



SCARBOROUGH TALKING NEWS LONE WORKING POLICY

Scarborough Talking News (STN) is a charity focused on recording and broadcasting weekly local news items to visually impaired and print disabled listeners. As a non-profit making organisation, all members are volunteers. In line with guidance from the Talking News Federation, STN has appointed a committee to oversee practice and procedures of STN activities. This policy has been developed with the safety and well-being of its volunteers in mind, giving support and advice to all its volunteers with regard to working alone.

What is Lone Working?

Lone working can be defined as any situation or location in which someone works without close or direct supervision, without a colleague nearby or always out of sight or earshot of another colleague. Even staff who work in a building with others may be considered lone workers. Lone workers may face a variety of hazards, depending on the task they have opted to complete for STN.

STN volunteers work in several settings. Each of the settings has been considered to evaluate the risk for lone workers and to identify as many practical steps as possible to help improve the personal safety of the volunteers working there.

Prevention – Recording Teams

When looking at ways of reducing risk, the STN committee has considered eliminating hazards where possible.

- Editors, readers and recorders produce weekly broadcasts in teams of a minimum of two volunteers.
- All recording teams ensure they have made contact with someone at YCSS Reception before signing in using the staircase register, which identifies individual visitors and times of arrival and departure.
- Recording teams sign out and say 'goodbye' at reception before leaving the building.
- A minimum of one dispatcher and one recorder meet on Thursdays to complete duplication and posting of recordings to listeners.
- They make their arrival known at YCSS Reception before signing in using the staircase register and personal 'meet and greet' before setting up in the studio and dispatch room, within earshot of one another.
- Despatching teams sign out and say goodbye at reception before leaving the building.
- The last volunteer to leave on completion of a task should make YCSS Reception aware.
- All volunteers are encouraged to carry mobile phones with them during their volunteering session. Whenever possible it would be considered good practice for somebody at home to know where the STN volunteer was and at what time they could be expected home.
- Individual volunteers who visit the YCSS Centre to complete a task must always inform the reception team they are on/leaving the premises and sign in/out, regardless of how short the task may be.

- Any volunteer completing a task when YCSS Centre is closed must ensure that somebody knows they are on the premises. A charged mobile phone must be within using distance throughout the loan working session.

Prevention - Home visits

- Home visits are sometimes made by volunteers to new listeners or listeners who may be experiencing problems with STN listening devices. If at all possible, listeners are invited to meet a volunteer at the YCSS Centre for support and advice. When this is not possible, it may be safer for two volunteers to make the home visit, particularly in the case of new listeners.
- Volunteers visiting listeners on their own are recommended to take with them a discreet method of raising the alarm if necessary, either a well charged phone alarm or a lone worker safety device. It is important that this technology is supported by someone knowing where the volunteer is and having agreed prearranged points of contact should the volunteer experience any trouble.
- Volunteers making home visits are advised to consider prior to the visit viable reasons for swift exit should the need arise.
- On arrival at a listener's address, volunteers should not continue with the visit if they are made to feel uneasy in anyway e.g. the presence of an aggressive dog. The listener can be contacted by phone to discuss the issue and another volunteer may be consulted for support and advice.

Assessing Risk

When a STN volunteer is going to be working alone, they must assess any immediate and unfolding risk to their personal safety. This is called dynamic risk assessment. If the volunteer feels in serious or imminent danger, they should withdraw, as soon as possible, to a place of safety.

Sharing Information

This policy has been shared with all STN volunteers, although very few would find themselves in a loan working situation.

Where there has been a 'near miss' accident or incidence of violence or aggression involving a volunteer, it is essential that the information is shared at the earliest opportunity with a member of the STN Committee. Whilst this may be difficult for the Lone Worker involved, reporting of the detail may help prevent repetition of a similar incident in future. The STN Committee member will ensure that this information is passed on to the rest of the Committee, who will then decide what appropriate action needs to ensue.

Policy adopted.....03/10/23

Date of next review.....03/10/26

Signed.....Chairman
Scarborough Talking News