



Lone Working Policy

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1 OVERVIEW

This is Lifespace's Lone Working Policy. It is intended to protect young people, staff, (paid mentor or volunteer) from any potential risk that working together one to one might expose them to physical, emotional, medical, or other difficulties, and that lone working sessions are well-planned and positive.

The aim is that with appropriate planning, setup, language and behaviour, the young person feels comfortable, relaxed, and able to benefit fully from the conversation and support being offered.

This document should be read alongside the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, particularly section 7, "Safer Working Practices" and the *Staff Behaviour "Code of Conduct" Policy*.

2 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all volunteers and paid employees of Lifespace.

Throughout this policy, **staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of Lifespace, full-time or part-time, temporary, or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This includes trustees.

3 TRAINING AND SUPPORT

All staff within Lifespace:

- Receive appropriate training, relevant to their role. This includes training related to lone working.
- Attend regular training and skills sharing sessions where issues relating to lone working and safeguarding will be addressed.
- Are invited to request additional training, specific to their role and/or to recommend relevant topics for future group training sessions.
- All staff working directly with young people are supervised half termly (during term-time) where issues relating to lone working are raised.
- Staff involved in lone working with young people, should discuss this, routinely within supervision.

4 MENTORING

Mentoring is "overseen not overheard" – mentors work with children on a one-to-one basis in an allocated room and must sign in and out. If a young person "drops-in" without an appointment, details are shared as soon as possible.

All our work is based on the principle that young people actively consent to participate in the mentoring.

In the event of issue, staff are required to:

- Leave the room if feeling unsafe.
- Leave the room if the young person become aggressive towards you.
- If necessary, call the police when safe to do so.
- If you cannot safely speak on the phone, call 999 and use the "Silent Solution" procedure, by tapping "55". Further details can be found here: https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Documents/researchlearning/Silent_solution_guide.pdf
- Discuss boundaries re behaviour at first opportunity, e.g., no aggression around the mentor and vice versa and any sign of aggression whether direct or indirect will terminate the session.
- If behaviour of mentee is deemed irrational leave the premises and contact supervisor/emergency number.
- Ensure mobile phone is available and charged, with reception.
- Mentor to surrender own property if threatened.
- Thorough note taking of incidents post session.
- If a child or young person becomes distressed or angry in a lone working situation, this must immediately be reported to the relevant practitioner, DSL or Deputy DSL.
- When delivering within schools, we will adhere to *Lifespace's Lone Working Policy* unless directed to follow schools' policy.
- When delivering in schools, mentors should familiarise themselves with the school emergency protocol or 'Lock Down Policy'. These would be used in the event of a threat of violence or incident that could cause harm. These vary from school to school and should be on display and/or readily available. The *School Orientation Form* provides a prompt to encourage mentors to be aware of and understand. .

5 GENDER MATCHING

When allocating mentees, we will look to identify occasions when a mentee requires/or preferences a mentor of the same gender (including transgender or non-binary individuals) For example, if the young person is identified to be at higher risk or has increased sensitivity due to age, circumstances, or history [e.g., risk of CSE], one-to-one work with a professional of another gender should only be undertaken with the prior agreement of the Head of Delivery, who will evaluate and record whether the apparent benefits outweigh the additional risks and what mitigation measures have been taken.

6 COMMUNITY DELIVERY

In addition to our schools-based mentoring delivery, Lifespace also provide youth and community-based delivery. This includes our work within Stratford Youth Collective. In addition to the above, the following also applies:

Staff working alone should:

- Not walk into the building alone with a young person or allow a young person onto site unless there are two staff members available.
- Not place themselves in unnecessary danger and should therefore not allow unknown people into the building.
- Arrange to leave with someone else and lock up in pairs..
- If they have arranged to meet with third parties whilst lone working in the building, should ensure that the front door is locked.
- Should text their line manager informing them of where they are and for how long.
- Should text their line manager as they leave, advising of any issues or concerns.

7 ONLINE DELIVERY

7.1 WORKING ONLINE AND/OR BY PHONE WHERE THE SCHOOL IS THE REFERRAL AGENCY

- Make sure that additional consent from parents/carers and students has been achieved and the details logged in the Lifespace office. Staff should only use the contact information included in that consent i.e., should not email the student to ask for a phone number/another way to make contact.
- Only use the nominated Lifespace email and student's school email address – both of which can be viewed by members of Lifespace and school staff.

7.2 WORKING ONLINE AND/OR BY PHONE WITH PARENTAL REFERRALS

- Make sure that additional consent from parents/carers and students has been achieved and the details logged in the Lifespace office. Staff should only use the contact information included in that consent i.e., should not email the student to ask for a phone number/another way to make contact.
- Only use the nominated Lifespace email and a student's school email address – both of which can be viewed by members of Lifespace and school staff. NO online sessions will be permitted unless via a school/college email account.

7.3 SELF REFERRALS FOR 16+

- Private emails may be used for appointment booking but NO personal information may be shared, and NO online sessions will be permitted unless via a school/college email account.

Please also refer to the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, particularly section 7, "Safer Working Practices" and the *Staff Behaviour "Code of Conduct" Policy*.

8 REFERRAL FORMS

Staff must obtain appropriate background knowledge of the young person in advance of the initial session.

This includes their personal referral. The Referral Form enables the mentor to assess the level of risk and may involve gathering information from referrer or parent/carer and sometimes other services working with the young person. These should be viewed in line with our Risk Assessments (see section 12)

Where a young person is 16+, Lifespace must gather information relating to emergency contacts and self-consents (photo consent, consent to be mentored etc). See also *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, and *Media and Communications Policy*.

9 SAFE SETTINGS

Unusually for an organisation working with children and young people, the work of Lifespace requires some degree of one-to-one working to allow the child to talk openly about sensitive issues.

For the protection of children and adults, the settings chosen, and behaviours adopted must be carefully considered.

Staff are trained to work in public areas such as schools, youth clubs etc. They only meet a child or young person for the purpose of mentoring or Lifespace purposes such as fundraising activities agreed in advance. This is only with the knowledge and consent of Lifespace, the Young Person (16+) and/or parents/carers.

Sessions should not be for extensive lengths of time. We recommend a session per week of no longer than 1 hour or less, dependent on the needs of the individual young person.

When meeting in a setting such as a school, Lifespace staff ensure that other staff are aware of their meeting, its purpose and duration. Rooms offering privacy from being overheard but where individuals are visible to others e.g., through glass doors, are always used where possible.

See also *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

10 PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION

When lone working, staff ensure they always have a charged mobile phone with them and have the Lifespace office, head office staff mobiles, out of hours and DSL numbers stored.

11 UNSAFE BEHAVIOUR

Staff will not engage in lone work if either party is under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or energy drinks. If the young person is under the influence during the session, the adult ends it immediately and ensures the young person is safely returned to class/home in the most appropriate manner. See also *Staff Behaviour "Code of Conduct" Policy*, section 36.

If staff become aware a young person has an article that could constitute a weapon or the young person behaves inappropriately in a way likely to expose themselves, staff or third parties to offence or harm, the adult must inform Lifespace immediately by phone and take their instructions.

If during a lone working session, a child or young person makes any allegations about the adult present or another Lifespace staff member, the adult must ensure the young person is safely returned class/home in the most appropriate manner and then immediately follows the allegation procedure set out in *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, section 19.

12 RELATED LIFESPACE DOCUMENTS

- Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Complaints Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Media and Communications Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Risk Assessment Community Mentoring at Youth Hub
- Risk Assessment Mentoring in Community Locations
- Risk Assessment Mentoring in Schools
- Staff Behaviour "Code of Conduct" Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

This Policy is communicated to all staff (paid and volunteer) including trustees.

Date of Issue: December 2024	Signed: Joanna Broughton	Interim Head of Delivery
	Signed: Mark Humphries	Chair
Date of Next Review: December 2025		
Policy Owner	Head of Delivery	