



Health and Safety Policy

July 2022.

Next review Date July 2024

Dr Alastair Smith, Chairperson of the Charity.

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SECTION 1: GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT

Rising Voices Wessex Community Choir (the Charity), believe that health and safety is a vital component of the Charity's business.

Freelance Music Directors, Trustees and volunteers (for example Steering Group) and members are the most important asset to this Charity, and therefore their health, safety and welfare is a priority at all times.

The Charity believe that prevention is not only better, but cheaper than cure. Good health and safety are paramount to our ethos and beliefs.

From a legal perspective, the Charity is committed to ensuring that it complies with all relevant health and safety legislation where it is reasonably practicable to do so.

The Charity is committed to ongoing monitoring and review processes, so that continual improvement in the management of health and safety can be achieved.

Our general intentions are to:

- Provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities.
- Maintain safe and healthy conditions for rehearsals and events.
- Provide and maintain safe equipment.
- Provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision.
- Consult with Music Directors/volunteers/members on matters affecting their health and safety.
- Review and revise this policy at regular intervals.

SECTION 2: ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Health & Safety Responsibilities

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the Chair of the Trustees.

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is that of the of the Trustees
Or appointed person i.e. Music Directors.

Rising Voices Wessex strives to create a positive and inclusive environment and culture, in order to provide the right conditions for the choirs to meet, thrive and perform. Contributions and feedback are welcomed, recognised and valued by all.

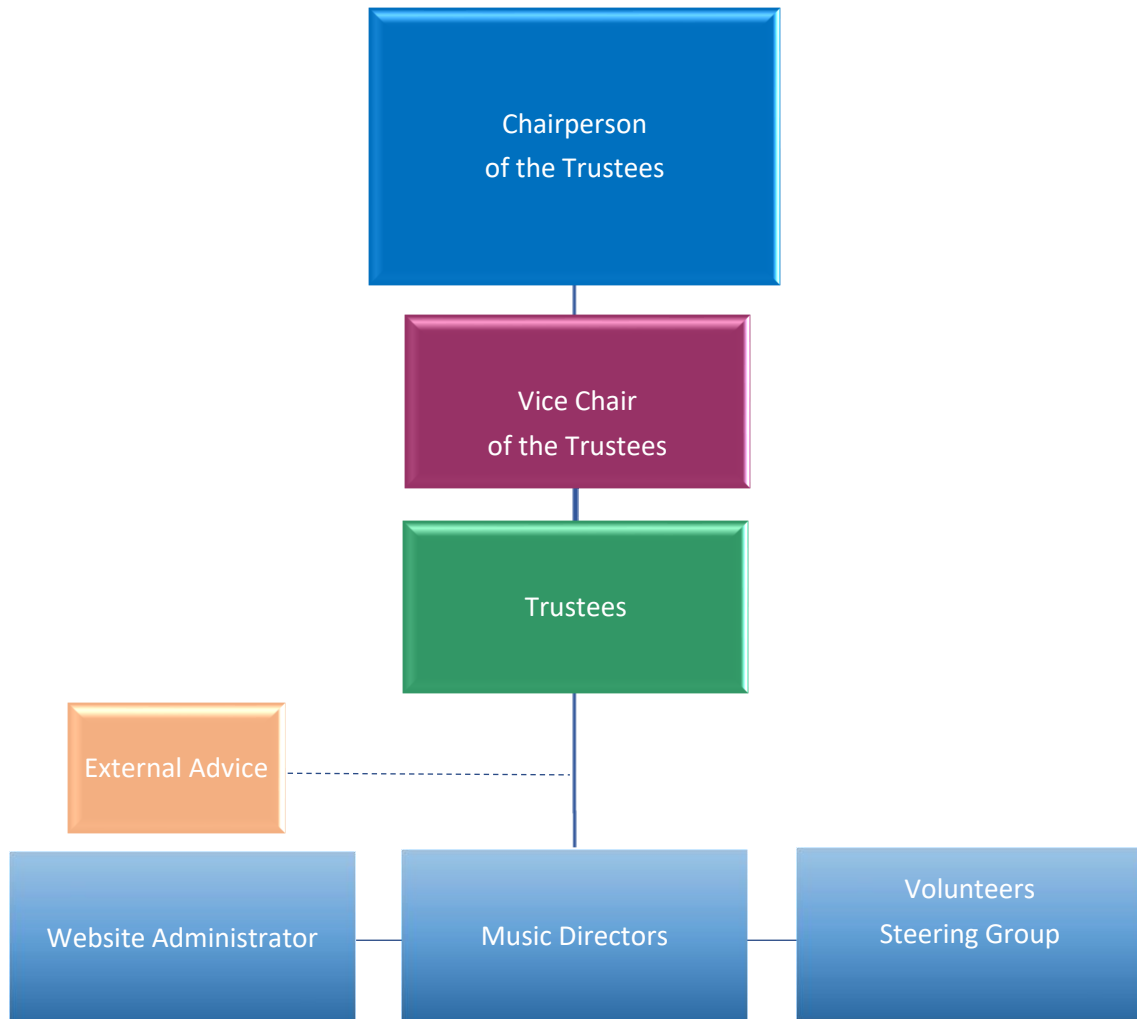
The Trustees is committed to supporting its Music Directors, members and volunteers at all times. Regular meetings and consultation aim to develop and maintain a positive culture within the charity.

Rising Voices Wessex believe that Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers should have rewarding and worthwhile roles, with the freedom and confidence to be empowered to raise health and safety concerns where appropriate.

The Charity aims to treat everyone with respect, and provide the necessary tools, training and support to work safely within the scope our activities. To do this, Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers are trusted, empowered and actively listened to by those with whom they interact.

Organisation Chart

To ensure that health and safety standards are maintained and improved, the following people also have responsibility for acting in a safe manner.



Chairperson's Responsibilities

- The Chairperson will be responsible for the planned implementation of effective health and safety standards within the Charity according to agreed objectives and for ensuring that health and safety standards are taken into account in planning and activities generally.
- Ensuring the Charity has access to competent health and safety advice as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Ensuring there exists an effective policy for health and safety management, supplemented by additional documents and safe systems of work relating to the required performance in each particular area and type of activity and that this document is implemented throughout the business.
- Ensuring that necessary resources and information are made available for the policy to be effectively put into practice.
- Ensuring that Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers are inducted appropriately to enable them to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensuring that everyone carries out their respective duties regarding health and safety at rehearsals and events.
- Ensuring that all accidents, incidents, diseases and/or dangerous occurrences are reported to the enforcing authority where required by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.
- Cooperate and assist, as necessary, with all enforcing authorities and any other external body concerned with health and safety in the course of their duties.
- Ensuring this policy is routinely reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the arrangements for health and safety remain current and valid.

2.2 Vice Chair or appointed person's responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the appointed person include the following:

- Ensuring that regular reviews are carried out to ensure that the Policy is being complied with and make recommendations directly to all Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers in matters concerning health and safety.
- Reviewing all safety rules on a regular basis and where necessary recommend suitable changes.
- Ensuring that appropriate Risk Assessments are carried out at new venues and when/ where appropriate.
- Ensuring that all accidents are recorded in the accident book (held at St John's Church) and reported to the Trustees.
- Ensuring appropriate First Aid facilities are available at venues for rehearsals and events.

- Ensuring Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers are competent in the use of any equipment they are required to use and have sufficient resources.
- Ensuring all equipment is maintained in good condition and free of defects / faults.
- Ensuring that at all times there is an adequate supply of suitable equipment, and that such equipment is in good condition, as required.
- Ensuring that the “general principles of prevention” as detailed in the Management of Health and Safety at Work 1999 Regulations are applied.
- Ensuring that all new Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers receive an induction to the Charity and its procedures, and access to health and safety information.

2.3 Other Trustees’ Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the other Trustees include the following:

- Cooperating with the Chairperson and other Trustees on health and safety matters.
- Ensuring that the duties and responsibilities for a safe environment are properly assigned, accepted and understood by all personnel working, volunteering in or entering the relevant workplace.
- Ensuring a budget for budget for resources to fully implement the Health & Safety Policy.
- Ensuring that the health, safety and welfare arrangements within the venues used are effectively implemented in accordance with the specific procedures detailed in this policy.
- Ensuring that all recommendations from the Risk Assessments are implemented within the relevant time frames.
- Ensuring that all incidents are reported in the accident/incident book and investigated to determine if further actions are necessary to prevent a re-occurrence. Notify the relevant venue if necessary.
- Ensuring that health and safety information and training is provided to all new Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers.
- Ensuring that all Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers within the Charity have been briefed on and understand the Health & Safety Policy along with any safe working systems/procedures relevant to their work.
- Ensuring Music Directors have access to all necessary and relevant information appertaining to their health, safety and well-being at rehearsals and events.
- Ensuring that any necessary equipment is correctly used and maintained in good order by Music Directors and by any other relevant persons, as required.

2.4 Music Directors', volunteers, guest musicians

All Music Directors, volunteers and guest musicians supporting the charity are asked to note the following responsibility's:

- To take care of their own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions while acting on the Charity's business.
- They are specifically reminded that they have a duty by law to use any equipment they or others provide safely.
- Report to the appointed person without delay any defect in the equipment, which might endanger safety, health or welfare of which they become aware.
- Report any deficiencies in First Aid Equipment etc.
- Use the correct equipment for the job and keep in good condition.
- If required the correct PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) will be used by all relevant persons and must be worn appropriately i.e. face masks or shields.
- You must avoid any action, which would be a source of danger to yourself and / or others.
- You must not carry out any tasks which you feel you are not competent to carry out, or one which involves unreasonably high risks.
- Ensure appropriate measures are taken when lone working in accordance with this policy and report to the Appointed Person any potential problems.
- You are to be encouraged to make suggestions and raise concerns. Indeed, this document is in itself an invitation to consultation. Read it in full and if you have anything to contribute then please advise orally or in writing to the Steering Group or Trustees.
- **Choir Members/Visitors Shall:**
 - Be made aware of, and conform to, the Charity's procedures, as appropriate to the purpose of their being on the relevant venue premises.
 - Sign the Register on arrival at practice sessions/performances.
 - Where provided, wear a Visitor Badge whilst on the premises, as required.
 - Wear a face mask or shield if requested to do so.

2.5 First Aid and fire responsibilities

- Ensuring that First Aid facilities are available at venues and periodically check the facilities.
- Ensuring that all persons know the location of First Aid facilities and the names of First Aiders.
- Ensuring that fire equipment is available at venues and check the relevant fire instructions and fire exits. Ensure exits are not obstructed by chairs or equipment.

SECTION 3: SAFE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Arrangements/ Resources

The Charity recognises that for the effective implementation of safety procedures and policies laid down in this Health & Safety Policy, adequate resources and funding must be made available. The Charity will provide resources for monitoring of health and safety in the organisation and for the provision of health and safety information as required.

All measures will be reviewed to ensure that they take account of the general principles of prevention.

3.2 Risk Assessment

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Charity will carry out Risk Assessments for all activities that present a risk to those taking part in choir rehearsals and events.

Risk Assessments will be undertaken at the venues and when planning events in relation to the following:

- Identifying any the significant hazards to members involved in the activity – stairs, steps and staging.
- Identify if the venue is suitable for all members. Evaluate the level of risk and decide if existing precautions are sufficient.
- Record the significant findings of the assessment.
- Identify fire equipment and fire exits.
- Check the availability of First Aid equipment
- Manual handling – check access for equipment and set up facilities – chairs and tables.
- Welfare Facilities – check toilets, kitchen and suitable changing facilities.
- If required consider facilities for social distancing and infection risk i.e. Covid 19

3.3 Access to Health & Safety Advice

The general day to day management of health and safety will be undertaken by the Trustees and Music Directors. Health & Safety Advice to be provided by the Trustee as and when required.

The Health & Safety Policy will be reviewed regularly. A new version will be issued if necessary and any changes brought to the attention of all Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers. The Policy will also be made available on the Charity website.

3.4 Consultation with Trustees/Music Directors/Volunteers

The Trustees see communication between Music Directors and volunteers as an essential part of effective health and safety management. Consultation will be facilitated by means of meetings, training sessions, email notices and verbal communication.

Information concerning safety matters, including the results of Risk Assessments, to be communicated to the relevant personnel. Any matter concerning safety, raised by any member of the Charity or any choir member, to be investigated by the Trustees so that action can be taken as appropriate.

All persons are to communicate any health and safety concerns in relation to the activities which form part of their role within the charity.

Trustees will hold:

Quarterly Trustee meetings where health and safety concerns will be an agenda item.

Music Directors/volunteers will attend:

Monthly Steering Group meetings.
Emails/telephone/meetings as required.
Annual AGM.

3.5 Work at Height and the use of equipment (staging)

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 requires an assessment to be conducted and all work at height to be planned. The overall principle is as far as is practicable, to prevent anyone falling.

The Charity undertakes limited activities at height and only uses equipment provided by the Charity, i.e. staging. Overseeing staff should check that the stage/staging has been inspected prior to use.

Risk Assessment for the use of staging will be reviewed at least annually, or as required, to ensure that the staging can be stored, moved and used safely.

All equipment provided for work at height must be checked prior to use and any damaged equipment taken out of service immediately. Music Directors, volunteers and members are instructed as to the safe and appropriate use of the staging. A back rail to prevent falls must be used if the staging is at full height. Anti-slip mats must be used with the podium.

The Charity will endeavor to ensure all persons are well and able enough to use the staging. If not, suitable seating will be provided at ground level with clear access and egress for all.

3.6 Manual Handling

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 identify the need to assess the risks involved with manual handling operations and give adequate information and instruction in the hazards involved and safe lifting procedures to be adopted.

The need for manual handling should be considered when carrying out the risk assessment for rehearsals and events. The Charity will endeavor to ensure all persons are well and able enough to help move chairs, tables and staging when setting up for rehearsals and events. Where possible two people should move the heavier items and trolly's should be used if available.

3.7 Housekeeping

Under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Charity should ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe place for rehearsals, performances and meetings. This cannot be achieved without good standards of housekeeping. Specifically, every venue must be kept clean and tidy to avoid the creation of hazards. Floors and traffic route surfaces, are to be kept free from obstructions, cables to be tapped down and wet or slippery surfaces to be identified.

Arrangements for ensuring good housekeeping

The Trustees will be in consultation with relevant personnel to ensure good housekeeping is achieved by the following:

- Inspection of regular venues to be carried out to identify areas where standards require improvements and if necessary contact the venue management.

- Clean, dry storage facilities for any of the Charity's materials/equipment within the regular Poole and Bournemouth venues. The staging and other relevant equipment is kept in an external lock-up storage facility.
- Rubbish will be kept in suitable containers and should not be allowed to overflow.
- Any spillage is immediately cleared up as required.
- Ensure objects do not protrude into walkways and access routes - these must be kept free from obstruction to enable adequate clear access and egress is available to persons with mobility issues.
- Secure and cover electrical cords trailing across the floor as trip prevention.
- Ensure staging is secured and used appropriately at events and podium, when used cannot slip.
- Equipment is always put away immediately after use and the venue is left tidy at the end of the practice session/event.

3.8 Safety Induction for new Trustees, Music Directors and Volunteers

Apart from explaining to the new Trustee Musical Director or volunteer what they will be required to do and to whom they will be directly responsible, the following tasks will be incorporated into the induction:

- The Health & Safety Policy will be made available, via the website
- The location of the First Aid Kit (s) at each venue and identified at venues for events.
- The venue Fire & Evacuation Procedure should be explained, and assembly points shown.
- The new individual should be made aware of relevant Risk Assessments.

All Music Directors will be provided with information on the significant findings of any Risk Assessments relevant to their particular activities, i.e. layout of venue and need for equipment such as staging for events or concerts.

3.9 Accident Reporting

The Charity is committed to preventing accidents to Trustees, Music Directors, volunteers, members and others who may be involved in rehearsals and events.

However, the Charity recognises that failures can occur and will investigate all accidents and ill-health to identify the immediate and underlying causes, in order to prevent reoccurrence.

The aim of accident reporting is to identify where measures can be taken to prevent reoccurrences. Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers are to report all accidents or serious illnesses occurring at rehearsals or events as soon as possible. These incidents will be entered in to the Accident Book (held at St John's Church) and will be investigated.

The HSE executive can be contacted on line at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>

All incidents can be reported online but a telephone service is also provided for reporting fatal/specified incidents only - call the Incident Contact Centre on 0345 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 08:30 AM to 17:00 PM).

3.10 First Aid

The Charity will provide adequate First Aid personnel and equipment, in accordance with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.

The Charity will, where possible ensure that staff are trained in First Aid are available on the premises at all times when practices / events are taking place, in case of an accident or someone feeling unwell.

First Aid Kits will be made available at all venues used for rehearsals and events.

Individuals who believe they might have a need for first aid items or medications must be responsible for their own supplies.

3.11 Emergency Procedures

The Charity will have in place procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. These will be communicated to all Trustees, Music Directors, volunteers and members and will be tested on a regular basis.

The Charity Management will ensure that:

- Adequate means of escape in case of fire exist for all persons at rehearsals and events.
- All means of escape are kept free from obstruction and are available for safe and effective use at all times.
- The means of escape have adequate emergency lighting.
- Adequate means for fighting fire are present and are maintained in efficient working order.
- Appropriate instruction will be given to all persons on the premises on evacuation procedures. In regular venues the evacuation exit points and meeting place will be made clear. When at external events, the process will be made clear dependent on the venue concerned at the start of the rehearsal / event.
- A register is maintained of all those present at a rehearsal or performance.
- That Poole and Bournemouth venues have undertaken a Fire Risk Assessment and that these venues are maintained satisfactorily.

Venue Management responsibilities include ensuring:

- Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked.
- The fire alarm call points are checked
- Emergency lighting has been maintained and tested.
- The fire alarm system (to include smoke detectors) is serviced and maintained.

In the event of a fire, sound the alarm.

Only attack the fire if trained to do so - do not put yourself at risk.

Dial 999 and ask for the Fire Brigade - give the address and ensure it is heard.

Evacuate the building by the nearest exit.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do not re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so.

3.12 Monitoring Health & Safety Performance at Venues

In addition to the reactive monitoring of accidents / ill-health, a proactive monitoring of health and safety in relation to practise/performance venues will be carried out.

The Charity will carry out the following:

- Inspections of the Poole and Bournemouth venues will be undertaken to ensure all areas/rooms used are safe to use.

- External venues will be checked prior to carrying out performances to carry out a Risk Assessment.
- Any areas used such as rooms/kitchens and toilets will be checked for suitable access etc. taking into consideration the needs and requirements of the members including wheel chair access.

The Charity is committed to providing suitable and sufficient welfare facilities to Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers, in accordance with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

The toilets and washing facilities will be checked to ensure they are clean and have access for the disabled. They provide toilet paper, soap, towels or a means for drying hands. Should these facilities be found wanting, the management will raise any issues with the individual venue.

The Charity aims to ensure that regular practice venues will provide facilities such as:

- Cups and drinking water.
- A kettle or urn to make hot drinks.
- Chairs to rest / tables to sit at.

Health and safety issues will be discussed at Trustee and Steering Group meetings. These meetings will be attended by the Trustees, Music Directors and volunteers.

All personnel will be notified of meetings and agenda in good time to enable them to confirm their attendance or to provide feedback.

3.13 Electrical Equipment

The Charity policy is to fully comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers, members and the public at all times. Only competent persons will be permitted to undertake any electrical work on Charity equipment.

Ongoing visual checks of electrical appliances should be carried out by users when used and faults, or hazards reported. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) by a competent person should be carried out regularly and a suitable sticker made available.

Music Directors and guest musicians

All electrical equipment not belonging to the Charity, but is being used as part of our activities, e.g. mobile electric keyboards etc., should be PAT tested regularly and a suitable sticker available on the plug/lead to confirm this has been done.

3.14 Lone Working

Following Risk Assessment, the Charity has decided that, whenever possible, individuals should not be alone in any of its regular practice premises, apart from very short periods, for example when other choir members are about to arrive or leave for rehearsals/performances. A charged mobile phone should be carried in these circumstances and if necessary, doors should be locked from the inside.

3.15 Bullying and Harassment

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity but as a once off is not considered to be bullying.

The charity will not tolerate bullying behaviour and will take any steps necessary to resolve bullying problems within the choir community, Trustees or Steering Group.

Any person who believes that he or she is being bullied should make it known that such behaviour is unacceptable. Where it is difficult for the complainant to approach the perpetrator, he or she will be directed to seek help from the Trustees.

The Trustee will listen patiently, be supportive and discuss the various options open to the person and where requested will assist the complainant in raising the issue with the alleged perpetrator. Any approaches will be non-confrontational and kept confidential.

The complainant may also make a formal complaint in writing to a Trustee. In this case the alleged perpetrator will be notified in writing that an allegation has been made against them.

All bullying complaints will be subject to an initial examination by the Chairperson with a view to determining the appropriate course of action. This may involve resolving the issue informally or formally investigating the complaint with a view to determining the facts and credibility of the allegation.

3.16 Stress and Anxiety

People affected by cancer can experience stress and anxiety. This is an adverse reaction to the diagnosis and treatment. Stress can occur when demands exceed the person's capacity and capability to cope. If stress is intense and goes on for a prolonged time it can lead to poor mental and physical health (e.g. depression, nervous breakdown, heart disease). Stress is not an illness but it can make a person ill. Recognising the signs of stress will help us take steps to stop, lower and manage stress. See Appendix 1 for more details.

The Charity is aware that it is important to manage stressful situations and will offer help and assistance by way of consultation, discussion and agreed goals to aid well-being and promote an active return to good mental health. With their permission members may need referral to their GP or for counselling.

The Charity aims to operate an open culture where it is safe for Music Directors and volunteers to communicate any concerns to the Trustees.

3.17 No Smoking Policy

Smoking is strictly forbidden within all indoor public places, including workplaces by law. For the purposes of the Charity this will include but not be limited to:

- Practice and performance venues.
- Toilets.

If a person is found smoking in a prohibited place, they will be informed that they are committing an offence. The person will be requested to extinguish the smoking material immediately.

3.18 Infectious Diseases including COVID-19

The Charity will ensure that the latest advice from the Government will strictly adhered to. The Charity will regularly communicate with Music Directors / volunteers / members regarding Charity procedures put in place to protect Music Directors and members in this situation. Individuals are encouraged to seek clarification should they have any queries.

During a pandemic all on-site practice sessions and performances will be cancelled until further notice and instead alternative arrangements via 'Zoom' will be made. Meetings and Charity discussions are also carried out this way until Government guidance permits face to face proceedings once more.

Appendix 1

Signs and symptoms of stress and anxiety

Emotional Symptoms	Mental Symptoms	Behavioural Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tearfulness• Feeling that they can't cope• Short-temper• Irritability or anger• More sensitivity• Feeling that they are not achieving• Loss of motivation• Loss of commitment• Depressive feelings• Anxious /worried• Frustration• Feeling drained• Guilt• Feeling neglected• Feel there's no-one to confide in• Loss of sense of humour• Cynicism• Low self esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to plan and concentrate• Indecisive• Muddled thinking• Mind racing or going blank• Confusion• Poor memory• Morbid thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eating when they're not hungry/comfort eating.• Losing their appetite.• Smoking, drinking and recreational drug.• Getting less done• Irrational behaviour /mood swings.• Poor relationships.• Verbally or physically aggressive.• Socially withdrawn.• Inflexible• Difficulty sleeping/changes in sleep patterns• Disregard for personal appearance• Lack of confidence• Poor time management

Other Relevant Health and Safety Policies include:

- Safeguarding Policy.
- Visual Display Health and Safety Information.
- Risk Assessment for Events.
- Risk Assessment for Covid Infections.
- Equality and Diversity Policy.