

# **Lone Working Policy (*both with and without clients*)**

Field of Joy recognises that, during the course of their work, it may be necessary for employees to work alone (on a one-to-one basis with a child or young person or vulnerable adult). This may occur as a regular part of an employee's working practice or may occur on an occasional basis. In either situation, it will arise from the understanding that this is the most appropriate and effective way of working with a particular child or young person. The safety of children, young people, vulnerable persons and workers is paramount and Field of Joy is committed to minimising the risk of lone working for its employees.

## **Young Persons and Vulnerable Persons Lone Working Procedures**

When meeting alone with children or young people, the following procedures should be adhered to:

- Staff working directly with children and young people must have a current Enhanced DBS check.
- Any staff members conducting lone working and their line manager must be familiar with their local safeguarding and child protection policy and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidance for managing safeguarding concerns.
- Staff members must ensure from the outset that the child or young person understands that their meetings are confidential, but there are limits to confidentiality in line with safeguarding practice (see Field of Joy Safeguarding policy for details). Staff members should never agree to keep 'secrets' and must ensure that children and young people understand this position.
- Staff members must ensure, from the outset of the work, that the child or young person understands the boundaries of what the worker and the service can offer, and what they cannot offer. The child, vulnerable or young person should know that support may be time-limited and will cover specific

matters relating to the child or young person's special educational needs or disabilities. The child or young person should be supported to access other services to meet other needs.

- If indicated, the child, vulnerable or young person should be asked to provide emergency contact details and medical information before the meeting starts. This information needs to be stored securely and the child or young person must understand that this information will only be used in case of emergency.
- Children and young people should be seen when other members of staff are at hand, in the same building. This can include other staff members outside of the FOJ Service, such as school or children's centre staff.
- Another member of staff, in the same building, should be identified and informed that the meeting is taking place. The location, time and expected length of the meeting should be recorded in a central place, for example, an electronic calendar.
- The staff member should not physically touch the child or young person. In some exceptional circumstances, such as a child or young person with a visual impairment needing guidance, or a child or young person needing support to walk (linking arms, for example), a staff member may need to touch the child or young person to support them appropriately. In these circumstances, the child or young person should always initiate touch, although this can be suggested by offering your arm to support them or asking them if it is alright to guide them. If you need to touch the child or young person, then touch their hands, arms or shoulders only.
- Staff members must be mindful of maintaining professional boundaries with the child or young person. They should not share unnecessary details about their personal lives, and should not seek unnecessary details of the child or young person's personal life. The staff member should not give gifts to the child or young person. As with all service users, staff members should use their professional judgment with regard to accepting gifts from children and young people. A parting gift from a service user may be acceptable, but regular gifts will compromise impartiality. Staff members should consult with their line managers if they are unsure and follow procedures.
- Staff members should not have contact with children or young people outside of work. This includes contact via social media. If a child or young

person initiates contact outside of the service, it should be explained to them that this is not allowed by the service and contact should be ended.

- Children or young people should be invited to attend meetings in professional settings where other members of staff are at hand, such as their school or college. Lone home visits or meetings in the community should be avoided. If exceptional circumstances occur which warrant the need to visit a child or young person at home without their parent or carer present, then members of staff should visit in pairs or in partnership with another professional involved with the child or young person, such as a teacher or SENCO.
- If, during the course of your work, concerns are raised that the child or young person may present a risk to others, then the child, vulnerable or young person should be asked for permission to speak to someone who knows them well in order to better understand their support needs. The nominated person should be asked to clarify if there are any risks or concerns related to seeing the child or young person alone, without details of the specific FOJ request being shared. Explore the options and make best endeavors to resolve how best to support and work with the child or young person safely. If necessary, the child or young person can be seen with another colleague or professional present. If you have explored all the options and attempted to be as flexible as possible without finding a safe solution, then consider remote support via email or phone. If the child, vulnerable or young person refuses permission for a nominated person to be contacted (for example, their teacher, support worker or probation officer), and there is reasonable cause for concern, then the service manager should make a decision based on the professional judgment of whether face to face contact should be refused.

## **Responsibilities**

Responsibilities for the health and safety of lone workers are allocated as follows:

### **Department Heads**

- Ensuring the management of lone working within the organisation is adhered to.

- Maintaining a log of their workers considered to be lone workers. This includes the responsibility to:
  - Identify all workers likely to work regularly in isolation from their colleagues.
  - Assess the risks that such lone working presents.
  - Having assessed the risks, decide whether lone working is reasonable or not in these situations.
  - Report to the Field of Joy Managing Director any situation where the risks cannot be controlled.
- If lone working is considered reasonable, then the Department Heads must ensure that suitable precautions are in place, such as:
  - Mobile telephones
  - Team working
  - Giving information on known risks
  - Reporting procedures
  - Personal alarms
  - Contact details
- Recording identified risks on a risk assessment.
- Maintaining contact with workers that work alone, both internally and externally.
- Implementing systems to identify those workers who do not report or return at the expected time.
- Ensuring systems are in place to take action to contact or locate workers that have failed to make contact or return at the expected time.
- Raising the appropriate level of alert if workers cannot be contacted within 1 hour after the expected time of contact or return, including if workers cannot be located, contacting the police.
- Monitoring feedback from the organisation on lone worker risk and seeking to improve processes.
- Ensuring all workers that work alone have read and understood this policy.
- Supporting workers who are victims of violence and aggression.

### **Staff and Volunteers**

Workers are responsible for:

- Taking a legal “duty of care” for their colleagues.
- Carrying and using all equipment provided for their safety eg charged mobile phones and making sure batteries are working.
- Following all working practices and procedures that have been put in place.
- Understanding the risks that affect them and not taking unnecessary risks.
- Raising any issues or concerns with their Department Head.
- Knowing what to do if threatened verbally or physically (see below).
- Reporting to their Department Head immediately if they experience anything unpleasant (even if trivial).
- Ensuring that a record is made of the date, time, and location of any incident using an incident form.
- Ensuring that an outside individual will take action if they do not return home when expected (where a phone call cannot be made to their department, eg attending a meeting out of normal working hours).
- Knowing where the first aid box and telephones are located in their department.
  - Ensure that management know your expected start and finish times.

Action to be taken if you are threatened verbally or physically:

- If you are in a position to do so, get out as quickly as possible.
- If you are not near an escape route, withdraw to a room, barricade yourself in, smash a window, scream FIRE (it is proven to be more successful than HELP).
- Do not feel embarrassed about causing a scene, do all you can to attract attention.
- Call 999 on your mobile phone and remember to tell them the address and a description of where you are.
- If possible, dial 999 again on a terrestrial phone as the call will be traced automatically.

## **Supervision**

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still an employer’s duty to ensure their health and safety at work. Supervision can

help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out.

The level of supervision required is a management decision, which should be based on the findings of risk assessment. The higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required eg a Department Head may arrange for the lone worker to be contacted at regular intervals through the shift. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require supervision or assistance.

### **Security for workers at Field of Joy**

When a member of staff or a volunteer supports a client, young person and vulnerable person, he or she may be at risk of physical or verbal assaults and hostility or an incident may occur where the staff member or volunteer requires the help of a colleague in order to protect themselves and the client from harm.

- The assessment of all new referrals for Field of Joy includes a risk assessment which should include any known challenging behaviours and any aspects of their medical or additional needs that pose a threat to lone working.
- Lone workers should carry a mobile phone so that they can summon help quickly; all phones should include the staff on duty number which will always be attended when staff and volunteers are working.
- The Field of Joy Manager should be alerted in the event of any emergency situations.
- In a situation where a lone worker feels under immediate threat of their physical safety, they should contact colleagues using their phone the staff on duty number or the police directly. If contact is made with colleagues, the most senior staff member on duty would contact the police if required. They should be careful to take all appropriate information from the lone worker, such as location and telephone number, and pass this on to the police. After the incident, the lone worker should fill in an incident form.

### **Training**

All workers should read this policy. As part of the induction process, Department Heads must satisfy themselves that each worker is competent

and safe to work alone and that they are clear about how to act in ways that will maximise their own safety and about what to do in an emergency situation.

<b>Dated:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023	<b>Reviewed:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024	<b>Signed:</b> C.Howells	<b>C. Howells</b>
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