

## **Policy Aim**

All employees have an equal responsibility to their employer, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to look after their own health and safety. When conditions of service delivery require staff to work alone, individual staff members and line managers have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents. 'Lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in the community, in their own homes or when they may be the only staff member present in the office. They will be physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. The aim of Interlink's policy for lone working is to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to describe procedures to minimise such risks and to promote safer working practice.

## **Principles**

A commitment to:

- Supporting staff members to recognise and reduce risk. Lone workers are encouraged to regularly assess the situation they are in and the risks to which they are exposed
- Provide appropriate training and information for staff
- Supporting staff to maintain safe working practices
- Provision of equipment such as mobile phones, as appropriate
- Priority being placed on the safety of the individual over the safety of property

## **Procedures**

### **Safety of Building**

- Access to the building is controlled
- Alarm systems are checked regularly
- A key code is used to restrict access to the upper floor after hours when rooms are being hired and a lone worker is present.
- There is access to a telephone and first aid equipment
- If there is an indication that the building has been broken into, staff must not enter alone but wait for assistance

### **Personal Safety**

- Members of staff undertake risk assessments relating to their role and circumstances. Assessment of the risks should be undertaken in conjunction with the line manager
- Interlink operates a 'buddy system'; staff must inform an identified person when they will be working alone giving accurate details of their location and will inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions

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when a staff member expects to go home after a visit rather than returning to the office. A 'buddy' might be a family member, friend or a work colleague

- If the buddy is a work colleague and the staff member does not report in, this needs to be reported to the line manager or Chief Executive, or an alternative designated member of staff in a case where these are not available
- Where it is deemed appropriate staff will be issued with a mobile phone. The staff member is responsible for checking it is fully charged and in working order
- Staff working at home should take every reasonable precaution to ensure their address and telephone number remain confidential
- A staff member working at home should have reasonable contact with their line manager, or other designated member of the management team, if working at home for extended periods
- Should an incident occur, there will be a full de-brief with the staff member's line manager who will produce a post-incident report

## **Safer Working Guidance**

### **Be aware of the environment:**

- Be aware of entrances/exits, alarm systems and procedures and the location of first aid supplies e.g. when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night
- Ensure items such as laptops and mobile phones are carried discreetly when out of the office
- Staff working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display and can be retrieved on 1471. Staff are encouraged to prevent the person you call accessing your number, dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile
- Make sure your car, mobile phone, electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use and in good working order

### **Be aware of your own safety:**

- Interlink's staff handbook (P19) details expectations of staff behaviour. Staff are to be courteous at all times and use appropriate language. Think about the tone of your voice and your choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising or which could be misconstrued, especially when working with young or vulnerable clients
- Think about your body language – what messages are you giving?
- Dress appropriately e.g. is it suitable to the occasion or does it hamper your movement?
- Be aware of your own triggers – what makes you angry or upset? Behave in a non-confrontational way
- Be aware of your own actions and how they are perceived

### **Be aware of other people:**

- If you are visiting or transporting a client on your own check, this needs to be risk assessed
- Where colleagues work with a person that is known to present a risk, this needs to be shared e.g. a client referred to you from an organisation or through a statutory partner. If other staff are likely to be working with the same client information regarding that client should be shared, as appropriate, within the bounds of confidentiality. Wherever possible meet clients in public venues (Interlink Staff Handbook – Page 21)
- Is their language appropriate to the situation? Take note of non-verbal cues
- Listen to others and show them you are listening

- If at any time you feel uneasy or at risk, remove yourself from that situation, do not put your personal safety at risk
- Be aware of Interlink's Safeguarding policies and guidance for good practice If a young person or vulnerable adult discloses alleged abuse to you
- If you feel threatened, make your excuses and leave or do not go into the situation in the first place if you feel at risk

### **Transporting Young People/Vulnerable Adults in Your Car:**

- In order to drive young people or vulnerable adults unaccompanied, you will have had a CRB check
- Before agreeing to transport people in your car, carry out a risk assessment
- You should notify your line manager of existing or an impending disqualification or conviction
- You must be in good health and physically capable of driving safely. Do not drive when tired or when taking medication which affects your ability to drive
- Parents should be informed of who will be transporting their child, the reasons why, how long the journey will take and expected time of arrival back home. They are required to sign the appropriate consent form
- The client should have been informed of the destination, the purpose of the activity and the method of transport beforehand
- You are required to have business insurance to enable you to carry others. Ensure your car is road-worthy
- Check the directions to your destination
- Carry more than one young person in your car whenever possible, or another adult as this reduces the risk and take sensible precautions
- Young people should never be left in the vehicle unattended
- Does the person you are expecting to transport have any personal safety issues? Do they have any health issues which may require medication?