



# **Blue Flamingo Community Hub CIC**

## **Health & Safety Policy**

*Policy Owner: Blue Flamingo Community Hub CIC*

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*Designated Safeguarding Lead: Erin Singleton*

## **Volunteer Responsibilities**

While the Board and ED hold primary responsibility, all volunteers must cooperate to keep the Hub safe. As a volunteer, you are required to:

- **Monitor Personal Boundaries:** Be mindful of your own emotional limits. If a conversation or situation makes you feel uncomfortable, you are empowered to set a boundary directly or step back for a 'sensory break'.
- **Report Hazards Immediately:** If you notice a spill, trip hazard, or faulty equipment, please take initiative to remedy the situation if it is safe to do so (ie: mop up spills, remove trip hazards, etc). If it is something which requires further attention, report it to the ED or SC immediately.
- **Maintain the 'Positive Vibe' Ethos:** Recognise that 'safety' includes protecting the positive atmosphere of the Hub. Avoid bringing external conflicts or negative attitudes into sessions.
- **Follow Food Safety Standards:** If assisting in the kitchen, you must adhere to the hygiene standards established in your training.

## **Dementia-Friendly Safety Measures**

To support our members living with dementia, we implement specific environmental safeguards:

- **Clutter Management:** All walkways, entry points and exit points must be kept clear of storage, bags, mobility aids, boxes or any other unnamed items to prevent trips and confusion.
- **Noise and Lighting:** We aim to manage noise levels and ensure lighting is consistent to prevent distress or overstimulation.
- **Signage:** Clear, accessible signage is used to help members navigate the Hub safely.

## **Food Safety and Hygiene**

As a café-style service, food safety is a critical priority:

- **Training:** Any volunteer helping to prepare food in the kitchen is required to complete an online Food Hygiene and Safety course.

- **Cross-Contamination:** Volunteers must ensure no contamination occurs in designated gluten-free. As most of the food we provide is pre-packed, all packaging must be retained until the end of the session so it can be referred to for allergy information.
- **Cleanliness:** Surfaces must be wiped down, equipment like coffee machines cleaned thoroughly, bins emptied at the end of stations and any spills are cleaned immediately.
- **Personal belongings:** Any personal items such as jackets, coats and handbags must not be kept in the kitchen at any point. All volunteers and staff are asked to place personal items in the appropriate place named by the Hub where the session is taking place (in Ashton this will be in the back cupboard; in Penwortham this will be on the booth nearest the kitchen; in Fulwood this is on the coat racks by the entrance to whichever room we're using).

### **Safe Lifting and Physical Boundaries**

To protect your physical wellbeing and ensure the safe setup of our sessions, please follow these guidelines:

- **Individual Assessment:** Only undertake lifting or moving tasks if you feel physically able and comfortable doing so.
- **The Right to Decline:** You have the full support of the Board to say 'no' or ask for a different task if you feel a physical activity is unsafe or beyond your capability.
- **Two-Person Lift Rule:** Any heavy or awkward items (such as folding tables or large resource crates) must be moved by two people to ensure balance and safety.
- **Clear Communication:** When performing a two-person lift, coordinate your movements and agree on a 'lead' before starting the lift.
- **Prioritize Safety over Speed:** If you have any concerns about your back, knees, or general physical comfort, please notify the ED or SC so your role can be adapted for that session.

## **Managing Conflict and Emotional Safety**

We have a zero-tolerance policy for behaviour that makes others feel unsafe:

- **Abuse and Aggression:** This includes physical violence as well as psychological pressure, negative comments or bullying.
- **External Grievances:** Bringing outside conflicts into the Hub is recognised as a risk to the collective wellbeing of the group and is not permitted.
- **Reporting:** Any instance of a volunteer or member feeling threatened or pressured must be reported to the ED or SC immediately.

## **Fire Safety**

- **The Designated Lead:** The Executive Director (ED) or Session Coordinator (SC) on-site acts as the Fire Warden for the session .
- **Electrical Safety:** All electrical equipment used (kettles, boilers, tablets) must be visually checked for damage before use.
- **Kitchen Safety:** Volunteers in the kitchen must remain vigilant when using water boilers and avoid leaving heat sources unattended .
- **Housekeeping:** Walkways and fire exits must be kept completely clear of clutter, resource boxes or personal belongings at all times.

## **Emergency Procedures (The 'Assisted' Evacuation) - if the fire alarm sounds or a fire is discovered:**

- **Raise the Alarm:** Immediately notify the ED or SC. The ED or SC will ensure the emergency services are called.
- **Stop All Activity:** Volunteers should immediately stop what they are doing and assist members .
- **Assisting Members:**
  - Many members may be confused or move slowly.
  - Volunteers should offer calm, clear instructions and physical support (such as carrying bags or guiding movement) to help members reach the exit .
  - Follow the 'Two-Volunteer Rule' for any member with significant mobility issues to ensure a safe exit.

- **Evacuation Routes:** Volunteers must use the nearest safe exit as identified during their on-site orientation.
- **The Roll Call:** Once at the designated assembly point, the ED will use the session register to ensure everyone is accounted for.

### **Volunteer Training**

- **On-Site Induction:** All new volunteers must be shown the fire exits and assembly points at their specific Hub location during their first session.
- **Ongoing Awareness:** Fire safety is included in the mandatory safeguarding and health and safety briefings provided throughout the year.

### **Equipment and Documentation**

- **Fire Extinguishers:** These are provided and maintained by the host venues (church halls/social centres). Volunteers are not expected to fight a fire unless they have been specifically trained to do so and it is safe.

### **Emergency Procedures**

- **First Aid:** A first aid box is located in the resources area of each Hub.
- **Fire Safety:** Volunteers will be briefed on exit routes and assembly points at each location (Ashton, Penwortham, and Fulwood) during their induction.
- **Lone Working:** The premises can only be opened to members of the public if two or more staff members or volunteers are present.