



Lone Worker Policy

A. INTRODUCTION

Evergreen Care UK has a duty of care for its staff and volunteers and seeks to protect them from the risk associated with working alone when they are on duty and away from Evergreen's office.

Evergreen as an employer does not expect staff and volunteers to expose themselves to unnecessary risks in the course of their duties. The organisation will work with staff and volunteers to minimise risks and will support them if they leave a situation in which they feel at risk.

B. BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. Evergreen must have details of each member of staff and volunteers telephone numbers (including mobile numbers).
2. Evergreen must have contact details of someone to contact in an emergency.
3. A Risk Assessment must be undertaken when lone working is being considered.
4. Never assume it won't happen to you.

C. LONE WORKING

A risk assessment is undertaken with all clients prior to the service being provided.

The following are important factors for staff and volunteers when visiting clients.

Staff and volunteers must:

1. Ensure they have a means of communicating with the office or a reliable contact.

The office staff will know where Home Support Workers should be when they are undertaking Evergreen duties. In relation to the Befrienders the office does not know when they will be visiting clients and we ask that they ensure someone responsible knows the times they are visiting a client. They are able to telephone the office during office hours to say they are visiting a client if they do not have someone else to contact. Befrienders in this situation out of office hours are able to leave a message on the office telephone to say they are visiting a client. Staff and volunteers have a telephone number to call if they need support in an emergency, even out of office hours.

2. Ensure they have their personal belongings in their pocket and other items in a bag which sits close to their body with fastening innermost. Any cash to be kept out of sight.
3. Give some thought before arriving at a client's home as to what exit strategies could be used if feeling uncomfortable or threatened when entering someone's home such as ensuring they are situated between the client and the front door.
4. Conduct their own risk assessment on the door step before entering. If feeling at all uncomfortable or unsure, to make an excuse and leave. It is important to trust their instincts.

5. Be mindful of the fact that they are entering someone else's territory. Their presence may be unwanted and pose a threat.

6. When entering make a note of how the front door opens and closes so that a quick exit can take place if necessary.

D. SAFETY ON THE STREET

Staff and volunteers must:

1. Plan journeys, perhaps using Google street view.

2. Look confident:

-stand tall and look as if they know what they are doing and where they are going.

-Be alert to what is going on around them.

-Do not wear a personal stereo.

-Ensure they have a working mobile phone with them.

3. Not take short cuts unless they are as safe as the longer way.

4. If passing higher risk areas, consider how to respond if feeling threatened.

3. If feeling that someone is following them trust their instincts and take action. As confidently as possible cross the road turning to see who is following. If still being followed, keep moving and head to a busy area and tell people what is happening. If necessary, the police should be called.

4. Keep their mind on surroundings avoiding distractions such as a mobile phone or headphones.

5. Seek to keep valuables in one safe place.

E. DEALING WITH AGGRESSION

Staff and volunteers must adhere to the following:

1. Be aware of changes in the behaviour of the client or their relative/visitor.

2. Try to use their own communication skills to defuse a difficult situation early on, thinking about how tone, volume and body language can help to create a calming atmosphere.

3. If the client or their relative/visitor is getting angry try to remain calm. It is best not to meet aggression with aggression.

4. Avoid entering the aggressor's personal space or touching them, as this could make the aggressor feel threatened and can escalate the situation.

5. Beware of their own body language, adopting a neutral and non-threatening position to help create a calming atmosphere.
6. If the situation cannot be de-scaled get away from the aggressor.
7. Be assertive and avoid meeting aggression with aggression.
8. Use exit strategies-have a pre-planned way to excuse themselves from a difficult situation. For example, it may be possible to say that they cannot help them but they will contact someone who can sort out the problem.
9. Apply diversion techniques to distract them whilst making their exit.
10. Use their voice - shout a specific instruction such as 'call the police'.
11. Remember the earlier they spot a potential problem arising the more choices they have to avoid it.
12. If an incident does occur they should contact their line manager or the office straight away. They will be supported and if necessary, risks will be reassessed so that extra control measures can be put in place.
13. Report near misses as well as actual incidents.
14. Only ever use physical self-defence as a last resort with the only purpose being to get away from the attacker.
15. There are personal alarms available in ECUK's office for the use of staff or volunteers if they believe it would be helpful in particular situations.

P*L*A*N

Prepare yourself for the journeys

Look confident

Avoid risk

Never assume

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