

Lone Working Policy

Introduction

Teaching Personnel recognise the need to provide safe working conditions for Teaching Personnel agency workers working alone or with small groups of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

This work may take place in a variety of settings including schools, pupil's homes, foster homes, children's centres, care homes, community centres, specialist units and other local authority premises.

This policy statement is designed to address concerns regarding this type of work and attempts to provide a common-sense framework to deal with most situations. The policy cannot be entirely prescriptive and is not designed to provide solutions to all scenarios.

The following are the core company guidelines:

- A risk assessment of the child /vulnerable adult and venue (where appropriate) should be completed in advance by the Client organisation
- The Client organisation must have relevant public liability insurance in place to include lone working in residential environments
- Teaching Personnel agency workers must consider their own safety and assess the risk implications of each situation
- A senior member of staff at the Client organisation and Teaching Personnel should be aware of all lone working situations
- All reasonable means should be used to provide communications with other staff in emergencies
- All agency workers should undergo Safeguarding training (available for free through Teaching Personnel where required)

Risk Assessment

It is impossible to avoid all risks in these situations. It is, however, possible to adopt a safe attitude and approach. The following should be considered by the Client:

- Where the agency worker is working and how far removed it is from other staff/adults
- Availability of communications and the relative speed of response
- The chance of aggression, violence or abuse
- The risk of accusations without witnesses present
- The risks involved in travelling to and from a location
- The comments from other relevant staff either verbally or on file regarding previous interactions
- The nature of the activity

In all cases, a risk assessment must be completed by the Client in advance of all placements for lone working. Teaching Personnel can provide a template for this where necessary.

Agency workers should complete an informal risk assessment on arrival at a placement in any lone working environment. If agency staff are anxious on arriving at a child's home and feel their safety could be jeopardised, they should not take the risk of proceeding further. They should telephone the parent/carer, Client and Teaching Personnel and advise that they are unable to attend.

Lone working in residential environments

It may be part of the agency worker role that work is undertaken in the home of a child or young person. The following guidelines should be observed for this type of work:

- Parents/carers should already have an understanding of agency staff activities and are aware of the nature of such visits as an aid to the child's development/ education.

- Agency workers should make Teaching Personnel and Client staff aware of any work due to be undertaken in a child's own home.
- Another adult should be present in the child's home at all times and if possible in the same room. If the agency worker is alone in a room with a child the door should be left ajar.
- The parent/carer/pupil should all be appropriately dressed.
- An estimated time of leaving and returning should be provided. A mobile phone should be made available to the agency staff (where possible). The Teaching Personnel should be aware of the agency worker's mobile phone number. The phone number of the home should also be readily available should difficulties be encountered.
- The Client should apprise themselves and the agency worker of any previous visits by other staff and acquire background information from social services, Educational Welfare Officers or Educational Psychologists if this is available.
- All home working should be recorded with the reason of the work, work covered and any issues arising by the agency worker. Clear and detailed record keeping may well prevent future problems.
- Agency workers may consider the carrying of a personal alarm.
- Agency workers should dress appropriately for visiting a home respecting families cultures in particular when a family's culture requires women to be well-covered up. Clothing or footwear should not impede staff's ability to move quickly in case of emergency
- Confrontation should always be avoided. At the first sign of potential danger an agency worker should leave. Agency staff should never assume that violence wouldn't happen to them. Any incident should be reported to the Client and Teaching Personnel immediately.

Lone working in non-residential properties

- Client staff should be informed if agency workers are working alone. Agency staff should have immediate communications available with other site staff particularly if working in remote parts of the building.
- Clients should endeavour to provide rooms that ideally have windows which, although providing privacy of conversation, allow easy viewing both in and out. There should also be easy access to the exit and freedom of movement.
- Agency workers should inform the administration office/Reception of any known visitors. Equally, office staff should check with agency workers about unscheduled visitors.
- Violence and abuse toward agency workers is unacceptable and work should be terminated if there is a possibility of personal danger.
- Detailed notes should be kept of all issues by the agency worker however unimportant they seem at the time.

General Guidelines on lone working for Agency Workers

- Dress appropriately for the environment
- Respect personal space
- Be aware of body language both of self and others
- Be prepared and avoid unnecessary risks
- Trust your intuition
- Look confident and project an air of control
- Maintain a professional relationship with carers
- Be aware of personal stress levels and the effect of health and fatigue on decision-making
- Take assertive action when danger threatens – shouting for help or using a personal alarm
- Park in a well-lit area and reverse in so that if there are any issues, you can quickly leave
- Do not divulge personal information such as your private address and phone number to any child or vulnerable adult.
- Do not agree to keep in confidence anything you are told. If you think a child, vulnerable adult or carer may want to make a disclosure, warn them that you will be duty bound to pass on any information. In the event of a disclosure, please contact the Client organisation immediately and follow Teaching Personnel's Safeguarding policy.

Policy review

The Compliance Manager will keep Teaching Personnel's Lone Working Policy under annual review in line with any changes in legislations.