

## **PROJECT VISIT AND LONE WORKING POLICY**

The Foundation's work and the roles of our staff mean that staff sometimes visit grantees and other organisations alone or may attend working sites, which could carry particular risks.

It is important that staff make appropriate arrangements to support their well-being.

### **General**

- All visits to external sites or external meetings should be marked in the Foundation's central diary system. This should include who is being visited and the location.
- If a staff member has any significant concerns about any visit, trip, meeting or other work-based activity, they should always discuss this first with their line manager. If you do have concerns, then the simple rule is you should not do the visit or should do so with a colleague. You should discuss this with your line manager. If you are invited to take (e.g. a car journey) when on a visit, and if any way you feel uncomfortable about this – you should take a taxi (and you may say it is Foundation policy to do this). The Foundation will cover the cost of this. If there is to be travel provided by a grantee/third party on a visit, ideally this will be confirmed in advance as part of planning for the visit (and inform your line manager as appropriate) so a judgement can be made.
- In general, you should never arrange a meeting (or enter) the private house of an applicant, or other work contact – and all meetings should either take place in the respective office, open space or site of the organisation being visited. If taken on a 'road-trip' on a site visit by an applicant, ideally you would request that two members of the organisation be present (albeit this may not always be possible).
- If there is any reasonable cause for concern while on a visit members of staff should cease the visit, regardless of whether the job has been completed, and discuss with a manager as soon as reasonable possible.
- In terms of safeguarding, it is essential that Esmée staff should not be left alone with children, young people, or adults at risk during visits. See Esmée's Safeguarding policy.

Where feasible, employees should prioritise the following:

- When arriving at a venue during late night or in darkness, especially when unfamiliar with the area, lone workers should opt for a taxi to reach their venue or accommodation.
- When visiting a grantee/charity using public transport, if the chosen route passes through an area where a lone worker feels vulnerable, it is advisable for them to seek out a place of safety and arrange for a licensed taxi to continue their journey.
- In the event that a lone worker finds themselves in a vulnerable situation, their primary course of action should be to relocate to a place of safety and promptly get in touch with their line manager.

### **Buddy**

- If you are going on a trip (e.g. travelling to another part of the country, overnight stay or a project visit) – you may wish to select a buddy from the team to check in with. You should pre-agree what the check in points of the project are and how you are going to connect and when (a simple email with agreed buddy may be most straightforward).
- You are responsible for each other's safety ensuring you check in and raise the alarm to a manager if you cannot contact your buddy.

### **Escalation Process**

- If there is no contact from an employee after two hours of the time expected, then contact their line manager and they will take further action.

### **Emergency Arrangements**

- All staff members should ensure the Foundation has two emergency contacts we can get in touch with if we are unable to contact you (ideally name, their relationship with you, and a phone number). It is the staff member's responsibility to update these/let the Foundation know if circumstances change.

### **Central Diary**

- All staff members are required to maintain an updated entry in the Central Diary including:
  - Location, details of any off-site visit or other work-based activity.
  - It should also state clearly when there is any change to usual working hours/working practice (e.g. state if working from home).
  - In the notes section of the Central Diary, please include a contact name, phone number, and address, if available, for any scheduled visit or external meeting. Additionally, if applicable, include the Salesforce reference as well.

### **Driving**

- If using own vehicle for work-based activity ensure your insurance covers this. The Foundation refunds car travel at the HMRC rate of £0.45p per mile. Alternatively, staff can hire a car where public transport is not a feasible option.

### **Outdoor site visits.**

Some visits will involve walking to/in remote areas. In addition, we support work on wildlife reserves and farms which might be in remote areas or areas with more natural hazards, such as bogs and uneven terrain, or moving plant/machinery. When organising visits of this nature, staff should ask for a risk assessment briefing before the visit starts. We would expect that staff are accompanied at all times while on such a visit and adhere to any rules that the site operator/host has in place. Staff should bear in mind that mobile phone signals and transport in some of these locations might be limited.

### **At Sea or on water**

This is to ensure the safety of employees involved in site visits on or near the sea or for water based visits.

Prior to undertaking any trip that involves work on or near the sea employees must:

- Obtain a risk assessment from the organisation. This should include confirmation that relevant insurance is in place for any vessels being used. We should keep a copy of this.
- Check that you have the right kit including clothes for the conditions expected. At a minimum the organisation must provide a life jacket for you.

- **Training and Life Jackets**

Life jackets must be worn at all times by staff on board boats or when working by the sea. Employees should check that life jackets and any other necessary safety equipment will be provided by the host organisation prior to any trip.

If a staff member intends to go out to sea in a commercial fishing boat of less than 15 meters, they must have a valid certificate in:

- Basic Sea Survival
- Elementary First Aid
- And must preferably be familiar with using a WHF radio on a boat.

