

# Health, Safety & Welfare

*Core Skills Reader*

***Level 1 – All staff, including unpaid and voluntary staff***



## Introduction to the Core Skills

The Core Skills standardises the training for 10 subjects commonly delivered as part of statutory and mandatory training requirements for health and social care organisations.

For each subject a set of learning of outcomes has been agreed nationally and is set out in the UK Core Skills and Training Framework (a copy of the framework is available on the Skills for Health website: [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/) ).

The learning outcomes specify what needs to be covered in the training for each Core Skills subject. This ensures a quality standard is set and provides clear guidance for organisations to deliver against these requirements as well as recognise the equivalent training delivered externally. This allows for Core Skills training to be portable between organisations and prevents the needless waste and duplication of statutory and mandatory training where is not required.

To aid organisations in the delivery of the Core Skills subjects, these education resources have been developed to be aligned to the learning outcomes in the UK training framework. Organisations have the flexibility to deliver these resources in a variety of formats as well as adapting them to add localised content alongside the Core Skills Materials.

If you require any further information about the Core Skills, in the first instance please contact the Learning and Development Lead in your organisation.

In the North West the implementation and management of the Core Skills is overseen by the North West Core Skills Programme on behalf of Health Education North West. The programme can be contacted on: [CoreSkills.Programme@nhs.net](mailto:CoreSkills.Programme@nhs.net)



## Introduction Health, Safety & Welfare

This reader covers the Core Skills learning outcomes for Health, Safety & Welfare. It can be used either as a standalone document or as supporting material alongside the Health, Safety & Welfare presentation or eLearning package (the relevant slide numbers and eLearning pages are given with each sub-heading). Whichever way the reader is used, it is recommended that the Health, Safety & Welfare Assessment is completed afterwards to allow the learner to demonstrate they have retained the knowledge and learning required to support best practice.

This resource has been designed to cover induction level training and addresses the key principles in Health, Safety & Welfare. It covers the general information about Health, Safety & Welfare that all employees should be aware of. It is mapped against the learning outcomes in the UK Core Skills Training Framework.

The training covered here is likely to be a minimum requirement for all staff working in a health setting and specific staff groups may require additional training dependent upon their role.

It is anticipated that it will take you approximately 20-30 mins to complete this reader. Current national guidelines recommend that the subject of Health, Safety & Welfare is repeated a minimum of every three years.

## What you will learn in this Reader (Slide No 2 / eLearning Page 1)

The objectives below covered by this reader are aligned to the Learning Outcomes for Health, Safety & Welfare in the Core Skills and Training Framework.

1. About the organisation's commitment to delivering services safely
2. The importance of acting in ways that are consistent with legislation, policies and procedures
3. How organisations consult with employees on health and safety matters

4. How to locate an organisation's Health and Safety Policy
5. The meaning of hazard, risk and risk assessment
6. How to recognise common work place hazards and manage risks
7. How to apply and promote safe working practices specific to your role
8. Actions you should take to ensure patient safety
9. The importance of raising and reporting health and safety concerns in line with organisation's processes
10. Your responsibilities to report incidents, ill health and near misses

### Why is this important?

(Slide No 3 / eLearning Page 2)

In 2013 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) reported that:

- Across the sector approximately 5 million working days (1.78 days per worker) were lost due to self-reported work-related illness and injury in 2012/13 around 90% of which was illness related. This is one of the highest numbers of working days lost per worker in any sector and higher than the average of 0.98 days per worker for all industries.
- An estimated 100 000 new cases of work-related ill health in 2012/13, with rates for stress, in particular, significantly above the average for all industries
- 1297 **major** injuries occurred to employees in Health Care and 1110 **major** injuries to employees in Social Care
- There were 56 fatal injuries to members of the public in 2012/13
- Most common causes of injury (including major) in the last 5 years were:
  - Slips, trips and falls. These are the biggest problem with most slips occur on wet or contaminated floors, often after cleaning. Most trips are due to poor housekeeping
  - Handling. More than a third of all injuries that result in three or more days of absence from work are caused by poor manual handling technique.
  - Assault
  - Work related stress features highly in the illness (rather than injury) statistics

You can visit the HSE website for more details and additional information by following this link.

[www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/)



## Organisation's commitment to deliver services safely (Slide No 4 / eLearning Page 3)

Health care providers have a moral responsibility and a legal duty to provide a safe place of work for all its patients, staff and members of the public. The NHS organisations have a commitment to do no harm. This principle is fundamental to the working of the NHS and is enshrined in the NHS Constitution.

The DH (2013) NHS Constitution explains the principles, values, rights and responsibilities that underpin the NHS. It is designed to make sure that the NHS continues to meet the needs of patients, the public and staff.

You can read the constitution by following this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england>

Even though hazards in care environments cannot be eliminated, risks to patients, employees and members of the public can be and should be reduced continually, everywhere and forever.

The NHS is committed to addressing health and safety in a positive manner; it should not be seen as a regulatory burden: it offers significant opportunities.

Benefits can include:

- reduced costs and reduced risks – employee absence and turnover rates are lower, accidents are fewer, the threat of legal action is lessened;
- improved standing among suppliers and partners; a better reputation for corporate responsibility among investors, customers and communities;
- increased productivity – employees are healthier, happier and better motivated

Examples of Procedures and Provisions in place include:

- Health and Safety Audits/Inspections
- Staff Training
- Policies, guidelines & procedures
- Safe work equipment and facilities
- Risk assessments
- Fire precautions
- Safety signs
- Occupational Health
- Employer's Liability Insurance

## Consulting with employees on Health and Safety matters (Slide No 5 / eLearning Page 4)

Consulting with employees on health and safety matters is very important in creating and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment. Through staff consultation, the employer will provide staff motivation and create awareness of health and safety issues. This process will enable organisations to become more efficient and reduce the number of accidents and work-related illnesses.

By law, employers must consult all of their employees via their representatives (i.e. Trade Union representatives) on health and safety matters, supported by the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (SRSCR) 1977. Many members of staff are not trade union members however and not all Trade Union representatives will negotiate on behalf of non-members. Non Trade Union members of staff have a right to be consulted under the Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

Consultation involves employers not only giving information to employees but also listening to and taking account of what employees say before they make any health and safety decisions.

Consultation with employees must be carried out on matters to do with their health and safety at work, including:

- any change which may substantially affect their health and safety at work, for example in procedures, equipment or ways of working;
- employer's arrangements for getting competent people to help him or her satisfy health and safety laws;
- information that employees must be given on the likely risks and dangers arising from their work, measures to reduce or get rid
- risks and what they should do if they have to deal with a risk or danger;
- planning of health and safety training; and the health and safety consequences of introducing new technology.



## Look for Health, Safety and Welfare information (Slide No 6 / eLearning Page 5)

Your organisation will have many means of keeping you up to date with Health, Safety and Welfare information. Policies, guidelines and procedures will be readily available – look for them on your organisation’s website. Find out who your

Health, Safety and Welfare leads and advisors are, they will be able to give you up to date information.

What’s new? Look out for:

- Health and Safety Executive posters
- Health and Safety Executive publications
- Newsletters and bulletins
- Health and Safety committee meeting minutes
- Team briefs

The HSE website has a vast amount of information on Health, Safety and Welfare at work. Follow some of these links to access guidance.

- Management of Health and Safety at Work
  - Link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsc13.pdf>
- Safe Use of Work Equipment
  - Link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg291.pdf>
- Manual Handling
  - Link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>
- Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare.
  - Link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg244.pdf>
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work
  - Link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf>
- Work with display screen equipment
  - Link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf>

## Legal perspectives

(Slide No 7 / eLearning Page 6)

You may have read and seen the media reports on the action of the “Health and Safety Police”. Of course many of these once investigated have proved to be false or local misinterpretation of the guidance. The law is there to help, support and protect people in the workplace and NOT to make things unnecessarily difficult.

- The law aims to:
  - Prevent people getting injured or suffering illness caused through work
  - Encourage high standards of health, safety and welfare
- The law says:
  - You have a right to a safe workplace
  - Your employer must keep you safe at work
  - You also have responsibility for your own safety

## Health & safety at work legislation

(Slide No 8 / eLearning Page 7)

The major pieces of Health, Safety and Welfare legislation in the UK are really all about good management and having procedures in place that will make working less of a risk.

- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)** - is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in the United Kingdom. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is responsible for enforcing the Act and a number of other Acts and Statutory Instruments relevant to the working environment.
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)** - generally make more explicit what employers are required to do to manage health and safety under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Like the Act, they apply to every work activity.



- **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, Regulations (2002)** - requires employers to control substances that can harm a worker's health. Using chemicals or other hazardous substances at work can put people's health at risk, causing diseases including asthma, dermatitis or cancer (please see below section for more details)
- **Manual Handling Operations (1992) (amended 2002)** - apply to a wide range of manual handling activities, including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying. The purpose of these regulations is to assist employers and employees to reduce the risk of injury from manual handling.
- **Display Screen Equipment Regulations (1992) (amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (2002)** - seeks to protect the health of workers by reducing risks associated with Visual Display Unit work (typically computer screens).
- **Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (1992)** - outline employers' duties concerning the provision and use of personal protective equipment, which is defined as *"all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which protects him (sic) against one or more risks to his health or safety", e.g. safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses."*
- **Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations (2013)** - All employers are required under existing health and safety law to ensure that risks from sharps injuries are adequately assessed and appropriate control measures are in place. The Sharps Regulations build on the existing law and provide specific detail on requirements that must be taken by healthcare employers and their contractors.
- **RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013** - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013, is a Statutory Instrument of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It regulates the statutory obligation to report deaths, injuries, diseases and "dangerous occurrences" that take place at work or in connection with work. The regulations require "responsible persons" to report deaths at work, major injuries caused by accidents at work, injuries to persons not at work that require hospital treatment, injuries arising from accidents in hospitals, and dangerous occurrences. Responsible person is generally considered to be an employer. **Not to report is a crime.**

For additional reading on all of these pieces of legislation visit the HSE website  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

## Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002) (Slide No 9 / eLearning Page 8)

COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health.

- Exposure to hazardous substances can be prevented by:
  - Finding out which substances are a health hazard
  - Conducting a risk assessment
  - Complying with control measures to reduce harm to health;
  - Keeping all control measures in good working order
  - Reading information and attending training
  - Accessing monitoring and health surveillance if appropriate
  - Be prepared for emergencies

To find out more visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/>

## Employer's responsibilities (Slide No 10 / eLearning Page 9)

The Health and Safety at Work Act places responsibilities on various groups including the employer. The Health and Safety at Work Act is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in the UK and it sets out the general duties of employers. Since its introduction, workplace deaths have fallen by 75%.

- *“It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his/her employees”*

**Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)**

The notion of Reasonably Practicable means that the cost of any measure should be proportionate to the risk. The act acknowledges that all risk cannot be eliminated but any risk must be assessed and actions taken proportionate to that risk. A risk assessment should therefore identify the risks, how they arise and how they impact on those affected patients, staff, and the public. This information is needed to make decisions on how to manage those risks so that the decisions are made in an informed, rational and structured manner, and the action taken is proportionate.



**Employee’s responsibilities....**  
(Slide No 11 / eLearning Page 10)

Employees have health and safety responsibilities as well as their employers. This reflects the fact that for good safety management it is essential for the employer and employees to work together.

The law says.....

“No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare”

All employees, in the interest of patients, colleague and their own health, safety and welfare should:

- Take responsibility of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions
- Co-operate with their employer on Health and Safety issues
- Be familiar with and follow policies, procedures and instructions
- Report any accidents, damage, unsafe acts or conditions, near misses, or loss as soon as reasonably possible.

- Ensure they report immediately any condition which may affect their ability to work safely
- Ensure they attend any related training courses provided for them

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)

### Management of health & safety at work regulations (Slide No 12 / eLearning Page 11)

The law requires that employers have in place systems and good management practice to examine risks and then put into place sensible measures to reduce these risks.

More specifically managers have to

- Assess the risks to which employees are exposed to at work
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of employees
- Comply with the law on the basis of the general principles of prevention



### Failure to comply with health & safety legislation (Slide No 13 / eLearning Page 12)

Failing to correctly apply health and safety legislation can have serious repercussions.

Apart from the most obvious and important risk to people's lives, organisations are putting themselves at risk of huge fines and the threat of imprisonment if they fail in their duty to correctly implement their Health, Safety and Welfare duties. Sanctions can also apply to individuals.



In summary consequences can include:

- Disqualification, prosecution, notices, fines and imprisonment
- Claims and complaints against the organisation and/or an individual
- Unquantifiable risk  
e.g. Reputation, credibility, morale

## Key Definitions

(Slide No 14 / eLearning Page 13)

You need to know some key definitions under the law when carrying out a risk assessment. These are:

- **Hazard** which is the potential to cause harm
- **Risk** which is the likelihood and consequences of that harm occurring
- **Safe** is about being protected from, or not exposed to, danger or risk
- **Significant risk** is not trivial in nature and is capable of creating a real risk to health and safety. Action needs to be taken to control it if reasonable
- **Reasonable** in the context of health and safety is where the cost of action to control the risk is proportionate to the reduction in the risk. Cost includes time and effort as well as money



## What is a risk assessment?

(Slide No 15 / eLearning Page 14)

When undertaking a risk assessment you're in effect identifying hazards that have the potential to cause harm and the associated risks. More specifically you should:

- Know about the hazards and risks in your work place
- Control the risks that need it
- Make sure the risks stay controlled

Risk is a part of everyday life

- You can't eliminate them all
- Identify the significant risks that affect you

- Know what to do to manage them responsibly

The HSE website has more information on risk assessment this link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/risk-assessment.htm> will take you there.

### Carrying out a risk assessment (Slide No 16 / eLearning Page 15)

Risk assessment is not a complicated process. Very often the risks are well known. it's just a case of assessing and controlling them. Any control measures you decide to implement should also be easy to apply.

For example employees who move heavy loads could harm their backs, so what reasonable precautions could be taken to avoid injury?

There are five simple steps to carry out a risk assessment

- Step 1** Identify the hazards
- Step 2** Decide who might be harmed and how
- Step 3** Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- Step 4** Record your findings and implement them
- Step 5** Review your assessment and update if necessary

### Risk evaluation process (Slide No 17 / eLearning Page 16)

At this point it would be useful for you to have access to your organisations' risk evaluation process so that you can refer to it as we discuss the next points. If you don't have a copy, contact your local Health, Safety and Welfare Advisor who will be able to provide a copy.



## Common risks

(Slide No 18 / eLearning Page 17)

Risks are associated with the nature of the task and workplace. In a health care setting the risks that are most significant to you are:

- Uneven or wet floors & obstructions causing Slips/Trips/Falls
- Ill health and previous injuries e.g. musculoskeletal
- Electrical hazards
- Mechanical hazards
- Equipment-related injury
- Biological hazards
- Chemical hazards
- Violence and aggression
- Work pressure/Stress
- Wrongly/not used personal protective equipment
- Traffic Routes
- Display Screen Equipment
- Sharps

These are just examples and you will need to apply a risk assessment to your workplace to check what hazards it presents.

## Slips, trips and falls

(Slide No 19 / eLearning Page 18)

Slips, trips and falls are the single most common cause of injuries at work with a cost to employers over £512 million a year in lost production and other costs. They also account for over half of all reported injuries to members of the public. Look out for hazards that may lead to tripping, slipping or falling and report it. You should also warn others of the hazard and if possible remove it. Clean up after yourself and place items of equipment back into storage once you have finished using them.

- Slips and trips can happen anywhere
- Remember that it's the biggest cause of serious injuries to health care workers, service users and others



## Preventing slips, trips and falls (Slide No 20 / eLearning Page 19)

You have a personal responsibility to remove and report hazards and your employer should have in place systems to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls. This should include planning, risk control, monitoring and a review process.

Examples of hazards include:

- Flooring – this should be suitable for the type of work activity that will be taking place on it and well maintained & cleaned correctly
- Stairs are a particular hazard. Look for broken steps or handrails
- Spillage – basically anything that ends up on a floor e.g. water, grease, talcum powder, waste cardboard and paper or dust.
- Obstacles -50% of all trip accidents are caused by poor housekeeping.



## Why you should report incidents & near misses (Slide No 21 / eLearning Page 20)

In the healthcare organisations, there is often uncertainty over whether incidents are reportable, particularly when they involve members of the public (e.g. patients in a hospital or residents in a care home), or when employees receive sharps injuries or suffer from work-related stress.

You are obliged to report all accidents so that they can be investigated and changes made to the system to reduce the hazard that was responsible. The points below indicate the reasons why you should report incidents and near misses.

- To prevent/ minimise risks and incidents by learning and implementing appropriate change
- For patient safety and a safer working environment
- To comply with legislation (RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013)

Incident Report  
Workplace Health & Safety

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following  
Reporting at the time of the accident?

- To comply with the organisation's policies
- To maintain a record of events and actions
- To identify trends
- To encourage openness and fairness

## Reporting Procedures

(Slide No 22 / eLearning Page 21)

Each employer will have their own procedures for reporting incidents and near misses. If you do not have a copy of yours then you need to contact your local Health, Safety and Welfare Advisor who will be able to provide a copy.

## Further Information

(Slide No 23 / eLearning Page 22)

For Further information please access the resources below

Health and Safety Executive

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Department of Health

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health>

Health, safety and wellbeing partnership group (HSWPG)

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/Aboutus/Publications/Pages/workplace-health-safety-standards.aspx>

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