

Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme

Lone Working Policy

This policy was agreed by the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Steering Group on

_____ (date)

Signed _____ (chair)

Date of Review _____

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1.0 Introduction

Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme is committed to ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, the personal safety of its volunteers. It should be clearly understood by all concerned that in any situation, the reduction of risk and avoidance of untoward incidents is of paramount importance.

Where clients are involved, the emphasis must be on safeguarding them from harm, even in cases where they contribute to a disturbance.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Health and Safety Policy and the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Safeguarding Policy.

2.0 Definitions

Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme defines a Lone Worker as someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision. Volunteers are also considered to be working alone if they have neither visual nor audible communication in the event of an incident. In this policy “base office” refers to the volunteer manning the dedicated telephone line.

3.0 Monitoring and Review

The Volunteer Co-ordinator shall ensure that this policy is reviewed annually and in the light of:

- a) Any significant changes in working practices
- b) Any changes in statutory legislation
- c) Any incident that identifies an improvement in practice is necessary

4.0 Compliance

Failure to comply with the requirements of any of Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme health and safety policies and procedures may put other people at risk. Members who deliberately flout the policies and procedures may be asked to leave the group.

5.0 Safe Working Arrangements

Establishing safe working arrangements for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other clients and volunteers. Lone workers should not be exposed to significantly higher risks than others who work together. Precautions should take account of normal working conditions and foreseeable emergency situations e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

When considering safe working arrangements the Chairperson will follow a hierarchical system based on the following:

- a) Assessment of the seriousness of the risk
- b) Avoidance of the risk
- c) Control of the risk to be greatest possible degree
- d) Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and security equipment/facilities where appropriate.

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Incidents can have a detrimental effect on the individual. The Volunteer Co-ordinator is to ensure that volunteers are properly cared for after such incidents. Even those volunteers not directly affected can be subject to anxiety and concern. It is important that all volunteers are informed of the basic details and any counter measures as soon as possible. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will liaise with the Secretary to ensure all volunteers are notified of any new procedures without delay.

5.1 Manual Management system for lone workers

Record systems will contain the following information:

- For regular Lone Worker visits to the same client, full details of volunteer, person being visited contact numbers and expected frequency of visit.
- For one-off Lone Worker visits, full details of volunteer, person being visited, address, time, and contact numbers.

Lone Workers must:

- Take a mobile phone to raise alarm or request help, ensuring the base office always has up-to-date details of the mobile number.
- Contact base office to report any changes in arrangements (even if this means leaving an answerphone message);
- Follow advice in any Risk Assessment undertaken by the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme for their activity;
- Ensure a system is established whereby the Lone Worker arranges in advance to contact a relative, neighbour or the base office at the end of a visit and that any failure to return is followed up.

Should any Lone Worker fail to return at the end of a visit, the relative, neighbour or base office will initially contact the Lone Worker's mobile phone. If there is no response, a paired visit will take place to the client's house. If the Lone Worker is not located, the police should be notified.

6.0 Transporting Cash

Volunteers carrying cash to the bank should consider their safety; vary the routes taken and the times at which the visits are made. Wherever possible, the visit should be accompanied.

If attacked, volunteers should immediately surrender the money, run as fast as possible away from the scene and only call the Police when in a safe position to do so. The safety of volunteers is primary; that of money is secondary.

7.0 Lone Workers undertaking Home Visits and Transporting Clients

Both the Volunteer Co-ordinator and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure working arrangements are as safe as possible. A key factor in this is the Volunteer Co-ordinator (or other volunteers) knowing where volunteers plan to be and for there to be the means for two way communication whenever possible.

A list of planned visits, with estimated times, should be available to the Volunteer Co-ordinator or at the base office. This should include a contact telephone number and address.

Where there is a situation where members of volunteers are in a lone working scenario undertaking home visits or travelling, they should where possible ensure most/all of the following items are adhered to:

- a) Plan your route.
- b) Try to visit in daylight or with someone else.
- c) Telephone the client prior to the visit to confirm your visit and to ensure that they will be there.

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- d) Always show your identification, confirm who you are and why you are visiting, wait to be invited in.
- e) If on arrival at a client's home, you meet with a situation that you did not expect to which gives you concern, leave and make other arrangements. Notify the base office immediately.
- f) You should never enter a house if you are suspicious.
- g) Carry out your own risk assessment on the doorstep before you enter. If you feel uncomfortable, make an excuse and leave. Ring the base office immediately, using the keywords (see 5 above).
- h) If a visit takes significantly longer than planned, make contact with base to update then on your revised plan and timetable.
- i) Always remain alert to changes in mood and movement.
- j) Domestic pets and other animals can present problems. If you feel unsure or unsafe ask the client to remove them to another room/place.
- k) Keep car doors locked when travelling.
- l) Keep valuables out of sight in the car.
- m) Try to park in open, well-lit places.
- n) If someone approaches you when you are stopped lock all doors. Open your window a fraction to allow conversation. Only offer to help if you are sure the situation is genuine. If you have a mobile phone, offer to call for assistance whilst remaining in the car.
- o) When returning to your car, have the key ready and enter quickly. Lock the doors as a routine.
- p) Avoid walking in isolated or poorly lit places or in subways whenever possible that the necessary safety precautions are carried out.

8.0 Feedback

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme's duty to ensure their health and safety at work. Feedback from volunteers can help to ensure that they understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out and can help the organising committee plan for risk avoidance. Volunteers are requested to give feedback to a member of the organising committee on a regular basis.

9.0 Training

Appropriate training will be given during the induction of volunteers and as part of an ongoing programme of training.

10.0 Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 Chairperson

- 10.1.1 Shall have overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with Health and Safety legislation.
- 10.1.2 Shall ensure that this policy is reviewed annually and in the light of any failure of the system and/or changes in statutory legislation.
- 10.1.3 Shall ensure that adequate resources are made available to implement the policy and carry out any remedial action or amendments to this policy.

10.2 The Volunteer Co-ordinator

- 10.2.1 Shall identify those volunteers who are involved in Lone Working and ensure that risk assessments are carried out as necessary and arrangements implemented to reduce the risks.
- 10.2.2 Shall review operations to identify situations where volunteers may be exposed to foreseeable risks.
- 10.2.3 Shall produce risk assessments and implement controls, reviewing their effectiveness at intervals not exceeding 12 months or when a significant change in circumstances occurs and following any incident.

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10.2.4 Shall establish clear procedures to set limits as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone, and where appropriate, when to stop work and seek advice.

10.2.5 Shall ensure that lone workers are fit for the full range of duties.

10.2.6 Shall, when planning changes in service provision, take account of possible risks to safety and make arrangements for their avoidance or control.

10.2.7 Shall monitor report incidents or near-misses to ensure that correct action is taken to prevent a recurrence.

10.2.8 Shall ensure volunteers receive appropriate training.

10.3 Volunteers

10.3.1 Consider the potential risks associated with lone working and are required to follow any specified procedures laid down.

10.3.2 Shall report to the base office any problems whilst working alone.

10.3.3 Shall take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and co-operate with the organising committee in meeting their obligations.

10.3.4 Shall be personally accountable for their actions and responsible for ensuring they comply with the agreed procedure.

10.3.5 Ensure all Health and Safety incidents due to lone working are immediately reported to Volunteer Co-ordinator and recorded.

Appendix 1: General Lone Worker Risk Assessment

Volunteers should always carry a mobile phone when carrying out tasks for WHGNS

Potential Risk	Likelihood of occurrence (1-3) 1=unlikely 2=likely 3=very likely	Severity of consequences (1-3) 1=mild 2=moderate 3=severe	Actions for Lone Worker to take to reduce risk
Volunteer has an accident whilst at a client's house.	1	3	Know your own limitations. Don't undertake any risky physical work unless the Client or another volunteer is present. Ensure the correct equipment for a job is used, e.g. use stable steps when changing a lightbulb. Ensure Client is aware of actions to take if an accident occurs.
Client becomes violent towards Volunteer.	1	3	Volunteer should not enter client's house if anything is suspicious. Volunteer to leave at first signs of a client's change of mood.
Client is discovered seriously ill or collapsed.	1	3	Volunteer to contact emergency services immediately. Volunteer to notify base office, when it is safe to do so.
Volunteer is unable to call police without endangering themselves.	1	3	Volunteer to make an excuse to ring a relative, neighbour or base office. It is wise for a "code word" to be agreed in advance to alert the volunteer's contact that it is necessary to ring the police.

This Risk Assessment will be added to if there are any foreseeable risks associated with any clients, volunteers or tasks.