

Grief support for
children & young people
in Swindon & Wiltshire



Lone Working Policy

Document Control:

Version	Date Written	Authors	Date Ratified	Judgement of controls/Amendments
Draft v.0.1	May 2022	K. Brownlee	May 2022	Good
Draft v.0.2	14.05.24	K. Brownlee	May 2022	Change in format – made into stand alone policy (taken from WTH handbook)
Draft v.0.3	02.05.25	K. Brownlee	14.05.25	Good, no changes
Draft v.0.4	23.02.26	K. Brownlee	11.05.26	Changes to reflect team review of safety procedures.
Date of Review:		1 year or sooner if required.		

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1. Charity Statements:

Statement of public benefit:

Wiltshire Treehouse is for the benefit of bereaved children, young people, and their families, living/educated within Swindon & Wiltshire.

Mission:

Wiltshire Treehouse wants to see a world where every bereaved child and young person can receive guidance and support to help them through their grieving process. We will enable those in our local communities to develop the coping strategies, skills, and confidence they need to thrive.

Charity Objectives:

Provide high quality, relevant bereavement support and guidance to children, young people & their families.

Improve the initial experience of a child bereavement through training and awareness raising.

Secure the continuity of our organisation, ensuring a future of child specific bereavement support.

Be proud of the charity, a great place to work and achieve.

Our Values:

Growth – Providing a safe space for personal development.

Respect – Beneficiaries, volunteers, and staff are treated with respect and dignity within their journey with the charity.

Inclusivity – Services and support available to the whole community.

Empowerment – Working with beneficiaries to enable change on their terms.

Friendly – Open and welcoming.

2. Purpose, Scope, and Users

Wiltshire Treehouse recognises that some staff and volunteers are required to work by themselves within Westlea School (George & Ann Tween Room), and in the community. There may also be times when they need to work out of hours.

The Charity also recognises it has an obligation under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act) and the Management of Health & Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1999, for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect workers where reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working
- Outline responsibilities for the charity and its lone workers (paid staff and volunteers)
- Identify key safety procedures

Scope of the policy -

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risks
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working and reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

The responsibilities of the Charity, and the content of this policy, apply equally to all staff and volunteers that, for whatever reason, work alone.

3. Definition of Lone Workers

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision such as:

Staff at Westlea School where:

- Only one member of staff works on the premises
- Staff working separately from others
- Staff working outside normal hours of 8am – 6pm weekdays, term time.

Staff working away from Westlea School and when their work may be carried out in:

- Schools
- Council buildings
- Other community buildings

4. Responsibilities

Service Director & Business Director

The Service Director is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working

- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Treehouse Management Team (Directors and Trustees) periodically reviews the effectiveness of this policy
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone
- Ensuring that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updates and refresher training as necessary
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents

Employees and Volunteers

Employees and Volunteers are responsible for: -

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions
- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy

Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

5. Risk Assessment for Lone Workers

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management.

An assessment must be carried out for and by all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff who work in isolation at Westlea School, as well as staff making visits to other establishments in the community.

The risk assessment should identify measures that reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. If risk cannot be minimised then alternative arrangements should be made.

Risk assessments for site based lone workers must include:

- safe access and exit
- risk of violence
- safety of equipment
- channels of communication in an emergency
- site security
- security arrangements
- level and adequacy of on/off site supervision

Risk assessments for mobile lone workers must include:

- client risk assessment where applicable
- travelling between appointments
- reporting and recording arrangements
- communication and trace ability
- personal safety/security

Following completion of the Risk Assessment, the Service or Business Director will give consideration to any appropriate action that is required.

Where staff either work alone in Westlea School or in the community they must use protocols for personal safety.

6. Safety Protocols

a. Contacting clients by phone

When contacting a client a works mobile should be used as preference. If it is necessary to call from a personal telephone (home or mobile) staff must protect their personal contact details by dialling 141 prior to the client's telephone number.

Staff should never provide their personal contact details- phone, email etc- to a client of with whom they are working on behalf of Wiltshire Treehouse.

b. Staff working alone at Westlea School (George and Ann Tweed Room) or in community settings

- Appointments with visitors are to be pre-planned and logged in the staff's Outlook calendar (which in turn should be shared/viewable by a manager)
- Unexpected visitors must not be allowed into the building
- Staff must follow the measures put in place by the lone working risk assessment

c. Home visit to clients

Wiltshire Treehouse does not routinely make house calls. In an exceptional circumstance this may be carried out with manager permission and with an additional risk assessment in place.

d. Emergency protocol

If a lone worker feels that his/her safety is compromised they should -

- **STOP** the meeting if they feel behaviour may lead to abuse or violence
- **LEAVE** the premises quickly if they feel unsafe. They should call a manager when at a safe place. If other people are vulnerable to harm they should alert the police when at a safe place.
- If they cannot leave the building then they should find a safe place and CALL THE POLICE FOR HELP. E.g. lock themselves in the toilet with their phone and call the police
- If they cannot escape a situation they should activate their personal alarm, which all lone working staff are issued. It is advised that these are worn on staff lanyards so they are accessible at all times. This should halt the assailant and allow the member of staff to escape to safety.
- As a last resort they shall contact a manager and say "I'm at (LOCATION) and I can't find the Red Folder". This covert message will trigger the manager calling the police.
This should only be as a last resort – getting to a place of safety should be the priority.

e. Driving alone

When driving alone staff should take the following precautions:

- Plan the route, being aware of any risks on route and be aware of where to park. Park in well-lit locations
- Keep valuables out of sight
- Drive with locked doors
- Reverse into parking spaces so you can drive out quickly
- Walk quickly back to the car, have keys in hand prior to arrival at the car
- In event of breakdown inform colleague at Wiltshire Treehouse of delay and location

7. Incident Reporting

Any incident i.e. an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage, must be reported to a Director of the charity who will keep a log of incidents involving lone workers. They will also review incidents linked to issues of security.

Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or 'unsafe' (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

8. Support for Staff

Employees and volunteers working for Wiltshire Treehouse should know that their safety comes first. Staff and volunteers should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk, or unsafe. Staff and volunteers should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response.

Managers will therefore ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

9. Reviewing & Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually, as well as monitoring its effectiveness. The policy's effectiveness can be measured through:

- Feedback from staff
- 6 monthly review at team meetings
- Staff sickness, presenteeism and staff turnover levels
- Exit interviews