

Escape Arts Health & Safety Policy

1. Definitions

The key definitions of this policy are as follows:

- **Health** refers to the wellbeing of employees. This encompasses conditions of both body and mind, which could affect the health and safety of employees and others.
- **Safety** refers to preventing injury or damage to any person or property affected by a work activity through the development of suitable and sufficient working practices.
- **Welfare** refers to the provision and maintenance of facilities to ensure good hygiene, a comfortable working environment and appropriate support for the wellbeing of the individual.

2. Statement of Policy

Escape Arts is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all employees, volunteers, participants, and visitors. Our objective is to prevent accidents, work-related ill health, and to promote safe systems of work across all our activities, including those at The Escape Arts & Heritage Centre, The Station Gallery and offsite events. This policy outlines our commitment to managing health and safety effectively and will be reviewed annually. Health & Safety is a standing agenda item at weekly team meetings, monthly operations meetings and quarterly Board Meetings. By adhering to this policy, Escape Arts aims to foster a culture of safety and wellbeing, ensuring compliance with HSE regulations and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, beneficiaries, artists, contractors and other persons engaging with Escape Arts services. Within this, there are roles which require specific health and safety responsibilities:

- Escape Arts Executive are responsible for implementing this policy, with support from Escape Arts Board of Trustees.
- Escape Arts Operations Manager oversees the implementation of this policy, conducts regular risk assessments, maintains records, and ensures staff and volunteers receive appropriate training.
- All Escape Arts staff members and volunteers must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others, comply with this policy, report hazards, and participate in training.

3. Arrangements for Health and Safety

3.1 Risk Assessments

Escape Arts maintains an Organisational Risk Assessment, which includes risk assessments on Escape Arts premises, fire safety procedures, equipment and home/lone working procedures. This is updated annually to identify potential hazards and implement control measures. It is Escape Arts' policy that every visiting Artist provides a risk assessment ahead of delivering a project with an Escape Arts community group. These are reviewed and saved on Escape Arts Project SharePoint.

Escape Arts also maintains an Organisational Risk Register to manage risk. This is reviewed quarterly with the Board of Trustees. *For more information, see Escape Arts Organisational Risk Management Policy.*

3.2 Training and Communication

All staff and volunteers receive appropriate health and safety training during induction and ongoing sessions as required. This includes Health & Safety in the Workplace, Food Hygiene, Working at Heights, Manual Handling and Lone Working. Health & Safety and Training are standing agenda items at weekly team meetings to ensure effective communication channels are maintained across the team to disseminate health and safety information.

3.3 Workplace Safety

- Premises Maintenance: Regular inspections will ensure that The Heritage Centre, The Station Gallery and other Escape Arts venues are safe and well-maintained. Annual building inspections are carried out at the Escape Arts & Heritage Centre by Colliers, on behalf of the landlord Stratford Town Trust. Annual building inspections are carried out at the Station Gallery by Nuneaton Train Station.
- Fire Safety: Fire risk assessments are conducted annually with a trusted external contractor. All staff and volunteers are trained in evacuation procedures, and evacuation drills are held with our staff and community groups every six months.
- First Aid: All Escape Arts staff are trained in First Aid, alongside volunteers whose role works with multiple beneficiary groups. A list of who is trained in First Aid Trained is provided at each Escape Arts venue with the First Aid kit. Staff and volunteers receive training in First Aid every three years.
- Accidents & Near Misses: All accidents and near misses are recorded online using BrightSafe. All staff receive their BrightSafe account on induction and must report any accidents or near misses as soon as possible to provide accurate information. All accidents and near misses are reviewed by Escape Arts Operations Manager, who implements actions where needed.

4. Building and Premises

Escape Arts is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and all who engage in our services. It is our policy that any essential building repairs will be conducted promptly with minimal disruption.

4.1 Hazards

Any potential hazards must be promptly addressed or reported to Escape Arts Operations Manager. Gangways, fire exits, stairs, doorways, and smoke alarms must remain unobstructed. Chairs or other furniture must not be used for standing; properly maintained step ladders must be used.

4.2 Equipment

Regular inspections of furniture and equipment are conducted to identify and address potential hazards such as sharp or protruding edges. Items deemed unsafe must be reported for repair or removal. All electrical equipment undergoes Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) annually.

4.3 Maintenance and Reporting

Any damage to the building's structure, including windows, must be reported immediately to the Escape Arts Operations Manager.

4.4 Smoking Policy

Escape Arts venues are non-smoking facilities. Smoking is only permitted in designated areas outside of the designated venue area.

4.5 Temperature Control

A minimum workplace temperature of 16°C must be maintained in office environments. Reasonable measures, such as blinds and heater timers, will be implemented to prevent excessive heat.

4.6 Lighting

Adequate lighting is maintained throughout each Escape Arts premises. Faulty lighting should be reported and corrected as soon as possible.

4.7 Noise Management

Noise levels must be kept as low as reasonably practicable during working hours, outside of community group sessions. Events outside of working hours must concluded by 11:00PM to minimize disturbances to neighbours.

4.8 Office Atmospheric Pollutants

Precautions will be taken to minimize exposure to pollutants emitted by office equipment such as printers and photocopiers. Workspaces containing such equipment must be well-ventilated.

4.9 Electrical Safety

No trailing wires, such as laptop leads, must be left across floors, especially during public opening times and community group sessions. External electrical cables at events and to the bus must be securely covered. Except in emergencies and with the approval of Escape Arts CEO, paraffin, bar electric, and calor gas heaters are prohibited at the Escape Arts & Heritage Centre, the Station Gallery and all other charity delivery locations. Any electrical work carried out at an Escape Arts venue must be performed by suitably qualified personnel.

4.10 Equipment and Hazardous Substances

All equipment will be regularly inspected and maintained. Hazardous substances are managed in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations.

5. Working Conditions

5.1 Working Hours

Escape Arts staff must adhere to reasonable working hours and take adequate breaks, as stipulated in their Terms of Employment and Escape Arts Employee Handbook.

5.2 Personal Safety

To enhance staff security:

- All entry doors must be locked once the staff member enters the building and Escape Arts Team WhatsApp Group utilised to make others aware of a staff member lone working.
- Staff handling money or valuables have the right to be accompanied by another person.
- Bank visits must be scheduled at non-routine times.
- Staff must not put themselves at risk due to Escape Arts property; in cases of threat, money or valuables should be surrendered.
- Situations involving personal risk should be avoided.
- Incidents of aggression, violence, or antisocial behaviour must be reported to Escape Arts CEO, Deputy CEO and/or Operations Manager and documented as an incident using BrightSafe.

At the Escape Arts & Heritage Centre, use of the Retail Radio security system is integrated into staff and volunteer inductions.

5.4 Lone Working

Lone working is discouraged where possible but there may be occasions where staff members will be lone working at an Escape Arts venue. Where unavoidable, staff must enter the venue and lock the door behind them immediately. The staff member must also inform their Line Manager or use the Escape Arts Team WhatsApp chat to notify them of lone working. The staff member must also confirm when they have left and locked up the venue. *For more information, see Escape Arts Lone Working Policy.*

5.5 Stress Management & Wellbeing Support

Escape Arts recognizes the impact of work-related stress and is committed to promoting a supportive environment. Employees are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their Line Manager and Escape Arts implement individual wellbeing support meetings with the team annually or as needed. Stress management and wellbeing support is provided to employees through an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): Peninsula's Health Assured Programme & Wisdom app. This provides a 24/7 confidential support contact number and online chat service for staff experiencing stress or in need of wellbeing support. This is to support staff with any circumstance that is affecting their wellbeing, it does not need to be related to work. *For information on how to access this service, see the Escape Arts Staff Handbook.*

6. Fire Safety

All staff, volunteers, beneficiaries or service users of Escape Arts venues must familiarize themselves with fire hazards, exits, and assembly points. Fire safety training is included as part of the induction process. *A more detailed explanation of Escape Arts Fire Procedures, including Accessibility Statement and supporting people with Personal Evacuation Plans (PEEPS), can be found in Escape Arts Fire Risk Assessment.*

6.1 Fire Procedures

Upon discovering a fire:

- Raise the alarm verbally.
- Call emergency services immediately (dial 999).
- Use fire appliances only if it is safe to do so.
- Evacuate promptly without collecting personal belongings.
- Assemble in the designated muster point. At the Escape Arts & Heritage Centre, this is the rear of Wetherspoons and at the Station Gallery, it is at the bottom of the station car park.
- Re-entry is prohibited until clearance is provided by the Fire Service.

6.2 Fire Equipment and Maintenance

- Fire exits must remain clear.
- Emergency lighting and smoke alarms will be tested weekly by Escape Arts Operations Manager.
- Fire-fighting equipment undergoes annual inspections by qualified engineers.
- All staff must be familiar with fire evacuation routes and procedures.

7. First Aid and Accident Reporting

First Aid boxes are available at all Escape Arts venues and are stored in clear labelled cupboards for ease of access. Where Escape Arts are delivering a project offsite or an outreach activity on the Escape Arts van, a first aid box must be brought.

All first aid incidents must be recorded on BrightSafe. An accident book is provided for external hirers. All incidents must be reported to the Operations Manager for review and documentation. Serious incidents falling under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) will be reported to local authorities.

8. Food Hygiene and Safety

Escape Arts CEO and Deputy CEO ensure that staff receive appropriate food hygiene training as part of their induction through Peninsula online training. Designated staff members must complete certified Food Hygiene Training and all other staff and volunteers that are involved with Food Preparation including drinks are required to complete BrightSafe Training parts A & B.

9. Hazardous Substances

Escape Arts adheres to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 1992.

- Hazardous substances will be removed or substituted where possible.
- If removal is not possible, substances must be stored securely and handled with protective equipment.

10. Manual Handling

All Escape Arts staff and volunteers are required to undertake online Manual Handling Training as part of their induction. Employees should avoid manual lifting where possible, but where necessary, the following procedures must be followed:

- Aids such as trolleys should be used for transportation.
- Heavy loads must not be transported upstairs.
- Assistance must be sought when handling heavy or awkward items.
- Any lifting-related strain must be reported in the accident book.

11. Use of Escape Arts Van

Escape Arts uses an arts camper van to deliver outreach activities with the community. The following procedures must be adhered to:

- Only registered and insured drivers over the age of 24 may operate the company van.
- All driving penalties must be disclosed for insurance purposes.
- Risk assessments will be conducted for all vehicle-related activities.
- The portable petrol generator will only be used after a full risk assessment, and external petrol cans must not be stored on the vehicle.

13. Volunteers

While Health and Safety legislation primarily applies to employees, Escape Arts is committed to ensuring the safety of volunteers. Volunteers will be included in risk assessments and provided with necessary training and information as part of their induction.

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following significant changes to our operations. Health and safety performance will be monitored regularly, and improvements implemented as necessary.

This policy and procedure was adopted on: 24th April 2025

To be reviewed every year.

Next review date: April 2026