

Lone Working Policy

Lone working

Green Routes is committed to providing a safe working environment for all staff / volunteers. The purpose of this policy is to set out general principles and guidelines in respect of staff / volunteers and management responsibilities as it relates to lone working practices. It raises a general awareness of how best to protect lone workers within Green Routes and identifies the type of precautions that should be considered in local risk assessments and resulting safe working procedures covering lone working.

Definition

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. Lone workers are described as staff or volunteers who are working in areas where they are unable to easily contact other members of staff/volunteers. These include staff / volunteers working alone on an out reach project

These may be divided loosely into environmental risks, transport and interpersonal. Interpersonal hazards may include violence and aggression, and inappropriate sexual conduct directed towards staff.

Travelling by car, etc., either to pick up students from bus or on out reach projects. Environmental hazards may include hazardous substances, unsound buildings and dangerous equipment.

Risk Assessment and Safe Working Procedures

Risk is part of every day life. However it is recognised that lone workers may be more vulnerable than other staff / volunteers in certain situations

The principle to be adopted is to avoid lone working by staff/volunteers as far as reasonably practicable, and when unavoidable, to minimise risk by:

1. Carrying out risk assessments covering the hazards to be reasonably expected including consideration of relevant information from other agencies.
2. Preparing safe working procedures that incorporate the precautions determined by the risk assessment.
3. Ensuring relevant staff / volunteers are informed and where appropriate, trained in the precautions and safe system of work.
4. Making reasonable checks that safe working procedures are implemented effectively by staff / volunteers.

Risk assessments shall:

- Identify the significant hazards
- Identify the specific group of staff/volunteers most likely to be affected.
- Identify the control measures already in place
- Determine whether these control measures are sufficient to adequately control risk
- Identify any further actions necessary and formalise them in an action plan
- Be documented, signed and dated
- Ensure that hazards, potential harm and precautions determined by the risk assessment are effectively communicated to staff / volunteers involved, preferably within a safe working procedure.
- Be reviewed periodically or as a result of change in nature of work or procedure

Specific risk assessments would need to be carried out for unusual or short term lone working activities. These could determine that lone working is inappropriate. The principles of identifying the hazards and determining appropriate control measures should be applied.

Responsibilities

Managers' responsibilities

The manager should take appropriate action to ensure that the working environment is safe. The manager must ensure that staff/volunteers have access to appropriate training, guidance and support. Managerial actions may include considering some or all of the following:

- Ensuring all staff / volunteers are fully trained in the strategies for the prevention of violence.
- Ensuring all staff / volunteers are briefed about the areas where they work.
- Ensuring all staff / volunteers are aware of attitudes, traits, mannerisms or cultural differences which can cause tension to clients, and work at all times in a manner that is sensitive to cultural difference.
- Enabling staff / volunteers to have information about the client from all relevant agencies, especially regarding previous incidents of aggression.
- To ensure that individual staff / volunteers concerns regarding their personal safety are taken seriously and that appropriate management action is taken.

- To provide risk assessment tools, and encourage all staff to use them as appropriate.

Managers responsibilities contd

- Implement appropriate additional precautions determined from risk assessments
- Ensure staff /volunteers are appropriately trained in safe working procedures and actions to take in the event of adverse situations.

Health and safety at work is a shared responsibility. Staff/volunteers are generally responsible for the following and should consider some or all of the following actions/practices.

- Avoiding lone working as far as possible
- Follow approved safe working procedures
- Attending appropriate training
- Have appropriate means of summoning assistance. This is in the form of Walkie Talkie communication devices.
- Recognise the importance of accurate and timely documentation of any “incidents” and submitting Incident forms/reports as required
- Ensure clothing and jewellery worn conforms to professional standards and is in line with the service needs. Be aware of the messages given out by the wearing of particular types of clothing and jewellery.
- Be aware of attitudes, traits, mannerisms or cultural differences, which can cause tension to students.
- Have knowledge on how to defuse potential problems and manage potentially aggressive situations.
- Share information with colleagues, or other agencies as appropriate, of students with a history of previous problems or potentially aggressive situations.

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events. Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them.

Date / signature as adopted by the Board of Trustees : 29/05/2014

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