



LONE WORKER & PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY

Community Impact Bucks is committed to reducing the risks to its staff, volunteers and trustees associated with lone working by:

- Identifying the risks associated with lone working ('risk assessment')
- Giving practical advice and clear guidance to managers, staff, volunteers and trustees on how to avoid and manage risks associated with lone working
- Developing the ability of staff, volunteers and trustees to anticipate risks and to manage and deal with them
- Encouraging proper reporting of incidents and near misses and ensuring that staff, volunteers and trustees do not avoid reporting them in the belief that they are not serious enough or that it may suggest failure on their part.

Management, staff, volunteers and trustees share the responsibility for achieving these objectives. This document is intended for use as a reference guide and also contains advice to help staff, volunteers and trustees to work more safely. This advice is not exhaustive, nor is it a substitute for safe systems of work.

It is essential that managers, staff, volunteers and trustees co-operate to develop simple and practical systems.

What is lone working?

Lone working describes any situation whereby someone is not working alongside or near to other staff. Potentially this could include any member of staff, volunteer or trustee.

Due to the nature of some of the work, there are frequent occasions when you will be in a situation where you are working alone, sometimes in remote or isolated areas or at night.

Given some forethought and a few simple precautions, the slight risk of going missing or becoming the subject of an assault can be reduced to a minimum.

Risk assessment

Lone workers could be more vulnerable e.g. to assault or because they are unable to raise the alarm, if they have an accident. Therefore the risk for lone workers is greater and more rigorous systems are needed to protect them.

Basic requirements for all lone workers

- Take care of your own safety and that of others affected by your actions or inactions
- Comply with risk assessments and safe systems of work
- Report any shortcomings in systems of work to your manager
- Complete Incident Report Forms in the event of incidents or near misses.



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Working alone away from the office

Before leaving your normal office base, staff, volunteers and trustees should:

- Leave details of where you plan to go, approximate times when you expect to be there, details of any meetings you have arranged (including the name of the person you are meeting)
- Ensure you have an appropriate means of communication
- If taking a mobile phone, check it is fully charged and (for pay-as-you-go), has sufficient credit; leave it switched on; do not use it whilst driving (see also Mobile Phone policy)
- Take and use any other personal protective equipment provided or identified in service specific risk assessments
- Think about where you will be going and what you will be doing; consider whether there are particular risks relating to that location or activity (e.g. an unusually isolated farm, adverse weather conditions for driving); if there are, discuss them with your line manager or Chief Executive before setting off
- Contact the office (or other person) to tell them about any delays or changes to your schedule
- Make contact by telephone at specified times, if you agreed to do this
- Return to or contact the office, or other person as agreed, when you have safely completed your work / assignment

Please remember that these procedures are there to protect you.

Staff, volunteers and trustees entering building sites

- Wear hard hats and safety footwear provided when appropriate
- Report to the site manager on arrival at the site
- Follow any site instructions / advice given
- Observe safety signs.

Visiting clients in their own homes

- Make a note of where you are going
- Do not enter if the person you are visiting is not there and you do not know the person inviting you inside
- Tell your manager about any incidents which arose during the meeting.
- Remember you are visiting someone else's territory, acknowledge it is their home and wait to be asked in, invited to sit, etc
- Familiarise yourself with the surroundings in case you need to leave quickly
- Don't block the other person's line of egress, but make sure your own isn't blocked
- Let the other person enter the room first and make sure you have a clear line of escape
- Do not stand too close to the person you are visiting
- If you feel threatened by dogs etc, ask politely if they can be moved.



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Aggression/violence/kidnap

This includes aggressive or inappropriate physical contact which may or may not result in pain and /or injury or offence and other non-physical abuse including verbal, racial or sexual abuse, threatening behaviour, gesturing, swearing, shouting, insults, innuendo, intimidating behaviour causing fear or emotional upset.

- Carry a personal alarm (if you have been provided with one) and ensure that you know how to use it
- Consider the safety of others and protect yourself before protecting the property of Community Impact Bucks.

Other advice:

Before the meeting /site visit:

- Think carefully about how you are going to handle a potentially difficult meeting in order to reduce the likelihood of conflict
- Where possible, arrange meetings when other colleagues are available; try to avoid after-hours meetings.

During the meeting/site visit:

- On entering a building or premises, make sure you know how to get out in a hurry
- If the person you are meeting appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, it may be appropriate to make another appointment
- Ensure your behaviour is honest, fair, even-handed, considerate and helpful; never be aggressive back, this is how anger can escalate into violence; don't be patronising
- Minimise a customer's frustration is by responding promptly and showing that you care about their problem
- Show that you are paying attention; listen and hear clients out, even if you have heard it before
- Do not keep leaving the room as this gives the message that you have other more important things to deal with.

If somebody starts to get angry:

- Try to remove an angry or upset customer from an audience or, if easier, remove the audience
- Make reasonable efforts to control the situation
- Postpone the meeting, if considered necessary, to cool the atmosphere
- Stay calm; try to stay relaxed; don't become rooted to one spot; move about occasionally; try to look at something you are discussing rather than at the aggressor
- Listen carefully, even to abuse; agree where possible
- Ask yourself if you are the best person to deal with the situation
- Offer an angry person a range of options from which to choose: in that way he or she will find it difficult to stay angry
- If you are unable to control the situation it is better to retreat



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- If you have been provided with a personal alarm, keep it where it is easy to use; it may be possible to use it to frighten the aggressor (for this reason, alarms can be effective in remote areas, where there may be no one within earshot).

After a violent or potentially violent incident staff, volunteers or trustees should meet with their line manager and / or Chief Executive to review the incident and agree courses of action including any further support or counselling. Any such review will be treated as a priority.

A full written report of any incident or support will be compiled. This will be kept in confidence; however the Chairman of the Board will be informed.

Entering or working alone at any Community Impact Bucks' office

Managers should:

- Consider whether it is necessary / appropriate for staff, volunteers or trustees to work alone
- Undertake a separate risk assessment for key holders, to include procedures for emergency call outs
- Ensure that staff, volunteers and trustees have appropriate means to raise an alarm (e.g. phone or mobile phone, panic alarm); that someone is available to respond in the event that an alarm is raised, and that they know how to respond
- Consider whether there should be a regular calling-in procedure.

If an accident/incident occurs

- Report all incidents, including near misses
- Provide a statement if asked to do so by your line manager or the Chief Executive
- Follow any new procedures if they are revised following the incident / near miss.

Travelling by car

This might include travelling long distances to unfamiliar areas, perhaps at night.

- Plan your route and take appropriate maps
- Ensure that the vehicle is in good order and that you have sufficient fuel; take warm clothes in case of breakdown or bad weather
- Keep valuables out of sight; female staff should not leave obvious signs that the driver is female (handbags, coats etc) on the seats
- Park in well-lit areas, if possible with the car facing in the direction of exit; when returning to the vehicle, check the back seat
- Carry a mobile phone for emergency use (see also Mobile Phone policy)
- Do not pick up hitchhikers
- Carry a torch at night
- If you see an incident, do not stop unless it is safe to do so; it may be safer to drive on and summon help



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- If you are forced to stop, keep your engine running and lock the windows and doors; leave sufficient space in front of the vehicle to be able to pull out and drive away; drive off if you feel threatened.

Road rage

Unfortunately this type of incident is becoming more prevalent. If at any time you are confronted by this situation, it is important that you do nothing to fuel it further.

Do not stop to confront the third party. If a car pulls in front of you and you are approached, stay in your vehicle with the doors locked and windows closed; keep the engine running and drive away as soon as possible. If you cannot get away make as much noise and fuss as you can; sound the horn, flash lights etc to gain others' attention.

If you think you are being followed or feel threatened, raise the alarm by using hazard lights and horn; if possible, drive on until you reach a busy area - e.g. a 24 hour garage

If you are stationary and have a mobile phone, ring the emergency services.

If you break down on a motorway or dual carriageway

- Park as near as possible to an emergency phone
- If you have to walk, wear high visibility clothing if possible
- Leave your car by the passenger door
- When making an emergency call, face oncoming traffic, so you can see if another vehicle is approaching
- Tell the operator if you are a lone female
- Never cross the carriageway
- Wait behind the barrier, beside your vehicle if this is safe
- Ask for ID from uniformed persons to ensure they are bona fide.

Travelling by public transport

- Plan your route (outward and return) in advance
- Try to avoid travelling alone late at night
- Wait in busy, well-lit areas if possible; be aware of the location of exits
- Have your fare / ticket ready and separate from other valuables
- Try to keep one hand free
- Sit downstairs on double-decker buses
- Try to avoid falling asleep.

Travelling on foot

- Think ahead, be alert and aware of your surroundings
- Keep one hand free if possible
- Avoid short-cuts, underpasses or poorly lit areas
- Walk facing on-coming traffic



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- Do not hitchhike or accept lifts from strangers
- Keep valuables out of site and avoid areas where groups may gather e.g. clubs, discos etc
- Avoid wearing personal stereos
- If you carry a personal alarm, ensure that it works and that you can quickly access it.

Dog attack

- Do not enter premises where an unfamiliar dog is loose
- If, when talking to a customer, their dog causes you to feel uncomfortable, politely ask them to remove it.

Travelling in isolated areas / late at night

- Wherever possible arrange meetings so that they are completed during daylight hours
- If you have to go to an evening meeting, be aware of safe parking areas, particularly after dark.

Staying away in hotels

- Park in well-lit areas
- Keep your room locked; use the chain if there is one
- If possible, avoid rooms with additional access from the outside (ground floor, adjacent to fire escapes)
- Do not invite anyone into your room or enter their room unless you know them well
- If there is a noise outside your room, do not investigate, call reception for assistance.

If your job entails you being out alone at night, make sure:

1. You let someone in the office know your movements - where you are going, whom you are meeting - and keep them informed of last minute changes. This must not only be verbal but must be clearly marked in the diary and on the movements system
2. Carry a mobile phone, keep it charged and make sure the office has a record of the number.
3. Carry a personal alarm (if you have been provided with one).
4. Arrange that you will check in with a named contact, either when you return to the office or call in on returning home.
5. If you make a visit out of office hours, arrange to contact someone when you return home. This may be a family member or flatmate if you are returning home; however, if there will be nobody at home make arrangements to check in with someone else.
6. Again, make sure this contact knows: where you are going and who you are meeting, has an estimated time of arrival home and knows where to start calling colleagues to raise the alarm if you do not check in.
7. If you anticipate problems for any reason, let the office know in advance and discuss it with your line manager. It may be possible to arrange for someone else to accompany you. **DO NOT GO UNPREPARED!**



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8. If you are meeting at night, do not hesitate to ask someone from the meeting to escort you to your car at the end.
9. A “trigger phrase” for use when reporting in to the office has been established. This would alert the office contact without alarming the antagonist. It is essential that all staff are familiar with this phrase.

In the event of the trigger phrase being used, or a “home safe” call not being made when expected, checks should be made by the agreed office contact to establish the well-being of the employee, volunteer or trustee.

Procedure for alerting to personal danger

If staff, volunteers or trustees find themselves in danger and unable to speak freely, they should emphasise to the antagonist that they are expected to call in to the office OR a central point at a pre-determined time, and that if they don't, the alarm will be raised.

On telephoning, the staff member/volunteer/trustee should say

“Hello, this is, may I speak to xxxx?”

And then pass on an innocuous message.

THIS IS THE SIGNAL THAT ALL IS NOT WELL. THE OFFICE WILL IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE AND DIRECT THEM TO WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL HAS INDICATED IN THEIR SCHEDULE THEY HAVE GONE

NOTE: A Risk Assessment form should be completed in advance of any planned lone working.