

Lone Working and Safe Practice Policy for Maybe Southwest Charity



For the purpose of this document, lone working refers to situations where therapists work alone or are physically separated from other people and therefore do not have access to assistance in an emergency.

All therapists offering services to Maybe Southwest Charity are self-employed and it is recognised that they are responsible for their own health and well-being when carrying out these services, in accordance with both the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992.

As the Maybe Southwest Charity gives paramount importance to the safety and wellbeing of the therapists and volunteers offering services to recipients of the charity, it is expected that they will follow the guidelines below for lone working.

This policy may be reviewed and amended by trustees of the Maybe Southwest Charity whenever is deemed suitable.

Objectives

To reduce the risk associated with working alone whether they are on Maybe Southwest premises, or working in another isolated setting.

To ensure that anyone carrying out psychotherapy or fundraising for Maybe Southwest understands that they are not expected to expose themselves to unnecessary risks in the course of their activities and that the charity will support a member of staff if they leave a situation in which they feel at risk.

General Rules

Maybe Southwest must have details of your (work and personal) mobile number, your home contact number and a person to be contacted in case of emergencies.

A personal alarm will be provided if requested.

A record of booked therapy sessions for the charity must be kept with the charity.

You must have a working mobile phone with you.



In order to both recognise and reduce risk, therapists are asked to:

- Carry out a risk assessment for each place of work, taking action when necessary to reduce risk, taking into account any changes in situation. Common sense is encouraged.
- Ensure that you are medically and physically fit to work alone.
- If necessary, remove any objects that may pose a risk, eg. Scissors.
- Not offer lifts to clients.
- Not meet with a child, young person or vulnerable adult unless someone else is present in the building both for your own and their safeguarding.
- Ensure that they are current on lone working practice, and safeguarding.

In order to promote safe working practice:

- Therapists must have a valid DBS check.
- Therapists will have proof of all necessary insurance for their individual working practice, ie. Professional Indemnity Insurance, Public Liability Insurance, Employers Liability Insurance.
- Therapists may request the use of a counselling room at the charity headquarters at Inwoods, Abbots Leigh Road, Bristol BS8 3QA where a therapist or another suitable adult can be in the vicinity for the duration of sessions.
- Therapists will monitor issues regarding the safety of both themselves and their client throughout the course of therapy, seeking advice if required from supervision, professional bodies. Any concerns should be shared immediately with the director of Maybe Southwest Charity.

Working alone at the Maybe premises or in other isolated settings

Having one person working alone in any venue is undesirable. However, as it is not practical to always ensure that two people are present then the emphasis of this policy is to reduce risk. When there is more than one person in the premises, there is still need for vigilance.

Only work at venues where you feel safe. Leave any appointment at any venue that feels unsafe and inform Maybe Southwest.

Before entering the building:

Ensure that the premises look as you would expect them to do – no signs of damage or occupancy and no signs of doors or windows forced or unlocked when you expect them to be locked. If you have concerns do not enter but contact your line manager or ask a second person to enter the building with you. **Do not enter alone.**

On entering the building:

Ensure that the building and contents are as you would expect them – If you have any concerns leave the premises and contact your manager.

Whilst working alone in the building:

Work as near as possible to the telephone.



Ensure that the entrance doors are all locked.

Do not open doors unless you know or have checked the identity of any visitor.

When talking to anybody you do not know on the phone, do not tell them you are alone in the building.

If you are working on Maybe Southwest premises and you hear the fire alarm exit the building in the usual way and contact Sarah Pitt (07941218072). If anybody appears in the building that you do not know, remain calm and non-threatening – ask who they are and who they are looking for, explain that the person they are looking for is not present and escort them from the premises. Then again contact Sarah Pitt (as above).

Always trust your instincts – if you do not feel comfortable about letting a person in the building, then ask them to return at a time when you will not be alone.

If you make an appointment with somebody for the first time or with somebody who you are not comfortable being with then arrange for somebody else to be at the venue at the time of the appointment

On leaving the building:

Ensure all doors are shut and locked.

Do not wait around in isolated or unlit outside spaces.

If an incident takes place:

If an incident occurs where there is a breach of your personal safety, you should complete an incident report including the date, time, location and description of the incident including names and contact details of any witnesses if known. This should be given to Maybe Southwest. This should be done no matter how minor the incident as the policies stated here may need to be reviewed.

If you are a therapist working on behalf of Maybe Southwest Charity at your own premises, you are responsible for adhering to the lone working policy on your premises to ensure that risk from lone working is reduced. All therapists are responsible for their own wellbeing.

Look confident

Stand tall and look as if you know what you are doing and where you are going

Be alert to what is going on around you

Do not wear a personal stereo

Carry a personal alarm

Ensure you have a working mobile phone with you

Avoid risk

Do not take shortcuts

Never assume

It won't happen to me

Do not ignore your instincts

REMEMBER NEVER PUT YOURSELF AT RISK – TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!