

Lone Working Policy	
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For use by	All employees and volunteers at Age UK Norfolk
Purpose	The policy explains how Age UK Norfolk will protect their employees as far is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working.
Version	2
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Review Date	Q2 2023/24

1. Introduction

This policy outlines some of the potential hazards associated with lone working, it defines roles and responsibilities and describes the practical steps that can be taken to minimise any risks and to comply with legislation. The principal aim of this policy is to ensure that any lone working carried out for the Charity is performed in a controlled and coordinated manner therefore minimising any health and safety risks.

2. Policy Statement

Age UK Norfolk takes extremely seriously the health, safety and welfare of its staff and volunteers. The Charity recognises that some staff and volunteers work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community. The purpose of this policy is to enable the Board of Trustees to meet its obligation to protect such staff and volunteers so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working.

3. Who does this policy apply to.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers working for or on behalf of the Charity who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

4. Definition of lone working

A lone worker for the purposes of this policy is defined as someone who performs an activity that is carried out in isolation from other workers without close or direct supervision.

In practical terms, employees are considered to be working alone if they have neither visual nor audible communication with someone who can summon assistance in the event of an accident or illness.

5. Responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Charity has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. There is also a general duty of care to protect volunteers and members of the public. These requirements are applicable to all work situations, including where employees (and others) are working alone or outside normal working hours.

5.1 Lone Worker responsibilities

All lone workers have a responsibility to take care of their own safety and to cooperate with the Charity's procedures (service specific and available within each individual service). Lone Workers should not knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk.

Lone workers have a responsibility to inform their line manager if they have any concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of the agreed arrangements and also if there are any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or to continue to work alone safely.

5.2 Line manager responsibilities

Line managers will formally identify lone workers and ensure that appropriate risk assessments are undertaken, to identify the risk and hazards to lone workers and the control measures necessary to minimise those risks, as far as reasonably practicable, also determining any additional supervision required.

Line managers must ensure that reasonable enquiries are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit and competent to undertake the work alone.

Line managers must ensure that staff and volunteers unable to nominate an individual (Buddy) that is aware of their whereabouts complete an opt out form (appendix 3). If they do not wish to opt out, then this should be raised with the Service Manager. Lone workers will be expected to carry a mobile telephone, if a personal alarm is required this can be provided.

Line Managers must encourage all staff and volunteers to make their Buddy's aware of the Red File process and share this Policy with them.

Line managers will ensure that all outreach staff and volunteers undertaking home visits understand how to use the Red File code to alert colleagues that they require assistance in leaving the property. Line managers must ensure that all office-based staff and volunteers understand that if they receive a Red File Code Alert (See Appendix 1 and flowchart) that they must, without delay, alert the Police with the whereabouts of the colleague in difficulty.

Line Managers will ensure that volunteers without access to Charity Log use the Appointment Form to log, in advance, all home visit appointments.

Line managers will also ensure that retail or office staff and volunteers understand how to use the Coded Conversation Alert (Appendix 2) to alert colleagues, friends or family that they require assistance, who must without delay, alert the Police.

6. Implementation

6.1 Risk assessment

To satisfy our duty of care requirements, it is necessary for the risks associated with lone working to be assessed.

It is expected that the risk assessment process is undertaken as a collaborative exercise by both the lone worker and their line manager/supervisor and that the agreed safe working procedures are recorded and communicated to all persons who may be required to work alone and any other employees who have a role to play in ensuring their safety.

The following outlines the four steps that must be taken for a lone working risk assessment:

- 1. Identify all persons who may be required to work alone.**
- 2. Identify the hazards to which the person(s) may be exposed.**
- 3. Assess whether current controls are adequate, and if not, consider what additional/alternative control measure(s) can be put in place.**
- 4. Review the risk assessment.**

6.2 Making a designated individual (Buddy) aware of your whereabouts

If you are lone working you should have a Buddy that you can contact in an emergency and who is aware of your whereabouts. Ideally this should be someone you live with or if you live alone a friend or relative. The nominated individual will help to ensure your safety by alerting the police if you were to fail to return home.

If you do not wish to assign a buddy, you will be required to complete an opt-out form (Appendix 3).

Volunteers undertaking home visits should always inform their nominated individual of the address of the client they are intending to visit and their expected time of return. All home visits to clients must be undertaken during office hours unless explicitly authorised by your line manager.

6.3 General Lone Working Guidance

6.3.1

1. Be prepared. If you are going somewhere new, check out the location on the internet prior to your visit so that you are familiar with the location. If the area looks as though it could pose a risk, discuss with your line manager.
2. Record your plans – Use the tools provided by Age UK Norfolk to record and make others aware of your planned activities.
3. Make sure someone is aware of your whereabouts and that you are working alone, in the office, shop or at someone's home.
4. Park as near as possible in a well-lit area, away from driveways or anywhere that you could be blocked in. Also, make sure you reverse in so it's easier to manoeuvre out.
5. Study your environment and complete a risk assessment. Arrive early and observe your surroundings from the safety of your vehicle. Note the exits, observe who is present and look for any possible dangers, such as dogs. Assess how easily you'd be able to leave in an emergency.
6. Trust your instincts. When you arrive at a lone working situation, remain on guard. If you sense something is wrong and you feel your safety is compromised by entering a property, make an excuse and leave.
7. Keep a clear path to an exit so that you don't allow yourself to become trapped.
8. Carry a mobile telephone and leave it switched on. If your safety is compromised and you are in danger use the Red File code (see Appendix 1) to alert the Office that you need assistance from the Police.

7. Training

All staff and volunteers are expected to implement this policy. Any member of staff or volunteer that is unsure of their responsibilities with regard to this policy should alert their line manager who will ensure they are fully apprised on the policy and its implementation.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1

Red File Code Alert Procedure - Home Visits

The red file code is to be used to alert the office that you are in danger whilst on a home visit to a client and need the assistance of the Police.

Use Age UK Norfolk's tools to log your activities.

1. If you feel that your safety is compromised whilst you are in the client's home, and you are in danger you must **telephone 01603 785 200 and say that you need information from your 'Red File'**.
2. The words 'Red File' will immediately signify that you are in danger and need assistance from the Police.

Staff or volunteers receiving this call must contact the Police immediately and provide;

- name of the member of staff or volunteer;
- location of client

Emergency Red File Procedure

You receive a call from a member of staff or volunteer - they inform you they need information from the **Red File**

ACT WITHOUT DELAY

The **Red File alert** is a coded message and means that your colleague is in danger and requires Police assistance urgently

Check whereabouts of staff/volunteer by

1. Checking Outlook diary
2. Checking Charity Log, or
3. Check the IAA calendar/ Teams Form

where possible, speed up process by sharing task with colleague/Line Manager

Telephone POLICE by calling 999

- Provide name and location of staff/volunteer
 - Explain they are in danger and need of **URGENT** assistance
- INFORM A MEMBER OF THE SMT**

Appendix 2

Coded Conversation Alert Procedure - Retail /the office

The Coded Conversation is to be used to alert your nominated colleague, that you are in danger in the workplace and need the assistance of the Police.

1. Staff and volunteers working in retail /the office out of normal working hours, should ensure that they have a nominated individual that they can contact if they feel their safety is compromised and that they are in danger.
2. The Coded Conversation Alert must be agreed with the nominated individual (someone at home, a colleague, line manager or a friend or relative) so that they understand that these agreed words or statements signify that you are in danger and need assistance from the Police.
3. The nominated individual receiving this call must understand that they need to contact the Police immediately and provide;
 - name of the member of staff or volunteer, and
 - address and postcode of the workplace.

Appendix 3

Lone Working – Buddy OPT OUT form

Name of volunteer:

I have read and understood Age UK Norfolk’s lone working policy and I am choosing to:

OPT OUT of the personal buddy scheme detailed in the policy

By opting out of having a personal buddy I confirm:

- I understand this will apply to all lone visits I undertake while volunteering for Age UK Norfolk, unless agreed otherwise in writing.
- I am accepting all risks that may arise by operating without a personal buddy

Volunteer Signature Date

Appendix 4

Lone Working – Personal Alarm – OPT OUT form

Name of volunteer:

I have read and understood Age UK Norfolk’s lone working policy and I am choosing to:

OPT OUT of the personal alarm scheme detailed in the policy

By opting out of having a personal alarm I confirm:

- I understand this will apply to all lone visits I undertake while volunteering for Age UK Norfolk, unless agreed otherwise in writing.
- I am accepting all risks that may arise by operating without a personal alarm

Volunteer Signature Date

7.0 Document Control

Version	Revision	Action	Author	Date
2	2.4	Update – Remove duplication following feedback and simplify recording structures.	VA	Oct 22
2	2.3	Updating – removal personal alarms and amendments to buddy system, recording home visits/appointment form	HM	Oct 21
2	2.2	Addition of flow chart and further strengthening	HM	Jan 20
2	2.1	Adding and amending sections to strengthen the policy	HM	June 19