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**Lone-working Policy**

**Policy Statement**

Our setting recognises that there may be occasions when our staff work alone as part of our service delivery. This policy is designed to educate staff as to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation and to provide a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

**Scope**

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

* Within this document, ‘lone working’ refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties:
  + work alone outside office hours;
  + attend training courses as part of their CPD;
  + undertake home visits; or
  + are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This situation may also arise when there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

Our principles for supporting lone workers include:

* A commitment to supporting staff and managers to establish and maintain safe working practices;
* Recognising and reducing the risks of lone working;
* A clear understanding of responsibilities;
* The priority placed on the safety of individuals above everything else;
* A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff working alone; and
* Providing equipment such as mobile phones.

**Procedures for lone working**

**Buildings**

* All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building and emergency exits are accessible;
* External doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone;
* When working alone there is access to a telephone and first aid kit;
* Ensure that sign-in and sign-out procedures are followed.
* If arriving first and there is any indication that the building has been broken into, staff call for assistance before entering the building.

**Personal Safety**

* Staff should avoid working alone if not necessary.
* Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and risk assessment is a sufficient safeguard in itself;
* Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
* Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the line manager.
* Staff must inform their Line Manager (or another identified person) when they will be working alone (including when undertaking home visits) giving details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when they are leaving;
* Communication, checking‐in and fallback arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and the Line Manager is responsible for agreeing to and facilitating these arrangements.
* If a member of staff does not report in as expected an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary;
* Staff working away from the setting should always ensure they have access to a mobile phone. Staff may use their mobile phone for this purpose. Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, in working order and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider;
* Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area.

**Risk Assessments**

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered:

* The environment – location, security, access;
* The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances;
* The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk;
* History – any previous incidents in similar situations;
* Any other special circumstances;
* All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary.  Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

**Monitoring and Review**

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager.