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Lone Working Policy and Procedure

Background

Healthwatch recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves in the workplace and in the community without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or out of office hours.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Parkwood Healthcare has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employees also have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

Legal Framework

Healthwatch shall act in accordance with the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of Healthwatch employees and volunteers.

‘Lone workers’ includes:

Those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is working on the premises
- People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations in the same building
- People working outside normal office hours evenings and weekends

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- A lone worker is visiting another agency’s premises or meeting venue
- A lone worker is making a home visit to an individual
- A lone worker is working from their own home.
- A lone worker is accompanying a client in their car

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Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the policy is to: -

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working
- Avoid instances of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working

Responsibilities

1. Company Responsibilities

- Ensure that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working
- Provide resources for putting the policy into practice
- Ensure that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed

2. Managers Responsibilities

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the policy
- Take all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees
- Identify situations where people work alone and decide whether systems can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Put procedures and safe systems of work into practice, which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone
- Ensure that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given induction, information, instruction and training and that this is updated regularly
- Manage the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents
- Ensure that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident
- Ensure that Mobile Phones, where issued, are maintained and used effectively

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3. Employees Responsibilities

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions
- Follow guidance and procedures designed for safe working
- Report all accidents and incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate
- Take part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy
- Report any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone

Procedure

1. Risk Assessments

- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Are there adequate channels of communication in an emergency?
- Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are vulnerable people at risk if they work alone?
- Is any known risk attached to a client being visited?
- Home visits should be avoided – is there an alternative?
- Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged?
- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?
- Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?

2. Good Practice for Lone Workers

- During their working hours, all staff leaving the workplace (or home) should leave written details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back at base. Staff should complete a weekly diary sheet for their managers with location, time and who is being met
- If, in the course of a trip away from the office, plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the office/manager
- Arrangements should be made with a manager or colleague to check that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task on time
- Telephone contact between the lone worker and manager is advisable to enable logging in when safely returned
- Staff should consider whether being left on their own with a client in their workplace, or leaving a colleague in this situation is safe practice.

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- When this occurs details of the meeting should be recorded providing information about the party involved.
- Access to or provision of first aid facilities should be considered for treating minor injuries.
- Use of a mobile phone to inform managers/colleagues of safe whereabouts should be used
- Periodical risk assessments should be undertaken to ensure adequate controls are in place

Vulnerable Adults

- In general, staff should **never** work alone with a person identified as a vulnerable adult.
- Staff should never transport a vulnerable adult alone.

3. Monitoring safety issues

- Lone workers must report to their manager all incidents such as accidents and near misses, including all incidents where they feel threatened. This includes incidents of verbal, racial or other abuse.
- Managers will report such matters to the Company Health & Safety Coordinator
- During supervision, managers should ask people working on their own whether there are any safety concerns that aren't being addressed.
- Lone workers are encouraged to seek help and advice if any safety concerns arise.

***Parkwood Disclaimer**

This policy applies to all staff when acting under the cover of 'Healthwatch' and whilst carrying out 'Healthwatch' specific activities. All Healthwatch staff are Parkwood employees and it is such that this policy is underpinned by Parkwood's policy and procedural framework. Parkwood reserves the right to implement its own policies in relation to Parkwood employees at any time.

References

Related Policies and Procedures

<u>Healthwatch</u>	<u>Parkwood</u>
Enter and Review	Health and Safety
Health and Safety	Risk Assessment
	Lone Worker

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