

Befriending & Visiting Service – A guide for Lone Working

Introduction

This guide is intended to provide information and guidance to help keep you safe when working on your own in the community. It supports the training you have received.

If you have any questions or feel you need additional training, please speak to your project co-ordinator.

Community visits – staying safe

It is unlikely that you will experience a problem when making visits in the local community. However, it is important not to be complacent. Situations and dynamics can change and you may need to reassess any potential risks associated with your visit.

Reducing the risks

Planning is key, it is important that you choose the most appropriate course of action if a difficult situation arises.

- Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable make an excuse and leave.
- Be aware of your body language.
- Avoid actions which may appear aggressive or an invasion of privacy or space.
- Remember the earlier we make safe choices and spot potential risks, the more likely we are to have the opportunity and knowledge to avoid them.

PLAN for your personal safety

Prepare:

- Make an appointment to meet the person you are supporting in advance
- Ensure someone knows where you are going and when you will be back.
- Think about where you are going and how you will get there.

Look confident

- Look purposeful and be aware of your surroundings and keep calm.

Avoid risk

- Avoid confrontation and do all you can to defuse a difficult situation.

Never assume

- Don't assume your fears are unfounded. Trust your instincts.
- Don't become complacent by believing it won't happen to you.
- People are not always what they seem – appearances can be deceptive.

Before your visit

- Take a charged mobile phone with you on your visit.
- Make sure you have a lone worker buddy. This is a person you inform that you are visiting someone and what time you expect to finish. This could be a family member, friend or your project co-ordinator.
- Never visit without someone knowing where you are going and when you will be back.
- Know your route and check your car has enough fuel.

During your journey

- Be aware of yourself, others and your surroundings.
- Always park in well-lit areas and facing the way you need to leave

During your visit at the person's home

- Be aware of your surroundings; noise, pets etc.
- Introduce yourself and show your ID
- As you enter ask the person to lead the way so you are behind them
- Try and sit so you have a clear exit door
- If you have any concerns don't continue with the visit. Never enter a house unless you feel completely confident to do so
- Assess the situation – is there anything unusual, is the person you are visiting there? If you feel uncomfortable, make an excuse, leave the situation and inform your project co-ordinator
- Never give or accept money or gifts of any kind from the person you are supporting

After your visit

- Check in with your lone worker buddy to let them know your visit has finished.
- Make a record of your visit and note any concerns to be passed to the Project Co-ordinator

Boundaries

All roles have specific boundaries that you are expected to maintain to protect you and the person you are supporting. Please remember the following principles:

- Maintain confidentiality – don't share confidential information about the person you support with anyone except the Project Co-ordinator

- Don't help with medication, personal care, shopping or financial arrangements
- Be mindful of your personal boundaries and self-disclosure
- Keep to the expected length of your visit

If you're asked to do something and you're not sure if it's part of your role

If in doubt, speak to your project co-ordinator. It is always best to check first before raising a person's expectations or making promises you can't keep.

What if the person you are visiting is unwell?

If necessary, call 999. Alternatively, contact the person's GP surgery. Please inform your Project Co-ordinator

If a person has a fall, do not try to catch them, do not try to lift them, Call 999.