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**Name:** Lone Working & Personal Safety

**Distribution:** Not confidential – for internal and external use

**Scope:** This guidance applies to all Barnardo's colleagues.

**Ownership:** Head of Corporate Safety

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**Guidance:**

The aim of this document is to provide information to all individuals on keeping themselves safe whilst undertaking their work activities.

**Lone Workers**

Lone working is one of the most significant concerns, because of the perceived vulnerability of the lone worker to violence and a greater risk of serious harm from some other hazards, often linked to a lack of ready access to first aid treatment.

There is no legislation that imposes a ban on lone working, but persons working alone should not be at a significantly greater risk than others. To achieve this objective, all cases of lone working must be the subject of a very careful and competent risk assessment that identifies the necessary high quality control measures. Consideration must be given to whether the worker is medically fit and both physically and temperamentally suitable to work alone. Specifically, the manager must consider whether it is appropriate for young/inexperienced workers, and new or expectant mothers to work alone.

The lone worker has a legal responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. They also have neither visual nor audible communication with someone who can summon assistance in the event of an accident, illness or other emergency.

Control measures may include instruction, training, supervision, back up, mobile phones, enhanced physical security at the workplace, etc. Mobile phones are often looked on as the main control for people working alone but they do not control all risks.

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Training may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and controls fully. Limits should be set to what can and cannot be done while working alone. The competency of the lone worker to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, e.g. when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, the supervisor does have an important role to play ensuring that the worker understands the risks associated with their work and that the necessary controls measures are carried out. Supervisors can also indicate appropriate action to take in situations of uncertainty, for instance if when making a home visit, additional previously unknown risk factors come to the attention, e.g. the presence of a large ferocious dog, or the premises being used to sell drugs.

Workers who are not experienced in lone working, or are working alone in new, unfamiliar circumstances or undertaking tasks which present special risks, may need to be accompanied at first. The level of supervision should be based on the findings of risk assessment. The higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance. If on any occasion, for any reason, the required level of supervision is unavailable, the work may need to be postponed. Lone workers should be aware of their own level of competence and what is outside that competence.

Procedures may need to be put in place to monitor lone workers to see they remain safe. These may include:

- supervisors or a control desk being aware of the location of the lone workers, and when they are expected to finish a task,
- supervisors stressing the need for lone worker to inform them if there is a change of plan,
- supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone,
- regular contact between the lone worker and the supervisor or control desk, using either a telephone or radio,
- use of a "buddy system,
- use of an outside security centre to monitor the safety of lone workers,
- automatic warning devices which operate if specific signals are not received periodically from the lone worker, or if a panic button is pressed,
- procedures for when keyholders attend premises after the intruder alarm has been activated, especially if the intruders may still be present,
- checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task.

Where only a small number of workers are in occupation at premises, it is a good idea for them to move to a single area, rather stay in individual offices. Where security personnel are employed at a premises, they should be made aware of the presence of any lone workers, in attendance outside normal working hours, and perhaps periodically visit the work areas on their patrols. Under these circumstances, the lone workers should be made aware of the security desk phone number.

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events. Emergency procedures should be established, and lone workers trained and practised in them.

Information about emergency procedures and risks should be given to lone workers of other employees who visit Barnardo's premises. Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a travelling first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.

### **Personal Safety when out Walking**

- Carry money and valuables safely
- Carry a minimum amount of cash
- Decide your response if item is snatched
- Secure fastenings on bags & brief cases
- Wear shoes/clothes that allow quick movement
- Appropriate clothing for the circumstances
- Avoid wearing expensive-looking jewellery
- Keep attack alarm to hand
- Check the route in advance
- Use well-lit roads and pavements
- Avoid alleys, subways and risky shortcuts
- Avoid wearing personal stereo
- Face traffic keep away from pavement edge

- Avoid threatening crowds/groups
- If followed, go straight to a busy place

### **Personal Safety when travelling by Personal Vehicle**

- Regular maintenance and servicing
- Ensure car is reliable
- Check tyres, oil and petrol
- Carry spare petrol in a safety can
- Join a National Breakdown Organisation
- Breakdown on motorway/fast road - leave by onside door and go to safe place.
- Plan your route in advance
- Carry an up-to-date map
- Tell someone your route and ETA
- Phone them to confirm safe arrival
- Carry a mobile phone or cash/phone card
- Keep doors locked
- Windows/sunroof closed in stop/go traffic
- Keep mobile phone/bags out of sight
- Lock valuables in the boot
- Do not pick up hitchhikers
- Never leave keys in the ignition
- Do not leave children alone in vehicle
- Demonstrating patience and courtesy when driving to avoid causing road rage.
- Keep calm if another driver's actions are annoying you.
- If someone in another vehicle tries to intimidate you or seems to be suffering road rage, drop back and let them go. If this doesn't work, drive straight to a busy place, perhaps the nearest police station.

### **Personal Safety when parking your Vehicle**

- Always lock your doors and close all windows, even if only parking for a moment.
- Keep all valuables out of sight; even better lock them in the boot. This includes car parking fee kitty money. A thief may smash a window just for a few pounds!
- Park well away from the shrubbery, alcoves and other hiding places.
- When parking in daylight, consider what the area will be like in the dark. Make sure it will be lit. If in doubt – drive away and find somewhere safer.
- At night, park in a place that is well – lit and, if possible busy.
- After parking, push the aerial right down.
- Use security lock nuts for securing spotlights and wheel nuts.
- Avoid multi-storey car parks or where you & your car are not clearly visible.
- When you approach your car be aware of the people around you. If in doubt, walk away and return with company. Always keep your keys and personal alarm handy.
- Colleagues should try to park close together and return to cars in a group.
- Some radio cassette / CD players systems can be removed and taken with you.
- Also consider the new security – coded equipment but put a warning sticker on the windows so that the thief does not waste time and damage your car in the process.
- Before you get into the car, check the back seat – keep a torch handy for this.

### **Personal Safety when travelling on Public Transport**

- Try to avoid travelling alone outside busy hours.
- Try to stay away from isolated bus stops, especially after dark.
- Also, avoid train stations which are deserted, or which are accessed via lonely paths.
- On an empty bus, sit near the driver or conductor.

- On a train, sit in a compartment where there are several other people – ideally one which will be near the exit of your destination.
- Check where the emergency alarm is located.
- If anyone causes you concern; change carriage at the next station.

### **Personal Safety when travelling by Taxi or Minicab**

- Beware of bogus minicabs. They may be dangerous and uninsured in the event of an accident.
- Carry the phone number of a reputable minicab company that you can phone if you cannot get a licensed taxi. If you can, share with a friend.
- When booking by phone ask for the driver's name and description, and the make and colour of car. Perhaps mention a password to use. Note down these details and give to a friend.
- If calling from a public place, try not to let anyone overhear your name and address or they could pretend to be a cab.
- When the minicab arrives, before entering ask:
  - to see the driver's ID
  - the name of their company
  - the name of their fare
  - the password if appropriate
- Sit in the back. Do not disclose personal information. If possible, have a suitable person meet you at the destination.
- Do not get into a cab that:
  - you haven't asked for,
  - has a driver acting suspiciously,
  - has an intoxicated driver,
  - looks unroadworthy or otherwise unsafe,
  - for any reason you are unsure about.

If you are worried about the driver once in the cab, ask them to drop you in a busy place. If they refuse, attract attention, if necessary, grab the ignition keys and throw them far away/down a drain. Use your personal alarm or bash and dash if all else fails.

### **Personal Safety when staying at hotels etc.**

- Women travelling alone make reservations using initial and last name. Don't say you're alone.
- Leave an itinerary and expected return date with friends or family.
- Keep room numbers private. Keep track of room keys. If a key is lost, ask for a different room, or ask for the locks to be changed.
- If you are unhappy with the security arrangements, get them improved or move to another hotel.
- Use all locks on hotel door, particularly the double lock. Consider using a portable alarm.
- When returning to your room, make sure that you have your room key out and ready. Listen for suspicious noises before entering.
- Never automatically open your door when there is a knock. Use any peephole or talk through the locked door. Check ID. If someone claims they are a hotel employee, phone reception to make sure the visitor is legitimate.
- Be alert for suspicious persons in the hotel hallways. Report them to the management.
- If there is an intruder in your room at night, pretend to be asleep until they have gone.

### **Keeping Worker Home Addresses Confidential**

If angry, potentially violent service users or other persons know your real full name, and have an idea of where you live, they can use the information to find out your home address via the internet, telephone directory, or electoral roll. Because of this possibility, such information must be kept strictly confidential.

## **Personal Safety in the Home**

- Invest in solid doors and good quality locks on doors and windows.
- Whenever you pop outside lock the door and take the key with you.
- Don't put valuables where they can be seen from the window.
- When you aren't home, use a timer set to turn lights on/off randomly.
- Install bright lights in all outside areas. Link them to motion detectors.
- Don't keep large amounts of cash or valuable jewellery in the house.
- Get a barking dog or "beware of dog" signs.
- Don't hide a spare key under the door mat or under a flower pot.
- Seek guidance from your local Police Crime Prevention Officer.
- Trim back any trees or shrubs near doors and windows.
- Join 'Neighbourhood Watch' and display sticker.
- Plant thorny bushes under all windows.
- Make sure your garage door is secured.
- Invest in a good security system along with motion sensor lights.
- Don't leave ladders or other access equipment outside.
- Fit a strong & secure door chain and a spy hole to the front door.
- Video the contents of your home. List your valuables.
- Keep the video and the list of valuables in a safe place.
- If someone asks to use the telephone, make the call for them yourself.
- Do not loan your keys to anyone you do not trust 100%.
- Keep any tools that could be used to break in safely locked away.
- If you go away, have someone care for the dog in your home.
- Always double check doors at night and lock all windows
- Grease drainpipes and fit with an anti-climb device.
- Do not label keys with your name or address.
- Do not open door to strangers.
- Engrave all valuables with your postcode.
- Get a barking dog or "beware of dog" signs.

## **Strangers Calling at Your Home**

- Always make sure that visitors are who they say they are. If they say they are from the police, gas or electricity company, or other utility, ask to see their identity card.
- Check it by ringing their local office. Don't use a number on their card but look it up in the 'phone book.
- If the person at home is blind, partially sighted, or have difficulty moving about, you can arrange to have your meters read at an agreed time, by a named person. When they call, the meter reader will give their name or an agreed password.
- If you are worried, ring the police. Don't let the caller stop you doing these things by saying he or she is in a hurry. A genuine caller won't mind waiting outside with the door closed while you ring. Remember to keep the door chain on until you are sure your caller is genuine.

## **Preventing Arson at Home**

- Eliminate the letter slot in the front door and install a box for letters on an outside wall OR
- Install fire-resistant box behind letter slot to catch mail and contain any burning flammables.
- Also consider the need for an appropriate security film on windows.
- Install smoke detectors on each level.
- Be aware of all the alternative ways out of your home. Plan your escape and practice it.

## **Personal Alarms**

The purpose of the personal alarm is to disorientate the attacker, through a high decibel noise delivered to an ear. This can give you vital seconds to make your escape to safety. You must be able to bring the alarm into use

quickly, and preserving the element of surprise, so it should not be carried in a briefcase or bag, but somewhere in easy reach. Some alarms are small enough to be added to a key ring and be easily concealed in the hand.

The aerosol type personal alarms should not be subjected to temperatures greater than 50 degrees Celsius, burned, pierced or left in direct sunlight, as this may cause them to explode. They should be kept out of reach of children. The status of the battery in the other type of alarm should be checked periodically.

### **Obscene or Nuisance Phone Calls**

- As soon as you realise you are receiving a nuisance or obscene phone call, hang up gently, showing no emotion.
- Most callers are put off if they do not get the desired reaction and will stop.
- If the phone calls persist despite you hanging up immediately, then they should be reported to the Police.
- Keep a record of the date, time and content of each phone call. Note the voice characteristics of the caller. This may help to trace them.

### **Attacks With Corrosives and Other Noxious Chemicals**

If in circumstances where there is a significant risk of an acid or other noxious chemical being thrown, vigilance is essential to look for anyone approaching and in a suspicious manner. It may be by someone known to you or it could be a stranger. Call loudly for assistance.

Running away from any person who causes concern is usually the safety option. But if this is not possible, use appropriate self-defence measures to restrain the attacker and prevent the chemical from being thrown, e.g. knock the container out of their hand, or throw something such as a plastic bag or coat over the container. What are you carrying that could be used as a shield, for example umbrella, folder, bag, briefcase, etc. If the self-defence measures are not successful, the relevant first aid treatment must commence as soon as possible. This involves flushing the affected body parts with copious running water for at least 20 minutes or until the ambulance crew/paramedic, summoned using phone numbers 999 or 112, take over. If running water is not available at the location use what is available, e.g. pond, fountain, stream, puddle, bottled water.

### **Definition of Violence at Work**

Violence at work is defined as 'Incidents where persons are abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public, in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.'

For risk assessment purposes, violence at work can be broadly defined into 3 categories:

- Violence committed by a person with no legitimate connection to the workplace. For example, a robber or burglar.
- Violence committed by a service user, customer or similar type of person receiving services from Barnardo's.
- Violence committed by someone who has a legitimate connection with Barnardo's. For example, delivery people, workers, workers' spouses/partners, contractors.

Examples of dangerous workplaces/occupations:

- Cash is handled or carried e.g. at or to/from banks, post offices etc.
- Members of the public are challenged e.g. ticket inspectors.
- Lone workers including those who visit service users at home.
- Dealing with people who have been drinking or taking drugs.
- Dealing with people suffering stress or grief.
- Seen to interfere with people's lives e.g. social workers.
- People frustrated at having to wait.



## **Dynamic Risk Assessment / PET Analysis**

A dynamic risk assessment can be defined as a continuous process of identifying hazards and the risk of them causing harm and taking steps to eliminate or reduce them in the rapidly changing circumstances of an incident. A PET (People, Environment and Task) analysis, which is often part of dynamic risk assessment, consists of the following elements:

*People* - this asks colleagues to consider what they already know about the people they are encountering, along with behavioural awareness of how individuals are acting at any moment during interaction. They are also asked to include themselves in the assessment.

- What do I know about this person or persons?
- What mood are they likely to be in?
- Am I working on my own?
- Do they have any history of aggression?
- What is their body language and tone of voice telling me?
- Is their behaviour changing unexpectedly?
- How confident and competent do I feel?

*Environment* - colleagues should consider the environment they will be working in and use their situational awareness to continue to assess their surroundings.

- What about the environment could make me more vulnerable?
- What could be used as a weapon against me?
- Can I get out if I need to?
- Whose territory is this (and how will this affect the dynamics)?
- Am I isolated from my colleagues?

*Task* - assessing the task they are carrying out will help workers identify triggers that may increase the likelihood of aggression.

- What am I doing that could create a trigger for aggression?
- Am I asking difficult questions or delivering bad news?
- Am I enforcing rules or asking the person to do something they will object to?
- Am I carrying or handling cash or valuables?
- Am I invading their space?
- Am I assessing for provision or denial of a service?
- Am I trying to stop the person from doing something they wish to do?

The PET evaluation can give colleagues a format to identify and assess their concerns. It also helps them articulate and report their concerns to their managers.

## **Visitors and Contractors Coming to Schools and Services**

If there are plans for a visitor/contractor to come to a School/Service/Carer's Home with a history of aggressive pupil/service user/placed CYP, etc., behaviour, the relevant risk assessments/method statements and local safety rules, must have reliable arrangements and procedures to inform the visitor/contractor about the circumstances, and controls to adequately manage the risk of assault.

Some General Golden Rules

- Do not assume that others behave predictably.
- Do not assume you cannot be a victim of violence because of your gender, size, job etc.
- Develop skills, behaviour and ways of working to recognise and deal with danger.
- Strike a balance between sensible caution, awareness and confidence rather than exaggerated suspicion.
- Remember that the risk of being assaulted is probably less than you think it is.
- Trust your intuition and act on any warning. Do not ignore it.
- Always be alert; be aware of your surroundings and others.
- Look confident, not like a potential victim.

- Keep reasonably fit - good posture, stamina and strength aid self-protection.
- Avoid violence risk in the workplace and when you are away from the site.
- Assess the potential risk and reduce it as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Avoid meeting aggression with aggression.
- Report any incident however trivial. Not doing so can put others at risk.

**Communications – verbal and non-verbal**

If you find a particular phrase annoying because you feel it is disrespectful, arrogant, uncaring or condescending, etc., it is likely that others also do. Avoid such phrases when dealing with potential aggressors. Only about 7% of total communication is verbal, so while one should be careful about what is said to a person in a potentially violent situation, thought must also be given to how the words are spoken and non-verbal communication/body language, e.g. the way we are dressed, bodily orientation, open and closed bodily positions, gestures, interpersonal distances, stance, facial expression, etc.

Body Language	Possible Interpretation
Jabbing fingers	Aggressive
Steepled fingers	Full of yourself
Rubbing eyes	Disbelieving
Rubbing earlobe	Not accepting what is said
Cuddling yourself	Nervous
Blowing out cheeks	Exasperated
Toss Head or shrug shoulders	Dismissive
Leaning back hands tightly gripping chair	Threatened
Head tilted down	Unsure
Head tilted sideways	Interested
Hand over mouth	Unsure what you are saying
Hand clenched across chest	Unfriendly
Hand under chin	Bored
Crossed arm and legs	Defensive
Uncrossed arms	More relaxed
Sitting back, legs folded, hands behind head	I'm in charge
Sitting up and looking	Open and alert

Invasion of our private space makes us feel uncomfortable. Going into someone’s body buffer zone can escalate aggression and make it more difficult to dodge an assault. When angry the body buffer zone becomes larger.

**Dealing with Aggression**

The Aggression Control Trilogy



Calming

- Allow aggressor to talk, explaining why they feel aggrieved and so on. Encourage them to keep talking with occasional prompts. Let them get any pent-up frustration out of their system.
- Avoid unnecessary interruption, hear them out and use appropriate body language to show you are listening, interested and empathetic. Give them plenty of space.



- Try to establish a rapport with the aggressor, tell them your name and ask theirs. Present yourself as another human being and not as a bureaucrat, authority figure, status or job title.
- Avoid argument and keep a careful mental note of what they are saying for future use. Observe them for signs of calming or possible physical attack.

#### Reaching

- When the aggressor has calmed down sufficiently, begin to build bridges.
- Explain back what you believe they have said. Seek confirmation of key points.
- Ask any questions you need to ask, explaining why you need to know. Find out as much as you can about them and answer their questions about yourself and your Service.
- Clarify what action and assistance they require in the short and longer terms.
- Smile, and continue to encourage, acknowledge and empathise. Offer refreshments and a comfortable seat.
- Avoid them thinking that you find the situation funny or are being patronising.
- Consider whether to take written notes (could be seen as officialdom in action).

#### Resolving (this was previously called 'Controlling')

- Move forward together to resolve the problem. Set clear and understood targets. Avoid jargon, admit failings, allow adequate time and avoid hurry.
- With complex problems, agree a list of component issues, tackling each aspect separately. Be encouraging and show pleasure when progress is made.
- Tackle the simpler issues first (demonstrates progress and so creates a positive atmosphere) and the more complex later. Be realistic and honest about what is achievable.
- Show that you have taken account of their views. If a proposed course of action is unacceptable, offer alternatives.
- Finally review what each person has agreed to do and when. Timetable future contacts. Involve colleagues that are more experienced if necessary.

#### **Fighting Back - The Very Last Resort - What is Reasonable Force?**

If trying to restrain, block or fend off a stranger already physically attacking you has failed, and you are unable to escape or call for assistance, the remaining option is to fight back. If you do decide to take on the attacker, it is important that you hit them sufficiently hard and fast but avoiding a degree of force out of proportion to the circumstances and the degree of risk posed. Target a vulnerable area. Use your body's natural weapons, e.g. fingers, fists, elbows, feet, knees, teeth, head, etc., or anything suitable you are carrying or to hand. This obviously does not apply to service users. Ask your manager about the availability of training in safe, effective and acceptable physical restraint techniques.

The Law allows the use of reasonable force to defend yourself but forbids the carrying and use of offensive weapons or items adapted for the purpose. Anything which you would normally wear or carry, or which is to hand at the location can be used. Don't allow the attacker to take it from you. Always think about what you will do in this situation; don't wait until it happens. You are not expected to make fine judgements over the level of force you use in the heat of the moment. So long as you only do what you honestly and instinctively believe is necessary in the heat of the moment. As a rule, the more extreme the circumstances and the fear felt, the more force you can lawfully use in self-defence. Once your self-defence action has been successful do not continue to hit the assailant. Instead leave immediately and report what has happened to the Police and your Manager at the earliest opportunity.

#### **Drug Rape**

Drug rape is one of the fastest-growing crimes in the UK with both males and females being targeted. The drugs, of which the best known is Rohypnol, are tasteless and odourless, are absorbed quickly by the body, and

cleansed from the body sometimes before memory of the rape has returned. The drugs can be introduced into soft drinks as well as alcoholic ones, plus food or cigarettes can also be used. They cause incapacitation and disorientation, and the warning signs are feeling drunk, strange and nauseous.

While licensed premises are the most common places where rape drugs have been used, incidents have also occurred in private houses, private parties, business premises, ships and planes, hence the importance of being very careful when acceptable a drink etc. when making home visits.

It is vital that if you suspect that your drink, cigarette, etc. has been spiked you take action to protect yourself, particularly resisting any 'kind' offers from a stranger or other person you do not completely trust to see 'safely' home.

### Associated documents:

- 1) Risk Assessment Guidance
- 2) Risk Assessment Template

### Compliance measures:

- Evidenced in the annual HSQA.

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### Document History:

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