

KEEPING SAFE WHEN VOLUNTEERING

This is a practical guide to remind you how to protect yourself when you are volunteering in the community on behalf of Independent Age.

Incidents are rare but it is everyone's responsibility to protect themselves while lone working and you should be aware of any risks and take steps to reduce them.

Why could you be at risk?

If your volunteering role includes:

- Having contact with the general public
- Visiting unfamiliar places
- Volunteering alone
- Volunteering in the evenings or at weekends

Keeping safe is a shared responsibility.

Independent Age responsibilities	A volunteer's responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide a safe place of work• To provide a safe work environment• To identify and assess risks valuate the risks and create control measures To provide training and guidance to volunteers• Record, monitor and review any lone working incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To plan for and take reasonable care of your own safety and that of others• To follow Independent Age Lone Working policy and procedures• To stop any activity if you consider you might be at risk• To report any incidents, accidents or concerns to their Independent Age contact

Risk Assessment

Before any home visit takes place, the Independent Age staff member/Independent Age volunteer will have carried out a risk assessment of the property, environment and the older person. Before you start volunteering make sure that the risk assessment has been shared with you and you have sufficient information to make an informed decision on whether or not the volunteering should go ahead.

Staying safe when out and about:

- Plan your journey carefully
- Charge your phone and save the contact numbers listed below.
- Tell your trusted contact where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Be aware of any potential risks

Keeping your trusted contact informed

When you joined Independent Age we asked for details of someone to contact in case of emergency, a partner, family member or friend. Unless we have been told otherwise we assume that is the person you will inform about your volunteering activity.

To keep yourself safe, you should tell them:

- Who you are visiting and their contact details (We have got the permission of the older person to share their details with your contact.)
- The time you are going out
- When you expect to be back
- If your plans change
- When you have left the visit with the older person

Uncomfortable situations

A volunteer should always leave an uncomfortable situation as quickly as possible and sometimes a visit goes on too long. These phrases may help:

- *This doesn't seem to be a good time, I will come back another day*
- *As you have someone else here, I will come back another time*
- *Would you please put the dog in another room, I don't feel comfortable with it here, otherwise I will have to leave*
- *I would prefer it if you didn't smoke, if you continue, I will have to leave*
- *I am sorry, I have another appointment to have to get to*
- *I am expecting a call from xxx, so I need to be available to take it otherwise they will worry*
- *I think we are finished for today, so I'll be back next xxx*

And remember the 8 key personal safety guidelines:

1. Tell your trusted contact where you are going.
2. PLAN – Prepare, Look Confident, Avoid Risk and Never Assume
3. Familiarise yourself with the area you will be visiting
4. Keep your own personal information personal
5. Be aware of cultural context
6. Record and report any incidents that cause you concern
7. Keep your mobile charged and accessible at all times
8. Carry your ID badge with you

Contact Numbers

Out of Hours Safeguarding 020 7605 4455
Independent Age Helpline 0800 319 6789
Independent Age Contact
Wellbeing Project Officer
National Wellbeing Manager

For more detailed information on keeping safe while Lone Working see the Suzy Lamplugh Trust: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/forms/leaflets>