

# **LONE WORKING AND PERSONAL SAFETY**



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## Policy Statement

This organisation believes that its staff should be safe at work and should not be exposed to undue or unreasonable risk. In particular, the organisation is committed to implementing measures that increase the personal safety and security of staff wherever possible, along with the safety of their personal property, and which ensure an effective response to personal safety and security incidents. The organisation also seeks to encourage service users, staff and others to have care and concern for the safekeeping of equipment and property and the personal safety of all.

This policy applies to all organisation staff without exception.

## The Policy

This policy is intended to set out the values and principles underpinning this organisation's approach to ensuring that staff working for the organisation are as safe as is reasonably practical while at work or when travelling to and from work.

## Responsibilities of the Organisation

The organisation will:

- Seek to ensure that it can respond effectively to all personal safety and security incidents, including incidents involving violence or threats of violence to staff, through the preparation of plans, management of incidents and appropriate follow up and recovery actions, as deemed necessary.
- Seek to ensure that the personal safety of staff is always considered a factor when planning individual care plans with service users, especially concerning staff travelling to and from a home care site. Wherever possible, arrangements that involve staff travelling to and from houses alone during the hours of darkness and in isolated areas or known high crime areas should be avoided.
- Be responsible for crime prevention/loss reduction measures, including assessing threats to the personal safety of staff, as well as investigating and initiating follow up actions in response to any reported incidents.

- Provide staff with a personal alarm, where necessary; raise awareness of personal safety and security issues by offering training and advice to staff and service users on personal safety and security.

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

This organisation believes that personal security is also the responsibility of every member of staff. The organisation expects every member of staff to accept that responsibility and to:

- Act and behave in a way to ensure their safety and security at all times.
- Act and behave in a way to ensure the safety and security of service users and property in the areas in which they are working.
- Report all personal safety and security incidents, including violence or threats of violence to themselves, and suspicious activities or incidents.
- Always leave information of their whereabouts with the office and with a friend/relative, and advise the office of any changes to their whereabouts.
- Never leave equipment visible in their cars, especially items like mobile phones, laptop computers, etc. Staff should only carry equipment that is strictly necessary for the visit they are making and should lock items in the boot.
- Always try to park in a well-lit, open location, or walk to a service user's home, along well-lit and populated routes.

All staff are strongly encouraged to carry a personal mobile phone and to ensure that an up-to-date contact number for it is left with the main office in case they need to be contacted. Staff carrying mobile phones should ensure that the battery is fully charged before leaving for work. A spare mobile phone is kept in the office for emergency use.

### **The Organisation's Offices**

Security is also considered an issue in the organisation's offices, especially for staff working alone there. The organisation's security lead, Hitendra Sharma, should conduct or arrange to conduct regular risk assessment checks around the offices specifically designed to pick up on security issues. Checks should be carried out on a regular basis and should include:

- Alarms.
- Security lights.
- Window and door locks.

Staff should be aware of who is in the building at all times. Any designated staff working at the office beyond their standard going home time should check no one is still in the building before they leave.

Staff should enter the office building by using a key Staff should never leave the outside door open.

Visitors can announce that they have arrived by using the entrance intercom system. Office staff should answer the intercom politely and check the identity of the caller before allowing them in. Staff who are working alone in the offices should be sure of

the identity of a caller before allowing them in; otherwise, they should refuse entry and ask the visitor to return when other staff are around.

This organisation pursues a zero-tolerance policy towards aggression and violence directed against staff.

## **Lone Working**

This organisation understands lone workers to be those who work without close or direct supervision or company for substantial periods. This includes most domiciliary care staff who visit and care for clients in their own homes. In this context, the organisation understands its duty as an employer being to assess any risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control those risks where necessary. The organisation recognises that staff working alone in potentially isolated conditions have no immediate backup or support and so are at a greater risk of injury through aggression or violence directed towards them from clients, relatives, carers or the general public. The organisation also recognises that staff working alone need to rely on their judgement and initiative and maybe at a greater risk of making mistakes or errors.

This organisation believes that training is particularly important for lone workers and research shows that adequate training is the single most critical factor in avoiding panic reactions in unusual situations. In particular lone workers need to be deemed competent to work alone, to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions needed fully. The organisation understands its duty as an employer to ensure employees are competent to deal not only with the day to day facets of their work but with circumstances that are new, unusual or beyond the scope of their training, e.g. if threatened with aggression and violence.

Procedures must be put in place to monitor lone workers to ensure they remain safe and to provide supervision regularly. This includes supervisors periodically visiting and observing those working alone and regular contact between the lone worker and supervision by telephone.

This organisation believes that supervision helps to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

When a member of staff visits a client in their own home, they may be at risk through health and safety hazards in and around clients' homes and of physical or verbal assaults and hostility from clients, relatives, and the general public. Recent evidence suggests that such incidents may be on the increase and home visiting protocols should take this into account, particularly in high risk areas such as high crime rate areas.

In this organisation:

- The assessment of all new referrals should include a risk assessment that includes threats from health and safety hazards and aggression and violence and other threats to lone working.

- Lone workers should carry panic alarms and mobile phones so that they can summon help quickly. All phones should include an emergency number which will be attended at all times that staff are working.
- Lone workers should call in at regular intervals to report that they are safe, including at the end of a shift.
- Administration staff in the central office should log and keep details of all home visits as well as having access to the names, addresses and telephone numbers of clients.
- Administration staff in the central office should contact the duty manager in the event of any emergencies.
- In a situation where a lone worker feels under immediate threat of their physical safety, they should contact the police directly or inform the duty administrator who should contact the police for them. The administrator should be careful to take all appropriate information from the lone worker, such as location and telephone number, and to pass this on to the police, after the incident the lone worker should fill in an incident form.

It is strongly advised that staff carry in their cars the absolute minimum amount of equipment and that they always park their car in a well-lit, public place, if at all possible. Thefts from cars are a major area of concern and muggings of care staff are a real threat, especially in high crime areas. If on foot, care staff should avoid dark, unlit, isolated routes to work.

In cases where care is to be provided in a high crime area or to a client with a known history of aggression or violence associated with them, a full risk assessment should be completed by the supervisor/manager. Where there is a significant risk then the care plan should be altered accordingly, either by reviewing the case with the relevant case manager or by arranging for care workers to attend in pairs.

## **Untoward Incidents**

Untoward incidents, including all incidents that involve the use or threat of aggression or violence, should be reported, recorded, regularly reviewed, and audited.

## **Related Policies**

Accidents, Incidents and Emergencies Reporting (RIDDOR)

Challenging Behaviour, Violence and Aggression

Health and Safety

Internet, Email and Mobile Phone (Acceptable Use)

Risk Assessment

## **Related Guidance**

HSE Lone Working: The Basics for Employers:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/>

HSE Lone Worker's Toolbox:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm>

HSE Protecting Lone Workers:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

HSE Risk Management:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

HSE A Safe Place of Work:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workplace/facilities.htm>

### **Training Statement**

All staff, during induction, are made aware of the organisation's policies and procedures, all of which are used for training updates. All policies and procedures are reviewed and amended where necessary, and staff are made aware of any changes. Observations are undertaken to check skills and competencies. Various methods of training are used, including one to one, online, workbook, group meetings, and individual supervisions. External courses are sourced as required.

Date Reviewed: March 2024

Person responsible for updating this policy: Hitendra sharma

Next Review Date: May 2025