

SAFFRON WALDEN MENCAP SOCIETY

LONE WORKING POLICY

This policy has been adopted by Saffron Walden Mencap Society through its Trustees Committee which remains responsible for its review.

Original signed version is kept at the SWMS Registered office.

Signed:

Date: 24/2/2025

Chair of Trustees

To be reviewed: February 2027

1. Introduction

Saffron Walden Mencap Society takes the health and safety of its employees and volunteers seriously. We have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of our employees and volunteers while at work or carrying out volunteer activity. We realise that at any given time, staff or volunteers may be working or volunteering alone.

2. Aim and Scope

This policy is designed to alert employees and volunteers to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to provide a framework for managing difficult situations. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Volunteer, Health and Safety & Transport policies.

3. Definition of Lone Working

Lone working is defined as any work situation where an employee or volunteer works without close or direct supervision. This may include working from home (other than in low-risk, office-type work), and working in isolated locations, work in the community without colleagues (such as driving members to clubs or activities).

4. Potential Hazards of Working Alone

People who work or volunteer alone will, of course, face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally, they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur.
- Fire while alone on premises.
- Violence or the threat of violence.
- Lack of a safe way in or out of a building, for example, danger of being accidentally locked in.
- Attempting tasks that cannot safely be done by one person alone.

5. Risk Assessments

Establishing safe working procedures for lone workers is no different from assessing the safety of our other activities. It is the responsibility of the relevant manager to consider the circumstances relating to the tasks lone workers are required to do and should complete a risk assessment for each role which they provide to the person. When completing risk assessments, we will consider the following:

- Does the workplace or specific task present an increased risk to lone workers?
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations?
- Safeguarding - what are the risks and has adequate training been given?
- Is there a safe way in and out of the premises for one person?
- Can one person carry all the equipment necessary to perform the role, or are objects too heavy?
- Is any personal protective equipment needed?
- Is there any risk of violence?
- Are women at greater risk if working alone?

The relevant manager will ensure any risks are communicated to the lone worker and a copy of the risk assessment showing the identified hazards and control measures is also given to them. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker or volunteer in a given situation, we will consider providing a second person or making other arrangements to complete the task.

6. Control Measures

To mitigate the risks associated with lone working, the following control measures will be implemented:

- **Emergency procedures:** Lone workers should be aware of emergency procedures, including how to contact emergency services and who to contact within the organization.
- **Information sharing:** Lone workers should be provided with sufficient information about the relevant members if working alone as a driver/companion.
- **Training and awareness:** All lone workers should have access to training on the risks associated with lone working and the control measures in place. In some instances, this may be shadowing another staff member/volunteer before working/volunteering alone.

7. Operational Procedures

- All staff & volunteers have a general duty to take care of themselves and others and must familiarise themselves with this document and the risk assessments associated with the work they do.
- Lone workers must have access to a mobile telephone and relevant emergency contact numbers at all times. Consideration must be given, depending on the length of the task, for a check-in' call with a colleague or manager after an agreed duration.
- Staff/volunteers who have been provided with a basic first aid kit will be required to carry them with them when working. They must also ensure that they are properly maintained so they are fit for purpose should there ever be a need to use them.
- All incidents and near misses involving lone workers should be reported to the relevant club leader who will inform the Chair of Trustees. An incident report form must be completed. This will help to identify any potential hazards and implement corrective actions.

Reviews - Audit Guidance

Check	Evidence
<p>Is a risk assessment conducted for each role within the charity and updated every 2 years?</p>	<p>Ask for Risk Assessments for 'Roles'.</p> <p>Check whether an assessment of lone working has been included in each Risk Assessment and, in these cases, whether measures have been taken to keep staff safe</p>
<p>In cases where a member of staff working alone has a health condition/disability, have actions been taken to secure their safety?</p>	<p>Check what action has been taken.</p> <p>Do records exist which show the situation is being managed sufficiently?</p>
<p>Are the procedures (outlined above) being followed by staff?</p>	<p>Speak to staff about these procedures.</p> <p>Check whether these are being adhered to.</p>