

LONE WORKER POLICY

1. Introduction

North Yorkshire Advocacy recognises that some staff and volunteers are required to work by themselves in the community without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or out of office hours.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, North Yorkshire Advocacy has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for employees and volunteers and unpaid Advocates when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employees and volunteers have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

To get some useful tips on personal safety North Yorkshire Advocacy recommends useful guidance sheets produced by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust which can be downloaded from: www.suzylamplugh.org.uk under Campaigns & Community.

2. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of North Yorkshire Advocacy staff, unpaid Advocates and trustees.

'Lone workers' includes:

Those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is working on the premises
- People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations
- People working outside normal office hours, e.g. cleaners

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- One worker is visiting another agency's premises or meeting venue
- One worker is making a home visit to an individual
- One worker is working from their own home.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to: -

- Increase staff and volunteers awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff and volunteers that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working;
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

4. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice; and
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed

Chief Executive and Lead Advocates are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy;
- Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees.
- Identify situations where people work alone and decide whether systems can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly;
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- Ensuring that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updating and refreshing this training as necessary;
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents;
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff and volunteers involved in any incident;
- Ensuring access to a mobile phone, and other personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable.

Employees are responsible for: -

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate;
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; and
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

5. Guidance for Risk Assessments of Lone Working

- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Are there adequate channels of communication in an emergency?
- Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Is any known risk attached to a client(s)?
- Has an alternative to a home visit been considered?
- Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged?
- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?
- Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?

6. Good Practice for Lone Workers

During their working hours, all staff and volunteers leaving the workplace (or home) should leave written details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back at base. If, in the course of a trip away from the office, plans change significantly, this must be communicated back to the office.(if the office is unmanned the Chief Executive or Lead Advocate must be contacted)

Arrangements should be made with the Chief executive or Lead Advocate to check that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task on time; telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague is essential.

Staff should avoid being left on their own with a client in their workplace, or leaving a colleague in this situation.

Staff should avoid meeting clients alone at the workplace.

- When this is unavoidable, staff must make a risk assessment and obtain the prior agreement of the Chief Executive or Lead Advocate who will make any arrangements to ensure their safety. This should be recorded in the bookings diary, giving contact details of the person who is being met.

Lone workers have access to a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.

Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.

Children and Vulnerable Adults – Please refer to the relevant Policies

- In general, staff should **never** work alone with a child.
- Staff should never transport a child on their own and should assess any risk before transporting a vulnerable adult alone.

7. Monitoring safety issues

Lone workers must report incidents such as accidents and near misses, including all incidents where they feel threatened, in the accident book. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

During supervision, managers will ask people working on their own whether there are any safety concerns that aren't being addressed. Lone workers are encouraged to seek help and advice if any safety concerns arise.

Reviewed 2016