

Lone Working Policy

Policy Statement

Next Steps Ed recognises the increased risks to lone workers and risk assessments cover lone workers and implement control measures as appropriate to reduce risks. Employees will be informed of any additional risks they may face as a lone worker.

Next Step Ed recognises the fact that there are risks to employees in the provision of its services but expects that people generally should be able to go about their duties without threat or fear of violence or aggressive intimidation resulting from their work.

Next Steps Ed will ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that employees who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety. Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 still apply. .

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees therefore measures will be adopted to protect anyone affected by solitary working.

Solitary working exposes employees to certain hazards. Next Step's Eds' intention is either to entirely eliminate the risks from these hazards or, where complete elimination is not possible, to reduce the risks to an acceptable level.

Aims

This document is to protect staff from violence whilst in lone situations and to fulfil the duty of care towards employees.

This document covers all employees within Next Steps Ed employed on a temporary or permanent basis who are lone working i.e., in homes, in the community or in schools.

Responsibilities of Management

- Responsibility that every reasonable preventative measure is in place to protect staff.
- Provision of training and guidelines for staff as part of their induction.
- Ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as deemed necessary.
- To ensure staff have mobile phones (a phone used for work purposes only).
- Ensure that any incidents are reported to the Health and Safety Executive and if a staff member is absent from work for more than 3 days this will also be reported to Health and Safety Executive.

Responsibilities of Staff

- Employees should ensure they are familiar with policy and procedures that are written in this document and comply with them and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.
- Staff must converse with the designated Health & Safety team on matters of Health and Safety. At no time should they put themselves or others at risk by their actions. All potential hazards, accidents or near misses which have been witnessed should be reported to the director immediately.
- Car users are always responsible for maintenance of their vehicles for work in accordance with Next Steps Eds' travel risk assessment.
- If at any time a staff member is involved in a road traffic accident whilst at work, he/she should notify the management with details a.s.a.p.
- Any medical conditions which may affect any aspect of safety staff should notify the management and report on Risk Assessment forms.
- Staff should contact one of the Directors (or delegated person in her absence) at least once a day on their working day.

Information and Training

Employees will be given all necessary information, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks associated with working alone. Employees will be required to follow any safe working practices devised, which may include the provision of communication equipment and awareness of emergency procedures. All employees are required to co-operate with these efforts to ensure safe working and to report any concerns to management.

Safe Systems of Work Visits:

- No home visits will be undertaken without first seeking approval from the management of Next Steps Ed
- Anyone conducting a home visit should notify the management when and where such visits are taking place should this visit occur outside the scheduled community timetable
- All visits to be made by prior arrangements by either telephone or personal contact.
- Ensure purpose of the visit is made clear.
- Staff to always wear Next Steps Ed ID.
- Aim to arrive on time, not earlier than arranged. In the event of arriving late call ahead with an explanation.
- If on arrival someone other than the pre-arranged person(s) is in attendance, a rearranged appointment is an option.
- If during any time of the visit staff feel uncomfortable about personal safety, they should leave immediately and notify the management.
- Always have contact numbers for the management to hand in case of emergency.
- Never leave any confidential or sensitive information on view.
- If visits are in pairs, agree on an exit strategy in case of an uncomfortable situation and you need to leave.

- Staff to notify management of attendance of student within 30 minutes of the start of the session
- At time of initial visit, staff to note environment and any potential risks for lone working at future date – a generic risk assessment must be completed before and after a first visit.
- When visits are taking place in public or any community building (libraries, community centres) risk assessment should be carried out before work commences.
- When working in school and public areas staff should avoid isolated situations e.g., room with door closed and no view outside. Any premises for use on a one-to-one basis should be equipped with telephone, if Staff do not have their mobile phone.
- Some venues are protected by CCTV. If there is a suspicion that an allegation will be made or concern about inappropriate behaviour by students when in a lone working situation, staff must notify management at the earliest opportunity to ensure that video evidence is retained.
- On any home visit ensure you are never left alone in the house with a child. Carer/parent should be present, in the same room or nearby. This also promotes good practice to ensure working supportively and cooperatively with parents.
- Never agree to be left alone with a child in the house. If at any time, you are left alone in a room with a child, ensure the door is ajar.
- If the child becomes ill or has an accident during your session, inform the parent/carers immediately. In case of accidental injury, report to management immediately and complete an accident form.
- If you become ill, inform the parent/carers immediately. Inform managers if you are unable to return to work. In case of injury notify manager a.s.a.p. You may then seek medical attention.
- If any time any person within the household interrupts the session in a way which is unacceptable, end the session and rearrange for a later date.
- If during your session any verbal or physical threats or abuse threaten personal safety leave at once and notify management. It is then the tutor's responsibility to log every detail immediately using Next Step's Ed's incident report form.
- Never give out personal information such as landline or mobile telephone numbers or home addresses.
- Never agree to keep anything in confidence which may be told to you. If you think anything may be disclosed to you, warn that you are duty bound to pass any information regarding any aspect of children's safety for well-being.
- All community settings should have policies and practices in place in response to violence. Staff should make sure they are fully informed of any existing policies or practices in relation to the setting in which they are working.
- Always Park vehicles in a well-lit area and avoid any isolated parking place. All valuables should be out of sight and locked away securely.
- Always have written carer/parental consent permission for transporting any learner and ensure vehicles are appropriately insured and taxed.
- In the instance of vehicle breakdown, contact management in making decisions for those travelling in the vehicle, to safely transport by alternative means. (Roadside recovery cover is recommended to Staff).

Avoidance and Diffusion Strategies

- Never expose yourself to unnecessary risks
- Always visit in daylight and be on time - call ahead if expected arrival time is changed
- Having knocked on door, stand back by 2- or 3-meters maintaining space at all times
- If at any time you have any doubt, make an excuse to stay on doorstep
- Make note of body language
- Listen
- Acknowledge their feelings
- Always be non-judgmental
- Never undermine
- Give respect
- Be insistent in a quiet way
- Be assertive with care but not in an aggressive manner
- Give yourself time to think
- Be aware you have back-up/support
- Leave yourself a way out
- Always make a note to yourself to make sure you have a clear and unobstructed clear exit

Crisis – Appropriate Responses

- Call for assistance
- “How can we move forward”
- “Can I help you?”
- Pause or call an end to the meeting
- Walk away
- Explanation of consequences
- Do not try to hero respond – personal safety is paramount always
- Record and witness
- Chance for debriefing

Summary

Working alone is not illegal, but it can create additional risks in a work activity. Next Steps Ed is committed to developing policies, safe working procedures etc. to control risks and to protect employees who in turn should know and follow them. In addition to employees being sure that they are capable of doing their job on their own, the three most important considerations are: -

1. The lone worker has all necessary information of the hazards and risks which may affect their personal safety
2. The lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong
3. Someone else knows the whereabouts of the lone worker and what he or she is doing

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