

# Lone Working Policy

## 1. Policy Statement and Scope

Our policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place for the health, safety and welfare of all staff and volunteers.

***"The health and safety of all staff and volunteers working for Independent Age is paramount and the charity will make health, safety and welfare an equal priority to all other charity objectives."***

We recognise that at any given time staff or volunteers may be working alone, whether that is in our office space, attending meetings or making home visits. We have a responsibility to assess the risks to lone workers and to take steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Staff and volunteers also have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Lone working is not inherently unsafe and proper precautions can reduce the risks associated with working alone. This policy is designed to raise awareness of the risks presented, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation and to give guidance on how to manage such risks.

Our values have been reflected in this policy and as a reminder are:-

- **Older people and Independence** – *We put older people and independence at the heart of everything we do.*
- **Work together** – *We work together internally and with outside partners to achieve the best results.*
- **Think big** – *We are bold, willing to take responsibility and to adapt when we need to.*
- **Trust and respect** – *We act with honesty, openness and integrity and recognise the contribution each of us makes.*
- **Be effective** – *We deliver a high quality service, using our resources well to deliver value.*

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers who may find themselves working alone at any time whilst undertaking duties for Independent Age.

## 2. Definition

A lone worker is defined as a member of staff or volunteer who regularly or occasionally works on their own without direct supervision or support.

Examples include but are not limited to a person who:

- works from home
- works alone in an Independent Age office
- works on their own outside normal office hours
- carries out home visits alone
- travels on their own
- stays away from home overnight on their own for work purposes

### **3. Policy principles**

The following principles underpin this policy:

- No staff member or volunteer should be in a situation where they feel at risk
- Everyone is responsible for avoiding and managing any risks that arise from lone working. This is essential as the Lone Working Policy clearly cannot envisage every situation, and hence staff members and volunteers are expected to demonstrate common sense and to also take responsibility for their own actions and safety.
- We will involve staff and volunteers in identifying risks that arise from lone working and consider ways to manage them
- Lone working risks should be identified and eliminated where possible and where this is not possible should be limited and managed
- Staff and volunteers will be provided with support, guidance and where applicable, training to assist them to stay safe
- Where appropriate, specific situations will be assessed for risk and an approach agreed with the lone worker and their line manager or Independent Age contact.
- Precautions should take into account both normal working conditions and foreseeable emergency situations e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents
- All incidents arising from lone working must be reported to a line manager/Independent Age contact and to the Head of People & OD for monitoring and reporting purposes.
- A failure to follow agreed safety procedures increases risk and is a decision taken by individuals for which they are personally accountable. Any failure to follow agreed procedures may be dealt with as a disciplinary offence for staff. For volunteers it may be dealt with under the Problem Solving policy.

### **4. Reporting**

As a member of staff or volunteer you must report any concerns, lone working incidents or near misses to your line manager or Independent Age contact.

- Line managers and Independent Age will keep records of all lone working incidents reported to them.
- Line Managers and Wellbeing Project Officers are responsible for completing the Incident Log The Head of People and OD, together with the Head of Volunteering will identify and implement learning to mitigate against future risk.

## **5. Lone Working Risk**

Independent Age has identified the following general risk areas that may arise from lone working

- Home visits
- Working alone in an office out of hours
- Meetings in empty/unfamiliar venues
- Lone activities e.g. parking vehicles at night
- Travel – car and public transport
- Overnight stays
- Meetings in public places

## **6. Assessing Risk**

Safe working arrangements are based on the following process:

- An assessment of the likeliness and seriousness of the risk
- The limiting of the risk
- Control or management of the risk

### **6.1 Supporting Older People**

The Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Management Plan must be completed by the line manager or Independent Age contact before starting any lone working activity. If an unacceptable level of risk is identified, the activity will be reviewed.

The risk assessment must take account of:

- The individual's ability to carry out their activities safely in their own environment
- The potential for the individual to be subject to harm, aggression, verbal or physical abuse
- The older person's living environment including third parties or animals present
- The individual's ability to request assistance or withdraw safely from a dangerous situation
- The individual's fitness to carry out the work alone
- Sudden personal illness, medical conditions or personal emergencies
- Building conditions

The above list is not exhaustive, each situation is different and individual risks for situations must be considered.

Volunteers and staff must leave the location if there is imminent or actual danger of any sort and must contact their line manager and volunteers their Independent Age contact to let them know the situation.

Completed risk assessments are stored on the older person's ThankQ record.

## 6.2 Other Lone Working situations

- Each office location will have a procedure/guidance notes for staff wishing to work alone out of hours.
- Staff working from home should consider the risks of any meeting arranged in their own home when alone and ensure appropriate steps are taken to minimise risks.
- Staff/Volunteers must assess the risks of meetings with third parties at premises other than IA offices. Particular care should be taken in respect of meetings in non-public places.

## 7. Responsibilities

Whatever your role, wherever you work and whoever you work with, you are responsible for ensuring that you are working in a safe environment and that you safeguard your own and others' personal safety.

### Senior Management Team responsibilities

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working
- Providing resources for putting policy into practice
- Ensuring there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed

### Resources Directorate responsibilities

- Ensuring that staff are aware of the guidance and procedure
- Ensuring staff have access to appropriate training, as necessary
- Advising on any changes in legislation which may affect the policy and making necessary updates
- Receiving and holding data on any lone working incidents or near misses
- Reporting to SMT/Trustees as required

### Services Directorate (Volunteering) responsibilities

- Ensuring that volunteers are aware of the guidance and procedure
- Ensuring that volunteers have access to appropriate training, as necessary
- Ensuring that volunteers understand their responsibilities and the means of checking and raising concerns.

### Line Manager/Independent Age Contact responsibilities

- Communicating this document to all staff and volunteers you manage/support
- Complete the Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Management Plan to identify and control risks and share the plan with the lone worker
- Having up-to-date contact details of your staff/volunteers
- Follow Independent Age guidance and procedures.
- Reporting lone working incidents or near misses

- Complete the Incident Log on behalf of your staff member or volunteer if they are unable to report the incident themselves

Staff and volunteer responsibilities:

- Avoiding lone working where possible
- Identifying risks that may arise from lone working
- Taking everyday precautions to ensure their own safety
- Follow Independent Age guidance and procedures
- Complying with any precautionary measures agreed with your line manager/Independent Age contact e.g. trusted contact system
- Reporting risks to the charity
- Keeping your line manager/Trusted Contact updated on your whereabouts
- Reporting lone working incidents or near misses to your line manager/Independent Age contact

## **8. Recording Whereabouts of the Lone Worker**

Staff

- You must ensure your appointments are logged in your Outlook Calendar. Logged information should include:
  - Where you will be working and time/length of the meeting
  - Name and ThankQ number (if relevant) of the person/s you will be meeting
- Line managers should know where their staff are and follow procedures to record and identify the whereabouts of staff
- Line managers must ensure that their staff receive appropriate training and/or guidance on personal safety (to include the requirements of this policy) as part of their induction
- You must follow the personal safety working arrangements
- You must report personal safety related incidents, and near misses

Volunteers

- As part of the application process volunteers are asked to provide details of a friend or family member we can contact in an emergency. That person should be given contact details for your Independent Age contact.

During visits, you should make sure you complete the agreed 'check in' phone calls, texts or emails with your trusted contact.

- Wellbeing Project Officers/Independent Age contacts must ensure that volunteers receive appropriate training and/or guidance on personal safety (to include the requirements of this policy) as part of their induction
- You must follow the personal safety working arrangements
- You must report personal safety related incidents, and near misses to your Wellbeing Project Officer/Independent Age contact

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

- The ongoing implementation of the Lone Working Policy will be monitored through feedback from staff and volunteers to the Head of People and OD and Head of Volunteering
- Any member of staff or volunteer with a concern regarding these issues should ensure that they discuss this in the first instance with their line manager or Independent Age contact.
- This policy will be reviewed annually unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.