

Rhose Community Library

Health Safety & Environment Policy

This is the Statement of General Policy and Arrangements for Rhose Community Library (RCL). The Policy will be reviewed annually. The Board of Trustees has collective responsibility for the Health and Safety (H&S) of Volunteers and others at the library. RCL are represented in safety matters by a volunteer Health and Safety Representative, currently Mr Ian Robinson. The Vale of Glamorgan (VoG) council are responsible for the H&S of the peripatetic staff, who work part time at this and other library venues in VoG.

RCL is run by volunteers and does not have any employees. As such it is not subject to existing Health and Safety Legislation but is subject to Common Law. RCL are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for volunteers, library users and others and will therefore abide by the principles of the Health and Safety at work Act and other related legislation where relevant to the library operation.

There is a Risk Assessment for normal RCL procedures and this needs to be read and understood by all volunteers. There should be at least one Safety Inspection annually, carried out by representatives of the volunteers. Any accidents or Incidents (near misses) must be reported and investigated by the Trustees or their representatives.

As there are no permanent staff at the library, the volunteers themselves are responsible for their own safety whilst working at the library; or elsewhere when performing library duties, for example at fund raising events.

Training will be provided if reasonably practicable; on the basis of Risk, Individual Requirement and Cost to RCL. Information will be provided to volunteers by a competent person, who may be another RCL volunteer.

The library is a public building and is subject to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) order 2005. The library was inspected in November 2018 and recommendations were made in order to improve Fire Safety. A Fire Risk Assessment is in place and information on Fire Safety is given as hand-outs and on a verbal basis to new and present Volunteers. RCL has a relatively small, single-story premises and can be considered a low risk area in normal operation.

The Library building, the land, and some of the equipment in RCL is owned and maintained by the VoG Council. This includes the computer equipment used for the inter-library functionality. VoG contractors carry out Portable Appliance testing (PAT) on an annual basis to comply with H&S regulations and they include RCL equipment in that testing.

RCL will endeavour to protect the environment by good energy management, and recycling a very high proportion of any waste material generated by library procedures: this will include redundant book stock which will be sold for fundraising or given to reliable local outlets (e.g. Duffryn Gardens) for resale. RCL will use recyclable materials when feasible.

Written by I Robinson. February 2019.

Issued by Board of Trustees.

Rhose Community Library

Risk Assessment

January 2019. Revision 1 July 2019.

Introduction

Rhose Library was previously run by the Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoG), but due to budget cuts the Council were not able to continue supporting its running. To prevent closure, the library is now run by Volunteers and managed by Trustees; VOG continues to supply book and computer services and also supports a number of events, in the library and local community centres, for fundraising purposes.

The responsibility for the Health and Safety (H&S) of volunteers and the consequential Duty of Care to library users has therefore been passed to the Trustees. The H&S of peripatetic library staff remains the responsibility of VOG although the Trustees retain a Duty of Care whilst they are on the premises.

The library is a single-story building with public access during daytime office hours and on Saturday. The library is next door to a local primary school and is visited by the pupils with teacher(s) at times and is regularly used by mothers with their children.

In order to support the local community and to raise funds, the library may be used for activities outside normal opening hours. The activities may include children supported by library volunteers and parents. There are also fund-raising events run at other venues, but these would normally be subject to the venue's own rules and guidance and therefore not included in this risk assessment.

This risk assessment is based upon advice given by the Health and Safety Executive, especially on their Website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/>

Hazard Identification.

1. Manual Tasks
2. Electrical
3. Mechanical
4. Working at height
5. Chemical
6. Access, walkways, trips & slips
7. Housekeeping hygiene
8. Fire
9. Office, DSE
10. Lone Working
11. Stress, Violence & Threatening Psychological Behaviour
12. Vulnerable Workers
13. Activities & Events

1. Manual Tasks

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
Volunteers lifting boxes of books: delivered in 'skips' and books taken from shelves. Muscle strains or lower back injuries may result from incorrect lifting.	There are no necessary routine Manual Handling tasks. 'Skips' are brought in on a trolley by VOG staff and placed in the "kitchen" area. Books taken off shelves are boxed for disposal and stored underneath benches. New volunteers are told that they should not lift the skips or heavy boxes. New and returned books are put on a trolley to fill shelves.	Volunteers need to be reminded of the best way to lift heavy objects, this can be done as part of the Volunteers induction and in regular library meetings. Particular care must be taken when disposing of boxes of books. Several volunteers have trolleys and Organisers should be reminded to always ask if these are available	Volunteer Co-ordinator and Safety Representative	Ongoing	Ongoing
When books are returned by borrowers they are returned to their proper position on the shelves, this may be at approx. head height or low level. Strain injuries may result in susceptible individuals.	A step-stool is available for higher shelved items. Volunteers are aware if they are predisposed to back muscle strains and will ask another volunteer for assistance. A trolley is used to carry the books to shelves.				
Moving of Bookshelves: volunteers may suffer strains, be hit, injure their feet or suffer trapped hands by incorrect shelf moves.	Shelves are regularly moved to clear the floor for events. The shelf units have four sets of wheels with brakes, which are released by foot. Two persons move shelves as a team. The shelves are moved to a new position and the brakes re-applied.	Signage on the side of shelves may be appropriate: e.g." release brakes carefully before moving. Two persons required to move these shelves."	Discuss with Volunteer Co-ordinator		

2. Electrical

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
<p>Staff could get electrical shocks or burns from faulty electrics including portable electrical equipment</p> <p>Lightning Protection</p>	<p>PAT testing is performed annually by VOG by suitably qualified technicians in accordance with HSE guidelines. Volunteers will be observant of poorly sited plugs or damaged wiring and take any defective equipment out of use. Any such faulty equipment is reported to the safety representative, Volunteer Co-ordinator or Trustees, via the report book</p> <p>The library is a single story building. The library is next to an electrical sub-station</p>	<p>Safety Representative to do visual checks of plugs, sockets, cables and on/off switches in the kitchen and reception desk area every three months and record this in the report book.</p> <p>Donated electrical equipment should not be accepted (politely declined) unless new, in good condition or it has been PAT tested.</p> <p>No requirement for lightning rod</p>	Safety Rep'	Ongoing	Ongoing

3. Mechanical

There is no mechanical equipment currently in use at Rhoose Community Library. Any tools necessary for maintenance or contract work will be the responsibility of the users and will not be retained for use by volunteers.

4. Working at Height.

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
<p>The library has very limited storage space: books and other articles may be stored at height. Volunteers may be hit by falling articles or fall when retrieving them.</p> <p>Volunteers may fall when opening windows or reaching for books on top shelves</p>	<p>Heavy articles, such as boxes of books, should not be stored on cupboard tops or shelves above eye height. An exception is Christmas decorations and books, only required once per year. A stepladder is provided, and two persons work together to ensure ladder is stable.</p> <p>A step-stool is provided to reach top shelving. The stepladder is used for higher reaches such as opening windows. Volunteers are told not to stand on chairs or tables. Windows are generally kept closed as air-conditioning is provided.</p>	<p>A routine maintenance check should be carried out on any ladders or step-stools. This should be annually and recorded as part of this risk assessment.</p> <p>If any deterioration to the stepladder or step-stool is noted it must be reported to the safety representative, Volunteer Co-ordinator or Trustee, via the report book and actioned immediately.</p>	Safety rep'	As required	

5. Chemical

The only chemical substances present in the library are domestic surface cleaners and bleach for toilet cleansing. No industrial chemicals are stored or used in the library. Smoking is not permitted in library areas.

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
Cleaning is carried out, generally once per week, by a volunteer. Some proprietary cleaners, such as bleach and Mr Muscle have hazard warning labels.	<p>Bleach is used carefully, and gloves are used. The volunteer is aware of the hazards and takes appropriate precautions against breathing fumes.</p> <p>The user is aware that sprays produce mists which are especially hazardous as they are a rapid route to the lungs. Sprays are used sparingly and carefully with adequate ventilation.</p>	The present volunteer cleaner is very experienced with use of chemicals. If another volunteer took up cleaning duties additional training, by the safety representative, would be necessary.	As required		

6. Access, Walkways, Trips and Slips. The library is a single-story building and there are therefore no stairways and no steps on access or egress. There is one entrance way and the library is carpeted after the entrance.

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
Volunteers and library users may suffer sprains, fractures or bruising if they trip over objects or slip on wet surfaces.	<p>As most surfaces are carpeted, slips are unlikely. The toilet area which is for public use, has a tiled floor. The toilet floor is cleaned during lunchtime closing and is generally dry by library opening.</p> <p>Trailing cables are only present when cleaning, when the library is closed.</p> <p>If electrical wires are present, e.g. at events, they are taped to the carpet with parcel tape or similar. These are checked by the event volunteers.</p> <p>Due to limited storage space, sometimes boxes may be stored at floor level. Care is always taken to site so as to prevent a tripping hazard.</p> <p>Volunteers are vigilant about floor condition and report any faults to the safety representative, Volunteer Co-ordinator or Trustees, via the report book</p>	<p>Remind volunteers that any spillages should be cleaned up immediately with paper towels etc. and made dry.</p> <p>Remind volunteers that objects, including bags and boxes, should not be left in walkways where they may be a trip hazard.</p>	All	Ongoing	

7. Housekeeping and Hygiene.

A small fridge is present for keeping milk for tea/coffee breaks: cold drinks are kept here in summer months. Food is rarely kept in the fridge. A microwave cooker is present but is only used by VOG staff.

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
Out of date milk and stored food may present a bacterial hazard to volunteers	Milk and other food's use-by date is always noted and disposed of when appropriate. Perishable food articles are not generally kept by volunteers, but any suspect food is disposed of routinely.	If out of date food is found in the fridge or elsewhere, its ownership should be investigated to prevent recurrence.	Safety Rep'	Ongoing	
Food may be present for refreshments at Library events, such as book sales. A high standard of hygiene must be maintained to prevent bacterial infection of customers.	Perishable food, such as meat sandwiches, are not generally served. Preserves may be sold but these will always contain suitable natural preservatives. A high standard of cleanliness is always maintained by the experienced volunteers. All food is removed from the premises after events.	Antibacterial handwash should be used by volunteers serving food of any kind, especially if there has been any occurrence of bacterial infections in the area.	Event organisers	Ongoing	

8. Fire.

Rhose Community Library is housed in a single-story building at ground level. The Volunteers and library users are considered to be at low risk from a fire. A separate Fire Risk Assessment has been produced and should be considered as being part of this risk assessment.

9 Office, DSE

Routine volunteer tasks are generally office based: two volunteers interact with library users at a reception desk. Each volunteer has a desktop computer with a bar-code reader for scanning book codes. Interaction is necessarily standing.

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
Routine Use of Display Screen Equipment may lead to repetitive Strain Injury (RSI), or muscle injuries due to bad posture when sitting.	<p>Volunteers are generally standing when using computer equipment and therefore specialist seating is not required.</p> <p>Computer use is for short periods only.</p> <p>On-screen information is clear and menu-driven and prolonged periods of concentration are required infrequently (e.g. when signing up new library users).</p>				
A photocopier is sited next to the desk area which may produce fumes if used repeatedly	Long copying runs are very infrequent, and no smell of Ozone has been noted during photocopying.				
Discomfort may be caused if the environment is hot/cold or lighting is poor.	<p>The library has air conditioning which regulates the temperature during summer and winter</p> <p>There is adequate natural light from windows and good artificial lighting from fluorescent 'daylight' fixtures.</p> <p>Volunteers work the hours that suit them, generally 3 hours per day.</p>				

10.Lone Working: Volunteers work in teams of two persons, there is also a peripatetic VOG member of staff one day per week (variable). Although this is a low-risk environment, lone working is not normally acceptable.

11. Stress, Violence & Threatening Psychological Behaviour

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
Volunteers may suffer abuse, threats or assaults, from library users or other members of the public.	The till is hidden from the street by filing trays and distance and holds only approx. £30 -£50. Volunteers are told to not resist a robbery. Staff are aware that they should not confront customers in case of dispute, e.g. for unpaid fines, but will pass these on to VOG staff for arbitration. Volunteers can report any instances of abuse, etc., to the safety representative, Volunteer Co-ordinator or Trustees, via the report book for discussion/support. Library facilities can be withdrawn from abusers.	Universal Credit assistance is now provided from library computers, but volunteers may be untrained, thus unable or unwilling to assist, this may lead to conflict. A protocol should be discussed with VOG and Trustees.	Trustees	Important	

12 Vulnerable Workers: young persons and disabled volunteers may be harmed by otherwise low-risk working conditions or hazards.

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
Young persons, e.g. those following a Duke of Edinburgh (D of E) award, may not be aware of working procedures and may be at risk from a range of low hazard issues. Disabled volunteers may find access to shelving and manual handling more challenging.	Young Persons are defined as being aged 16 to 18. They may be Volunteers but are not given tasks other than library duties. Supervision is always given by more experienced volunteers. Younger persons doing their D of E award may be 13 to 16 and would be carrying out duties as Work Experience. They would be present with two volunteers and would not be expected to carry out tasks other than normal library duties.	The Volunteer Packs should make it clear that the duties of Children and Young Persons may be limited to take account of their age and limited experience.	Vol Co-ordinator	1 st Quarter 2019	

13 **Activities and Events.** RCL volunteers run a number of activities, such as Craft and a Lego club on a regular (generally weekly) basis. There may also be fund raising events, such as book sales on an occasional basis.

Who might be harmed and how	What are we currently doing?	Further Action recommended/required	Action by whom	Timing	Completion
Persons attending, including children may be harmed by the hazards, previously listed, during the events	The Lego club and Craft club are run by experienced library volunteers familiar with the hazards present. There is a high level of supervision, especially when children are present. Attendees are not permitted into the kitchen area and electrical equipment is not required.	Organisers of regular events should read this risk assessment and review their own procedures to ensure that the risk to attendees is considered acceptably low. Special care needs to be taken to keep the rear fire exit accessible as the kitchen fire exit may be unfamiliar.	Lego Club organisers Craft Club Organisers	ASAP	
Fund raising events include persons not familiar with hazards present in the library. Events may include refreshments of hot drinks. Money is collected at these events, which may be a security issue.	Storage of hot water is in a safe position behind tables not accessible to the public. Tea is dispensed to customers in suitable cups. Hot food is not sold so there is no need to access kitchen equipment. Money is kept in containers out of sight, only small amounts (around £20) is generally present, notes will be taken to the safe. The doors are locked after the event for money counting by two persons.		All	On going	
Presentation events. Many more people may be present than a normal day, which may be an issue for emergency evacuation.	Special care is taken to keep fire exits clear. Presenters will generally give details of the fire alarm and evacuation procedure before any such event.	There is sometimes an embarrassment in announcing the fire evacuation procedure as it may seem trivial or amusing. Organisers need to be aware of this and make announcements if the presenters do not.	Event organiser	On going	
Money may be collected at events away from the library and taken back to the library. There is a risk of robbery including assault.	Volunteers are aware that they should not resist a robbery. There are always at least two persons present; venues are always in a public place. Money is always in a closed container (such as a lidded bucket) to avoid showing money. Transport is by car with two persons present. The money is counted by two persons in the locked library.	Before events where money is collected and at any changeover of "shift" volunteers should be reminded of security procedures. Young persons should not participate as volunteers at such events unless accompanied by two adult volunteers. Children should not participate.	Event organisers	On-going	

Procedure in case of an Accident, Incident or Near-miss.

All accidents, incidents and near-misses must be reported immediately by recording any relevant details in the blue report book or in the desk diary. A Volunteer on duty should make a verbal report or email, as soon as possible, to the Volunteer Co-ordinator or the Safety Representative. All accidents, incidents and near-misses will be investigated by the Trustees and recorded in the Board meeting minutes.

It is particularly important to report Incidents or Near-misses as investigation of these may prevent a future injury.

Reviews

This Risk Assessment should be reviewed as follows:-

- Annually
- After a significant change to the Library layout or procedures
- After any Accident, Incident or Near-miss

Written by Ian Robinson Safety Representative, Trustee January 2019 Signature

Approved by:

Date of next Review: January 2020.

Addendum: addition of lightning protection added 10/07/19