

# LONE WORKING POLICY



Effective from: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Butterfly Bloom is committed to ensuring that staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy a safe working environment. It is recognised that there are occasions when staff may be required, or choose, to work alone or in isolated situations. This, however, may introduce risks for a normally non-hazardous work activity.

### **Lone working**

For the purposes of this policy, lone working will be defined as a situation where staff are engaged in work where there are no other people who could reasonably be expected to come to their immediate aid in the event of an incident or emergency.

Within Butterfly Bloom, there are various work activities that may result in staff members working alone; for example:

1. Staff staying on to finish urgent work after others have left, or those who regularly work late or start early, before anyone else gets into the building.
2. Staff who are key-holders or who are left to turn out the lights, set the alarm and lock up the premises after everyone else has gone home.
3. Peripatetic workers whose work involves travelling or home visits to service users.
4. Staff on home visits alone.

### **Risk Assessment**

It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Co-ordinator together with the Service Manager to ensure that an annual Health and Safety and Risk Assessment is undertaken and that members of staff are aware of the content of this, as well as the risks of Lone Working. The risk assessment will take into account the type of tasks undertaken, the environment, health and safety instruction and training received in addition to the individual's medical history.

Hazards identified will be evaluated by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator for the likelihood of the hazard causing harm. Measures will be introduced if the assessment shows that existing precautions are inadequate to eliminate or adequately control the hazard. The risk assessment will be subject to review to ensure it is relevant and current to the workings of the service.

Contractors will be given the opportunity by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator to complete a Lone Working Risk Assessment as necessary and receive the appropriate Health and Safety information.

### **Protocol**

Staff should seek the permission of the Service Manager to work alone in the building outside of normal school hours. The experience and training of staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working. Whenever possible it is recommended that staff work with a colleague and ensure that they are aware if they are to be in a lone working situation, for example if a colleague had previously been on site but had subsequently left. Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

## **Staff Responsibilities:**

Staff members have a duty of care for themselves and anyone else who could be affected by their actions. Therefore, they have a responsibility to ensure that they:

- Are aware and follow all policies or procedures.
- Always plan ahead.
- Are fully aware of the risks when working alone.
- Do not put themselves in potential danger.
- Ensure that they have made themselves aware of the nearest place of safety.
- Be aware of the on-site security procedures.
- Ensure that access is available to personal alarms/mobile phones or some form of personal communication.

All lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with family, friends or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers keep a mobile phone with them in case of an emergency. Staff completing home visits as a Lone Worker should ensure that someone is aware of the address/family to be visited.

Site security must be maintained at all times, however staff should not enter the premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately call the police. Staff must not put themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals.

All staff receive training to help ensure they understand the risks associated with lone working and to minimise these risks. All lone workers, in an otherwise unoccupied building, must follow Butterfly Bloom's fire and evacuation procedures in case of an emergency. Staff are responsible for making themselves familiar with and following Butterfly Bloom's safety procedures and knowing the location of safety equipment.

Contractors are responsible for assessing their own risk and for providing their own first aid kit, suitable for treating minor injuries.

Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money (such as being handed money during home visit). They should not undertake activities that involve working at height or any task that has been identified as medium risk (such as moving heavy or unstable objects). They should not undertake any activities that are identified as high risk (such as entering a home where suspected or known violence, drug or alcohol misuse has taken place) or which is potentially hazardous, given their own level of experience and the nature of the task.

It is the responsibility of all staff and contractors to be aware of and to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general

concerns on health and safety to the Health and Safety Co-ordinator. If members of staff fail to follow procedures designed to protect their safety, this could result in a disciplinary matter as they will have contributed to their injury and any compensation claims for damages or unfair dismissal may be reduced accordingly.

Butterfly Bloom respects the right of the employee to refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of the Service Manager/ Health and Safety Co-ordinator any aspect of work-related risks.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and amended as necessary. Following any incident a thorough investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to procedures and working practices.