

Lone Working Policy and Procedures.

LONE WORKING POLICY

Introduction

The following policy and procedure has been written to minimise risks for **the** Above and Beyond team members working alone.

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 it is the employer's duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risk where necessary. Employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

The Directors of Above and Beyond will regularly review the Policy and Procedure to ensure its implementation and to ensure that it is relevant to working practice.

Definition of Lone Working/Lone Workers

Lone workers are those who work by themselves, for example:

- **People in fixed establishments (The Base or any other establishment where we have permission to use or a hire arrangement)**
 - A team member working alone in an office or other base.
 - People working outside normal hours*, for example, staff working late etc.
*normal working hours are defined as 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday
- **Mobile workers and volunteers working away from their fixed base**
 - A team member who is required to travel alone to and from a fixed base to another place of work or to meetings etc.

Working practices will require personnel to work one to one with children, young people **and families**.

Keeping yourself safe

It is your responsibility to keep yourself safe. Staff and volunteers should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.

- **Staff and volunteers** will never give out to young people **and families** their home address or personal landline phone numbers. If ever a young person or **family** discovers such information, the worker should discuss with **a Director** how best to deal with this.
- Do not have any communication with young people **and families** through any Social Media. Do not become 'friends' with **young person or family** – Above and Beyond have an active,

monitored closed Facebook group – ask young people and their families to join the group – you can also add to the Above and Beyond Facebook content. Ask a Director for more information.

- **Staff and volunteers are not permitted to** take a young person to their home address in any circumstances.
- Contact between staff, **volunteers** and young people will only take place in ‘work’ hours. a **worker or volunteer** is expected to inform a Director of when they are working and where they will be.
- If a member of staff **or volunteer** encounters a young person **or family** in their ‘own’ time pleasantries etc should be exchanged but ‘work’ issues should not be discussed.
- Dress appropriately and sensibly.
- Try not to hold one to one support sessions at homes – use public spaces such as cafes or local youth centres. Think visibility.
- If working at the office do not have the door closed.

Staff Behaviour towards young people

- Team members will never lend young people money, or give young people money from their ‘own’ pocket.
- Team members will never sell young people or their families anything, no matter how good the bargain may be to the young person.
- Team members must never buy anything from a young person or their families
- Team members may give young people things ‘for free’, but strict adherence should always be given to health and safety issues (especially when such gifts include electrical goods).
- Team members should only generally accept gifts from young people (and then only if this is at the young person’s initiation!) **at special holiday time such as Christmas** or at a time when the **team member**/young person’s working relationship is ending. Such gifts should be ‘proportionate’; if in doubt at any time what this might mean the worker should consult a **Director** as to whether receiving such a gift would be an appropriate thing to do. Occasionally it is acknowledged that gifts could be given for good reason outside of these times but they should always be proportionate and regular gift giving should be sensitively but politely discouraged and refused.
- Receiving thank you, birthday or Christmas cards from young people is acceptable. Above and Beyond do allow a team member to give a young person a small birthday gift – this is limited

to no more than the £10. Such gifts should be given by the worker, but also on behalf of Above and Beyond. Thus, the gift or card would say 'from Fred Bloggs, and all at Above and Beyond'. **Any other cards** would be similarly signed.

- Staff **and Volunteers** will not be complicit in buying/giving young people and **families** things which could be illegal or harmful to their health. This will thus include alcohol, drugs and cigarettes.
- Staff **and Volunteers** will not use aggressive (verbal or physical) language either directly to, or in front of, young people and families. This will especially apply when young people themselves are irate or causing a member of staff and volunteer to feel irate. Instead the worker will act as clearly and calmly as possible at all times.

Relationship Building

Because of the nature of our work, it will be accepted that Above and Beyond Workers should behave as a 'human being' towards young people, and that in so doing giving out a level of personal information or expressing certain viewpoints will be an inevitable part of developing such relationships. Without this young people could view staff mechanically and without respect.

- However, workers should always behave towards young people in a professional way, bearing in mind the worker is always the professional service giver and the young person the service receiver.
- Workers will not bring their own needs into a conversation, nor ever leave the young person in a situation where they are worried or concerned about the staff member.
- Workers will never form sexual or personal relationships with a young person whilst that young person is in receipt of our services. Should such a relationship develop with an ex service user, no matter what their age, this must be discussed with a Director.
- Workers will never tell young people that it is 'ok' to share secrets. Above and Beyond's confidentiality and child protection procedures must be followed at all times.
- Workers should remain aware of the needs and issues of the client group with which we are dealing, and the possibility in all such relationship building that certain things could be misconstrued or misinterpreted. Thus, whilst lone working for example is an expectation of the job, awareness should always be shown towards leaving oneself in compromising situations e.g. seeing young people in bedrooms, condoning illegal behaviour by direct or indirect response, talking in an over familiar way about personal issues etc. Whilst such situations could be 'sprung' on a member of staff e.g. during a home visit finding a young person taking drugs/being drunk/inappropriately dressed, and thus initially unavoidable, the worker should find a pragmatic reason to take themselves out of that situation asap, discussing the reasons for so doing with a young person then, or a later date.

- Workers should be aware of the potential misconstruing of issues around actual physical contact with young people. In general, therefore such contact should be avoided. However, seeing someone in considerable distress or upset, it may only be human to not only be sympathetic but a light touch on the arm or shoulder may naturally indicate empathy and fellow feeling. However once again awareness should be a key factor on the part of the worker and any such contact should be professional and in the context of a worker/young person, not friend to friend or parent to child capacity.

6. Managers Responsibilities and Lone working include:

- Assess risks for home visits - this achieved through the referral form which seeks information about known risk. When we get the referral and risks are identified enquiries will be made to gather more information.
- Make sure that all workers are satisfied with the safety measures that are in place.
- Hold regular meetings to talk about and evaluate work practices. These meetings will include professional supervision of cases where risk will be assessed.
- Make sure that staff are aware of their own safety and they understand that they should leave a situation if they do not feel safe.
- Make sure staff get induction training and shadow an experienced member of staff on their first home visit.
- Give guidance about how to carry out a home visit and give them all the necessary information they need.
- Give staff guidance about emergency procedures prior to a home visit.

7. Home visiting

Before you set out:

- Get information about the family and the location you are visiting.
- Wherever possible, phone to make an appointment for visits. Make sure that the families you are visiting know who you are and what your role is. Make active use of the Above and Beyond appointment card
- If you are unable to keep the appointment at the agreed time, let the family and a Director know.
- Make sure that a manager knows about who, where and when you are visiting. Inform them of the time you expect to finish. Text or phone the manager to inform them you have completed and have left the home.
- If you do not check back with the manager by a specified time we will contact you to make sure you are alright. This should be in place for every visit. Make sure that any changes to your itinerary are known by your line manager.
- If you are uneasy about making a visit ask your line manager for extra support, for example go with a colleague or arrange for someone to call you at a set time.
- If possible, schedule visits to vulnerable areas for particular times of the day, such as morning when parents are around taking children to school, and during daylight hours.

- Dress appropriately for the area or family to be visited, particularly in areas where women are well covered up. Do not wear expensive looking jewellery.
- Wear shoes and clothes that do not hinder movement or your ability to run away in an emergency.
- Make sure that your means of communication (for example mobile phone) and any personal alarms are working and accessible.
- If you drive, make sure that your vehicle has enough petrol, is well maintained and that you are covered by appropriate insurance.

8. When arriving at a family's home:

- Assess the situation as you approach and be prepared to abandon or postpone the visit if you doubt your own safety.
- To ensure safe working practices stand well clear of the doorway after ringing or knocking on the front door.
- Always wear your Above and Beyond ID badge.
- Do not enter a location if you feel uneasy about your safety. Make an excuse not to go in if the person answering the door gives you any cause for concern, for example say you have a colleague waiting for you in the car.
- When you enter the building, follow the occupants rather than going in first.
- Stay aware of the behaviour of everyone in the house. Look for any signs or signals that may indicate a potential problem.
- Treat parents/ carers courteously, remember that you are a guest in their home. Have a non-judgmental approach, show sensitivity and give value to each family's culture and circumstances.
- Be aware of professional boundaries and the relationship with the family.
- Refer to the policies and procedures about confidentiality and child protection concerns.
- Be aware of time and the family's commitments when on visits and arranging further visits.
- If there is an apparently aggressive animal in the house, ask the householder to put the animal in a separate room. If in doubt, do not enter the house or arrange for an office visit.
- If you are uncomfortable around any animal, be it aggressive or not, ask for the animal to be put in another room during the visit.

9. Emergency procedures

While incidents are happening:

- Put your own safety first. Leave a situation if you feel unsafe. Professional codes of conduct do not want you to risk your own safety. It is better to leave and find other ways of providing support to the family.
- If you are sure the aggression is not directed towards you personally and the person simply needs to let off steam at someone about their situation, let the person have their say. Calm them down and then try to talk about the situation and help them to think of ways to deal with the problem.
- Do not use control and restraint techniques. The use of any force by staff could be interpreted as an assault.
- Call for assistance from the Police 999 or a Director
- Recognise the limits of your own ability to deal with a situation and the time when it becomes wise to leave.

10. After incidents have happened:

- Allow yourself time to recover and, if possible, seek practical support from a Director. Even after minor accidents, feelings may be difficult to control and may affect your ability to deal with any further problems that arise. This is natural.
- Contact a Director to inform them of the incident.
- Fill out an Incident Report Form – make sure you stick to the facts.