

## **Healthwatch Cambridgeshire: Lone working policy and procedures**

### **Introduction**

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire (HWC) has a duty of care to employees and volunteers and is required by law and so far as is reasonably practicable, to protect employees and volunteers from risks to their health and safety.

Employees and volunteers may be required to be on their own and unsupervised away from our premises or they may be working alone in an office or other building.

### **Responsibilities**

The overall responsibility for the health and safety of employees and volunteers rests with the HWC Board who will ensure that adequate policies and procedures are in place and take all reasonable steps to ensure that risks are where possible, eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level. The operational responsibility rests with the Chief Executive who will ensure that the HWC Board are kept up to date with changes in legislation and that adequate procedures are in place.

It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to be mindful of their safety, to follow HWC procedures for working alone and to report any concerns to their manager at the first opportunity.

HWC does not expect that volunteers will be required to work alone and unsupervised in a building. However should this situation arise then the procedure outlined below will apply.

It is not anticipated that any HWC staff or volunteers will need to undertake home visits. If this need arises the staff member or volunteer should discuss with the CEO who will decide upon a course of action.

### **Procedures to be followed when working alone in an office or other venue**

Wherever possible, avoid working alone in a building either during or after work hours. However where this cannot be avoided, the following procedures should be followed:

- Ensure that there is no unauthorised person present in the building
- Lock external doors, ensuring you can escape in an emergency but do not leave the key in the lock

- Do not admit members of the public to offices or other buildings after normal working hours
- Alert a colleague, friend or family members that you are working alone.

### **Travelling**

Staff and volunteers should take steps to ensure their own well-being and safety such as having enough petrol or diesel and making sure the vehicle is well maintained.

### **Home Visiting**

It is not anticipated that home visiting to service users, carers or the general public will be a major element of HWC's work. However, we should ensure all risks are mitigated by:

- Ensuring all efforts are made to obtain as much information as possible about each situation and the people involved.
- Where a visit is being made to someone who causes concern, the time and place of the visit and the name of the person should be advised to the administrator. The administrator should be advised when a visit has ended, the Chief Executive will stand in if the administrator is not available.

### **Diaries**

Employees who are not or not always office or centre based, must maintain a diary. The diary will include names, addresses and telephone numbers of any home visits or who have appointments at the office/centre and the time, venue and if possible contact numbers of other meetings and events.

It is the responsibility of individual employees to maintain the diary and of the line manager to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that this procedure is being observed.

### **Equipment**

HWC will make a mobile phone available to employees who need one or make arrangements for re-imburement of business calls if employees wish to use their own phone.

### **Personal information**

Employees and volunteers should not give their home address or own telephone numbers to any third parties. The main office number should be given and any message will be passed on to the employee or volunteer.

Employees and volunteers are advised to exercise caution when discussing details of their personal life with others.

**Reporting**

All employees and volunteers are required to report the following to their line manager:

- concerns about lone working
- concerns about these procedures
- suggestion for improving these procedures
- any incident where their health or safety has been compromised.

**Training and Awareness**

Training sessions will be provided for staff regularly lone working and volunteers.

**Approved by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire Board of Directors**

Date: 13 November 2013

**Reviewed**

Date: January 2016

**Next Review**

Date: January 2017

**Responsible Officer**

Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire