

Lone and Remote Working Procedure

This document sets out the guidelines and protocols to ensure the personal security and safety of New Mills and District Volunteer Centre's staff, volunteers and trustees when working on their own or undertaking a home visit as part of the delivery of services.

It should be read in conjunction with the *Lone and Remote Working Policy*.

1. Procedures for Staff When Booking Appointments

As part of the Befriending project, home visits are seen as best practice and should be initially offered to all clients (dependant on the assessment of risk). Other clients may be offered a home visit due to a number of factors including poor mobility, other health related issues or due to their responsibilities as a carer. These clients should be offered a home visit **only** if they are unable to visit our offices or outreach service and staff should ascertain that a home visit is absolutely necessary before arranging one.

The following good practice guidelines in relation to client care for home visits should be observed.

- Check the best time for a home visit – are there any arrangements that must be accommodated – e.g. homecare visits, nursing care, family visits
- Explain what the purpose of the visit is and what will happen when the staff member/volunteer visits.
- Set a time limit to the visit e.g. 30 minutes or 1 hour. Please note – this should be no more than a maximum of two hours per visit.
- Ask the client to have any necessary or relevant paperwork to hand for the appointment.
- If there is sufficient time, confirm the appointment and any relevant paperwork needed in a telephone call and/or in writing. Check that the client will be able to read any correspondence, e.g. that there are no issues in connection with poor eyesight, literacy, language problems etc.

2. Office Cover

When booking home visits, you should balance the needs of the service user with those of the Centre. Wherever possible due regard should be given to the functioning of the office, taking into consideration any meetings, staffing levels and other priorities. If unsure, please consult with the Centre Manager.

3. Procedures for Staff Before Undertaking a Home Visit

- 3.1 A risk assessment must be completed for each individual client prior to the first home visit, which must be updated whenever The Centre is made aware of a change in the client's circumstances, such as a new relationship, a deterioration in the client's condition or mental health issues. A copy of the risk assessment can be found in Appendix B.
- 3.2 Make sure that New Mills Volunteer Centre Staff and the Centre Manager know that you are undertaking a home visit, ensuring that your Outlook Diary contains the client's full name as a minimum before leaving for the office. You must ensure that Charity Log has the clients up-to-date details before leaving.
- 3.3 If a home visit is being conducted en-route to the office and as the first piece of work for that day, staff must ensure that the above details are entered the day before.
- 3.4 **Under no circumstances** should a home visit be conducted without following procedure 3.1 and 3.2 above

- 3.5 Make sure that the office has your correct mobile number. Staff must take full responsibility for ensuring that any changes made to mobile numbers are recorded at New Mills and District Volunteer Centre's office.
- 3.6 All home visits should be pre-assessed with reference to risk, scope and duration.
- 3.7 If you have any personal safety concerns before visiting a service user, it is essential you discuss this with your Line Manager or Named Worker to assess the risk, suitable control measure (e.g. being accompanied by a second colleague) or postponement.

4. For Volunteers

- 4.1 Before a volunteer (such as a befriender), undertakes any home visits, regardless of the reason, a staff member must undertake an assessment of both the risk and suitability of the visit. Under no circumstances must a volunteer visit a client without a risk assessment being completed in advance. This risk assessment must be updated regularly, with feedback mechanisms in place to ensure volunteers are aware of what to look for and who to update should the risk assessment need amending.
- 4.2 We expect volunteers to undertake home visits to clients within New Mills and District Volunteer Centre's office hours, which are 10.00am – 4.00pm Monday to Friday. This is to ensure that staff are on hand to offer support should the volunteer need to call the office in an emergency or for advice. Where this is not possible, a special arrangement can be made between the volunteer, client and associated staff member. In this case, volunteers will be provided with information regarding safeguarding, who to contact in an emergency and other project- specific support information within the volunteer induction training and associated project handbooks.
- 4.3 If you have any concerns while undertaking a visit please contact New Mills and District Volunteer Centre's office, and speak to your project coordinator.

5. Procedures for Staff and Volunteers - Travelling to Appointments

- 5.1 When driving, keep doors locked and park your car in well-lit areas. Only get out of the car when you feel safe to do so.
- 5.2 If you see an accident/incident or someone tries to flag you down, consider whether it is safe to stop; if necessary, indicate that you will go for help or telephone for assistance.
- 5.3 If you think you are being followed, do not stop, drive to a busy area and alert the Police.
- 5.4 If approached when you are stationary, keep your doors locked and only wind your window down slightly so that you can hear the person speaking to you. If you are in any doubt about the situation, drive away. Do not leave valuables in view.
- 5.5 If the car breaks down and you have a mobile phone, call the recovery service and stay in the car with the doors locked until assistance arrives (if safe to do so). If you do not have a mobile phone, assess the situation with regard to going to a call box or otherwise seeking help. If it is not safe to leave the car, try to attract someone's attention and ask them to seek assistance for you. If possible, use the vehicle's nearside doors and seats.
- 5.6 In line with both the law and Health and Safety policy, do not use your mobile phone when driving. Pull over in a safe place before answering or making a call.

- 5.7 On public transport, if you feel unsafe in getting off at a particular stop, then stay on the bus or train until it is safe to leave. Stay downstairs on buses and within sight of the driver.
- 5.8 When walking, wear clothing that does not restrict your movement and try to keep at least one hand free, if possible; do not laden yourself down with bags or packages as it makes you less mobile.
- 5.9 Try to keep to well-lit areas and, if there is no footpath, walk facing towards oncoming traffic. After dark, avoid poorly lit subways, waste ground, alleyways and poorly lit blocks of flats. Do not be tempted to take short cuts through potential problem areas, even if you are in a hurry.

6. Procedures for Staff and Volunteers - In the Home

- 6.1 Staff and volunteers must always carry their ID badges and show them to the client before entering the client's home (even if the client does not wish to see your ID, please ensure you make it visible as it promotes good practice when working with vulnerable clients).
- 6.2 If you have any personal safety concerns when you arrive for the appointment, do not continue with it; apologise and leave. A new appointment can be arranged.
- 6.3 Always leave your mobile phone switched on and in silent mode. Clients should not have their business interrupted by text and voice-mail messages. Staff must take full responsibility for ensuring batteries are fully charged.
- 6.4 On arrival, take a moment or two to check exit routes. Ensure your option to exit is always visible and accessible.
- 6.5 If you are sitting in a client's home, if possible, choose the seat nearest the door so that your exit cannot be blocked.
- 6.6 If during the visit you become uneasy or uncomfortable with your surroundings, perhaps due to the arrival of another person, make an excuse (such as you've just received an urgent telephone message from the office that you've only just noticed on your mobile, or you need to put more money on the parking meter), apologise and leave. A new appointment can be arranged another time.
- 6.7 If you have any problems during a home visit that causes you to require assistance, such as feeling unsafe or in danger and unable to alert the police for any reason, call the office and ask for the Centre Manager. Covertly alert them to the fact that you need immediate assistance and they will phone the police. Only use this in emergencies and as a last resort if you are unable to exit the property.
- 6.8 In emergencies where calls can't be openly made a Silent 999 call can be made. From a mobile if you don't speak you will be prompted to press 55 and you call will be transferred to the police, it doesn't allow for the police to track your location so you will need to covertly alert them to where you are if safe to do so. From a landline if the operator doesn't hear you speak but can hear background noise then they will transfer you to the police who will be able to find your location based on the location of the landline.
- 6.9 If the client attempts to leave you alone in the property regardless of the length of time, explain that New Mills and District Volunteer Centre's policy does not allow you to remain in a client's home alone. Leave immediately.

6.10 If the visit takes longer than anticipated, then you must telephone the Centre Manager or another member of staff and let them know how long you expect the visit to last.

7. Procedures for Staff - Completing the Visit

- 7.1 If you are not intending to return to the office before going home (i.e. visit is at the end of the working day) you must contact the Centre Manager or other member of staff in the office, tell them that your visit has finished and that you do not plan to return to the office. It is the Centre Manager's responsibility to ensure that all workers in the field have reported in and that their whereabouts are accounted for.
- 7.2 All home visits should be completed by 17.30 hours except when authorised and only in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.3 If the member of staff conducting the home visit has not contacted the office by the expected finish time to say that they have completed the visit, particularly if the appointment was at the end of the day, then the Centre Manager, or Named Worker will try and make contact with the member of staff on their mobile or on the client's home number. Then the responding to no contact protocol (section 8.) will be activated.

8. Procedures for Staff - Responding to No Contact

In the event of an employee not making planned contact, the Centre Manager or project coordinator must:

- 8.1 Attempt to contact the employee using the contact number given and ascertain that there are no problems.
- 8.2 In the event that the employee has not made contact 15 minutes after the agreed check-in time, make contact with the individual's Emergency Contact/Next of Kin (located on share point).
- 8.3 If, after carrying out steps 8.1 and 8.2, contact has not been made 30 minutes after the initial agreed check-in time, then the Centre Manager (if not already dealing with the situation) should be informed of a "**no response alert**" and the police should be contacted using 999.

9. Procedures for Staff and Volunteers - Client's Safety

If you are concerned for the client's health and safety for whatever reason, speak to the Centre Manager or Project Coordinator or one of the Designated Protection Officers (see Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Safeguarding Children Policy).

Appendix A

Home Visit Process Map



Appendix B Home Visit Risk Assessment

*Name:
*Service User ID:
*Date:

*Worker Name:
*Assessor Signature:

Risk Assessment - Before the visit:

Client risk assessment	Yes (Comments)	No (Comments)
Apart from the client does anybody else live in the home?		
Is there any history of aggressive behaviour or potential violence?		
Is there any history of aggressive behaviour or potential violence towards staff, volunteers?		
Is there any history of aggression, violence or threats to staff from family or other visitors to the home?		
Is the client a risk to themselves?		
Are there any other risk factors or hazards (Including mental health, substance/alcohol mis-use)?		
Are there any other safety issues associated with the premises/person?		
Is the client supported by any other agencies? Please give details		

HAVE YOU	Yes (Comments)	No (Comments)	Don't Know
Contacted the person directly?			
Checked with the person (or their family/carer) that they need and/or want the visit at this time?			

Checked who will be present during the assessment			
Identified the health status of any individuals where the assessment / visit is taking place?			

Risk Assessment – To complete both prior to and during the visit:

Premises risk assessment	Yes (Comments)	No (Comments)
Access to home – is there easy access and exit, more than one exit from the home. Doors – easily opened, unobstructed		
Pathways – level surface, uncluttered, adequate width		
Steps /stairs – non slip, level surface, solid		
Pets – adequately restrained		
Lighting – well-lit, dark hiding places NB. If any home visits need to be carried out after dark ensure neighbourhood lighting is assessed after dark prior to first visit.		
Neighbourhood – general safety		
Is there safe, well-lit parking available close to the home?		
Are there any safety concerns regarding the route from public transport stops to the home.		