



## **Lone Working Policy**

### Introduction

The majority of the Rock Trust's staff will participate in lone working of one kind or another, and it is an integral part of the way we work with young people. However, there are particular risks associated with lone working that need to be managed so that the risks to staff can be minimised. It is important to remember that it will not always be possible to eliminate risk entirely from this kind of work, but consideration should be given to how it can be minimised to an "acceptable" level.

### What is a Lone Worker?

Staff will be considered to be lone working in any situation where they are working in isolation. This will include anyone working 1:1 with a young person (or a group of young people), On Call workers, attending external meetings (particularly out of normal office hours) and supportive flatmates.

### Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Rock Trust that a detailed set of guidelines that aim to minimise the risks involved in the situations where staff will be lone working will be produced.

- A copy of these guidelines should be given to all new staff as part of their induction. This would also include temporary staff.
- If any changes are made to the guidelines, all staff should be given an updated copy.

Risk assessment, information and good communication are key to ensuring that staff are not put at unnecessary risk whilst lone working. Risk assessments will provide vital information about the young person that is being visited, and therefore what hazards may be posed by lone working. Staff will often have up to date information about young people they work with and it is important that they communicate this to other staff who may need it by use of file notes, team meetings and IT mechanisms etc. However, it is recognised that there will be times when such information is not available as we have no previous knowledge of the young person. Particular vigilance and risk assessment skills are required in such situations.

## Lone Working Guidelines

The detailed guidelines that will be produced should cover the following broad questions:

*What information should staff be familiar with before they visit a young person (or undertake group work)?*

This will include risk assessments, file notes etc. This may be obvious to most staff, but temporary staff for example may need to know where they can find this information.

*How should staff let people know where they are?*

This will include what systems staff in the team should follow to ensure that others know where they are. These systems could include what visits are planned for they day and expected timescales, logging in and out with the office etc. It may not be necessary to have staff log in after every visit, but as a minimum they should log in at the end of the day if they are not returning to the office. Consideration should also be given to what system is needed for staff working outside normal office hours, including On Call workers.

*What should staff do if there is an unexpected crisis on a visit?*

Training and experience will have a key role in helping staff to manage such situations safely, but clear guidelines should be available to staff.

*What action should be taken if a lone worker is not accounted for?*

It is important to have an agreed protocol to follow if a worker does not return to the office or fails to log in. This could include everything from phoning the young people they were visiting right up to alerting the police.

People working in separate parts of same building

Just because there are people in another part of the same building there could still be staff in a lone working situation and these such scenarios should be considered when producing the guidelines.

The above guidelines may include the use of mobile phones, pagers, personal alarms etc. It is important that in health and safety terms these would be considered as items of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). When attempting to minimise risk, PPE should always be considered as the last line of defence. Consideration should be given to organising the work activity safely without the need for PPE first. PPE should only be considered if there is residual risk which could be reduced to an acceptable level with PPE.

## Staff Responsibility

This policy is intended to protect staff and therefore all staff are expected to comply with any guidelines produced under it. In addition to these guidelines, staff should follow any agreed procedures or protocols for working safely with young people and apply their experience and training to ensure they work safely when lone working.