# **POLICIES & PROCEDURES – LONE WORKER**

**PURPOSE:**

To set out the approach of GNFC Systems in relation to training and staff development regarding ‘Lone Workers’.

**OTHER RELATED POLICIES:**

* Health & Safety
* Risk Assessment and Management (Service Users)
* Protection from Abuse & Discrimination: Adult and Child
* On-Call
* Induction, Training & Development

## INTRODUCTION

This document contains a policy statement (Part One) and procedural guidance (Part Two). The functions of each are set out below.

## Part One – Policy Statement.

The policy statement sets out the broad framework of principles within which the particular area of work will be carried out. It sets out Good News Family Care’s broad style approach to lone working, including any aims and guiding principles.

**Part Two – Procedural Guidance.**

The procedural guidance sets out the details that staff will require to carry out their duties in this particular area of work. It also sets out the specific tasks involved in undertaking this area of work and identifies who is responsible for carrying them out.

## PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT

## AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

* GNFC is committed to maintaining a safe environment for staff working alone.
* GNFC is committed to maintaining a safe environment for clients who will receive support from a lone worker.

## PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

The risks relating to Health & Safety of Lone Workers will be considered for every Service User of GNFC.

**The Lone Worker System**

1.1 All staff and volunteers will be subject to a DBS check and reference checks.

1.2 Induction material specifically addresses issues of safety and protection from abuse for clients and staff members.

1.3 Ongoing training will be provided to all staff and volunteers who will at any time be a lone worker either within the charity’s properties or other working environment.

1.4 Supervision will specifically address any issues arising from lone working practice or presenting risks. Guidance & direction will be given when appropriate.

1.5 Any staff member or volunteer found to present a risk to clients will become subject to the disciplinary procedures.

1.6 The Key Worker (or Representative) will complete a Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan for any client to assess if they presenting Risk to lone workers – This will be kept in the client’s file. The allocated key-worker and other staff members will continually monitor the presenting risk. Risks will be recorded on the front sheet of the record and a message will be left in the Communication Book. All relevant staff/services /projects will be informed of the risks by the key-worker. All staff are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of those presenting risks.

1.7 GNFC will ensure that all relevant staff and volunteers receive appropriate training GNFC will provide emergency alarms for all relevant staff.

1.8 A Health & Safety Risk Assessment will be undertaken at the premises of Community Support Clients before undertaking specific tasks that pose risk to workers.

### Lone Worker Risk Assessment: Checklist

**2.1. Are there risks associated with the client’s home environment (in the resident’s bedroom or community home)?**

Eg Animals (dogs, cats)

* Hygiene issues
* Health and safety e.g. loose floorboards, unsafe steps etc.
  1. **Are there risks associated with the client?**

E.g. Aggressive or unpredictable behaviour

* Safeguarding concerns
* Risks associated with drugs/alcohol.
* Mental health issues
* Other people that clients might associate with.

### 2.3 Risks associated with the worker

i.e. Are there any health issues which might cause a problem if working alone (e.g. is the worker medically fit).

* Has the worker had sufficient training to cover emergencies.
* Does the worker know ‘Lone Worker’ policy etc.

# **3. SAFE LONE WORKING PRACTICES**

Whenever you are required to work alone, you must do an assessment of risk for working safely, taking note of the individual service user’s Risk Assessment. This information is available through the key-worker/care team.

## 3.1 Violent/Challenging Behaviour

Where you have any concerns about the possibility of violent/challenging behaviour developing, be sure that you have taken note of the following:

* Gather all available information about the service user/s first. This will enable you to anticipate potential problems.
* If there is any history of violent or aggressive behaviour you must either arrange for the service user to visit the office or, if a home visit must be made, take a colleague with you.

## Community Home Visits

* Remember that it is a privilege to be invited into another person’s home.
* In these cases: always carry an identification card with you. Also have a mobile phone and a personal alarm handy – it can put off attackers or vicious dogs.
* Take only what is essential into the property: leave handbags, briefcases and so on elsewhere. Avoid taking anything that you would not wish the person to see or read.
* Always trust your instincts. If you reach a property but feel concerned, do not go in.

**You should:**

* Conduct the interview near the front door, or arrange a future appointment at the office or when you can return with a colleague.
* Ensure that you are familiar with the layout of the property or block you are visiting.
* Let the service user lead the way and avoid entering a room first and never sit with your back to the door.
* Check the type of lock on the front door. If the service user locks the door, check where the key is.
* Try to avoid reacting to the property itself, for example, if it smells, is untidy or dirty. Remember each person has God given intrinsic value and avoid being judgemental.
* Sit nearest the way out and avoid being blocked in by the service user.
* Terminate the visit and leave the property immediately if you start to receive threats.
* Do not carry your house or car keys and anything showing your home address and telephone number. If both are snatched, it is advisable to have your locks changed immediately.

## 3.3 Visiting other people’s premises

Going to conduct business on other people’s premises is, to an extent, like going to other people’s homes. It is their territory, not yours and you may be more or less welcome depending on the nature of your visit. The points made in the previous section also apply to visiting other premises.

If you suspect the likelihood of drug misuse either sit on a hard chair or remain standing.

## 3.3 Travelling in a vehicle

Put all valuables out of sight, under a seat, or preferably in a locked boot. The theft of handbags from front seats is frequent in large towns. When leaving the car, lock equipment and valuables in the boot. Keep doors locked and windows closed when driving. Lock your car when you leave it, even if you only go to pay for petrol on a garage forecourt.

Plan your route in advance, if necessary, use a map or SatNav. Try to stay on main well-lit roads. If you need directions ask in a garage or shop. Make sure that you have a mobile phone, charger and change in case of emergencies.

Do not give lifts to strangers. If someone seems to be in trouble, only stop if you are convinced it is a genuine matter. Otherwise drive on to a police station and report it.

If a missile is thrown at your vehicle do not stop, but drive on to a police station and report it. Before stopping and getting out of your vehicle, make yourself aware of what is going on. After dark, if possible, park in a well-lit and busy place. When you park in daylight, consider what the area will be like after dark.

Have your keys ready when returning to your vehicle, ensuring that you always approach it from the rear, or walk around it to make sure that there is no one in it before you open the door.

When transporting service users, assess the likelihood of risk, and if there are any concerns – take a colleague with you.

## 3.4 Evening Meetings

If you have to attend an evening meeting, you should advise your Manager of the location and ensure that you have a safe way of getting home. Take a personal attack alarm with you.

## 3.5 Working Alone on GNFC Premises

If you are working alone at Oldfield Farm or Charis House you must ensure that you know who is ‘on call’ and that you have checked which telephone number you are to contact them on if necessary. If there is any concern that tension is arising, contact the ‘on call’ Duty Staff Member immediately. If they are not on the premises it may be advisable to call the appropriate emergency service. In a violent or medical emergency this should be done prior to contacting the ‘on call’ staff member.

**The On-call Phone number is: 07756884511**

**The Emergency phone number from Charis House and Oldfield Farm the number is: 999**

**In a violent situation or medical emergency this should be done prior to contacting the ‘on call’ staff member.**

Ensure you are aware of the Emergency procedures for Charis House and Oldfield Farm. If emergency services are called to Oldfield Farm, please provide the **Grid Reference: SK 00915 78240** and advise them to access Oldfield Farm via Fernilee Reservoir, High Peak.

Whilst at Oldfield Farm, if needing urgent support in person when on evening/overnight duty (after contacting emergency services if required), your nearest emergency contact who you should call before calling the On-Call person is:

***Julia Hawthorne at Knipe Farm on: 07769186953***

There is an ‘Emergency phone’ available for residents at Oldfield Farm for situations where there is an emergency and they are unable to access the land-line phone. The phone is situated where residents can access it in the hallway at all times. Staff must ensure that residents are informed about this procedure on admission. The phone is set up with capability for residents to phone Charis House, the On-call phone and emergency services.

* If the situation requires urgent attention, Emergency services must be called and support can be accessed from Julia Hawthorne before contacting Charis House or the On-call phone.
* If the situation is less urgent, the individual is advised to phone Charis House or the On-call phone.

When lone working, ensure that you have an office key on your person at all times so that you can access the telephone to call for help (or to lock yourself in if necessary) should an emergency arise. The "walkie-talkie" handset could be an alternative ‘back–up’ method. Always ensure that the ‘on call’ DSM has the other handset before going upstairs.

If tense situations arise with service users, take care that your responses do not add to the problem. Keep calm and refuse to be "pressed into a corner" by differing opinions or by service users 'ganging up" on you. You should always withdraw to seek support if you begin to feel threatened.

## 4. House Rules linked to Personal Safety and Security

* Behaviour likely to cause offence or distress to other residents or staff is unacceptable (for example: bad language, noisy, violent or threatening behaviour).
* Residents must not harass or discriminate against other residents or staff on the grounds of race, nationality, colour, religion, sexual orientation, disability or HIV/Aids status.
* Alcoholic drinks are not allowed on the premises. Anyone found to be under the influence of alcohol may be asked to leave.
* Anyone found in possession of (or under the influence of) illegal or non-prescribed drugs or found to be abusing solvents such as Glue or Butane etc, will be given immediate notice to leave. If there are concerns that illegal substances are being brought onto the premises, GNFC reserves the right to conduct room searches and request drug/alcohol tests and will contact the police if appropriate.
* Residents or visitors are not permitted to allow anyone onto the premises by opening a door or other means of entry. All doors – including the front door – must be answered by a member of staff only. Visitors are allowed into the house by prior arrangement only.

House rules must be discussed with new residents and signed by them upon arrival. Discussion of the House rules form part of staff/volunteer induction

**5. Farm Projects**

### 5.1 Whilst on the farm premises, ensure that you have a charged mobile phone with you in case of emergency, with Charis House number on the phone book favourites. This is for your safety for practical incidences and people issues.

### 5.2 Do not use any machinery, or undertake activities that present significant risk (see Risk Assessment) when you are alone. If your assessment of the situation indicates that you are at risk, when possible, phone for help, and or leave the task for another occasion

### 5.3 Always ensure that the DSM at Charis House knows that you are lone working, and at what time you plan to return.

**5.4 Nursery – Staff will not work alone in nursery. It may sometimes be necessary that a staff member will be in the house (for example the kitchen). If only one staff member is left in nursery at such times the nursery phone will be used to call to the office for support in case of emergencies.**

### 5.5 Other procedures that are relevant to working alone at the farm are:

Professional Boundaries

Protection from Abuse and discrimination

Safeguarding & Child Protection

Health & Safety

Working with Service-users at Oldfield Farm

**These policies and procedures must be observed at all time and in all situations**.