreseeable risk to the health and safety of employees, learners or visitors.

Risk assessments are:

- Carried out by a competent person with input from the relevant line manager.
- Reviewed at least annually, or sooner following any incident, significant change in activity, or change of premises.
- Recorded and held on file in MyAC, accessible to relevant staff.
- Communicated to all staff and learners affected by the assessed activity.

Specific risk assessment processes also apply to apprenticeship employer premises. A workplace health and safety assessment must be completed by a suitably trained Apprenticeship Connect employee before any placement or delivery activity commences.

1. The assessment is completed using the Workplace Health and Safety Assessment form.
2. The outcome is recorded as either 'met' or 'not met'. Employers assessed as 'not met' will not receive services until identified areas are addressed.
3. The outcome is held on file in the relevant employer record.
4. Employers are reassessed every one to two years depending on risk level, or immediately following a change of premises or significant change in health and safety provision.

All employers of apprentices are required to confirm acceptance of Apprenticeship Connect's health and safety provisions at various stages of onboarding, including within the Services Agreement, the health and safety assessment form and enrolment paperwork.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The organisation recognises that good mental health is as important as physical health and is committed to promoting the wellbeing of all employees and learners. The organisation will:

- Create a culture in which mental health concerns can be raised openly and without stigma.
- Ensure line managers are trained to recognise signs of stress, anxiety and poor mental health, and to respond appropriately.
- Provide access to appropriate support resources, including any employee assistance programme available to staff, and pastoral and safeguarding support for learners.
- Conduct workload and role reviews where an employee or learner reports that stress or mental health concerns are affecting their ability to work or learn.
- Take reasonable steps to address workplace factors that contribute to stress, such as excessive workload, unclear expectations or poor working relationships.

Employees experiencing mental health difficulties should speak in the first instance to their line manager or, where they prefer, directly to HR. Learners should speak to their course tutor or the safeguarding team. Mental health concerns will be treated with the same seriousness as physical health and safety risks.

Remote and Hybrid Working

The organisation's health and safety obligations extend to home and remote working environments. Employees working remotely are required to:

- Complete a remote worker self-assessment before commencing regular home working, and repeat it following any significant change in their setup.
- Ensure their home workspace is set up in accordance with display screen equipment (DSE) guidance, including appropriate seating, lighting and screen positioning.
- Report any concerns about their home working environment to their line manager, who will arrange appropriate support or reasonable adjustments.
- Follow lone working check-in procedures as directed by their manager, particularly when working in isolated or unfamiliar environments.

The organisation will provide guidance on safe home working setups during induction and will make DSE guidance and self-assessment tools accessible via MyAC.

Workplace Health and Safety (Apprenticeships)

The organisation is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all its learners. In addition:

- The organisation assesses the health and safety provision of all employer premises used for apprenticeship delivery.
- Learners are made aware of their host employer's health and safety arrangements as part of their programme induction.
- Tutors will raise any concerns regarding an employer's health and safety provision with the Safety Officer promptly.

Reporting Accidents

Employees and Visitors

1. In the event of an accident causing injury, ensure the injured person is being cared for and immediately request a supervisor or first-aider. **DO NOT MOVE THE INJURED PERSON** unless they are in immediate danger from their surroundings.
2. Report full details to the Safety Officer, who will record the incident in the accident book. Incidents will be reported in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). Specified injuries and fatalities must be reported immediately; over-seven-day injuries within ten days; dangerous occurrences without delay.
3. Any 'near miss' incident must also be reported to the immediate supervisor, who will ensure a report is made to the Safety Officer.
4. All accidents will be investigated by the departmental or line manager and the Safety Officer. A report will be made to the Board, who will ensure necessary action is taken to prevent recurrence.

Learners

1. In the event of an accident causing injury, ensure the injured person is being cared for and immediately request a supervisor or first-aider. **DO NOT MOVE THE INJURED PERSON.**
2. Report full details to the relevant health and safety officer in your workplace and follow your employer's procedures.
3. Notify Apprenticeship Connect of the incident through one of the following:
 - Your course teacher
 - Email: help@apprenticeshipconnect.co.uk
 - Telephone the Safety Officer: 0204 604 3360

Reporting Learner Illness

1. Common illnesses such as colds or mild flu are generally not escalated. However, if learners are experiencing severe symptoms, unknown illnesses, or serious critical illnesses, they must be referred to the safeguarding team using the Safeguarding Report Form in MyAC.
2. Referrals will be investigated by the designated safeguarding lead or a nominated deputy, who will monitor the illness and work with the course tutor, employers and parents (where applicable) to provide ongoing support.
3. Where a learner's absence due to illness extends beyond one month, or is anticipated to do so, the organisation may place the learner on a break in learning.

First Aid

1. During induction, employees will be shown the location of the nearest first aid box to their work area. For learners on programmes, the location of first aid equipment at venues will be advised on the day.
2. Names of first-aiders and appointed persons, together with information on how to contact them, are available on MyAC for internal staff. Learners and visitors will be advised of first-aider details at any Apprenticeship Connect venue.

Fire Safety

1. Fire exits must be kept clear from obstruction at all times. All employees, learners and visitors to Apprenticeship Connect sites must know their evacuation route and assembly point. All individuals attending a venue will be shown the fire evacuation point at the start of their visit.

If you DISCOVER A FIRE:

1. Immediately operate the nearest fire alarm call point.
2. Evacuate the building. Only trained fire marshals should attempt to tackle a fire, and only if it is safe to do so, the fire is small and contained, and evacuation is not delayed.

If you HEAR THE FIRE ALARM:

1. Leave the building immediately by the nearest available exit and report to your warden at the Evacuation Assembly Point (EAP). DO NOT RUN. DO NOT USE LIFTS. DO NOT DELAY FOR PERSONAL BELONGINGS.
2. The switchboard operator or designated person is responsible for calling the fire services if not automatically triggered.
3. Do not re-enter the building until instructed by your warden.

Good Housekeeping

- Do not run on stairs. Use handrails when going up or down.
- Be aware of others approaching blind corners or opening doors quickly.
- Do not read while walking.
- Ensure lower filing cabinet drawers are closed after use to prevent trips and falls.
- Electrical and telephone cords must not lie uncovered across floor areas; they must be secured or covered.
- Ensure floor areas are well lit and free of obstruction.
- Spilt liquids must be cleaned up immediately.
- Pointed objects such as pens, pencils and letter openers must be used with care to avoid puncture injuries.
- Horseplay of any kind is unacceptable and constitutes a disciplinary offence.

Electrical Equipment

Electrical equipment is normally safe, provided it is properly installed and regularly inspected. Water and liquids are conductors of electricity; contact with faulty equipment can make electric shock far more severe. Employees must:

- NEVER touch electrical equipment with wet hands.
- NEVER move portable electrical equipment without first disconnecting it from the mains.
- NEVER carry out electrical repairs unless you are an authorised person.
- KEEP electrical cables and flexes away from wet areas and where they may be damaged.
- ALWAYS switch off equipment when not in use, unless continuous operation is required.
- ALWAYS disconnect electrical equipment at night by removing the plug, unless continuous operation is required.
- REPORT defective equipment to the Safety Officer immediately.

Working at Heights

- Do not attempt to retrieve items beyond your reach without using appropriate equipment.
- Use a ladder or approved stepping stool. Ensure the ladder is in a safe condition before use.
- Do not use chairs, open drawers, or any makeshift device as a climbing aid.
- Do not climb shelving units.
- Do not overreach on a ladder — descend and reposition instead.

Training

The organisation is committed to ensuring all staff receive appropriate health and safety training. Training needs are identified through induction, annual appraisal and in response to incidents or legislative changes.

All Staff

All Apprenticeship Connect staff will receive a health and safety induction covering the key provisions of this policy, emergency procedures, and individual responsibilities.

Annual refresher training will be delivered via MyAC or face-to-face sessions as appropriate. Completion is recorded on MyAC; non-completion is escalated to the relevant line manager.

Management

Managers will receive training in managing health and safety issues relevant to their role at least annually, with additional training provided in response to legislative or operational changes.

Teaching Learning and Assessment

Tutors will undertake health and safety in education training through the organisation's Teaching, Learning and Assessment CPD Schedule, covering learner welfare, workplace safety in apprenticeship settings, and safeguarding obligations.

Disciplinary Action

Any employee or learner who contravenes the provisions of this policy, whether or not in doing so they place the health and safety of themselves or others at risk, will be subject to disciplinary action and, where appropriate, dismissed from employment or withdrawn from their education programme.

Serious and Imminent Danger

1. In the event of a danger of death, serious imminent danger or significant health risk, employees or learners may stop work and immediately proceed to a place of safety. The matter must be reported to their supervisor as soon as possible.
2. Following investigation, the employee or learner will be informed that: the danger has been addressed and normal working should resume; or that the matter does not constitute a grave risk; or that further investigation will take place and the individual may be asked to carry out alternative work or learning in the interim.
3. Refusal to resume normal working or learning when lawfully instructed to do so may constitute a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Contingency Planning

In the event of a pandemic or comparable significant public health event, the organisation will activate a pandemic-specific policy and procedure developed by the Business Manager and Directors, covering guidance for employees, learners and stakeholders in line with official Government and medical advice at the time.

A separate Pandemic Response Procedure is maintained and will be made available via MyAC when activated. The organisation will communicate updates through appropriate channels, which may include policy releases, email communication, MyAC announcements and management meetings. Individual risk assessments for high-risk employees and learners will be conducted and monitored throughout any such event.

Promoting Health and Safety

Effective health and safety depends on sustained promotion and awareness. The organisation will:

- Ensure all employees read, understand and acknowledge this policy during induction.
- Conduct health and safety induction for all employees.
- Deliver health and safety information, advice and guidance to all learners during programme induction.
- Direct all learners to this policy and provide ongoing access via MyAC.
- Educate learners about how to source and apply health and safety information in their workplace.
- Embed health and safety awareness in programme delivery through lessons and assessments.
- Include health and safety notices in venues and on the organisation's e-learning platform.
- Guide employers about their health and safety obligations in relation to apprenticeship delivery.
- Ensure health and safety arrangements are inclusive and accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities or additional needs.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if required by legislative change, a significant incident, or a material change in the organisation's activities or structure. The Safety Officer is responsible for coordinating the review and presenting proposed changes to the Board for approval.

Contact Us

For further information about health and safety at Apprenticeship Connect, or to make a health and safety report, please contact us:

- Email: help@apprenticeshipconnect.co.uk
- Telephone: 0204 604 3360