

Working Alone Safety Policy & Procedure



Title of Policy: Working Alone Safety

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Introduction

Allsorts Support Services CIC & Allsorts Community (Which will be referred to as the organisation throughout this policy).

We want all service users to have successful and fulfilling lives.

This policy document should be considered in conjunction with all other relevant duties, policies and guidance.

Aim of the Policy

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning the organisation's approach to working alone safety for all staff.

The policy has the following aims:

- To maintain a safe and healthy environment for all service users and employees.
- To comply with applicable laws and legislation.

This policy is informed by the organisation's understanding of its statutory duties as an employer.

Having effective, up to date and easy to follow policies and written documents minimises risk to service user's, employees and the organisation itself and can ensure that statutory requirements, standards and regulations are understood and provides a framework to monitor compliance. To ensure the organisation provides a robust and clear framework, the organisation has developed this policy to manage processes to achieve compliance and effective co-ordination across the organisation.

Through this policy the organisation will ensure that there is a process whereby all policy documentation is consistent. In addition, there will be an effective process for managing and reviewing policies and any associated written documents on a regular basis, to ensure that documentation remains legally compliant and actions are undertaken in a safe and efficient manner.

This policy will ensure that the organisation meets its legal responsibilities and provides a clear organisational approach to documentation.

Policy Statement

The organisation will provide a structure for the development of policies and other written documents.

This will include:

- Ensuring that staff has access to the most recent copies of the organisation's documents.
- Establishing a control procedure for all policies and other written documents to ensure that those in use are current and relevant.
- Ensuring that the equality impact assessment process is completed on all policies and procedures.

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- Ensuring systems exist to monitor the use of, and compliance with, all written documents
- Developing and maintaining a central database of policies, procedures and written documents
- Maintaining an archive of past written documents, for reference and to meet legal requirements.

The organisation will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees and volunteers who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety. Measures will also be adopted to protect anyone else affected by solitary working.

Solitary working is not illegal, but it exposes employees and others to certain hazards. The employer's intention is either to entirely remove the risks from these hazards or, where complete elimination is not possible, to reduce them to an acceptable level. The organisation has developed policies and procedures to control the risks and protect employees, and employees should know and follow them.

The person responsible for the implementation of this policy is the manager, and the employee is essential to its success.

Definition of Lone Working

Staff in establishments where:

- Only one person is working on the premises
- A person is working separately from others within the same building

Staff working away from their base:

- Visiting or working with members of the public or service users
- Carrying out duties in the public domain which carry an element of risk.

Arrangements for securing the Health and Safety of Employees

Managers will be responsible for assessing the risks of working alone, and record on a organisation Risk Assessment Form and for devising safe working practices ensuring that the risks are minimised. These assessments will include the identification of hazards from, for example, means of access and/or egress, environment, service user's home, in the community, substances etc.

It is also important to emphasise that the individual who is working alone has a personal responsibility to ensure that they take all necessary steps to minimise the risk.

Procedure for Out-of-Hours Lone Working

The organisation manager will arrange local procedures for Out-of-Hours Lone Working.

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Training

The organisation manager will arrange for any Staff Learning and Development for the organisation to include personal safety as part of the organisation induction training. The focus of training is the management of personal safety and prevention of incidents.

Reporting of Incidents

The organisation requires that all incidents are reported by the individual concerned immediately following the event, using the organisation's Incident Reporting Procedures.

Responsibilities Managers

- To ensure that this policy is implemented by all members of staff and volunteers
- To ensure that adequate monitoring is undertaken to identify the efficacy of the policy

To ensure that every member of staff who comes into contact with services users, members of the public, or work alone is trained as a minimum in

- Personal Safety, De-escalation techniques and Break-away techniques and to ensure that this training is mandatory
- To ensure that all incidents are reported and recorded using the organisation's established systems.
- To ensure that staff making occasional home visits follow this policy.
- To ensure that all staff are trained in all other relevant and related the organisation's policies e.g. Violence to Staff, Harassment etc.
- To ensure that Risk Assessments as detailed in this policy are conducted and reviewed where necessary, including for all staff whose work takes them out into the Community.
- To ensure that this local arrangements are reviewed regularly.
- To provide adequate resources, staffing and equipment to implement measures required under the risk assessment to allow safe working.

Responsibilities of the Manager

- To make sure all members of staff are aware of the procedure for Out-of-Hours Lone working that is operational within the organisation.
- To ensure that appropriate clinical, environmental and activity based risk assessments are undertaken as detailed in this policy and that such assessments are shared with the whole team
- To ensure that staff comply with safety measures and procedures determined by these risk assessments
- To ensure the provision for regular review and discussion of reporting policies and guidelines at local level with the work team
- To provide clear guidelines about the types of incident that should be reported. Including verbal as well as physical aggression from whatever source, and incidents that were potentially dangerous but were resolved (Near Misses)

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- To communicate clear procedures for incident reporting to all staff
- To provide support on a regular basis for staff who encounter aggression through supervision, peer review or Resolve
- To require and facilitate sharing of information between different community teams, and between hospital wards and community teams, when staff safety may be compromised
- To facilitate sharing of information with GPs, Social Services and other agencies.
- To ensure staff are aware of how to identify risks on the electronic patient record where this is available.

Debriefing

The Manager must ensure that a debriefing session is organised following any untoward incident or any incident which was potentially dangerous (near miss). It is important that members of staff receive support following such incidents and that the lessons learnt from the experience are shared with other members of staff to prevent these incidents occurring again. The process of debriefing also encourages members of staff to take responsibility for ensuring that they take on board the benefit of others' unfortunate experiences.

Responsibilities of Employees

- The onus is on individuals to take their own safety seriously.
- Check that you are familiar with staff procedures which relate to employee safety.
- Ensure that you undertake the training provided for you by the organisation in personal safety, the prevention and therapeutic management of violence and aggression and risk management.
- Report any untoward incidents, accidents or near misses to the manager.
- Familiarise yourselves with the organisation policies and all risk assessments available.

Guidelines for Community Staff on Working Alone in Safety Policy

Introduction

These guidelines have been developed to increase the safety of all staff working alone in the Community. However, professionals must take all reasonable steps to minimise risks.

The policy and guidelines provide a basis for the improved risk management of patients, relatives and carers.

Risk Management:

Predicting risk - through assessment and history taking.

Managing risk - through joint working, self-reporting and increased communications systems.

Recording risk – as per the organisation incident recording and monitoring.

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Communicating risk – potential of new information system.

Ability to identify when staff members are overdue, establishing local protocols for Out of Hours working.

Routine Procedures

Assessing Risk

Staff should gain as much information as possible about the service user prior to visiting;

- Check clinical risk assessment.
- Check the service user's record where available.
- Speak to any other professionals / relatives who know the service user.
- Prior to an initial assessment, every effort must be made to identify if this new assessment poses any danger or risk.

Ensuring Known Whereabouts

The organisation should ensure that the staff member Administrator/buddy/nominated person knows where they are by displaying a full flight plan detailing;

- Service user to be visited
- Locations to be visited (if not service users home address)
- Anticipated time of return (if they're delayed they should contact the staff member Administrator/buddy/nominated person and ask that the flight plan be updated.)
- Contacting the Team Administrator/buddy/nominated person if they do not intend to return after their final visit.
- Contacting the Team Administrator/buddy/nominated person at least every three hours.
- Additionally the make, colour and registration of the car they are using should be recorded and made available to the Team Administrator/buddy/nominated person

Procedure if Staff have not Returned at a Given Time

- If not back within 60 minutes of the specified time: The organisation Team Administrator /buddy/nominated person should inform the manager who should then;
- Contact the member of staff on their mobile phone and home telephone number.
- Where possible make telephone contact with service user on the flight plan.
- Arrange for two staff to visit the service user who are not contactable.
- Contact the police to request search using flight plan and car registration information.
- Inform the line manager of missing personnel and actions taken.
- Complete Incident Report.

Communications

Staff should carry mobile phones with them at all times and ensure that they are switched on. If they need to switch the telephones off for any reason, they should inform the Team Administrator when switching off and when they switch on again.

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Initial Assessments

Where ever possible, initial assessments / meetings should be held in the Service Users own home.

Joint Visits

Staff should carry out joint visits and / or see the service user at an alternative venue when visiting service users who are:

- New assessments, unless negligible risk has already been identified.
- Not known to them and require an urgent visit
- Identified as a risk through clinical risk assessment:
- To themselves through neglect or self-harm.
- To others through threats of violence.

Enlisting Police Assistance

If after carrying out all the above precautions staff still have concerns about visiting a client and a visit is essential contact the local police.

Inform the police where and when they are visiting.

What their concerns are e.g. risks of violence?.

What assistance they require e.g. police escort or an officer in the vicinity.

Ask for an incident no. (This can be quoted when assistance is required)

Procedure for Staff Experiencing Difficulty in a service user's Home

Staff should try to contact the Team Administrator or the police by phone. Stating their location and if possible what assistance they require.

Staff subject to physical danger should only employ 'breakaway' techniques as a last resort, where de-escalation has failed and a clear escape route is available.

- Obtain as much information as possible about the service user, their families and the contact locations.
- Give service users information about your role and the planned appointment so that they know what to expect.
- Be aware of your own safety at all times while travelling and at contact locations.
- Continually reassess the risks and do not enter any location where you do not feel safe.
- Follow team procedures for keeping in touch with base, checking out and checking in at agreed times.
- Follow procedures for "signing off" at the end of your work period
- You must prepare a flight plan for your working day/week and ensure the Team Administrator/buddy/nominated person has this.

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Whilst travelling:

- Allow adequate time for the journey.
- Lock your vehicle whilst driving.
- Park as near as practicable to the address to be visited, in such a position as to be able to drive straight off.
- Avoid as far as possible, waste ground, isolated pathways and subways particularly at night.
- Carry your identification with you and show it when you arrive at your destination.
- You must report all incidents to the Manager.

All policies and other written documents

It is the responsibility of the Policy administrator to ensure that when a document is revised, a copy of the original is forwarded to the Manager.

Once revised policies and other written documents are approved, the Manager will pass on to all employees.

Staff will be notified of newly approved/revised policies, procedures and guiding documents within one week of approval by the manager.

Non-compliance with this Policy

In the unlikely event of a member of staff not respecting the policy, the organisation's manager should attempt to resolve the situation informally in the first instance. Ultimately, repeated breaches of the policy will result in disciplinary procedures and may lead to dismissal.

Policy Implementation

It is the responsibility of the Policy administrator to keep all policies and procedures up to date. The manager will identify how any policy or written document will be implemented. This will include liaising directly with the policy administrator in order to ensure that staff training requirements have been highlighted. Overall responsibility for ensuring the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed rests with the organisation's Manager.

Information on the policy will be:

- Circulated to all staff
- Provided to all new employees

Training

All new staff will be required to read all policies as part of their induction process.

Review Process

The Manager requires that certain policies must be reviewed annually. These are:

- Safeguarding policy
- All other policy documents must be reviewed no later than three years after initial approval and regularly reviewed on the same basis thereafter.

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- Documents will be reviewed more frequently if changes in legislation or the service requires it.
- It is the responsibility of the policy administrator will ensure that documents are reviewed in line with their review dates.

Where a review necessitates considerable change to the previous document, the process will be treated as though it is a new document.

Minor amendments can be notified by distributing copies of the policy to appropriate recipients, with a cover sheet with the changes are and their implications. This sheet should be kept with the original.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or at an earlier date if changes are required due to changes in government advice.