



## PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY AND GUIDELINES

TalkFIRST takes the safety and wellbeing of staff and volunteers very seriously

This policy is designed to make staff and volunteers aware of risks and to identify the responsibilities each person has in the situation to minimize any risk. It is not intended to raise anxiety, but to give staff and volunteers a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

### Lone visits to clients' homes

It is the responsibility of the organisation to:

- Request any information regarding known risk from the referrer.
- If risk unknown undertake a joint initial visit to the address on the referral form to assess any potential risk.
- Provide a 'buddy' who will be aware of the whereabouts of staff and volunteers. The buddy will:
  - Contact the staff member/volunteer 10 minutes after the expected time of departing from visit
  - If no answer, call after a further 10 minutes
  - Take all steps to confirm the wellbeing of the staff member/volunteer, such as telephoning the client, calling the home number of staff/volunteer and the police if no contact can be made.

It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to:

- Ensure the following details are given to their supervisor.
  - Case name
  - Name, address and contact number of visit
  - Any known risks
  - Time of visit and expected time of leaving
- Carry a mobile phone, making sure it is charged
- Leave the address if they feel in any way at risk
- Text or call the 'buddy' when the visit is completed
- Report any concerns regarding the client or the address to their supervisor as soon as possible

### Using other venues, i.e. those booked to undertake mediation/family group meeting

It is the responsibility of the organisation to:

- Risk assess any venue booked by TalkFIRST. Risk assessment will include:
  - The general location of the venue and any associated environmental factors
  - Exterior lighting where after dark finishes are expected
  - Arrangements for securing the building
  - Ensuring the venue is fit for purpose and in a good state of repair.
- Brief staff /volunteers in relation to any identified issues associated with the assessment
- Implement buddy system as for home visits

It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to:

- Let their supervisor know if there are any particular needs, such as disabled access or if small children will be present.
- Report any previously unknown risks as soon as possible to their supervisor and to the 'person in charge' at the venue
- Sign in and out on the venue's register, where required
- Familiarise themselves with the fire exits / escape routes and layout of the building and the venue's fire procedure
- Be satisfied that there is no/minimal risk associated with the clients expected at the venue and liaise with their supervisor if necessary
- Implement buddy system as for home visits

## **Transport**

It is the responsibility of the organisation to:

- Be aware of the method of transport used by staff/volunteers, including :
  - Make, model, colour and registration number of car
  - Whether using an alternative; public transport or walking
  - Assessing risk associated with transport (i.e., the location of a bus stop if in a risky area or after dark)

It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to:

- Ensure their supervisor has up to date, accurate information about transport
- If using a car, to ensure it is in good order
- Take steps to keep themselves safe such as avoiding isolated routes if walking
- Making themselves aware of the route to destination beforehand

## **Emotional wellbeing**

From time to time it may be that a case raises anxiety or upset. In order to protect their emotional wellbeing, staff / volunteers are urged to talk things through with their supervisor. It is the responsibility of the organisation to:

- Provide regular supervision sessions to through aspects of a case and how the volunteer/staff member feels
- Be available for one to one or telephone discussions when needed, or as soon as possible.
- Consider how best to support a volunteer / staff member with the case in consultation with them.

It is the responsibility of the staff member/volunteer to:

- Discuss with their supervisor whether a case should be allocated to another person if they feel that issues within the referral will cause them upset.
- Bring issues affecting them emotionally to the attention of their supervisor either through supervision, by requesting a on to one session or telephone discussion.

### **Reasonable precautions**

This Personal Safety Procedure is not conclusive. Whatever the circumstances staff and volunteers are asked to talk all reasonable precautions as they would do in any day-to-day situation. For example:

- Avoiding poorly lit areas
- Driving and parking safely
- If carrying valuable items (such as a mobile phone) keep them out of sight
- Let someone at home know when you are due back (in addition to using the buddy system)
- Not giving out your personal telephone number or address to clients
- If using social media, ensure privacy settings are set high

It is the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that special circumstances are taken into account to ensure the safety of our staff and volunteers. If staff or volunteers feel that this procedure does not meet their needs we ask that they let us know.

Name: Tracy Sheppard  
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THIS PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY IS NOT  
CONCLUSIVE. IF YOU NOTICE ANY GAPS OR NEW  
ISSUES ARISE WE ASK WE ASK THAT YOU LET US  
KNOW. YOUR FEEDBACK IS ALWAYS WELCOME