



## **Bridging the Gap (Manchester)**

### **Health & Safety Policy**

**Registered Charity Number: 1170952**

This policy and guidance will be reviewed annually, if there are any changes in the related legislation or when an incident dictates. This will ensure that this document remains current and fit for purpose.

This policy should be read in conjunction with: -

- **Manual Handling Policy and Procedure**
- **Fire Safety & Prevention Policy and Procedure**
- **Lone Working Policy & Procedure**
- **Infectious Diseases Policy & Procedure**
- **Health & Safety Risk Assessments**
- **Workforce Driver Policy & Procedure**
- **Stress in the Workplace Policy & Procedure**
- **Mental Health First Aid Policy & Procedure**
- **Menopause Support in the Workplace Policy & Procedure**
- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policies & Procedures**

Date reviewed: 09 April 2025, Interim review 2 October 2025 (inclusion of Fire Safety)

Reviewed by: Chris Copestake & Michelle McHale

Next full review due: 09 April 2026

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## **Appendix A - Reporting Information for BTG Health and Safety Officers**

### **1. Purpose and Scope**

This Health and Safety policy aims to protect workers, volunteers and people who use the services of Bridging the Gap (BTG).

It is BTG's policy to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of all paid staff, volunteers and any other persons who may be directly affected by the activities of BTG, including the general public.

### **2. Legislation**

There are a number of pieces of legislation to ensure a safe working environment. The following are relevant: -

#### Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

All employers have a duty to maintain a safe working environment 'so far as reasonably practicable' for their employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This means that employers are expected to protect their workers against risks to their health and safety. The Act also expects that the working environment is safe and that training to ensure the health and safety of workers is carried out. These requirements are not only for office-based staff but lone workers and the environments they encounter too.

#### Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The regulations make it clear what employers must do under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The main requirement of which is to assess all the risks to the health and safety of their employees and, if the organisation has more than five employees, to record the outcomes of the assessment. Although BTG falls under the required number of staff for recording outcomes, it does carry out risk assessments for all its activities and records the outcomes, as well as any required improvements.

The risk assessment should identify the risks associated with lone working, outline any safety measure that can help to reduce the risk and ensure that the safety measures are put into practice and reviewed regularly to make sure they are still valid. If the risk assessment shows that the risk is too hazardous for one lone worker to manage alone, other arrangements will need to be introduced.

The regulations also expect employees to take reasonable care for their own personal safety.

#### Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981

The regulations require employers to provide first aid equipment so that emergency first aid can be received by employees if needed. This could include the provision of first aid equipment in the car for lone workers travelling alone in case they are involved in accidents and incidents.

#### Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 (COSHH)

These regulations require that any substances that are hazardous, including hazardous waste and cleaning materials used, are identified and assessed for their risk to the health of all workers and that there are safety measures put in place to control these risks.

#### Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

These regulations place a legal duty on employers to report deaths, major injuries (or injuries that require more than three days off work) and dangerous occurrences at work. This would include accidents and incidents that happen as a result of lone working.

A full list of types of reportable injuries can be found on the HSE website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm>

#### Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007

This legislation allows an organisation to be convicted when the death of someone has occurred to whom it owes a duty of care, e.g. a staff member or a person using the service, due to the negligence of the organisation. This can include a failure to put into place adequate risk management systems.

#### Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

This guidance aims to help employers comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous

Amendments) Regulations 2002. It will help employers – and managers, safety representatives and employees – to control and reduce the risk of injury from manual handling. The Regulations apply to manual handling activities involving the transporting or supporting of loads, including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving loads. A load may be either inanimate, for example a box or a trolley, or animate, for example a person or an animal. The risks from manual handling can be found across all kinds of workplaces – on farms and building sites, in factories, offices, warehouses, hospitals, banks, laboratories and while making deliveries.

#### The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

This legislation requires employers to implement a fire safety and prevention policy and procedure to minimise fire risk and to keep up-to-date records of fire safety management practices.

### **3. Responsibilities for Health and Safety**

Overall responsibility for implementing health and safety falls with the Board of Trustees, Project Managers or the team lead for a particular activity, although everyone is individually responsible for health and safety.

The Project Managers / Health and Safety Officer will provide a regular report on BTG's health and safety performance to the Trustees and ensure the report contains proposals for the continual improvement of health and safety management as appropriate.

While volunteering for BTG, each volunteer is responsible for their own health and safety and is responsible for the wellbeing of the service users and other volunteers around them.

In the event that there is a health and safety breach the Health and Safety Officer and Project Manager will be responsible for the overseeing and execution of the protocols.

#### Designated Health & Safety Officer (with overall responsibility):

Chris Copestake, Trustee

Email: [chris@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:chris@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk)

#### Project Manager (for day-to-day responsibility):

Heidi Exell                      Tel. 07561 680009

Email: [ProjectManager@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:ProjectManager@manchestersouthcentral.foodbank.org.uk)

#### **4. Risk Assessments**

As an extra step to reduce potential risks to health and safety, BTG conducts risk assessments for all activities related to working for the organisation. These risk assessments are available to all staff and volunteers and should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety policy. Where working conditions, habits or change risk assessments shall be reviewed.

#### **5. Training**

Staff members and volunteers shall be given necessary health and safety inductions and provided with appropriate training and personal protective equipment where necessary. BTG will ensure suitable training and relevant arrangements are in place to cover staff members engaged in work that is remote from BTG's main site.

Induction programmes, will include Staff and Volunteer Handbooks that will draw their attention to important health and safety issues in respect of: -

- Manual handling
- First Aid
- Working at a height
- Fire safety and evacuation
- Accidents and incidents at work
- Hazardous substances
- Food hygiene
- Driver training

#### **6. Fire Safety**

All staff members and volunteers must ensure that they familiarise themselves with BTG's fire safety and evacuation procedures (including the location of all fire exits and fire equipment). Fire Safety Officers must carry out Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for all staff and volunteers with additional support needs. BTG will ensure that staff members receive adequate training to ensure they are aware of all procedures which must be followed in the event of a fire.

BTG will ensure Fire Drills take place annually and that all relevant and necessary signage and fire equipment for the protection and safety of staff members and others present in our work spaces will be displayed clearly and updated/maintained as

necessary. Escape routes shall be well signed and kept clear at all times. BTG shall ensure its fire safety risk assessment is kept up to date and regularly reviewed.

## 7. Compliance

It is **EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY** to ensure they keep themselves and others safe and that they adhere to all BTG's health and safety policy and procedures.

BTG will ensure: -

- compliance with the Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 and related regulations and codes of practice
- all reasonable and practical steps and measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all staff members, including volunteers while at work.
- the safety and health of any members of the public, or any persons who may visit sites and locations where BTG carries out its business operations, is protected so far as is reasonably practicable
- sufficient measures are implemented to prevent accidents and cases of work related ill health by managing health and safety risks in the workplace.
- clear and adequate information/training is provided to all staff members including volunteers to ensure that they are competent to carry out their work in a responsible and safe manner.
- engagement with staff and volunteers in matters about health and safety and their work for us.
- implementation of emergency procedures in case of significant events, such as fires etc, which threaten the health and safety of staff members and others.
- the maintenance of all necessary equipment and tools necessary for staff members to carry out their duties.
- The safe storage and handling of all substances and products which may cause harm to staff members who are required to use them during the course of their work.

BTG staff and volunteers have a duty to: -

- work and conduct themselves in a manner that promotes and ensures their own safety and the safety of others.
- follow and obey procedures and practices that have been designed and implemented by BTG to ensure safe and healthy working conditions.
- report any accident, injury or any other working conditions which they believe to be unsafe or of immediate danger to the appropriate Health and Safety personnel immediately without delay.
- keep work areas kept clean, tidy and rubbish free and ensure all spillages are cleaned up immediately (see below for bodily fluid spills).
- report any needles, blood or bodily fluids (DO NOT TOUCH) to the appropriate health and safety personnel or a person responsible who has had adequate training to deal with such spills.
- familiarise themselves with the whereabouts of first aid provisions and emergency fire evacuation procedures.

## **8. Working at Height**

‘Working at height’ means carrying out a work activity in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injuries.

Working at height remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries. Common cases include falls from ladders, which is the most likely danger of injury from falling in the food bank setting.

In the main, warehouse work at BTG premises poses only low-risk situations, where common sense tells you no particular precautions are necessary. However, staff and volunteers should ensure that before working at height they consider the following: -

- When working at a height, prevent falls by using the right type of equipment.
- Always use equipment that is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job, as well as it being checked regularly. For most at-a-height working in the food bank warehouses BTG provides substantial, 3-step stools for reaching the higher warehouse shelves.
- Never place step stools on an uneven surface.

- When positioning step stools in order to handle stock on the higher shelves make sure you can get safely to and from where you are working (i.e. personal protection)
- Ensure that you are not moving stock above the heads of other workers so as to provide them with protection from falling objects (i.e. collective protection).
- Don't try to carry/move too much stock at once.
- Never overreach when using step stools or ladders.
- Only use the step stools for light work of short duration (a maximum of 30 minutes at a time).

## **9. Manual Handling**

The term manual handling covers a wide variety of activities including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling and carrying. If any of these tasks are not carried out appropriately there is a risk of injury.

This is a very important area of health and safety since it is one of the most common causes of injury at work. For this reason this topic has been separated out from this document and a standalone manual handling policy and procedure has been written.

[Manual Handling P&P](#)

## **10. Care of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)**

Many materials or substances used at work could harm your health. These substances could range from dust particles, gases or fumes that you breathe in, or liquids, gels or powders that may come into contact with your eyes or skin. There could also be harmful micro-organisms present that can cause infection, an allergic reaction or are toxic.

Harmful substances can be present in anything from cleaning products to flour dust, fruit and vegetables, blood or waste. Ill health caused by these substances used at work is preventable. Many substances can harm health but, used properly, they almost never do.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) legally requires BTG to: -

- identify which harmful substances may be present in the workplace



- decide how workers might be exposed to them and be harmed
- look at what measures have to be in place to prevent this harm and decide whether BTG is doing enough
- provide information, instruction and training
- provide health surveillance, in appropriate cases

Staff members and volunteers are not expected to come into prolonged contact with any substance covered within the 'Care of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations' while working for BTG. However, should this change, BTG will ensure an appropriate risk assessment is carried out beforehand, with full training given to any person(s) expected to use them. This will ensure the substance's safe use, handling, storage and transport in the provision of BTG's services.

Staff members and volunteers should be aware that all domestic cleaning items that they may come into contact with will come with their own health warnings, and these should be read carefully and followed as directed. Volunteers and staff should be aware that: -

- Having your hands wet for a long time or having them frequently wet during the day can irritate skin and lead to dermatitis
- Some ingredients in cleaning products can cause skin allergies and asthma
- Some cleaning products are corrosive and can cause skin burns and eye damage.

In addition, food items such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and flours donated to BTG may also cause harm, such as dermatitis of the skin and allergic reactions, therefore, extra care and attention is required when working around these products also.

On site there are bathroom facilities to wash and BTG provides the use of aprons, gloves and face masks to limit the likelihood of exposure and harm.

## **11. Workstation Health & Safety**

Workstation Health and Safety refers to any person who uses display screen equipment (DSE), such as PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones for work related activity. The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations apply to workers who use DSE daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more. The regulations don't apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or only use it for a short time.

The risks from DSE can be reduced using the following straight forward controls:

### **Getting comfortable**

- Forearms should be approximately horizontal and the user's eyes should be the same height as the top of the screen
- Make sure there is enough work space to accommodate all documents or other equipment. A document holder may help avoid awkward neck and eye movements
- Arrange the desk and screen to avoid glare, or bright reflections. This is often easiest if the screen is not directly facing windows or bright lights
- Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent intrusive light
- Make sure there is space under the desk to move legs
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of seats on the backs of legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users.

### **Well-designed workstations**

#### *Keyboards and keying in ( that is, typing)*

- A space in front of the keyboard can help you rest your hands and wrists when not keying
- Try to keep wrists straight when keying
- Good keyboard technique is important – you can do this by keeping a soft touch on the keys and not overstretching the fingers.

#### *Using a mouse*

- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with a straight wrist
- Sit upright and close to the desk to reduce working with the mouse arm stretched
- Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used
- Support the forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly
- Rest fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.

### *Reading the screen*

- Make sure individual characters on the screen are sharp, in focus and don't flicker or move. If they do, the DSE may need servicing or adjustment
- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room
- Make sure the screen surface is clean
- When setting up software, choose text that is large enough to read easily on screen when sitting in a normal comfortable working position
- Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice versa).

### **Changes in activity**

Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps prevent fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache. Organised or scheduled rest breaks may sometimes be a solution.

The following may help users: -

- Stretch and change position
- Look into the distance from time to time, and blink often
- Change activity before users get tired, rather than to recover
- Short, frequent breaks are better than longer, infrequent ones

- Timing and length of changes in activity or breaks for DSE use is not set down in law and arrangements will vary depending on a particular situation.

## **Portable computers**

These same controls will also reduce the DSE risks associated with portable computers. However, the following may also help reduce manual handling, fatigue and postural problems: -

- Consider potential risks from manual handling if users have to carry heavy equipment and papers
- Whenever possible, users should be encouraged to use a docking station or firm surface and a full-sized keyboard and mouse
- The height and position of the portable's screen should be angled so that the user is sitting comfortably and reflection is minimised (raiser blocks are commonly used to help with screen height)
- More changes in activity may be needed if the user cannot minimise the risks of prolonged use and awkward postures to suitable levels
- While portable systems not in prolonged use are excluded from the regulations, some jobs will use such devices intermittently and to support the main tasks. The degree and intensity of use may vary. An employer who provides such equipment still has to risk assess and take steps to reduce residual risks.

## **BTG staff will:**

- analyse workstations, using the HSE checklist, to assess and reduce risks
- make sure controls are in place
- be provided to access for information and training
- provide eye and eyesight tests on request, and special spectacles if needed
- review the assessment when the user or DSE changes.

For further guidance please refer to the Health and Safety Executive's 'Working with Display Screen Equipment Guide' [HSE Display Screen Guide](#)

## 12. Driving for Work

BTG must manage health and safety risks to workers and volunteers who drive a vehicle or ride a motorcycle, other powered two-wheeler or bicycle on the road as part of their role. Health and safety law applies to work activities on the road in the same way as it does on a fixed site.

Commuting to work is not generally classified as driving for work, except where someone's journey starts from their home and they are travelling to a work location that is not their normal place of work. Health and safety law does not apply to commuting.

Hazards that can cause harm to the driver or rider, passengers, other road users and/or pedestrians when driving for work include: -

- roadworks, traffic and congestion
- vehicle condition
- fatigue and distraction
- time pressures
- the weather
- behaviour of other road users

BTG will manage risks to drivers and others by: -

- complying with the laws and regulations to workforce driving
- checking drivers credentials
- undertaking driver health checks
- completing driving risk assessments
- maintaining all vehicles to an acceptable driving standard
- providing driver training

Staff and volunteers are required to: -

- report any external work-related driving hours
- report any health issue or medications that may affect ability to drive safely
- report any traffic or driving violations

- carry out vehicle checks prior to driving the vehicle and complete vehicle check book
- report any vehicle defects immediately and refrain from driving any unsafe vehicle
- undertake driver training as requested
- comply with all risk assessments, policy and guidance

### **13. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)**

RIDDOR places duties on employers to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses).

#### **What must be reported?**

- Deaths and injuries caused by workplace accidents
- Occupational diseases
- Carcinogens, mutagens and biological agents
- Specified injuries to workers (fractures, amputations, burns, crushes, any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia)
- Dangerous occurrences
- Gas incidents

BTG's Health and Safety Officer maintains responsibility for reporting any reportable injuries to RIDDOR and the Trustee Board.

### **14. Reporting Concerns**

BTG places huge importance on the health and safety of its staff, volunteers and clients. If there are any health and safety concerns, these should be passed on immediately to a Project Manager or the team leader supervising a session who will liaise with the Board of Trustees' Health and Safety Officer to ensure concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Should a complainant be unsatisfied with the outcome of their concern being looked into then they can write directly to the Chair of Trustees to outline their dissatisfaction and continuing concerns.

## **15. First Aid**

Despite there only being guidance from the HSE that an organisation with a workforce of 25 persons and over must have a qualified first aider on site (HSE The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations, 1981, p18-19), a category that BTG does not fall under, BTG recognises the importance of having an appropriately qualified person on site, where possible. It will therefore endeavour to do this as frequently as is possible.

First Aid boxes are provided by BTG and are located in the staff office, the overspill warehouse (Room 11) as well as one being provided in the delivery van. These First Aid boxes will be checked regularly by the Project Manager to ensure they contain appropriate and within use-by date items. The building management has also provided a first aid box in the communal kitchen at the Centre,

When BTG's services are provided off-site the Project Manager/team lead will be aware of where the First Aid box is kept that is provided by the respective church organisations.

A notice will be placed prominently in BTG's warehouses informing staff and volunteers where First Aid Boxes can be located and who in the building is a qualified First Aider.

## **Mental Health First Aid**

BTG recognises that mental and physical health should be treated as equally important. It will, therefore ensure that there is a designated Mental Health First Aid Champion in the organisation and that this person is enabled to undertake the appropriate training to maintain a Mental Health First Aid Accreditation.

BTG will inform its employees/volunteers how they can access the help of the organisation's Mental Health First Aid Champion.

## **16. Policy Review**

This policy and any health and safety procedures will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are any legislative changes or work related habits or changes to practice.

***This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees:***

<b>Name: Michelle McHale</b>	<b>Signed:</b> 
<b>Position: Chair of Trustees</b>	<b>Date: 09 April 2025</b>

## **Appendix A**

### **For Health and Safety Officers only:**

All incidents can be reported online but a telephone service is also provided for reporting fatal/specified incidents only - call the Incident Contact Centre on 0345 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5 pm).

### **Reporting online**

Responsible persons should complete the appropriate online report form listed below. The form will then be submitted directly to the RIDDOR database. You will then have the option to download a copy for your records.

- [Report of an injury](#)
- [Report of a dangerous occurrence](#)
- [Report of a case of disease](#)
- [Report of flammable gas incident](#)
- [Report of a dangerous gas fitting](#)