

LONE WORKING

1 Policy Statement

Guildford YMCA is committed to providing good working practices that strive to minimise risks for everyone. Providing an effective service to our clients will involve lone working, indeed the staffing design of a number of projects incorporates regular lone working. This policy aims to set out good practice guidelines for lone working.

2 Purpose

To ensure that there are safe working practices in place and outline specific responsibilities.

3 Scope

These procedures apply to all employees, and volunteers undertaking authorised activities for Guildford YMCA

The definition of lone working is “Any working environment where there is only one member of staff present; including one to one meetings.”

This policy applies to all staff where they are lone working and undertaking roles and activities during working hours which fall into the areas below:

- Any Guildford YMCA establishment
- Activities/meetings with clients
- Working with clients in the community
- Travelling with clients

4 General Responsibilities

All staff should read and refer to relevant department specific risk assessment and department procedures, staff have a duty of care to follow procedures implemented and/or amended as a result of any risk assessment.

Staff Responsibilities

- Taking reasonable care and completing lone working risk assessments in liaison with their manager;

- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working;
- Considering and assessing potential risks to their health and safety;
- Reporting all incidents, difficulties or risks raised from lone working, however minor, to their manager even if they do not wish any further action to be taken, because failure to report an incident may put others at risk.
- Reporting any risks they identify, or any concerns they might have, in respect of lone working.
- Maintaining an up to date diary of their appointments that is accessible to others whilst they are out lone working.

Managers Responsibilities

- Ensure that lone working is incorporated into the annual risk assessment document produced by departments involved in lone working practice. The department risk assessment is subject to an annual review by relevant Board Sub-Committees, in liaison with staff;
- Identify staff in their services who are lone workers;
- Regularly review, assess and monitor the need for working alone in liaison with those undertaking lone working;
- Putting procedures, devices and/or safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- Ensure that staff groups and individuals who lone work are given appropriate information, instruction and training, updates and refresher training as necessary;
- Provide information to ensure that staff are aware of any potential risks related to lone working, and the procedures in place locally to manage and reduce risks;
- Ensure that staff are fully inducted and trained in lone working procedures;
- Ensure that staff understand local risk assessment procedures and know what their own responsibilities and duties are

6 Assessing Risk

All lone working situations / practices must be covered by thorough risk assessments which should be reviewed and discussed on a regular basis, and where there is significant change i.e. related incident or series of incidents.

Risk assessments should take account of both normal work and foreseeable emergencies including fire, potential risks such as violence and aggression as well as illness and accidents. The format of the assessment will become a written record and will show any significant findings of any person who may be particularly at risk.

The 5 step process, outlined below, may be followed when assessing risk:

- Identify any potential hazards.
- Decide if the person/s may be affected / harmed and how.
- Evaluate the risk arising from the information you have already gathered.
- Record your findings and eliminate the risk or put control measures in place to reduce the level of risk to the lowest level practicable.
- Review the assessment on a regular basis.

Anyone conducting home visits, or meeting clients away from the project/office must fully brief themselves about the client they are meeting, and are aware of any issues or problems that could possibly put them at risk. These matters must be covered in the risk assessment, for this situation.

Staff must ensure they have clearly reported information about their intended location and time of arrival and departure. Refer to section 12 Recording Your Movements for further guidance.

7 Travelling with clients

Wherever possible staff should use public transport, or a taxi service (with authorisation from their manager) when travelling alone with clients.

Staff who on occasions may need to transport clients in their own vehicle must seek explicit permission for that specific journey from their line manager, and ensure that they have set up a reporting in system for that particular occasion.

Anyone who uses their own vehicle for company business must ensure that they have the appropriate insurance cover, and have lodged a current copy of the insurance certificate with Human Resources.

8 Activities with clients

In order to ensure effective service delivery it may not be possible or desirable to totally eliminate lone working, indeed some projects have regular aspects of lone working within the staffing design. However, when

appropriate, possible and practical, staff should avoid placing themselves in a position where they will be alone with a single client. Managers should ensure that staff understand the importance of assessing risk and know what their own responsibilities are.

If the role requires lone working activities relevant situations should be risk assessed by the staff member in liaison with the line manager and adequate measures put in place. Lone working should be discussed as a regular part of supervision between the member of staff and their line manager.

9 Working in projects

Managers must ensure project procedures are a result of risk assessment and best practice. Managers must ensure these procedures are in place, robust and take in to consideration all reasonably foreseeable circumstances.

Staff must use the project procedures in place to ensure they are traceable whilst carrying out their duties.

Procedures must be in place to minimise any potential risks to staff who carry out single cover shifts. A manager must always be available on call to provide guidance, take decisions and if necessary, arrange attendance at the project.

Managers must ensure there are clear and visible guidelines of action to take if a serious incident occurs.

10. Home Visits

Where the client or the nature of the visit has been assessed and agreed as posing a high risk, the member of staff must be accompanied by a colleague. No line manager may withhold permission for an employee to be accompanied by an appropriate colleague in such circumstances. If necessary, the visit should be re-arranged for a time when it is possible to organise secondary support.

Visits to empty properties must be discussed and agreed with a line manager and the visit should be made in pairs if this is considered necessary.

11 Recording your movements

Managers and staff must undertake adequate risk assessment to ascertain appropriate systems regarding lone working, as control measures will vary depending on the department and according to individual roles.

Control measures should be reviewed and discussed with the staff member/team and agreed in liaison with HR wherever there is a significant change and at regular intervals.

Managers of lone working staff must ensure there is an open diary desk system in operation and reporting in procedures to monitor the whereabouts of lone workers.

Staff who regularly lone work in the community must ensure they understand and operate the open desk diary system and reporting procedures at all times.

The diary must be kept up to date and accurate. Staff are responsible for ensuring that all lone working movements are recorded in the diary and last minute changes are communicated to the relevant person as soon as they occur to avoid unnecessary concerns for their contact person or setting off an emergency situation as set out in Section 15 - Action if a visiting member of staff fails to call in. The following information should be recorded or readily available:

- Name of client they are visiting / meeting
- Address of the destination
- Client and/or destination contact numbers
- Times of meeting (i.e. 12.30-2.00 and not simply 12.30)
- The estimated times of arrival and departure from destinations and the office.
- The point of contact where any alterations are to be notified

Procedures will need to be put in place to monitor lone workers to ensure that lone workers remain safe. These may include;

- Supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone;
- Regular contact between the lone worker and any form of supervision by telephone or face to face;
- Regular checking of procedures designed to raise the alarm if contact is lost with a lone worker; and
- Regular checking of other safety devices to ensure that they still work.

12 Using mobile phones

All staff required to lone work must have access to a mobile phone which should be kept fully charged and switched on while on Guildford YMCA duties outside the office. No staff member should conduct a visit or viewing or other external meeting with clients without a mobile phone.

It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that their mobile phone is kept secure at all times.

13 Early visits, and visits after the weekend

In cases where staff are going straight to a visit first thing, without visiting their base first, it is their responsibility to make sure that their movements are recorded correctly and that their line manager/contact person for that period is made aware of the arrangements in advance.

In the above circumstances, staff must phone their line manager's/contact person offices and leave a message on the answer-phone confirming that they are on their way to the visit.

14 Action if a visiting member of staff fails to call in

If the member of staff fails to phone the line manager within 30 minutes of the agreed call-in time, the manager must:

- Ring the member of staff's mobile phone, and if unable to contact ring (as appropriate):
- The visited client's/tenant's home number (if available)
- The home number of the previous client/tenant (if available)
- The home number of the next client/tenant due to be visited (if available)

If the member of staff still cannot be contacted, and if the visit is after hours, the line manager should call the employee's home number.

Should the line manager be unable to contact the member of staff or establish her or his whereabouts on any of these numbers during a daytime visit, a senior manager should be informed, consideration should be given to trying to contact the staff members next of kin, and the Police called immediately.

The Police should be given the following information:

- The member of staffs name and description
- The names and addresses of the last known client visits
- Name and address of next client to be visited (if appropriate)
- The member of staff's mobile and home phone number
- The line manager's contact number

Should the incident occur after hours, the line manager should contact the Police immediately.

Wherever possible, the line manager should arrange to attend the employee's last known visited address with the Police. Where this is not possible, the line manager should arrange another member of staff to cover.

Failure by a member of staff to report on their whereabouts, which results in this emergency procedure being invoked without good reason, may be treated as a disciplinary issue.

Approved May 2008 at the Residential Committee
Approved May 2009 at the Residential Committee