**Reviewed by - Mr Ryan Palmer (Registered Care Manager)**

**Policy Statement**

Comfort Home Care believes that lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees.

Comfort Home Care understands lone workers to be those who work without close or direct supervision or company for substantial periods of time. This includes most domiciliary care staff who visit and care for service users in their own homes. In this context Comfort Home Care understands its duty as an employer being to assess any risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control those risks where necessary.

Comfort Home Care recognises that staff working alone in potentially isolate conditions have no immediate back up or support and so are at a greater risk of injury through aggression or violence directed towards them from service users, relatives, carers or the general public.

Comfort Home Care also recognises that staff working alone need to rely on their own judgement and initiative and may be at a greater risk of making mistakes or errors.

Comfort Home Care believes that training is particularly important for lone workers and research shows that adequate training is the single most critical factor in avoiding panic reactions in unusual situations. In particular lone workers need to be deemed competent to work alone, to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions needed fully.

Comfort Home Care understands its duty as an employer to ensure employees are competent to deal not only with the day to day facets of their work but with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of their training, for example, if threatened with aggression and violence.

Comfort Home Care adheres fully to The Fundamental Standards: Staffing: Fit and proper persons employed. Regulation 18 and 19 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, which relates to receiving appropriate training, professional development, supervision and appraisal.

**Lone Workers' Supervision Policy**

By definition lone workers are those who work without constant supervision throughout their working day, therefore procedures must be put in place to monitor lone workers to ensure they remain safe and to provide supervision on a regular basis. This includes supervisors periodically visiting and observing those working alone and regular contact between the lone worker and supervision by telephone.

Comfort Home Care believes that supervision helps to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

**Lone Workers' Security Policy**

When a member of staff visits a client in their own home he or she may be at risk through health and safety hazards in and around service users' homes and of physical or verbal assaults and hostility from service users, relatives and the general public. Recent evidence suggests that such incidents may be on the increase and home visiting protocols should take this into account, particularly in high risk areas such as high crime rate areas.

At Comfort Home Care:

* + - * Lone workers should carry mobile phones so that they can summon help quickly;
      * All phones should include an emergency number which will be attended at all times that staff are working.
      * Administration staff in the office should log and keep details of all home visits as well as having access to the names, addresses and telephone numbers of Service users.
      * Administration staff in the office should contact the on-call supervisor, Deputy Manager or Registered Care Manager in the event of any emergency situations.
      * If requested staff at Comfort Home Care can have high visibility jackets, torches and personal attack alarms.
      * Initial induction training on lone working and updated information may be communicated through the crier on a weekly basis.
      * All care staff will message on call at the end of each night shift to inform them that they have arrived home safely.
      * Comfort Home Care will risk assess lone working and staff who have the use of a bike to ensure safety. **(See Risk Assessment File, Risk Assessments 11 and 12).**

In a situation where a lone worker feels under immediate threat of their physical safety. they should contact the main office/on-call or the police directly. If contacting the main office/on-call the Supervisor/Manager/ Proprietor would contact the police for them if required, the Supervisor/ Manager/Proprietor should be careful to take all appropriate information from the lone worker, such as location and telephone number, and to pass this on to the police, after the incident the lone worker should fill in an incident form.

It is strongly advised that staff carry in their cars the absolute minimum amount of equipment and that they always park their car in a well-lit, public place if at all possible.

Thefts from cars are a major area of concern and muggings of care staff are a real threat, especially in high crime areas. If on foot then care staff should avoid dark, unlit, isolated routes to work.

In cases where care is to be provided in a high crime area or to a service user with a known history of aggression or violence associated with them, then a full risk assessment should be completed by the supervisor/manager. Where there is significant risk then the support plan should be altered accordingly, either by reviewing the case with the relevant case manager or by arranging for care workers to attend in pairs.

**Untoward Incidents**

Untoward incidents, including all incidents which involve the use or threat of aggression or violence, should be regularly reviewed and audited.

Registered Office: Comfort Home Care, Sunningmead Community Centre, Lazenby Road, Tiverton, EX16 4AL.

**Training**

All staff should read this policy. As part of the induction process supervisors must satisfy themselves that each member of staff is competent and safe to work alone and that they are clear about how to act in ways that will maximise their own safety and about what to do in an emergency situation.