**Lone Working**

**Policy**

**(R.E.A.L Foundation Trust)**

**2021**

**Lone Working Policy and Guidance for Staff**

1. Policy

* 1. R.E.A.L Foundation Trust is required to provide a safe environment, safe equipment, and safe systems of work for its employees, volunteers and those who are affected by their work. These requirements are applicable to all situations, and particular attention must be paid to situations where staff work alone or outside normal working hours.
	2. Lone working is not covered by any specific legislation but the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (amended) 1999 apply.
	3. R.E.A.L Foundation Trust acknowledges that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of its employees when working alone.
	4. The management team shall ensure that lone working situations are identified, appropriate risk assessments are undertaken, and adequate control measures are introduced.
	5. Staff shall be provided with information, instruction, and training as appropriate to minimize risks in lone working situations and/or when working outside normal working hours.

**2. Guidance**

**Aim**

This guidance is designed to protect staff whilst working in lone situations, and to fulfil our duty of care towards employees in this respect.

This guidance covers all staff undertaking work on behalf of the R.E.A.L Foundation Trust on permanent or temporary contacts or employed on a supply basis, who are working in lone situations

***Definition***

*Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. This includes those who work alone in homes and in the community*

Management Responsibilities

**2.1** Identify Lone Workers

Using the definition above, managers should first identify activities which involve lone working and the members of staff who may be "at risk" as a result.

**2.2** Identify Hazards Associated with Lone Working

Activities must then be considered with a view to identifying the associated hazards and assessing the risks. Managers should consider the following areas:

**Location**

Hazards specific to the environment that may pose a particular risk, such as:

* Work in homes and in the community
* Access and egress requirements
* Remote areas
* Transport and parking arrangements

**Use of equipment**

* Hazards specific to work equipment such as:
* Manual handling issues
* Portable electrical appliances

**Potential for work-related violence**

*(Definition of work-related violence: Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened, assaulted, or suffers damage to his or her property, in circumstances arising out of the course of their employment)*

Activities and situations posing a potential risk of violence such as:

Staff carrying laptops or mobile phones

**Initial visits**

* A history of violence, verbal abuse, or threats to staff
* Individual
* Hazards specific to the individual, such as:
* Medical conditions
* Disabilities
* Female employees
* Pregnant employees
* Age
* Competence
* New or temporary employees

**Working Times**

Hazards associated with staff working alone out of normal working hours such as:

* Evening work- particularly after dark
* Weekend work

**Support**

Regular support and supervision should provide the opportunity for employees and managers to discuss health and safety issues, including those associated with lone working. Urgent issues should be raised immediately with the management team.

**2.3 Control Measures**

Managers should ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out on activities managed or organised by R.E.A.L Foundation Trust. These are of particular importance in lone working situations. Appropriate control measures should be identified as part of this process.

These may include considering alternative working methods, providing additional training and/or supervision, additional equipment such as personal alarms or mobile phones, scheduling joint working, identifying alternative locations.

**2.4 Record and Communicate**

**2.4 a)** Managers should maintain accurate records of risk assessments. Hazards specific to the lone working activity should be identified and evaluated, and control measures should be recorded

**2.4 b)** All findings from risk assessments should be communicated to all employees concerned

**2.4 c)** Risk assessments must be reviewed on a regular basis and revised as necessary

**2.4 d)** Managers should ensure that all incidents listed on the notifiable major injuries and conditions produced by the Health and Safety Executive. Where a member of staff is absent from work for more than 3 days because of work- related injury or violence this will also be reported to the Health and Safety Executive on form F2508.

**2.5 Training and Supervision**

**2.5 a)** Training is particularly important in lone working situations where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in times of uncertainty. This should form part of the induction programme for new staff and ongoing professional development. Additional training should be made available to staff if this is deemed to be appropriate or necessary because of circumstances which arise because of lone working

**2.5 b)** All employees should be made aware of the risks posed by the work activity and the procedures that are in place to protect them and others. Managers should also be confident that the employee is competent to undertake the work safely.

**2.5 c)** Additional supervision may also be determined through the risk assessment process and will therefore vary according to the circumstances. This may take the form of a periodic visit or there may be the requirement for immediate contact or frequent reporting to be maintained, as well as alarm raising procedures.

**2.5 d)** It is the manager's responsibility to determine the extent of training and supervision required. This will depend upon the risks involved and the capability and experience of the employee.

**2.6 Staff Responsibilities**

Under section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 it is the duty of every employee whilst at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself/herself and of any other persons who may be affected by his/her actions or omissions at work.

**2.6 a)** All staff should ensure that they are familiar with the Lone Working Policy and Guidance, and any risk assessments that have been undertaken in respect of work in which they are engaged, and that they comply with them. Failure to comply could result in disciplinary procedures.

**2.6 b)** Staff must cooperate with employers in matters of Health and Safety. They should not put themselves or others at risk by their activities. They should report to the manager all potential hazards, accidents or near misses which they have experienced or witnessed.

**2.6 c)** If you are using your own car in the course of your work, you are responsible for the safety and maintenance of vehicles used for work. In addition, it is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurances are in place and your insurer is informed of the nature of your work.

**2.6 d)** If a member of staff is involved in a road traffic accident or any other incident whilst at work, he/she should inform their designated contact as soon as possible, with details of the incident.

**2.6 e)** All incidents should be reported on the reporting form.

**2.6 f)** Members of staff who have medical conditions which may compromise their safety should inform their line managers of this.

**2.6 g)** Staff should ensure that their whereabouts are known by submission of up- to-date diary sheets. Where staff have been in a lone working situation, contact should be made with the designated base or person prior to the visit and at the end of the working day to confirm that they have concluded the visit safely.

**Additional Guidance for Staff Safety on Home and Site visits**

* Ensure that weekly timetables are up to date and accurate with telephone number contacts where possible.
* Where possible, initial home visits should be conducted with two members of staff. You should as far as possible assess the potential risks of any home or off site visit. An informal risk assessment could be done prior to a visit by gathering information from those knowledgeable about the situation, e.g., the referrer, school-based staff and/or other support professionals. If you have any cause for concern about making the visit, this should be discussed with your management team and appropriate action taken. This may involve using an alternative venue.
* As part of the initial visit, note the environment and any potential risks for lone working in the future.
* Complete a risk assessment form on return to base and return with initial visit information.
* Where visits take place in public or community buildings such as libraries or community centres, a risk assessment should be carried out prior to the work taking place.
* Staff working in schools and public venues should avoid isolated situations, e.g., a room with a closed door and no outside view. Rooms intended for one-to-one work in such premises should be equipped with a telephone.
* Never agree to be left alone in the home with a child. The Carer or parent should be in the home and preferably in the same room. In addition to personal safety this is good practice in terms of working supportively and cooperatively with parents/carers.
* If a child is accidentally hurt or becomes ill during a session, ensure you inform the parent/ Carer or designated school/ setting named contact immediately. In the case of accidental injury to a child or young person, the incident must be reported immediately to your management team, and an accident form completed.
* If you are alone in a room with a child, keep the door ajar.
* If you are hurt or become ill, inform the parent/Carer/designated school/setting named contact immediately and if appropriate, leave. You should inform your base if you are unable to return to work. In the case of injury, you should report the matter to your management team as soon as possible and complete an accident form You may then be advised to seek medical attention.
* If your work session is interrupted by a member of the household in a manner unacceptable to you, feel free to close the session and rearrange it for another time, if appropriate.
* If at any time you feel that verbal or physical threats or abuse may compromise your personal security, leave immediately and notify your management team. It is your responsibility to log all details immediately.
* Do not divulge personal information such as your home address and phone number without careful consideration of the circumstances.
* Do not agree to keep in confidence anything that might be told to you. If you think people may want to make disclosures, warn them that you will be duty bound to pass on any information regarding the compromise of children's safety or wellbeing.
* Note who to contact should the need arise within the setting.
* When parking your vehicle, take care to avoid isolated and poorly lit locations. Equipment and valuables should be concealed.

**Visiting Protocol**

* Make prior arrangements to visit, either by telephone call or letter or personal contact.
* Ensure that the purpose of the visit is clear.
* Make sure that you have your Elks Education Trust ID card with you.
* Remember you are a visitor.
* Arrive on time. Do not call earlier than arranged. If you know you are going to be detained, call ahead.
* If, on arrival, someone meets you other than the person with whom you have made the appointment, feel free to rearrange the appointment.
* If at any time you feel concern about your personal safety, leave immediately and telephone your designated contact in the office (See Diffusion and Avoidance Strategies/Appropriate Responses in a Crisis).
* Ensure that you are equipped with contact numbers for your base/ management team in case of emergency.
* Do not leave sensitive/confidential information on view

**Avoidance and Diffusion Strategies**

* Don't expose yourself to unnecessary risk
* Visit in daylight and be punctual
* Having knocked on the door, step back 2 to 3 metres If in doubt, make an excuse to stay on the doorstep. Take note of body language
* Use humour
* Keep calm
* Be Serious
* Take advice
* Listen
* Communicate
* Acknowledge their feelings
* Be non-judgmental
* Apologise/Empathise
* Stay out of their space
* Don't undermine
* Give a way out without losing face
* Respect
* Be quietly insistent
* Be assertive, not aggressive
* Be aware back-up/support
* Take time to think
* Set boundaries
* Realise that to do all this may be difficult
* Leave yourself a way out
* Always make sure you have a clear exit

**Appropriate Responses in a Crisis**

* Call for back-up
* Walk away
* “Can I help you?”
* Call a halt or a pause to a meeting
* “What can we do?”
* “How can we move forward”
* Set boundaries – give clear signals
* Define roles
* Explain consequences
* Don’t try to be a hero – personal safety must be a paramount
* Record and Witness
* Opportunity for debriefing