

## **BRADFORD VOLUNTEER DOULAS STAFF LONE WORKER POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bradford Doulas staff provide a high quality and consistent service to pregnant women and people in Bradford. Staff undertake family casework and supervise volunteers to provide antenatal, birth and postnatal support. This regularly involves lone visits to families in the general course of their duties. Staff deserve to feel as safe as possible and adequately supported in their role whilst they are lone working. Bradford Volunteer Doulas is committed to taking proactive measures to minimise risks. The following policy outlines potential risks and appropriate steps to mitigate these risks for staff working alone.

### **POLICY**

- 1.1 Bradford Doulas asserts that staff have the right to feel as safe as possible whilst working with the project but acknowledges that all lone working comes with a degree of risk.
- 1.2 Risk assessment is the key mechanism through which risk is identified and appropriate controls and mitigations are determined.
- 1.3 The Service Manager holds responsibility for ensuring that all policy, procedure and risk assessment paperwork for lone working is up to date and will identify any relevant training staff may need in order to effectively implement these.
- 1.4 Team Leads will oversee risk assessment and where necessary offer guidance to staff regarding appropriate measures where risks have been identified.
- 1.5 All staff must have a good awareness of potential risks and must be able to:
  - identify potential risks
  - determine appropriate mitigation measures (with support from their Team Lead or Service Manager)
  - record risks and mitigation measures using the appropriate paperwork
- 1.6 All staff must understand that even once risk assessments are in place, situations can change and it is their responsibility to be alert to signs of risk and take appropriate measures to protect themselves whilst working with the project
- 1.7 If an incident occurs which leads to a member of staff feeling unsafe their line manager will discuss appropriate action regarding their work with the family and if the risk is perceived to have been moderate or serious a review of this policy, procedure and related risk assessment paperwork will be triggered.

### **UNDERSTANDING POTENTIAL RISKS AND POSSIBLE MITIGATIONS**

- 2.1 Potential risks to staff during a lone visit include (but are not limited to):
  - Verbal abuse
  - Threatening or intimidating behaviour
  - False accusations
  - Physical attack
  - Attack from a pet
  - Fire
- 2.2 Potential warning signs on arrival or at any point during the visit that a situation that may be at risk of becoming unsafe include (but are not limited to):
  - Evidence of drug or alcohol use
  - Signs of domestic conflict
  - Unexpected people present
  - Pets loose in the room where you are meeting
  - Unsupervised naked flames
- 2.3 Possible mitigations include (but are not limited to):
  - Joint visits with another member of staff
  - All contacts taking place in a public place

## **PROCEEDURE**

### **TRAVEL**

- 3.1 Staff are responsible for planning their own travel for home visits and any off site work. They should raise any concerns about their travel arrangements with their line manager.
- 3.2 Staff can and should inform SCAMP at the start and end of any journey for which they want to take additional safety precautions. They should inform SCAMP of their name, addresses for start and end destinations, relevant travel details (such as name of taxi company or bus number), estimated journey time and telephone number.
- 3.3 Staff must inform SCAMP at the start and end of all work related journeys made by taxi or after dark. They should inform SCAMP of their name, addresses for start and end destinations, relevant travel details (such as name of taxi company), estimated journey time and telephone number.

### **HOME VISITS**

- 4.1 Team Leads will identify cases where risk may be likely during the triage process and if necessary contact the referrer or the family for further information before accepting the referral
- 4.2 Staff must contact the family to complete an initial risk assessment by phone prior to visiting
- 4.3 If any risks are identified at 4.1 or 4.2 mitigation measures should be discussed and agreed upon with a Team Lead or Service Manager prior to visiting the family.
- 4.4 Staff must complete a full in person on site risk assessment during their first visit to a family. A new risk assessment must be completed if there is a change of location for support at any point (due to a change of address for example). Exit routes from the property and ease of access to these should be noted.
- 4.5 Staff must log in and out with SCAMP Security for every contact with the family regardless of the location of the visit, including for visits made in pairs. They will be asked to provide their name, full address for location of visit and phone number.
- 4.6 If on arrival to the property, staff have any concerns about safety, they should not enter the property. They should make an excuse, apologise and say they will be back in touch soon. They must notify their line manager of this as soon as possible. A new risk assessment must be completed before support continues.
- 4.7 If a staff member feels unsafe at any point during a lone visit they should leave the property as quickly and safely as possible. They must notify their line manager or Service Manager of this as soon as possible. A new risk assessment must be completed before support continues.
- 4.8 If a staff member feels unsafe at any point and is unable to exit the property or situation for any reason they must either call 999 directly or call SCAMP security and ask for 'Extension 13' which will trigger an immediate 999 call by SCAMP security.

### **BIRTH**

- 5.1 It is expected that staff doulas will travel by taxi when offering birth support, therefore travel procedure 3.3 must be followed.
- 5.2 If any birth support is provided at home, home visiting procedure as outlined in 4.1 – 4.11 must be followed including hourly check in calls to SCAMP security.
- 5.3 When providing birth support at the hospital, staff must follow 5.1 and 5.2 as relevant and must inform SCAMP on arrival to the hospital. They must inform SCAMP of their name, location (Maternity Unit, BRI) and telephone number and confirm they will contact SCAMP when they are finished. Staff must remember to follow travel protocol 3.3 for their journey home.
- 5.4 In instances of home birth, once the midwives have arrived, hourly check ins with SCAMP can be replaced by an agreement to call when support finishes as in 5.3 for hospital birth support.