



The right support, at the right time

Home Visits and Lone Working Policy

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This policy sets out the procedures and responsibilities for home visits and lone working at the Leading Futures Alternative Provision.

INTRODUCTION

This guidance applies to all work carried out in isolation, including during home visits.

The provision is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all staff and volunteers for which there is a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and further detailed within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

AIMS

The policy is to support any practitioner supporting children and families to help develop effective home visits and lone working practice.

The provision has a legal responsibility to provide safe systems of working for staff working alone, including when visiting the homes of learners alone. Individual staff must also take responsibility to follow safe working practices when working in this way.

This policy aims to ensure that a standardised, practical and knowledge-based approach to home visits and lone working is taken by Directors and staff, in line with current legislation and best practice.

KEY DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this guidance, lone working refers to any work carried out independently, without the immediate presence of other staff. These activities typically involve staff working and traveling alone, or completing home visits, often without direct supervision.

In all such situations, staff must adhere to relevant procedures and policies outlined in the Home Visits and Lone Working Policy. These measures are in place to ensure safety, mitigate risks, and maintain professional standards while working this way in isolation.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:

- Directors are responsible for the implementation, review and evaluation of the Home Visits and Lone Working Policy.
- Upon induction, staff will be required to familiarise themselves with this policy.
- Directors will routinely reinforce the policy to ensure staff remain informed and compliant.
- Directors and the Engagement Lead are responsible for ensuring that home visits and lone working risk assessments are completed and that control measures are implemented.
- All relevant members of staff will be consulted when carrying out risk assessments and will be informed of the findings.

- Members of staff have a duty to co-operate and comply with all controls in place to ensure safe working.
- Directors will give guidance in situations of uncertainty and will report on a regular basis any incidents that have taken place, in line with the reporting procedures for critical incidents.
- All staff are responsible in ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively.

LONE WORKER HOME VISITS

Before a staff member carries out a home visit, a risk assessment must be completed, ideally by two staff members. The findings of this assessment will determine whether it is safe for a staff member to visit alone.

If a staff member needs to return to the home for another visit, the risks may change. If new risks emerge, the assessment must be updated accordingly.

Before undertaking a home visit, staff must ensure the following safety considerations are addressed:

Risk Assessment & Preparation

- Initial Health and Safety Risk Assessment: Has a thorough risk assessment been completed? If so, does it confirm that visiting alone is safe?
- Background Information: Has the lone worker gathered all available information about the family and the home's location?
- Pre-Visit Contact: What prior communication has occurred with the family (e.g., phone call, written confirmation) to ensure they understand the purpose of the visit and the staff member's role?
- Missed Appointments: How will the lone worker inform the family if they are unable to attend a scheduled visit?

Planning & Documentation

- Shared Calendar: Lone workers must maintain and share their electronic calendar to ensure the provision is always aware of their whereabouts.
- Home Visit/ Lone Working Record: The location and address of the home visit must be recorded in the Home Visit/ Lone Working Record. This is kept in a labelled folder in the office.
- Director Notification: Staff should notify Directors that they are completing a home visit. They should provide Directors with the name and address of the family and an expected return time or check-in time before leaving for a visit.

Personal Safety Measures

- Minimising Risk: When conducting home visits, staff should avoid wearing valuable jewellery and ensure no valuables are left visible in vehicles.
- Appropriate Attire: Clothing and footwear should not restrict movement, allowing staff to respond quickly in case of an emergency.

- Situational Assessment: Upon arrival, staff must assess the environment and be prepared to abandon or reschedule the visit if personal safety is a concern.
- Identification: Lone workers must wear a staff ID badge at all times.

Observing and Responding to Risk Factors

- Household Behaviour: Staff must remain alert to behaviours or signals that may indicate potential risks during the visit.
- Respect & Professionalism: As guests in the family home, lone workers must adopt a non-judgmental approach, respecting cultural and personal circumstances.
- Professional Boundaries: Staff must be mindful of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with families.
- Aggressive Animals: If an animal in the home poses a risk, lone workers should politely request that it be secured in another room.

Post-Visit Procedures

- Closure & Follow-Up: At the end of the visit, ensure all parties are satisfied with the interaction and that expectations for next steps are clearly communicated.
- Record-Keeping: All details of the visit must be promptly documented and kept up to date.

Additional Safety Requirements

- Staff must carry a mobile phone at all times when working alone outside the provision.
- If going directly home after a visit, staff must arrange to notify the Directors upon safe arrival. This applies any directed evening and weekend work.
- For out-of-hours work, staff should ensure that partners or family members have the contact details of the Directors in case of emergencies.

LONE WORKING WITHIN THE PROVISION

There may be times when staff work alone in the provision. This may include those staying after opening hours to complete work, key holders who are responsible for opening and closing the provision or cleaning staff who work in the evening or early morning.

All staff should take responsibility for their own safety and inform Directors of when they will be working alone, and when they have finished.

KEEPING SAFE IN THE PROVISION

- **Anyone working alone in the building should have a buddy system in place so that they phone or text when they are leaving.**

- Any person working alone in the provision will not allow anyone else to enter, unless they are sure the caller is known to them, and they consider it safe to be alone with them. The front door should be kept locked when working alone in the building.
- When working alone in the building it is important to be aware of the risks associated with working with electrical equipment, hazardous substances etc.
- No one will use ladders or work at height when alone in the building.
- All fire doors must be checked to ensure they are not locked. Doors must be unlocked to ensure safe exit in event of an evacuation. Fire doors should be unobstructed.
- Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.
- Any incidents or accidents must be reported to Directors immediately.
- The first person to enter the building in the morning must ensure that it is safe to do so, if the alarm is ringing or there are signs of forced entry no one must enter the building alone. The person must wait until another member of staff is present and inform the Directors. If it is considered unsafe to enter the building, the Police must be called.