

NORMS Health and Safety Policy

Purpose

NORMS (North Somerset Multiple Sclerosis) is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all members, volunteers, and visitors. We recognise that MS affects people in very different ways, and that levels of mobility, balance, fatigue, and sensory tolerance vary from person to person. Our aim is to reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level while maintaining an inclusive and enjoyable environment.

Our Commitment

We will:

- Ensure that venues used for NORMS activities are as safe and accessible as possible, with clear information provided about access, facilities, and potential hazards.
- Plan activities with the needs of people living with different levels of disability in mind, including seating, rest breaks, and quiet areas where possible.
- Provide risk assessments for activities and events, reviewing them regularly and adapting them when circumstances change.
- Encourage members to speak up if they spot a hazard or have concerns about their safety or the safety of others.
- Respond promptly to health and safety concerns, near misses, or accidents, and take steps to prevent recurrence.

Guiding Principles

- **Individual Needs Matter:** We recognise that health and safety considerations may differ greatly for someone with fatigue, heat sensitivity, mobility issues, or sensory sensitivities.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Health and safety is everyone's responsibility — organisers, volunteers, and members alike.
- **Prevention First:** We focus on anticipating and reducing risks before they cause harm.
- **Openness and Respect:** We welcome honest reporting of hazards without blame.

Risk Reduction Measures

We will:

- Conduct a venue and activity risk assessment before events.
- Make reasonable adjustments for individuals with specific needs.
- Clearly mark and communicate any potential hazards (e.g., steps, uneven surfaces, trip hazards).
- Ensure first aid provision is available or accessible at all events.
- Keep a basic first aid kit on site for group-led activities.

Reporting Health and Safety Concerns

We encourage all members to report any hazard, near miss, or accident — no matter how small — as soon as possible.

Step 1 — Raise the concern

Report the issue to a NORMS organiser or volunteer immediately, either verbally or in writing. If urgent, take steps to prevent harm (e.g., block access to a hazard) until help arrives.

Step 2 — Record the incident

The organiser will log the concern, near miss, or accident in the Health and Safety Incident Log, including:

- Date and time
- Location
- Description of what happened
- Names of people involved (if applicable)
- Any immediate action taken

Step 3 — Investigation

The organising team will investigate to determine what happened, why, and what can be done to prevent it happening again.

Step 4 — Follow-up

We will communicate the outcome of the investigation to those involved and make any necessary changes to improve safety.

Near Misses

A *near miss* is an event that did not cause harm but had the potential to. Reporting near misses helps us prevent future accidents.

Accidents

If an accident occurs during a NORMS activity:

1. Ensure the safety of the injured person and others.
2. Provide first aid or call emergency services as required.
3. Record the details in the Health and Safety Incident Log.
4. Inform next of kin if necessary (with consent).

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in our activities or legislation. We will use reports of concerns, near misses, and accidents to improve our risk management.

Approved by: NORMS Organising Team

Date: [Insert Date]

Next Review Date: [Insert Date]