



Uppertunity Health and Safety Overview & Key Points

At Uppertunity, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment where everyone can thrive. Health and safety is a shared responsibility. Staff, volunteers, members, carers and visitors all have a role in helping to keep themselves and others safe.

We take a realistic and balanced approach to health and safety. Risks cannot always be removed completely, but hazards should be identified and controlled as far as reasonably practicable.

This document provides an overview of the key health and safety arrangements at Uppertunity. It does not replace the full Health and Safety Policy, Citation Fire Risk Assessment, Uppertunity Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Plan, activity-specific risk assessments, CookSafe procedures, COSHH information, safeguarding procedures or individual support arrangements. Uppertunity receives external health and safety advice from Citation.

1. EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone working or volunteering at Uppertunity should:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- Follow health and safety instructions, training, procedures and relevant risk assessments.
- Report hazards, damaged equipment, accidents, incidents and near misses promptly.
- Stop an activity or use of equipment if they believe it is unsafe.
- Never use equipment they have not been trained, instructed or authorised to use.
- Ask for help rather than attempting a task beyond their ability, experience or training.
- Make management aware of any support or reasonable adjustments needed to work safely.
- Work collaboratively and communicate any concerns or changes that may affect safety.

Staff planning activities must consider the environment, equipment, individual support needs and level of supervision required before the activity begins.

2. RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Citation Fire Risk Assessment, Uppertunity Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Plan, CookSafe, COSHH, safeguarding, allergen, incident-reporting and individual support procedures must also be followed where relevant.

Current assessments include:

- General and Office
- Kitchen-Based Activities
- Art, Craft and Creative Activities
- Community Gardening
- External Outings
- Working with People Under 18
- Woodwork Activities
- Community Pop-Up Events
- Catering Pop-Ups
- Lone Working
- Bowling League
- Driving for Work
- Homeworking
- Display Screen Equipment

Separate Fire Risk Assessment, CookSafe, COSHH, safeguarding, allergen, incident-reporting and individual support procedures must also be followed where relevant.

A separate or additional assessment must be completed where an activity introduces significant risks not adequately covered by an existing assessment.

3. STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

For members attending without their own support worker or carer:

- The standard maximum ratio is five members to one Uppertunity staff member.
- A session may exceed five only where another Uppertunity staff member is onsite, aware of the arrangement and immediately available to support if required.
- Where one suitable, inducted volunteer is actively supporting the session, up to four additional members may attend, giving a maximum of nine members to one staff member and one volunteer.
- These are maximum ratios, not automatic staffing levels. Ratios must be reduced or additional support provided where individual needs, mobility, medical needs, behaviour, safeguarding concerns, the activity or the environment require closer supervision.
- Volunteers support staff but do not replace the responsibility of the Uppertunity staff member.
- Where a volunteer facilitates or leads a session, an Uppertunity staff member must remain onsite, be available and retain overall responsibility.
- Members attending with their own carer or support worker are supported in line with their individual arrangements.

At least two staff members should normally be present when Uppertunity services are running. Lone working is minimised but may take place where the person, activity, environment and emergency arrangements can be safely managed by one staff member in accordance with the Lone Working Risk Assessment.

Staff must not work alone with a Red-category member or anyone whose support or evacuation needs require more than one person. Where a staff member works alone with a member at Uppertunity, that staff member must be a trained Fire Marshal.

4. GENERAL PREMISES SAFETY

Everyone should help keep the premises safe and accessible.

- Keep walkways, stairs, doors and fire exits clear.
- Store bags, boxes and equipment safely and away from routes.
- Clean and dry spillages promptly. Isolate or clearly identify an area if it cannot immediately be made safe.
- Report damaged flooring, furniture, lighting, sockets or equipment.
- Do not use damaged electrical equipment.
- Do not overload sockets or extension leads.
- Keep liquids away from electrical equipment.
- Keep rooms tidy and remove waste regularly.
- Report building defects or hazards to management so they can be raised with The Circle or venue management where appropriate.

Stepladders

Only Uppertunity-provided, purpose-made stepladders may be used.

- Chairs, tables and improvised platforms must never be used as ladders.
- No ladder or stepladder higher than three steps may be used for routine tasks.
- Only staff who have received appropriate ladder-safety instruction may use a stepladder.
- Check the ladder before every use.
- Use it only on firm, level and dry ground.

- Maintain three points of contact and do not overreach.
- Another staff member must be nearby while the stepladder is being used.
- Stepladders must not be used while lone working.
- Stop if the task cannot be completed safely from the permitted height.

5. MANUAL HANDLING

Before lifting or moving anything:

- Assess the item, route and destination.
- Reduce heavy loads into smaller amounts where possible.
- Use a trolley or wheeled equipment where available.
- Use two people for heavy, long, bulky or awkward items.
- Keep the load close to the body and avoid twisting.
- Clear the route before moving the item.
- Never lift or move something beyond your own capability.

6. FIRE, EMERGENCIES AND EVACUATION

All staff must know:

- How to raise the fire alarm.
- The relevant escape routes and exits.
- The assembly point.
- How to contact the emergency services.
- The evacuation arrangements relevant to the people they are supporting.

Fire exits, escape routes and firefighting equipment must remain unobstructed. Members, volunteers and visitors must be supported to evacuate where required.

Fire exits, escape routes and firefighting equipment must remain unobstructed. Members, volunteers and visitors must be supported to evacuate where required.

Uppertunity uses a Green, Amber and Red evacuation-support system. All Red-category members must have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) completed before attending. A PEEP may also be used for Green or Amber members where the standard evacuation arrangements do not fully meet their individual needs. At least one trained Fire Marshal must be onsite whenever members are attending.

If a fire or evacuation alarm occurs, follow Uppertunity's current Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Plan.

The level main entrance is used wherever safe and available. If it cannot be used, follow the alternative evacuation arrangements and Fire Marshal instructions.

Do not re-enter the building unless specifically involved in the planned trained-staff Red evacuation procedure, or until authorised to do so.

The fire alarm is routinely tested on Tuesday mornings. Call 999 where there is a serious injury, fire, choking, anaphylaxis or other immediate danger.

7. FIRST AID, ACCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES

At least one trained first aider and a stocked first aid kit must be available during operating hours and activities. If an accident or illness occurs:

- Make the area safe where possible.
- Provide appropriate first aid.

- Call emergency services where required.
- Inform management.
- Record accidents, incidents and near misses through Uppertunity's reporting process.

Incidents and near misses should be reviewed so that risk assessments, support arrangements or working practices can be updated where necessary.

8. ACTIVITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Activities must be led by a competent staff member or approved facilitator.

- Match activities, tools and equipment to the person's ability, understanding and support needs.
- Give clear instructions and appropriate supervision.
- Check equipment before use.
- Remove damaged or faulty equipment from use immediately.
- Stop horseplay, unsafe behaviour or misuse of equipment.
- Adapt or stop an activity where safe participation cannot be maintained.
- Higher-risk, unfamiliar or specialist activities may require an additional risk assessment.

The chop saw is restricted to a specifically trained and authorised operator. Members must not use the chop saw, and it must never be operated while lone working.

9. KITCHEN AND FOOD SAFETY

Kitchen-based activities must follow the Kitchen-Based Activities Risk Assessment and Uppertunity's CookSafe Food Safety Management System. Key controls include:

- Wash hands thoroughly before preparing or handling food.
- Do not prepare food when unwell.
- Anyone who has had vomiting or diarrhoea must remain away from food preparation for at least 48 hours after symptoms stop.
- Check ingredients, allergies and intolerances before food is prepared or served.
- Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate.
- Follow cleaning, temperature-control and food-storage requirements.
- Knives, hot equipment and electrical appliances must only be used with appropriate instruction and supervision.
- Stop any task where the participant, ingredient or equipment cannot be managed safely.
- Keep required food safety and temperature records.

Additional supervision limits within the Kitchen-Based Activities Risk Assessment must be followed.

10. CHEMICALS AND COSHH

Staff and volunteers must follow Uppertunity's COSHH assessments, product labels and relevant Safety Data Sheets.

- Keep substances in their original, labelled containers.
- Store chemicals securely and away from food.
- Never mix chemicals unless specifically authorised by the product instructions and COSHH assessment.
- Never transfer chemicals into food or drink containers.
- Use gloves, eye protection, ventilation or other PPE where required.
- Report spills, exposure, damaged containers or reactions promptly.
- Lower-hazard products should be used where practical.

Flammable and hazardous substances must be stored according to the relevant COSHH assessment and designated storage arrangements. Uppertunity has a designated metal COSHH unit.

11. OUTINGS, EVENTS AND DRIVING

Before an outing or event:

- Check the venue, journey, accessibility, expected environment, weather and emergency arrangements.
- Consider individual support, mobility, medical and sensory needs.
- Agree staff and carer responsibilities.
- Establish meeting points and headcount arrangements.
- Carry a charged phone, first aid supplies and necessary emergency information.
- Identify any venue-specific hazards and add additional controls where required.

Only authorised drivers may drive for Uppertunity work. Drivers using their own vehicle for work must have:

- The correct driving licence.
- Appropriate business-use insurance.
- A valid MOT and road tax where required.
- A roadworthy vehicle.

Drivers must not drive when tired, unwell or impaired by alcohol, drugs or medication. Handheld mobile phones must never be used while driving.

12. LONE WORKING

Lone working is limited to suitable low-risk duties and is not the normal arrangement while services are operating.

Lone working is minimised and is not the normal arrangement while services are operating. However, lone working may take place where the person, activity, location and emergency arrangements can be safely managed by one staff member.

Staff lone working must:

- Tell a manager or use the agreed staff communication system before starting.
- State where they are, what they are doing and their expected finishing/check-out time.
- Keep a charged phone accessible.
- Confirm when they have finished or left safely.

A staff member may work alone with a member only where the member's support and evacuation needs can be safely managed by one person, the member is not Red, the activity is suitable for lone working and the staff member is a trained Fire Marshal where the work takes place at Uppertunity.

Lone working must not take place with a Red member.

Staff must not undertake higher-risk activities while alone, including:

- ladder or work-at-height tasks;
- restricted machinery;
- hazardous substances;
- heavy or awkward manual handling;
- hot-food production;
- powered cutting equipment; or
- other activities assessed as requiring another person.

Staff have authority to stop, leave or rearrange lone work if they feel unsafe.

13. HOMEWORKING AND SCREEN USE

Homeworking is occasional or hybrid rather than a full-time arrangement. Staff must maintain regular contact with their manager and team. A suitable workstation should include:

- A stable desk or table.
- A supportive chair.
- A laptop stand where required.
- A separate keyboard and mouse for regular laptop work.
- Suitable lighting and sufficient space.

Staff beginning a homeworking arrangement must send a photograph of their workstation to their manager and send an updated photograph if the setup changes.

14. DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

Staff and regular volunteers who use a laptop or other display screen equipment for one hour or more per week are considered DSE users. DSE users must follow Uppertunity's DSE guidance and will receive an annual DSE assessment. They should also complete annual eye testing in line with Uppertunity's arrangements.

DSE users should:

- Use an appropriate workstation setup.
- Take short, frequent screen and movement breaks.
- Change position regularly.
- Review their workstation if their setup, equipment or needs change.
- Report pain, discomfort, headaches, eyesight concerns, equipment problems or adjustment needs promptly to their manager.

15. SAFEGUARDING AND SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Staff and volunteers must maintain professional boundaries and work within their role, competence and training.

- Report safeguarding concerns immediately through Uppertunity's safeguarding procedure.
- Do not investigate safeguarding concerns yourself.
- Respond to any immediate safety or welfare need.
- Record concerns accurately.
- Seek management or emergency support where there is immediate risk.

Relevant member support information, emergency contacts and individual arrangements must be accessible to authorised staff. Staff should familiarise themselves with information relevant to the members they are supporting and communicate significant updates through the agreed management and team processes.

16. TRAINING AND COMPETENCE

Staff and volunteers must only undertake tasks they are competent, trained or authorised to carry out. Uppertunity provides mandatory and role-specific training, which may include:

- Health and safety
- Risk assessment
- Manual handling
- Fire safety
- Safeguarding
- First aid
- Food safety
- Equipment-specific training
- DSE and workstation guidance
- Driver safety requirements

Additional training should be completed where a role or activity requires greater competence.

17. WELLBEING

Uppertunity aims to support a healthy and sustainable working environment. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to:

- Raise workload, stress or wellbeing concerns early.
- Take appropriate breaks and annual leave.
- Ask for reasonable adjustments where required.
- Seek support from their manager or team.
- Step away from situations where they feel unsafe.

Staff also have access to Wellbeing 360, a wellbeing programme offering additional support and resources, including online access to a therapist and a range of wellbeing-related discounts and benefits.

Concerns should be discussed and working arrangements reviewed where health, wellbeing or changing circumstances affect someone's ability to work safely.

18. FURTHER INFORMATION

This overview should be read alongside the relevant full documents, including:

- Health and Safety Policy and Handbook
- Organisational Handbook
- Employee Handbook
- Staff and Volunteer Welcome Pack
- Risk Assessments
- Citation Fire Risk Assessment
- Uppertunity Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Evacuation Plan
- COSHH assessments and Safety Data Sheets
- CookSafe Food Safety Management System
- Safeguarding procedures
- Incident-reporting procedures
- Individual support arrangements and PEEPs

Staff should speak to management if they are unsure which procedure or risk assessment applies.