



LONE WORKING POLICY

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Introduction

NE Youth recognises its responsibility to assess the risks to lone workers and to take steps to avoid, or control, the risks where necessary. This policy outlines the organisation's responsibilities and the necessary practical considerations for all staff involved in lone working on behalf of the organisation.

Definitions

Within this document lone working refers to the situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in a building/at an event but the nature of the building/event may create isolated areas.

The Health and Safety Executive defines two lone workers as:

- 'Workers in fixed establishments' – e.g. a staff member primarily based in one building
- 'Mobile workers' – e.g. a member of staff attending meetings at venues different to their normal base

Examples of Lone Working Situations

Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples of lone working which workers may encounter whilst carrying out their duties:

- Being the only worker in the office
- Attending a meeting at venue away from your normal base
- Travelling alone during the course of your duties
- Transporting a young person
- Conducting a sensitive conversation with a young person in a separate room or venue during an open access session

Lone working with young people should be kept to an absolute minimum outside of programmes where lone working is the focus and robust risk assessments are in place - it is never acceptable to

commence group work or open access work with young people without at least two workers being

Legislation

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places duties of employers and employees under Sections 2–9. NE Youth, as the employer, has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, volunteers (referred to as ‘workers’ in this policy) and service users. The requirements regarding safe systems of work, health and safety policies, information, training and instruction, and a safe working environment are particularly important.

Whilst NE Youth will do all that is within its powers to ensure the health and safety of its staff and volunteers, health and safety at work is the responsibility of each and every individual. It is the duty of each worker to take “reasonable care” of their own and other people's welfare and to report any situation which may pose a threat to the well-being of any other person.

Practical Arrangements for Considering Lone Working

For each instance of lone working, a risk assessment of the situation should be carried out. The risk assessment should take in to account factors including;

- Where the lone working is due to take place (the environment)
- Who the worker will be meeting with, including if service users are involved
- The venue where the lone worker will carry out their duties
- The nature of the work being carried out
- Knowledge of any risk factors associated with the environment, other people who will be there or contentious issues which may be raised during the course of the meeting
- The potential for a negative response
- Any prior knowledge from colleagues

All risk assessment results must be shared with the worker's line manager before the lone working commences. If risks cannot be minimised to a safe level, the lone working should not go ahead. Risk assessments for regular work with service users should be reviewed to assess suitability and continuation if any behaviour or information comes to light which alters the scope of the original risk assessment.

What to Consider when Developing the Risk Assessment

The following list should be considered when developing risk assessments in anticipation of lone working situations, and by workers whilst carrying out lone working, on behalf of the organisation:

- **Who else is aware of where you are and what you will be doing?** In practical terms, the worker should ensure that a designated colleague is aware of when the lone working is due to take place, what the nature of the duties are, where the worker will be, who they are meeting with and when the lone working is due to finish.
- **Does the worker have adequate means of communication?** All workers carrying out lone working should have access to a telephone to call for help if the need arises. Lone 'mobile workers' should ensure that they have access to a charged mobile phone.
- **Does the worker/colleagues have existing knowledge of the meeting venue?** Whenever possible, lone workers should conduct their duties in public areas and have knowledge of the environment included in the risk assessment. When the worker does not have prior knowledge of the environment, as much information as possible should be gathered to ensure that the risk assessment carried out is as relevant to the situation as possible.
- **Does the worker/colleagues have existing knowledge regarding who the lone worker will be meeting?** It is important to take any prior knowledge of individuals into account when conducting the risk assessment. Is the individual(s) known to the organisation? Is there any known history of violent or threatening behaviour? When there is a known history of threatening or violent behaviour, lone working should **not** take place.
- **What is the nature of the lone working?** Workers should consider the duties which need to be carried out whilst lone working and assess whether or not they are suitable for one member of staff. For instance, will the worker be conveying information which may provoke a potentially negative response, how many people will be involved and what will be happening?
- **How will the worker get to their destination?** The worker should consider how they will get to their destination. This includes mapping out public transport arrangements in advance or ensuring that personal transport is in a good state of repair and fit for use in line with NE Youth's Transportation Policy.

Practical guidelines for safe lone working

Workers involved in lone working should carry out a 'dynamic risk assessment' when entering a situation and should consider the following, non-exhaustive list, of considerations:

- Be alert to the situation you are entering
- Place yourself in a position to make a quick exit if necessary i.e. where possible, be the closest individual to an exit and be aware of how to operate the door
- Have an awareness of the location of all entrances and exits
- Be aware of the positioning of items, including those belonging to the lone worker (scissors, etc.) that could be used as a weapon
- Make a judgement as to the best possible course of action based on how the meeting/activity is going i.e. whether to continue or to withdraw
- Avoid walking in front of the person you are meeting, and whenever possible, do not position yourself in a corner or in a location where it may be difficult to escape
- Remain calm and focused during an incident in order to make rational judgements

Near misses and incidents relating to lone working

All near misses and/or incidents relating to lone working should be recorded on the NE Youth Incident Report Form and submitted to the Deputy CEO. The worker involved should ensure that they provide as much detail about the situation as possible, when completing the form, so that any lessons learned can be put in to practice for future lone working situations and so that any necessary follow up actions are completed.