



Health and Safety Policy - Introduction

This generic policy is intended to be used as a guideline or template for the production of a Health and Safety Policy, which should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual GP/Dental Practice.

Employers have a statutory duty under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974¹, to prepare and keep revised a written statement of Health and Safety Policy, if more than five people are employed. It is recommended as good practice, even if less than five people are employed.

Although day-to-day management of Health and Safety may be delegated to a nominated responsible person e.g. the Practice Manager, overall responsibility is held by the GPs/Dentists. It is suggested that one partner is nominated to take responsibility for Health and Safety.

Key Points

The Policy should:

1. Commit the employer to the provision of a safe and healthy working environment for employees, patients and others, such as contractors and visitors who may be affected by work activities.
2. Ensure that the responsibilities of all individuals are clearly identified and understood throughout the Practice.
3. Require that effective arrangements for dealing with health and safety issues and emergency procedures are in place.
4. Require that all the above are regularly revised and that progress is monitored. It is recommended that the policy document should be reviewed annually and/or whenever changes that affect implementation are made.

Structure – Three Basic Elements

1. A general statement of intent, specifying minimum standards. (See Para 1.0 overleaf)
2. The organisational arrangements for implementing the policy. (Paras 2-6 overleaf)
3. The arrangements for assessing risk², implementing preventative measures based on risk assessment; consulting staff,^{3,4} providing training; monitoring implementation and making improvements where appropriate.



Health and Safety Policy

1 Statement of Intent

- 1.1 GP surgery/Dental Practice is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees and those, such as patients, contractors and visitors, who may be affected by its activities.
- 1.2 The Practice is committed to ensuring, wherever possible, that accidents, untoward incidents and occupational illnesses are prevented.
- 1.3 The Practice is committed to promote values, attitudes, competencies and behaviour that underpin a positive health and safety culture and its health and safety policies and arrangements.

2 Responsibilities of the Nominated GP/Dentist (Health and Safety)

- 2.1 While ultimate responsibility is held by the Partners, the responsibility is delegated to the GP/Dentist nominated to take the lead in Health and Safety.
- 2.2 This responsibility is for the management of health and safety, including compliance with relevant legislation and Practice policies. This will be achieved by:
 - 2.2.1 Requiring active and visible support from fellow GPs/Dentists, Practice Manager, and other staff;
 - 2.2.2 Allocating appropriate resources to achieve reduction of risk, so far as is reasonably practicable;
 - 2.2.3 Ensuring an organisational structure exists which clearly defines responsibilities and accountability for health and safety issues;
 - 2.2.4 Ensuring that those with responsibility for health and safety have appropriate authority and sufficient time and resources to discharge their duties;
- 2.3 Developing a strategy to include:
 - 2.3.1 Provision of adequate training for those with responsibility for health and safety (**See Appendix 1**);
 - 2.3.2 Identification of appropriate performance standards and Practice health and safety objectives, for those with responsibility for health and safety;
 - 2.3.3 Systematic identification of hazards, assessment of risks³ and implementation of effective control measures;
 - 2.3.4 Regular monitoring of health and safety performance, including annual audits.
 - 2.3.5 Receiving and taking appropriate action on reports and recommendations from those with responsibility for health and safety, enforcement agencies and other specialist advisers;
 - 2.3.6 Referring major policy matters to the Partners for resolution;
 - 2.3.7 Chairing parts of meetings specifically designated for the purpose of consulting on health and safety issues with employees.

3 Responsibilities of Other GPs/Dentists

- 3.1 Supporting the nominated (health and safety) GP/Dentist in the discharge of his/her responsibilities for health and safety and chairing parts of meetings as per 2.6 in his/her absence.



4 Responsibilities of the Practice Manager (or Other Designated Person)

- 4.1 Developing and reviewing Practice health and safety policies and procedures and safe systems of work;
- 4.2 Bringing to the attention of the staff all health and safety policies, procedures, notices and information and ensuring these are observed;
- 4.3 Receiving and taking appropriate action following any health and safety reports;
- 4.4 Ensuring compliance with health and safety policies and procedures and reporting any unresolved non compliance to the nominated partner (health and safety) for resolution;
- 4.5 Ensuring that suitable arrangements are in place for identifying hazards, assessing and controlling risks and developing safe systems of work;
- 4.6 Ensuring adequate and timely consultation with employees^{2,4} on any matter which may affect the health and safety of employees or those who may be affected by work activities;
- 4.7 Ensuring that accidents/incidents, injury or the potential for future injury are fully investigated and appropriate action taken, including notification to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (RIDDOR⁵) where appropriate. (See Policy for the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents)
- 4.8 Ensuring that health and safety performance is regularly monitored both actively (audit) and reactively;
- 4.9 Ensuring an annual audit of health and safety is undertaken to determine performance against policy objectives;
- 4.10 Consulting in good time, with any appropriate Health and Safety representatives^{2,3} and other relevant staff concerning any changes in the workplace, which affect or may affect the health, safety and welfare of employees and others who may be affected by work activities;
- 4.11 Facilitating appropriate training for all new employees and updating whenever there is an alteration in practice which influences the degree of risk.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 The commitment of all employees is required to provide a safe and healthy working environment. They are therefore required to:
 - 5.1.1 Conduct work activities with due regard for the safety of themselves and others.
 - 5.1.2 Comply with health and safety policies, procedures and safe systems of work.
 - 5.1.3 Report any defective equipment to the appropriate person immediately.
 - 5.1.4 Raise any matter of concern regarding health and safety with the Practice Manager, or other designated person, in his/her absence.
 - 5.1.5 Take an active role in the development of safe systems of work/policies etc. particularly when they as an individual are the 'expert' in that particular field.



6 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed after twelve months, or earlier if indicated by any changes that affect implementation.

Signed Date

Name and Designation

7 References

- 1. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- 2. The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999
- 3. The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- 4. The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- 5. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995



Appendix 1

Training

- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for Health and Safety should undertake the appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- The IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) nationally accredited course is highly recommended.
- The course can be undertaken as a block of four days or as four individual days. Arrangements can be made to hold the course in your area for up to twelve people provided suitable accommodation can be provided.
- If you would like further information please contact the Occupational Health Helpline. Contact details can be found at the front of the Manual.

This page is intentionally blank

