

**WANSBECK VALLEY FOOD BANK POLICY:
HEALTH AND SAFETY, INCLUDING LONE WORKING**

Description	Date	Prepared by	Approved by	Review Date
Version 1	March 2022	Linda Fugill		March 2024

1. Introduction

Wansbeck Valley Food Bank (The Food Bank) has an obligation under Health & Safety legislation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff, volunteers, contractors and members of the public so far as they come into contact with the Food Bank. The Food Bank has a duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent personal injury and damage to property and to protect everyone from foreseeable work hazards. This Health and Safety Policy is made available to all staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors and will be displayed on a notice board in our premises. New staff and volunteers are informed of the Policy and its implications during induction and any revisions will be disseminated via cascade briefings to all staff and volunteers. The legal basis for health and safety in the workplace are the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAW) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

2. Statement of Intent

The Food Bank is fully committed to providing and ensuring that staff, volunteers, visitors, clients and contractors have a safe and healthy place in which to work and visit. It is our aim to:

- comply with all legislation relating to health and safety.
- establish standards which take account of legal, statutory and other requirements
- establish and maintain interest in, and awareness of, those standards and provide training which will maintain those standards
- require the commitment of all personnel to exercise personal responsibility to do everything possible to prevent injury to themselves, other employees and members of the public.
- make available safe and adequate plant, materials, work systems, training and supervision to ensure competence in the staff and volunteer team.
- review this procedure every 24 months

3. Organisational Responsibilities for Safety

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for fulfilling all Health and Safety duties as an employer, including all Statute Health and Safety Legislative requirements. The Operations Manager has overall responsibility to the Board of Trustees for ensuring that appropriate and effective health and safety management systems are in place:

- For the overall management of health and safety
- To control identified risks through the risk assessment process
- To promote a safety culture at all levels
- To provide health and safety training

Persons responsible for the various activities of the Food Bank shall ensure that all necessary procedures and arrangements for health and safety are in place, communicated and operating efficiently in their area of responsibility. All staff and volunteers have legal responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of themselves, their colleagues and visitors. Particular responsibilities have been assigned to the following persons:

<u>Activity area</u>	<u>Responsible person</u>
Electrical equipment	John Rowley
Vehicles	Mark Facey
Fire equipment and evacuation drills	Linda Fugill

Food handling and Hygiene
First Aid and Accident Reporting
VDUs and Work Stations

Linda Fugill
Linda Fugill
Sheila Rowley

4. Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments will be held in the Health and Safety File, readily available to all staff and volunteers for reference

4.1 Annual Audit

Members of the Trustee Board will conduct assessments of risks to staff, volunteers, clients and visitors, using risk assessment forms. The findings of these assessment will be recorded in writing. Any significant findings that staff and volunteers need to know to ensure their health and safety will be communicated. Trustees will follow up if new equipment/training is required and all.

5. Electrical Equipment

A list of all our portable electrical appliances is maintained by the Admin Assistant and held in the Health and Safety File. Every 6 months plugs, cables and sockets will be inspected by the Responsible Person to ensure that there are no loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. Any repairs needed will be reported to the Responsible Person. PAT testing and testing of fixed electrical equipment will be carried out to conform to legislative requirements. Nobody should attempt to carry out the simplest electrical work such as fitting plugs or changing light bulbs unless they are certain that they know what they are doing.

6. Fire Hazard

Session supervisors will undertake daily checks to ensure that all Fire exits are functional and clearly signposted. A list of the locations and type of fire extinguishers and other fire protection will be maintained by the Admin Assistant and held in the Health and Safety File. The Responsible Person will arrange for all fire extinguishers to be checked independently on an annually basis. The Responsible person will arrange for evacuation drills to be conducted on a 6 monthly basis.

7. Food Handling and Hygiene

The Food Bank commits itself to compliance with the requirements of the Food Safety Act 1990, Food Safety & Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and subsequent regulations/amendments as a basis for its minimum standard. The Responsible Person will ensure that

- standards for food acquisition, processing, issuing and disposal are met
- training, along with appropriate records retention, is provided to all food handlers commensurate with their responsibilities.

Incoming food will only be accepted into stock if clearly labelled with ingredients; this applies particularly to bread. To reduce wastage, stock will be issued in priority according to earliest use by/best before date. Regular visual checks will be undertaken to detect the presence of any vermin; if found then appropriate pest control action will be taken. Work surfaces are to be cleaned daily and after any spillage occurs.

8. First Aid and Accident Reporting

The First Aid Box is located in the Office. Monthly checks of content and organising replenishment will be undertaken by the Admin Assistant. All volunteers and staff are responsible for recording all accidents in the Accident Book, which is located in the Office. All significant accidents and near misses should be reported to the Operations Trustee and appropriate emergency help sought.

9. Vehicles

All drivers of vans are responsible for using them in a safe and legal manner; they will ensure for their tidy and roadworthy condition. Records of condition checks should be undertaken per the log sheet and any defects reported to the Responsible Person. The Responsible Person will also arrange for regular servicing, road tax, MOT and insurance of Food Bank vehicles

10. Lone Working

Working alone can increase the risks for staff and volunteers depending on the work to be carried out, the time of day and the location of the premises. The trustees and managers of the Food Bank take their responsibility for ensuring the welfare of all staff and volunteers seriously. Persons are only allowed to work in our premises on their own in line with prior agreed arrangements which will include

- Work schedule and list of duties agreed with managers
- Person to have means of contacting manager (mobile phone, etc.).

10.1 Lone working by drivers

Drivers are briefed to be particularly mindful of their personal safety. These arrangements include:

- Carrying a panic alarm device
- Ensuring the van's mobile phone is charged and switched on
- Delivering food to the gate or doorstep, but not entering the client's residence
- Parking in a manner that is simple to depart quickly and safely if they feel under any threat

11. Dealing with abusive clients

Clients who are abusive to volunteers or staff will no longer be able to receive deliveries nor collect food parcels at the Food Bank. In such situations the referrer will be requested to collect on behalf of the client.

12. VDUs and Work Stations

Our policy is to assess the risks to all habitual users of computer workstations and to reduce those risks to the lowest level possible. The following factors will be considered when carrying out risk assessments:

stability and legibility of the screen	suitability of keyboards, desks and chairs
contrast and brightness of the screen	the work station environment
tilt and swivel of the screen	the user-friendliness of the software.

Daily work routines will involve periods away from the screen. Where necessary, risk assessments will be carried out by the responsible person

13. Manual Handling , Lifting and Moving

Many activities of the Food Bank involve lifting and moving significant quantities of food. Training is provided to new volunteers in appropriate techniques and guidance per Appendix 1 of this document. Visual inspection of equipment used for moving stock should be inspected by the session supervisor at the beginning of each shift. Any faults should be reported to the Operations Manager.

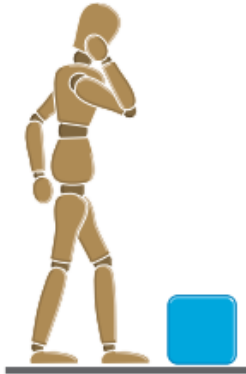
14. Training

Training is of fundamental importance in the management of health and safety. The aim of training should be to increase the health and safety awareness and the competence of employees and volunteers at all levels in the organisation, so that they do not put themselves or others at risk of injury or ill health. Health and Safety training is provided at Induction Sessions and refreshers via cascade briefing sessions as required.

APPENDIX 1 Manual handling

Many Food Bank related activities involve lifting and moving significant amounts of food. It is therefore crucial that volunteers with reduced ability to lift items draw such restrictions to the attention of the person in charge at the warehouse/ distribution centre. To protect themselves and others from the risk of accidents every volunteer should only lift or move items that are within their personal capacity. **WHEN IN ANY DOUBT, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO LIFT OR MOVE HEAVY ITEMS. INSTEAD SPLIT THEM INTO SMALLER LOADS THAT CAN BE HANDLED SEPARATELY**

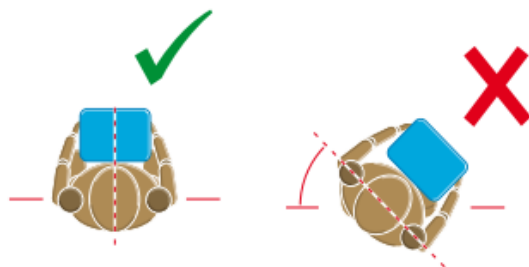
a. Practical tips on good handling technique for lifting



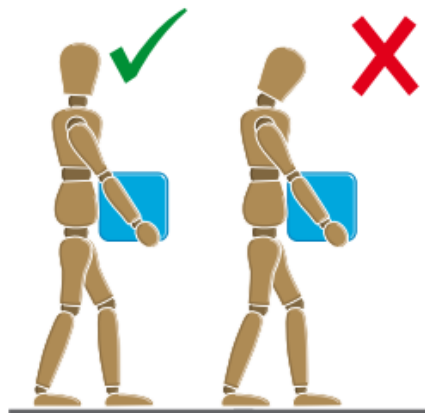
Think before lifting/handling. Plan the lift. Can handling aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.



Adopt a stable position. The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). The worker should be prepared to move their feet during the lift to maintain their stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.



Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.



Keep the head up when handling. Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.

Move smoothly. The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed. There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.



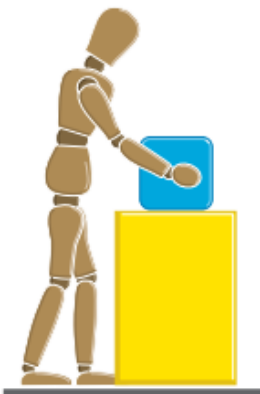
Get a good hold. Where possible, the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.

Start in a good posture. At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

Don't flex the back any further while lifting. This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.



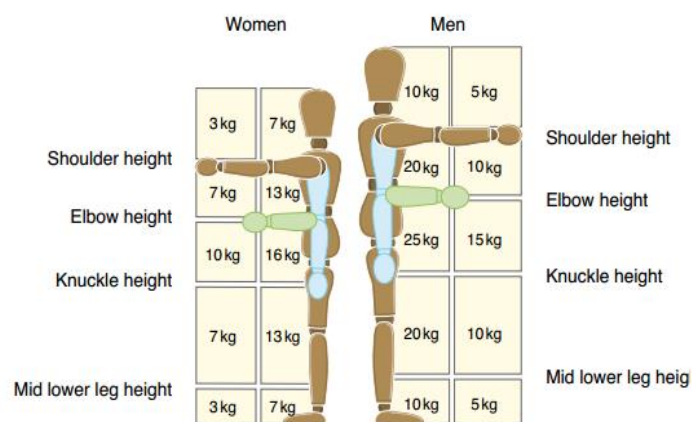
Keep the load close to the waist. Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.



Put down, then adjust. If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.

The diagram opposite shows HSE guidelines for lifting and lowering loads with hands at different body levels. In view of the profile of our volunteers it has been decided to restrict loads to be lifted as follows:

- **13kg** for items moved at normal heights by a single individual
- **25kg** for items moved at normal heights by two individuals working together
- **7kg** for items placed or removed from shelves etc above 1.5m or below 0.25m from floor level



Note how guideline weights are reduced if handling is done with arms extended, or at high or low levels, as that is where injuries are most likely to happen. The guideline weights assume that the load is readily grasped with both hands and that the operation takes place in reasonable working conditions, with the lifter in a stable body position

Good handling technique for pushing and pulling loads

Use the barrows and skates provided. Do not overload these devices. It is better to push rather than pull when moving a load, provided you can see over it and control steering and stopping.

Get help from another person whenever negotiating a slope or ramp, on uneven surfaces or in other adverse situations, as pushing and pulling forces can be very high. Keep your feet well away from the load and go no faster than walking speed. Place chocks under the wheels where trolleys can move whilst loading.

(Source: web-friendly version of leaflet INDG143(rev3)HSE Manual handling at work: A brief guide, published 11/12)