The Gatehouse Health and Safety Policy

Policy ID Number: PO8

Policy Passed by Board of Trustees: 9th September 2026 **Valid until:** 1st December 2027

Related Policies and associated documents

- P33 Fire Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Checklist
- Fire Risk Assessment
- P33a Fire safety PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)
- P03 Managing Risk Policy
- P06 Food Groups Food Safety Handbook
- P07 Internal Food Safety Handbook
- P08a Health and Safety Policy Statement for public display
- Lone Working Policy To be completed
- Employee Handbook
- Gatehouse Incident Book
- Gatehouse Accident Book

Part 1: Statement of intent

This is the Health and Safety policy statement of The Gatehouse.

The Gatehouse, is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all staff, volunteers, and guests. As a charity supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, the organisation recognises the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone who enters its premises or engages with its services.

The charity will take all reasonably practicable steps to prevent accidents, injuries, and work-related ill health by identifying and managing risks, maintaining safe working conditions, and promoting a culture of safety and responsibility.

The Gatehouse is committed to:

1. **Establishing and maintaining a Health and Safety Management System** to manage risks associated with its premises, activities, and the people supported.
2. **Complying with all relevant health and safety legislation** and striving to meet or exceed best practice standards.

3. **Providing clear leadership and assigning responsibilities** for health and safety at all levels of the organisation.
4. **Ensuring all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training and support** to carry out their roles safely and confidently.
5. **Promoting a culture of openness and responsibility**, encouraging everyone to identify, report, and help manage hazards.
6. **Communicating and consulting with staff and volunteers** on all health and safety matters, ensuring this policy is understood and accessible.
7. **Conducting and reviewing risk assessments regularly**, prioritising and implementing actions to reduce risks to acceptable levels.
8. **Maintaining safe premises and equipment**, including regular servicing, inspections, and compliance with fire and building safety regulations.
9. **Monitoring and reviewing performance** to ensure continuous improvement in health and safety practices.
10. **Providing health surveillance and maintaining records** where appropriate to support staff wellbeing and legal compliance.
11. **Collaborating with other organisations** sharing premises to ensure mutual awareness of risks and compliance with safety legislation.

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in operations or legislation.

Part 2: Responsibilities for health and safety

1. Overall and final responsibility for health and safety: CEO Sasha East
2. "Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice falls to the individual Managers listed in the table below:
3. To ensure health and safety standards are maintained/improved, the following people have responsibility in the following areas:

Name	Role	Area of Responsibility	
Sasha East	CEO	Overall and Final Responsibility	• Updating Policies • Budgets • Ensuring Legal Requirements are met • HR & Work-Related Ill Health • Consultation

Name	Role	Area of Responsibility	
Zoe Wright	Services Manager	Service Delivery & Volunteer Management	• H & S Training • Risk Assessments (excluding Public Events) • Volunteers • Emergency Procedures • Pest Control • Building Services / Utilities • Office Equipment • PAT Testing and Electrical Systems Testing
David Kay	Fundraising and Publicity Manager	Fundraising and Publicity	• Public Events (including Risk Assessments)
Gemma Stone	Casework Manager	Casework	• Safeguarding • Lone Working
Vacant – Interim Arrangement with Services Manager	Community Centre Manager	Café/Community Centre, Shower Project, Clothing Store and Workshops and Groups.	• Fire Safety and Equipment (including annual testing) • First Aid • Moving and Handling • Food Safety • Storage and use of chemical substances • PPE
Monica Gregory	Leaf Coordinator	LEAF	• LEAF activities and events
Nicole Corfield	Lead Counsellor	Counselling Service	• Counselling Service Risk Assessments and Client Safeguarding and Confidentiality
Nigel Meaby	Systems & IT Manager	IT and Systems	• IT Equipment Maintenance, purchasing • DSE assessments

Everyone who works with us whether staff, volunteer or contractor **must**:

1. Take reasonable care for their own health and safety.
2. Consider the safety of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions

3. Work in accordance with information and training provided.
4. Refrain from intentionally misusing or recklessly interfering with anything that has been provided for health and safety reasons.
5. Report any hazardous defects in plant and equipment, or shortcomings in the existing safety arrangements, to a responsible person without delay.
6. Not undertake any task they are not trained or authorised to do.

Part 3: Arrangements for health and safety

Health and safety law poster is displayed at (location)	Kitchen Notice Board
First-aid box is located:	The Office – left hand side
Accident book is located:	The Office – right hand wall

Operational Risk assessment

Internal operational risks are assessed to highlight, manage, remove or mitigate against potential hazards. These are reviewed and updated regularly and any action to mitigate/avoid risks is carried out. A master risk register, subject to review by senior leadership and trustees is held on file in the SMT area of the shared drive.

Risk Assessments for Staff and Volunteer Roles

The Gatehouse conducts regular risk assessments for all staff and volunteer roles to ensure that individuals are equipped to work safely and confidently in a dynamic and sometimes unpredictable environment. These assessments help identify potential hazards related to the physical workspace, role-specific duties, and emotional wellbeing, allowing the organisation to implement appropriate safeguards, training, and support. By proactively managing risks, The Gatehouse fosters a culture of safety and accountability, ensuring that everyone involved in service delivery is protected and empowered.

Risk Assessments for Working with Challenging or Vulnerable People

Given the nature of its work supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, The Gatehouse recognises the importance of assessing risks associated with working with guests who may be vulnerable, distressed, or exhibiting challenging behaviours. Risk assessments in this area help staff and volunteers understand potential triggers, boundaries, and intervention strategies, while also ensuring that safeguarding protocols are in place. These assessments are vital for maintaining a respectful, trauma-informed approach that prioritises the safety and dignity of both guests and team members.

Risk Assessments for Activities and Events organised by the Gatehouse

Whether hosting workshops, community meals, or special events, The Gatehouse uses risk assessments to evaluate the safety of its activities and ensure that all logistical, environmental, and participant-related risks are considered. This includes assessing venue suitability, equipment safety, crowd management, and emergency procedures. By planning ahead and documenting potential risks, The Gatehouse ensures that its events are inclusive, well-managed, and compliant with health and safety standards, allowing guests to engage meaningfully and safely

Risk Assessments for external Public Activities and Events

When participating in external public events (e.g. manning a publicity stand) a risk assessment is to be produced solely relating to actions being managed by Gatehouse employees or volunteers if required by the event organisers or otherwise deemed necessary by the Fundraising and Publicity Manager. These risk assessments are for single events and therefore are not reviewed regularly or held on the master risk register. Unlike internal risk assessments they may be in the form of a document provided by the external event organiser rather than using the Gatehouse template risk assessment as a basis.

Training

Training Commitment

The Gatehouse believes that training is essential for ensuring the safety, confidence, and effectiveness of all staff and volunteers. To support this, the charity maintains an annual training plan that outlines core and role-specific training requirements. This plan is stored on the shared drive and is accessible to all relevant team members. It includes mandatory sessions such as health and safety, safeguarding, and professional boundaries, as well as opportunities for development aligned with its values and services.

Training Records and Identification

Training records for paid staff are securely maintained on BreathHR, a platform accessible to all employees. Training needs are identified through regular **l**ine management meetings, annual appraisals, or can be requested directly by individuals. This approach ensures that training remains responsive to the evolving needs of the team and the challenges of working with vulnerable and potentially complex individuals.

Premises

The Gatehouse is committed to operating in safe, well-maintained premises that support the wellbeing of staff, volunteers, and guests.

At each site where the charity operates the following checks should be made and recorded by the lead staff member. Activity specific risk assessments provide more detailed

information about the procedures for working in safe ways specific to the locations where they take place.

What	Indicator	Frequency
Escape Routes and exits	They should be well signed and clear	daily
Fire Safety Equipment		
Evacuation Procedure		
Toilets		
Cleaning Equipment		
Sharp Bins		
Food Storage		
First Aiders Identified		
Fire Marshall Identified		
Peep Identified		
Asbestos Survey		
Gas Safety		
Electrical Safety		
Tanked Water		

Sites

The Gatehouse recognises that each site may have unique risks and operational needs. The following list outlines the specific health and safety requirements and arrangements in place at each location to ensure compliance, safety, and suitability for its services.

St Giles Parish Rooms, 10 Woodstock Road Oxford OX4 6HT

The Gatehouse operates from a historic building adjacent to St Giles Church, which retains responsibility for the building's structural maintenance and key safety systems. This includes annual fire extinguisher checks, boiler and heating servicing, and electrical inspections. As the primary users of the space, The Gatehouse team holds responsibility for day-to-day safety and cleanliness, including identifying and reporting maintenance issues promptly. This

collaborative approach ensures the premises remain safe, functional, and welcoming for all staff, volunteers, and guests.

New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square Oxford

The Gatehouse occasionally uses space at New Road Baptist Church for meetings and other activities. While church staff are often present on site and act as the first point of contact for any immediate concerns, the charity remains responsible for ensuring that everyone works safely and respectfully within the premises. This includes reporting any issues that are encountered, maintaining appropriate conduct, and being mindful of who is allowed into the building. Staff and volunteers should be particularly aware of the behaviour of guests, as well as individual's unknown to us who may be visiting other parts of the building, to ensure the safety and comfort of everyone using the space.

Working Offsite

The Gatehouse undertakes a range of off-site activities, including outreach, meetings, and events. The casework outreach team operates in pairs within agreed zones and under a specific risk assessment. Caseworkers and counsellors do not meet clients off-site unless accompanied by another staff member or a volunteer. LEAF (Lived Experience Advisory Forum) workers may attend meetings off-site with members, but never in a member's home and only in public places when working alone.

For any off-site events or activities, the charity ensures that appropriate risk assessments are completed as required and that undertakes checks to ensure activities are covered by insurance before proceeding.

Operational staff are encouraged to use the check-in/check-out system, informing a colleague of their location and expected return time, to support lone working safety. Further details are outlined in the Lone Working Policy and role-specific risk assessments.

The CEO and fundraising team members also give talks at external venues and attend external meetings and events, and for those activities the CEO and Fundraising & Publicity Manager respectively are responsible for ensuring that all H & S matters are considered and managed appropriately.

Equipment

Safe Use of Equipment

All staff and volunteers at The Gatehouse have a responsibility to use equipment safely, appropriately, and in accordance with training and guidance provided. Individuals must check equipment before use and report any faults, damage, or concerns promptly to ensure timely maintenance and to prevent accidents. This applies to all equipment, including kitchen tools, office devices, and cleaning supplies.

First Aid

The charity will maintain suitable numbers of first-aid personnel to deal with minor accidents and emergencies at the workplace. These personnel will have sufficient training and qualifications in accordance with statutory requirements. Identities of first aiders will be displayed throughout the workplace. Accidents resulting in injury are to be recorded in the Gatehouse Accident Book.

Maintenance and Assessments

The Gatehouse arranges annual Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) for electrical equipment to ensure safety and compliance. Staff who work from home or regularly use desks and screens are required to complete a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment to support safe working practices and prevent strain or injury. These measures help maintain a safe and supportive working environment across all settings

Working with Chemicals

At The Gatehouse, low-risk cleaning chemicals are primarily used to maintain hygiene and safety across its premises. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to use these substances safely, following the instructions on labels and any training provided. Chemicals must never be mixed, and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, should be used where necessary. Any concerns about chemical use or exposure should be reported immediately.

Storage and Compliance

All cleaning products are stored securely in a designated, lockable COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) cupboard, in line with health and safety regulations. Although the use of hazardous substances is minimal, the charity follows COSHH principles to ensure safe handling, storage, and disposal. Safety data sheets are available for all substances used, and staff are expected to familiarise themselves with these where relevant. Regular checks are carried out to ensure compliance and to maintain a safe environment for everyone. Daily checks are recorded on Lamplight for each activity, session or event. Weekly checks by department leads to be logged on the shared drive and shared with senior managers. Monthly and annual checks to be completed by senior managers and discussed at senior team meetings and actions recorded and monitored.

Consultation

The Gatehouse values open communication and active involvement from staff and volunteers in maintaining a safe working environment. Health and safety matters are routinely discussed as they arise, and all team members are encouraged to raise any concerns directly with their line manager or the relevant senior staff member. Safety observations—instances where

policy is breached without resulting in an incident—are recorded in the accident book to help identify trends and training needs.

The charity also embeds health and safety into the organisational culture through regular volunteer meetings, an annual online survey, and dedicated sessions during staff training days. These channels provide opportunities for team members to share feedback, raise concerns, and contribute ideas for improving safety across all areas of its work.

Evacuation

The Gatehouse is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, guests, and visitors can evacuate safely in the event of an emergency. Fire Marshalls are appointed for each operational site to aid with evacuation. Further information can be found in the Fire Risk Assessment: **Fire safety PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)**.

The charity recognises that many of the individuals supported may have a range of vulnerabilities or additional needs, and this is taken into account when planning for emergencies. A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is assigned for each community centre or café session to ensure that anyone requiring assistance can be supported appropriately. Staff and volunteers are briefed on evacuation procedures, and signage is clearly displayed throughout the premises.

The charity is also mindful of the presence of contractors, members of the public, or individuals unfamiliar with the building, and ensure they are made aware of relevant procedures. Regular checks and drills help us maintain readiness and ensure that the approach remains inclusive and effective.

Annual Health and Safety Review

The Gatehouse is committed to continuous improvement in health and safety. Each July as a minimum the organisation will carry out a full review of this Health and Safety Policy, procedures, and practices. This review will be shared with the Board of Trustees and relevant managers, along with a summary of findings, recommended actions, timeframes, and any resource requirements needed to address identified issues. This process ensures accountability, transparency, and a proactive approach to maintaining a safe environment for all.

Recording and Reporting

Internal recording and reporting requirements, such as reporting serious incidents to the Board of Trustees or CEO who must in turn report to the Board of Trustees.

Depending on your role and the nature of any incident, you may have reporting obligations to other authorities, such as to the HSE under RIDDOR and the Charity Commission Serious Incident Reporting.

Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board	Oct 25	Initial draft approved	Annually

Appendices:

1. Risk Assessment Matrix.
2. Risk Assessment Template.

RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

The threat any risk poses is a combination of the probability (likelihood) of it happening and the impact if it did. This matrix can be used as a very simple tool to assess a risk.

		Probability – a risk will materialise		
		Low	Medium	High
Impact – if it did	Low	Very Low	Low	Medium
	Medium	Low	Medium	High
	High	Medium	High	Very High

RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

The Gatehouse seeks to support a staff team from a wide range of backgrounds and in particular those who have lived experience of homelessness.

The charity holds a risk assessment for each activity, each job role and each person where there are particular risks involved.

This risk assessment will be used by managers to ensure that every activity, project or duty that the staff member does has a consideration of its risks and this is the document the organisation will use to address any potential risk and reduce risks as much as is feasible. This document is used to identify methods of flagging up potential issues and share and learn from them as a wider team. Either this template or an adapted version may be used as appropriate, or for externally organised public events a separate risk assessment provided by the event organiser may be used.

Signed			
Signature		**Date**	
Print Name			

What poses the risk a risk	What are the risks?	Who is at risk?	Risk Level (H/M/L)	What precautions have been taken or will be taken to reduce the risk?	Decisions and actions in response to the risk (including reason)	Person responsible for managing concerns

Questions to ask when completing:

- What existing risk controls are in place?
- Are existing controls effective and adequate?
- Are relevant policies in place and up-to-date?
- Does everyone who needs to, know about them and are these applied consistently?
- Has any necessary training been carried out and is it up-to-date?
- Is any necessary equipment available and serviceable?
- Are any repairs, maintenance or new equipment needed?
- Is any signage needed and in place?