

GUIDELINES FOR LONE AND OFF-SITE WORKING

To be read in conjunction with Wellspring's
Health & Safety Policy & Practice

LONE WORKING AT WELLSPRING

Therapists

- Therapists are encouraged to ensure that whenever possible a member of the Administrative staff or another therapist is in the building while they are working, especially in the evening.
- Therapists should never arrange to see a client for the first time when there is no one else in the building.
- Therapists should exercise caution when making out of hours appointments and should phone someone by arrangement to confirm that a session is over and the client has departed if they are aware of any possible risk.
- Portable telephone handsets are available to staff. Therapists who are alone on the premises with a client should have a handset with them in the therapy room. While these are not connected to Wellspring's main phone line, therapists should nevertheless ensure that the ringer is off so that they are not disturbed by any incoming calls.
- Therapists should have, or know how to access quickly, clients' GP details.
- **Trainee counsellors** MUST NOT see clients unless another staff member is in the building.

All staff (therapists, administrative and volunteer staff, caretaker, cleaners) should:

- report any hazards or omissions that might compromise safety when working alone.

- be familiar with the *Policy & Guidelines on Handling Violent and Aggressive Behaviour*.
- chain the door if answering an unexpected ring in the evening.
- know the location of the first aid boxes.
- take care to follow the Exit Procedures and leave the premises safe and secure.

OFF-SITE WORKING

A. Therapists may see clients at another location, such as a clinic or community building.

They should familiarise themselves with the safety rules and procedures for that environment and be alert to safety issues relating both to clients and to themselves.

B. Occasionally a therapist will arrange to see a client at the client's home or work place.

1. Therapists must always inform Administration in advance, and give details of:

- the name of the client
- the address at which the session will take place
- the time of the session

2. The therapist must also arrange to phone the Administrator or other appropriate person once the session is over.

3. Therapists should take care to maintain a professional relationship by observing appropriate boundaries (strict time-keeping, refusing cups of tea etc, and doing nothing that would suggest that the session was a social visit).

4. Therapists should be vigilant regarding personal safety, noting the exit route and situating themselves when possible so that they could make an easy exit from the room in which therapy takes place. It is recommended that they carry a personal alarm, especially when visiting a client for the first time.