



# **LONE WORKING POLICY**

## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1. CARI is committed to the promotion of a safe working environment for all staff. These policies and procedures facilitate as safe a working environment as is reasonably possible for all staff working alone with children.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1. To promote safe practice for lone working and to heighten staff awareness regarding safety issues and risk management. This includes 1-2-1 meetings, on-site in the therapy rooms and lone working for CASS and CASATS staff and volunteers.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1. This policy applies to staff, volunteers and contract workers within CARI.
- 3.2. This policy should be read in line with the CARI Child Protection Policy, and the CARI Child Safeguarding Statement.

## **4. Glossary of Terms and Definitions**

- 4.1. Lone working: all situations, either site based or on outreach when staff, in the fulfilment of their duties, seek to undertake communications with clients without the accompaniment of another staff member.
- 4.2. Risk assessment:
  - 4.2.1. A structured and documented discussion between manager and staff member to anticipate risk and plan responses, considering the following: client relationship to the service, clients history, environmental factors, any other relevant factors

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 5.1. Manager: to ensure staff have adequate capacity and are sufficiently supported in line with this policy to undertake lone working in as safe a manner as possible.
- 5.2. Staff: to work within the procedures outlined in this policy.

## **6. Principles**

- 6.1. CARI acknowledges that in the case of 1-2-1 work (lone working) is a valuable and necessary facet of staff work.
- 6.2. To ensure effective service provision to those in need of our service. We will provide outreach services in CASS and CASATS, which due to resource restrictions will involve lone-working outreach.
- 6.3. The safety of staff and clients is paramount. Where risk management cannot be effectively planned, lone working will not take place.
- 6.4. When staff are working alone the organisation will ensure as much as possible that adequate safety precautions and practices are in place, as described in this policy.
- 6.5. Lone working carries increased responsibility for staff to make decisions without consultation with other team members. CARI will endeavour to ensure they have sufficient support, information and capacity to make decisions, and will support the autonomy of staff that are working alone.
- 6.6. If possible clients will be accommodated to work with someone of a preferred gender in cases where lone working is taking place. Staff will assess risk, and respond taking into account staff safety and resource capacity.

## **7. Therapy Sessions 1-2-1**

- 7.1. Lone working with a child 1-2-1 is a necessary and valuable part of the therapy work in CARI.
- 7.2. A parent or carer needs to be present in the building with any child under 16. CARI provides parallel support sessions for parents/carers. CARI does not work with

children in isolation. Parents/carers sign a consent to therapy form where lone working is outlined.

- 7.3. Therapists need to ensure the safety of children in the therapy room.
- 7.4. If child needs to use the bathroom, the therapist returns to the parent to accompany the child to the bathroom.

## **8. Off-site meetings and outreach**

- 8.1. Outreach staff will endeavour to not be alone with a child client, outside of the building. Staff will attempt to ensure that the work with children will be done with another adult present e.g. parent, Garda, doctor. Staff may conduct lone working off site in the following circumstances; 1-2-1 key working meetings in a public place (e.g. coffee shop, public place in court house)
- 8.2. If it is necessary for staff to meet with a client off site on their own, this will be arranged in agreement with their line manager.
- 8.3. If a staff member staff feels uncomfortable meeting a certain client alone, they must inform their manager of this.
- 8.4. Staff will only ever engage in lone working off-site if risks can be adequately assessed.
- 8.5. Prior to undertaking off-site lone working staff will:
  - 8.5.1. Conduct a verbal risk assessment with a manager; this should include any risks previously identified with the individual clients or their family.
  - 8.5.2. Ensure staff/management on duty have the name of the client, the exact location of the appointment, an approximate start and end time of the appointment, as well as any issues flagged in risk assessment.
  - 8.5.3. Ensure the duty mobile phone / their mobile phone is fully-charged and sufficiently topped up.
- 8.6. While conducting any working off site staff will:
  - 8.6.1. Follow provisions of this policy and the CARI Child protection Policy.
  - 8.6.2. If the staff member feels in anyway threatened or unsafe or if any client becomes aggressive they should remove themselves from the situation, ending the intervention/meeting as politely and respectfully as possible.
  - 8.6.3. The staff member can ring the office to debrief and get support. Staff should also report these issues to their Manager.

## **9. Onsite Meetings**

- 9.1. If dealing with an angry or aggressive individual special attention should be made as to the safety of the environment. Assessment needs to be made as to whether the session is more appropriately conducted with two members of staff. This should be discussed with their manager.
- 9.2. When meeting with a client, staff should always sit with a clear path to the exit, so they can leave quickly if necessary.

If at any time staff feel uncomfortable, they should trust their instincts and end the session in a respectful way. If the staff member feels in anyway threatened or unsafe, they should remove themselves from the situation. Staff should report any concerns they may have to the Manager as soon as is reasonable.