Meeting Room And First Aid Policy

Policy Created: September 2023

Last Reviewed: February 2026

Next Review: February 2027 (or sooner if significant changes in legislation, guidance, or organisational activities occur)

Reviewed by: Laurence Clark

Responsible Officer: CEO

Approved by: CEO

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1. Introduction and Commitment

Pathways Associates CIC is a disabled-led organisation dedicated to enabling people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families to live the lives they choose as equals in their local communities.

The organisation takes the safety and wellbeing of everyone using its meeting rooms and facilities very seriously. This policy sets out the procedures for the safe booking, preparation, use, and management of meeting rooms, including the Waterside office training space, as well as the provision of first aid and measures to reduce the spread of respiratory infections such as COVID-19, flu, and other viruses.

Although specific COVID-19 restrictions ended some time ago, the organisation continues to follow current public health advice from GOV.UK and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on minimising transmission risks in workplaces and community settings. Emphasis is placed on ventilation, good hygiene, and supporting individuals who may be more vulnerable to infection.

The policy aligns with HSE guidance for low-risk office and training environments, fire safety regulations, first aid at work requirements, and the Equality Act 2010, ensuring spaces are accessible and inclusive for disabled people.

It supports the broader commitments in the Health and Safety Policy, Infection Control Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, and Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy. The approach reflects the organisation's values of lived experience leadership, partnership, inclusion and respect, innovation, and integrity, with a strong focus on creating safe, welcoming environments that promote physical and mental wellbeing for all users.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all use of Pathways Associates CIC meeting and training rooms, including the Waterside office space and any hired external venues, whether for in-person, hybrid, or virtual events hosted or facilitated by the organisation. It covers first aid provision and infection prevention measures during these activities. The policy applies to colleagues, associates, volunteers, Experts by Experience, participants, families, visitors, and contractors involved in or attending events.

3. Key Objectives

The organisation aims to provide safe, accessible meeting spaces that minimise risks to physical and mental health. It seeks to ensure prompt and effective first aid response to any incidents, reduce the transmission of respiratory infections through practical and proportionate measures, comply with relevant HSE, fire safety, and public health guidance, support users who may have higher vulnerability with compassion and without stigma, and learn from usage feedback and incidents to continuously improve practice.

4. Core Principles

Safety remains the highest priority through proactive risk checks and emergency preparedness. Accessibility is embedded by providing adjustable lighting and heating, hearing loops, quiet areas, and evacuation aids where needed. Measures are kept proportionate to the small size and low-risk nature of the organisation. Wellbeing is placed at the centre, with attention given to mental health support and trauma-informed responses. Hygiene and ventilation are emphasised to help prevent the spread of respiratory infections. Transparency is maintained through clear communication and feedback opportunities.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The CEO and senior leadership hold overall accountability for compliance and the provision of necessary resources. They appoint qualified First Aiders and Fire Marshals and ensure incidents are reviewed. Training and event leads are responsible for conducting risk assessments, preparing rooms, briefing users, and coordinating responses to incidents. First Aiders and Fire Marshals provide immediate assistance, maintain equipment and kits, lead drills, and report any issues. All users, including colleagues, associates, volunteers, Experts by Experience, and participants, are expected to follow the guidelines, report hazards or incidents promptly, and respect the needs and safety of others.

6. Procedures Booking of meeting rooms is managed centrally through info@pathwaysassociates.co.uk. Users must provide the following details:

- Date and time of the event
- Expected number of participants

- Any accessibility requirements (e.g., ramps, interpreters, quiet spaces)

Before any event the following preparations are made:

- Rooms are cleaned and ventilated by opening windows or doors where possible
- Equipment and exits are checked to ensure they are clear and working
- The first aid kit is fully stocked and accessible
- Accessibility features are confirmed (clear pathways, adjustable furniture, emergency evacuation aids)
- Hand sanitiser stations, tissues, and waste bins are provided
- Good respiratory hygiene is encouraged

In line with current public health advice on reducing the spread of respiratory infections, the following measures apply:

- Users are encouraged to stay at home if they have symptoms such as fever or cough
- Good hand and respiratory hygiene is promoted
- Wearing a face covering is recommended if the individual or others present are at higher risk
- Ventilation is maximised through natural airflow and the use of fans where appropriate
- Overcrowding is avoided
- Hybrid participation options are offered whenever possible
- Additional adjustments (e.g., quiet spaces or personal precautions) are provided for immunocompromised or vulnerable individuals without judgement

If someone develops symptoms during an event:

- They are supported to isolate
- They are advised to follow NHS guidance on testing and treatment
- Surfaces are cleaned thoroughly

Fire safety procedures are as follows:

- In an emergency the alarm is sounded

- Fire Marshals guide everyone to the assembly point in the Waterside car park
- Evacuation plans are inclusive, with chairs and assistance available for those with mobility needs
- Annual drills are conducted

First aid procedures include:

- Kits are located in the main office and training room and checked monthly
- In the event of an incident, 999 is called if the situation is serious
- First Aiders assess and treat as appropriate
- All actions are recorded in the accident book
- Mental health incidents are managed with calm de-escalation, access to a quiet space, and appropriate referral
- Serious incidents are reported under RIDDOR to the HSE where required

After each use:

- Rooms are tidied
- Equipment and lights are turned off
- Doors are locked
- Users are asked to complete a short feedback survey on safety, accessibility, and comfort

7. Training, Awareness, and Support

Annual first aid and fire safety training is provided for all staff and relevant volunteers in an HSE-approved and accessible format. Role-specific training is offered for First Aiders and Fire Marshals. New users receive an induction safety briefing. Awareness is raised through easy-read guides, posters, and co-produced resources. Wellbeing support is available, including debriefs and checks following any incident.

8. Monitoring, Review, and Continuous Improvement

This policy is reviewed annually or following any incident or change in guidance. Monitoring takes place through logs, audits, and user feedback. Learning is co-produced with Experts by Experience wherever possible.

Feedback is welcomed at any time, and annual summaries are included in the CIC report.

9. Conclusion

Pathways Associates CIC is committed to maintaining safe, inclusive meeting spaces and effective first aid provision that protect and empower everyone involved. By prioritising wellbeing, accessibility, ventilation, hygiene, and continuous learning, the organisation creates positive and supportive experiences that align fully with its disabled-led values.

Appendix A: Room Checklist

- The room must be clean and well ventilated
- Equipment and exits must be clear and working
- The first aid kit must be fully stocked and accessible
- All accessibility needs must be met
- Hand sanitiser and tissues must be available