

## **Personal Safety, Home Visiting, Lone Working & Transporting Children and Young People**

### **1. Background**

Personal safety is the responsibility of all staff. It is inevitable that at some time during our work we will be working on our own given the nature of the role that we undertake. We work together to ensure that we follow the systems and procedures in place to enable us to perform our daily duties safely and responsibly.

The protocols below should be taken as a guide to safe working in the YOS. Systems and procedures are only as good as those who operate them and therefore it is important that we all pay close attention to them and accept that it is **our** responsibility to follow them.

New staff are provided with information about personal safety procedures, during the induction period, which are key to their personal safety particularly when lone working and training is arranged as necessary for new front-line practitioners and for other members of staff if a need is identified.

It is also imperative to ensure all staff familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures for Health, safety and Well-being on the city council staff website.

### **2. Home visiting**

For most YOS staff visits to the home are central to their work, and in line with the Youth Justice Boards Statutory National Standards.

Home visits will always be undertaken in line with National Standards and dosage through the scaled approach, unless there is an assessed reason as to why a home visits are not suitable/supported due to significant risks posed.

Seconded staff must ensure they also apply their organisations policies as appropriate.

Where a home visit is to be undertaken, the following needs to be considered:

- Does the referring body have any information relating to known problems re visiting the home? Are other services involved? Where appropriate have the police undertaken a trawl of intelligence on the address? Has this included LASBU, housing etc
- Staff should try to arrive at the appointed time as people can become more anxious if they have to wait for the visit. If lateness is unavoidable, try to call the person to let them know what time you will arrive and if they cannot wait, seek to rearrange the appointment.

- Cars should be parked in a safe place, ideally within sight of the home being visited unless there is a perceived threat to the vehicle from any individual who has a history of damaging professionals' cars.
- Staff must always have and show their identity badge however it may be appropriate for this not to be on show until you arrive at the address). Staff must behave respectfully at all times, listening, being non-judgemental and avoiding giving information on subjects they know little about offering instead to find out the information and to contact the family again.
- Staff MUST never divulge information regarding other known associates or families being worked with.
- Staff must never enter a home where a child/or children is alone and must activate safeguarding procedures if this is the case and the children are perceived to be at risk.
- Is it appropriate to visit alone? Should a colleague wait outside in their car or go into the home?
- Would it be most appropriate to arrange with a colleague to contact them by a certain time to advise them of your safety? This can either be done through the Buddy system or duty management system. Should you have a panic word in case of needing to call your buddy or manager ie "red folder"
- All home visits must be clearly recorded on the whiteboard and within the electronic diary system as well as in Capita, in advance of the home visit.
- Staff need to assess the exit route upon entering a house and position themselves, as far as possible, with this in mind in case the need arises to leave the property quickly to ensure their personal safety.
- What should the officer do if, whilst on a home visit, he/she perceives a potential threat? It may be possible that, by showing that the agitated person is being taken seriously and being listened to, they will calm down. However, in situations where the level of agitation appears to be escalating, it is important to remain calm, to remain completely non-confrontational, to make an excuse and to leave as soon as possible. A general principle is that staff should not place themselves in a position where they feel threatened. Where a member of staff feels that a threat is increasing they should remove themselves from the situation at the earliest opportunity.
- Where dogs or other pets are present, if the officer feels uncomfortable or threatened in any way, they should ask the person to put the pet/s in another room being appropriately polite and respectful.
- Always make and update detailed records of all contacts on the YOS data base
- All front-line staff has access to a mobile phone and have a YOS staff member or other member of the management team to contact in the event of an emergency. However, if there is a serious concern please notify the police in the first instance.
- In the event of there being concerns identified/experienced about home visiting, consideration should be given regarding an alert on Capita in relation to all children/young people at the address. Such concerns should be discussed with a Team Manager. Care should be taken to be factual and not subjective. If other agencies are also working with the family, it is imperative to share concerns having discussed through a Manager.

- If an incident has occurred, an incident report form (S02) MUST be considered/completed with a manager. On hearing the details of the incident, the manager will decide if a report should be completed. (Information available on Interface.) The member of staff will also possibly feel that they require some support from a colleague and/or manager and should ask for this. Support should be offered to staff members on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the incident.

NB If a person in the home is **smoking** when a member of staff visits, staff are advised that they may ask the person politely to stop smoking while they are there and if they refuse, explain that the meeting will need to be arranged to take place elsewhere and if they still refuse, they are advised to leave on health and safety grounds.

### 3. Personal Safety procedures

- On a day-to-day basis, all staff will be required to complete the white board and electronic diary showing times they are off-site. Electronic diaries should detail all home visits (**addresses and names**), meetings, courses etc and should record the expected time of return to base. Any unexpected changes to these plans must be telephoned through to the duty manager at the YOS and the whereabouts board updated accordingly, in line with data protection.
- Staff must ensure they have shared their electronic diary with all managers.
- The duty manager should ensure they frequently check the whiteboard and electronic diaries and ensure any staff on home visits that haven't arrived back at the allocated time, are called to check their safety.
- Any direct work with service users, outside of office hours and weekends should be highlighted to the duty manager. A call in and call out system will be put in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff working outside of office hours and at weekends. The duty manager function is in place for evening calls until 11pm but only if advised in advance of a late meeting.
- Managers will monitor whereabouts of all staff, upon notification, of work outside of office hours and will call staff at the allocated end time If the staff member has not called in.
- A 'buddy' system is in place for additional support but should not replace the duty manager's role.

**Compliance with all these personal safety procedures is not optional and any failure to follow them would be treated as a breach of Health and Safety procedures and thus a serious disciplinary matter.**

### 4. Lone working

- All organisations working with or on behalf of children & young people need to give careful consideration to lone working and particularly one to one situations when staff may find themselves working on their own with a child or young person. Where there is a need for these situations it is important that staff regularly and routinely discuss the issues relating to such occasions during supervision and team meetings. These are required to give staff support and direction in dealing with one to one situations, and to allow discussion to take place to ensure that development of procedures can take place. We can all learn from each other and discussion may help particularly new staff in particular to realise some of the safeguards that must be in place.

## 5. General guidance re working with children/young people:

- Avoid meeting with a child / young person in a remote or secluded area
- Always inform other colleagues and/or parents/carers about the contact beforehand, assessing the need (with them) to have them present or close by
- Always report any situation where a service user becomes distressed or angry to a duty manager/line manager, even when the situation appears to be resolved or is calm again
- Carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the service user when in a one to one situation.

## 6. Transporting Children & Young People

Please ensure you refer to the “[transporting young people policy](#)” on InterFace.

- There will be occasions when staff are expected to transport children & young people as part of their duties. Staff are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting children & young people (if the journey is less than 100 miles) and should ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured to include, ‘business use’ and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that this requirement is met. Adults should also be aware and adhere to the use of car seats for younger children. The requirements on this can be found on InterFace by searching for ‘Child Car Seats/Restraints’.
- Seconded staff must adhere to their own services policies and procedures.

### Always remember:

- Officers must be fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/or ability to drive.
- In addition to the annual MOT, licence and insurance document check, all staff who use their cars for work purposes must ensure their vehicle complies with legal requirements re roadworthiness
- Be aware that the safety and welfare of the child/young person is their responsibility until they are safely passed over to a parent, carer or school etc.
- Details of the journey should be recorded in accordance with agreed procedures on YOS database and on the whereabouts board/electronic diary
- Officers must ensure that their behaviour is appropriate at all times.
- Officers must ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety.
- Ensure that you have parental consent before transporting a child/young person if the parent/carers is not present, or

- Ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned
- Pre-plan the action you would take if your car broke down. Identify who you would call to assist you to ensure the child/young person was safely delivered home/to school in the event of your car breaking down.
- Where you require assistance, be prepared to call for assistance in the event of either you or the child/young person being ill.
- If a child absconds from your car and you believe them to be in danger, be prepared to contact the police, the parent/carer and duty management immediately.
- Any journeys over 100 miles should not be taken in your own vehicle but arranged through YOS reception to book a lease car, in line with LCC procedures.

Reviewed and updated November 2015 – Karen Manville Version 2

Reviewed and updated January 2017 – Karen Manville – version 3

Reviewed and updated June 2018 - Karen Manville – version 4

Reviewed and updated June 2019 – Karen Manville – version 5