



Lone Worker Policy

1. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of employees and volunteers who work alone, by identifying risks, implementing preventive measures, and providing support and guidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers who work alone at any time while performing their duties for Refugees Welcome North Somerset (RWNS)

3. Definition

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. This can include:

- Meeting with service users in public spaces to provide support and friendship
- Visiting service users in their homes
- Working from own home
- Working outside normal hours

4. Responsibilities

Employer:

- Conduct risk assessments to identify potential hazards associated with lone working.
- Implement control measures to mitigate identified risks.
- Provide information to lone workers about potential risks and safety measures.
- Ensure effective communication systems are in place.
- Provide appropriate equipment for safety and emergency situations.

Employees and Volunteers:

- Follow the Lone Worker Policy and any specific instructions or procedures.
- Participate in training and report any safety concerns or incidents.
- Use provided safety equipment and maintain communication with their supervisor or designated contact.
- Recognise the cultural sensitivities around being alone with service users, ie different genders.

- Staff and volunteers should avoid being alone with children. Those who are in contact with children during sessions will require an enhanced DBS and meet minimum staffing levels.

5. Risk Assessment

- Conduct regular risk assessments for lone working situations.
- Identify specific hazards such as violence, environmental conditions, or medical emergencies.
- Implement control measures such as alarms, communication devices, and regular check-ins.
- Individual service users will be risk assessed ahead of meeting outside of RWNS Welcome Hubs.

6. Communication

- Staff and volunteers who are lone working must ensure they have access to reliable communication tools (e.g., mobile phones, radios).

Mobile phones which have sufficient charge and data to make calls if needed.

Please speak to your Manager if you do not have reliable access to a mobile phone.

- Ensure you share your planned itinerary and route with a Manager or colleague.
- Staff and volunteers to provide their managers with an emergency contact number who they can call, if there are any concerns.

7. Training

- RWNS will provide information and training on safe lone working practices at induction.
- RWNS will ensure workers understand how to use safety equipment and communication devices.
- RWNS will conduct regular refresher training sessions on lone working.
- RWNS all staff and volunteers are offered training in cultural competency to effectively support service users from diverse backgrounds. This could include understanding different cultural norms, communication styles, and providing culturally appropriate support.

8. Supporting service users in public

- Choose a safe, public Location: Meet in a well-lit, busy place like a café or community centre where both of you will feel safe.
- There is budget available for refreshments, should you go somewhere like a café.

9. Visiting service users in their home

- Until enough information is known to inform a risk assessment and management plan, staff and volunteers should not visit service users' home on their own.
- If a risk is identified through assessment or information from partner agency. We will suspend home visits and make alternative arrangements.
- Alternative arrangements may be working in pairs or meeting in public or at a RWNS welcome centre.

- If at a staffed premises (ie hotel or supported housing project) remain in the communal areas.

10. Working at RWNS Welcome Centres

- If you are lone working at the RWNS welcome centre/s, please ensure doors are locked and a colleague is aware of your location and lone working status.
- If a risk assessment identifies a heightened risk, we will temporarily suspend lone working and ensure minimum staffing.

11. Working at home

- Staff team working at home, are encouraged to check in with a colleague during their working day.
- Staff and volunteers are discouraged from inviting service users to their own home. We acknowledge that through friendships that develop this may be a possibility. We request this isn't done during initial befriending or support provision. Please see ***Boundaries policy*** for more information.

12. Driving

- **Roadworthiness of Vehicles:** Ensure that your vehicle is regularly serviced and maintained. This includes checking oil, brakes, tires, lights, and other critical systems. Ensure you have ample fuel for any planned journeys.
- **MOT and Insurance:** The vehicle must have a valid MOT certificate and be insured for the purpose of transporting service users. If there is a charge or increased premium on your policy, please speak to your Line Manager.
- **Safety Equipment:** Make sure that the vehicle is equipped with necessary safety items, such as a first aid kit and breakdown kit.
- **Parking:** Always park in well-lit, safe locations to ensure the safety of both you and the service users.
- **Seat Belts:** Ensure that all passengers wear seat belts at all times.
- **Respect Speed Limits:** Adhere to speed limits and all other traffic regulations.
- **Distractions:** Avoid using mobile phones or other distractions while driving.
- **Weather Conditions:** Assess driving conditions and avoid unnecessary journeys in adverse weather.
- **Volunteer Comfort and Safety:** Volunteers and staff are not obligated to drive service users. If you do not feel comfortable or safe driving, you can decline the request. If you feel more comfortable, consider driving with another volunteer. This can provide additional support and safety.
- **Incident Reporting:** In the event of an accident, ensure that all necessary emergency services are contacted. Report the incident to your line manager as soon as it is safe to do so. Report any near misses or safety concerns to your line manager to help improve safety practices.

13. Emergency Procedures

- RWNS will develop and communicate emergency processes with specific detail relevant to lone workers.

- Lone workers will ensure they know how to respond in case of emergencies (e.g., medical emergencies, accidents, or security threats).
- RWNS will provide first aid kits at its own premises.
- Lone workers must familiarise themselves with local arrangements and provisions whether working at RWNS premises or in the community.

14. Support and Guidance

- We encourage lone workers to report any concerns or incidents without fear of retribution, acknowledging that honesty is needed to ensure safe working practices.
- RWNS aims to foster a collaborative environment where everyone feels safe and supported.

15. Monitoring and Review

- Regularly monitor lone working practices and review the effectiveness of control measures.
- Collect feedback from staff and volunteers and make necessary adjustments to the policy.
- Review the policy annually and update as needed. Next review date 30th November 2025.