

Health & Safety Working Safely Guides

Other People's Homes

WORKING SAFELY IN OTHER PEOPLE'S HOMES

The potential for violence against you in other people's homes may depend on why you are there or the person may just be having a bad day. Always remember it is their home, you are the visitor and have little control over their environment, but you can control the task. Always introduce yourself and explain reason for visit and show ID on arrival.

Before setting out

Find out as much as possible about the person you are visiting and family members who may be present. Know your route and let someone know where you are going and expected time of return. Consider what the location will be like when you finish your visit i.e. it may be daylight on arrival, but dark when you leave. Take telephone numbers, phone card or mobile phone and have a personal alarm ready to use.

On arrival at property

- Park vehicle as near as possible to property in direction of travel, park facing out of a cul de sac.
- Take only what you need into the property, don't take valuables and take care with any documents containing personal information
- Do not enter the property if the appropriate person is not available. If you have concerns or feel uneasy don't enter and call a supervisor or manager for advice
- Check your exit and sit near the door, be prepared to leave if you feel at risk
- If you feel uncomfortable ask for dogs to be put into another room
- Ensure the person is safe and home is secure when leaving

Action to take if you are threatened

- If you are threatened or prevented from leaving stay calm and try to control the situation. Try to appear confident, speak slowly and clearly and not be enticed into an argument. Try to diffuse situation by saying you will seek advice from a supervisor or colleague
- Keep your distance, never touch or turn your back on someone who is angry
- If staff attend in '2's wait outside the property until both have arrived. Consider whether sending out 2 members of staff may escalate the difficulties
- If working in '2's agree a code word or phrase to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave
- Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety if you have any concerns about personal safety and Inform a supervisor immediately

Recording

- All information about concerns or incidents must be recorded accurately, kept up to date, and shared with others as necessary
- If future visits need to take place, draw up a contract with person giving concern e.g. about expected acceptable standards of behaviour with staff and inform them that any threats or acts of violence against staff or their personal property may result in a service being withdrawn or request that a person (if not the prime reason for call) is not present when staff visit

- Ensure accidents, incidents and near misses are reported to a manager at the earliest opportunity and record on the WCC Accident/Incident reporting system
- Manager to ensure staff are supported and know how to access staff care if an incident occurs which causes emotional distress

Please refer to the Personal Safety at Work policy available on the Intranet, Advice and Guidance, Health and Safety or contact your health and safety team for further advice.