TAUNTON WELCOMES REFUGEES

charitable incorporated organisation number 1183921

Taunton Welcomes Refugees

4c. Lone Working Policy

Policy Statement

Wherever volunteers, members of staff or trustees are working on behalf of Taunton Welcomes Refugees (TWR) the charity has a duty of care, and their safety is paramount. However, the very varied and unpredictable nature of our work means that it is important that each person needs to be extra vigilant in operating in a safe way in a lone environment, and according to this policy.

Where you are working alone, you and Taunton Welcomes Refugees (TWR) have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

This policy is designed to alert you to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks.

This policy applies to all members of TWR who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

Lone workers face the same risks as anyone else, as well as those directly related to their work. Within TWR overall policy relating to safer working practices, support for lone workers is an essential part, and the same principles apply, particularly:

- a commitment to volunteers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
- recognising and reducing risk
- a commitment to the provision of appropriate support for volunteers
- a clear understanding of responsibilities

- a commitment to providing appropriate training

- A lone worker is a volunteer, staff member or trustee who performs an activity that is carried out in isolation from other workers without close or direct supervision. Such people may be exposed to risk because there is no-one to assist them and so a risk assessment may be required.

Procedures

1. Personal Safety

- Lone workers must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
- Lone workers and others should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
- Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made
- Lone workers must inform an identified person (co-befrienders, line manager, project leader or co-trustee) when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a volunteer expects to go home following a visit. This can be by sending a message on the TWR internal Whatsapp group.
- Lone workers who work to a pre-planned programme of visits must inform their identified person if they deviate from the programme.
- If a lone worker does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate.
- Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the activity, and clearly understood by all parties. Issues to consider include:
    - ease of raising an alert
    - the identified risks
    - measures in place to reduce those risks
- For the most part, where people are working alone, initial introductions will be made through a third party or parties. However, we strongly advise that lone working should happen in a secure and public place or some other safe environment with other people around. Similarly, travelling to and from a meeting should be planned with personal safety in mind.

Online Lone Working

Lone working may also take place online, for example when volunteers, staff or trustees communicate individually with people seeking support or other contacts on behalf of Taunton Welcomes Refugees (TWR), using video calls, telephone calls, messaging apps, email or other online platforms.

The same duty of care and commitment to personal safety applies to online lone working as to face-to-face activities.

Lone workers should take reasonable precautions to protect their own safety, privacy and wellbeing when working online. These include:

- Using TWR-approved communication channels wherever possible and keeping personal contact details private where practicable.

- Considering the potential risks before engaging in one-to-one online contact, particularly with people they do not know well.
- Informing their trustee link, where appropriate, about planned online meetings or contacts, especially where there are known concerns or additional risks.
- Ensuring that any concerns, inappropriate behaviour, threatening communications or other incidents arising from online contact are reported to their trustee link or designated safeguarding lead(s).
- Not feeling under pressure to continue an online conversation or meeting if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. You may end the contact and seek support via your trustee link.

If a volunteer, staff member or trustee has concerns about the risks associated with online working, they should discuss these with their trustee link before continuing the activity.

2. Assessment of risk

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- the environment – location, security, access
- the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances
- the individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk history – any previous incidents in similar situations
- any other special circumstances

All available information should be considered and checked or updated as necessary

Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task. No lone worker should have to work in a situation in which they feel unsafe.

Safety is always the prime consideration and concern.

3. Planning

- Lone workers should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.
- Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place.
- Depending on the activity, the line manager, trustee link, project manager or Board of trustees is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the team.

4. Reporting

- Should an incident occur in the first instance contact the trustee link and if required, the safeguarding lead(s).

5. Monitoring and Review

- The on-going implementation of the Lone Working Policy will be monitored through the review process.
- Any lone worker with a concern regarding these issues should ensure that it is discussed with their trustee link.
- The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of reviews, unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.

Resources

Suzy Lamplugh Trust

A leading charitable authority on personal safety. The Trust is a registered charity, and a leading authority on personal safety: http://suzylamplugh.org

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

The HSE has published a range of guidance and support materials to help employers manage the risk of work-related violence to staff. This includes guidance for lone workers. These are all available on the HSE website at https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/worker/index.htm