

LONE WORKING POLICY

The Policy

Medistaff24 have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff while they are at work, as set out in our Health and Safety Policy. We recognise that at any given time staff may be working alone, whether that is in our office space or attending our service users' homes.

We have a responsibility to assess the risks to lone workers and to take steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Staff have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Lone working is not inherently unsafe and proper precautions can reduce the risks associated with working alone.

Some staff may spend most of their working lives working with others and find themselves working alone occasionally. Others will work alone on a daily basis. This policy refers to frequent lone workers and occasional lone workers and to high risk and low risk activities.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. Eg.

- 1) People working separately from others in a building
- 2) People who work outside 'normal' hours
- 3) People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues
- 4) People who work at home other than in low risk, office-type work

The definition covers staff and volunteers in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures.

Potential Hazards of Working Alone

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- 1) Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available
- 2) Fire

- 3) Violence or the threat of violence
- 4) Lack of safe way in or out of a building eg danger of being accidentally locked in
- 5) Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone

Measures to reduce the risk of lone working

We undertake the following measures to reduce the risk of lone working:

Working alone

- 1) Where you are concerned that you may be unsafe working alone in any particular context, you should discuss your concerns beforehand with your line-manager or supervisor. A risk assessment of the situation will then be undertaken if appropriate
- 2) A risk assessment will identify the hazards of work. When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place, or the work reassigned to another worker or done in hours when the worker is not alone
- 3) In any situation where you feel unsafe whilst working alone, you should remove yourself from that situation immediately, and report the incident to your line-manager or supervisor

Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. We ensure that you understand the risks associated with your work and the relevant safety precautions

- 1) Lone workers new to a job or undergoing training may need to be accompanied initially
- 2) Regular contact by phone may be appropriate and we ensure that lone workers have a mobile phone available at all times to enable them to contact the office in the event of an emergency

Accidents and Emergencies

- 1) Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. This should include being made aware of special arrangements for out of hours incidents. First-aid may be available from others, or it may be prudent for an individual frequently working away from the office to carry a basic first-aid kit if there is a foreseeable risk of injury

2) Staff working alone in the office for a day should advise reception staff, so they can be accounted for in case of fire

3) Staff working alone are responsible for adhering to security and fire regulations at all the times.

Violence at work

1) You must ensure that violent incidents are reported to ensure that the risk can be communicated to all. The risk of violence may not be directly people related, it may be associated with environmental issues like working alone outside after dark, or a situation may arise where there was no previous history of incidents


2) Staff likely to be lone workers in such situations should be trained in dealing with difficult people, in ways to recognise a risk and in behaviours which may reduce the risk eg up to and including terminating the event

Conclusion

1) Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff or volunteers, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors

2) We ensure that measures are in place to reduce risk and that expectations have been communicated to lone workers and appropriate training provided

3) All staff, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and should take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with their normal working life

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