

## 4.13 Safe Practice in Homes

### Scope of chapter

Whilst the Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for Health and Safety, under the authority of the Health and Safety Policy; the provision and management of a healthy and safe working environment at each home or office; is delegated to the Manager responsible for that location; who must prioritise the assessments of any potential hazard/s, introduce practicable and acceptable interventions to reduce the risks; and bring these to the attention of everyone that could be at risk.

The Manager is also responsible for health and safety during any activities organised by the home including those in the community.

This Chapter lists some of the key factors that staff must take into account in terms of safe practice in the Home. However, it is not exhaustive. Staff must always act in a way, which promotes and protects children's and their own safety, ensuring that children are not placed at risk of injury or harm.

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### 1. Activities

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In allowing young people to participate in leisure activities, the company has a responsibility to ensure that all such activities are safe and only allowed to commence once a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been produced.

The recommendations (or control measures) must be brought to the attention of anyone participating; young people, staff and the person/s in charge of supervising the activity.

In preparing the risk assessment, the assessor must consider: -

- The cognitive/mental age of the individual/s;
- Knowledge, experience and competency of the staff who may supervise or take part in the activity;
- Any medication being taken by participants and the possible effects this may have if the activity is carried out;
- The inherent dangers associated with the activity;
- If any specific training is required and if so, who will provide it;
- The level of personal protective equipment needed;
- The level of supervision needed to ensure the safety of the service user and staff;
- The emergency action plan be adopted if an accident occurs.

If on completion of the assessment, a significant risk exists then the activity must be suspended until additional controls can be implemented.

In any event written consent will be required in relation to young people for any activity deemed to have inherent risks for example; go-karting, parachuting, abseiling, climbing, horse riding, motorcycling etc.

Consideration must also be given to staff; ability and willingness to participate, health and fitness etc.

## **2. Toys and Games**

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Toys and games should always be put away safely after use. They should be checked for damage and broken items disposed of after appropriate explanation to children.

## **3. Care of Cleaning Fluids**

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These must be stored in a locked cupboard and meet health and hygiene regulations. Only non-flammable and low-hazard products may be used.

See **COSSH Procedures**.

## **4. Road Safety**

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### **Authorised Drivers**

Driving is possible one of the most hazardous tasks that staff may be asked to undertake as part of their duties, the consequences ranging from prosecution, injury, disability through to fatality.

Authorised drivers, have been placed in a position of trust; with responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others; including young people in our care. In the majority of cases you may be the only person in a position to decide if it is safe to proceed.

In such circumstances the company fully supports any driver (or member of staff) to take action that may lessen the likelihood of injury or harm to any party.

In an effort to reduce any potential harm further the company has also adopted a range of policy measures and control measures to ensure the general health and competency of employees asked to drive as part of their job.

### **Young people**

Staff should ensure that children are provided with adequate guidance and have acquired appropriate skills relating to personal and road safety.

This will include providing children with information and support as necessary.

Children should wear appropriate safety clothing when away from the home.

Children wishing to own or use a pedal cycle must at all times be supervised by staff or, if riding alone, must undertake a Cycling Proficiency Test.

See **Activities and Transporting Children Procedure**.

## **5. Unaccompanied Children**

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Children should not be allowed out unaccompanied or unsupervised unless agreed by the manager of the home or it is stated in their **Placement Plan** that they may do so.

## **6. Knives, Scissors etc.**

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Knives and other sharp tools or equipment required for the running of the home should always be used and stored securely, out of reach of children, when not in use.

Outside of this day to day use, young people and staff may not keep/use knives (or any other item that could be considered as an edged weapon; or tool; regardless of size or intended purpose) without the explicit agreement of the manager of the home.

In that event Risk assessments should be completed and must highlight the terms of any agreed use.

Children may only use such tools/equipment as part of a plan or when undertaking an activity under the supervision of staff; Items should be secured by staff on completion of the activity.

## **7. Tools**

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Garden and other tools or equipment may only be used by competent and/or trained staff and must be stored securely, out of reach of children, when not in use.

Children will only be permitted to use power tools whilst at school under the strict supervision of their teacher.

Children who are permitted to use other tools must be supervised at all times by a person who has sufficient competency to adequately advise and supervise others. Details should be recorded in a specific risk assessment in line with current Health and Safety legislation relating to young people.

You must also let their parents (or carers, or placing authority) know the key findings of the risk assessment and the control measures you have taken.

## 8. Candles

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Candles (other than those used decoratively on cakes) may not be kept on the premises.

## 9. Festive Decorations

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All festive decorations (including Christmas decorations) must be non-flammable and manufactured to an acceptable British Standard. Christmas trees must also be of an artificial, non-flammable type, manufactured to an acceptable British Standard.

Christmas tree lights must be PAT tested annually or immediately before being used.

Don't leave fairy lights on when you go out or when you go to sleep.

- Don't let the bulbs touch anything that can burn easily, like paper;
- Don't overload sockets.

## 10. Wardrobe Hangers

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Wire, wooden and/or rigid plastic wardrobe hangers are not permitted in the home; they must be of a flexible plastic design.

## 11. Aerosol Sprays

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Children may not keep aerosol sprays unless agreed by the manager of the home.

See **Drugs and Substance Misuse**.

## 12. Fireworks

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Fireworks can often play a big part in celebrations - like Bonfire Night, Bastille Day, Diwali, New Year and Chinese New Year.

However, fireworks are explosives, burn at high temperatures and are unpredictable.

As a result Bryn Melyn promotes the attendance of professionally run displays as the safest way of celebrating such events and believe this significantly reduces the risk of injury to both staff and young people.

*'just over 40 per cent of all accidents involving fireworks happened at a family or private party. A further 30 per cent of accidents were the result of casual incidents in the street or other public place. Just over 10 per cent of accidents happened at large, public displays'. (Child Accident Prevention Trust - 2009)*

The company wants children to enjoy fireworks..... but they need to know that they can be dangerous if they are not used properly.

### **13. Propane Gas Fires and Oil Heaters**

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Heating involving naked flames i.e. Oil and paraffin heaters are not allowed to be used at any location.

**End**