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## **LONE WORKING POLICY**

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### **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 MOONSTONE CARE believes that lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees.
- 1.2 Lone workers are defined as those members of staff who work without close or direct supervision or company for substantial periods of time. This includes most domiciliary care staff who visit and care for service users in their own homes.
- 1.3 MOONSTONE CARE understands that it has a duty as an employer to assess any risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control those risks where necessary.
- 1.4 We recognise, that staff working alone in potentially isolated conditions have no immediate back-up or support and so are at a greater risk of injury through aggression or violence directed towards them from service users, relatives, carers or members of the general public. MOONSTONE CARE Agency also recognises that staff working alone need to rely on their own judgement and initiative and may be at greater risk of making mistakes or errors.
- 1.5 MOONSTONE CARE believes that training is particularly important for lone workers and research shows that adequate training is the single most critical factor in avoiding panic reactions in unusual situation. In particular lone workers need to be deemed competent to work alone, to be sufficiently experienced and to fully understand the risks and precautions needed
- 1.6 Highland understands its duty as an employer to ensure employees are competent to deal not only with the day to day facets of their work but with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of their training, for example, threatened with aggression an violence.

### **2. Lone Workers' Supervision**

- 2.1 By definition lone workers are those who work without constant supervision throughout their working day, therefore procedures must be put in place to monitor lone workers to ensure they remain safe and to provide supervision on regular basis. This includes supervisors periodically visiting and observing those working alone and regular contact between the one worker and supervision by telephone.
- 2.2 Supervision of lone workers is important as it helps to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

### **3. Lone Workers' Security**

- 3.1 When a member of staff visits a service user in their own home he or she may be at risk through health and safety hazards in and around the service users' homes and of physical or verbal assaults and hostility from service users, relatives and the general public. Recent evidence suggests that such incidents may bon the increase and home visiting protocols should take into account particularly in high risk areas such as high crime rate areas.

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- 3.2 To ensure the protection of our care staff, the following should be carried out:
- The assessment of all new referrals should include a risk assessment which includes threats from health and safety hazards and from aggression and violence and other threats to lone working
  - Lone workers should carry panic alarms and mobile phones so that they can summon help quickly, all phones should include an emergency number which will be attended at all times that staff are working
  - Lone workers should call the office at regular intervals to report that they are safe, including at the end of a shift
  - Office staff should contact the manger on call in the event of any emergency situation.
  - In situation where a lone worker feels under immediate threat of their physical safety, they should contact the police directly or inform the office or On Call Supervisor who should contact the police for them; the supervisor should be careful to take all appropriate information from the lone worker, such as location and telephone number, and to pass this on to the police, after the incident the lone worker should complete the incident form.
- 3.3 It is strongly advised that staff carry in their cars the absolute minimum amount of equipment and that they always park their car in a well lit, public place if at all possible. Thefts from cars are a major area of concern and muggings of care staff are a real threat, especially in high crime areas.
- 3.4 If the lone care worker is on foot, then they should avoid dark, unlit, isolated routes to work.
- 3.5 In cases where care is to be provided in a high crime area or to a service users with a known history of aggression or violence associated with them, then a full risk assessment should be completed by the supervisor/care manager. Where there is significant risk then the care plan should be altered accordingly either by reviewing the case with the relevant case manager or by arranging for the care workers to attend the visit in pairs.
- 4. Untoward Incidents**
- 4.1 Untoward incidents, including all incidents which involve the use or threat of aggression or violence should be regularly reviewed and audited.

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### **5. Training**

- 5.1 All MOONSTONE CARE staff must be given adequate training and information on this policy.
- 5.2 Security training should be included in the induction training for new staff and in-house training sessions on security should be conducted at least annually and all staff should attend.
- 5.3 As part of the induction process, supervisors must satisfy themselves that each member of staff is competent and safe to work alone and that they are clear about how to act in ways that will maximise their own safety and about what to do in emergency situations.
- 5.4 In addition, all staff will be appropriately trained to perform their duties safely and competently and those staff required to use specialist equipment will be fully trained and supervised while they are developing their competency.

### **6. Compliance with the Policy**

All staff are expected to fully comply with this policy. Any staff failing to follow the procedures within this policy may be liable for disciplinary action being taken against them.