

PHASE Thornbury Lone Working Policy

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to identify the key risks associated with lone working and to set out how these should be mitigated.

Scope and Responsibilities

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors employed to carry out work on behalf of Phase.

The Directors of Phase are responsible for :

- a) Ensuring that risks are regularly reviewed, along with the mitigation created by the guidance;
- b) That up-dated information about risk assessment and management are made available to all interested parties; and
- c) That appropriate training is provided as and when required.

Individuals are responsible for :

- a) Following the guidance as set out in the policy;

- b) Making themselves familiar with the detailed risk assessments as they relate to one to one working; and
- c) Taking advice or appropriate action in response to any perceived risk not explicitly covered by this policy

Principles

The first priority for Phase is the health, well-being and safety of its staff, volunteers and contractors.

The safeguarding of all of the young people that Phase works with is also key, and is a major factor in the consideration of how to mitigate the risks associated with lone working.

It is rarely possible to eliminate risk. There is always a balance to be struck between the activities aimed at mitigating risk and the consequences of any of the risks materialising. Most mitigation comes with a cost. Costs can be financial, may create an administrative burden and/or may create operational difficulties. Having taken the first two principles into account, the effectiveness of the Phases' work should be the determining factor.

Context

Lone working is defined as any activity carried out on behalf of Phase, where the individual has no immediate contact, either visually or audibly, with any Phase colleague. (For the purpose of this policy a Phase colleague may be a director, staff member, volunteer or contractor paid to provide services).

The majority of work undertaken by Phase is done on a one to one basis with young people and is, by its very nature, lone working.

It is also true that, given the nature of Phase's work, and the stage of its development as an organisation, almost all of its activities, including its administration, is carried out by individual's working on their own. Ensuring that everyone involved in the delivery of Phases' services remains engaged, and able to work in the most productive way possible, is an important, and on-going, challenge.

Whilst the overwhelming majority of engagements with young people are positive and to plan, it is important to take reasonable precautions, including when and where to meet, and to prepare for situations which may cause variation from this, even if the likelihood of them happening is relatively small.

Key risks

General

Working with people, particularly with those who may be stressed, anxious and/or worried, can be emotionally draining, unpredictable and give rise to questions about the effectiveness of the help and support being offered. Working on one's own, in any type of work, can give rise to personal doubt about the value of that work and lead to a questioning of its purpose. This is particularly true in the case of volunteers, who have no financial motivation for their involvement with Phase.

Volunteers who work with young people must bear in mind that their role is not to provide professional advice, but to offer support and guidance which, whilst based on their own knowledge and experience, should be aimed at helping the young person discover their own way forward.

Young people

Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

A medical condition that may give rise to an emergency.

Significant change in mood/behaviour.

An unhealthy attachment/over reliance on the service provider.

The service provider

Rapid change in health.

The loss of confidence, anxiety, or even panic, in the face of the unknown/unexpected.

The danger of exerting undue influence on the young person.

The environment

An accident (particularly when out walking and talking).

Issues arising from the use of a building (for example fire).

The unwanted involvement of others in the one to one meeting.

Other

An allegation of inappropriate behaviour (against a Phase colleague).

An allegation of inappropriate behaviour by family member(s) or other individuals who play a significant role in the young persons life.

The possibility of a young person trying to impose conditions around the sharing of information.

Guidance

1. Before a meeting

1.1 Ensure that you are aware of the emergency contact numbers. These should include those in the Safeguarding Policy, particularly the Designated Safeguarding Manager (DSM), and the appropriate person responsible for the site of the next meeting.

1.2 Ensure that your mobile phone is fully charged and has the numbers identified in 1.1.

1.3 Ensure that you are aware of medical conditions of any young person you are meeting with, and the potential impact they might have.

1.4 Ensure that you are familiar with the building that you are meeting in, including evacuation procedures in the case of fire. If the meeting is outside, for example with a "walk and talk", ensure familiarity with the proposed route.

2. During a meeting

2.1 If you believe a young person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs then either (a) do not begin the meeting, or (b) terminate the meeting immediately. Notify the person responsible for the young person at that location. If not at an identified location accompany the young person back to the location they would normally have returned to after the meeting and notify the responsible person.

2.2 Do not begin a meeting where a young person is accompanied by someone who has not been authorised to attend the meeting. Notify the person responsible for the young person at that location. If a meeting is interrupted by someone who refuses to leave then suspend the meeting and contact the responsible person for the location. Resume the meeting once the interruption has been ended.

2.3 Remain aware of the environment throughout the meeting and be prepared to act should any changes occur that may give rise to concern.

2.4 If a young person's mood/behaviour exhibits at a level beyond which you feel comfortable, or changes to such during a meeting, then you should explain to the young person that you need to bring the meeting to an end. Notify the person responsible for the young person at that location.

2.5 If a young person indicates that they have been the subject of abuse, or are in danger of being abused, then follow the procedures set out in the Phase Safeguarding Policy.

2.6 If, during a meeting, a young person alleges that the person conducting the meeting has acted inappropriately towards them, then the meeting should be terminated immediately. The DSM should be notified immediately and then the person responsible for the young person at the location the meeting is being held, should be notified.

2.7 Do not promise to keep confidential undisclosed information. It is better that the young person does not disclose the information than to be made a false promise of non disclosure. In such circumstances the DSM should be notified of any concerns.

3. *After a meeting*

3.1 Any accident, or near accident, should be reported as soon as possible to the Phase Operations Manager.

3.2 Any concern about a) the welfare of the young person; b) the nature of the relationship; or c) the position of the individual providing support, arising from what may have been said or may have happened at the meeting, should be passed on to the DSM.

3.3 Any assessment that the young person needs professional help beyond the scope of the Phase service being provided should be raised with the Phase Operations Manager.

3.4 Volunteers should be given the opportunity, wherever practicable, to meet with other Phase colleagues, in order to share experiences, learning and to develop their ability to provide the most effective support possible.

This policy has been reviewed and approved by	Name (Position):	Signed:
		Date:
	Name (Position):	Signed:
		Date:
Policy to be reviewed:		