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Lone Worker and Lone Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

This policy refers to paid staff and volunteers. Where the word "worker" is used it should be taken to mean any person who carries out tasks on behalf of Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (DFTRA), whether paid or unpaid. It does not mean that DFTRA regards its volunteers as having the same statutory or employment rights as its paid staff. It does mean that DFTRA considers that many areas of good practice (including this lone worker and volunteer policy) relate equally to paid staff and to volunteers.

DFTRA recognises its duty of care for the health, safety and security of staff working, either in paid roles or as volunteers, alone. Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the current Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAW) and the current Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSW) are applicable. These require identifying hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks. DFTRA's Lone Worker and volunteer policy must be applied to all situations covered in section 2 (below) and also situations where employees or volunteers may be working in premises which are either publicly managed or privately owned.

2. Lone Workers and Volunteers

The policy applies to those situations where staff or volunteers work alone or in small groups in isolation. These include the following situations:

- DFTRA workers left alone to work anywhere
- People working outside standard working hours
- People attending meetings
- Where the nature of the work requires the individual to work in isolated areas
- People who visit people's properties

3. DFTRA's responsibility

DFTRA, through the Board of directors, has a general responsibility to ensure a safe working environment for staff working in lone situations. We need to be:

- Aware of those activities that require lone working or those groups of employees who are required to
 work alone, and to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments for those situations are carried
 out.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with our policy on zero tolerance of violence and abusive or threatening behaviour against staff and volunteers.
- Provide employees with appropriate training, information and support advising of the hazards of working alone and associated good practice.

4. Employee's or volunteer's responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the employee or volunteer to co-operate with any safe system of work and follow any instructions when given.

Having been given suitable and sufficient instruction, each person must do all they reasonably can to avoid themselves being exposed to a situation that may result in an accident/incident. This will include a continuing assessment of the situation they find themselves in.

If anyone finds themselves in a situation with which they are not familiar or do not feel safe then they must leave if safe to do so and seek further assistance.

Directors

Martin Smith (Chairperson), Stan Chance (Vice Chairperson), Christine Phillips (Treasurer)
Elaine Lloyd, George McClay, John Doughty, Tony Brain

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Where an incident occurs even if no injury is sustained, the incident must be reported to the employee's line manager as soon as practicable, and an accident/incident form completed. If the employee does not feel safe following such an incident, then they should withdraw and seek further advice/assistance.

Employees should try not to panic if they are involved in an incident, they should remain calm as this will allow them to think clearly and act appropriately.

Employees or volunteers should:

- Always tell a colleague (or your partner/family/a friend) where you are going, who you are meeting and when you expect to return.
- Prepare yourself for difficult meetings by finding out everything you need to before arriving and planning in your mind how you are going to deal with it.
- Do not meet aggression with aggression.
- Do not enter a building, particularly someone else's home, if you don't feel comfortable or safe.

5. Risk Assessments

Any Risk Assessment carried out should consider any Lone Workers or volunteers and their environment, any significant risk should be written down and kept as a matter of record. The following should be taken into consideration:

- Does the place of work present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek
 medical advice if necessary.

Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?

There is a need to identify the location; the requirement for other staff and visitors to access the area; whilst creating a secure and safe environment for the lone worker.

Some factors to take into account:

- Can doors and windows be closed and locked to eliminate the likelihood of unwanted intruders
- Is access restricted by other means e.g. security keypads, swipe cards
- In an emergency can the member of staff leave the premises safely
- Is the furniture and/or equipment positioned to allow good visual advantage for the lone worker, as well as leaving the area if required

6. Communication

Maintaining effective communications with staff in lone situations is essential. It will help to ensure that staff and volunteers can keep colleagues informed of their whereabouts but also provides a means of making contact in an emergency therefore enhances an individual's sense of security.

Whenever they are going out alone to meet anyone on behalf of DFTRA, they should ensure that a relative, friend or DFTRA colleague knows where they are going and when they expect to return. All staff and volunteers should ensure that the DFTRA's contact register contains up-to-date details of their next of kin or people to contact in an emergency.

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7. Monitoring and review of the Policy

The policy is to be monitored as an ongoing process by the DFTRA Board of Directors to ensure that it meets current needs.

Updated and agreed by the DFTRA board on: 10th June 2024.

Next review due by: July 2026.