



Street Paws – Health and Safety Policy

Lead responsibility:	Street Paws Chair Person
Approved by:	Street Paws Trustees
Operational from:	January 2018
Review due:	January 2019
Legal framework:	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992

Street Paws is committed to promoting a safe and healthy working environment for all of its all members, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries.

This policy document details how Street Paws' Health and Safety arrangements will be implemented and monitored, and who will be responsible for each area of implementation. The policy will be reviewed every two years. Our commitment to providing a healthy and safe working environment means that Street Paws is always ready to adapt its Policy and practices to meet new standards as they are laid down.

1. Health and Safety Officer

Michelle Southern, Chair Person, is Street Paws' Health and Safety Officer. She is responsible for the implementation of our Health and Safety Policy, and for ensuring compliance with Health & Safety legislation, within Street Paws. On a day to day basis practical advice and guidance is available from the Chair Person.

Regional Street Paws Co-ordinators are responsible for communicating Health and Safety information to their own regions. They will be present at, and responsible for overseeing, every outreach event taking place in their designated geographical area. They are also responsible for conducting risk assessments and ensuring compliance with Health & Safety legislation within their region/city of responsibility. It is advisable that Co-ordinators carry a mobile phone when conducting Street Paws' activities, which may be useful in case of an emergency.

Although volunteers are not included within Health & Safety legislation in the same way as paid staff, any organisation involving volunteers has a legal responsibility and a 'duty of care' towards their volunteers, which Street Paws is committed to.

If you have any Health and Safety queries, please contact the Chair Person to discuss these further.

2. Communication

This Policy will be made available to all trustees, staff, members and volunteers when signing up to be involved with Street Paws' activities.

Any changes to the Policy will be communicated by the most appropriate means, whether hard copy information sheets or soft copy such as e-mail. These will be supplied to Regional Co-ordinators, who will be responsible for drawing the contents to the attention of their members, volunteers and others.

IF YOU BECOME AWARE OF A POTENTIAL SAFETY HAZARD REPORT THE HAZARD TO YOUR REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR.

The Chair Person will be available to answer queries on Health and Safety issues.

3. Employees

Under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, it is the duty of every employee while at work to:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety at work of themselves and any other people who might be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Co-operate with their employers and others to enable them to comply with statutory duties and requirements
- Not intentionally or recklessly misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992 further require employees to:

- Use any equipment, etc., provided in the interests of safety
- Follow health and safety instructions
- Report anything they consider to be a serious danger
- Report any shortcomings in the protection arrangements for health and safety

Street Paws recognises that its employees will often provide the first warning of any hazards in the workplace. We therefore encourage employees to report any concerns regarding either specific hazards or general issues pertaining to their health and safety, or the health and safety of others. Street Paws will investigate any and all reported hazards, implementing changes as required.

4. Volunteers

Much of the outreach activity conducted on behalf of Street Paws will take place in the evenings, and in uncontrolled environments. The nature of street-based work means that volunteers will look to approach homeless people they do not know, and their pets, in these uncontrolled environments. Engagement with these groups and individuals must be done as safely as possible.

Volunteers are responsible for their own health and safety and should not put themselves in a position that could place them, or others, in danger. Volunteers are under no obligation to participate or continue with any Street Paws activity. They should never undertake any work if they have concerns about their own or others' health and safety. If they have any such concerns, they should stop the work and raise these with the Chair Person, or the Regional Co-ordinator.

Volunteers should take the following precautions when engaging in Street Paws outreach:

- Discuss the outreach with your Regional Coordinator. If you feel there are potential hazards or risks that you are concerned about these should be discussed prior to undertaking the task.
- Decide on an appropriate mode of travel i.e. if it is dark and you are going to unfamiliar territory, consider getting a lift from another volunteer as opposed to walking.
- There must always be a minimum group of three people undertaking any outreach activity. If there are less than three individuals present, the activity will be stopped and postponed.
- Do not leave the wider group of Street Paws volunteers who are present and also undertaking outreach, and ensure that you are never on your own.
- Minimise the belongings you bring with you. Ideally, limit these to essentials only e.g. car keys, mobile phone.
- Be discreet if using your mobile phone in uncontrolled environments.
- Distribute personal belongings evenly about your person. Do not put cash, phone, wallet, purse etc. all in the same bag.
- If any incidents arise e.g. fighting between clients on the street, you should immediately remove yourself from the situation and move to a place of safety.

5. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments for key local outreach sites will be conducted by the Regional Co-ordinators. A risk assessment is made up of five simple steps:

- 1) Identify the hazards (and the risks associated with them).
- 2) Decide who is at risk and in what way.
- 3) Investigate the precautions currently in place and identify what else could / should be done to reduce the risk.
- 4) List the risks which need further precautions or are subject to specific restrictions.
- 5) Record all this and brief those at risk on the contents of the risk assessment.

A risk assessment form is available from the Chair Person and is attached herewith:



Risk Register.xlsx

5.1 Hazards and Risks

In considering safety it is important to differentiate between hazards and risks:

- A hazard is a situation or set of circumstances, whether in the form of human activity or health hazard, that could cause harm to people.
- A risk is the probability that someone will be harmed by a hazard.

Wherever possible, volunteers and staff in the area being assessed will be involved in the risk assessments.

Once a risk is identified, the Regional Co-ordinators involved will liaise initially with the Chair Person, who will advise on the remedial action which needs to be taken. Where initial risk assessments indicate that a risk is present, a supplementary assessment may be conducted by the Chair Person or another trustee, both as a means of auditing the initial assessments and in order to ensure that the most effective remedial action is taken. All risk assessments will be regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

5.2 Issues for Street-based Risk Assessments

Issues to consider when conducting a risk assessment may include:

Equipment

Do all staff have the right personal protective equipment (first aid kit, suitable footwear)?
Does everyone have their mobile phone?
Is anything extra needed for the particular area?
Is all equipment in working order?

Walking routes

Have all routes been risked assessed?
Do staff know escape routes in that particular area?
Does the line manager have a copy of the route?

Spatial

Is there adequate street lighting?
How public is the space?
Are there appropriate 'escape routes' should there be an issue?

Weather conditions

Are there any weather warnings for that area?
Are the roads or foot paths icy?
Will wet or windy weather increase the risks in the area?

Engagement

What is the size/age/composition of the group?
What's going on with the group (drinking alcohol, etc.)?

Public disorder (Anti-Social Behaviour)

Is this a "hotspot" area?
Are there any current issues and would extra be needed?
Where is the nearest Police Station?

5.3 Lone Working

Lone working is not normal practice for Street Paws volunteers or staff, and should be discouraged. Outreach teams should operate in a minimum team of three, and individuals should keep in sight of others whenever possible. Workers should avoid meeting a client in his or her own home (in the case of hostel/temporary accommodation) unless deemed absolutely necessary. In these instances, appointments should be pre-arranged, recorded in writing, and a minimum of one other member of Street Paws should be informed in advance – this should be the Chair Person, or Regional Co-ordinator.

6. Accident Reporting

All accidents, incidents or "near misses", must be recorded in the Accident Reporting Log which is available from the Chair Person. This includes:

- Any accident, incident, "near miss" or potentially hazardous situation
- Any such incident involving anyone engaged in carrying out Street Paws' charitable activity the time
- Any incident of threatened or actual violence between any individuals carrying out Street Paws' charitable activity
- Any incident of threatened or actual violence committed by an individual on themselves

All accidents recorded in this way are notified immediately to the Chair Person who will monitor these accidents for remedial action and to ensure that incidents which must be reported under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) and the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Regulations are notified to the HSE as a matter of urgency.

The Chair Person will be responsible for initial investigation of accidents and for recommending actions to be taken to remedy any risk which is discovered. Regional Co-ordinators will be responsible for implementation of these remedial actions.

7. COSHH - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

Under the COSHH Regulations 2002, people engaged in the storage, labelling, packing or conveyance of any dangerous substance shall take all practicable steps to prevent risk of injury to person or property. There are a small number of potentially hazardous substances with which Street Paws members, volunteers, trustees and beneficiaries may come into contact; for example animal medications. In the main these are of very low risk to humans. In all cases, the Regional Co-ordinator has overall responsibility for the Street Paws bag of veterinary supplies and this must never be left unattended.

However, it is important that everyone is aware of hazardous substances, and of the risks involved if they are misused. Members and volunteers must always read the manufacturer's warning label and any usage information printed on these items before distributing. Regional Co-ordinators must bring these to the attention of all new members, volunteers and beneficiaries.

If anyone engaged in Street Paws business comes into contact with any hazardous substance, whether by inhalation, ingestion, in the eyes or by absorption through the skin, they must immediately seek the assistance of their first aider or Regional Co-ordinator. Such incidents should be recorded in the Accident Reporting Log and reported to the Chair Person as soon as possible. If the casualty requires hospital treatment or loses consciousness as a result of contact with a toxic substance, the Chair Person must make this clear in the accident report as it will be a reportable incident under RIDDOR.

8. First Aid

For first aid purposes, Street Paws' activities and those environments where we conduct them are deemed a medium risk environment, as this will predominantly be in outdoor, public spaces.

Street Paws will provide at least one appointed first aider and first aid box at each outreach activity and other organised Street Paws events. The appointed person will be the Regional Co-ordinator unless otherwise stated. They will take charge in an emergency and are responsible for calling the emergency services. The Regional Co-ordinator will ensure all volunteers, members and others are aware of:

- The location of the first aid box
- Who the first aider or appointed person is
- Where the first aider or appointed person can be found.

9. Working with other organisations

When Street Paws works in partnership with other organisations, the Chair Person will be responsible for agreeing:

- Which organisation has ultimate responsibility for health and safety;
- How the organisation with responsibility will ensure its policies and procedures are implemented;
- What the organisation will do if its standards are not met;
- How volunteers will be trained to fulfil their health and safety responsibilities;
- If volunteers are dissatisfied with or concerned about health and safety how they will share their views and how this information will be recorded.