



NORTH STAR

Creating homes, building futures

**Health and Safety
Policy and Procedures
2023**

NORTH STAR HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1 – HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT.....	4
PART 2 – ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
1. The Board.....	6
2. Chief Executive.....	6
3. Management Teams.....	6
4. The Senior Management Team:.....	7
5. Named Health and Safety Lead.....	7
6. Other Heads of Service, Managers and Team Leaders.....	8
7. Head of Property and Compliance.....	9
8. Health and Safety Steering Group.....	9
9. Health and Safety Assistance.....	10
10, Whistleblowing.....	10
PART 3 – ARRANGEMENTS.....	11
1. Accidents and Incidents.....	11
2. Airborne viruses.....	12
3. Alcohol and Drugs.....	12
4. Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's).....	13
5. Contractors.....	13
6. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).....	14
7. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 ("CDM 2015").....	15
8. Co-operation and Co-ordination.....	16
9. Display Screen Equipment (DSE).....	17
10. Driving at Work.....	17
11. Electrical Safety.....	18
12. Employee Well-being.....	19
13. Fire Safety.....	19
14. First Aid.....	20

15.	Gas Safety.....	21
16.	Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment.....	21
17.	Health and Safety Training	23
18.	Home working.....	23
19.	Lifts and Lifting Equipment.....	24
20.	Lone Working and Personal Safety.....	24
21.	New and Expectant Mothers	24
22.	Manual Handling.....	25
23.	Office Safety.....	25
24.	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).....	25
25.	Planning, Monitoring, Review and Revision.....	26
26.	Slips, Trips and Falls.....	26
27.	Snow Clearing and Gritting.....	26
28.	Water Safety.....	26
29.	Work at Height.....	27
30.	Work Equipment.....	28
31.	Young Persons Employment.....	28
32.	Control of Visitors	29
33.	Occupational Health arrangements	29
Appendix A.....		30
	Responsible Officers.....	30

PART 1 – HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of North Star Housing Association.

North Star recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer for providing a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, and for avoiding risks to the health and safety of others who may be affected by its activities.

We will meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the tenants in their homes as specified in the Regulator of Social Housing Home Standard and adhere to current legislation.

We will take all reasonable steps within our power and provide all necessary resources, i.e. finance, staffing, literature, and communication to meet this responsibility.

Communication between all levels of employees within the organisation is paramount and we will therefore ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place to permit the flow of information both to and from employees.

The Health and Safety Steering Group will consult with employees on matters affecting their health and safety and encourage suggestions for improvement.

We will ensure that all our employees are competent to carry out their work, and will provide them with adequate information, instruction, and training to enable them to work in a way that does not put themselves or others at risk.

We will provide appropriate information and/or instruction and/or supervision for employees and others visiting or working at North Star premises.

We will provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions and suitable work equipment.

We will strive to reduce accidents and ill health associated with work, and to achieve continuous improvement in the related safety, health and welfare management arrangements and performance.

Where we employ contractors to carry out work for us, we will ensure that they are competent, and that they have appropriate health and safety policies and arrangements.

We all have a legal duty to co-operate in health and safety related matters, not to endanger others or ourselves and not to misuse anything provided to protect health and safety. This policy will be communicated to all North Star employees; employees are required to co-operate and comply with the arrangements for securing their health, safety and welfare at work set out in this policy, and in other associated policies and procedures. In particular, employees are required to follow any health and safety instruction, advice or guidance issued by North Star, and to raise any concerns about health and safety with Line Managers or health and safety representatives.



North Star, through its Health and Safety Steering Group, will monitor the implementation of this policy, ensuring that health and safety procedures are effectively applied and regularly reviewed and revised. The policy and associated documents will be reviewed at least every two years; any changes will subsequently be made known to employees.



Signed: _____

Chief Executive

PART 2 – ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Board

The Board is responsible for ensuring:

- Adequate management arrangements are in place to ensure that all employees are able to undertake their duties and responsibilities, taking full account of the health and safety requirements of the organisation.
- Health and safety management arrangements are adequate and function as intended.

The Board has appointed the Chief Executive as having overall responsibility for health and safety within the organisation.

2. Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring:

- Appropriate resources are allocated to health and safety.
- As a minimum, North Star's activities comply with current health and safety legislation.
- Health and safety is given equal priority with other organisational policy objectives.

3. Management Teams

All Senior Management Team (SMT) and Management Team (MT) members are responsible for ensuring that, within their area of operation:

- Employees have a safe place of work.
- Employees have comprehensible and relevant information on the risks they face and the preventative and protective measures that control those risks.
- Employees have received appropriate health and safety training relevant to their role and understand their health and safety responsibilities.
- Health and safety policies and procedures are properly implemented, and employees are involved in the implementation process.
- Health and safety risks are identified through risk assessments, and risk assessments are reviewed annually and updated where necessary or whenever work activities change.
- There are effective arrangements in place for planning, organising, controlling, monitoring and reviewing preventative and protective measures through the annual review of all role based risk assessments.



- Health and safety concerns are dealt with according to the procedures laid down in the health and safety management arrangements.

4. The Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Customers, Executive Director of Assets and Growth, Executive Director of Finance and Business Support and Director of People Services

In addition to their individual responsibilities in relation to their areas of operation, the members of the Senior Management Team are collectively responsible for ensuring, through the co-ordination of health and safety arrangements, the effective operation of the organisation's health and safety management system. This responsibility includes:

- Establishing strategies to implement policy and integrating these into the general activities of North Star.
- Assigning responsibilities for planning, measuring, reviewing and auditing health and safety policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that health and safety objectives are an integral part of the business plan.

5. Named Health and Safety Lead

The Social housing Regulations Act 2023 gained Royal Assent in July 2023 and requires Housing Associations / Registered Providers to designate a lead for Health and Safety within the organisation. North Star's nominated health and Safety lead is Emma Speight Executive Director of Assets and Growth. The designated lead is responsible for:

- Ensuring the appropriate Policies are in place.
- Monitor compliance with Health and Safety requirements.
- Assess the risk of failure to comply.
- Notify the responsible body of any risk material risk or failures.
- Provide advice on how to comply with requirements.

As required information on the named lead must be published so that tenants know who to contact. This information is available to tenants and in on communication with tenants regarding health and safety issues.

The Act clarifies that the health and safety lead is not liable for breaches and that legal responsibility for ensuring compliance with health and safety requirements remains with the housing association or Registered provider

6. Other Heads of Service, Managers and Team Leaders

Are responsible for ensuring:

- New staff receive a suitable health and safety induction from their Line Manager prior to commencing work and further corporate health and safety training within their probationary period.
- Staff undertake the necessary health and safety training for their role.
- Staff understand the specific health and safety responsibilities of their role and are aware of their general responsibility to work safely and report problems.
- That activities under North Star's control are in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.
- Health and safety is managed on a day to day basis within their operational remit.
- Any issues they are unable to address are reported to their line manager.
- Risk assessments are undertaken and kept up to date for all identified hazards.
- Safe working procedures are adhered to and employees for whom they have responsibility are working in a safe manner.
- Work equipment provided to enable employees to carry out their work is suitable for the task and regularly maintained.
- Employees are provided with, and wear, appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Accidents and incidents are recorded, the causes are investigated and any necessary remedial action is taken.
- Accidents and near misses are reported via the [accident and near miss reporting form](#)
- They notify their Line Manager of any accidents and near misses.
- They notify their Line Manager and the Executive Director of Finance and Business Support of any personal injury claims received.
- Any enforcement officer reports relating to health and safety, food safety or fire safety are copied to their line manager and the Head of Assets and Property Services.

In addition to the above:

- Managers in Directly Managed supported housing and sheltered schemes, are responsible for ensuring that customer needs and requirements are assessed and appropriate action relating to the safety, health or welfare of the customer or of North Star employees involved in their support is implemented.
- Managers responsible for North Star premises must ensure that appropriate safety checks are carried out in accordance with relevant policies and procedures, and that the premises are maintained in a safe condition.



- Managers of services that employ contractors must ensure that all contractors undertaking work on behalf of the organisation have adequate health and safety policies and follow safe systems of work.

All STAFF have a duty in the operation of the Policy, and these are summarised as follows:

- To read and understand North Star's Health and Safety Policy.
- To carry out any specific health and safety responsibilities relating to their role, as set out in the organisation's policies and procedures.
- To take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other employees, and people who may be affected by the work they do.
- To co-operate with North Star to enable compliance with any duty imposed upon it by law.
- To attend health and safety training that is arranged for them.
- To make proper and effective use of anything which has been provided to them for their health and safety or welfare.
- To report all health and safety concerns to their Line Manager.
- To take positive action to prevent incidents and accidents and to improve business health and safety performance.

7. Head of Property and Compliance

The Head of Property and Compliance is responsible for:

- Keeping senior management informed of changes in health and safety legislation and its implications for the organisation's activities.
- Ensuring that health and safety policies and procedures are kept up to date and conform to the prevailing legislation.
- Preparing a quarterly performance report for the Board on the management of health and safety, identifying any issues and providing actions for resolution.

8. Health and Safety Steering Group

The Steering Group meets on a six weekly basis and includes representation from both SMT and MT. In addition independent specialist Health and Safety advice is given by our third party consultants, Pennington Choices. Ltd

In adherence with North Star's Health and Safety approach, the Group's purpose is to:

- Oversee health and safety activity across the organisation.
- Identify, monitor and review health and safety risk via the Action Plans, performance reports and near miss reporting.
- Raise awareness of any health and safety issues from internal and external scanning.

- Review resource requirements and make recommendations for additional work/resource where necessary (in accordance the Financial Regulations).

9. Health and Safety Assistance

It is essential that advice on health and safety matters can be obtained quickly and easily.

As required under Regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the organisation has appointed competent assistance from:

Brian Claydon, CMIOSH
Tel: 07736217891

Pennington Choices
Tel: 0800 8830334

The above health and Safety assistance is responsible for providing a source of expert advice on health and safety matters and to act as the “competent person”.

Appendix A shows which officer is responsible for individual health and safety areas.

10. Whistleblowing

North Star encourages staff, Board members and all stakeholders to raise concerns whenever they arise and have a Whistleblowing policy that supports the commitment to the highest standards of quality, probity, openness, and accountability. North Star encourages employees, Board, and stakeholders to express concerns about suspected wrongdoing or mal practice and issues relating to health and Safety. How to do this and how North Star will respond is set out in the policy.



PART 3 – ARRANGEMENTS

1. Accidents and Incidents

All staff are required to report accidents and incidents within two working days of an accident or incident occurring. Accident details must be reported via [accident and near miss reporting form](#). Employees involved in, or witnessing an accident or incident are also required to inform their Line Manager. Managers are responsible for carrying out investigations of accidents involving their direct reports, or occurring in a service or premises for which they are responsible within ten working days of the accident being logged, with assistance where necessary from the external Health and Safety Advisor. Where remedial actions are identified these are monitored by the Property Compliance Co-Ordinator to check that actions are completed within the agreed timescales.

Accident figures are reported to each meeting of the Health and Safety Steering Group, and to the Board quarterly.

Definitions

An accident is often defined as any unplanned event that resulted in injury or ill health of people, or damage or loss to property, plant, materials or the environment.

An incident is any unplanned event that could have resulted in injury or ill health of people, or damage or loss to property, plant, materials or the environment but did not.

A near miss is an event not causing harm, but has the potential to cause injury or ill health.

RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (2013)

Reports to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR: In certain circumstances, accidents and incidents arising out of or in connection with work, including accidents involving customers, tenants and members of the public, may be legally reportable to the Health and Safety Executive.

Should you be made aware of an accident which you feel is RIDDOR reportable you must carry out the following:

- Complete the near miss/accident reporting form immediately.

To ensure that the HSE is notified within the required timescale, the Head of Property and Compliance should be contacted by telephone immediately if any of the following occurs:

- A person dies.
- An accident resulting in a member of the public or someone else who is not a North Star employee (tenant, customer, contractor or member of the public) going to hospital.

- An accident resulting in an employee being off work for more than seven consecutive days (once they have been off for seven consecutive days, or you know they will be off for more than seven consecutive days).
- A fire or explosion resulting in a premises being out of use and/or evacuated for 24 hours or longer.
- An incident involving damage to asbestos containing materials.
- Collapse of scaffolding or lifting equipment/machinery.
- Collapse of a building or structure.
- Serious incident involving a gas appliance.

If the Head of Property and Compliance is not available, contact the Executive Director of Assets and Growth or the External Health and Safety Advisor.

The responsible person must notify the enforcing authority without delay. This is most easily done by reporting online at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>. Alternatively, for fatal accidents or accidents resulting in specified injuries to workers **only**, you can phone the Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 9923.

NB: A RIDDOR report must be received within 10 days of the incident.

For accidents resulting in the over-seven-day incapacitation of a worker, you must contact the Head of Assets and Property Services who will notify the enforcing authority within 15 days of the incident, using the appropriate online form.

2. Airborne viruses

Following the national pandemic in 2020/21 North Star developed robust arrangements for the control of airborne diseases.

Where Government advice is provided, North Star will ensure that all guidance is followed. The Health and Safety Steering Group will review all guidance and provide advice to Senior Management Team. Senior Management Team will co-ordinate all communicate with employees.

All role based risk assessments and office risk assessments identify controls to reduce the risk of transmission or infect from airborne viruses. All risk assessments are reviewed on an annual basis and will be updated as a when there are changes in Government guidance.

3. Alcohol and Drugs

It is a responsibility of all employees to ensure that whilst on duty they are fit for work, and not under the influence of alcohol, drugs or solvents. It is the joint responsibility of all employees to ensure that their colleagues are fit and safe to work. Should an employee notice any other member of staff under the influence of such substances it must be brought to the attention of their Line Manager.

Anyone considered to be under the influence of the above, will be suspended from work, pending an enquiry and possible disciplinary action. The consumption of alcohol and/or non-medically prescribed drugs, non-medical inhalants on North Star sites is not permitted and will be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's)

North Star has a duty to manage any properties that may contain asbestos under the [Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012](#). North Star stock, and buildings that we rent on a fully repairing lease, may contain asbestos containing materials (ACM's), and some North Star employees carry out work in buildings owned or managed by third parties which may contain asbestos.

We arrange asbestos management surveys of all our non-domestic buildings, including the common parts of blocks of flats, constructed before 2000. According to the findings of the survey, wherever possible we will manage ACM's by leaving them in situ, informing staff and contractors of their locations and monitoring their condition. Where the only safe option is removal, we will arrange for ACM's to be removed by a licensed contractor. Information on ACM's remaining in situ is made available to contractors and employees, and the condition of ACM's is monitored.

Assessments of domestic premises are carried out prior to invasive work to identify where sampling and analysis will be needed to identify the presence of ACM's. The results are provided to contractors who will be working on the property. North Star employees do not carry out work on ACM's; where ACM's are suspected in the part of a building where work is to be carried out, sampling and analysis of suspect materials is arranged, and where this indicates that the work would disturb ACM's a suitable contractor will be engaged to carry out the work.

A separate [Asbestos Policy](#) sets out the responsibilities and arrangements in detail.

5. Contractors

North Star employs contractors to assist in maintaining its buildings and equipment. All contractors that North Star uses undergo relevant checks which include as a minimum the requirement to submit their Health and Safety Policy and Public Liability Insurance and demonstrate their competency to carry out the work safely. The extent of the health and safety checks carried out as part of the procurement process depends on the type and extent of work the contractor will be undertaking.

Contractors may also be required to produce site specific risk assessments and method statements as required by North Star. Under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 "CDM 2015" they will also be required to produce a Construction Phase Health and Safety Plan for any construction related activities.

Construction is defined in CDM 2015 as the construction, alteration, conversion, fitting out, commissioning, renovation, repair, upkeep, redecoration, or other maintenance (including cleaning which involves the use of water or an abrasive at high pressure or the use of corrosive or toxic substances), de-commissioning, demolition or dismantling of a structure.

For further information on CDM 2015 please see Section 6 Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

Contractor performance is monitored through key performance indicators, site visits, investigation of accidents and near misses, and feedback from staff and customer satisfaction.










6. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

The [COSHH regulations](#) requires you to adequately control exposure to materials in the work place that cause ill health. In North Star hazardous substances are used, or may arise, in a wide range of workplaces and work activities:

- In offices hazardous substances include cleaning products and printer inks and toners.
- In all housing with communal areas, hazardous substances include cleaning products and in some cases bodily substances.

Hazardous Substances

A substance can be identified as hazardous by checking the Safety Data Sheet provided by the supplier, or by identifying the hazard warning symbol on the substance container.

What do the COSHH symbols mean?		
 Dangerous to the environment	 Toxic	 Gas under pressure
 Corrosive	 Explosive	 Flammable
 Caution – used for less serious health hazards like skin irritation	 Oxidising	 Longer term health hazards such as carcinogenicity

Wherever possible, non-hazard alternatives are used. Where this is not possible, managers are required to keep an up to date register of substances

hazardous to health. Material Safety Data Sheets are held and COSHH assessments undertaken to identify risks to employees and others and suitable control measures. Information gathered from these assessments is supplied to employees who use or are exposed to the substance, or who are responsible for ensuring that other people such as tenants are not at risk.

Storage of Hazardous Substances

The risks of storing and handling hazardous substances must be assessed, for instance, consider the effects of a leak to the air, water and surrounding land.

The following steps to control the risks of hazardous substances will include:

- Storing chemicals according to the manufacturer's instructions on the safety data sheet.
- Keeping the minimum quantity of hazardous substances necessary.
- Storing incompatible substances separately.
- Preventing release or leaks.
- Training employees to store and handle hazardous substances properly.
- Labelling storage containers properly.
- Storing flammable substances in suitable containers away from sources of ignition, such as boilers and heaters.
- Using a secondary containment system such as a drip tray or bund (a storage area designed to prevent liquids escaping).

Personal protective equipment is provided to employees where this is identified as an appropriate control measure either on its own or in conjunction with other controls.

The North Star [Blood-borne Viruses in the Workplace Policy](#) sets out the arrangements for controlling the risk of exposure to blood-borne viruses.

7. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 ("CDM 2015")

[The Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015](#) ("CDM 2015") came into force on 6th April 2015, replacing CDM 2007. CDM 2015 applies to nearly every construction, engineering or development project, including small and domestic projects.

CDM 2015 places much more health and safety responsibility on "the Client" than was the case under the old CDM regime. The Client is defined as "organisations or individuals for whom a construction project is carried out". This broad definition means that housing associations will usually be the Client for the purposes of CDM 2015.

Client's Duties

The Client's duties include the following:

- Notifying the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) where construction work is scheduled to last longer than 30 working days and have more than 20 workers on site at any point and/or where construction work is scheduled to exceed 500 person days.
- Making suitable arrangements for managing a project without risking the health and safety of any person affected by the project.
- Ensuring that other duty holders are appointed as appropriate, including the Principal Designer and Contractor.
- Ensuring the roles, functions and responsibilities of the project team are clear.
- Ensuring that the sole contractor or Principal Contractor prepares a construction phase plan before construction works begin.
- Ensuring that the Principal Designer prepares a health and safety file.
- Ensuring sufficient time and resources are allocated.
- Ensuring relevant information is prepared and provided to other duty holders.
- Ensuring that the people and organisations they appoint have the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and (if an organisation) the organisational capability to manage health and safety risks.
- Ensuring effective mechanisms are in place for members of the project team to communicate and co-operate with each other and co-ordinate their activities.
- Ensuring that the Principal Designer and the Principal Contractor carry out their duties.

Under the new regulations there will no longer be an official role of CDM co-ordinator. Instead, North Star will appoint a Principal Designer and Principal Contractor who must:

- Assemble a competent professional team and ensure that the roles of team members are clear.
- Ensure sufficient time and resources are allocated at appropriate stages of the project to adequately and appropriately deal with health and safety issues.
- Ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place for project team communication and that they work.
- Provide suitable welfare facilities for the duration of the construction work.

When North Star delegates these responsibilities to a professional team or contractor, it will ensure they have the skills, training, expertise and capacity to carry these out.

8. Co-operation and Co-ordination



Where we work in partnership with other organisations, or where other organisations work on our premises, we have arrangements in place to co-operate with them by sharing relevant health and safety information. We will co-ordinate our activities in such a way that the health, safety and well-being of our employees, the employees of other organisations, volunteers, customers and others who may be affected by our activities is not put at risk.

In supported housing services that are partly or fully managed by a third party support provider or managing agent, the respective responsibilities of North Star and the third party are clearly documented in Service Level Agreements and Management Agreements. The Supported Housing Services Manager and the relevant Team Manager are responsible for ensuring that responsibilities are clearly understood and are carried out. Where accidents, near misses and incidents occur, the relevant Team Manager will involve other relevant parties in their investigation, and where the findings suggest that lack of clarity or understanding regarding respective responsibilities was the cause we will take steps to address this.

9. Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

[The Health and Safety \(Display Screen Equipment\) Regulations 1992](#) apply to workers who use DSE daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more. Employees in North Star's offices, including offices within supported and sheltered housing properties, routinely use computers with display screens to assist them in carrying out their work. All computer users are required to carry out an annual self-assessment to enable them to highlight any problems with their use of computers, or with the furniture or equipment provided. They have access to a video which shows them how to arrange their workstation to minimise the risk of musculoskeletal problems from using computer equipment. Completed self-assessment forms are generated through the Microsoft learning management system POLARIS, . If an employee has identified problems with their workstation or with their use of computers, People Services will send a direct email to the employee and their Line manager to identify ways of resolving the problem. Any new equipment required will be ordered by Data and Digital.

Computer users are required to organise their work in such a way as to avoid long periods of use by taking regular breaks. Problems such as back, neck or upper limb pain or stiffness, or other health problems that may be attributable to computer use must be reported to the employee's Line Manager, who is responsible for investigating the problem with assistance from the People Services Assistant where necessary.

Computer users are entitled to an eye test which will be paid for by North Star, as will the cost of spectacles required specifically for computer use.

Reference to expected arrangement for Homeworking is set out in section 18.

10. Driving at Work



Many job roles in North Star involve driving at work using either the employee's own vehicle or a leased vehicle provided by the organisation for their use. On an annual basis North Star will ask all staff who receive essential or casual car user payment to provide evidence that they have car insurance which covers business use, a valid drivers license, and in-date tax and MOT certification for the car used as part of organisation business. This is monitored and validated by the finance team as part of the car user payment process.

All staff are responsible for checking their eligibility to drive and that where they use their own vehicle, the MOT and business insurance cover are satisfactory. This covers all staff that drive at work, including essential users and casual users.

Mobile Phones and Driving

Whether a driver has been provided with a mobile phone for the purposes of work, or they have their own personal mobile phone, they will be expected to stop at a safe place away from the main carriageway to make or take a phone call and to comply with current legislation at all times.

It is strictly prohibited to send a text message whilst driving.

The use of a hand-held mobile phone is recognised as a driving offence, effective from 1st December 2003. The definition contained in the Department for Transport's decision letter in response to consultation on the proposed legislation is:

"drivers speaking or listening to a phone call, using a device interactively for accessing any sort of data, which would include the internet, sending or receiving text messages or other images [is an offence] if it is held in the driver's hand during at least part of the period of its operation".

Further details are contained in the [North Star Driving Policy](#).

11. Electrical Safety

[The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#) impose health and safety requirements with the respect to electricity at work. Electrical installations in North Star properties are inspected and tested at five year intervals.

All portable electrical appliances owned by North Star undergo a Portable Appliance Test at the frequency specified within the HSE Guidance document HSG107 (3rd Edition) "Maintaining Portable Electrical Equipment". Electrical appliances are also subject to user checks.

Responsibility for arranging these inspections and tests and ensuring that any recommendations are implemented rests with the Compliance Team.

Repairs to electrical equipment and the electrical installation are carried out by suitably qualified contractors.

Health and safety checks and inspections include basic checks to ensure that electrical equipment, cables, switches and sockets are free from obvious damage, and that sockets are not overloaded.

12. Employee Well-being

North Star is committed not only to employees' health and safety at work, but also to their wellbeing. Employees are encouraged to discuss problems relating to workload or other work-related issues with their Line Manager. Where they do not feel able to speak to their Line Manager, employees should contact the People Services department.

Employees have access to a counselling service provided by Oasis. Employees may contact Oasis direct, and the contact details are available on the intranet.

Employees also have access to a physio service. You can access a form on the intranet and via People Services.

Stronger Together organises regular sessions on stress reduction, including Indian head massage, yoga, and a stress-busting quiz, etc.

A wellbeing group with representation from across the business meet once a quarter and contribute to emerging wellbeing interventions.

13. Fire Safety

North Star has a responsibility to comply with requirements in [The Fire Safety Act 2021](#). The Fire Safety Bill commenced in May 2022 confirming that landlords have a responsibility for the prevention and management of fire spread for multi occupied residential buildings including:

- a) The building's structure and external walls (including windows, balconies, cladding insulation, and fixings) and any common parts.
- b) All doors between domestic premises and common parts such as flat entrance doors.

The Act sets out the need for a new type of fire risk assessment (FRA) which assess the external structure and walls. All buildings will need a regular assessment of both communal and flat entrance doors. North Star holds a register of all fire doors and intends to inspect them annually.

Fire risk assessments are carried out in North Star offices, general needs communal areas, sheltered housing and supported housing to ensure adequate fire prevention measures are in place. Any remedial work identified is addressed and monitored accordingly.

Systematic evacuation based on the assessments are in place at each site and regular fire drills help to keep staff aware of what they should do in the event of a fire. Regular testing and servicing is in place for fire detection and warning equipment, emergency lighting and fire-fighting equipment.

In sheltered and supported housing, staff identify tenants who require personal emergency evacuation plans and work with those tenants to produce a suitable plan and ensure they understand it. In agency managed supported housing, information on the findings of the fire risk assessment is made available to the agency so that they can determine the necessary evacuation arrangements for the tenants they support.

Smoke and carbon Monoxide Alarms (Amendment) 2022

New regulations came into force in October 2022 with a requirement to:

- Ensure at least one smoke alarm is equipped on each storey of tenants homes where there is a room used as living accommodation.
- Ensure a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room used as living accommodation which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers).
- Ensure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are repaired or replaced once informed and found that they are faulty.

North Star adheres to the requirement, with the detailed responsibilities and arrangements found in the [Fire Safety Policy](#).

14. First Aid

[The Health and Safety \(First Aid\) Regulations 1981](#) require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

First aid arrangements are in place in all North Star workplace with nominated and trained first aiders in place at all offices.

First aid kits are provided in all offices, sheltered housing and directly managed supported housing. First aiders are responsible for re-stocking first aid kits in offices.

A separate [First Aid Policy](#) sets out the responsibilities and arrangements in detail.

15. Gas Safety

[The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) requires employers to provide and maintain a working environment that is so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health, Gas Safety procedures are in place to ensure that a safe and healthy environment is provided for all employees, service users and tenants of the North Star's properties. Even where management of a property is contracted out to another organisation, North Star retains the responsibility for gas servicing and maintenance.

The Gas Safety Policy and procedure provide a framework for all departments and services that have duties to ensure specific management systems relating to gas safety. This area of operation is highly regulated with both Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 [The Gas Safety \(Installation and Use\) regulations 1998](#), Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 [Gas Safety \(Management\) Regulations 1996](#) and amended in 1998, together with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other regulations made under this act.

All gas systems and equipment will be properly specified, designed by competent gas engineers, and installed by Gas Safe registered organisations.

All gas appliances will be serviced and inspected for safety at least every 12 months by a Gas Safe registered installer and the tenant provided with a Landlords' Gas Safety Certificate. The details are set out in the Fuel Policy.

16. Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

A general assessment of the risks associated with the activities of the organisation, as required under the [Management of Health and Safety at Work 1999](#), has been carried out and used to identify areas where risk management is required. These are the areas contained in these health and safety arrangements. Where the requirement for further assessment has been identified i.e. COSHH, display screens, manual handling, personal protective equipment, etc. these will be carried out by Managers and Team Leaders, with the assistance where necessary of the external Health and Safety Advisor.

The table below sets out the types of risk assessment carried out in North Star, the people responsible for carrying them out, and the teams or departments that they are relevant to. Although the person responsible for carrying out the risk assessment is usually the Line Manager of those exposed to a particular hazard in connection with their work, it is important that those employees themselves are also involved in the risk assessment process to ensure that it is as complete as possible, and that the control measures identified are practical. Involvement of employees also helps to ensure that they understand the risks and the importance of the control measures.

The teams and departments referred to in the table are those which the risk assessment is most likely to apply to. However, there may be other teams and departments to which the risk assessment is relevant, and there may be other hazards identified which are not covered by the risk assessment types listed in the table. The table should be used as an indicator of the risk assessments required rather than a definitive list.

Risk Assessment Type	Person Responsible	Teams/Departments that this is relevant to
COSHH	Managers of teams and individuals that use, or may be exposed to,	Supported Housing Sheltered Housing General Needs Housing

	hazardous substances	
Display Screen Equipment	Computer users, with assistance from external H&S Advisor where necessary	All
Fire	External contractor and Compliance Team Manager	All
Lone Working	Line Managers of staff who work alone in the office or out in the community	General Needs Housing Supported Housing Property Services Asset Management Development Communities
Manual Handling	Line Managers of staff whose job roles involve manual handling	All
New or Expectant mum	Line Manager	All
Property-related, i.e. covering the physical environment of a building and associated land	Scheme Manager, Team Manager, Housing Officer, Property Services Surveyors	All teams with responsibility for buildings and land
Service User in Directly Managed Supported Housing	Scheme Manager or Team Manager	Directly Managed Supported Housing
Water Safety	External contractor and Compliance Team Manager	Property Services Supported Housing General Needs Housing
Work at Height	Line Managers of staff whose job roles involve work at height	All

In practice, several of the risk assessment types in the above table may be grouped into one risk assessment document for a particular team, department, service, etc.

Where the risk assessment identifies additional actions required to manage the risk, the person carrying out the risk assessment will determine the date by which the action should be completed, and the person responsible for completing it. The timescale for completing actions should be risk based, with actions to control high risks being implemented as quickly as possible. Where, for practical reasons, a sufficiently short timescale cannot be achieved,

the implementation of temporary measures to control the risk should be considered.

Responsibility for monitoring progress with actions rests with the person who carried out the risk assessment, and where appropriate their Line Manager.

Risk assessments will be reviewed annually or more frequently if circumstances change, or if an accident, near miss or incident occurs which suggests that existing risk management arrangements are inadequate.

17. Health and Safety Training

North Star is committed to ensuring that employees receive suitable and sufficient training to enable them to carry out their roles without putting the health or safety of themselves or others at risk.

All new staff receive health and safety induction training which is delivered by the Compliance Surveyor.

Other health and safety related training is provided in accordance with the needs of individual job roles and includes:

- Lone working
- Ladders
- Manual handling
- Asbestos awareness
- Fire safety

Relevant training will be organised by People Services as directed by managers.

Training needs are discussed with employees through regular one to one meetings.

Training records are held on the Microsoft learning management system POLARIS.

Information, Instruction and Supervision

North Star recognises its responsibilities to inform and instruct its workforce. The statutory Health and Safety Law poster is displayed in all offices. Health and safety is a standing agenda item for all employees in performance review meetings with Line Managers. In addition, health and safety is a standing agenda item at all team meetings.

18. Home working

North Star have adopted a hybrid working model which allows employees, with the agreement of their line manager, to work remotely as well as from a North Star office.



All equipment provided by the Company for use at home is inspected and maintained in accordance with the relevant legal requirements and company policy. This includes the completion of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments and Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) on an annual basis.

Employees are responsible for the maintenance of the building structure and equipment, fixtures and fittings within their home, including the domestic electrical system, heating systems and smoke detection etc. Like any worker, employees must take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be harmed by their actions while they are working.

Risk Assessments are reviewed on an annual basis by the line manager of anyone who works remotely to ensure that controls for risks such as lone working remain fit for purpose.

North Star recognise that without day to day contact symptoms of stress or mental health problems may be more difficult to identify. As such all employees are expected to work from a North Star office at least 2 days per week and all one to ones and team meetings are to be held in person

19. Lifts and Lifting Equipment

North Star stock contains a number of passenger lifts, for which the Compliance team arranges quarterly servicing, and six monthly thorough examinations to meet the requirements of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations. Recommendations contained in the servicing and examination reports are dealt with promptly.

Where lifts are found to be unsafe, they are taken out of use until repaired.

If any accidents, near misses or incidents occur which could indicate a problem with the lift, the lift servicing contractor is asked to investigate and carry out any necessary remedial work to avoid further accidents, incidents or near misses.

Our housing stock contains a small number of stair lifts which are installed solely for use by tenants. The Compliance team arranges annual maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Stair lifts also undergo a thorough examination annually.

20. Lone Working and Personal Safety

Employees who are at risk of personal injury due to lone working receive training to help them recognise situations where they may be at risk, and to help them diffuse and/or escape from such situations. Assistive technology is provided to appropriate groups of staff to enable them to call for help. The North Star [Lone Working Policy](#) contains details of the arrangements in place.

21. New and Expectant Mothers



North Star has a duty to new and expectant mothers at work, to take into account the particular risks to new and expectant mothers when assessing the risk of any work activity. Managers are required to carry out a risk assessment when a member of their team informs them that she is pregnant. Necessary adjustments will be made to reduce risks to the employee or their child.

For more information see the HSE information leaflet "A Guide for New and Expectant Mothers who work". ["A Guide for New and Expectant Mothers who Work"](#)

22. Manual Handling

Employers must comply with the [Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992](#). Manual handling risk assessments are carried out in relation to job roles that involve regular handling of large, heavy or difficult loads. Wherever possible tasks are redesigned to avoid or reduce the need for manual handling. Where a risk assessment identifies a need for additional manual handling training this will be arranged using a suitable external provider. Manual handling equipment will be provided where the risk assessment identifies this as a way of reducing the risk of injury.

23. Office Safety

North Star offices meet the requirements of the [Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#). Contracts for servicing, inspection, and maintenance of equipment such as boilers, fire alarms, fire-fighting equipment and electrical equipment are arranged by the Compliance team.

The office environment is generally safer than for example workshops or site locations. Arrangements for the health and safety hazards typically found in offices are covered in other sections of this policy, i.e. Fire Safety, Manual Handling, Electrical Safety, and Display Screen Equipment.

Office staff have a responsibility to ensure that their workplace remains tidy and free from apparently insignificant hazards, which can easily become the source of very serious accidents.

24. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Under the [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) at Work Regulations 1992](#), employers have a legal duty to make suitable, properly maintained workplace safety equipment available, free of charge, to any employees working in potentially hazardous environments. North Star will provide all necessary PPE identified through the risk assessments for the protection of employees from risk or if required to fulfil job roles safely any residual risk. All such equipment will comply with the relevant British or European Standard.

All staff must report any loss or damage to PPE and are responsible for requesting replacement via their Line Manager.

25. Planning, Monitoring, Review and Revision

To ensure policies and procedures remain relevant and effective and that the organisation responds positively to the introduction of new, or changes to existing legislation and regulations relating to health and safety, a programme of planning, monitoring, review and revision is in place.

The Head of Property and Compliance, with assistance from the Compliance Team Manager compiles information on health and safety performance which is reported to the Health and Safety Steering Group and is used to identify areas where further improvement is needed. The external Health and Safety Advisor highlights new and changing legislation which will have an impact on the organisation.

Accident information is reported to the Health and Safety Steering Group and accident and incident reports are scrutinized with a view to revising policies and working practices with the aim of improving accident trends. Managers with support, where necessary, from the Health and Safety Advisor, are responsible for investigating accidents, near misses, incidents and work-related causes of sickness absence.

26. Slips, Trips and Falls

In North Star offices, the communal areas of sheltered, supported and general needs housing, and other premises where we have a maintenance responsibility, regular checks and inspections are carried out to identify, among other things, slip, trip and fall hazards. Where these are identified, repairs are carried out as soon as possible, and in the interim temporary measures are put in place, such as cordoning off an area or erecting warning notices.

In between formal checks and inspections, employees are required to report slip, trip or fall hazards to their manager so that remedial action can be taken.

27. Snow Clearing and Gritting

We do not generally undertake to clear snow or spread grit on general needs properties. The following only applies to Supported Housing Services:

Requirements for snow clearing and gritting are determined and reviewed by the Supported Housing Service and a designated Property Services Surveyor in the Property Services team. Where it is considered appropriate, a contract will be drawn up with a suitable external contractor for gritting to be carried out at a scheme whenever the local temperature is forecast to fall below 0°C. Other schemes and offices will be gritted, and snow cleared, at the request of the responsible Team Manager of the Service.

28. Water Safety

North Star's stock includes buildings where water storage and distribution present a water safety risk. Risk assessments are carried out on the water systems in these buildings by a suitable external contractor, and control measures recommended in the risk assessments are implemented. A separate Water Hygiene Policy sets out in detail the responsibilities and arrangements for managing legionella risks.

Legionella Management

It is a legal requirement to consider the risks from legionella that may affect employees or members of the public and take suitable precautions. It is the responsibility of North Star to establish:

- The identification and assessment and sources of risk.
- The preparation of a scheme (or course of action) for preventing or controlling the risk.
- The implementation and management of the scheme - appointing a person to be managerially responsible, sometimes referred to as the 'responsible person'.
- The maintenance of records and checks that what has been done is effective.

29. Work at Height

Under the [Work at height Regulations 2005](#), employers and those in control of any work at height activity must make sure work is properly planned, assessed and carried out by competent people. Risks from working at height in North Star offices and supported housing schemes have been assessed, and the following arrangements put in place to reduce the risk of a fall from height.

The need to work at height has been reduced by:

- Minimising storage at high level by finding alternative storage areas.
- Storing frequently needed items where they can be easily accessed without needing to use a stepladder.
- Reviewing storage regularly.
- Using low energy light bulbs which have a longer life and therefore need changing less frequently.

Employees are required to adhere to the following guidance on working safely at height:

- Always use the correct equipment – do not climb on chairs/tables or other furniture to carry out tasks such as putting up curtains, changing light bulbs and adjusting blinds; use suitable equipment.
- If suitable equipment is not available speak to your manager.

- Before carrying out the task check that the equipment is in good condition with no loose or missing parts. If you find the equipment is unsafe report this to your manager, and don't use it.
- Be aware of other people in the room where you are working, and others who may come in during the task; if necessary, put up warning signs.
- Consider whether you need a second person to help you, for example to pass things to you or take things from you.
- Put all equipment away when you have finished.

30. Work Equipment

Where work equipment is provided North Star will ensure that staff who need to use it receive adequate training or instruction. Equipment is maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions and staff are required to carry out user checks on all equipment before they use it. Employees are responsible for reporting faulty or damaged equipment to their Line Manager. Faulty or damaged equipment will be taken out of use until it has been repaired. Budget-holders are responsible for ensuring that any new equipment purchased meets health and safety standards before purchase.

31. Young Persons Employment

Young Persons are identified at two levels:

- Those who are under the age of 18 years.
- Those who are below the Minimum School Leaving Age (MSLA), approximately 16 years (actually varies between 15 years 9 months and 16 years 7 months).

North Star recognises that special consideration must be given to young persons, due to lack of experience and potential absence of awareness of potential risks associated with work. To enable identification of these special considerations, and in compliance with the [Management of Health and Safety at Work 1999](#), risk assessments will be carried out to identify areas of possible risks to young persons.

In the case of young persons under the minimum school leaving age, possibly on work experience, copies of the risk assessments must be supplied to the school or college of the young person and North Star should attempt to discuss the assessment findings with them, either directly or through the young person's school.

Whilst North Star recognises that all people are different, some jobs lend themselves to a generic risk assessment of the work and activities suitable for young persons. All people are different and young persons' individual development will vary, therefore an individual risk assessment, based on the general assessments, will be carried out for each person under the age of 18 years.

Some areas for consideration in risk assessments:



- Manual handling, where individual capabilities may vary greatly; the body is still developing in young people.
- Use of equipment and machinery where certain levels of skill and maturity are required.
- Close supervision will be required where machinery or equipment is used.
- Young persons should not be left in a 'Lone Worker' situation.

All issues involving young persons, particularly accidents or health issues must be reported to the relevant Line Manager.

32. Control of Visitors

Visitors may not be aware of the potential hazards, or the controls manage them whilst attending a North Star Property. Therefore:

- All visitors must report to reception, sign in and follow instructions at that site.
- Managers are responsible to make sure that, for premises under their control, there are local arrangements for the management of visitors.
- Those inviting visitors to their site must make sure that they follow the local arrangement and are not left unaccompanied.
- In the event of an evacuation visitors will need to be escorted from the building and taken to the identified assembly point

All staff are to be aware of visitors safety and not allow them to enter any restricted areas.

33. Occupational Health arrangements

When an employee is unwell, may be unwell, or if it is suspected that the employee is unwell, North Star may seek to acquire a medical assessment report from an Occupational Health Practitioner or the employee's GP.

The purpose of an Medical Assessment is to help to understand the severity of a condition or suspected possible condition, determine what support can be offered, manage possible reasonable adjustments, or, if the employee is absent from work, plan for a return to work.

The employee is required to provide any necessary consent, attend appropriate meetings and co-operate with any requirement by North Star for the acquisition of a report from an Occupational Health Practitioner or the employee's GP.

In cases of stress-related illness, mental health conditions or muscular-skeletal conditions, North Star will arrange early occupational health appointments.

Appendix A

Responsible Officers

Arrangement	Responsible Officer/Department
Asbestos	Compliance Team Manager
Display Screen Equipment	Head of People Services
Electrical Safety	Compliance Team Manager
Fire Safety	Compliance Team Manager
Gas Safety	Compliance Team Manager
Gas Servicing Repairs	Property Services Manager
Lifts & Lifting Equipment	Compliance Team Manager
PAT Testing	Compliance Team Manager
Snow Clearing & Gritting	Property Services Manager
Water Safety	Compliance Team Manager