



## Lone Working Policy

### **Principles**

Our lone working guidelines work alongside our Safer Working Practices policy and are set out below. Transporting young people is also covered as a related area.

These guidelines intend to protect young people, staff and volunteers from any potential risk that working together one to one might expose them to physical, emotional, medical or other difficulties, and that lone working sessions are well-planned and positive.

### **1. Training & Support**

- 1.1 All relevant staff and volunteers attend a two day training session which includes training related to lone working.
- 1.2 Volunteers are supervised on a monthly basis where issues relating to lone working are raised as an agenda item.
- 1.3 Volunteers attend regular skills sharing sessions where issues relating to lone working are raised and attended to.
- 1.4 Staff who are involved in lone working with young people receive regular supervision from their line manager. Any issues relating to lone working are raised as an agenda item

### **2. Lone Working - staff and trustees lone working at Mentoring Plus offices**

- 2.1 Staff or Trustees working alone in the office should not place themselves in unnecessary danger and should therefore not allow unknown people into the building.
- 2.2 If Staff or Trustees have arranged to meet with third parties whilst lone working in the building, they should be aware that there is a personal security alarm that operates only in the entrance hall and waiting room. This alarm, when activated, makes contact with an external organisation with whom a conversation can be had and the relevant action put into place. Meetings could therefore be held in this area.
- 2.3 Staff or Trustees working alone in the building should text their line manager informing them of where they are and for how long.

### **3. Lone Working - one to one with children and young people (lone working)**

- 3.1 Unusually for an organisation working with children and young people, the work of Mentoring Plus requires some degree of one-to-one working to allow the child to talk openly about sensitive issues. For the protection of children and adults, the settings chosen and behaviours adopted must be carefully considered.

- 3.2 Staff and volunteers are trained to choose public areas such as cafes instead of secluded or remote meeting places, only to meet a child or young person for the purpose of mentoring, and only with the knowledge and consent of Mentoring Plus and parents/carers.
- 3.3 Staff and volunteers obtain appropriate background knowledge of the young person in advance of the session. This includes their personal risk assessment including medical information. This information is applied when planning for a session with a young person, in the choices made, consents sought and preparation for meeting the young person's needs throughout the session. If longer or high-risk activities are planned, this is shared in advance with the relevant MP practitioner and advice followed.
- 3.4 Sessions should not be for extensive lengths of time. We recommend a session per week of no longer than 4 hours. Longer sessions or greater regularity than this must be agreed with the Director or designated deputy.
- 3.5 When meeting in a setting such as a school, staff and volunteers ensure that other staff are aware of their meeting, its purpose and duration. Rooms offering privacy from being overheard but where individuals are visible to others e.g. through glass doors, are always used where possible.
- 3.6 When meeting a young person in a school to take off the premises for a mentoring session; they must always be signed out and back in on their return. If the school do not provide this system the member of staff should provide written proof of taking them out and returning, themselves.
- 3.7 When lone working, staff and volunteers ensure they have a charged mobile phone with them at all times and they are aware of the following contact numbers - project office, project staff mobiles, 24 hour emergency M+ telephone number. If a mentor has not seen a parent/carer at time of collection they are to send a text to state that the young person has been collected (this could be in the case of a young person being collected directly from school). In the case of a Primary matching all collections will be from school and the young person will be signed out.
- 3.8 When lone working, staff and volunteers ensure that if/when they meet a young person the parent/carer is not present, they send a text message to the parent/carer to inform them of collection and estimated time of return.
- 3.9 If a young person does not keep an appointment the member of staff or volunteer who had arranged to meet them must contact the parent/carer and practitioner, where relevant, to say they have not met.
- 3.10 All lone working activities undertaken must be age-appropriate and meet requirements outlined in the Health & Safety Policy. Any exceptions to this are agreed and risk assessed in advance with the Director or designated deputy. It is the responsibility of staff / volunteers to ensure that they and the young person have appropriate clothing, food, drink or equipment for any activities undertaken. Any incidents or accidents must be reported in accordance with our Health & Safety Policy.
- 3.11 Staff / volunteers will not engage in lone work if either party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If the young person appears to be under the influence during the session, the adult ends it immediately and ensures the young person is safely returned home in the most appropriate manner.
- 3.12 If the young person behaves inappropriately in a way likely to expose themselves, staff, volunteers or third parties to offence or harm, the adult must inform Mentoring Plus immediately by phone (see 6.6 above) and takes their instructions.

- 3.13 If during a lone working session a child or young person makes any allegations about the adult present or another Mentoring Plus volunteer or staff member, the adult must ensure the young person is safely returned home in the most appropriate manner and then immediately informs the Director or designated deputy.
- 3.14 It is sometimes necessary to collect or return a young person to their home. No home visits should be made other than that necessary to carry out mentoring. Visits are never without prior arrangement with the family, and are always recorded. Staff and volunteers must never remain alone with the young person in their home, or visit private areas such as a bedroom.
- 3.15 Mentoring Plus assesses and mitigates any risk to staff or volunteers of visiting the young person's home prior to such an arrangement being made.
- 3.16 Where staff or volunteers have an arrangement to visit a young person in their home the following aspects must be considered whilst undertaking mentoring; and the interventions to utilise in anticipation of or response to risks:
- Mentor to read and discuss M+ lone working policy with supervisor
  - Leave the home if feeling unsafe
  - Leave the home if family become aggressive towards you or each other
  - If necessary, call the police when safe to do so
  - Text supervisor upon entering the home and when leaving the home. Text danger word "red" to supervisor and emergency number if too unsafe to call, as an urgent need for help – Supervisor/holder of emergency number to call the police if word received.
  - Mentor to discuss boundaries re behaviour at first opportunity, eg no smoking around mentor and vice versa and any sign of aggression whether direct or indirect will terminate the session
  - If behaviour of mentee or family members is deemed irrational leave the premises and contact supervisor/emergency number
  - Ensure mobile phone is available and charged, with reception
  - Mentor to surrender own property if threatened
  - Thorough note taking of incidents by mentor post session
  - Leave personal property (except mobile phone) in boot of car prior to entering premises unless you have a good relationship/trust with the family
- 3.17 If a child or young person becomes distressed or angry in a lone working situation, this must immediately be reported to the Director or designated deputy who will take appropriate risk assessment action.

#### **4. Transporting Children and Young People**

- 4.1 Car journeys are an example of a setting which may unavoidably require a secluded one-to-one situation. These should be undertaken only with a specific purpose relevant to the work of the charity, by prior arrangement and with the permission of the young person and their parent/carer.

- 4.2 In the case of a child or young person urgently needing a lift without prior arrangement, the journey and the reason for it should be immediately reported to the charity and parent/carer.
- 4.3 Adults who use their own vehicles for transporting children must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured\*, that the maximum capacity is not exceeded, and that they are fit to drive. The driver is legally responsible for ensuring all passengers wear seat belts and that younger / shorter children use car seats where required under current legislation\*\*.
- 4.4 Where adults transport children in a vehicle which requires a specialist license/insurance e.g. PCV or LGV6, staff must have an appropriate licence and insurance to drive such a vehicle.
- 4.5 If behaviour by a young person is sufficiently inappropriate to be putting staff, volunteers or other passengers at risk whilst driving, the driver should park the car at the first safe opportunity, take the keys out of the car, and step out of the car in order to call project staff and take their instructions.
- 4.6 Staff / volunteers will not be asked to drive more than 60 miles or for more than 3 hours in any one day in the supporting or collecting of young people.
- 4.7 Only staff can transport more than one young person to and from group sessions. Under these circumstances staff may drive a maximum of three young people. If a car can accommodate more e.g. a 7-seater, an additional adult must also be present throughout the time the young people are being transported. A volunteer can transport more than one child only with prior arrangement and under exceptional circumstances.
- 4.8 Adults transporting young people must drive according to the law and model good behaviour as a road user.

\* We are advised that most motor insurers will consider driving a young person as part of a voluntary arrangement falls under social, domestic and pleasure, provided that driving is not described as the main purpose of volunteering and they are not paid for driving other than to reclaim costs. Volunteers should check with that this is the case with their insurance provider.

\*\*Currently a child must use a booster seat until they are 12 years old or 135cm in height, whichever comes first, but check for any updates - <https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/using-a-child-car-seat-or-booster-seat>

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