

Adopted: 25th April 2017

WORKING ALONE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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.

DEFINITION

Lone workers are staff who are required to work on their own and unsupervised, either away from the charity's premises or who are alone in an office, day centre or other building.

PRINCIPLES

AUKCAP's lone worker policy and procedures shall be influenced by a number of fundamental principles, as follows:

- ***Duty of Care***
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.
- ***Best practice***
AUKCAP will use its best endeavours to ensure that the working practices required of its staff and volunteers demonstrate the charity's commitment to the safety, security and well-being of staff and volunteers. The requirements of current legislation will be seen as minimum requirements to be improved upon where possible in practice and application.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall responsibility for the health and safety of staff and volunteers rests with the Board of Trustees. It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to ensure that the policy in respect of lone workers meets current legal requirements. The Board of Trustees will strive to ensure that its policy and procedures will, where possible, exceed legal requirements.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the operational procedures are adequate and that staff are instructed to follow established procedures.

Each member of staff and volunteer is responsible for complying with the policy and procedures put in place and for drawing attention to matters of concern not currently addressed by the policy and procedures.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Board of Trustees of AUKCAP shall review the operation of this policy bi-annually, unless earlier review is required due to changes in relevant legislation or if areas of concern are highlighted by staff or volunteers.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to bring changes in legislation and best practice to the attention of the Trustees.

POLICY STATEMENT

- a. The Trustees of AUKCAP are aware of the duty of care for the health and safety of employees, placed upon them by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the 1993 EU Directives.
- b. Insofar as is reasonably practicable the Trustees will take steps to identify the risk to the health and safety of staff working alone and unsupervised and further will take all reasonable steps to ensure that such risks are, where possible, eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level.
- c. The Trustees recognise that it is impossible to eliminate all risks and is therefore committed to providing adequate training for lone workers. Training in personal safety will be made available to all staff, as soon as possible after the date of their joining AUKCAP.
- d. As required by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 all employees of AUKCAP have a duty to follow the charity's procedures for lone workers.
- e. All employees of AUKCAP are required to bring to the attention of the organisation any concerns or worries relating to their own, or another employee's lone working.
- f. All employees of AUKCAP have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and their property, and in particular are required to refrain from taking unnecessary risks.
- g. The Trustees of AUKCAP will pay proper attention to any concerns raised by employees and will insofar as is reasonably practicable take steps to alleviate these concerns.
- h. The Trustees of AUKCAP shall respect the judgement and discretion of staff with regard to lone working.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN WORKING ALONE

PURPOSE

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

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 shall be followed:

A member of staff working alone in a building shall:

Before being left alone, ensure that there is no unauthorised person present in the building.

Lock external doors, having regard to the need to escape in an emergency. Where 'push open' fire exits are not available it will be the responsibility of the lone worker to carry the key with them whilst they are alone in the building, or to place it near to the external door. The key to an external door will not be left in the lock on the inside of the door.

Not admit members of the public to offices or day centres after normal working hours.

Be encouraged to alert a colleague, friend or family member that they are working alone. Upon leaving the building or upon being joined by a colleague the member of staff will inform their colleague or friend that they are no longer working alone.

TRAVELLING

AUKCAP's Lone Worker policy requires staff and volunteers to take steps to ensure their own well-being and safety.

Attached at Appendix 1 are guidelines 'Your Practical Guide to Crime Prevention', produced by the Home Office, which AUKCAP strongly urges staff and volunteers to consider and use as they feel appropriate.

HOME VISITING

AUKCAP and its employees recognise that visiting clients at home is an important element of the charity's work. Whilst the risk of staff coming to harm is likely to be negligible, both the organisation and its staff must recognise that a risk does exist. Steps must be taken to eliminate this risk completely or to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. A number of steps will be taken as follows:

Home Visits to clients known to AUKCAP and where no cause for concern has previously been reported

Where a client is already known to AUKCAP, and 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 staff will follow the general procedures outlined below.

The attention of staff is also drawn to the guidance in the leaflet entitled '*Working Safely in Other People's Homes*' (Suzy Lamplugh Trust 1998) included as Appendix 2 to this document.

Where clients are known to AUKCAP and where cause for concern has previously been notified

Under no circumstances whatsoever should a member of Age UK Cambridgeshire staff visit a client at home in circumstances 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 client at an Age UK office or centre where other members of staff will be present.

In circumstances where it is not possible for a client to attend an Age UK office the Line Manager and member of staff will consider whether the risk may be reduced to a reasonable level, for example by two members of staff visiting together or one member of staff visiting with a third party known to the client, such as another professional or a friend of the client.

In circumstances where 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 Executive.

Where the client referred is not known to AUKCAP

In circumstances where the client is not already known to AUKCAP it is important that the referral process is such that pertinent information is obtained from the referrer or where possible from the client themselves.

In circumstances where the member of staff or volunteer 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 client attending an Age UK office or centre.

In circumstances where it is not possible for a client to attend an Age UK office the Line Manager and member of staff will consider whether the risk may be reduced to a reasonable level, for example by two members of staff visiting together or one member of staff visiting with a third party known to the client, such as another professional or a friend of the client.

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 Executive.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

- Maintaining a Diary
- All staff, other than those who are completely office/centre based will maintain a second or 'office' diary.
- The diary will be maintained by that individual member of staff and will be kept completely up to date and held at the relevant office/day centre.
- The diary will include the names, addresses and telephone numbers of clients being visited at home or who have appointments at the office/centre and of meetings and other events. Contact numbers for meetings and other events will also be noted.
- It will be the responsibility of individual members of staff to maintain the diary in the manner prescribed and of the Line Manager to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that this procedure is being observed.
- AUKCAP will make available an 'attack alarm' to each member of staff. Please ask your manager if you wish to carry an alarm.

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 office diary to be accessed in order to ascertain the itinerary of that member of staff.

Keys and Keyholders

- A set of keys to each office or day centre will be maintained at the charity's county office.
- The staff named as out of hours contacts will each have access to the charity's county office outside normal hours.
- The details of a key holder for each office and centre will be lodged with the local police.

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.
- It will be for individual employees to decide the style of address to be displayed on the badge. Staff may prefer not to display their surname on the badge.

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 clients.

REPORTING

- All employees are required to report to their Line Manager any matter of concern in relation to lone working in general or these procedures in particular.
- All employees are required to report to their Line Manager any suggestion for improvement upon these 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.

VOLUNTEERS

General information

Throughout this document, reference to 'staff' or 'employees' will be taken to include '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 procedure outlined above for staff 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 members of staff shall apply.

Training and Awareness

Each volunteer will be made aware of the charity's policy on lone working by their Organiser and will be given copies of the booklets.

Training sessions for volunteers, provided by their Organiser, will incorporate a unit on personal safety and crime prevention.