



H&S-006  
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Helping Blind and Disabled People

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## Lone Worker Policy & Guidelines

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### 1 Introduction & Scope

The Milton Keynes Reader Service acknowledges its duty of care for the health, safety and security of employees and volunteers alike. There is no general legal prohibition on working alone. The broad duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply.

The policy relates to situations where employees or volunteers work alone. These include the following situations:

- Lone working in the MKRS Office or recording studio
- Attending exhibitions, displays, fundraising etc.
- Visiting service users' homes

### 2 Responsibilities

It is the employee or volunteer's responsibility to do all he or she reasonably can to avoid being exposed to a situation that may result in an accident/incident. This will include a continuing assessment of the situation they find themselves in.

If people find themselves in a situation with which they are not familiar or do not feel safe then they must seek further assistance.

Where an incident occurs even if no injury is sustained, the incident must be reported to the Service Coordinator, or a member of the Executive Committee, as soon as practicable, and an accident/incident form completed.

## **3 Procedures**

### **3.1 Lone working in the Office**

The MKRS coordinator is responsible for general safety within the office. Anyone working alone in the office in the coordinator's absence must be made aware of escape routes and appropriate procedures in event of emergency.

As the office worker is placed in a vulnerable situation the following guidelines are recommended:

- Close the window whenever leaving the office, even for a short period of time
- Turn the catch on the main entrance when no one else is using the property
- Lock the office door whenever other people or groups are using the rest of the building

### **3.2 Lone working in the Recording Studio**

The coordinator must ensure that anyone working in the studio is aware of escape routes and procedures. Ideally the MKRS coordinator should be in the office while a volunteer is working in the recording studio. If the coordinator needs to go out, the volunteer must be informed that this is going to happen and be given expected times of departure and return.

### **3.3 Attending exhibitions, displays, or fundraising**

Efforts should be made to ensure that a representative from the Reader Service does not attend an event, or man a display unaccompanied. Where this is unavoidable it is essential that the coordinator or a member of the Executive committee is aware who is involved, where they will be, and what times they will be there. This also applies to solo Service Members who may be involved in fundraising on flag days.

The coordinator and Executive Committee will endeavour to give the guidance and advice to help deal with potential problems.

### **3.4 Guidelines for meetings and home visits**

If volunteering or working alone:

- Volunteers should ensure someone knows when they will be involved in work for the MK Reader Service. Volunteers will be given emergency contact numbers that they can pass on to people. Note - To protect User confidentiality, volunteers should not give out the contact details of their Service User.
- The Coordinator should ensure either someone knows, or there is a clear record of appointments, with destination, name of person being met with and expected time of return from the appointment.
- All should prepare for meetings by gaining as much information as possible about the person and the destination.
- No one should enter a building, particularly someone else's home, if not feeling comfortable or safe.
- All should check the inside of the car before getting into it – especially at night.
- If in doubt, walk away!

### **4 Document Review**

This document should be reviewed every three years or when there is a new Service Coordinator.