



# **THE SUITED & BOOTED CENTRE LIMITED**

## **LONE VOLUNTEERS POLICY**



## Lone Volunteering

Suited & Booted's Lone Volunteering policy is intended to apply to all volunteering proposed to be undertaken alone, where the risk to the individual lone volunteer may be increased either by work itself, or by the lack of on-hand support should something go wrong.

This is particularly so, as assisting clients to find appropriate interview clothing is likely to bring volunteers and clients into close contact. However, it is important that these risks are not over-exaggerated, as this can have a detrimental effect, by engendering an unnecessary perception of fear amongst volunteers that is disproportionate to reality.

Lone volunteering can occur:

- During Suited & Booted's normal opening hours;  
or
- When volunteering outside normal working hours

Under both these circumstances, Suited & Booted's guidance on lone volunteering will apply.

## Summary of Policy

Working as a volunteer alone can bring additional risks to the relevant activity. Suited & Booted has developed policies and procedures to control risks and protect volunteers, and volunteers must follow them. Apart from volunteers being sure that they are capable of carrying on the activity on their own, the three most important things to be certain of are that:

- a. The lone volunteer has full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she is being exposed.
- b. **Maria Lenn** knows that the volunteer is alone and what he or she is doing.
- c. The lone volunteer knows what to do if something goes wrong.



## **Policy Statement**

Volunteers should take steps to avoid attending clients when no other volunteer is present. Suited & Booted acknowledges that there may be an increased risk to health and safety of its volunteers, and others, when working alone. Risk assessments should be undertaken to identify risk to lone volunteers and measures introduced to minimise risks wherever reasonably practicable.

Suited & Booted will seek to ensure that lone volunteering situations are identified, appropriate risk assessments undertaken, control measures introduced and volunteers are provided with the necessary information and instruction.

## **Volunteer Responsibilities**

All volunteers have a general duty to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

All volunteers must further ensure that they will:

- Co-operate with Suited & Booted to enable it to meet its obligations in respect of the prevention of physical and non-physical assaults and the reduction of risks related to lone working.
- Be vigilant and ensure that any known or identified risks are immediately reported to Maria Lenn as a minimum requirement.
- To be aware of out-of-hours arrangements and the details of the contact numbers, so that immediate contact can be made in the event of an emergency (see below)
- Report any accident or incident in accordance with the provisions of the incident reporting procedure.



## Definitions - Physical and Non-physical Assault

**Physical assaults** include being shoved, pushed, punched, kicked, head-butted.

This is not an exhaustive list.

### Non-physical assaults

It is very difficult to provide a comprehensive description of all types of incidents that are covered under this definition; however, the following examples would be consistent:

- Offensive language, verbal abuse and swearing which prevents volunteers from doing their job or makes them feel unsafe
- Negative, malicious or stereotypical comments
- Invasion of personal space
- Brandishing of objects or weapons
- Near misses i.e. unsuccessful physical assaults
- Threats or risk of serious injury to volunteers, or visitors
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Spitting
- Alcohol or drug fuelled anti-social behaviour
- Unreasonable behaviour and non-cooperation
- Any of the above linked to destruction of or damage to property

This is not an exhaustive list



## Risk Assessment and Control

The policy for dealing with lone volunteering is no different from other activities in that it involves risk assessment for the lone volunteering activity.

The objective of the risk assessment is to ensure that satisfactory control measures are in place for such activities.

To simplify the procedures this guidance proposes that lone working can be arranged into three risk categories, namely low, medium and high and examples of medium and high risks are given in the Tables - but please note that these are not exhaustive lists.

**Table – Risk Activity**

<i><b>Risk Level</b></i>	<i><b>Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Control Measures</b></i>
<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People engaged in tasks they would normally undertake at Suited &amp; Booted, and where the work does not involve attending clients who appear to be under the influence of drink or drugs, or showing aggressive behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lone work is permitted, but it is good practice to ensure that a second person is aware of the first person's location and they have access to means of communication.</li> <li>• Inspections/risk assessments of the work area should be undertaken by the lone worker to ensure hazards have been identified, risk controlled and provisions for emergencies are in place e.g. escape routes open, fire fighting equipment, first aid, etc.</li> <li>• Volunteers are aware of the correct incident reporting procedures and are encouraged to report actual and near miss incidents.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Risk Level</b></i>	<i><b>Activities</b></i>	<i><b>Control Measures</b></i>
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact with clients who are under the influence of drink or drugs, or are potentially violent or aggressive</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>LONE WORKING IS NOT PERMITTED</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RING CONTACT NUMBER</u></b></p>



## Control Measures

The types of control measures for a lone working activity at Suited & Booted will vary depending on the type of hazard and the experience of the volunteer. The questions that need to be asked are:

- a) Whether the risk of the work can be adequately controlled by one person, or are more people necessary?
- b) Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone volunteer?
- c) Is there a safe access and exit for that person?
- d) Do lone volunteers fully understand the risk involved in the work?
- e) Are limits set as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone, when to stop and seek help?
- f) Are there contingency plans in place should an alert/alarm be raised by the lone volunteer?
- g) Are these plans and procedures well known by volunteers?
- h) Have arrangements been made for illness, accidents and emergencies?

## Volunteer/ Client Contact

Volunteers should **never** give out their home telephone number, mobile number or any other personal information to a client.

## Support After an Incident

Debriefing will take place after serious incidents have occurred affecting personal safety, to establish the details of what happened and to provide emotional help to the Volunteer(s) involved.

Trustees will be involved in these debriefing sessions.



## Control Points

One of the most important arrangements of this policy is the requirement for **Maria Lenn** to know whether volunteers are likely to be operating alone.

It is equally important that this information is available for volunteers who may be called out from home.

Where a client gives cause for concern, the volunteer should be able to contact a Control Point.

The Control Point could be any one of, or a mixture of, the following:

- A The Suited and Booted telephone number – 07808 531 654
- B The Chair (**Angus Murray**) telephone number – 07986 532 080

The Control Point would provide, or call for, help and assistance

The activities within this guidance are not exhaustive, consequent risks should be effectively identified and managed by the trustees.

The 'lone volunteer' is required to follow the outcomes of the risk assessment and consequent agreed procedures.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually or when it is considered appropriate to do so.