

Lone Working Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the hazards related to lone working and controls to lower risks.

Scope

This document applies to all members of staff, volunteers and people who use CREST Waltham Forest's services.

Rationale

The document is necessary to comply with health and safety legislation.

Introduction

It is the policy of CREST Waltham Forest to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which requires CREST to provide a safe environment, safe equipment and safe systems of work for its employees and those working on its premises. These requirements are applicable to all work situations and particular attention must be paid to situations where staff are working alone or working outside normal working hours.

Definition

Working alone can introduce new hazards, e.g. lack of assistance if needed, first aid cover, emergency situations and violent attack. CREST acknowledges that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of its staff and volunteers when working alone. Suitable risk assessments shall be undertaken to identify risks to the lone worker and measures shall be introduced to minimise those risks wherever reasonably practicable. Staff and volunteers shall be provided with information, instruction and training as appropriate in order to lower risks when working alone.

Risk Assessments

Where significant hazards exist, risk assessments of work activities shall be undertaken to comply with the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999. Where these work activities are likely to be undertaken by a lone worker then these factors should be considered in the assessment. It may be the case

that merely by working alone which can be out of hours, risks are introduced even for a non-hazardous work activity, which had not been subject to a formal risk assessment. Particular consideration shall be given to:

- Assessing if the work has to be carried out by a lone worker
- The remoteness or isolation of the location
- Any problems of communication
- The possibility of violence
- The nature of possible injury
- Emergency egress (eg are fire exits open out of hours, is there a safe route to escape in the event of danger)
- Biological hazards (eg from poor hygiene, needles and rodent urine)
- Electrical hazards
- Poor lighting for out of hours working
- Passive smoking
- New and Expectant Mothers

To address the additional risks (if any) identified in relation to a lone working situation, CREST Managers shall introduce appropriate control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks.

Such control measures may include:

- Logging in/out system
- Provision of communication equipment – ie mobile phones
- First aid kits
- Additional lighting – eg torch
- Information and training – ie sharing of knowledge between team members on any potential risk areas
- Additional supervision
- New and expectant mothers to avoid lone working
- Matching staff and/or volunteers to appropriate person who uses the service
- All relevant information on client is shared with staff

It is essential all lone workers consider potential risks before any activity or visit and act to reduce these where possible. If anything is assessed as high risk this should be communicated to their line manager. On-going communication between all lone workers and their line manager is essential and must take place regularly. It is important any new information or change of circumstances is communicated between managers and lone workers as soon as possible. All staff, volunteers and managers need to be aware of the importance and responsibility for good communication to ensure safe working practice.

CREST will ensure that all staff receives regular supervision. Communicating any changes in need and circumstances is essential. Accurate and up to date records must be maintained in line with agreed CREST protocols. All lone working staff should be aware of the increase in risk involved in disclosure of certain personal information. It is

strongly advised that this is discussed prior to disclosure in supervision. No staff should divulge information concerning another member of staff or person who uses the service without prior consent. Lone working staff need to be aware of any written personal information carried with them (eg in bags or cars).

If the lone worker feels vulnerable, threatened or uncomfortable for whatever reason they should inform their line manager or in their absence the project manager. They will assess the situation and decide how to progress.

Training requirements for lone working staff, volunteers and managers will be identified through supervision. This can include lone working, management of aggression and violence, breakaway techniques, understanding mental health and boundaries/relationships.

Lone working with people who use the service

No lone working is to be carried out with an unknown person who uses our service. Assessment of the referral form will be undertaken prior to meeting with the client. For the initial meeting, staff must ensure they meet the client in a public place if it proves difficult for them to attend the CREST office. Any potential risks and agreed actions should be assessed during the initial meeting. Any concerns should be reported directly to their line manager.

Staff and volunteers must ensure they have sufficient and appropriate knowledge of the person they are lone working with. Managers must ensure lone workers have appropriate and up to date telephone numbers for emergency contacts. Where possible, lone working visits should be conducted during normal office hours, where help is more easily summoned. A timetable of who you are seeing, on what day, at what time and where must be given to your manager on a weekly basis.

Staff and volunteers must inform their manager of any changes to the timetable. Extra work or out of hours work without the consent of your manager is not permitted. Keep to the timetable at all times. Rearranging hours every week could put you at risk as the manager will not know your location. Complacency can be a hazard. Knowing the individual for a number of months/years does not mean that an injury will never happen.

Lone workers must check the following controls:

- Mobile phones are charged and receiving a signal
- Contact numbers are stored and out of view
- Any written back up copy of contact numbers is out of view
- Money is available for an emergency
- Line manager/manager/project administrator knows your whereabouts including time started and time due to finish.
- Line manager knows your car registration number if applicable
- Access to a first aid kit, it is fully stocked (including gloves)
- Enough petrol is available for the journey
- A map is available if required

- If working out of hours, communicate to your line manager what time you are due to finish and provide them with an emergency number
- Have updated information about the person who use the service including any recent incidents
- Contact line manager/on call staff member when visit ends

Any unacceptable behaviour from a person who uses our service must be reported to the line manager.

Communication

Lone workers must have a method of communicating to other persons in the event of an emergency – eg via mobile phone. These are provided as a safety measure and staff must be responsible for maintaining their maintenance. Any defects should be reported to the project administrator. A checking-in procedure needs to be established. Personal attack alarms are important controls and will be provided to staff. These should be kept somewhere easily accessible and their correct working is the responsibility of individual staff and volunteers. All staff should be fully competent in using these and any faults should be reported to the line manager.

If the lone worker fails to communicate with their designated person the following action should be taken:

- After 10 minutes the missing worker's mobile phone will be called
- If they cannot be contacted on their phone after several attempts, the line manager must be informed
- The line manager must investigate and if necessary the police should be contacted.
- If the worker can be contacted by phone but it is felt from their conversation they are risk, the police will be called.
- Details of all lone workers home telephone numbers and car registration numbers must be documented for use in an emergency. This information must be kept in a secure place. It is the individual workers responsibility to inform the line manager of any changes.