

Merton Mencap

Health & Safety Policy

Last reviewed
January 2026

Next review
January 2027

Merton Mencap

Health & Safety Policy

1. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

Merton Mencap recognises the *Health & Safety Executive (HSE)* as the independent body providing health and safety information and instruction to employers. *The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974* places a statutory duty on employers to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its staff and other people who may be affected by its activities, e.g. service users, visitors.

The HSE requires employers to display a *Health and Safety Law Poster* at its premises. The *Health and Safety Law Poster* is displayed at the Merton Mencap office.

2. Responsibilities

As the employer, the Executive Committee (Trustees) has overall and final responsibility for health and safety matters at Merton Mencap and for ensuring health and safety legislation is complied with. The Executive Committee may delegate responsibility to a member of staff at Merton Mencap for day-to-day tasks in relation to health and safety.

The Executive Committee has delegated day-to-day responsibility for health and safety tasks and for ensuring this policy is put into practice to:-

Andrew Whittington, Chief Executive
(Delegated Health & Safety Officer)

The contact details of the *Delegated Health & Safety Officer* are:-

Merton Mencap
The Grange
1 Central Road
Morden
SM4 5PQ

M: 07767 670 134

E: chief.executive@mertonmencap.org.uk

All staff are required to:

- co-operate with instructions from the *Delegated Health & Safety Officer*, or other authorised persons, in relation to health and safety
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety
- report all near-misses, accidents and incidents to the appropriate person, eg their line manager or the *Delegated Health & Safety Officer*

3. General policy statements

Merton Mencap's general policy is to:

- ensure its staff know how to contact the *Delegated Health & Safety Officer*
- provide health and safety training/information to its staff appropriate to their role
- ensure any equipment used by Merton Mencap is safe and appropriately maintained
- conduct risk assessments of its services and activities which are made available to relevant staff to identify and manage any hazards, prevent incidents and accidents and avoid work-related ill-health
- ensure any near-misses, accidents and incidents are recorded, investigated and reported to the Executive Committee
- ensure any reportable occurrences are reported to the Health & Safety Executive, as required

The Executive Committee will ensure incident reporting is a regular agenda item at Executive Committee Meetings, and that the Delegated Health & Safety Officer provides a relevant update.

4. General premises arrangements

Merton Mencap will ensure the premises it uses for its services, activities and general business are kept clean, hygienic and safe.

In the case of premises which Merton Mencap regularly hires for its services and activities, Merton Mencap will put in place an agreement with the premises owner which shows the arrangements for the following

- access to the building

- ensuring security of staff, service users and equipment
- the whereabouts and management of any Asbestos
- adequate heating, lighting (inside and outside, as appropriate) and ventilation
- access to clean drinking water
- toilet facilities
- managing cleaning and hygiene
- waste disposal (including clinical waste)
- storage (for Merton Mencap items and equipment)
- the owner's agreement to maintain their items and equipment for Merton Mencap use

5. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments will be conducted by a member of staff who is competent to carry out the task and recorded on the relevant Merton Mencap risk assessment form.

Merton Mencap completes the following risk assessments:

- for the charity's registered office
- for each service (plus a Manual Handling risk assessment)
- for each paid position
- for one-off activities, eg community event

Additional risk assessments will be completed when further risks have been identified for a situation.

Risk assessments will be reviewed annually or sooner in the event of an incident.

The person in charge of the project or activity on the day (e.g. Team Leader) is responsible for ensuring that staff read and understand all risk assessments before sessions. All staff are responsible for ensuring that they read, understand and follow the risk assessments.

Risk assessments for third party organisations will be obtained, e.g. from a theme park if arranging a visit.

6. Fire procedures and drills

Procedures for managing fire will be recorded on a separate risk assessment titled 'Fire Risk Assessment & Evacuation Plan'. This Plan will include details of the location of fire exits, the whereabouts of fire safety equipment (eg break glass points and fire extinguishers) and assembly points. This information will be made available to all relevant staff and service users.

Merton Mencap will maintain records of fire drills conducted at its services and activities, which are also recorded within the Plan.

All staff must comply with the relevant fire procedures relating to the service or activity they are working on.

The Plan also includes details of which party is responsible for ensuring fire safety equipment (eg fire extinguishers, fire alarms) are maintained and are safe to use. In cases where Merton Mencap hire premises to run a project for people with a learning disability, the responsibilities for maintaining fire safety equipment will also be made clear within the premises hire agreement.

7. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

In accordance with the 1992 COSHH Regulations (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health), Merton Mencap recognises its duty to conduct risk assessments related to hazardous substances, eg cleaning chemicals.

Following a COSHH risk assessment, the following action will be taken:-

- in the first instance, action is taken to remove the need for the hazardous substance
- if this is not possible, action is taken to find a replacement for the hazardous substance, with a substance which does not have any hazardous properties
- if this is not possible, a further risk assessment of the hazardous substance will show instructions for safe use and storage, and any personal protective equipment (PPE) required (eg safety spectacles, gloves) which the charity will provide.

8. Safe use of equipment & Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Merton Mencap will maintain an inventory of all items and equipment (over £50) owned by the charity in relation to its services and activities, for insurance purposes, showing their approximate value.

All staff must comply with all relevant instructions on the use of any items or equipment in relation to any of Merton Mencap's services and activities.

Merton Mencap will ensure all portable electrical items used during its services and activities undergo Portable Appliance Testing (PAT). Merton Mencap will maintain records to show PAT has been carried out for electrical items owned by the charity. In the case of electrical items not owned by the charity, an agreement with the owner of the items will be established by Merton Mencap to ensure PAT is carried out.

Adequate supervision will also be provided to service users accessing equipment (see risk assessment for each project)

Staff should report any problems found with items or equipment to the relevant person, eg the Projects Manager or *Delegated Health & Safety Officer*.

9. Staff ratios

Risk assessments of projects and services include reference to safe staff ratios.

10. First Aid

Merton Mencap will ensure that at least one member of staff working on its projects or activities has received first aid training. A first aid box will be provided for projects and activities.

Reference should also be made to Merton Mencap's *First Aid & Administration of Medication Policy & Procedure*.

11. Incident reporting

Procedure

Reference should be made to our Safeguarding Policies & Procedures but, in summary, concerns about the welfare of a child, young person or adult with a learning disability/autism must be raised immediately with the charity's safeguarding lead (or the deputy lead in their absence) – see our Safeguarding Policy for procedure for managing such instances. The charity's safeguarding lead should assess the matter and consider a referral to a statutory agency straight away if the person is regarded in immediate harm, eg Merton's Safeguarding Team, the Police.

In the case of recording all incidents, the following procedure should be followed:

- record the incident using the Incident Report facility on the day of incident
- notify the relevant manager the same day
- manager must assess and take any necessary action and records all actions on the form
- parents and cares are notified about the incident on the day
- manager logs incident on the charity's main Incident Log
- the Chief Executive and Trustees review Incidents bi-monthly to spot patterns and check whether incidents were managed correctly

In-house training and refresher training is required for all Team Leaders and senior staff at least annually.

Recording

In the case of all our activities for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and autism, our Policy is to record all incidents on the same day including:

- near misses
- accidents
- safeguarding matters.

Incidents may include (but are not limited to):

- concerns about a person's welfare, eg staff member notices bruises, a change of behaviour, a disclosure made to a member of staff
- an injury, whether or not it required first aid response
- a situation which could have resulted in an injury or problem, ie a near-miss

RIDDOR

The Chief Executive is responsible for reporting relevant matters under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). RIDDOR covers the following incidents:-

- fatal accidents
- major injury accidents/conditions
- dangerous occurrences
- accidents causing 3 days or more incapacity from work
- certain work-related diseases

Records of all accidents/incidents are maintained at the Merton Mencap office, by the *Delegated Health & Safety Officer*.

12. Audit

Health and safety practice, as reflected in the risk assessments, will be checked through audits. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring audits are completed and actions undertaken. Audit findings will be reported and reviewed by the Executive Committee.

Health & Safety audits of each project will take place regularly.

Reference should also be made to Merton Mencap's *Audit Policy and Procedure*.

13. Regular review and assessment

Health & Safety matters will be as a standard agenda item at all:

- senior team meetings
- Executive Committee Meetings (with trustees)
- supervisions & appraisals

14. Staff

Staff are required to advise their manager as soon as practicable of any reason which could put them or others at risk (eg of illness or injury). In such instances, the manager will investigate which may include contacting the staff member's GP or other medical professional (with consent from the staff) to ensure fitness to work.

In any case, staff experiencing sickness and diarrhoea are not permitted to work until at least 48 hours post symptoms.

15. Communicating matters of health and safety to service users

Merton Mencap will ensure any relevant matters of health and safety are communicated to service users in an accessible way.

16. Concerns about Health and Safety

If any staff has any concern about any aspect of health and safety in relation to any of Merton Mencap's activities they should report it immediately to the *Delegated Health & Safety Officer*.

Internal Audit Guidance

Check	Evidence
Do staff know who the designated Health & Safety Officer is for the charity, who they can raise concerns with?	Ask staff and volunteers
All staff have received Health & Safety training?	Check the Training Records to see whether all staff and volunteers have completed training
Are Incident Forms available?	Check the project file on-site. Check that blank Incident Forms are in the file and that staff know they are there
Do staff know the procedure to record any incidents/accidents/near misses?	Ask staff and volunteers what they would do to record an incident/accident/near miss
Incident Forms are being completed accurately and passed to the Projects Manager and any follow ups completed	Check the Incident Form file at the office and check whether Incident Forms have been completed appropriately
Risk Assessment Form is in the file at the project and is being followed by staff and volunteers	Check file Ask staff whether they have read the Risk Assessment – check their knowledge of it
Fire Evacuation Procedure is in place and a copy at the project	Check that a Fire Evacuation Procedure Form is in place and is at the project. Ask Staff what they would do in the event of the fire Check that fire drills are being done
Safe staff ratios are being adhered to	Check that the staffing ratios (as referenced at 9, above) are in place
A qualified First Aider is on duty	Check that there is a First Aider on duty Check that the training is up to date
Check that service users know about Health and Safety procedures (e.g. fire evacuation point)	Ask service users (where appropriate)