

ADUR COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE LONE WORKER and LONE VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy refers to paid staff and volunteers. Where the word “worker” is used it should be taken to mean any person who carries out tasks on behalf of Adur CVS, whether paid or unpaid. It does not mean that Adur CVS regards its volunteers as having the same statutory or employment rights as its paid staff. It does mean that Adur CVS considers that many areas of good practice (including this lone worker and volunteer policy) relate equally to paid staff and to volunteers.

Adur CVS recognises its duty of care for the health, safety and security of staff working, either in paid roles or as volunteers, alone. Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAW) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 MHSW are applicable. These require identifying hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks. Adur CVS's Lone Worker and volunteer policy must be applied to all situations covered in section 2 and will need to include work carried out on Adur CVS' premises, and also those situations where employees or volunteers may be working in other premises which are either publicly managed or privately owned.

2. Lone Workers and Volunteers The policy applies to those situations where staff, or volunteers work alone or in small groups in isolation. These include the following situations:

- People manning desks out of hours or over the weekend , or attending exhibitions, displays etc
- People working outside standard working hours
- Where the nature of the work requires the individual to work in isolated areas
- Community based staff or volunteers working autonomously at other premises
- People who visit service users' homes

3. Adur CVS' responsibility

Adur CVS, through its Chief Officer, has a general responsibility to ensure a safe working environment for staff working in lone situations. We need to be:

Aware of those activities that require lone working or those groups of employees who are required to work alone, and to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments for those situations are carried out.

Ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with our policy on zero tolerance of violence against staff and volunteers.

Provide employees with appropriate training, information and support advising of the hazards of working alone and associated good practice.

4. Employee's or volunteer's responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the employee or volunteer to co-operate with any safe system of work and follow any instructions when given.

Having been given suitable and sufficient, each person must do all they reasonably can to avoid themselves being exposed to a situation that may result in an accident/incident. This will include a continuing assessment of the situation they find themselves in.

If anyone finds themselves in a situation with which they are not familiar or do not feel safe then they must seek further assistance.

Where an incident occurs even if no injury is sustained, the incident must be reported to the employee's line manager as soon as practicable, and an accident/incident form completed. If the employee does not feel safe following such an incident then they should withdraw and seek further advice / assistance.

Employees should try not to panic if they are involved in an incident, they should remain calm as this will allow them to think clearly and act appropriately.

Employees or volunteers should:

- Always tell someone on site or your partner at home where you are going, who you are meeting and when you expect to return
- Prepare yourself for difficult meetings by finding out everything you need to before arriving and planning in your mind how you are going to deal with it
- Do not meet aggression with aggression
- Do not enter a building, particularly someone else's home, if you don't feel comfortable or safe.

5. Risk Assessments

A Risk Assessment should be carried out or arranged by the Chief Officer on Lone Workers or volunteers and their environment and updated at regular intervals; any significant risk should be written down and kept as a matter of record. The following should be taken into consideration:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek medical advice if necessary.

Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

- What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?

There is a need to identify the location; the requirement for other staff and visitors to access the area; whilst creating a secure and safe environment for the lone worker.

Some factors to take into account::

- Can doors and windows be closed and locked to eliminate the likelihood of unwanted intruders
- Is access restricted by other means e.g. security keypads, swipe cards
- In an emergency can the member of staff leave the premises safely
- Is the furniture and/or equipment positioned to allow good visual advantage for the lone worker, as well as egress if required
- For out of hours working, do staff need access to other departments?

6. Communication

Maintaining effective communications with staff in lone situations is essential. It will help to ensure that staff can keep colleagues informed of their whereabouts but also provides a means of making contact in an emergency therefore enhances an individual's sense of security.

All staff or volunteers who work alone outside the CVS offices will be provided with a mobile phone. Whenever they are going out alone to meet service users, they should ensure that a relative, friend or CVS colleague knows where they are going and when they expect to return. All staff and volunteers should ensure that the CVS's contact register contains up-to-date details of their next of kind or people to contact in emergency.

7. Monitoring and review of the Policy

The policy is to be monitored on an ongoing process by the Chief Officer to ensure that it meets current needs, and is to be reviewed every three years by the Executive Committee.

Adopted by Adur CVS Executive Committee
19 August 2008