East Sussex Community Voice

Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy

Policy Schedule

Version	Date of next review by ESCV Board	Date of adoption by ESCV Board
1	n/a	June 2022
2	November 2025	November 2025
3	November 2027	
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1 Introduction

1.1 The scope of this policy is to promote an active safety culture and the adoption of good practice in the context of lone working for all employees, Board members and volunteers of East Sussex Community Voice (ESCV).

1.2 This policy is designed to alert staff, Board Members and volunteers to the risks presented by lone working, to the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and the procedures that minimise risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to provide a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

1.3 Lone working may arise in unusual situations or as part of the normal working pattern of an employee.

1.4 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those "who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". They may include:

- people working separately from others in a building
- people who work outside "normal" hours which are Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00
- people who work away from their fixed base without colleagues e.g. visiting people in offices, care settings, public spaces etc.
- people who work at home.

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1.5 This policy applies to all staff, Board members and volunteers employed by or working on behalf of ESCV, either directly or indirectly, and all situations involving lone working in connection with their duties and work activities. All have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate personal safety measures and procedures are observed at all times.

1.6 Managers will take a lead role in promoting and developing a security and safety conscious environment. It is the responsibility of each manager where staff and volunteers undertake lone working to ensure that the procedures developed, or which are in place, are applied and adhered to.

1.7 ESCV fully supports staff, Board members and volunteers if they "walk away" from a situation in which they feel uncomfortable or threatened. This is one of the most successful forms of harm prevention.

2 Policy Statement

2.1 Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 every employer and employee has rights and responsibilities to ensure the provision of a safe working environment supported by safe systems of working.

2.2 Working alone is not against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, ESCV fully accepts the obligations placed upon it by statutory legislation and guidance to ensure the safety of its employees and volunteers.

2.3 Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff, Board members or volunteers to work alone, they and the ESCV Chief Executive Officer have a duty to assess and reduce the risks that lone working presents.

2.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the ESCV Health & Safety and Safeguarding policies especially, and those listed in section 13.

2.5 ESCV will consult with staff, Board members and volunteers to review working practices on a regular basis to ensure that they feel safe in the course of their duties and that they are not knowingly exposed to circumstances that present a risk to their safety. Any concerns will be discussed in one-to-one meetings and team meetings, as well as at Board level.

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3 General procedures and precautions

3.1 Working in the Office – 31&31a The Old Printworks, 1 Commercial Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex

3.2 For the majority of office working time (Monday to Friday 08:00 to 18:00) there will usually be other staff present. However, there will be times when working alone is the only option. The following applies where staff are working alone.

3.3 Staff should inform their line manager if they plan to work alone outside of normal working hours and, where possible, in-person appointments should not be made when staff are alone.

3.4 Outlook diaries must be kept complete and up to date, identifying the location in which people are working if they are outside of the office or usual working times.

3.5 Staff should keep the ESCV office door locked if they are working alone.

3.6 Communication with any callers should be through a door entry system and not by opening the door. The inner office door should be locked to prevent casual or unplanned callers entering. Ad-hoc visitors and enquirers are not encouraged.

3.7 Staff working alone in the office should ensure that they have a quick and easy system to summon help e.g. a mobile phone charged and switched on.

4 Working outside of the main office/working at home

4.1 Where staff work alone for extended periods or on a regular basis then employees, line managers and the Chief Executive Officer must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor their safety, and to manage any impact(s) of working in isolation.

4.2 Staff, Board members and volunteers must inform their line manager or prescribed point of contact when they will be working alone on ESCV-related activity, giving accurate details of their location, and following the risk assessment plan for any event in which they are participating. This includes occasions when the staff, Board members or volunteers expect to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to the office.

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4.3 If a member of staff, Board member or volunteer does not report in as expected, the line manager or prescribed point of contact should attempt to contact the person, initially to check on their welfare, and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary.

4.4 Any external meetings not at formal offices or places of work should be in a public place, such as a coffee shop etc. If the meeting is of a confidential nature, then it must be held with two ESCV representatives present at all times.

4.5 Staff, Board members and volunteers are reminded when working from home on ESCV business that they are still 'on duty' and should ensure their own safety at all times.

4.6 Home or personal mobile phone numbers should not be given to people outside of the organisation, and when using their home or personal mobile telephone on ESCV business staff, board members or volunteers should dial 141 before dialing to ensure that their number cannot be traced.

5 Public Events

5.1 ESCV frequently undertakes promotional activities and events involving the public, patients, volunteers and professionals. Before undertaking such events staff will consider any potential risks and will have a risk assessment in place if appropriate.

5.2 If the event is external, staff should contact any appropriate bodies (e.g. Council) regarding any permits or risk assessments required (e.g. public marches, rallies) and determine insurance and risk assessments already in place and those required.

5.3 ESCV staff should also check with the ESCV Insurance company to ensure any ESCV-led activities or events are covered by our policy.

5.4 Young volunteers (under 18 years old) attending public events need to be supported by two adult members of staff. Consent from a parent or guardian for participation must be obtained, and travel arrangements in place need to be documented.

5.5 Young volunteers will travel independently or with the support of an appropriate adult (e.g. parent/carer) to any volunteer activities in the community. Staff will liaise with the emergency contact as necessary in advance of any activity to make contingency arrangements.

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5.6 If the travel arrangements for the child or young person are disrupted, then staff will liaise with their emergency contact to confirm the alternative travel arrangements to ensure their safety. If it is necessary for staff to travel with a child or young person, then every effort should be made to ensure that two staff are present in the car or on public transport. If it is unavoidable for a member of staff to travel on their own with a child or young person aged under 18 to maintain their safety, then this should be documented in the ESCV Safeguarding Log and reported to the Safeguarding Lead.

6 Security in other buildings

6.1 When making a booking at an external venue, staff must ensure that there will be an appropriate person present in the building during the event (i.e. building manager or caretaker) or that this person can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

6.2 All appropriate steps must be taken to control access to the building or room, and that emergency exits are accessible.

6.3 Staff, Board members and volunteers should ensure that they are familiar with the fire procedure and intruder alarm procedure, and know the location of both exits and alarms.

6.4 Staff should ensure there is access to a telephone and first aid kit at all external venues or events.

6.5 Whenever possible staff, Board members and volunteers should park in a well-lit and busy area.

6.6 Staff, Board members and volunteers should ensure sign-in and sign-out procedures at venues are followed.

7 Personal Security when undertaking ESCV activity in the community.

7.1 A risk assessment should be considered, and where appropriate completed for every community activity.

7.2 Staff, Board members and volunteers participating should familiarise themselves with any identified risks. Only essential personal items should be taken on the activity.

7.3 Staff, Board members and volunteers should not attempt to protect money, valuables, property or possessions over their own safety.

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7.4 They should have access to a mobile phone at all times and are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, in working order and that all relevant contacts are listed (i.e. ESCV office, colleague mobiles, venue contact person, vehicle breakdown, and 'In Case of Emergency' details).

7.5 They should wear any equipment provided or necessary for tasks, such as high-viz jackets.

Home Visiting

7.6 It is not anticipated that any ESCV staff, Board member or volunteers will need to undertake home visits to members of the public or service users.

7.7 If a need for this arises then the staff member or volunteer should discuss it with their line manager, nominated staff contact or the Chief Executive Officer, and the visit approved in writing.

7.8 If a home visit is deemed necessary, all risks will be mitigated by taking the following actions:

- Ensuring all efforts are made to obtain as much information as possible about each situation and the people involved.
- Where a visit is being made to someone who causes concern, the time and place of the visit and the name of the person should be advised to the Business Support Officer and recorded in the ESCV Safeguarding Log. The Business Support Officer should be advised when a visit has ended, with ESCV managers standing in if the Business Support Officer is not available.
- Staff should use common sense, trust their instincts and leave if a situation feels threatening, saying for example that they are going back to get something from the car.

8 Visiting Care Homes, Inpatient, Forensic or Prison Facilities

8.1 ESCV staff, board members and volunteers must be familiar with and adhere to the safety and security procedures of any residential facilities they are likely to enter, and should ensure they are made aware of these procedures as part of their training, induction or briefing process.

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8.2 This may at times mean staff, Board Members and volunteers attend training supplied by the facility concerned, particularly in the case of prisons and secure forensic facilities.

8.3 ESCV staff, Board Members and volunteers will not use physical restraint methods under any circumstances, but will use de-escalation and remove themselves from risky situations when appropriate.

8.4 They should find a designated appropriate area in any facility they wish to meet clients in, following the guidance of facility staff. This could be a meeting room, an interview room or any room affording a degree of privacy for client confidentiality, but also ensuring personal safety.

8.5 Every effort will be made to avoid instances when members of staff, Board members and volunteers are left alone with a child or young person other than their own. This is for the protection of children and young people.

8.6 There will ordinarily be two adults with children and young people at all times. The only exception to this will be where an adult is working with a child or young person in a public space in a health or care setting and undertaking an activity on behalf of Healthwatch or ESCV.

8.7 Where a member of staff is alone with a child or young person, the door of the room should be kept open, and another member of staff should be informed. This should be recorded in the ESCV Safeguarding Log and reported to the Safeguarding Lead.

8.8 Staff, Board members and volunteers will avoid meeting clients in bedrooms unless the health or mobility limitations of the client make this the only possible setting. In this instance they will make staff on the unit aware, leaving the bedroom ajar and locate themselves near the door to allow a quick exit if necessary.

8.9 In secure facilities ESCV staff, Board Members and volunteers should visually locate the panic button in the room in which they meet with the client and then sit within easy reach of it.

8.10 Should ESCV staff, Board members and volunteers seek to meet clients in forensic psychiatric, secure psychiatric or prison settings, they must obtain information concerning any safety or security watches that clients may be under.

8.11 They should seek a degree of privacy whilst respecting any necessary safety and security measures the care team feel are important.

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9 Travelling

9.1 Travelling to and from work, and visiting different areas for meetings, presents risks for all staff, Board members and volunteers. These risks can be unpredictable and are not usually within the power of ESCV to control. Staff, Board members and volunteers should make every effort to reduce the risks associated with travelling.

9.2 If staff, Board members and volunteers are undertaking activity outside normal business hours (08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday) they should alert their line manager when they set off, arrive at the destination and return home again.

9.3 If needed, they should discuss different forms of transport (e.g. taxis) with their line manager or the responsible manager.

9.4 They should take reasonable precautions which might include:

- checking directions for the destination in advance of departure and carrying a map
- ensuring their car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover
- ensuring someone knows where they are and when they are expected home
- avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas
- taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night
- ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are not visible when being carried, and/or when stored in vehicles
- as far as is practical, avoid using mobile phones when alone outside
- if using public transport, have their fare and ticket separate from their wallet/purse, sit near the driver, guard, or other passengers
- checking bus/train times to avoid unnecessary waits.

10 Reporting Incidents

10.1 Staff, Board members and volunteers are expected to report all incidents of violence, verbal abuse, or the threat of either to their line manager or the Chief Executive. This information is required to allow ESCV to accurately monitor incidents and to take the necessary action. Any such abuse, whether in person, or by written or oral communication, must be appropriately recorded.

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10.2 ESCV is required to record all incidents of violence or aggression in the workplace. Keeping records helps build up a picture of problems or weaknesses in the procedures that could affect others. Requiring staff, Board members and volunteers to report all incidents, whether they are minor or more serious, encourages good practice and promotes an open and supportive environment for all, and especially those who may experience violence.

10.3 A reporting system for incidents and 'near misses' is in place.

10.4 Staff, Board members and volunteers are required to complete an ESCV Incident Reporting Form detailing the incident or near miss within 24hrs of the incident taking place and send this to the Business Support Officer. Forms are available on the shared drive in the ESCV Governance file.

10.5 The incident should also be reported to the line manager and/or Chief Executive Officer as soon as possible, usually within 24hrs. They are responsible for overseeing any aftercare that staff, Board members and volunteers may need, and are also required to record the outcome of the incident and any follow-up action.

Within the first 24 hours	Provide medical assistance (if needed) Police attendance Contact next of kin/family Debrief Escort home if necessary
1 - 7 days	Reporting on incident Counselling if appropriate Support from colleagues/Chief Executive Officer
7 + days	Follow up with police Continued counselling if appropriate Legal advice and support for the individual where necessary

10.6 All information is confidential and staff, Board members and volunteers affected will not be named in any general feedback session. However, the details of the incident will be used for recording and monitoring purposes.

10.7 If the event takes place at the ESCV office then the building manager should be notified as soon as possible.

11 Responsibilities

11.1 The Board of East Sussex Community Voice has the ultimate responsibility to implement and review this policy.

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11.2 The East Sussex Community Voice Chief Executive Officer holds the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that the Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy is implemented. The Chief Executive Officer will:

- advise, inform and consult with staff, Board members and volunteers in order to progress and monitor lone working within the organisation
- monitor and report to the East Sussex Community Voice Board (annually) on lone working practice within the organisation
- ensure staff, Board member and volunteer awareness and understanding of lone working and personal safety issues and practice via training and development.

12 Monitoring and review

12.1 The Board of East Sussex Community Voice will scrutinise work on disclosure to ensure that we meet our legal, ethical and operational commitments.

12.2 This policy will be reviewed and updated on a two-year rolling basis by the East Sussex Community Voice Board.

12.3 This policy may be revised sooner if there is a change in working premises, conditions or laws directly affecting disclosure or any other aspect embedded in the document.

13 Related Policies

13.1 The following policies and procedures that are related to this policy include:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Data in Transit Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Enter and View Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Homeworking Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Safeguarding Statement
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Volunteer Policy .

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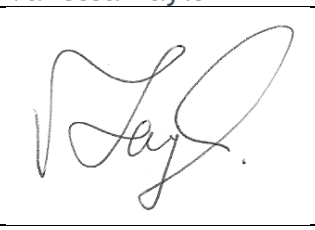
13.2 Approval and Adoption

Author/Reviewer	Jess Gee and Matthew Ryan
Sponsor	Veronica Kirwan
Date of approval and adoption	20th November 2025
Date of next scheduled review	November 2027

Signature of East Sussex Community Voice CIC Board Chair

Name	Vanessa Taylor
Signature	
Date	**21st November 2025**

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