



# LONE WORKING POLICY

## 1. LONE WORKING

- 1.1 With Outreach and community work it is recognised that employees and volunteers have to work alone at times. There is no legal prohibition on working alone but StreetlightUK has a duty to implement safe working arrangements.
- 1.2 If you work in a situation where you can at times be working on your own ensure that you are familiar with the procedures for summoning help and review these regularly with all concerned. Most of the procedures outlined are for working safely in situations meeting clients of StreetlightUK but, in addition, consider the following measures and, most importantly, agree with the Project Manager what the arrangements will be in your individual circumstances: -
- 1.3 If you are in the office/community/outreach alone, discuss with the Project manager/Team Leader an appropriate strategy for summoning help. This could be having the mobile phone number of the manager or agreeing with another member of staff/Volunteer, that they will call you on a regular basis during periods when you are likely to be working on your own.
- 1.4 Have a checking procedure where you call in by phone to a colleague at a pre-determined time and at the end of an Outreach/Client meeting or working day.
- 1.5 When you know from previous contact or from service user records that a service user could be threatening or abusive only arrange to see them with another member of staff/volunteer as agreed by Project Manager/Team Leader.
- 1.6 Wherever possible arrange to see a **service user** you have not met before with another colleague. At first interview outline expectations for all concerned.
- 1.7 Where you are likely to be in a situation where you could be working on your own at any time in the office and the office is not fitted with an automatic warning device to summon help, you should have access to a personal alarm. Although this will only be really effective when help is within hearing distance, sometimes the piercing sound of the alarm can act as a deterrent to an attacker. When you are on your own keep the alarm hidden but near you. Do not have it in a locked drawer or in a place where it would be difficult to reach. Make sure you know how the alarm works and test it regularly.
- 1.8 If you are concerned about working alone, talk about your concerns to your Team Leader/Project Manager.
- 1.9 Staff/Volunteers must fill out an Emergency Contact Details form to be stored in the office/with emergency contact. Volunteers/staff must notify Streetlight UK if any of these contact details change.

## 2. SAFETY WHILST VISITING SERVICE USERS

- 2.1 It is often necessary for employees and volunteers to arrange to see service users at premises other than at Streetlight UK's office. Whilst the vast majority of these meetings pass without incident you must always be aware of the potential risks.
- 2.2 You must leave a clear and unambiguous record with the Project Manager/Team Leader of the address where you are visiting, a telephone contact number and the time of your visit and the likely time of your return to the office. Where you intend to return home directly after the visit, telephone the Project Manager/Team Leader to let them know you have completed the visit

- and you are on the way home. If you go on somewhere else after your visit or there is any changes of plan make sure they are aware of your movements.
- 2.3 If you are working on your own in your office and go out on a visit or to meet a service user it is important that you have an arrangement within your team to notify someone within the team of your whereabouts and contact details.
  - 2.4 In particular, be aware of how to make a call to the emergency services from your mobile. Check that the phone is working and the battery is charged before you leave the office.
  - 2.5 If the office has not heard from a member of staff/volunteer and they have not returned at the time indicated, the Project Manager/Team Leader will call you on the mobile or call the contact number you have left. If they cannot contact you they will alert the Project Manager/Trustee to take further action, which could include calling the police.
  - 2.6 Where you do not know the service user, never arrange a home visit unless accompanied by a colleague. If at all possible you should always arrange initial visits in the Streetlight UK office or in the offices of another agency (e.g. a youth club or training provider's premises). Neutral territory such as cafes, where there are people about, could be another option. Even when you know the service user only visit at home on your own if you feel comfortable doing so.
  - 2.7 You should never arrange initial visits out of office hours and, as a rule, all home visits and meetings with service users should be within normal working times when you can contact or be contacted by your office/team leader.
  - 2.8 Carry your Streetlight UK identity card with you and make sure it is within easy reach. Do not keep it in your purse or wallet.
  - 2.9 **It is Streetlight UK policy that staff must not travel with service users in their own cars**, unless they are covered with specific insurance for work use. If this is not the case, where you feel it is appropriate to transport a service user to an appointment, accompany the service user on public transport. Fares will be reimbursed by the organisation but check with your Project manager before, and if it is going to be a lengthy or expensive journey.
  - 2.10 **Never give your personal telephone number or address out to service users, or Streetlight UK partners.** Only give out Streetlight UK mobile number and business address.

### 3. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- 3.1 All the systems outlined above for notifying colleagues and taking care for your personal safety apply when you are engaged in any outreach activity.
- 3.2 Always try to carry a mobile phone and your Streetlight UK ID card when you are engaged in any outreach activity.
- 3.3 If the outreach activity in which you are engaged involves working in another agency's premises, familiarise yourself with their safety procedures before you start and be aware of who is working within that agency. Check if there is a written contract for joint working arrangements. Be aware of your immediate surroundings and environment. Never work on your own in the premises of another agency.
- 3.4 Always stay in sight of your co-worker and be aware of the tone of your co-worker's conversation. They may need your help or want to escape. Agree with them a pre-arranged code or signal which will alert you to any danger or discomfort with a situation and always respond to this signal if it is given. One example of a pre-arranged signal could be "I promised to make a phone call".
- 3.5 If workers encounter a violent, or potentially violent, situation they should not get involved. Walk away and do not do anything to aggravate the situation. It may be appropriate to retire to a safe distance and call one or more of the emergency services.
- 3.6 Remember that under no circumstances should staff/volunteers endure physical harassment of any kind. If this occurs, leave immediately. Access the support you need from a colleague, your Team Leader or Project manager. Where appropriate contact the police. Make sure the incident is recorded.

#### **4. REPORTING INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS**

- 4.1 All incidents and accidents or near misses must be recorded in the accident book held in Streetlight UK Office and reported to the Team Leader/Project manager. The manager will follow the necessary procedures and implement control measures to minimise the risk in the future.
- 4.2 It is the Team Leaders and Project manager's legal obligation to report accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences if it results in; death, major injury, if a work related injury results in an employee/ volunteer being unable to work for a period of 3 days or more, if members of the public are injured and needed hospital treatment, work related diseases and occurrences that potentially could have been a reportable incident.
- 4.3 The team leader/project manager will internally monitor minor injuries, intermediate injuries, and property damage incidents, acts of violence, threats of violence and verbal abuse incidents. On a quarterly basis the manager will review all records to check for re-occurrences or similarities.
- 4.4 All information about any incidents or accidents will be recorded and available to all interested parties, including enforcement agencies, internal/external agencies and other stakeholders.
- 4.5 This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees of Streetlight UK on an annual basis or in the event of a serious incident or accident. Any changes to the policy upon review will be discussed and explained to all employees and volunteers.

#### **5. ONLINE OUTREACH**

- 5.1 Before commencing online outreach when lone working, staff or volunteers must check-in with the team leader first, the time must be agreed and the team leader must be informed of the beginning and end of the session. If required, staff and volunteers can use a secure video-call platform in order to stay connected during online outreach.
- 5.2 Volunteers must not have lone access to outreach mobiles. The senior women's support worker and women's support workers must always have access to their outreach mobiles.
- 5.3 If volunteers begin to feel uneasy undertaking online outreach alone, they must stop and contact the team leader.
- 5.4 Whilst undertaking online outreach, if staff experience challenging circumstances that they feel they require assistance with, they must then stop and contact their Line Manager.