

Lone working & personal safety guidance

This guidance for **not/nowhere** Members and associates is provided to raise awareness of the reasons why violence and aggression occurs; provides a range of tools to prevent it occurring; and, assist in the management of the outcomes if an incident occurs.

Lone working and personal safety

not/nowhere Members and associates may need to work alone as part of their role. Lone working is not illegal and providing adequate precautions are taken there is no reason for lone working not to be a normal part of work. not/nowhere workers must be familiar with the following measures:

- How to communicate with the not/nowhere team when lone working
- How to ensure someone in the not/nowhere team is available
- How to access information about sites or people being visited
- The hazards and potential risks involved in lone working (see risk assessment)
- The protective and preventative measures available to them for lone working
- Awareness they never need to put themselves in danger
- Awareness they can terminate a piece of work at any time if they feel their safety is at risk
- How to raise the alarm in case of an emergency
- Ensuring communication devices (e.g. phones) are fully charged up
- Ensuring they have a torch available for poorly lit environment
- Ensure ICE (In Case of Emergency) phone numbers are in your mobile phone.

Lone worker check in and check out

When a worker is working on their own, not/nowhere will ensure that a member of the team is available via mobile telephone. The lone worker should inform the nominated team member when they have completed their work and have left the premises, or other site.

Off-site visits

Recording

All off-site visits should be recorded in the not/nowhere shared diary so people's movements can be tracked in the event that they go missing.

Visit preparation

As not/nowhere is a community focused co-operative, lone working may take place outside of normal office hours as well as during normal office hours. Preparation carried out before a lone working visit is the most important factor to keeping safe

Depending on the nature of the visit, this could include consideration of:

- Any medical conditions which would preclude lone working
- Information, instruction and training for the not/nowhere Member or associate, including a thorough understanding of the personal safety and lone working guidelines and all other relevant guidance checklists
- The location/group/event to be visited
- The purpose of the visit and how it will be conducted
- Other individuals known to be a risk who may be at or near the location
- The route to/from the site, details of buses, trains, taxis etc.

- Action to be taken if an incident occurs.

Prior to the visit

Prior to visiting off site premises

- The need to have someone from not/nowhere available
- The most effective means of communication with the not/nowhere team
- That their mobile phone is working and fully charged.

Upon arrival

- Confirm with the nominated members of the not/nowhere team that you have arrived. A simple text message is enough.
- Ensure you carry the minimum number of possessions/equipment necessary. If driving leave valuables locked in the boot of the car.
- If walking in high risk areas, wearing headphones is not recommended, nor is texting or using smartphone screen as this alerts potential thieves that you have valuable items and distracts your attention from your surroundings.

Office/hiring security arrangements

The not/nowhere office has the following security arrangements in place

- Entrance via buzzer entry system
- Suitable external lighting to allow safe entry / exit from the site - in particular when locking / unlocking the site.
- A system in place so not/nowhere Members or associates can alert team members help is needed at the premises
- Suitable arrangements for handling cash and other valuables including now/nowhere equipment
- Hirers' details must be recorded at the time of arranging a pick up or drop off time

Responding to an abusive or violent incident

A **work-related violent incident** is any incident in which a person involved with not/nowhere is abused, threatened, harassed, or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. This includes but is not limited to:

- Assault including kicking, biting, punching, spitting etc. even if it does not leave a mark
- Sexual assault
- Verbal abuse or threats including those of a racial, sexual or discriminatory nature
- Abusive phone calls.

Verbal abuse is an incident in which a person involved with not/nowhere is abused, threatened, or otherwise intimidated which results in them feeling afraid for their safety. This need not include shouting or swearing.

Immediate response

Immediately after an abusive or violent incident

- Ensure that the assailant has left the area/building (without compromising your own safety)
- Secure the building and ensure other people are alright.
- Support any people involved

If the verbal abuse or threats are considered of sufficient seriousness or the incident involves a physical assault, the not/nowhere worker should:

- Contact the police
- Arrange medical assistance (first aid, ambulance etc.)
- Take photos of the scene and preserve the area for potential evidence
- Take witness statements and contact details of witnesses as soon as possible
- Contact the nominated not/nowhere health and safety officer by telephone
- Arrange for the individual subject to the abuse, threats or assault to be escorted home, if appropriate.

Actions by Directors

Within one week of the incident, the Directors should hold a meeting to discuss the incident. Such a meeting should include consideration of:

- The impact on there worker team
- Planning training/counselling and ongoing support if necessary
- Reviewing relevant risk assessments
- Drawing up an improvement action plan
- Discuss the matter at a team meeting in order to learn from the experience.

Reporting incidents

- If anyone working on behalf of not/nowhere, a participant in an activity or a member of the public is threatened, abused or assaulted during a not/nowhere activity it must be reported, regardless of where the incident took place.
- This can help to avoid repeat occurrences, identify the need for changes to working practices, and ensure that not/nowhere is able to offer help and support as appropriate.
- Incidents should be reported to the Directors of not/nowhere [**is there a named individual?**]

Reporting verbal abuse

- Unlike physical assaults, whether or not something constitutes verbal abuse can depend on context and environment. Depending on the group being worked with, it may be unrealistic to report every instance they are sworn at. However not/nowhere Members and associates must report every incident during which they felt threatened and that there was a risk to their safety, regardless of the volume or specific words used.
- Reporting incidents of this nature acts as a vital warning of potentially dangerous individuals and can improve the safety of other Members or associates.
- Keep in mind that although you may not find the situation / individual of concern other people may, for example if they are of a different gender or ethnicity.

Risk assessment

Lone working and off-site working opportunities should be submitted to a risk assessment, using a template. While new sites should be submitted to a risk assessment, it is unlikely a risk assessment will be needed for each person.

If in doubt appropriate guidance should be sought from the not/nowhere team and/or health and safety executive. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

Reducing the risk of violence and aggression

Directors

In relation to violence and aggression, the Directors, with guidance where needed, will ensure:

- They minimise risk by undertaking and reviewing suitable risk assessments
- They adopt an open attitude, ensuring that they are accessible to employees who wish to discuss problems or anxieties and that communications are effective
- If they manage a site and it is appropriate, they produce a Personal Safety Procedure
- not/nowhere workers receive appropriate information, instruction and training in personal safety
- That no workers have a personal health or medical condition that could put them at unnecessary personal safety risk
- The workers understand how and when to report personal safety incidents
- They seek to support any workers who are in need of counselling following a personal safety incident
- Any reported personal safety related incidents are reviewed and action taken if possible to reduce the likelihood of recurrence
- They discuss any deficiencies in personal safety arrangements and plan remedial improvement action

Workers

Workers have a duty to reduce the risks they face by ensuring they:

- Follow procedures, for example in relation to lone working
- Report any potential problems with individuals or the building which could result in a confrontation
- Do not take any unnecessary risks
- Report incidents in accordance with the co-operative's policies and procedures
- Participate in personal safety training as and when requested
- Make all reasonable efforts to defuse any potentially violent incident and where appropriate support colleagues in doing so, while avoiding, as far as possible, placing themselves in danger.