

**Main/Registered Office: Signposts, 58 Regent Road, Morecambe, LA3 1TE**

**Telephone : (01524) 419021**

**Fax : (01524) 411541**

*Community  
Legal Service*



E-mail: [signpostsmarc@signposts.org.uk](mailto:signpostsmarc@signposts.org.uk)

Website: [www.signposts.org.uk](http://www.signposts.org.uk)

**“Working to Empower the Community”  
in Lancashire and Cumbria**

**Pamela Beswick – Chief Executive**



*Help Point*

**Also:-**

Preston Office: (01772) 759413 Carnforth Office: (01524) 732807

## **LONE WORKING POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Health and Safety Legislation imposes a general duty on all employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees whilst at work and anyone else who may be affected by the work activities. This requirement includes the need to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place whilst employees are working alone.

It is the policy of Signposts to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health, safety and welfare.

These measures will be extended where appropriate, to include contractors and anyone else who may be involved in lone working for Signposts.

### **PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEES WHO MAY BE REQUIRED TO WORK ALONE AND/OR OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS**

It is the responsibility of managers to assess the potential risks of lone working to employees and to ensure that arrangements are in place to reduce these risks to the lowest possible level in accordance with other policies and procedures. Managers must also ensure that all employees have received appropriate information, instruction and training relating to lone working and provide them with opportunities to raise any concerns.

It is the responsibility of employees to follow these arrangements and to raise any additional concerns, changes in working practices or situations etc. with their line manager as soon as they arise.

### **RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR LONE WORKING**

The undertaking of risk assessments, which identify and control the hazards and risks associated with lone working, are a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. These will assist in identifying whether work maybe carried out safely by one, unaccompanied person. Risk Assessments should include the identification of hazards from; access and/or egress, environmental factors, personal factors, violence, etc. and should be carried out in association with the employees who will

Charity Registration Number: 1117645

Member of AdviceUK (previously FIAC)

Company Limited by Guarantee: 5990592

Registered in England and Wales



North Lancashire  
Teaching Primary Care Trust



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Additional major funding from Preston City Council, the FC Scott Charitable Trust and Tudor Trust

be undertaking the duties to ensure that their experiences, concerns etc are taken account of.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF RISK**

Line managers should establish clear procedures to set limits of what activities can and cannot be carried out whilst working alone. It is not possible to list all possible scenarios within the policy however, examples may include visiting a service user known to have violent tendencies, visiting a new, service user unknown to Signposts with limited information about them, working alone in an office outside of standard working hours.

Lone working may expose employees and others in particular hazards, which may not be apparent in normal circumstances. Signposts aim is to eliminate these hazards completely or, where this is not possible, to reduce them to an acceptable level.

In carrying out a Lone Working Risk Assessment particular consideration should be given to:

- a) Task/activity to be carried out
  1. Timing and whether or not it is appropriate for the task to be carried out alone.
  2. Level of risk
  3. Staff/police response time
  4. Complexity of task
  5. Training requirements
  6. Additional information
- b) The ability of employees
  1. Training provision/requirements
  2. Relevant qualifications and experience
  3. Medical fitness
  4. Competence for task including supervision issues for new employees
- c) The remoteness or isolation of workplaces
  1. Means of communication
  2. Means of raising an alarm
  3. Time required for help to arrive
  4. Access and egress routes
  5. Transport arrangements
- d) The risk of injury, violence or criminal activity etc
  1. Awareness of the contents of Service User risk assessments, care plans etc.
  2. Awareness of known associates and/or relatives of the Service User.
  3. Information relating to previous visits, social worker concerns etc.
  4. Awareness of medication, alcohol and/or drugs issues.
  5. Presence of family pets etc, which may pose a threat or intimidate
- e) Service users' individual requirements
  1. As for d) above
  2. Gender, race and/or culture issues
- f) Means of communication
  1. Mobile phone
  2. Landline telephone
  3. Personal Alarm

4. Buddy system
5. Lone Worker System

g) Emergency and accident procedures, e.g.:

1. Means of summoning assistance
2. Means of raising the alarm
3. Reporting of accidents, incidents, injuries etc

h) The nature of any potential injury or damage and anticipated “worst case” scenario

1. Control measures for dealing with the situation
2. Procedures to be followed in an emergency
3. Contact points, including those for “out of hours” working

i) Backup/supports contacts

1. Line manager
2. Emergency Duty Team
3. Emergency services – police, fire, ambulance
4. Property Group
5. Health and Safety

Local rules, arrangements and risk assessments should be developed and documented to cover these issues where appropriate and should also take account of any operational guidelines, which may be available.

### **INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION**

Employees must be provided with appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to carry out their duties in a safe manner and to identify hazards and risks associated with lone working. Employees must follow safe systems of work where they are in operation and report any shortcomings or concerns in the employer’s arrangements for health and safety to their line manager as soon as possible.

Managers must identify training requirements of their employees during supervision sessions and give employees the opportunity to have input into this process. Managers must then ensure that relevant training courses are identified and that employees are given the opportunity to attend them. This process should be reviewed during further supervision sessions.

### **SUMMARY**

Working alone may bring additional risks to a work activity. Signposts provides appropriate information to enable managers to develop local arrangements to control these risks and to protect employees.

Important things to consider are that:

- (I) The lone worker has full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she may be exposed and that they feel capable of carrying out the task/activity in this situation.
- (II) The lone worker is aware of the procedures to follow in the event that something untoward happens, is aware of their own personal limitations and does not exceed them.

- (III) An appropriate manager is aware of the whereabouts of all lone workers under their supervision and what activities they are involved in.
- (IV) Procedures are in place to allow lone workers to report back following completion of their task/activities.

## **PROTECTION OF CONTRACTORS WHO MAY BE REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT WORK FOR SIGNPOSTS ALONE/OR WORK OUTSIDE STANDARD ESTABLISHMENT HOURS**

The general requirement to ensure the health, safety and welfare of contractors carrying work on behalf of signposts rests with their direct employers.

There may be occasions when contract work must be carried out before/after standard establishment working hours or in isolation. In such cases the action required by the manager is the same as that required at any other time. The manager of the establishment/office must liaise with the contractor prior to work commencing, to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place which take the isolation factor into consideration and provide appropriate information to enable the contractor to carry out the work safely, i.e. security measures, fire escape routes, details of hazards and risks which may affect the work being carried out.

Where there is any doubt as to the feasibility of the work being carried out, the appropriate building surveyor should be contacted for advice.

If you have any comments, concerns or queries relating to the content of this policy or the issue of lone working, please contact your line manager in the first instance.

**Project Director**  
**April 2005** \_\_\_\_\_

**Revised September 2007** \_\_\_\_\_

## Procedures for home visits including risk assessment

**Home visit** is defined as any contact with clients outside of Signposts buildings.

### **Home Visit Check List**

This is part of the lone working policy and it is vital that you adhere to these procedures.

- Ensure that you have a named base contact – you must contact **this** person when you have finished. (office duty or strategic, NOT apprentice!)
- Make sure your mobile phone is 'at hand' during your home visit – do not have it in your bag.
- You must ring in after **ALL** home visits – even when you finish earlier than planned, or the client is not in. It is NOT acceptable to not ring in

**If you do not ring in and we cannot contact you,  
we WILL contact the police.**

### **Risk assessment of each visit (Guidelines from CVS)**

1. How well do you know the client?  
**Safest** – known to you; information from another agency.  
**Riskiest** – not known at all; first visit; no history from another agency.
2. What gender are they in relation to you?  
**Safest** – same gender  
**Riskiest** – opposite gender, particularly female staff to male client.
3. Time of day.  
**Safest** - daytime  
**Riskiest** – night time
4. Location  
**Safest** – public place,  
**Riskiest** – bedroom in B and B, lone visit to flat

Number of riskiest factors:

- 4 – Visit at Signposts
- 3 – Take a colleague
- 2 – Consider taking a colleague or a safer location i.e. café
- 1 – Proceed with care

### **Procedures for planned visits**

1. Contact person on office duty at Signposts to let them know;
  - Where you are going.
  - What time you expect to return.

2. If the person on office duty is unavailable, contact the strategic cover to let them know;
  - Where you are going.
  - What time you expect to return.
3. If no one is available cancel the visit. Do not use the apprentice!
4. Office duty or strategic worker should phone worker if not returned by time stated;
  - If worker answers to confirm everything OK – arrange another time for return.
  - Worker doesn't answer - try texting and ringing again. Ring the clients home phone.
  - If no contact can be made with worker or client call police.

There is a responsibility on the office duty/strategic cover to ensure they are aware of what time to call workers. The worker is responsible for making sure they ring into the office at the stated time or that they can be contacted.

#### **Personal safety training for staff**

- Knowledge of above risk assessment and procedures for visits.
- General personal safety issues including travelling to and from visits; prevention of infection; 'Get out' strategies.

#### **Continual risk assessment whilst working**

- Cancel visit if you suspect the client has been using alcohol or drugs
- Cancel visit if client has visitors that are not known to you.
- Use 'Get out' strategy if client receives visitors whilst you are there.
- Be aware of any change of mood.
- If you feel at all uncomfortable during your visit use a 'get out' strategy. Your safety is more important, home visits can be rearranged.

#### **Practical**

- ID cards and mobile phones for all workers attending home visits.
- Reporting of incidents
- Protocols between agencies

#### **Code words**

If you are contacted during a home visit or need to call for help, please use the following 'code words'. This ensures that you do not raise suspicion and are able to call for help without the client's knowledge.

- 'I'm running late so can you cancel my appointment with Pam please.'

**Revised July 2007** \_\_\_\_\_

