

Lone Working Policy

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Audience:	ADCH Trustees and Volunteers		
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1. Introduction

ADCH recognises the risk of lone working and has developed this policy to ensure the safety of all staff, workers, volunteers, and trustees when working alone. The aim of this policy is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of ADCH and its staff and volunteers, to fulfil its legal obligations and to take action to minimise the risks of lone working. The policy also aims to increase staff awareness of safety issues related to lone working and to ensure that all lone working is assessed in a systematic and consistent manner.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all members of staff, workers, volunteers, trustees, temporary workers, contractors. Any reference to 'lone workers', 'member of staff' or 'employees' includes anyone who works for or is engaged by ADCH (paid or unpaid).

3. Definition of Lone Workers

A lone worker is defined as a member of staff or volunteer who regularly or occasionally works on their own without direct supervision or support. Put simply, if a person cannot be seen or heard by a colleague, they are lone working, whether that be for all or part of their working day. Examples include but are not limited to a person who: -

- works from home (low risk)
- works on their own outside normal working hours
- carries out Member site visits alone
- travels on their own
- stays away from home overnight on their own for work purposes

4. Policy Principles

The following principles underpin this policy:

- No staff member or volunteer should be in a situation where they feel at risk.
- Everyone is responsible for avoiding and managing any risks that arise from lone working. This is essential as the Lone Working Policy clearly cannot envisage every situation, and hence staff members and volunteers are expected to demonstrate common sense and to also take responsibility for their own actions and safety.
- We will involve staff and volunteers in identifying risks that arise from lone working and consider ways to manage them.
- Lone working risks should be identified and eliminated where possible and where this is not possible should be limited and managed.
- Staff and volunteers will be provided with support, guidance and, where applicable, training to assist them to stay safe.

- Where appropriate, specific situations will be assessed for risk and an approach agreed with the lone worker and their line manager.
- Precautions should consider both normal working conditions and foreseeable emergency situations e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness, and accidents.
- All incidents arising from lone working must be reported to a line manager for monitoring and reporting purposes.
- A failure to follow agreed safety procedures increases risk and is a decision taken by individuals for which they are personally accountable. Any failure to follow agreed procedures may be dealt with as a disciplinary offence for staff.

5. Lone Working Risk

ADCH has identified the following general risk areas that may arise from lone working:-

- Member visits/Assessments
- Meetings in empty/unfamiliar venues
- Lone activities e.g. parking vehicles at night
- Travel – car and public transport
- Overnight stays
- Meetings in public places

5.1. Other Lone Working Situations

- Staff working from home should consider the risks of any meeting arranged in their own home when alone and ensure appropriate steps are taken to minimise risks.

6. Responsibilities

Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working (Risk Assessments).
- Providing resources for putting policy into practice.
- Ensuring there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed.

Line Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the guidance and procedure.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers have access to appropriate training, as necessary.
- Advising on any changes in legislation which may affect the policy and making necessary updates.
- Receiving and holding data on any lone working incidents or near misses.
- Reporting to Trustees as required.
- Having up-to-date contact details of your staff/volunteers.
- Follow ADCH guidance and procedures.
- Reporting lone working incidents or near misses.
- Complete the Incident Log on behalf of your staff member or volunteer if they are unable to report the incident themselves.

Staff and Volunteers are responsible for:

- Avoiding lone working where possible.
- Plan visits and ensure necessary action or risk assessment is completed beforehand.
- Taking everyday precautions to ensure their own safety.
- Tell your nominated contact of your whereabouts and inform of any changes.
- Follow ADCH guidance and procedures.
- Complying with any precautionary measures agreed with your line manager.

- Reporting risks to the charity.
- Reporting lone working incidents or near misses to your line manager.

7. Framework for Managing Lone Working

This section outlines the process for managing lone working including:

- Risk management
- Before lone working
- During lone working
- What to do in the event of an incident

7.1. Risk Management

7.1.1. Identification of Risks

To identify possible risks the following should be considered (this is not intended to be exhaustive):

- Groups exposed to lone working risk.
- Working conditions – for example poor lighting, isolated areas, hazards.
- Work activities being undertaken such as working near or carrying animals.
- Delivering unwelcome information.
- Risks of confrontation or aggression due to information being unwelcome.
- Carrying any equipment that is a target for theft.
- Capability to work alone e.g. level of experience, physical challenges.
- Travelling between environments/settings.
- Wearing name badges/other identifiers.

7.1.2. Assessment of Risks

The risk assessment should include the following:

- Identification of the type of risk and staff or volunteers affected.
- The likelihood of occurrence and impact on individuals and resources.
- The adequacy of the agreed controls to minimise the risks.
- An overall risk rating to determine the severity of the risk. Risk rating = Impact x Likelihood.
- What action is needed to reduce the risk further.
- Agreed timescales for reviewing the risk assessment.

7.1.3. Managing Risk

Following risk assessment, the Trustees must agree and document actions for minimising the identified risks. Advice should be sought as necessary.

The agreed actions should then be communicated with relevant staff or volunteers.

7.1.4. Review

Risk assessments should be reviewed at least annually. Risk assessments should also be reviewed following reported incidents and concerns.

Review of moderate and high risks will take place more frequently as deemed appropriate.

7.2. Before Lone Working

Before undertaking any activity which involves lone working the following good practice guidelines should be considered and followed as appropriate. The risk management process outlined below should be used to identify appropriate actions for particular activities.

- Check any known documentation that may indicate existing risks associated with the activity.
- Identify low risk lone working that is deemed acceptable.

- Identify high risk areas where lone working is not deemed acceptable and alternative arrangements have been made, such as staff attending in pairs.
- Someone should always be aware of a lone worker's movements and whereabouts.
- Staff and Volunteers must provide ADCH with details of a friend or family member that can be contacted in an emergency. That person should be given contact details for the volunteers Line Manager and/or other ADCH contact.
- Consider what technology and emergency equipment may be useful (such as a mobile phone, personal alarm, torch etc).
- An escalation process should be agreed to manage any problems that arise.
- Ensure staff have had appropriate training.
- Be aware of any cultural issues before entering a lone working situation.
- Agree an escalation process. Based on the seriousness of the situation the process may include escalation to:
 - Nominated emergency out of hours contact
 - Board of Trustees
 - Police

7.2.1. Technology

The purpose of using technology is to enhance protection. It will not however prevent all incidents or make people invincible. It should therefore always be used in conjunction with other measures to reduce the risk. Technology can be useful as a deterrent, distraction of an assailant or to summon assistance.

The following technology should be considered and applied as deemed appropriate following risk assessment:

- Mobile human resource safety devices and systems that are operated using mobile technology or handsets.
- Personal attack alarms.
- Mobiles. It is important to ensure they are charged, emergency contacts are included on a speed dial and they are never left unattended. It is also important to remember that using a mobile may escalate an aggressive situation.
- Code words or phrases could be agreed to alert colleagues to a threat and the appropriate required response, such as calling the police.

Practical advice for the use of a personal 'man down' alarm includes:

- Remember this is primarily for protection and personal safety, check them regularly particularly before a lone situation.
- Check the batteries regularly.
- Use them as instructed and be clear about their capability.
- Remember there is no certainty of assistance arriving quickly but it may allow time for you to remove yourself from the situation.
- They are better for use than a personal mobile phone as they are discreet.

Practical use of devices includes:

- Ensure you are trained to use the device.
- Maintain the device regularly, change batteries etc.
- Use code words.
- Keep them nearby.
- Be familiar with the expected response.

7.3. During Lone Working

- During visits/assessments, staff and volunteers should make sure you complete the agreed 'check in' phone calls, texts or emails with your trusted contact.

- You must follow the personal safety working arrangements.
- You must report personal safety related incidents, and near misses to your Line Manager.

7.3.1. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is a continual process and during a lone working visit staff should:

- Be alert to warning signs such as body language, animals, influence of drugs or alcohol
- Ask those you are visiting / clients to secure animals as unexpected behaviour or people may frighten them and cause them to behave differently.
- Remove yourself from the situation if there is felt to be a risk of harm. Do not put yourself in danger.
- Place yourself in a position for escape, don't stand in corners etc.
- Be aware of all entrances and exits.
- Be aware of positioning of items that could be used as a weapon.
- Judge best possible course of action.
- Utilise appropriate physical security measures such as personal alarms.
- Remain as calm as possible do not engage in confrontation.

7.3.2. Lone Working and Vehicles

When travelling alone the following good practice guidelines should be followed as appropriate:

- Ensure vehicles have adequate fuel and have been maintained adequately
- Don't leave items visible in vehicles such as electronics and bags
- Get keys ready for your vehicle before leaving premises
- Check inside and outside of the car
- Lock all doors whilst inside
- Park close to the location in well-lit areas
- Contact nominated colleague if you breakdown, ensure your hazard lights are on and lock your doors – contact your breakdown service provider.
- Where possible, don't display signs identifying your organisation.
- Don't leave items with personal details in the car
- If using a taxi use a reputable one.
- Book taxis in advance if possible
- Do not give personal information to the driver
- On foot avoid known areas of risk
- Carry items safely so as not to advertise what you are carrying
- Stay in lit areas if possible and avoid isolated pathways in rural areas.
- Relinquish property if challenged

8. Reporting

As a member of staff or volunteer you must report any concerns, lone working incidents or near misses to your line manager and/or The Association Manager.

- The Association Manager will keep records of all lone working incidents reported to them.
- The Association Manager is responsible for completing the Incident Log and together with appropriate Line Manager, will identify and implement learning to mitigate against future risk.

9. Monitoring and Review

- The ongoing implementation of the Lone Working Policy will be monitored through feedback from staff and volunteers

- Any member of staff or volunteer with a concern regarding these issues should ensure that they discuss this in the first instance with their line manager or Association Manager.
- This policy will be reviewed annually unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.

Version History

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