

LONE WORKING PROCEDURES

Probation Offices

1. At most offices there are secure arrangements to restrict immediate access to those parts of the building where staff are located.

Where there are no such arrangements e.g. Welshpool, any person should not work on their own under any circumstances.

2. If you are working alone on the premises during office hours, first identify the caller and their business.

If they have an appointment and there is no one to see them then advise them when someone will be available and ask them to return at that time.

If they are delivering goods e.g. stationery or they are a building contractor, they should still not be given access to the building if you are on your own. Advise them when they can call back.

If a caller is persistent, abusive or violent contact the police immediately.

3. If you are working alone outside office hours do not respond to the caller by entering into dialogue or by opening the door.

If a caller is persistent, abusive or violent contact the police immediately.

4. If you are working alone in the office but there are other members of staff on the premises, first identify the caller and their business. If they have an appointment let them into the waiting area and notify the member of staff they have come to see. If that member of staff is not on the premises then notify another officer.

Only admit the person who has business with the Service or an appointment. Their friends or associates should be asked to wait outside.

Keep delays in the waiting area to a minimum and keep the caller informed of the reason for the delay.

If a caller is abusive, threatening or violent contact the police immediately – and warn other staff already on the premises.



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5. Telephone calls can also be abusive or threatening. Try to get the caller to identify themselves, and terminate the call as quickly and politely as possible.
6. If you are interviewing a client in your office on your own
 - **Carry a personal alarm pendant** on you so that you can summon help.
 - Ensure that you are not left alone in the building and you know where other members of staff are located, so that they can be called to provide support or assistance.
 - Sit near the door so that you can exit the room easily.
 - Avoid having objects in the immediate vicinity, which could be used as a weapon by others.

If the caller is abusive, threatening or violent call other staff by whatever means are available to assist you or use the personal alarm pendant to contact the police immediately

7. If you are alone and are worried about leaving the office because you have reason to believe that you might be threatened or attacked on your way out, call the police and if possible another member of staff at their home for support. Do not leave the building until the police arrive.

Court

If you are interviewing an offender in the Court Building:

1. If you are unhappy about your safety arrangements within the Court building, withdraw immediately and notify the Clerks of Justices of your action and your reasons for it.
2. Inform the Court usher of your whereabouts at all times.
3. Do not interview in isolated waiting rooms.
4. Always carry a personal alarm. On hearing the alarm the court clerk or court usher will activate the panic system to summon emergency assistance from the police.
5. Always sit near the door so that you can make your exit if necessary.



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Cells

If you are interviewing an Offender in the cells:

The security of the Prisoner is of primary concern to Premier staff. Premier staff will, at all times, attempt to facilitate interviews by the Probation Service. It is at the discretion of the Senior Custody Officer whether an interview room or cell is locked during your interview. This may depend on the movement of other Prisoners and whether or not there are other perimeter doors that could be secured. Premier Officers will accompany you during interviews if requested and remain by the door of the interview room, or inside the room if required to do so.

1. If you are unhappy about your safety arrangements in the cells, withdraw immediately and notify the Senior Custody Officer of your action and the reasons for it.
2. If it has been necessary to lock you in an interview room with a Prisoner, ask a Premier Officer to remain in hearing distance at all times.
3. It is appropriate to ask a Premier Officer to accompany you for the duration of the interview if any potential area of risk has been assessed.

Police Station

If you are interviewing an offender at the Police Station:

The security of the Prisoner is the primary concern to the Police. The Custody Sergeant is accountable for the security of the Prisoner and the safety of the staff. They will allow interviews to take place only if they feel it is safe to do so.

1. If you are unhappy about your safety arrangements within the police station, withdraw and inform the Custody Sergeant of your action and the reasons for it.
2. Obtain details regarding the background, temperament or attitude of the detained person from the Custody Sergeant prior to the interview.
3. It is at the discretion of the Custody Sergeant whether the interview room is locked during your interview. If the door is locked, ask for a Police Officer to remain within hearing distance at all times.



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4. Ask a Police Officer to accompany you for the duration of the interview if any potential area of risk has been assessed.
5. Terminate the interview if any behaviour or language is used by the Prisoner which indicates that you may be placed at risk.

Community Service Worksite

Community Service Supervisors are often supervising groups of Offenders in isolated or out of the way places, and could be vulnerable to attack or unacceptable behaviour. The following procedures should be adopted to ensure your safety.

1. You must have with you at all times during the work session a mobile phone. Check that the phone is fully charged and carry emergency batteries with you. The mobile phone should be switched on at all times, so that you can summon help in an emergency. Either dial 999 for Police / Ambulance / Fire or contact the Powys County Council 24hour Duty Room, Tel: 01597 825 275.
Give them your name, telephone number and ask them to contact one of the Service's Senior Managers.
2. If a situation is developing which you consider to be unsafe, you must terminate the session as quickly as possible and return to base. The Senior Community Service Officer must be advised immediately of the action you have taken.
3. You should only carry someone as a passenger in the vehicle if you believe that they present no risk to you.

Prisons

Probation staff visiting Prisons do so under the jurisdiction of the respective Prison Governor, and must obey the reasonable instructions. Prison personnel usually staff visiting areas, and any movement around the prison is supervised. It is unusual for lone interviews to take place these days.

1. If you are unhappy about your safety arrangements within the prison, withdraw immediately and inform the prison staff or your action and the reasons for it.
2. Obtain details regarding the background, temperament or attitude of the detained person from the prison staff prior to the interview.



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3. If the interview room door is locked, ask for a member of the prison staff to remain within hearing distance at all times.
4. Ask a member of the prison staff to accompany you for the duration of the interview if any potential area of risk has been assessed.
5. Terminate the interview if any behaviour or language is used by the Prisoner, which indicates that you may be placed at risk.

Home Visits

1. Wherever possible, Offenders should be invited to attend the office where interviews can take place in a supervised environment.
2. Where a home visit is required, Officers should only visit where an assessment has been carried out regarding the safety of the visit. If the visit is considered unsafe, it should not be undertaken, and the Line Manager informed immediately.
3. In all cases you must inform the office how long you will be away and ensure that they know the address where you are making the home visit. Agree a course of action to be followed, if you have not returned by the agreed time.
4. When visiting, observe all reasonable safety precautions, do not park in isolated or dark places, sit near the door, end the interview if you become aware that the situation is becoming unsafe and report to the Line Manager.
5. A Mobile telephone should be used when home visiting. It should be left switched on so that contact can be made if necessary. Ensure the mobile is fully charged and batteries carried with you. Phone your arranged contact when the visit is finished.

Working from Home

1. Ensure that the office knows when you are working from home and how you can be contacted
2. Consider home security and safety, such as doors and windows locked, how people get in and out, how you escape in emergency, would anything trap you inside the home.



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3. Arrange a procedure for raising the alarm should you need help, agree contact with a neighbour, how you would call the emergency services.
If an incident should occur, the correct form should be completed.

Driving

1. If you carry a mobile phone, check it is fully charged and that emergency batteries are carried with you. Obtain a list of contact numbers to use in emergency. Whilst considering the importance of **not** using your mobile whilst driving, you must also be aware of your own security when pulling over to use the mobile telephone and lock all car doors.
2. Where possible join a national breakdown organisation.
3. Complete vehicle checks before a journey, e.g. petrol, oil, and tyres. Breaking down will put you at risk. Always carry a First Aid Kit in case of emergency.
4. Plan your route to avoid remote areas or stopping to ask directions.
5. Ensure that staff in the office know your destination and when you expect to arrive.
6. Doors should remain locked and windows closed in built up areas or slow moving traffic.
7. Park in well lit areas especially if you are not returning to your car until after dark. In multi storey car parks, park as near to the exit as possible and away from pillars. Reverse into the parking space. Have your keys ready when you return to the car, and check the back seat.
8. If you break down pull off the road as far as possible and use the hazard warning lights. If you do not have a mobile telephone, note landmarks as you walk to the nearest telephone in order to relay your location to the breakdown organisation or police. If possible drive your car as near to the telephone as possible, using the passenger door to get out when on the Motorway.
9. It is advised in the case of Motorway breakdowns that you wait outside the car on the verge to avoid collisions on the



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hard shoulder. Consideration should then be given to your security when you are outside the vehicle.

10. It is advised that you ask the recovery vehicle driver for identification when arriving at your vehicle.
11. If another driver intimidates you, or a car is following you, drive to a busy public place and call the police if necessary. If a car pulls in front of you and forces you to stop, leave the engine running and if the driver approaches you sound the horn continuously with the hazard lights on.
12. If you see an incident or someone tries flagging you down, it could be safer to use a phone to report what you see. Gesture to acknowledge that they need help and indicate that you will phone for help.

Passengers

1. Only carry passengers in the vehicle if you believe that they present no risk to you.

Offices of External Agencies

1. If you are unhappy about your safety arrangements within the external office, withdraw immediately and notify your Line Manager of your actions and your reasons for it.
2. Ensure that the probation office knows where you are working, when you will be leaving and how you can be contacted.
3. Always make sure that you are aware of the evacuation procedures in place.

It is important to bear in mind that lone workers are vulnerable to false accusations being made as well as physical harm being caused.

All incidents must be reported to your line manager immediately and a record of the incident must be recorded on the Near Miss or Violent Incident Report forms, a copy of which should be kept at the local office and the original sent to Headquarters.



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