

Adopted: 25th April 2017
Reviewed: February 2023

LONE WORKING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to set out Age UK Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's (AUKCAP) policy, and its procedures which shall apply to staff working alone.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all AUKCAP employees and volunteers.

For the purpose of this policy, Lone Workers are employees or volunteers who are required to work on their own without close or direct supervision, either away from the charity's premises or who are alone in an office, day centre or other building. This includes employees working at another employer's premises, or working close to other people who are not AUKCAP employees. Throughout this document, reference to 'staff' or 'employees' will be taken to include 'volunteers'.

Compliance with this policy is a mandatory requirement of AUKCAP.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The charity as an employer, owes a duty of care to its employees and is required, by law and so far as is reasonably practicable, to protect staff from risks to their health and safety.

The **Board of Trustees** and the **Chief Executive** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Lone Working Policy and associate procedures comply with current legal requirements.
- Ensure sufficient resources are made available for the management of lone working.

The **Deputy CEO** is responsible for:

- The safe management of lone working across all services, directing and deploying resources accordingly.

- Reporting concerns relating to lone working and personal safety to the H&S Manager

The **H&S Manager** is responsible for:

- Assessing the risks to personal safety arising from lone working for all of the organisation's activities, and taking all steps to ensure that such risks are eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Producing the Lone Working Policy and associated procedures, in consultation with all relevant employees.
- Leading the investigation into any incidents arising from lone working.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of all control measures to reduce the risk from lone working, and responding to all concerns raised by employees.
- Providing lone working and personal safety training for all employees.

Each **Line Manager** is responsible for:

- Ensuring the lone working procedures for their service are adhered to.
- Adjusting working arrangements in consultation with the employee concerned, where an employee's medical condition significantly increases the risk of harm when working alone.
- Monitoring the risk to their team's personal safety posed by service users, and adjusting lone working procedures in good time where there is reason to believe this risk has changed.
- Sharing information about risks associated with service users with employees where appropriate, including when utilising relief staff or employees from other services.
- Bringing to the attention of the H&S Manager any changes required to the lone working policy or procedure because of changes to their service/area of responsibility, or any incidents which indicate current procedures are no longer effective.

Every **employee** is responsible for:

- Informing their line manager of any medical conditions that may put them at increased risk of harm when working alone
- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others, including refraining from taking unnecessary risks when working alone
- Complying with this policy and any associated lone working procedures
- Reporting to their line manager any incidents affecting their personal safety using the accident reporting procedures
- Bringing to the attention of their line manager any concerns related to lone working and personal safety, including any changes in service users they are

supporting with which may increase the risk to the employee's health and safety

- Completing lone working and personal safety training at induction and refreshing this training when required.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Risks

There are several risks associated with lone working, depending on the nature of the work activity being carried out:

- Risk of violence resulting in injury and psychological trauma
- Risk of worsening health conditions or poorer outcomes in the event of an accident or ill-health, due to the lack of help immediately available.
- Risk of injury relating to operating machinery and working at height without assistance.
- Restricted access to and egress from buildings, which may lead to entrapment, injury or assault.
- Impact on mental health such as feelings of isolation and loneliness, which can increase the risk of stress, depression, negative coping strategies and associated ill-health.

General principles for lone working

- Prior to lone working, as much information as possible should be gathered about the potential risks to personal safety, including previous history of the service user and known hazards at the location.
- Where there are potential risks to personal safety, lone working is not permitted without an agreed plan to manage these risks. This plan must be kept under review and amended should there be indications that the level of risk has increased.
- Indications that the level of risk has increased includes changes to a service user's behaviour and habits, unknown visitors at the service user's property, changes to the property such as signs of deliberate damage, deterioration of conditions, reports of incidents at or near to the property/work location.
- Where the risk to personal safety is significant, lone working is not permitted under any circumstances.
- Lone working is not permitted where work activities include working at height outside, or manual handling operations where the task has been identified as requiring a minimum of two people to carry it out safely.
- When lone working, employees must prioritise their own safety and avoid taking unnecessary risks. They must seek help and support from their line manager or other AUKCAP managers in the event of an emergency or difficult situation and not attempt to tackle the incident alone.

- Specific lone working procedures for each service are documented in the Lone Working Service Specific Procedures. It is the responsibility of all employees to familiarize themselves and adhere to the relevant procedures for their role. Line Managers must ensure that the procedures are followed at all times and respond to any instances of non-compliance.

Calendar Management

- Where practicable, each individual member of staff should maintain an Outlook calendar, to include the names, addresses and telephone numbers of clients being visited at home or who have appointments at the office or day centre and of meetings and other events. Contact numbers for meetings and other events must be noted.
- If it is not practicable to maintain a detailed daily calendar due to frequent and short notice variations in visit schedules, staff should ensure that they rigorously adhere to their service's contact arrangements. In addition, their line managers must be made aware in advance of any unusual activities including first visits, out of hours visits and ad hoc events and the relevant visit/event details shared.
- Individual's calendars are to be made accessible to all to view, and must be kept up to date at all times.
- It will be the responsibility of individual members of staff to maintain the calendar in the manner prescribed and of the Line Manager to ensure that this procedure is being observed.

Emergency Contacts

- AUKCAP will issue to every employee a list of 'out of hours' contact numbers. These will be for emergency use by family and friends who may be concerned about the safety of a member of the charity's staff after the end of normal working hours.
- The emergency contact will arrange for the relevant calendar to be accessed in order to ascertain the itinerary of that employee.

Keys and Keyholders

- A set of keys to each office and day centre will be maintained at the charity's South Fens office.
- The staff named as out of hours contacts will each have access to the charity's South Fens office outside normal hours.

Name Badges

- All staff will be issued with a name badge which they will be required to wear whilst at work.

- Employees are discouraged from wearing such name badges in public places.

Personal information

- Staff are discouraged from sharing personal information with third parties with whom they come into contact in the course of their work for AUKCAP.
- In particular staff are not encouraged to give their home address or telephone number to third parties.
- Staff are also discouraged from discussing details of their personal life, for example their home circumstances, with service users.

LONE WORKING PROCEDURES

The following are the procedures which will be followed by staff working alone in different situations.

1. LONE WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY

Where a service user is already known to AUKCAP:

- Where no adverse circumstances have been previously reported, the risk may be deemed to be low. When carrying out visits to clients in this category, employees must follow the arrangements outlined for their service in the Lone Working Service Specific Procedures document. Employees must continue to dynamically risk assess the situation and report immediately to their Line Manager any changes that may indicate the risk level has changed.
- Under no circumstances whatsoever should a member of AUKCAP staff visit a service user at home where a risk has been previously identified or suspected without prior discussion with their Line Manager.
- In these circumstances the member of staff should discuss with their Line Manager the need for a home visit. If possible an arrangement should be made to meet the service user at an AUKCAP office or day centre where other members of staff will be present.
- Where it is not possible for a service user to attend an AUKCAP office, the Line Manager and member of staff will consider other arrangements to reduce the risk. For example, by two members of staff visiting together or one member of staff visiting with a third party known to the service user, such as another professional or a friend of the service user.
- If the employee and/or Line Manager are not satisfied that the risk may be suitably reduced, no home visit shall take place. The Line Manager will report the circumstances of this decision to the Chief Operating Officer.

Where the service user is not already known to AUKCAP:

- It is important that as much information as possible is gathered during the referral process to make an informed decision about the potential risk of harm. This information must include previous incidences of violent or aggressive behaviour by the service user or other occupants, mental ill health, presence of animals, hoarding and other safety concerns within the property.
- If the member of staff taking the referral believes there is cause for concern, these should be shared with the relevant Line Manager prior to a home visit being made. The Line Manager will consider the information available and will discuss with the member of staff alternatives to a home visit, for example the service user attending an AUKCAP office or day centre.
- Where it is not possible for a service user to attend an AUKCAP office, the Line Manager and member of staff will consider other arrangements to reduce the risk. For example, by two members of staff visiting together or one member of staff visiting with a third party known to the service user, such as another professional or a friend of the service user.
- In circumstances where the Line Manager and/or employee feel that the risk remains unacceptable, then no home visit should be made, and the circumstances of this decision reported to the Chief Operating Officer.

To read more around subject of Personal Safety at Work please refer to Suzy Lamplugh Trust website via the following link [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) .

2. WORKING ALONE IN AN OFFICE, DAY CENTRE OR OTHER BUILDING

Wherever possible staff and volunteers will avoid working alone in a building either during or after working hours. However, where this cannot be avoided when other staff may not be available, or where staff wish to work beyond normal working hours, the following procedures must be followed:

- Before being left alone, staff must ensure that there is no unauthorised person present in the building/office.
- External doors at day centres should be locked, having regard to the need to escape in an emergency. The key to an external door will not be left in the lock on the inside of the door.
- Office doors should be secured so that entry is only possible with a key fob/key code as applicable.
- Where one is available, the lone working safety device should be worn and switched on during all periods of lone working.
- Members of the public are not permitted access to offices and day centres after normal working hours.

- When the lone working is unexpected and unplanned, the member of staff must alert their line manager or a colleague that they are working alone. Upon leaving the building or upon being joined by a colleague the member of staff will inform their line manager or colleague that they are no longer working alone.

3. TRAVELLING

When travelling to, from and for work, staff must:

- Plan their route before setting off.
- Keep their vehicle in good condition with sufficient fuel.
- Keep the doors of their vehicle locked when driving, and ensure any valuables are stored out of sight, preferably in the boot.
- Ensure they park in well-lit or busy areas, and plan their route back to their vehicle carefully, particularly if it will be dark.
- Do not give lifts or accept lifts from people they do not know, or they do not know well, including service users.
- If using public transport, they should wait in well-lit areas where there are other people around. They should sit near the driver on the bus or guard on the train if possible.
- If using a taxi, they should ensure it is a licensed taxi from a reliable firm. Where possible, they should pre-book the taxi and then inform a colleague or friend of the taxi firm's name and number.

4. HOME WORKING

When working from home, employees are classed as lone workers and as such are vulnerable to work-related stress, social isolation and depression. Employees working from home should:

- Check in with their line manager and/or colleagues at the start of their working day via a brief message on Teams.
- Discuss with their line manager any concerns relating to the impact of working from home on their mental wellbeing and strategies for managing these.

5. REPORTING

- All employees must report any concerns regarding lone working to their Line Manager, including any changes to existing risk levels and suggestions for improvements to the procedures.

- All employees are required to report immediately to their Line Manager, or if after normal hours, to a named emergency contact, any incident where the individual believes his/her health or safety had been compromised due to lone working.
- All concerns and incidents will be investigated by the Service Manager in conjunction with the Health & Safety Manager, and where a full investigation is required, the findings will be reported to the Board and Chief Operating Officer.

6. VOLUNTEERS

Exceptions

AUKCAP does not expect that volunteers will be required to work alone and unsupervised in a building or day centre. However should this situation arise then the procedures outlined above for working alone in an office, day centre or other building shall apply.

Initial assessment visits will usually be undertaken by a member of staff. However, where, by mutual agreement, volunteers undertake initial assessment visits the procedure outlined above for working in the community shall apply.

Training and Awareness

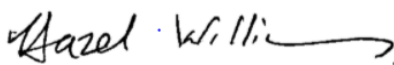
Information on lone working procedures is included in the Volunteer Handbook, which is issued to all volunteers at the point of recruitment. In addition, training on personal safety is included in volunteer induction training.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed every 24 months, unless earlier review is required due to changes in relevant legislation or if areas of concern are highlighted by staff or volunteers, or following any serious incidents.

Lone Working Policy & Procedures approved: 12.02.2021 (Date)

Signed by Chair of Trustees



Version Control Tracker

VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	COMMENTS
1.0	May 2019	SAM BURTON	Policy created.
2.0	January 2021	LIZ WRIGHT	Scheduled review.
2.1	October 2021	LIZ WRIGHT	References to County Office removed.
3.0	February 2023	LIZ WRIGHT	Scheduled review. Roles and responsibilities updated. Explanation of risks included. General principles added. Home working adding.