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Lone Working Policy

Reviewed	January 2024 (minor revision June 2025)
Next review	January 2027

Introduction and need for a policy

This policy is designed to alert staff and volunteers to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks (appendix i). It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give everyone a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

Definition

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff and volunteers in the course of their duties work alone at the office, in their own homes, in the community, in the homes of individuals or in their own cars. They will be physically isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance.

Basic requirements for Volunteer Action

- Cover lone working situations in initial training
- Provide risk assessments for staff and volunteers
- Gather information from referral agencies on the potential risks involved in lone working with specific service users.
- Assess lone working issues when meeting potential service users and referrers for assessment prior to matching
- Pass on specific lone working information relating to the match to the volunteer prior to matching them

The office number is 01832 275433
Emergency contact number 07835 958683

The Volunteer Action Risk Assessment for Community Volunteers is on the web site, please check regularly as it is a live document and subject to revision. **www.volunteer-action.org.uk**. The Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually **and** whenever an issue arises.

APPENDIX i

Basic requirements for all Lone Workers

- Take care of your own safety and that of others affected by your actions or inactions
- Read and comply with the risk assessment and inform the office if a risk changes
- Inform the office of any incidents that occur
- If working alone at the office keep in regular touch via the chat function or phone. Only be at the office alone when a colleague is working elsewhere or make other arrangements for someone to know when you will be there and plan to return home.
- Make sure someone is aware of your movements and the time you intend to return to your home/base this could be your partner or a nominated individual. Ensure your partner or nominated individual is aware of the office telephone number and the emergency contact should you fail to return home.

If in doubt do not drive/visit. An appointment can always be rearranged.

Be aware of the environment

- Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
- Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order
- Check that electrical and other mechanical equipment (eg a wheelchair) is safe to use. Read the instructions for use, and ensure that faults are reported /dealt with.
- If your work takes you into areas which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates, arrange to check in when the visit is over.
- Ensure you are aware of an exit route should an emergency arise.
- Do not sit with your back to people

Be aware of yourself

- Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.
- Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

Be aware of other people

- Take note of their non-verbal signals.
- Be aware of their triggers.
- Do not enter a house where anyone is or appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
- Listen to them, and show them you are listening.
- Leave if the situation feels like it is getting out of control