There are two separate aspects to health and safety. First, under the common law (case law), everyone has a 'duty of care' in all aspects of their life to take reasonable care to prevent injury, loss or damage that could reasonably be predicted and prevented. So at home, for example, if your front step is damaged and someone could be injured, you have a duty to take action to reduce this risk by repairing the step, or perhaps notifying the landlord and in the meantime putting up a 'Caution, broken step' sign. As an organisation, you have a duty of care to your paid staff, volunteers, your clients/service users, and anyone on your premises or using your activities and services.

Failure to comply with duty of care is **negligence**. A person who is injured or suffers loss or damage because of negligence can sue (bring a legal claim against) whoever was negligent, and may be awarded compensation.

Secondly, health and safety and related legislation sets out a statutory framework for duty of care. Failure to comply with the relevant legislation is a breach of duty of care, and is also an offence for which the responsible person(s) or organisation can be fined or even in some cases imprisoned.

Public liability insurance covers the organisation for claims arising from injury, illness or death caused by the organisation's negligence or failure to comply with health and safety or related legislation. For more information about insurances, see *Factsheet 18: Insurance*.

Duty of care and health and safety are complex issues. This Factsheet provides some of the basics. For more information, see the Further Help section below.

Health and Safety at Work Act
Duty of care applies to all individuals and organisations, but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and related regulations apply only to organisations with employees (even if the employees are temporary and/or part-time). But even if an organisation is purely voluntary and has no paid staff, it is good practice to comply with health and safety legislation, because this is a way of showing the organisation takes seriously its duty of care.

Under health and safety legislation, all employers with five or more employees must have a written health and safety policy. Good practice is for all organisations, even those with no employees or fewer than five, to have a written policy.

A template for a basic policy is on the Health and Safety Executive website. This is intended for ordinary businesses, so you should change "employees" to "employees and volunteers", and should adapt the template as appropriate for your organisation. The health and safety policy should be approved by your management committee and should be reviewed regularly.

Health and safety poster
All employers must display an approved health and safety poster or give all employees an approved pocket card. These set out general health and safety duties of employers and

employees, and are available from HSE Books (see Further Help, below). New versions of these (the new poster has coloured photographs) were published in 2009, but the old versions can be used until 5 April 2014.

Risk assessment

All organisations should assess systematically any potential risks or hazards to paid staff, volunteers, clients/service users, visitors and members of the public with whom the organisation comes into contact. Doing a risk assessment shows that you have considered all possible hazards and implemented methods of avoiding accidents.

Organisations with five or more employees must put the main points of their risk assessment in writing, but it is good practice for all organisation to do so.

The HSE template for a health and safety policy (see above) also includes a template for a risk assessment.

The stages in a risk assessment are:
- Look for potential hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate these risks and decide whether your existing precautions are adequate
- Record your findings
- Review your assessment on a regular basis (in particular when new activities or services are started or existing ones change, or when you start using different premises) and revise it if necessary
- Implement any necessary measures if you have found your existing precautions to be inadequate

First aid

Different organisations will need different first aid arrangements, according to their size and activities. A first aid needs assessment (a form of risk assessment) should identify whether trained first aiders are needed, or whether it will be adequate simply to have an Appointed Person or Persons to look after first aid boxes and organise a first aid response, such as ringing for an ambulance. Appointed Persons should not give first aid unless they are trained to do so.

The Health and Safety Executive website (see Further Help, below) provides a template for carrying out afirst aid needs assessment, and guidance on how many and what type of first aiders might be necessary.

First aid box

If you have employees you must have a first aid box at each workplace. If you do not have employees but have premises or provide activities or services, you should have first aid boxes as appropriate.
There are no rules about what must be in a first aid box. Some of the basics would include bandages, triangular bandages, sterile wound dressings, sterile wipes, and a leaflet on basic

first aid. The organisation's risk assessment should provide an indication of what else needs to be included.

Employers must display a notice or notices indicating where the first aid box is, who the first-aider or appointed person is and where they can be found.

Recording and reporting accidents and incidents
All employers must have an approved accident book, which is used to record not only accidents, but also illness caused or possibly caused by work and any "near-miss" accidents. Approved accident books are available from HSE Books (see Further Help, below) and good stationers.

Any illness or injury which causes death or which causes, or could cause, an employee to be incapable of work for more than seven consecutive days (even if the person is actually at work, or the days are weekends or non-work days) must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive's Incident Contact Centre (see Further Help, below) and in some cases the local authority's environmental health department. Dangerous occurrences which could have resulted in a reportable injury, but did not, must also be reported. These reporting rules are called RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations).

Hazardous substances
COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) regulations require organisations to do an assessment of any substances that are used or stored on your premises and which are hazardous to health. These include not only chemicals and other substances which are clearly toxic, but also ordinary products which could cause injury of illness if they get are swallowed or get onto skin or eyes, or if the fumes are breathed. These could include cleaning agents, solvents, bleach and similar products.

The organisation must ensure those people who handle or use the products are aware of how to store the substances, how to deal with any spillages, and any potential hazards to skin, hair, eyes etc.

The Health and Safety Executive has further information on COSHH assessments.

Food hygiene
If your organisation prepares, serves and/or stores food on your premises, whether it is for sale or not, food safety regulations are likely to apply. These require that people preparing or handling food must be properly trained and properly supervised. There are also specific requirements regarding clean work areas and equipment, suitable premises, suitable arrangements for food waste and so on. Information is available from the local environmental health department.

Occasional provision of food by private individuals at events such as church, school or village fairs is not likely to be covered by the food hygiene regulations, but the individuals and organisation still have a duty of care (see above) to ensure the food is safe.

Fire safety
In the past most organisations had to be registered with the Fire Service who will issue a fire certificate, but since 2005 the organisation and any person who has control over any part of the premises are responsible for ensuring fire safety.

The responsible person(s) have a general duty to ensure the safety of employees, and in relation to non-employees, to take fire precautions that are reasonable to ensure that premises are safe. As part of this duty they must carry out a fire risk assessment, giving particular consideration to people who might be at special risk, such as people with disabilities, and any dangerous substances that are likely to be on the premises.

Make sure you have clear guidelines for your staff, volunteers and visitors about procedures in the event of a fire. Everyone should know where the nearest fire exit is, how the alarm will be raised (not all premises have a fire alarm), where to assemble, how the roll call will be done and who will do it. If you hold an event, you should make these procedures clear before you start.

More information is available from the Fire Protection Association and the Department for Communities and Local Government (see Further Help, below).

General health and safety advice
The following basic tips are useful for all workplaces (and should be picked up by your risk assessment!).
- Don't leave wires from electrical equipment and computers trailing
- Don't keep paper (whether new or for recycling) stored where it could be a fire risk.
- Ensure that you have appropriate desks and chairs
- Ensure fire exits are clearly marked, are able to be opened immediately from the inside and are not obstructed in any way
- Train all staff to bend at the knees when lifting, and to use a trolley for moving heavy objects
- Ensure the workplace is at a reasonable temperature. There is no legal minimum or maximum for indoor workplaces, but the Health and Safety
- Executive recommends a minimum of 16 degrees C (61F) for sedentary work and 13C (55F) for strenuous work. As a maximum the Trades Union Congress recommends 30C (86F) for sedentary work and 27C (81F) for strenuous work, but the British Safety Council recommends a maximum of 25C (77F) for sedentary work

Registering your premises
In the past, every place where people were employed had to be registered with the local authority environmental health department or the Health and Safety Executive. Since 2009 offices, most shops and most factories no longer need to register, but places handling food

or subject to other specific registration rules must still be registered. Information is available from the local authority environmental health department.

Some organisations may need to register with other bodies. For example nurseries and some other organisations working with children need to be registered with Ofsted, and organisations providing health or adult social care services may need to be registered with the Care Quality Commission.

Further Help
Health and safety law and enforcement
Health and Safety Executive – www.hse.gov.uk
Health and Safety Executive Local Office – 0161 952 8200
HSE Books – https://books.hse.gov.uk/
HSE Incident Contact Centre – www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm
Manchester City Council business support and licensing – 0161 234 4911, www.manchester.gov.uk/info/752/health_and_safety_at_workadvice_and_training/2280/health_and_safety_advice_for_businesses
Manchester City Council environmental health – 0161 234 5004, https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/directory_record/91153/environmental_food_and_health_and_safety_enforcement_policy/category/761/environmental_health

Local first aid training providers
St John Ambulance – 0844 770 4800, www.sja.org.uk
Greater Manchester Hazards Centre – 0161 636 7557, www.gmhazards.org.uk

Local food hygiene training providers
The Manchester College – 0800 068 8585, www.themanchestercollege.ac.uk
Fire safety
Fire Protection Association – 01608 812 500, www.thefpa.co.uk
Department for Communities and Local Government – 0303 444 0000, www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw
Manchester Community Central – www.manchestercommunitycentral.org contact 0333 321 3021, or email: info@mcrcommunitycentral.org

Updated July 2012