

BASP HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. PURPOSE

BASP's activities are based on welcoming the stranger and seeking justice for those who are seeking asylum. In doing so BASP affirms the rights of all people to be emotionally, spiritually, and physically safe and to have their beliefs and opinions valued at all times.

This policy and relevant procedures have been developed to help BASP live out its commitment to the health and safety of its community and to meet its responsibilities under Victorian legislation.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all people connected with BASP – employees, volunteers and contractors, people seeking asylum, students, visitors.

The BASP office is within the Brigidine Ministry Centre (BMC) owned and managed by the Brigidine Southern Cross Community (BSCC).

BASP's staff and some volunteers work within the centre but many visit people seeking asylum in their homes.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

i) BASP Co-CEOs

BASP Co-CEOs will, as far as practicable, be responsible for:

- A safe working environment and healthy systems of work by
 - providing and maintaining a safe work environment
 - ensuring there are arrangements in place for the safe use, handling, storing, and handling of donated goods
 - providing adequate facilities and/or systems for the welfare of staff, volunteers, people seeking asylum and others visiting the office and people in their homes
 - providing adequate information and training to ensure all involved can undertake their duties in a safe manner, without risks to health

- ensuring contractors have the skills and practices to carry out their activities safely and are compliant with regulations and to check that any work done has been completed to safety requirements.
- BASP will comply with legislative requirements and standards under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Vic), consulting with staff and reviewing its OH&S policy and procedures periodically to ensure it is and continues to meet its responsibilities.

ii) Employees and Volunteers

- Have a duty to take responsible care of their own health and safety and that of others affected by their actions on behalf of BASP.
 - Are required to comply with safety procedures and to report any concerns regarding health and safety encountered in their work.
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4. PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

BASP recognises that health and safety includes both **physical and psychological wellbeing** and that psychosocial hazards can result in psychological harm, and in some cases physical harm. Psychosocial hazards are work-related factors that may lead to negative psychological responses such as stress, anxiety, depression, or other harm if they are frequent, prolonged, or severe. ([Safe Work Australia](#))

4.1 What Are Psychosocial Hazards

Psychosocial hazards can arise from:

- The design or management of work
 - The working environment
 - Systems of work
 - Personal or work-related interactions
- Examples include:
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination, aggression, or violence
 - Exposure to traumatic content or situations
 - High emotional demands without adequate support
 - Excessive workload or time pressure
 - Poor role clarity or unclear expectations
 - Lack of support, supervision, or debriefing
 - Remote or isolated work
 - Poor workplace relationships or communication breakdowns

- Inadequate resources or training to undertake work safely ([Safe Work Australia](#))

4.2 Managing Psychosocial Risks

Psychosocial hazards will be managed through the same risk management approach used for other hazards, including:

- Identifying psychosocial hazards in consultation with staff and volunteers
- Assessing the risks associated with these hazards
- Implementing control measures to eliminate, or where that is not reasonably practicable, minimise psychosocial risk
- Reviewing controls to ensure they remain effective and appropriate
Examples of controls include:
 - Clear role descriptions and expectations
 - Adequate supervision, debriefing, and mentoring support
 - Training in managing difficult interactions and self-care
 - Providing avenues for support

4.3 Reporting and Responding to Psychosocial Hazards

- Staff and volunteers are encouraged to report psychosocial hazards, concerns, or near misses to a Co-CEO or Board member.
- Reports may be made in person, by email, or in writing.
- Reported psychosocial concerns will be treated with sensitivity, confidentiality where possible, and responded to promptly.
- No person will be penalised for reporting in good faith.

PROCEDURES

Housing (refer to Housing Policy)

The Co-CEOs will select houses, leased and donated, that are safe and suitable to the needs of people seeking asylum. Any hazards identified prior to occupancy and subsequently will be addressed promptly, with interim safety measures instituted until the issue is fixed, e.g. use front door only until back steps are fixed.

Matching of people and their need for housing will be carefully considered by Co-CEOs prior to confirming a housing offer. A housing agreement will be signed by BASP and residents, outlining conditions all of which include no smoking inside, respecting the other residents and property, and immediate advice to BASP of any issues in the house.

Regular review of the houses by the agent and/or BASP Co-CEOs and/or BASP volunteer acting as the House Support person.

Any breaches of conditions will be acted upon promptly, including eviction if warranted.

Employment/Recruitment/Matching (Refer Volunteer Policy and Procedures)

The BASP Board employs the BASP Co-CEOs, Co-CEOs recruit staff and volunteers. All new staff and volunteers are informed of BASP's Health and Safety Policy and Procedures and reporting mechanisms. All new staff and volunteers are made aware of the vulnerabilities of the cohort of people that BASP supports.

Volunteers are interviewed by a Co-CEO to assess their suitability, availability and skills for the tasks required. They are required to have a current Working with Children Check and sign a Volunteer Role Statement.

Most volunteers visit asylum seekers in asylum seeker homes. These may be in a BASP house or a privately rented house.

The Co-CEOs are responsible for ensuring the home visits are safe for volunteers, either by a prior visit to the house themselves or a clear referral from other professionals regarding the safety of a visit.

Volunteers are matched with asylum seekers assessed as no risk to a visitor and with needs matched to the volunteer's skills, interests and availability.

Volunteers are advised to notify a Co-CEO if they encounter any concerns, hazards, or risks while undertaking their duties.

NOTIFICATION OF HAZARDS, RISKS, INCIDENTS

The BASP Board has a Risk Register which is reviewed and updated regularly.

The BASP Co- report any significant incidents, Health and Safety issues or Safety of Vulnerable People issues to the Board monthly in their report. These are collated annually on the Hazard, Risk and Incident Form and reviewed by the Board at the February Board meeting.

If the issue is urgent such as serious damage to any person, property, or potentially to reputation, this would be escalated by contacting the Board Chair immediately and notifying the ED of Kildare Ministries. This is aligned with the Kildare Ministries Notification of Risk Framework.

BASP also has a Crisis Management Plan which outlines escalation of action and notification if a crisis occurs.

If a hazard or injury occurs within BMC, this is also reported to the BMC Manager to liaise as needed with the Brigidine Southern Cross Community, the owners of the premises, using their reporting formats.

BMC also holds training and updates on Emergency procedures and First Aid.

BMC is a smoke free workplace.

BASP has developed a statement to respond to the Coronavirus.

Injuries

The BASP Co-CEOs are the RTW coordinators for staff injuries and for support and follow up of any injuries incurred by volunteers undertaking BASP activities.

Updated June 2023