



LONE WORKING POLICY

This policy was adopted by Innovate Dorset on:
Wednesday 25th September 2019
the next review date for this policy: 25th September 2020

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The purpose of this document is to ensure the safety of staff/workers and pupils/clients while working alone in public places.

Principles

Mentors should not put themselves at personal or professional risk as a result of doing their job. However, staff will, from time to time, need to make sound professional judgements about the wisdom of entering into particular situations and it is important that workers feel able to do this, taking into account the Youth context in which Innovate Dorset works.

The guidelines below should be followed, and Mentors should feel confident that professional behaviour would have the support of the Innovate Dorset Management.

If in doubt, it is important to seek the advice of colleagues.

Kevin Tatchell 14/02/2020

Policy should be applied and/or in Assessment and Identification of:

- Travelling
- Individual visits or support in pupil's home
- Working alone in bases
- External visits with pupils
- Incidents and Accidents
- Whilst in Public

Confidentiality

1. No information about the pupil or family should be disclosed to anyone without the parents' consent, except in cases of child protection.
2. The parents will be asked to sign a consent form to give permission for professionals to liaise with one another or to cross services.
3. It is strongly advised that any personal information not be discussed in public. If talking about work in public spaces, then ID numbers should only be used.

Travelling and Individual Outreach Work

All Mentors who transport young people using their own vehicles should have the appropriate business insurance cover on their motor vehicle insurance certificate.

It is recommended that workers be covered by membership of an emergency breakdown and repair service.

When lone working, Office Administration should have a weekly timetable of planned sessions activity, times and venues. If not, Mentors should contact the office to log each visit and/or activity with the client, to keep your Team Manager, SLT or colleagues informed as to where you are, where you are going and what time you will be back.

Good Practice:

- Make sure you have planned your route and the time needed for a safe journey.
- If your travel plans do change.
 - You must pass on your new plans to Management or colleagues via a call, text or use of TeamDesk.
- Always find out background information from colleagues or referring professionals before making a first home visit or contact.
- Do not make a visit unaccompanied if you feel uncertain about the situation.
 - Discuss with your Line Manager the appropriate action.
 - If at any time you feel uncomfortable about making a home visit take a colleague with you. Or who could be a professional from another Children and Young People's Service team or agency (EWO, Social Worker, Community Nurse or SENCO).
- Try to park your car as close as possible to the venue.
 - If you cannot park close by be aware of the risks involved in walking (handbag, phone etc.) and practice protective behaviors.
 - Do not carry a lot of cash or valuable items.
 - Ensure you leave nothing visible in your car. Lock up all valuables in the boot, including notes.
 - Loose notes, names, addresses or information that others can identify any young person you or the company work with is a serious breach of GDPR and is a fineable offence at £20'000'000 per breach. If you are discovered to be in breach, your continued employment with Innovate Dorset Ltd will stop.
- If you have a mobile phone always keep it on so that you can be contacted
 - Do not answer your phone while driving it is an offence. If the company suspects you are driving at the time of phoning, they will instantly hang-up without warning as it is an offence for the company to make a call to you while you are driving, regardless of technology you possess to make and answer calls whilst driving.
- If an accident should occur when you are driving alone, carrying a passenger or student/client you are advised to complete an '**Incident Recording Sheet**' at the time of the incident.

Identifying Safe/Unsafe Practice

1. Only enter a house on invitation from a parent and show your identification.
2. Do not enter a house unless another known adult is present. This is preferably and usually the parent but could sometimes be another member of the family known to you.
3. You should not be in a pupil's home when there is no other adult present.
4. Never enter a house where a parent or other adult is not fully dressed.
5. It is inadvisable to go upstairs or into a bedroom.
6. Consider the age and sex of the Mentee when working alone.
7. If you are working alone but within sight or hearing distance of another adult, shut outside doors securely but ensure you can exit easily.
8. Consider visibility and consider leaving the door open and let other adults, professionals or colleagues know where you are and what you're doing.
9. Discuss emergency exits with colleagues and arrange furniture so that exits, especially fire exits are always clear.
10. Never leave colleagues working alone unless they know where you are and can contact you.
11. If it is dark when you leave, keep to well-lit routes to reach your car.
12. Report any health hazards, aggressive behaviour or difficult to manage incidents immediately to your Team manager and document in your session report in case you need evidence later.
13. In order to protect the Mentor, sessions will NEVER be undertaken in the Mentor's own home. Sessions will only be undertaken at the pupil's school or public place.

When making visits

- Check TeamDesk for last minute information before departing for any session and complete any missing information. If you have doubts as a result of any updated information that you were not previously aware, then do not make the journey or seek advice on how to address the concerns and raise the safety level.
- Ensure that when travelling with any Mentee in the car, parent's permission must be sought before sessions can begin.
- Ensure that any young person under 12 years of age or less than a height of 4 feet 11 inches (150cms.) must be seated in a car seat with a seat belt on.
- Give the parent your work mobile phone number if you have one and take the pupil's home telephone number or other contact number with you and remember to update TeamDesk.
- Let the parent know the departure time and the time expected back, the destination and the car registration number if necessary.
- Make a risk assessment to decide if a second adult is needed to supervise the child. check if the pupil is taking any medication and what time the next dose is due.
- Ensure that road safety rules are taught and followed.

If at any time a member of staff should feel uncomfortable about transporting a pupil take him/her straight home or back to the ward/school and do not take him/her out again. Write up your reasons as a record and talk this through with a Team manager as soon as possible and inform the pupil's school or referring agency. Other arrangements should be made for transporting the pupil if necessary.

Incidents and Allegations

Following the Children Act (1989) there was an increase in young people, particularly those who are distressed or emotionally disturbed, making false accusations against professional staff, usually abuse. It could also happen that parents, distressed, angry, frustrated or emotionally fragile could make an accusation or complaint. It is essential to minimise the chance of such accusations. The advice in the Suzy Lamplugh leaflet is helpful and all staff should be aware of how they communicate with pupils and adults and practice effective listening skills.

If there has been a difficult situation or uncomfortable incident or accident staff should contact the Team Manager and record this appropriately. (as above)

Staff should ensure that they write notes after any incident, accident or near miss on an **Incident Recording Sheet**.

As well as being part of the required records these will serve as evidence if necessary and are helpful for good reflective practice. You will need to give your records to the Team Manager ready for the pupil's review and may need them for performance management.

All incidents, accidents or near misses should be reported to the Team Manager and recorded.

Conclusion

It is very important to be cautious, sensible, and professional while being mindful of the sensitive nature of the clients with whom we work. It is possible to worsen the situation by over dramatising or becoming too formal. Stay relaxed, low key with a positive attitude and stay outside the dynamics of the family, which can be extremely complex. These guidelines should serve to minimise the risks inherent in the work we do.

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Signed on behalf of the Company by:

Signature:

Name in Capitals: KEVIN TATCHELL