



The Old Lodge, Uffculme, 50 Queensbridge Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8QY.  
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## **Health & Safety Policy**

### **General Statement of Policy**

- Women & Theatre complies with all health and safety legislation including the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Women & Theatre recognises and accepts its duty under the law to:
  - Prevent injuries in the workplace.
  - Maintain a safe and healthy workplace.
  - Establish and maintain effective systems for managing health, safety and welfare.
  - Ensure that all employees are competent, able to perform their tasks safely and are consulted on issues, which affect their health and safety.
  - Provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment for anyone who could be affected by our activities.
- Women & Theatre rents office space in a Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust-owned building, and therefore complies with the health and safety policy and fire safety procedures, as laid down by BSMHFT.
- Women & Theatre accept responsibility for the health and safety of its employees, freelancers, volunteers and participants yet recognises that they have a responsibility to take care not to harm themselves or others by their acts or omissions.
- This Policy relates to all office-based activity, homeworking and project delivery activity.
- Women & Theatre has a Covid-19 Health & Safety Policy which incorporates the measures W&T have put in place to protect its building users and everyone involved in off-site projects from the risks of the Covid-19. Whilst legal restrictions in relation to social distancing, mask wearing and testing have been removed, W&T will continue to use some measures in particular contexts to minimise risk to participants, staff, freelancers, volunteers and audiences.

### **Responsibility**

- The Board takes ultimate responsibility for the setting, and review of Policy.
- The General Manager is responsible for drafting the Policy, and for recommending it to the Board annually.
- The General Manager is responsible for its implementation in the day to day running of the company.
- The Stage Manager is responsible for implementation whilst rehearsing and on tour. The designated lead artist is responsible for implementation in delivery contexts where a stage manager is not present. Off-site working may involve adherence to host venues' and partner organisations' Health & Safety Policies. W&T's Project Manager will clarify this, in advance of project planning and inform delivery staff.
- All employees and freelancers are responsible for implementing this policy, taking reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others that they affect. This includes carrying out their

own risk assessment and voicing any queries or concerns about health and safety; highlighting any hazards they have discovered and declaring any injury or accident they have suffered.

- Where relevant, staff-specific risk assessments will be carried out to assess and address any need for reasonable adjustments, in line with W&T's Wellbeing policy and Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Women & Theatre have Public Liability and Employers Liability insurance. The Employers Liability certificate is prominently displayed on the back of the main door of the office.

### **Women & Theatre Staff**

- Women & Theatre's Health & Safety Policy is provided to all core staff, freelance workers and volunteers and is available on the W&T website
- A core staff member talks through the policy & relevant risk assessment procedures with all new staff ensuring they are aware of:
  - hazards and risks they may face, if any;
  - measures in place to deal with those hazards and risks, if necessary;
  - how to follow any emergency procedures.
- Poster: "Health and Safety Law: "What You Should Know" is displayed on back of the main door of the office.

### **Premises**

- The General Manager, Designated Lead Artist and Stage Manager share responsibility for ensuring that employees and freelancers can operate in a healthy and hygienic atmosphere.
- All food rubbish is deposited in the flip top bin in the kitchen. Food should not be left lying on tables, dropped on the floor or put in the office bins. Food should not be left in the fridge beyond used by dates. Bins should be regularly emptied, and rubbish deposited in the large bins by the main building.
- Crockery and cutlery should be cleaned and dried after use and nothing left overnight
- In line with 2007 Smoke free legislation, the office is a no smoking area with clearly displayed 'No Smoking Signs'. Any employee or freelance worker in breach of Smoke free legislation will be dealt with under Women & Theatre's Disciplinary Procedure.
- Smoking is permitted outside the entrance to the Uffculme Centre on Queensbridge Road.
- Signposting information is available in the office for staff wishing to stop smoking.

### **First Aid**

- A first aid box, incident book and first aid guidelines are located in a visible and accessible place the office – one the chest of drawers in the main meeting/ dining room.
- The General Manager ensures office & touring supplies are checked every 3 months. On occasions, this is delegated to the Project Manager. In the event of the first aid supplies being used on tour the Stage Manager is responsible for refilling supplies.
- Accidents are written into the book at the time of incident; detailing who was involved, what happened and any action that was taken. Accidents occurring at external venues are recorded in the venue's accident book, and W&T make a note for its records. (Risk assessments being carried out and accident books provided for workers at home)
- Serious Incidents will be reported to the Chair as soon as is practical and action taken to ensure that the incident is not repeated. Serious incidents are also reported to the Health & Safety Executive.
- A trained First Aider is always on site at the main Uffculme Centre building during office hours.

- As part of individual project risk assessments, we identify any First Aid provision within the delivery context, and ensure project staff know what to do in the case of an accident or emergency.

### **Slipping & Tripping**

- All cables, which run by or near thoroughfares or exits, must be taped down.
- Personal items, props & other project materials which could pose trip hazards will be kept away from thoroughfares or exits.

### **Manual Handling**

- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) apply to work which involves lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying.
- All Stage Managers receive prior information about lifting heavy or awkward equipment. They are responsible for passing this information to cast members. The Stage Manager is expected to identify whether there is a risk of injury and if there is, all practicable steps should be taken to eliminate the risk by either avoiding the operation altogether or providing mechanical alternatives.
- Heavy items being moved around a building should be done so using lifts where available, should this not be possible extra care should be taken carrying equipment downstairs, and it must be ensured that lighting is adequate.
- Two people must carry heavy or bulky items or equipment.
- Workers are advised not put themselves at risk of injury and are not expected, unless it is in their job description, or freelance contract, to lift or carry.
- Workers are not asked to lift items which may risk their health or safety.

### **Work at Height**

- Women & Theatre understands that work at height activities pose additional risks to persons carrying out those activities and anyone underneath the working area. With this in mind, work at height will be avoided where possible although we acknowledge that due to our operations this will not always be achievable. Where work at height cannot be avoided, we will implement reasonable measures and safeguards to ensure the safety of employees and anyone who could be affected by working at height.
- Workers will be supervised by venue technicians at all times & comply with host venue's work at height guidance, take care in working at height & inspect equipment prior to use.

### **Noise**

- Women & Theatre understands that hearing loss caused by exposure to noise at work can be a significant work-related occupational illness and is committed to working with partner venues to ensure the responsible management of noise to protect employees, contractors and visitors from the effects of noise induced hearing loss.

### **Equipment**

- Electrical equipment is regularly serviced and annually tested by qualified PAT testers.
- Employees working at computer screens are encouraged to take regular breaks and spend 5-10minutes away from their computer every hour.
- Employees working at computer screens can have an annual eye test paid for.
- If an employee is prescribed glasses to help them work with a computer, W&T will pay the cost of a basic pair of glasses, provided they're needed especially for work, i.e. if an eye test shows the

employee needs special glasses prescribed for the distance the screen is viewed at. If an ordinary prescription is suitable, W&T does not have to pay for glasses.

- Office chairs and desks are ergonomically correct for typing.

### **Risk Assessment**

- Risk Assessment documentation is given to Stage Managers & Lead Artists for guidance when assessing the health & safety of rehearsal and performance and project activity venues. Documentation will include templates to be filled in, listing details such as Risks or Hazards, Level of Risk, Potential Impact, and Controls in place to mitigate risk.
- Risk Assessments are produced by the Stage Manager for site-specific and theatre-based performances working closely with a relevant staff member at the host venue or site. Risk Assessments of other project activity will be produced by the designated Lead Artist or Project Manager. Risk Assessments will be made available to the office and demonstrated to all cast/ team members. All company activity is Risk Assessed for Covid-19 safety.
- Where staff are working from home, appropriate risk assessments should be carried out to ensure their health and safety. (accident book being provided)

### **Fire Safety**

- W&T has produced the appended 'Fire Alarm Procedure' in discussion with Birmingham & Solihull Mental health Foundation Trust, detailing procedures for building users to follow in the event of a fire.
- Evacuation Procedures are displayed in the office; both at the bottom of the stairs, and by the main entrance, next to the intruder alarm key pad.
- There are 3 fire extinguishers in The Old Lodge, located in the kitchen and hallway, which are checked annually. There is also a fire blanket in the kitchen.
- BSMHFT carry out a 2-yearly Fire Risk Assessment of the premises and make recommendations for improvements.
- W&T will ensure good house-keeping standards; avoiding piles of papers being left on desks and other surfaces. We will ensure regular recycling collections of waste paper.
- W&T Staff will ensure fire doors are kept closed, and avoid propping them open, whenever possible.
- The Stage Manager ensures that all venues have clear, unlocked fire exits and that employees (and audience, where necessary) are aware of their location.
- All consumable storage (paper, cardboard, costumes etc) must be tidied away and kept at least 1 metre away from ignition sources such as electric appliances and heating, and waste should be removed from the building regularly into refuse bins which are kept clear of the building.

### **Vehicles**

- The General Manager is responsible for ensuring that all vehicles used for projects are hired from reputable sources and are road worthy, legal, safe and serviced regularly.
- The Project Manager ensures that all van drivers hold a full, current driving licence, are insured and experienced van drivers capable of driving safely. Women & Theatre will provide inexperienced van drivers with driving practice.
- All the seats have seatbelts and must be used.

**This policy was approved by W&T's Board of Directors on 14 September 2022**



## **The Old Lodge Fire Alarm Procedure**

The Old Lodge is a small building on the Uffculme Centre site which is occupied by Women & Theatre, a charitable organisation that delivers diverse drama work in different contexts including within BSMHFT settings.

The Old Lodge is primarily used as an office - hosting administrative work, meetings and occasionally rehearsals involving small numbers.

The Women & Theatre Team all work part-time, and work flexibly and so there is not always someone in the office during traditional office hours. The building is sometimes accessed at evenings and weekends, particularly to load/ unload set & equipment. Most commonly, there is no more than 6 individuals in the office at one time.

The building is located over 2 floors (both of which lead directly to outdoors on ground level, due to the building being on a slope). On the ground floor, there is a main entrance/exit, a reception room, hallway, 2 office rooms, a meeting/dining room with a small kitchen area off it. Downstairs, there are 2 toilets and 2 storage rooms and a fire exit.

No staff are currently trained as fire marshals although all have been briefed on evacuation procedures. The most senior member of staff present at the time of a fire/suspected fire will co-ordinate the evacuation.

### **Fire Protocol**

- Upon discovering the fire, raise the alarm by operating the nearest break-glass point
- Fire extinguishers are in various locations. Only tackle the fire if you have been trained and it is safe to do so
- Close all doors and windows if it is safe to do so
- Evacuate building by nearest exit, and go to Evacuation Point (Uffculme Car Park)
- Dial 999 to call fire brigade
- The Uffculme Centre Fire Response Team Co-ordinator (FRTC) will respond to any activation and offer support to Women & Theatre staff with their local operating procedure as appropriate.
- Most senior person on site to check building is empty and direct fire brigade by standing at the entrance to the site to inform the fire brigade where to go.
- Only re-enter the building if the fire service says it is safe to do so
- Call an engineer to reset the fire alarm system (Day: 0121 301 2500, Out of hours: 0121 301 3000)

**Reviewed by Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust on 25/8/22**