

1:1 Sessions - Lone working Policy

Purpose:

This policy provides clear guidance for PMACTIVE staff and volunteers engaged in 1:1 work with children, young people, and/or vulnerable adults. It ensures that all lone working is carried out safely, ethically, and in line with UK safeguarding legislation and best practice.

At PMACTIVE, we recognise the vital role that 1:1 sessions can play in building trusting relationships with the children, young people, and vulnerable adults we support. These sessions can be an essential part of encouraging independence and developing life skills, particularly when working with individuals away from the family home or their usual carers.

Where possible, we aim to carry out this work in settings where parents or carers can remain nearby — for example, in another room of the house. However, we also acknowledge that some 1:1 work may take place in environments where parents, carers, or colleagues are not present.

Lone working must never compromise the safety or wellbeing of the client or the worker. All staff and volunteers have a duty of care to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, uphold safeguarding responsibilities, and follow safe systems of work.

Scope:

This policy applies to all PMACTIVE employees, sessional staff, and volunteers who may be required to work with children, young people, and/or vulnerable adults in a 1:1 capacity without direct supervision. This includes work in community settings, educational settings, during home visits, online sessions, and when transporting young people.

Legal Framework:

This policy aligns with:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- The Care Act 2014
- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- HSE Lone Working Guidance
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) procedures

This policy should be read & implemented in conjunction with:

- Our Safeguarding Policy for working with adults and/or working with children.
- Any up-to-date individual risk assessments for the adults / young people we work with.
- Up-to-date activity-based risk assessment for the planned activity.

Types of Lone Working:

Lone working involves any situation where a PMActive member of staff or Volunteer engages with a child, young person or Vulnerable adult without direct supervision by another adult. This includes, but is not limited to:

- One-to-one mentoring or support sessions in the home
- One-to-one mentoring or support sessions in the community
- Driving or transporting young people
- Online or telephone sessions

Key Principles

- **Safety First:** The wellbeing and safety of service users and staff is paramount. Lone working must be risk-assessed, approved, and always planned.
- **Safeguarding-Focused:** All lone working must follow safeguarding procedures.
- **Informed Consent:** Written consent is required from parents/carers for children and from the vulnerable adult (or advocate) where capacity exists.
- **Transparency:** Lone working must be documented, approved, and communicated to managers and relevant parties.
- **Appropriate Boundaries:** Staff must maintain professional relationships and avoid situations where their actions could be misinterpreted.
- **Risk-Aware:** All lone working must be risk assessed beforehand, and staff must remain contactable throughout the session.

Risk Assessment and Planning:

It is important to understand that 1:1 lone working may not always be appropriate for the individuals we work with. All staff should discuss lone working PMActive management before discussing the possibility of 1:1 lone working with the client and their parents / guardians. If agreed a lone working permission form can then be completed to determine the scope of the 1:1 session.

Lone working may only take place after a 1:1 lone working permission form has been completed & a written and reviewed risk assessment has been completed. This should be completed by the member of staff and agreed by the PMActive management.

This risk assessment must consider:

- Age, needs, and vulnerabilities of the individual
- Context, location, and timing of the session
- Staff member's experience, training, and suitability
- Emergency protocols
- Communication plans
- Consent from parents/carers / vulnerable adult or their advocate
- Consent from senior management

High-risk activities or sessions involving vulnerable or high-risk young people (e.g. history of aggression, self-harm, mental health crisis) must have additional controls and may require two staff members to be present & take place in adjusted environments. This should be discussed with PMActive management to determine if 1:1 lone working is appropriate in this situation.

PMAActive recognises that it may be in the individual's interest to repeat sessions. Where this occurs, a single risk assessment may be used; however, PMAActive staff and volunteers must review the risk assessment before each session to ensure it continues to meet the needs and circumstances of the session

1:1 Sessions in the home / community:

PMAActive recognises that one-to-one sessions may take place in individuals' homes or out in the community. Regardless of location, all PMAActive staff conducting 1:1 sessions, whether in private homes or public settings, are required to always wear a PMAActive uniform to ensure they are easily recognisable and to promote professionalism and trust.

Staff and volunteers will have appropriate background knowledge of the young person in advance of the session, including any personal risk assessment and relevant medical information.

Environmental Considerations:

Each setting presents unique challenges that must be considered and addressed within the risk assessment.

Considerations include:

- Known safeguarding concerns with individual
- History of challenging behaviour
- Pets in the home
- Other occupants in the home
- Access to toilets / first aid in public place
- Location, anticipated risks (eg crowds, weather & transport)
- Emergency arrangements & contact points

Public Venues:

All public venues used for 1:1 sessions must be safe, accessible, and age-appropriate. They should be well-populated to avoid isolated or poorly lit areas, previously agreed upon with management and, where applicable, the parent or carer. Staff should always maintain visibility and awareness by choosing seating and spaces that support supervision and safeguarding, avoiding secluded areas.

It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to ensure that both they and the young person have appropriate clothing, food, drink, or equipment for any activities undertaken. Any incidents or accidents must be reported in accordance with our Health & Safety Policy.

Considerations for Cancelling a session:

Staff and volunteers must not engage in lone working if either party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If the young person appears to be under the influence during the session, the adult will end it immediately, contact PMAActive management and ensure the young person is safely returned home in the most appropriate manner.

If the young person behaves inappropriately in a way likely to expose themselves, staff, volunteers, or third parties to offence or harm, the adult must inform PMAActive management immediately by phone and follow their instructions.

If, during a lone working session, a child or young person makes any allegations about the adult present or another volunteer or staff member, the adult must ensure the young person is safely returned home in the most appropriate manner and then immediately inform PMAActive Management.

Transporting Individuals:

Due to the nature of the individuals we work with it is likely it will be necessary to transport a child, young person, or vulnerable adult as part of the session plan.

It is important to ensure the following has been considered and is adhered to:

- Transportation risks should be included on the risk assessment
- Consent must be obtained (from parents for under-18s, or from the adult/advocate)
- The member of staff must have the correct level of car insurance and DBS clearance
- The passenger must sit in the back seat of the vehicle
- No vulnerable or high-risk young person is ever transported alone.
- The trip is communicated in advance to PMAActive management and logged as part of the session notes.

Unplanned lifts are discouraged unless essential for the young person's safety. Any unplanned transport must be reported to PMAActive management and parents immediately.

Online or Virtual 1:1 Work:

PMAActive largely operates through face-to-face interactions, as we believe this fosters stronger engagement and more meaningful connections. However, there may be times when virtual meetings are necessary — for example, due to geographical constraints, illness, safeguarding considerations, or scheduling challenges. In such cases, we ensure that the same standards of professionalism, confidentiality, and safeguarding are upheld throughout the virtual interaction.

When engaging in lone working online:

- Sessions must be pre-approved and documented
- Consent must include the use of digital platforms
- Staff must use organisation-issued devices and accounts only
- No private messaging or out-of-hours contact
- Sessions should be recorded or supervised, where possible

Contact, Supervision and Reporting:

To ensure the safety of both the individual and PMAActive staff, all lone working sessions must be communicated to PMAActive management in advance. Details should include the session time, location, and expected duration. This information will be recorded in a shared bookings calendar. It is the responsibility of the staff member conducting the session to ensure that this information is accurate and accessible to PMAActive management prior to the session taking place.

- All lone working must be supervised indirectly through regular PMAActive management oversight & contact.

- All lone working sessions must be recorded, with date, time, location, and a brief summary of content and outcomes.
- Any disclosure, safeguarding concern, behavioural incident, or inappropriate conduct must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Rachel King – 07812593231.

It is important the member of staff remains contactable throughout the session. An agreed check-in phone call / text message may be agreed, especially where the sessions is for an extended period (over 90 minutes). Staff must always carry a charged mobile phone, personal alarm (if needed), and have emergency contact numbers accessible.

Training and Induction:

All staff will receive training on lone working procedures and safeguarding during their induction, with refresher or additional training provided on an ongoing basis, as identified through supervision, risk assessment, or changes in role or legislation. 1:1 lone working sessions will only take place where the staff member has assessed the situation, deemed it appropriate, and feels confident and comfortable to proceed.

All staff and volunteers engaged in lone working will receive:

- Safeguarding and child protection training
- Lone working and risk assessment training
- Professional boundaries training
- Scenario-based practice (e.g. dynamic risk assessments)

Incident Reporting and Post-Incident Support:

All incidents, concerns, disclosures, or inappropriate behaviour during lone working must be reported to the DSL or Senior Manager immediately and recorded using the appropriate form. This includes:

- Safeguarding concerns
- Medical incidents
- Behavioural issues
- Allegations or complaints

Should an incident arise PMAActive will ensure staff are fully supported including a debrief of the situation, access to counselling or support services and ongoing supervision.

Conduct and Behaviour Expectations:

As with any role undertaken with PMAActive, we expect our staff to represent the company with honesty and integrity. This includes demonstrating professionalism, maintaining appropriate boundaries, treating all individuals with dignity and respect, and upholding the values and standards of PMAActive at all times. Staff are also expected to follow all relevant policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding, confidentiality.

During any lone working session, staff must:

- Maintain professional language and behaviour

- Avoid physical contact unless required for safeguarding/emergency
- Not share personal contact details
- Not initiate or accept friend requests on social media
- Not allow or encourage secrecy

Final Responsibilities:

Staff and Volunteers are responsible for adhering to this policy, raising concerns, and maintaining their own safety and that of the child.

PMActive Management are responsible for authorising and overseeing all lone working arrangements.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for reviewing incidents and safeguarding implications.

If at any point a worker feels unsafe or uncomfortable, they must end the session and report immediately.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, guidance, or operational requirements change.

Date:

Reviewed By: