



DiABETES UK

Volunteering Alone and Keeping SAFE Policy

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Procedure approved by: Volunteering Steering Group

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1. What is lone working and who does this apply to?

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. As a volunteer you could find yourself volunteering alone at some point.

2. Why is it important to know about volunteering alone?

When volunteering alone there is no one there to help you if you have an accident or suffer sudden illness. You need to be able to recognise and avoid potential dangers. You also need to know how to get help.

No volunteer should be in a situation where they feel at risk and this is why we ask that you contact your local Volunteer Development Team if you need any guidance or if you have concerns when planning your roles and activities.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Diabetes UK responsibilities

Diabetes UK have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our volunteers. This is why we ask for SAFE Assessments [Safe Activities For Everyone] to be completed for volunteer roles and planned volunteering activities.

3.2 Your responsibilities as a lone volunteer

- You are expected to take reasonable care of your own safety and that of others.
- Follow any personal safety practices outlined below.
- Report any accidents, incidents, injuries and 'near misses' to your local office.

4. Know the risks of your role

Remember we all want to have peace of mind so think about any the risks involved for you by doing the **PEACE** test.

Look and consider the '**P**eople – **E**nvironment – **A**ctivities – **C**hecks – **E**quipment' involved in the tasks you are going to undertake.

4.1 People

Who are you going to meet? Are they...

- strangers/members of the public
- people known to you
- new people
- people with a history of difficult behaviour
- You? Have you any health issues that might affect your safety when alone, such as pregnancy, disability or special medication?

4.2 Environment

Where are you going to be? Are you...

- going into someone's home or personal space
- a person who travels on their own
- going to be out on the street amongst members of the public
- visiting a rural, isolated or unfamiliar urban area
- able to communicate with someone to let them know what you are doing, where you are and if your plans have changed?

4.3 Activity

What are you doing? Are you...

- dealing with cash – collecting, receiving, counting, banking
- carrying valuables
- supporting other people who you don't know
- travelling on your own?

4.4 Checks

When are you volunteering? Is it...

- during the day when there are people around
- night or early morning outside normal office hours, when less people are around
- difficult or severe weather conditions?

4.5 Equipment

What equipment are you using?

- Mobile phones
- Cars/taxis

Once you have thought about these then please take responsibility and look at how to keep yourself SAFE and well.

5. Top tips

Although we would always encourage you to be with someone you know when volunteering, there may be times when you are volunteering alone. Therefore we always need someone, a friend or family member, to know where you are and what you are doing, and most importantly knows exactly what to do if you do not return at the expected time.

5.1 Setting off on your journey

- Before you set out leave information about your destination. Full address, telephone number, expected duration of visit.
- If confidentiality is an issue, perhaps you can leave the details in a sealed envelope with trusted family member or friend. Alternatively, your details could be left with your local office.
- If possible leave details of how you intend to travel to an appointment e.g. driving or bus route, taxi firm number.
- Expected time of return.
- If plans change let someone know.

5.2 Attending Meetings

- Be alert of your surroundings, know your exit.
- Anticipate that others may join the meeting.
- Where possible face your exit. Ensure your exit route is clear.
- If you are visiting a home you must take another volunteer with you and consider the following.
 - Are there any animals that could make you feel uncomfortable? You could always ask for them to be placed in another room, if applicable.
 - Check where the doors are and how they open.
 - Don't enter if you have any concerns.
 - Only take what you need with you and do not spread your belongings around as you can leave quickly if you want to.

5.3 Travel

- Be organised, plan your route, and know where you are going.
- Check the weather as that may have an impact on your travel arrangements.
- Tell someone when you will be expected home.
- Public Transport:
 - prior to travelling, check for any delays
 - on trains, avoid travelling in empty carriages
 - wait in well-lit areas
 - use reputable licensed taxi firms
 - store taxi contact details in your mobile phone.
- If you are driving:
 - ensure your vehicle is in good running order
 - always choose the safest, not necessarily the shortest, route
 - give yourself time to take regular breaks. You will need to stop for at least 20 minutes every two hours
 - make sure you have sufficient fuel for your journey
 - when driving alone, particularly in traffic, lock your door
 - park somewhere well-lit where possible
 - ensure valuables are out of sight
 - do not use your mobile phone whilst driving
 - do not drive when you are tired or taking medication that could cause drowsiness
 - never drink and drive
 - know what to do in an emergency if your vehicle breaks down or you are involved in an accident.

5.4 Mobile phone

- Ensure you have a mobile phone with you at all times.
- Always ensure it is charged.
- Do not use your phone whilst driving.
- Ensure contact details are programmed into your mobile.

Your volunteer team are here to support you so please contact your local office if you have any questions, queries or concerns.