



LONE WORKING POLICY

Statement of Intent

Friends of the Family recognises that some of our staff and volunteers work alone in a range of settings and that the Health and Safety of these individuals is paramount.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Friends of the Family Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy and the risk assessment for conducting home visits.

Aim

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the staff and volunteers of Friends of the Family are safe when working or volunteering alone. This policy aims to

- raise awareness of the Health and Safety issues related to lone working
- to give guidance on assessing and controlling the risks
- to ensure that as far as possible, people working alone are not at more risk than other employees and volunteers

What does this policy cover?

This policy covers any staff member or volunteer who

- works alone with families, visiting them in their own homes
- works alone in any location including the office both inside and outside of regular office hours
- travels alone in relation to their work or volunteer work

The Law

There is no general prohibition in health and safety law of working alone, but there is a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Methods

Friends of the Family is committed to supporting staff and volunteers and ensuring that the risks that come with working alone either in the office, visiting a family's home, or out in the community are minimised. We appreciate that it is not possible to eliminate risk completely but take responsibility for ensuring that the risks are considered and minimised.

Friends of the Family will ensure that all staff and volunteers undertaking lone working are aware of and fulfil their responsibilities as safely as possible. This will be done by:

- ensuring that this policy is disseminated, implemented and monitored.
- ensuring that staff and volunteers are given appropriate training, so they are aware of the risks relating to lone working.
- establishing effective preventive measures to minimise the risks.
- gathering information from referral agencies about potential risks, assessing the risks and passing on specific lone working information to staff or volunteer befrienders who may, on occasion, enter the home.
- understanding that different people feel unsafe in different situations, and the risks can be different between people in the same situation. Friends of the Family will ensure that our procedures are flexible enough to respond sensitively to these variations.
- creating a safe non-judgemental environment in which staff and volunteers can raise concerns about lone working.
- ensuring that no staff or volunteer undertakes a home visit or lone working scenario that they are not comfortable to do.
- ensure that staff and volunteers receive regular supervision and support to raise any concerns.
- recording any incidents using the Friends of the Family's incident report form (Appendix B).
- monitoring the frequency of reported incidents and conducting regular analysis to identify risks and hazards.

Staff and volunteers must:

- take responsibility for their own personal safety and take sensible measures when working alone in line with this policy.
- let someone know where they are going and what time they expect to return, while respecting service user confidentiality.
- informing the service if they are concerned for their safety or that of the service user (refer to the Friends of the Family Safeguarding Policy).
- not knowingly endanger themselves or their colleagues.
- attend relevant training provided by Friends of the Family.
- record any changes to the home situation and for befrienders to record their interactions with their focus child.
- not put their lives, or the lives of others at risk at any time including if attempting to prevent an act of violence.
- ensure that the emergency services are called in an emergency.
- report any incidents to the Project Manager or Operations Director at the earliest possible opportunity.

Risk Management

All staff and volunteers need to be aware of the potential risks associated with lone working. This includes working at the Friends of the Family office, other locations and home visiting.

All staff and volunteers should be aware of the Friends of the Family lone working procedures (Appendix A) which takes in account the potential for the following hazards:

- physical or sexual abuse
- emotional or mental ill health
- verbal abuse or threatening behaviour
- personal injury
- theft / criminal damage
- road traffic accidents / breakdowns

Dynamic Risk assessments and Home Visits

All home visits should be carried out in accordance with the Home Visiting Procedures (Appendix A) and the [Friends of the Family home visiting risk assessment](#).

Staff and Volunteers should be aware that the family circumstances may change and that home visiting is also subject to dynamic risk assessment in situ. Staff / volunteers must not enter any premises if they are not comfortable to do so and should contact the line manager / project manager.

Preparation for a home visit

When home visiting a new family, staff must gather enough detailed and relevant information from referrers in relation to any potential risks before the first visit. If there are any concerns about home visiting these must be raised with the Operations Director and alternative arrangements should be put in place.

For the 5s to 13s Befriending Service, where volunteers may also visit the family home on their own, volunteers will be made aware of any specific risks identified by the Project Manager. If there are any risks identified by the volunteer during their visits, appropriate measures will be agreed between the volunteer and the Project Manager during supervision, documented on CRM and monitored.

Volunteer Training and support

Home visiting is covered in the volunteer training and all volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Friends of the Family lone working risk assessment.

Employees and volunteers will not be asked to home visit a family where there is known history of physical violence in the household. For families experiencing emotional abuse, or mental ill health, a dynamic risk assessment will take place by the 5s to 13s Manager and where necessary arrangements will

be made to meet in a neutral, safe and public place.

Supervision

Lone working arrangements / home visits will be reviewed regularly during supervision with the 5s to 13s Befriending Manager or Operations Director. Reasons that agreed procedures may need to be changed include any incidents involving staff or volunteers, a change to the family circumstances or a change to the staff or volunteers' needs.

Guidance for employees working alone at the Friends of the Family office

Staff working alone in the office outside of normal working hours, should where possible, let the wardens of the Friends meeting house know. When working alone at any time, ensure the door is secure and that the outside security light is always turned on.

If you are concerned and in immediate danger, call the police in addition to the Wardens.

Staff working alone at a different venue that is not the office

All alternative working venues will be assessed and any risks considered and discussed with the Operations Director before use. The Operations Director or another member of the team should be made aware if you are at any venue working alone. Doors should be kept locked e.g. at the Salvation Army when counselling upstairs.

Policy reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees: 29th January 2025

Review date: April 2026

Appendix A

Detailed Lone Working Procedures for Home Visits

At Friends of the Family the safety of our employees and volunteers is paramount and although some of the recommendations below are common sense, we believe that it is appropriate to highlight them. The Code of Behaviour in the Safeguarding policy should also be reviewed in conjunction with these procedures.

When making a home visit employees and volunteers should:

- PLAN for their own safety (Prepare, Look and Listen, Avoid Risk, Never Assume).
- ensure that colleague or family members know where they are going and their expected time back.
- report back to the Project Manager/Line Manager with any major changes to their planned itinerary if they have any concerns at all about the location in which they are going.
- ensure that they carry a fully charged mobile phone, and it is switched on.
- not enter someone's house if that person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- remain aware of changes in mood, body language and behaviour during a home visit.
- not sit with their back to people.
- be aware of your surroundings and place yourself in clear line of an exit.
- avoid parking on the family drive to avoid being blocked in.
- if it is necessary to use their own landline, they should withhold their personal telephone number by dialling 141 before the telephone number.
- not enter a home if they feel concerned about their safety. They should ask their Project Manager/ Line Manager for advice or extra support if they feel uneasy about making a home visit and put alternative arrangements in place.
- be prepared to identify themselves with their Friends of the Family identity card.
- be aware of cultural issues and dress appropriately. If appropriate keep their shoes on.
- treat the family members courteously and remember they are guests in the family home.
- allow enough time for their journey and let the family they are visiting know if delayed.
- be aware of the general safety issues associated with road travel.
- conceal bags and equipment in the boot of their car. If possible, avoid taking a handbag or valuables into the family home.
- avoid using waste ground, or isolated pathways, particularly at night bearing in mind it gets darker earlier in winter. As far possible, home visits should be arranged in daylight hours.
- be aware of the nearest place of safety e.g. shops.
- not give a lift in their car to anyone unknown to them and without prior arrangement.
- If there are any concerns about the way things are developing, or an incident occurs and where employees and volunteers feel unsafe, they should always put their own safety first by recognising the limits of their own abilities to deal with a situation and leave when appropriate.
- if there is immediate danger to the staff member, volunteer or any other individual then the police should be contacted by dialling 999.

Next of Kin details:

For the welfare and safety of employees and volunteers who undertake lone work the following personal information should be stored on Friends of the Family's CRM. This data is subject to our data protection and privacy policy.

- Name
- Address, telephone and emergency contact number
- Relevant medical conditions
- Mobile phone number
- Car registration number, make, model and colour
- Client details

Procedure in event of a member of staff or volunteer not returning from a home visit when expected

A named emergency contact of the staff member or volunteer who has not returned and has not been contactable on their mobile phone should contact Friends of the Family who will then endeavour to track their movements. The date and time of all contacts with both parties should be kept as a record in case assistance from the Police is required.

If Friends of the Family or a relation is unable to track down the staff member / volunteer and there is sufficient concern for that person's safety or wellbeing, then the decision to report it to the police may be made.

Appendix B
Lone Working Incident Report Form

Incident			
Name of person reporting incident			
Role			
Please give details of the incident / cause for concern (including who, where, when, what, how)			
Date the incident / cause for concern occurred			
Signed		Date	

Investigation			
Carried out by			
Position			
Please give details of the investigation and findings			
Recommended Preventive Actions			
Signed		Date	

Actions	
Carried out by	

Role			
Signed		Date	