



Care & Share Companionship Scottish Registered Charity No : SC048873

LONE VISITING POLICY - VOLUNTEERS

Purpose

Care and Share Companionship is committed to providing a safe support environment as far as is reasonably practical for their volunteers. Consideration shall therefore be given to the health and safety implications in respect of lone support visits.

This document explains how Care and Share Companionship will protect their volunteers as far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone support visits. The law requires organisations to consider carefully, and then deal with any health and safety risks for volunteers visiting alone.

Policy

All volunteers should be made aware of this policy. Anyone who is or who potentially may be a lone visiting volunteer offering support shall receive information, instruction and relevant training in respect of all identified hazards and the risks involved.

- All new volunteers of Care and Share Companionship should receive an induction, including reference to the lone visiting policy.
- In an emergency, the lone volunteer offering support should phone the relevant emergency service, Programme Coordinator, Operations Manager or if unavailable, a named member of the Board of Trustees.
- It is the responsibility of the Manager and Coordinator to ensure that volunteers do not suffer from undue stress as a consequence of lone visiting.

Definition of lone visiting

Lone volunteers are those who visit by themselves without close or direct supervision.

This includes when

- Volunteers are out in the community ie, befriending.

Aims of the policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone visits.
- Ensure that the risks of lone visiting are assessed regularly and that systems are put in place to minimise the risk as far as is practical.
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to volunteers that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when visiting alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to their role as a volunteer lone visiting.

Procedure

Individuals will receive information, instruction and supervision in respect of the hazards and risks associated with lone visiting.

All individuals are to take relevant and sensible precautionary measures whilst lone visiting. This includes letting someone know (a friend, colleague or family member) when their visit begins and ends.

Volunteers will report to the Manager or Coordinator any unsafe or potentially unsafe situations. Any incidents of aggression or threats will be recorded using the incident reporting procedure.

If a volunteer feels that they are putting themselves at risk they should discuss the situation with the Manager or Coordinator.

Further efforts by the Manager shall be made to eliminate or reduce hazards starting with a process of reassessment of the task.

Risks of lone visiting

Risk assessments for lone volunteer visits must include:

- Safe entry and exit to premises
- Location, eg remoteness, transport, parking
- Risk of violence eg history of violence from the public or the service user
- Channels of communication in an emergency
- Arrangements for home visits
- Reporting and recording arrangements
- Communication and traceability – log in and log out procedure by informing a member of their household or friend expected time of arrival to and from location
- Personal safety

Following completion of risk assessment, consideration must be given to any appropriate action that is required.

All volunteers must be made aware of the Programme Coordinator's mobile number

Implementation and Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this Policy shall stay in force. This Policy will be reviewed annually or if legislation, best practice or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

Policy Monitoring and Review

Care and Share Companionship is committed to the ongoing monitoring and reviewing of this policy and will carry out a formal review every year.

All aspects of this Policy shall be open to review at any time.

Review Date : 01/09/2024

Latest version updated 07 April 2023