



## LONE WORKING POLICY

This policy was agreed by trustees on: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
It will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.  
The next review is due by: March 2024

This policy is for all **employees** and **volunteers** at CARAS.  
It applies to face-to-face settings, whether working at CARAS premises or off-site.  
Online risks are covered in the Safeguarding Policy.

Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers  
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charity number: 1124376  
company number: 6462487

## Values

All of our work is values led. Our values are:

**Kindness** CARAS will nurture all who are part of our community, helping everyone develop their skills, talents and interests.

**Justice** CARAS will strive for social justice following a rights-based approach and challenging instances when rights are not upheld in wider society.

**Empowerment** CARAS works alongside people, recognising and respecting their skills and strengths and striving together for better outcomes.

**'With' not 'for'** CARAS will put the voices, opinions, experiences and needs of its beneficiaries at the heart of all that we do.

## Policy background.

Due to the nature of our work there will be times that CARAS staff and volunteers will undertake lone working. A lone worker policy is essential to ensure that as much as possible is done to promote the safety and security of staff and volunteers carrying out their roles. CARAS community members are protected by the steps laid out in our Safeguarding Policy. However, it is important to note that staff and volunteers are not expected to expose themselves to unnecessary risks in the course of their duties.

This policy is intended to protect staff and volunteers from the risks associated with working alone whether they are on CARAS premises or working off-site.

This policy relates specifically to face-to-face work.

This policy interacts with, and should be read in conjunction with, the CARAS Safeguarding Policy and the CARAS Volunteer Agreement, and individual staff contracts and role descriptions.

For the purpose of this policy, lone working will be categorised into two distinct types of work:

Working alone on CARAS premises at Blakenham Road.

Working alone off-site.

Please note that the office at Tooting Works is used solely by CARAS staff. Only Blakenham Road is used for meetings and activities with CARAS community members or external agencies.

**Commented [my1]:** This is a good point, however there is no mention in the policy how it protects the community member? The focus is more on the protection of staff, interns and volunteers. How are we ensuring that we are being accommodating and giving community members a space to share how they feel about lone working?

**Commented [Mo2R1]:** Would this be in the safeguarding policy rather than here?

**Commented [E13R1]:** Yes, on reflection I think this needs to specify it is about the safety of workers.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR LONE WORKING MANAGEMENT**

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to Heads of Service and line managers. Heads of Service and line managers must ensure that staff and volunteers are supported to:

- Understand this policy
- Plan all occasions where lone working will be used
- Prioritise their own personal safety

All staff and volunteers must:

- co-operate with Heads of Service and line managers on lone working matters
- adhere to the lone working policy
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety when undertaking lone working
- report all incidents to an appropriate person – a line manager or one of the Directors.

## **GENERAL RULES**

### Contact details

CARAS must have details of every staff member's personal mobile number, home address, and a person to be contacted in case of emergencies. This is stored on Lamplight. It must be updated immediately if there is any change.

Any volunteer undertaking lone working must also have these details stored on their Lamplight profile. Staff must check this prior to agreeing a lone work plan with a volunteer.

### Location

CARAS must know where employees and volunteers are if they are working alone. Line managers must be involved in lone working plans.

Calendars must be kept up to date with the location of any activities taking place outside of the usual place of work.

## **WORKING ALONE AT BLAKENHAM ROAD**

The emphasis of this policy is to reduce risk.

Having one person working alone in CARAS premises is undesirable but may happen on occasion.

There must always be at least two responsible adults present when face to face project activities are taking place. This can be two staff, or a staff member and a volunteer. It cannot be delegated to two volunteers.

On occasion, when no activities are taking place, a staff member may be making use of desk space or be present to set up before others arrive. On no account should a

staff member be locking up alone after an evening activity- always ask others to remain with you and leave together.

When there is more than one person in the premises, there is still need for vigilance.

#### Before entering CARAS premises at Blakenham Road

- 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. CARAS premises are located on a shared site so there will normally be other workers in your vicinity who you can ask for help. **Do not enter alone if you have concerns.**

#### On entering the building

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

#### Whilst working alone in Blakenham Road

All staff have a CARAS mobile. Keep this charged, switched on, and near to hand.

Ensure that the front door is firmly shut behind you.

All visitors will need to press the button for the intercom. Do not open doors unless you know or have checked the identity of any visitor.

Do not make an appointment to meet with anybody external to CARAS at a time you will be in the office alone.

If anybody arrives at the building that you do not know, ask who they are and who they are looking for. Take their contact details and offer to make an appointment for them to speak with that person.

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

#### **WORKING ALONE OFF-SITE**

It is always preferable to meet external partners, volunteers and community members at the CARAS premises. However it is recognised that some off-site one-to-one working will occur. What these exceptions are will differ between departments. The

guidance on what off-site one-to-one work is appropriate in each department will be led by each Head of Service.

All meetings with community members should happen in a public space. Meetings must never take place in people's homes (including hotels/hostels). If no suitable alternative to the home can be found this must be referred back to the line-manager.

All intake meetings with new community members must happen remotely or at the CARAS premises at Blakenham Road.

#### In advance of an off-site meeting

All off-site working should be entered into personal calendars. This should include the location of the meeting and the name of the person being met.

Staff and volunteers should take all normal precautions when planning their journey to their meeting, including considering safety of short-cuts, time of day and remoteness of locations.

No off-site work is to be undertaken without prior agreement from a line manager. Risks should be discussed fully before an agreement is reached.

Anyone doing a visit or one-to-one meeting should identify a 'buddy' who they will contact (via phone/teams/message) before and after the session. This is likely to be a line manager. At the end of the visit, the worker should text to say they have finished and are safe. If this message is not received by the buddy, the buddy should:

- Call the person's work phone
- Call the person they were meeting
- Call the person's personal mobile number
- Contact the person's emergency contact
- If they remain uncontactable, they should call the police

This must also be shared with the Directors.

#### Risk assessment

Risks are not always known ahead of time. Any identified risks or information for working safely with community members will be noted on their lamplight profile Profile > Background > Any relevant information for safe working. Before meeting a community member off-site, staff should check this and discuss any information with their line manager. The line manager is responsible for leading this conversation prior to approving the work.

#### Visits to under 18s

No off-site one-to-one meetings are to be held with under 18s without informing their parent/carer/key worker.

As with all one-to-one meetings, where possible, visits to under 18's should happen in a public space. No meetings will ever be held in someone's home.

During a visit/one-to-one meeting

Ensure you have your phone with you, switched on and charged.

If in the course of a trip away from the office plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the line manager and if necessary guidance sought regarding risk.

Do not carry any unnecessary valuables.

Do not enter someone's home.

If you feel uncomfortable in any way whilst working one-to-one you should end your meeting. This may be due to behaviours you witness/experience or things that are said. Trust your instincts. If in doubt, leave.

In the event of an incident occurring:

Avoid confrontation, stay calm and keep your voice low and gentle to avoid increasing the other persons heightened state

If violence is threatened, your safety is at risk or you feel uncomfortable withdraw from the situation as soon as possible.

Make your situation clear to people around you- call for help, speak to a passer-by.

If appropriate, and you are able to, call the police on 999.

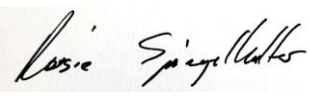
Incidents must be reported to your line manager as soon as possible. The incident must be recorded in lamplight within 48 hours.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually. The Managing Director and Heads of Service will work together to ensure best practices are maintained and updated in the policy where necessary.

The policy will be publicly available through the CARAS website.

This policy is agreed by the board of Trustees, and signed on behalf of them by:

Chair or Trustees 

Date 5.3.22

Trustee

Date

