

LONE WORKING POLICY

This policy, along with other interlocking policies, forms the governance of Homeless and Rootless at Christmas (HARC).

This policy is to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe and healthy working conditions for volunteers and guests.

Introduction

Homeless and Rootless at Christmas (HARC) has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their employees and volunteers.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers in order to reduce the risks of lone working as far as is reasonably possible and practicable. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working on the site or taking part in HARC business off site.

In many cases, lone working is low risk and an uneventful experience. However, it can create risks or increase risk that are already present.

Definitions of lone worker

For the purpose of this policy, a lone worker is defined as someone who regularly or occasionally works on their own without direct supervision or support. Employees and volunteers are also considered to be working alone if they have neither visual nor audible communication in the event of an incident. Lone working can occur:

- During normal working hours at an isolated location, or within the normal workplace

Objectives of this policy

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- Situations where lone working takes place are identified.
- That risks inherent in lone worker situations are assessed and suitable precautionary measures taken.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment is the overall process of performing a systematic written risk analysis and risk evaluation in order to identify methods to control the severity of the risk.

Risks to be assessed during the process may include:

- Potential violence or aggression
- Isolated areas or difficult terrain
- Sudden illness or accident
- Building conditions
- Weather conditions

This list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities for the health and safety of lone workers are allocated as follows.

Employer

- Ensure the management of lone working within the organisation is adhered to under the health and safety policy.
- Maintain a log of the situations of employees considered to be lone workers in the Project Log Book. This includes the responsibility to:
 - To identify all staff likely to work regularly in isolation from their colleagues.
 - To assess the risks that such lone working presents.
 - Having assessed the risks, to decide whether lone working is reasonable or not in these situations.
 - To discuss with Trustees any situation where the risks cannot be controlled.
- If lone working is considered reasonable, then the project manager (or board of trustees) must ensure that suitable precautions are in place such as:
 - Mobile telephones
 - Giving staff/volunteers information on known risks
 - Informing colleagues about being alone with a guest
- Implement systems that mean staff/volunteers that have failed to make contact or return at the expected time are contacted.
- Monitoring feedback from the staff/volunteers on lone worker risk and seeking to improve processes.
- To draw attention to this policy during training.
- To support staff/volunteers who are victims of violence and aggression in line with the organisational policy.

Employees and volunteers should

- Avoid lone working where possible
- Take everyday precautions to ensure their own safety
- Carry and using all equipment provided for their safety e.g. personal alarms and mobile phones and making sure batteries are working
- Follow all working practices and procedures that have been put in place
- Understand the risks that affect them and not taking unnecessary risks
- Know what to do if threatened verbally or physically (see below)
- Raise any issues or concerns with the Project Lead or Project Manager.
- Report to the designated person immediately if they experience anything unpleasant (even if trivial)
- Ensure that a record is made of the date, time and location of any incident in the Project Log Book.

Action to be taken if you are threatened verbally or physically:

- If you are in a position to do so, get out as quickly as possible. Walk away.
- If you are not near an escape route, withdraw to a room, barricade yourself in, smash a window, scream FIRE (it is proven to be more successful than HELP).
- Do not feel embarrassed about causing a scene, do all you can to attract attention
- Call 999 and seek immediate help

Supervision

Although staff/volunteers/guests cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still the trustees duty to ensure their health and safety while they are at the project. Supervision (if required) can help to ensure that staff/volunteers understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out.

Reporting

It is vital that all incidents, even those thought trivial, are reported to the Project Leads, and Project Manager they should put the complaint in writing to the Project Manager at harc.sheffield@virgin.net. Please email (or phone) in the report as soon as possible.

Remember to include date, time, and location and include all necessary details including witness details. For further details please see the HARC Incident Reporting Policy.

Near misses (where an incident could have occurred) also need reporting as these reports help to assess future risk

Monitoring and Review

The ongoing implementation of the Lone Working Policy will be monitored through feedback from staff and volunteers to the Project Leads, or Project Manager

Any member of staff or volunteer with a concern regarding these issues should ensure that they discuss this in the first instance with the Project Leads, or Project Manager

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.

Julie Roberts: 24.10.2024

Review date: October 2025