

Home-Start Mid & West Suffolk

Policy: Lone Working

There is no legal prohibition on working alone but all employers have a duty to consider whether it is safe for an employee to do so and assess the risks posed by such working.

Lone worker scenarios within Home-Start:-

- Lone organiser/co-ordinator visiting prospective volunteer or family
- Staff travelling to appointments
- Sole worker in the office
- Working from home
- Volunteer visiting a family
- Lone working in charity shop

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. Extra control measures:

- Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek medical advice if necessary. Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual. The HSUK medical questionnaire will be completed by volunteers prior to their commencing volunteering (see appendix 1).
- Discuss with employees the risks to identify appropriate measures
- Avoidance whenever reasonably practicable
- Regular contact with the employer. Contact number to be available at all times. Where mobile signal is unreliable a landline number will be preferable.
- Enhanced reporting systems
- Planning of travel to minimise risk e.g. avoidance of travel in the dark, pre-planning routes, parking in well-lit areas
- Mobile phone- this should be checked for signal at the match visit and if not satisfactory a scheme mobile should be provided.
- Diarised appointments
- Access to first aid kit for treating minor injuries- volunteers will be encouraged to keep a first aid kit in their car and have access to first aid support and guidance.
- Emergency procedures, personal alarm
- Increased support and supervision
- Safety of equipment – procedures must be established to ensure effective reporting of defects checking and maintenance of equipment
- Following risk assessment procedures for lone working in the office building/charity shop.

Lone working volunteers

Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them vulnerable for working alone. Volunteers must be reassured that they will not be asked to visit families where it is known that there are circumstances which may compromise their own or the organiser's/co-ordinator's safety. Volunteers will also be withdrawn from families where concerns for their safety develop.

Personal safety should be an essential element of each course of preparation. Volunteers may be in a potentially vulnerable position since they visit families on their own. They may also be vulnerable while on the journey to and from the family. So some schemes in high risk areas provide personal safety alarms for their volunteers and staff.

It is important that someone knows where and when each volunteer is visiting. The organiser/co-ordinator should always be aware of which volunteer is visiting which family. Volunteers must agree a visiting day and time with their family. The co ordinators must be informed and the information recorded on the Section 2 form. Should this change for any reason then the co ordinator must be informed immediately. As an additional safety measure some volunteers leave a sealed envelope in a secure place at home in the eventuality of an emergency. We provide volunteers with Home-Start scheme details to provide to their next of kin should the eventuality of an emergency occur to enable them to contact the scheme.

Initial visits to families : to ensure the safety of staff and volunteers, families who have been involved with children's' services, social care or a self referral, will be visited by 2 workers.

It is important to get safety in perspective and not to worry volunteers. Each year in the UK over 5,000 volunteers visit families in their own homes. There have been very few recorded incidents of volunteers experiencing problems. Nonetheless, this should not prevent schemes from ensuring that all volunteers are aware of reasonable safety precautions to take.

Signed by Chairperson

C Read

Date 9th August 2019

To be reviewed as Scheme circumstances or legislation requires

APPENDIX 1

Home - Start Health Questionnaire for Volunteers

Name.....

Confidential

Thank you for volunteering with Home- Start; we greatly value your involvement. In line with the Equality Act 2010 Home-Start are obliged to carry out risk assessments in order to maintain the health and safety of all parties involved.

In order for us to make any reasonable adjustments necessary in order for you to successfully carry out your role would you please complete the following:

All information will be treated as strictly confidential.

- Do you have any health condition that might affect your involvement with Home-Start?

- Are you at present receiving any medical treatment or attention that may affect your ability to volunteer in the future?

- If you have a disability or any special needs please inform us of any adjustments that you would like us to make in order for you to comfortably carry out your role as a volunteer.