

Safe Working Environment and Lone Working Policy

Policy, Procedures and Practice Guidance

1. Definition

Within this document, **Lone Working** refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in Escape Arts venues, in the community and in their own home. They will be physically isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance. This policy applies to all Escape Arts venues, both permanent and other visiting venues, and including outreach projects using the multimedia van.

Escape Arts Venues refers to The Escape Arts & Heritage Centre in Stratford-upon-Avon, The Station Gallery in Nuneaton, Escape Arts Office on Guild Street in Stratford-upon-Avon and Escape Arts Garage in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Hired, Partner & Other Venues refers to venues visited as part of the outreach programme using the multimedia van or any venue Escape Arts hires to deliver projects, such as Stratford Town Football Club (VIPS), Lifeways Garden (Nourish & Flourish), Chilvers Coton Heritage Centre (Nuneaton Escape) and Stratford Youth Hub (Arts Award).

For venue specific information, please refer to the Risk Assessment for the venue. It is Escape Arts policy that other venues that Escape Arts uses for the delivery of services provide their venue risk assessment.

2. Policy Statement

The Policy states that no member of staff or volunteer should lone work within Escape Arts venues during its set public hours of opening. This includes community group sessions, where two members of staff must be on site at all times. Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and CEO/Deputy CEO have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant Health and Safety policies.

3. Purpose of Policy

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working; to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimize such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

4. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition above. No volunteers will be permitted to work alone from Escape Arts venues. Volunteers must always be supervised by a trained staff member.

5. Lone Working Procedures at Escape Arts Venues

Escape Arts venues are operational up to six days a week, morning and afternoon, including community group sessions throughout the week with occasional evening and weekend use for events. During events and times when the venues are open the public, **staff or volunteers must not work alone.** This is due to the public facing element of Charity events. It is our policy that during public opening hours at Escape Arts venues, there must be two or more staff members on site at all times. If someone needs to leave the building, this would take the staffing number to one. The building should be locked and secured and policies for lone work should be followed for the times that only one member of staff or volunteer is on site.

There will be occasions when staff members will be working from venues alone before or after community group sessions or on days where there are no projects. If a staff member is in an Escape Arts venue alone, the front door must be locked immediately on entry, before silencing alarms to ensure staff safety. In this instance, the staff member must make the rest of the team aware if you are working in an Escape Arts venue alone, for example by putting a message in the Escape Arts Team WhatsApp. This is also where staff can find other staff members' phone numbers to contact in the event of an emergency. Staff must also put a message on the WhatsApp chat when they have locked up and left the venue. In addition to this, extra care should be taken when accessing and leaving venues. If you notice anything suspicious, keep the doors locked and phone the CEO, Deputy CEO or Operations Manager. In an emergency, staff must phone 999. Following any lone working incident, this must be reported internally through an Incident Report on BrightSafe. For more information on using BrightSafe or Incident Reporting, contact Escape Arts Operations Manager and/or Deputy CEO. This also applies to incidents at hired, partner or other venues and working from home.

Escape Arts Office on Guild Street is a shared venue with multiple offices. When working from this venue, staff must follow the same lone working procedures outlined above. Staff must also ensure that they sign in and out of the building in the entrance hall to prevent being locked in by another office user. If a staff member is the last one in the building, they must alarm and lock the front door when leaving. For more information on this procedure, see Escape Arts SharePoint Buildings Folder or contact the Deputy CEO for more information.

Staff must always let team members know verbally or using the WhatsApp chat if they are going to the Escape Arts Garage on Mayfield Road in Stratford-upon-Avon. Staff must never go to the garage alone outside of working hours (9am-5pm) or in the dark.

Within overall policy relating to safer working practices, support for lone workers is an essential part, and the same principles apply, particularly: a commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices recognizing and reducing risk a commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff a clear understanding of responsibilities the priority placed on the safety of the individual over property a commitment to providing appropriate training for staff equipment such as mobile phones, personal alarms and bard watch radios.

6. Lone Working Procedures at Hired, Partner or Other Venues

There may be occasions where staff are required to work alone at venues not managed by Escape Arts, including outreach venues or spaces hired for project delivery. In these circumstances, additional care must be taken to assess and manage risk, as Escape Arts does not have direct control over these sites.

Prior to working alone at a hired or partner venue, the following steps must be taken:

- A risk assessment for the venue must be provided by the host organisation and reviewed by an Escape Arts member of staff in advance. Any concerns must be reported to the Operations Manager.
- Staff must also complete a risk assessment for using the venue, identifying any immediate risks such as access restrictions, poor lighting, or lack of mobile signal and risks associated with project delivery.
- Staff must inform another member of staff, such as their Line Manager, or post in the Escape Arts Team WhatsApp when they arrive at the venue and again when they leave.
- As with Escape Arts venues, Escape Arts staff must ensure that the venue is secure, and the front entrance is locked while lone working to prevent unplanned or unsafe access.
- If at any point a staff member feels unsafe, they must remove themselves from the venue and report concerns to the CEO, Deputy CEO, or Operations Manager as soon as possible. In an emergency, staff must phone 999.

Escape Arts staff should not work alone at hired, partner or other venues during public access events or when members of the public are expected to attend without another staff member present. In the event of any emergency at a hired venue, staff should follow the site's emergency procedures if available and also contact the Escape Arts CEO, Deputy CEO and/or Operations Manager. Staff must always call 999 in the case of a serious or immediate threat to personal safety.

7. Lone Working Procedures at Home

There may be occasions where staff undertake work from home. While home working can offer flexibility, it also presents its own set of risks, particularly where individuals are working in isolation. As with other forms of lone working, steps must be taken to ensure staff safety and wellbeing.

Staff members working from home should:

- Inform their Line Manager that they are working remotely that day. This must always be agreed with the Line Manager ahead of any remote work.
- Ensure they are contactable during working hours via phone or email.
- Take regular breaks and ensure they have a safe and comfortable working environment, including appropriate seating and lighting. Online training on safe home working will be provided on induction.
- Be aware of their mental wellbeing, particularly during extended periods of home working, and reach out to their Line Manager if support is needed.

In line with Health & Safety regulations, staff are encouraged to complete a basic home working self-assessment, which includes a Display Screen Assessment. This will be completed as part of the induction and reviewed as part of annual wellbeing one-to-ones. Line Managers will support with any reasonable adjustments where required. All Escape Arts policies continue to apply when working from home. *For more information, see Escape Arts Policies Folder on SharePoint.*

In the event of an emergency or urgent concern during home working, staff should contact the CEO, Deputy CEO or Operations Manager. For immediate emergencies, dial 999.

8. Personal Safety

Always be aware of your position in Escape Arts venues and never put yourself in a position where you have no exit route. If you are threatened where you do have no escape route, lock yourself in the toilet and phone 999.

9. Bardwatch (Escape Arts & Heritage Centre)

Escape Arts is now signed up with CCTV Bardwatch and has a security radio. At the start of each shift staff members must sign on using the radio and sign off when leaving the building. Full instructions are kept in the Building Management Folder. There is a panic alarm on the radio and suspicious or threatening behavior MUST be reported. The radios are monitored 24/7 by CCTV and the police.

10. CCTV & Alarm System

At the Escape Arts & Heritage Centre, there is internal and external CCTV fitted, which is linked to an alarm system. The alarm must always be set when leaving the building, for alarm details, please contact your Line Manager. If you accidentally set the alarm off, please contact either CEO, Deputy CEO, Operations Manager or Administration

Coordinator, who can access the CCTV and alarm system remotely. For more information, see Escape Arts CCTV Policy.

External CCTV is in use at The Station Gallery and is managed by Nuneaton Train Station.

If at any point you go to enter an Escape Arts venue and there are signs of forced entry, do not enter and phone the CEO or Deputy CEO immediately, who will take further action.

11. Monitoring of Policy

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Weekly team meetings and monthly operations meetings where staff can raise concerns or report incidents related to lone working.
- Review of all lone working incidents, near misses, or concerns, recorded via internal reporting processes.
- Line Managers conducting informal check-ins with staff undertaking lone working responsibilities to ensure procedures are being followed and support needs are being met.
- Feedback from staff regarding the practicality and clarity of lone working procedures, which will be considered in future updates.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by Escape Arts Board of Trustees, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, organisational structure, or following any significant lone working incident.

This policy and procedure was adopted on: April 2025

Next review date: April 2028