

Lone Working Policy

1. Lone Working

1.1. Introduction

A lone worker can be defined as: 'Any situation or location in which a member of staff or a volunteer works without a colleague nearby; or when someone is working out of the office alone whilst engaged on Teddington & Hampton Wick Voluntary Care Group (THWVCG).

There are some heightened risks associated with lone working, which include:

- Personal safety – the THWVCG office is in a shared building, which may pose a risk of physical and verbal abuse from unauthorised visitors
- Visiting clients in their own home to collect them
- Lifting and handling tasks when assisting a client into a car may result in injury
- Driving between one location and another when an accident may occur.

1.2 Health and safety for lone working by Companionship volunteers.

THWVCG is responsible for ensuring that their employees are suitably trained in relation to lone working. This may include, but is not limited to, verbal briefing (e.g., on the risks and mitigations), written guidance (e.g., procedures for unlocking and locking of the THWVCG office, logging instructions for drivers picking up/dropping off clients), or training sessions (e.g. manual handling safe practise for assisting clients into and out of cars). The risk assessment of the role will identify suitable training.

1.3 Working alone in the THWVCG office

If you arrange to work outside the normal office hours, make sure the THWVCG Co-ordinator know your plans.

- Before entering the building, ensure that the premises look as you would expect them to do – no signs of damage or occupancy and no signs of doors or windows forced or unlocked when you expect them to be locked. If you have concerns do not enter but contact the Chairperson or Trustees or ask a second person to enter the building with you.
- On entering the building, ensure that the building and contents are as you would expect them – if you have any concerns leave the premises and contact your chairperson or Trustees.
- Ensure that the front door is closed behind. Keep the office door closed. Make sure the office telephone is working (and mobile phone if you have one). Do not open the office door unless you know or have checked the identity of any visitor. Always trust your instincts – if you do not feel comfortable about letting a person in the building, then ask them to return at a time when you can arrange for someone else to be with you.

1.3. Driving, gardening, and shopping for THWVCG clients

Always arrange any driving, gardening, or shopping for THWVCG clients through the office, and refer any new clients to the THWVCG office.

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust recommends that a person plans their movements whether at work or in daily life as follows:

P*L*A*N for being safe out and about

P- Prepare yourself for the journey

L - Look confident

A - Avoid risk

N - Never assume

- Know exactly where you are going and how you are going to get there. Assess any risks there may be in doing the journey you are about to undertake. Ensure you have your personal belongings (e.g. keys, travel card) in your pocket and other items in a bag which sits close to your body with fastening innermost. Ensure you have a working mobile phone with you.
- If the client does not answer the door after several rings, try phoning their number, check with neighbours or look through windows if safe to do so. If you have emergency contact details for the client, call them. If you still get no response, call the THWVCG office or outside office hours call the THWVCG Co-ordinator.
- THWVCG does not expect anyone to expose themselves to unnecessary risks in the course of their work duties and THWVCG will support a member of staff if they leave a situation in which they feel at risk. If you feel uncomfortable, decline to carry out the job – making an excuse in front of the client as necessary - and call the THWVCG office Co-ordinator as soon as possible.
- If an incident occurs where there is a breach of your personal safety or an accident, make notes of the incident including the date, time, location and description including names and contact details of any witnesses if known. This should be done no matter how minor the incident. Call the Office Co-ordinator as soon as possible.