

Bradford South Circuit

Home Visiting and Lone Working Policy

The superintendent minister and any minister line managing others

so far as is reasonably practicable within the organization, should:

- be responsible for the health and safety of employees and others who they manage and/or have responsibility for;
- ensure that adequate resources are made available to facilitate healthy and safe working practices;
- ensure that all employees who they manage know and accept their responsibility under this Code of Practice and the Bradford South or individual church Health and Safety Policy. All new staff should be expected to sign a declaration to this effect as part of their induction process. All existing staff should have this code of practice discussed with them and declaration signed at the next available supervision session following receipt of this document.
- keep an up to date directory of staff home contact/car details, i.e. home telephone number, mobile numbers, emergency contact person and number, address; make, colour and registration of car. This should be kept in a confidential manner and be accessible from the home office where possible, in addition to the work place.
- provide support and guidance to any member of staff who may be deemed vulnerable or at risk.

All Staff and volunteers

are encouraged to work healthily and safely and so far as is reasonably practicable should:

- take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, and others who may be affected by their acts and omissions at work;
- not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare;
- make themselves familiar with, and conform to the Bradford South Health and Safety Policy Guides, and Codes of Practice;
- observe all health and safety rules and procedures at all times and conform to instructions given by the local health and safety guidelines
- report any unsafe conditions or practice in their workplace;
- Attend health and safety related training courses when asked to do so.

Matters relating to health and safety should be addressed and noted on a regular basis through 1:1 and team meetings.

It is reasonable to expect that all staff will exercise care when undertaking their duties on behalf of Bradford South Circuit. Examples of taking such care includes the following, and should be carried out with due regard to the Bradford South General Health and Safety Policy.

Home Visits: (potential risks/assessment)

Central to minimising risk is forward planning before the visit is undertaken. This starts with risk assessment which is concerned with gathering as much relevant information as possible. Information might include the following.

- What is known about the individuals current circumstances?
- Have they experienced some recent trauma that might increase the risk of assault? (Bereavement, separation from a partner, prosecution, removal of children. etc).
- Have colleagues from other agencies had recent contact that could provide insight into the individuals current temperament.
- Are there drug or alcohol issues.
- Before approaching the premises assess the risk. Listen and observe and try and evaluate what is happening within. If you are uncertain it is better to leave than to put yourself at risk.
- Before entering the premises consider the presentation, disposition and demeanor of the occupant.
- Upon entering the room consider where the interview is to be conducted and if necessary try and position yourself in easy reach of an exit.

General precautions:

- Vehicles should be maintained in good working order (regularly serviced, tyres, oil and water checked on a regular basis) and have adequate fuel.
- When parking your vehicle consideration should be given to positioning of the vehicle to facilitate an unhampered and prompt departure.
- Whilst it is advisable to position your vehicle close to the premises you are visiting, consideration should be given to parking in an area that is well lit.
- Make sure valuables are out of sight.
- Be aware of dogs both in the neighborhood and as you enter the property. Do not be deterred from asking the owner to put the dog in another room.
- Ensure that you are aware of reporting requirements in the event of any kind of accident, including road traffic accidents, as soon as it is practicable to do so.

Workers should at all times be aware of their surroundings and should have regard to accessing and exiting any premises. It is considered good practice to try and ensure that if you are driving, that you park in a position that enables you to drive away without having to undertake time consuming maneuvers, e.g. if you are in a cul de sac, turn the vehicle around so it is facing the exit route prior to the visit or meeting taking place. If possible, have your car keys ready in your hand to unlock your car upon returning to it to ensure swift access.

Try to avoid isolated or badly lit areas.

Wherever possible, plan your visit in advance and get to know your whereabouts. If the visit is an initial home visit, where possible, workers should **undertake a risk assessment regarding potential safety hazards**. This might include a visit to familiarize with the area, checking with colleagues if the area/client may pose a risk (where they are previously known). If workers feel vulnerable, unsafe or potentially at risk of harm about undertaking a visit based on information that has been provided/instinct, advice and support should be sought from their line manager prior to the visit taking place. If there are concerns about continuing the visit once it has been made, **the worker should walk away and report reasons/concerns to their line manager**. Examples of support available may include arranging to invite the client to meet with you in an alternative place such as the office or other community based venue, or joint visiting with another member of staff. Consideration should be given to the possible need of two workers undertaking the home visit where it is felt prudent to do so.

Ensure that you carry with you the minimum required for the purpose of the visit and never leave any belongings of any kind on show inside the vehicle. It is not advisable to carry lap top computers when out on a home visit, or be seen using them in a public place. Where it is necessary to be carrying additional belongings, keep them locked in the boot of the car until needed. Workers should not carry files or other documentation with them that contain personal and/or confidential information about themselves or clients.

Always try to ensure that any personal belongings are distributed about your body; bags wherever possible should be worn slung across your body-do not make bags something to fight for.

Once inside the building, particularly on home visits, if there is a concern try to position yourself such that you are able to exit the room or building quickly without being impaired by furniture, or a closed door.

If any member of staff feels they are being threatened harm at any time, they must report the matter to their line manager or Superintendent Minister and an incident form should be completed and logged as necessary. Incident forms can be obtained from the office. In such incidences, the manager and member of staff should carefully consider the most appropriate course of action, including reporting the matter to the police.

Dress code: Workers should at all times be mindful to the image they portray by how they are dressed; avoid wearing clothes that may have the potential to cause offence e.g. images and slogans on t-shirts. Footwear should be of a nature that is easy and comfortable to walk in. Loose fitting items around the face and neck, such as earrings, necklaces, scarves and worn I.D could potentially pose as a health and safety hazard to workers; do not wear items that could be quickly and easily caught hold of.

Do not impede your senses unnecessarily-avoid wearing a hood, talking on the phone unnecessarily or listening on ear phones.

Mobile telephones: Staff should always ensure that their mobile phones are charged and switched on during working hours. Whilst it is possible that answering mobile phones could potentially pose a risk to safety in some situations, it could also serve to alert other people to the fact that the worker has access to a means of communication.

CHECK procedure –if a worker feels unsafe then they must set up a check system with a colleague, this should involve a call and all the information required to set off an alert should this be necessary. If the person does not respond after several attempts to contact them then the police should be called. It is the responsibility of the person asking for a check call to let the other know if they finish early and no longer need the check.

Lone Working:

When working alone in a building
it is good practice to undertake the following:

- Ensure you are familiar with the emergency scheme for your premise and where exit points are;
- Ensure the building is kept locked whilst anyone is working in the building.
- When working alone in the office, use the intercom system to respond to callers.

This policy will be reviewed annually

.....Chair of Circuit Meeting

Dated