

## LONE WORKING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to set out the SUN Network's policy, and its procedures which shall apply to staff working alone.

### DEFINITION

Lone workers are staff who may work on their own and unsupervised, either away from our premises or who are alone in an office, or other building.

### PRINCIPLES

This policy and procedures shall be influenced by a number of fundamental principles, as follows:

- Duty of Care: The employer owes a duty of care to its employees and is required, by law and so far as is reasonably practicable, to protect staff from risks to their health and safety.
- Best practice: The employer will use its best endeavours to ensure that the working practices required of its staff and volunteers demonstrate its commitment to the safety, security and wellbeing of staff and volunteers. The requirements of current legislation will be seen as minimum requirements to be improved upon where possible in practice and application.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall responsibility for the health and safety of staff and volunteers rests with the Board of Directors. It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that the policy in respect of lone workers meets current legal requirements. The Board will strive to ensure that its policy and procedures will, where possible, exceed legal requirements.

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the operational procedures are adequate, and that staff are instructed to follow established procedures.

Each member of staff and volunteer is responsible for complying with the policy and procedures put in place and for drawing attention to matters of concern not currently addressed by the policy and procedures.

### MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Board shall review the operation of this policy every three years, unless earlier review is required due to changes in relevant legislation or if areas of concern are highlighted by staff or volunteers.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to bring changes in legislation and best practice to the attention of the Board.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

a. The Board of Directors are aware of the duty of care for the health and safety of employees, placed upon them by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the 1993 EU Directives.

b. Insofar as is reasonably practicable the Board will take steps to identify the risk to the health and safety of staff working alone and unsupervised and further will take all reasonable steps to ensure that such risks are, where possible, eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level. c. The Board recognises that it is impossible to eliminate all risks and is therefore committed to providing adequate training for lone workers. Training in personal safety will be made available to all staff, as soon as possible after the date of their joining. d. As required by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 all employees have a duty to follow the procedures for lone workers. e. All employees are required to bring to the attention of the organisation any concerns or worries relating to their own, or another employee's lone working. f. All employees have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and their property and are required to refrain from taking unnecessary risks. g. The Directors will pay proper attention to any concerns raised by employees and will insofar as is reasonably practicable take steps to alleviate these concerns. h. The Directors shall respect the judgement and discretion of staff regarding lone working.

## **PURPOSE**

The following are the procedures which will be followed by staff working alone.

### **WORKING ALONE IN AN OFFICE OR OTHER BUILDING**

Wherever possible staff and volunteers will avoid working alone in a building either during or after working hours. However, where this cannot be avoided when other staff may not be available, or where staff wish to work beyond normal working hours, the following procedures shall be followed:

A member of staff working alone in a building shall:

- Before being left alone, ensure that there is no unauthorised person present in the building.
- Lock external doors, having regard to the need to escape in an emergency. Where 'push open' fire exits are not available it will be the responsibility of the lone worker to carry the key with them whilst they are alone in the building, or to place it near to the external door. The key to an external door will not be left in the lock on the inside of the door.
- Not admit members of the public to offices or day centres outside of normal working hours.
- Utilise the OK Alone system for the duration of their time in the building and sign off once they have left.

## **TRAVELLING**

This policy requires staff and volunteers to take steps to ensure their own well-being and safety.

## HOME VISITING

Visiting clients at home is a rare element of our work. Whilst the risk of staff coming to harm is likely to be negligible, both the organisation and its staff must recognise that a risk does exist. Steps must be taken to eliminate this risk completely or to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. A number of steps will be taken as follows:

**Where a client is already known**, and where no adverse circumstances have been previously reported, the risk may be deemed to be low. When carrying out visits to clients in this category staff will follow the general procedures outlined below.

Where clients are known and where cause for concern has previously been notified:

Under no circumstances whatsoever should a member of staff visit a client at home in circumstances where a risk has been previously identified or suspected without prior discussion with their Line Manager.

In these circumstances the member of staff should discuss with their Line Manager the need for a home visit. If possible, an arrangement should be made to meet the client at an office or centre where other members of staff will be present.

In circumstances where it is not possible for a client to attend an office the Line Manager and member of staff will consider whether the risk may be reduced to a reasonable level, for example by two members of staff visiting together or one member of staff visiting with a third party known to the client, such as another professional or a friend of the client.

In circumstances where the employee and/or Line Manager are not satisfied that the risk may be suitably reduced no home visit shall take place.

### **Where the client is not known:**

In circumstances where the client is not already known it is important that consideration is given to whether any significant risks may be expected.

If there are, these should be shared with the relevant Line Manager prior to a home visit being made. The Line Manager will consider the information available and will discuss with the member of staff alternatives to a home visit, for example the client attending an office or centre.

In circumstances where it is not possible for a client to attend an office the Line Manager and member of staff will consider whether the risk may be reduced to a reasonable level, for example by two members of staff visiting together or one member of staff visiting with a third party known to the client, such as another professional or a friend of the client.

In circumstances where the employee and/or Line Manager are not satisfied that the risk may be suitably reduced no home visit shall take place.

## GENERAL PROCEDURES

### OK Alone Monitoring System

- All staff that will be lone working shall be signed up to the OK Alone monitoring system. It is the Executive Directors responsibility to ensure this happens prior to any lone working occurring.
- All staff are to be trained in the use of OK Alone and download the OK Alone app to their work smartphone and allow it GPS access.
- All staff will have a pin code to access the app, they must store this pin number safely and in the event of losing it, inform the Executive Director.
- At the start of lone working the staff member must log on to the OK Alone app and select 'Start shift' The OK Alone app will then count down from 2 hours unless a shorter time is selected from the menu and will maintain a running countdown. If the worker is going to be longer than 2 hours they must press 'Check In' prior to the two hours ending and the counter restarts at 2 hours. To stop the countdown once you leave, the worker presses 'End Shift'.
- In the event of an emergency or requiring help the worker must press the 'Help' option. OK Alone will immediately alert the designated Monitor who will attempt to contact you to ensure that you are ok. If they cannot contact you after three attempts, they will either report to your last known location or call the police to your last known location.
- The Executive Director will be the designated Monitor in the event of emergencies.
- The organisation will make available an 'attack alarm' for the team to be used as appropriate. Please ask your manager if you wish to carry an alarm.

### Emergency contacts

The employer will issue to every employee an 'out of hours' contact number. This will be that of the Executive Director. It will be for emergency use by family and friends who may be concerned about the safety of a member of staff after the end of 'normal working hours'.

ID Badges: All staff will be issued with an ID badge which they will be required to wear whilst visiting other premises.

### Personal information

Staff are discouraged from sharing personal information with third parties with whom they come into contact during their work. Staff must not give their home address or telephone number to third parties.

## REPORTING

- All employees are required to report to their Line Manager any matter of concern in relation to lone working in general or these procedures.
- All employees are required to report to their Line Manager any suggestion for improvement upon these procedures.
- All employees are required to report immediately to their Line Manager, any incident where the individual believes his/her health or safety had been compromised.



## **VOLUNTEERS**

Throughout this document, reference to 'staff' or 'employees' will be taken to include 'volunteers'.

Volunteers will not be required to make home visits.

Each volunteer will be made aware of this policy by their supervisor.

Training sessions for volunteers, will incorporate a unit on personal safety.

**Approved by The SUN Network Board of Directors Date: 9th July 2018**

**Next Review Date: July 2021**

**Responsible Officer Executive Director of The SUN Network.**

**Signed.....**

**Date.....**

**Signed.....**

**Date.....**