

Volunteer lone working policy, procedure and guidance

[Organisation] takes seriously its responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers who carry out their volunteer activity alone, without direct support or supervision. E.g. collecting and dropping off shopping for someone who is self-isolating.

[Organisation] are committed to reducing the risks to volunteers and the purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to reduce the risks of lone working as far as is reasonably possible and practicable.

The purpose is to help you think about and improve your personal safety, be aware of risks and to take steps to reduce and adapt strategies to keep you safe.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to:

- Understand 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 location, adverse weather conditions for driving). If there are, discuss them with your team leader before setting off
- Comply with any personal safety procedures detailed by (organisation)
- Raise any concerns with their team leader immediately
- Report any accidents, incidents, injuries or 'near misses'
- Report any safety practices that need to be improved, or risks not otherwise identified

Volunteers should take the following precautions when volunteering:

- Ensuring someone knows where they are going and when they are expected home, including details of any activities you have arranged
- Volunteer during daylight hours as much as possible and avoid poorly lit or deserted areas where possible
- Carry 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
- Carry a personal alarm, if you have one
- Arrange that you will check in with a named contact when you have safely returned home
- Take and use any other personal protective equipment provided or identified in service specific risk assessments e.g. face mask, hand sanitizer
- Tell your team leader about any incidents which arose during volunteering

Procedure for checking in and out and alerting to personal danger

We recommend all volunteers should have a buddy to check in and out of their volunteer shift with. It is the responsibility of the volunteers to exchange emergency contact details in case a volunteer fails to check out after their shift and is not contactable.

It is sensible to establish a “trigger phrase” for use in extreme situations. This would alert a team member without alarming the antagonist.

It is essential that all volunteers are aware of 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 to establish the well-being of the volunteer.

If a volunteer finds 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, they should say “Hello, this is, may I speak to xxxxx?” And then pass on an innocuous message or use the trigger phrase.

This is the signal that all is not well. The other person should immediately call the police and direct them to where the individual has indicated in their schedule they have gone.