

Lone Working Policy

Compass Disability Services

Units 11 – 12 Belvedere Trading Estate
Taunton, TA1 1BH

December 2015
Review: December 2018

Introduction

Compass Disability Services has a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees under Health and Safety legislation. These responsibilities apply equally to those staff that; for whatever reason, work alone. It is the employer's duty to assess the risks to lone workers and take steps to remove or control risks as far as possible. The nature of the work undertaken by Compass Disability Services and its projects necessitates lone working practices. The principle of this policy is to ensure that risks associated with lone working are managed in accordance with good practice and legislation

Definition

Lone workers are members of staff or volunteers who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. This includes homeworkers, staff who may find themselves alone in the office and those attending meetings where there is the potential to be alone with a service user, member or other unknown professional.

Risks

Risks can be associated with many types of work but it is generally assumed that lone workers face increased risk due to the isolated nature of their work. Risks can also take different forms, for example we must consider risks in terms of the potential for physical harm but also the risk of being more vulnerable to false accusations. It is therefore imperative that all lone workers are vigilant and conduct their duties with safety in mind at all times.

It is recognised that different roles with Compass Disability Services place some employees at a greater potential risk than others, for example: remote home workers, work alone for a large majority of the time and visit service users in their own homes as the job necessitates this; staff working on the Compass Disability Network project attend meetings with members in hired venues; and on occasions other members of staff will be working alone in the main office. Most risks come from the unknown, but trying to identify risks in advance is an essential tool in managing risk. All staff should be familiar with the good practice guidelines and must follow these procedures.

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Implementation of Safeguards

Employees are required to take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their work and to co-operate with Compass Disability Services in meeting their legal obligations with regards to Health and Safety and other legislation.

In an attempt to manage or minimise risks as far as possible Compass Disability Services has implemented a number of safe systems of working.

Whereabouts of Lone Workers

It is generally considered that Lone working increases the vulnerability of workers therefore it is essential for staff safety, that people working away from the office can be located by staff in the main office. To facilitate this, the lone working procedures must be observed at all times. Failure to comply with the lone working procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Compass Disability Services will store details of lone workers' emergency contacts and other details (personal description, car registration, home phone number, etc) in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and they will only be used in circumstances when the lone worker has not followed the Lone Working-procedure, or we are unable to contact them and therefore have concerns for their safety.

New Referrals

The potential, service users' Care Manager, who would most likely be aware of any potential risks the individual might pose to a lone worker, completes the referral form and must state any potential or known risks on the form. If a potential risk is identified the member of staff should arrange the initial visit as a joint visit with the Care Manager, when this is not possible, take a colleague.

Mobile Phones

All Remote Workers who are regular lone workers will be provided with a work mobile phone, which they will be expected to carry at all times during their working hours when outside of their office base. They must ensure the phone is sufficiently charged at all times. These phones will enable the worker to use the Lone Alert system or contact their buddy. This will also allow the main office to contact the worker should the need arise.

Identity Cards

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An identity card with photograph will be issued to all lone workers for identification purposes, along with the address and contact details of the main office. An aide memoire will be printed on the reverse of the identity card to act as a constant reminder to lone workers about some of the key aspects of keeping themselves safe. Lone workers will be expected to wear this identity card whenever they are lone working.

Use of Telephone Numbers

All office staff will be trained not to give out any employees' home office or work mobile telephone numbers to service users or members under any circumstances. Remote workers may choose to give their direct contact details to service users but will be advised by their line manager of the potential consequences and dangers of this. It is not likely but should any other member of staff need to make a call to a member or service user from their home phone, the number should be preceded by 141 so that the number is withheld.

Meetings where there is the potential to be alone with a service user, member or unknown professional

Staff attending meetings with service users or members, especially potential service users or new members, or an unknown professional should make every effort to attend these meetings with another member of staff from Compass Disability Services or someone they know from another organisation. When this is unavoidable the member of staff must arrange to meet in a public place and/or ensure the lone working procedures (as set out below) are followed.

Incident Reporting

In order to maintain appropriate records of incidents involving lone workers, it is essential that all incidents are reported to your line manager. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe are reported even if this was not a tangible event or experience. Reports of these incidents are imperative in informing future visits, meetings, etc and will help to inform lone working policies and procedures. All reported incidents will be recorded on CL, for that particular service user. All incidents will be discussed at a debriefing session or supervision, notes of which will be kept on the employee file. This will be monitored by the line manager.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the lone workers' line manager to ensure they are made aware of the Lone Working Policy and Procedures before any lone working commences and at regular refresher intervals thereafter, for example

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annually. Your line manager must also devise and implement safe working systems for lone workers to avoid or control risk where this is necessary and ensure systems are in place for staff to be traced and that these systems are regularly checked.

It is the responsibility of the lone worker to ensure they are aware of the policy and procedures relating to lone working and comply with them at all times and to take reasonable care to protect themselves.

Training

All staff working for Compass Disability Services should know that a great deal of importance is placed on the health, safety and welfare of our staff, and as such all lone workers should be aware of how to deal with situations when they feel they are at risk or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions can influence or even trigger an aggressive response. Your line manager will ensure that lone workers receive appropriate training; this will be completed within the first three months of work for those that regularly work alone. The line manager in consultation with the lone workers themselves and in conjunction with the Operations Manager will consider refresher training at appropriate intervals, for example every three years thereafter.

Policy Revisions

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and amended as necessary, or earlier if changes to the operations of Compass Disability Services occur. All employees should pass suggestions or recommendations for the revision of any aspect of this policy through normal channels to the Chief Executive.

Additional Information:

- Homeworking Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Office Lone Worker Procedure

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