

## **VOLUNTARY ACTION - LEEDS**

### **PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDELINES**

Voluntary Action - Leeds recognises its responsibility for protecting the personal safety of people in Stringer House: staff and volunteers, visitors, trainers, clients and the general public. We therefore have both internal and external personal safety provisions which are designed to protect you.

#### **Internal Provisions – Stringer House**

##### ***Insurance***

VA-L carries a range of insurance policies, and certificates are located in the entrance area; further information can be obtained from the Finance Department.

##### ***Health & Safety***

VA-L has a detailed Health and Safety Policy, which is signed by all staff as a condition of employment. Fire regulations are given to all new starters at induction, regular risk assessments are conducted, and strict procedures relating to signing in and out of Stringer House apply to **everyone** using the premises. The Health and Safety Policy also contains a range of Staff Safety Rules.

##### ***Panic Alarms***

We have three panic alarms in Stringer House, which may be used as follows :-

1. The panic alarms are located in the reception area, near to the staff notice board, and in the training room and IT training room; they are clearly marked, and are simple push-buttons.
2. The alarms may be used by anyone who feels threatened or who requires urgent assistance - for example, should someone be taken ill and need immediate help.
3. The panic alarms in the reception area and in the training room sound a loud klaxon in the main office area: the noise is an intermittent rising “squawk”, NOT a continuous siren like the fire/burglar alarms. The alarm in the IT training room sounds a bell.

4. All staff and volunteers in Stringer House should acquaint themselves with the noise of the panic alarms, and should be prepared to respond and assist if required. For new staff who have not heard the alarm, a demonstration can be arranged by Admin, and it is your responsibility to request this.
5. If the panic alarm is sounded, any available managers **and/or** administration staff should attend immediately to assess the situation and organise appropriate action; under no circumstances should **any** staff member attempt to respond on their own.

You are asked to respect the provision of panic alarms, and to use them only for the purposes intended.

### **External Provisions for Client Work, etc**

VA-L is concerned to protect as far as possible the personal safety of its employees and volunteers while working away from Stringer House: it is recognised that certain jobs involve visiting organisations/clients in other premises, and that this requires additional safety awareness both on the part of the individual worker and VA-L itself. The following procedures and provisions exist for your own safety, and you are asked to abide by them at all times :-

1. Where possible, try to arrange visits so that you are not alone, particularly if the visit is the first one.
2. Do not arrange to visit any organisation at someone's home unless you can be accompanied by a colleague throughout the visit; instead, if the organisation does not have its own premises, use other local facilities such as a library, community centre, café, etc - somewhere with other people nearby.
3. When visiting any organisation or client, it is your responsibility to take a mobile phone with you - either your own or one of VA-L's which are to be used solely for the purposes of protecting staff while doing external work. If you do not have your own phone, or do not wish to use it for work, you will need to organise your visits to ensure that a VA-L mobile is available on the desired day/time. You must also ensure that your line manager or a member of the Admin team knows which phone you are using, and has your number before you leave for the visit.

4. When doing any visit which you feel may present a risk (e.g. a group/individual unknown to you, or in an area or at a time where you may feel threatened) you must ensure that you notify your line manager or Admin as to your whereabouts: leave the name, address and telephone number of where you are going, your contact number, and how long you are going to be. If your visit turns out to be longer than planned, you **MUST** telephone your line manager or Admin to inform them and to arrange a new end-time. If you do not do this, we will assume that you have met with some problem and will need assistance.
5. If during a visit you feel that a client is uncomfortable in any way, you should leave and report the situation to your line manager immediately on return or by phone if you are not coming straight back to Stringer House.
6. If you experience any other problems or have any concerns about some aspect of a visit, these must be reported to your line manager as soon as possible.

While VA-L is aware that these procedures may seem onerous or unnecessary, you are asked to abide by them strictly, as they exist purely to protect staff both from any potentially threatening or dangerous situations and from any risk of allegations.