



Student Volunteering Cardiff (SVC)

Lone Working Policy & Procedures

July 2017

	Lone Working & Volunteering Policy
1.0	Introduction
1.1	<p>As an SVC staff member or volunteer you may on occasion undertake visits/meetings/activities where you are working or volunteering alone, or on a one-to-one basis with a beneficiary.</p> <p>The majority of beneficiaries that SVC volunteers will visit/meet will be within organisations/schemes/hospitals/schools. In these environments there will usually be a staff member present who can provide support should a volunteer require any type of assistance.</p> <p>However on occasion, SVC staff or volunteers may visit/meet beneficiaries within their homes where the beneficiary lives alone, or when no one else is in the home.</p> <p>SVC staff or volunteers may on occasion undertake tasks outside of a beneficiary's home, and visit/meet with a beneficiary on a one-to-one basis, within the community. This may include activities such as going for a walk, shopping or other leisure activities.</p> <p>This policy aims to keep SVC Trustees, volunteers and the staff who support SVC safe within their roles; help to prepare Trustees, volunteers and staff for lone visits/meetings; advise Trustees, volunteers and staff on the potential hazards to be aware of within a home; advise on SVC's procedures should any type of emergency, incident or concern arise whilst undertaking lone working or volunteering.</p> <p>These guidelines will be supported by training on particular topics.</p>
2.0	Scope of the Policy
2.1	<p>This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of SVC staff, volunteers and Trustees.</p> <p>'Lone workers' includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Those working at their main place of work where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one person is working on the premises • People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations • People working outside normal office hours 2. Those working away from their fixed base where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One worker is visiting another agency's premises or meeting venue • One worker is making a home visit to an individual • One worker is working from their own home • One worker is undertaking activities in the community
2.2	<p>It is hoped that all your questions relating to this policy will be clearly answered. However, if you have questions which remain unanswered, then please refer to the SVC Manager or SVC Board of Trustees (SVC staff may also refer to the HR department at Innovate Trust, as the employers of SVC staff).</p>
3.0	Aims of the Policy

3.1	<p>The aim of the policy is to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staff, volunteer and Trustee awareness of safety issues relating to lone working. • Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable. • Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff, volunteers and Trustees that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone. • Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.
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4.0	<p>The SVC Board of Trustees are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working; • Providing resources for putting the policy into practice; • Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed. <p>The SVC Manager is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that all staff are made aware of the policy; • Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees and volunteers of SVC; • Identify situations where people work alone and decide whether systems can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own; • Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly; • Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone; • Ensuring that staff, volunteers, groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updating and refreshing this training as necessary; • Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents; • Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff or volunteers involved in any incident; • Providing a mobile phone, and other personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable. <p>Staff and volunteers are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SVC staff must ensure all Lead Volunteers and volunteers are made aware of this policy; • Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions; • Conducting Risk Assessments for their specific projects involving Lone Working; • Delivering training for their specific projects to give appropriate information, instruction and details regarding this Policy, Lone Working and SVC's associated procedures; • Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working; • Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate; • Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; • Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.
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5.0	Guidance for Risk Assessments of Lone Working
5.1	<p>When Risk Assessing Lone Working for a volunteer, Trustee or staff member, the following must be considered-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone? • Are there adequate channels of communication in an emergency? • Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker? • Is there a risk of violence? • Are women especially at risk if they work alone? • Is any known risk attached to a beneficiary?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an alternative to a home visit/ one-to-one meeting been considered? • Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged? • Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate? • Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?
6.0	Good Practice for Lone Workers

<p>6.1</p>	<p>During their working hours, all staff and volunteers leaving the workplace (or home) should leave written details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back to the workplace/home.</p> <p>If, in the course of a trip away from the office, plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the SVC office and partner organisation of volunteering. If the visit is assessed to have sufficient risk, details of the planned visit must be Recorded on the white board in the SVC Office.</p> <p>Arrangements should be made with the supervisor (SVC Manager, SVC Project Coordinantor, Scheme Manager or support staff) to check that a lone worker has returned To their base or home on the completion of a task on time.</p> <p>Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague, may also be advisable. Staff and volunteers should avoid being left on their own with a client in their workplace, or leaving a colleague in this situation.</p> <p>Staff and volunteers should avoid meeting clients alone at the workplace. When this is unavoidable, staff and volunteers must make a risk assessment and obtain the prior agreement from the SVC Manager who will make any arrangements to ensure their safety.</p> <p>Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. First Aid kits are carried on each SVC vehicle, additionally there is a First Aid kit in the SVC office.</p> <p>Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary. Personal alarms are available from the SVC office upon request.</p> <p>Occasionally risk assessments may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid. This will be organised by the SVC office for volunteers and Trustees. All SVC staff will be registered onto basic First Aid courses.</p> <p>Children and Vulnerable Adults – In general, staff and volunteers should never work alone with a child or with a vulnerable adult who displays challenging behaviour. Staff and volunteers should never transport a child or vulnerable adult alone.</p> <p>Before making service user visits, the ‘lone worker’ must have full knowledge of the hazards, and risks to which he or she may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks.</p> <p>Have you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checked the Service User records for up-to-date information? • Contacted the referrer for up-to-date information on the service user? • Consulted other colleagues that may have worked with the service user? • Read and understood any service user specific risk assessment documentation? <p>Having collected all the relevant information you then need to plan your contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust your intuition and always think of your personal safety;
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	<p>What is the best time of day to visit; assess the situation, are you familiar with the property location?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the weather/visibility; seasons - will you be driving in the dark? • Where is the most appropriate place to meet this person? • Do I need to take another staff member/ volunteer with me? • If another agency is involved can we undertake a joint visit? • Ensure someone knows where you are at all times; do not make last minute/unplanned visits; • Are you aware of the emergency procedures?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have all the relevant contact numbers e.g. Office, Line Manager, On-Call Number or other nominated persons? • Do you have your personal panic attack alarm (if applicable) and or mobile-check it is charged; • Do you know where you are travelling to - check your route to avoid stopping & asking strangers for directions; • Park near street lighting or lit areas whenever possible; • Reverse into parking spaces to ensure a quick getaway; • Keep all doors locked whilst driving and keep valuables out of sight; • It is not good practice to visit service users because ‘your passing’ or your ‘on your way home’; • If you do not intend to return to the office at the end of the day, ensure you let someone know at the office.
7.0	<p>Preparing for Lone Working or Volunteering</p>
7.1	<p>Visiting/meeting alone in a Beneficiary’s Home: Where possible these meetings should be undertaken on a two-to-one basis. However as an SVC staff member or volunteer, you may on occasion visit people within their home alone.</p> <p>Prior to undertaking the visit/meeting, ensure you have followed the guidelines above.</p> <p>Some SVC beneficiaries may need help because they are disabled, ill, under stress, or frail. They may therefore be unable to maintain high safety standards in their homes, and this may affect both them and you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware that many accidents occur in the home, and that sensible measures can prevent injury and even death. • Should you come across any condition or piece of equipment around the home which seems unsafe, talk to the beneficiary about it – bearing in mind that you are a visitor in their home – and, with their permission, tell the SVC Manager of your concerns as soon as possible.
8.0	<p>Safety Guidelines when undertaking a Home Visit</p>

<p>8.1</p>	<p>These notes highlight the main points but are not an exhaustive list.</p> <p>Personal Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is up to you not to put yourself at risk. The golden rule is ‘if you are not sure whether it is safe to do it, don’t do it!’ • When going to and from a beneficiary’s home, be aware of possible dangers. If you are worried about visiting the beneficiary on your own, or in the dark, or in a particular area, discuss your concerns as soon as possible with your SVC Project Coordinator or the SVC Manager. Personal alarms are available to SVC staff and volunteers on request. • Trust your judgement. If the actions of anyone in the home you are visiting sets off ‘alarm bells’, trust your intuition and position yourself for an easy exit. Please note that this situation is unlikely to arise, but it is better to be forewarned. • SVC staff and volunteers should never be involved, under any circumstances, in attempting to lift a beneficiary from a recumbent or sitting position to an upright position, or move the person from a chair to a bed or wheelchair. It is easy for an untrained person to injure themselves trying to do these manoeuvres and if you drop the beneficiary, you could injure him or her as well.
<p>8.2</p>	<p>Electricity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical flexes, plugs and sockets should be in a good state of repair. • Power points must not be overloaded, i.e. several appliances working from the same point. • Mains operated appliances, including portable appliances, must not be used in bathrooms. • Electrical appliances, plugs and flexes must not be handled with wet hands. • Electric blankets should be kept dry and flat, and serviced regularly. • Do not carry out any electrical repairs yourself unless you are a professional electrician. Even routine tasks such as changing a fuse or wiring a plug must not be undertaken. • If you have any doubts about a piece of equipment or item, do not use it.

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	<p>If you notice any of the above hazards please inform the SVC Project Coordinator or the SVC Manager as soon as possible.</p>
<p>8.3</p>	<p>Gas If you smell gas in the house and you cannot locate the source, or if you detect or suspect a leak:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all naked flames are extinguished (including cigarettes). • Open all doors and turn off the gas taps. • Do not switch on the lights. • Contact the gas emergency services (0800 111 999) and seek advice.

8.4	<p>Cooking</p> <p>Many fires start in the kitchen. These are some of the dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot light going out. • Pan handles must be kept clear of flames as they will get hot, but should not stick out into the kitchen. • Chip pans must not be filled more than half way. • Cookers should be checked regularly while in use.
8.5	<p>Heating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fires and heaters should be adequately guarded. • Check that there is no smell of gas, especially near meters. • Portable heaters must be kept clear of furniture and not put where people can trip over them. • It is dangerous to air clothes near a fire or a cooker. <p>Check that oil heaters are not giving off smoke or smells.</p>
8.6	<p>Safe Movement</p> <p>It is vital that the home is as safe as possible. However, remember that you are a visitor in somebody else's home, and that you can only make suggestions on improved safety to the SVC beneficiary/ their Support Team or Manager.</p> <p>Check the following potential problem areas, and point out hazards in a diplomatic and friendly way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That doorways, hall, passages, stairs and landings are free of clutter and that they are well lit, even at night; • That carpets, rugs, mats and lino which are torn, worn or wrinkled and/or move easily may be hazardous; • That fixtures and fittings are secure; • That all areas are free from trailing flexes; • That anything spilt on the floor is cleaned up at once.
8.7	<p>Fire</p> <p>Do not smoke in a beneficiary's home – even if the beneficiary smokes. This will ensure that if there is a fire, you cannot be held responsible. If a fire should occur whilst you are with a client:</p> <p>Do not put yourself at risk!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove yourself and client to a place of safety; • Dial 999 and ask for the Fire Brigade.
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8.8	<p>Medicine and Chemicals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The golden rule for SVC staff and volunteers is that it is not your role to assist the beneficiary in any way with medication. • As a visitor you should also not handle any chemicals. However please remember that lavatory cleaners and bleach should never be mixed, and never transfer chemicals (e.g. bleach) into other containers.
9.0	<p>After a Lone Working or Volunteering Visit</p>
9.1	<p>Following a one-to-one visit/ meeting please ensure you contact your supervisor to let them know you have finished the visit, and notify them of your safety.</p>
10.0	<p>Reporting an Emergency</p>
10.1	<p>What to do in an Emergency? If, whilst out on a lone working meeting/visit an emergency arises please contact:-</p> <p>If the emergency occurs in working office hours (Mon-Thurs 9-5, Fri 9-4) please contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SVC Office – 02921 676780 • The Innovate Trust Office – 02920 382151 • The Innovate Trust Managers Office – 02920 391960 • Your Project Coordinator (you will be given their work mobile) • If applicable, the scheme number for where you are volunteering (you will be given these numbers) <p>If the emergency occurs outside of working office hours, please contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Innovate Trust schemes please contact the On-Call service – 07786363338 • For schemes such as Weekenders, Home and Away – please contact your Project Coordinator (you will be given their work mobile number) <p>If in doubt call 999!</p>
10.2	<p>Following an Incident or Emergency Following an incident or emergency please ensure you record as much information as possible whilst the situation is fresh in your mind. If known, information should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual’s name; • The individual’s home address and telephone number; • The nature of the incident or emergency, including dates, times and any other relevant information; • Details of any witnesses to the incident or emergency; • Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details. <p>As soon as possible this information should then be recorded on an SVC Incident or Emergency Form (an SVC staff member will support you to complete this form).</p>
11.0	<p>Monitoring Safety Issues Lone workers must report incidents such as accidents and near misses, including all incidents where they felt threatened, or uncomfortable in the SVC accident book. This includes incidents of verbal abuse. During supervision, the SVC Manager/ SVC Project Coordinator will ask people working on their own whether there are any safety concerns that aren't being addressed. Lone workers are encouraged to seek help and advice if any safety concerns arise.</p>

