



# Lone Working Policy

We expect that volunteering with Refugees Welcome in Richmond (RWinR) will be a mutually welcoming, enjoyable and life-enhancing experience. Our foremost concern is that our work is safe and all people involved are supported. The RWinR Lone Working Policy exists to achieve that end.

Befriending for RWinR often involves volunteers supporting beneficiaries as 'lone workers'. In this policy 'lone worker' refers to volunteers who carry out their role in isolation from other workers without direct or close supervision.

Lone working exposes the RWinR volunteer and beneficiaries to risks, which are not present, or are reduced, when working in a team. To mitigate these risks RWinR Team Leaders and volunteers are required to follow the guidance outlined below.

## Team leader guidance

Team leaders will:

- Ensure the volunteers have been recruited safely. Each volunteer will have a current DBS with no convictions, have read the RWinR Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy, have undergone safeguarding training, been interviewed and supplied two references.
- Create and discuss a risk assessment with the volunteer.
- Highlight areas of cultural sensitivity — dress, conduct, seasonal appropriateness such as Ramadan.
- Oversee updated risk assessments.
- Assess the beneficiaries' and volunteers' skills and needs and match them suitably.

- Ensure volunteers do not work alone until there has been a beneficiary assessment involving 2 or more RWinR team leaders.
- Be notified of volunteers' working hours and check they are working as planned.
- Ensure volunteers work closely with another team member or team leader if they are arranging a lone-working session. Volunteers need to inform other volunteer members or team leaders of the date and time of the session and text them as soon as the session has finished.
- Ensure volunteers have contact details of the RWinR safeguarding team.
- If there is any concern about a beneficiary/volunteer's wellbeing the team leader will contact the RWinR Safeguarding team or contact 101 or 999 in case of an emergency.
- Oversee the delivery of the volunteers' support, receiving regular feedback from the beneficiary.
- Ensure that refugee beneficiaries:
  - Provide regular feedback about the support they are given.
  - Have at least 2 RWinR volunteers (including team leaders) supporting them.
  - Know how to make a complaint or share a concern and have the necessary contact details for communication.
  - Have provided an emergency contact number.

## Volunteer guidance

Volunteers are required to:

- Work with the team leader to create a risk assessment and follow the risk mitigation actions.
- Inform either their volunteer co-worker or team leader before they embark on a lone home visit. They need to give the date and time of the visit and message as soon as it has finished.

- Ensure team leaders' mobile phone and further contact details are known and available for use.
- Carry a charged, working mobile phone when lone working.
- Ensure all emergency and relevant contact numbers are held on the phone.
- Provide the RWinR team leader with an emergency contact number.

#### *In the beneficiary's home*

- Assess the beneficiaries and the home environment at the start of the visit. If there are any concerns relating to anyone's safety the team leader should be informed and if necessary the visit should be cancelled.
- Ensure fire escape routes are available and not locked.
- If there are pets, which look dangerous or worrying, ask them to be secured in another room during the visit.
- Avoid being in a room alone with minors and adults at risk. Should this be unavoidable, keep doors open and be as visible and audible as possible.
- Avoid physical closeness and touching, in all circumstances, unless there is an emergency.
- Be aware and respectful of the varying cultural sensitivities present; (this may affect volunteers' clothing choices, food sharing and visit timing).

#### Support for volunteers

- If there is serious concern about the welfare of a volunteer, the team leaders or volunteer co-worker should call the police.
- Before beginning their support volunteers will discuss the nature and risks of the role with their team leaders. If, during befriending, there are any questions, issues or changes in provision volunteers can bring these to the team leader at feedback sessions, or before, in cases of emergency.
- If there is any element of the role a volunteer is uncomfortable with or feels outside of their skillset, it is fine to refuse such work and refer back to the team leader.