Lone Working Policy

Policy Statement

Where there are requirements for staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

Purpose

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

Context

Some staff work outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns and/or to undertake their job role. CURUFC's principles for supporting lone workers include:

- a commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining
- safe working practices
- recognising and reducing risk
- a commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff
- a clear understanding of responsibilities
- the priority placed on the safety of the individual over property
- a commitment to providing appropriate training for staff
- Equipment such as mobile phones will be made available as appropriate.

Definition

'Lone working' covers all work proposed to be undertaken alone where the risk to the individual lone worker may be increased either by the work activity itself, or by the lack of available support should something go wrong. This can include working at home.

Security of buildings

Managers and their employees must ensure that: -

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible
- Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder
- If applicable, key codes for access should be changed from time to time and when a member of staff or sub-contractor that knows the code leaves and as a matter of course if a breach of security is suspected
- When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms.
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering
- External doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone
- Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures
- Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area

Personal safety

- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
- Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with their Manager.

- Staff working away from the office should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile 'phone is charged, in working order, and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider.
- Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
- When a risk assessment identifies that it is not possible for work to be undertaken safely by a lone worker, then arrangements for providing support staff must be put in place, or the work prohibited.

Assessment of risk

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access, exit.
- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
- Can the risk of the work be adequately controlled by one person, or are more people necessary?
- Substances which are subject to COSHH regulations and /or DSEAR must be considered very carefully.
- The individuals concerned – special needs, indicators of potential or actual risk.
- Do lone workers fully understand the risk involved
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations.
- Any other special circumstances.

All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.

Staff working at home

- Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.
- Staff working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display, and can be retrieved on 1471. To prevent the person you call accessing your number, dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone.

Monitoring and Review

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager.