

POLICY AND PROCEDURE



SoLO
Life
Opportunities

38 Walnut Close
Chelmsley Wood
Birmingham
B37 7PU

Charity No. 1102297
England Company No.
5025939

External Workers supporting Members on a SoLO project

Policy statement

SoLO Life Opportunities (SoLO) is committed to working in partnership where it will benefit our members to do so. SoLO recognises, however, that to ensure the health and safety of the member, and to protect the organisation's reputation, there needs to be an agreed working protocol.

Introduction

An external worker is one who is employed by another organisation (e.g. Care Agency/Social Services) or an individual (e.g. a parent employing through an individualised budget). In relation to this policy the external worker would be employed by the other organisation or individual to specifically support a child, young person or adult to attend a SoLO project. The employment would be directly with the other organisation or individual and there is an assumption that the external worker's employer is fully compliant with the law and regulations relating to the employment of that worker.

However, it is recognised that SoLO projects are delivered on a team basis and it is important, therefore, both for the staff and the members, that these external workers are enabled to feel part of the team and work within SoLO's policies and procedures.

External worker guidelines

Any person wishing to bring their own PA onto a SoLO project will be expected to comply with the external worker guidelines (appendix A) which will be made available to them when they arrive. They outline the basis under which the person is working whilst on a SoLO project. It will be expected that the SoLO Project Leader will direct both the work of the Personal Assistant whilst on the SoLO project and their behaviour to ensure that the worker is complying with SoLO's policies and procedures. At all times, the interests of

Policy Name: External Workers Supporting Members on a SoLO Project
Organisation: SoLO Life Opportunities
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1

the member being supported will be paramount and any actions taken will give consideration to their specific needs and requirements. However, consideration must also be given to other members attending the SoLO project ensuring that all needs are catered for.

Where a worker is not behaving within our guidelines or to an acceptable standard, the Project Manager, in the first instance, will speak directly to the PA with a view to alerting them to the issue and changing their behaviour. If this does not bring about an acceptable solution, the issue will be raised on an incident reporting log and Senior Managers will determine if it needs to be escalated to the Provider of the PA service.

Code of Conduct

We would expect all external workers to abide by our policies, particularly relating to:

- Health and Safety
- Personal Safety
- Behaviour Management
- Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults
- Equal Opportunities
- Incident reporting

The external worker will need to work within our aims and objectives and their activities will need to reflect the values that underpin the work of SoLO.

There is a dress code for all projects and we would wish external workers to follow it.

All external workers will be issued with a staff handbook to be used as guidance on appropriate behaviour whilst working on the project. Where a directive from the external worker's employer contradicts the guidance given within the handbook, this would need to be discussed fully. If it was felt that the guidance given contravened SoLO's health and safety policies or values, SoLO would reserve the right to terminate the placement.

Participation

The external worker would be given, before attending the project, a brief of the activities that are offered by the project.

Examples:

- Performing arts – involving dance, improvisation, mime, singing etc.

- Get active – involving taking part in activities such as football, climbing, judo etc.

It would be expected that the external worker would participate in all the activities (as long as this involvement enabled them to ensure that their one to one client was safe) in the same manner as the SoLO workers and volunteers. It is accepted, however, that there are certain activities that might be unacceptable (for instance, some people might find climbing too difficult) – these would be agreed beforehand.

Most projects have planning sessions which do not, necessarily, involve the learning disabled members. It would be favourable if the external worker would be prepared to be involved in these sessions, to ensure consistency and clear communication as well as building up the team. However, where this is not possible (if, for instance, the external worker had to transport the learning disabled member to and from project) then the external worker would need to ensure that they were briefed on any details that related to their member's involvement in the project. The responsibility for this briefing lies with the Project Leader.

Training

SoLO provides training around core competencies for staff. These include:

- Induction
- Health and Safety
- Child protection/vulnerable adults

It is expected that all external workers would be trained to a minimum standard. However, if they wished to attend SoLO's training this could be arranged at a small charge. The responsibility of notifying external PA's of training opportunities lies with the Project Leader.

Team building is an important part of the SoLO training package and external workers would be encouraged, where possible, to join in, although the costs of this would need to be met by their employer.

Screening of Staff

SoLO undertakes a robust system of screening of staff and volunteers:

- interview
- reference checks
- DBS checks
- ongoing supervision

We would expect that as a minimum standard the external worker would be DBS checked.

The external worker will, whilst on the SoLO project, be under the supervision of the Project Leader, and will be required to take direction from the Project Leader – particularly on issues relating to health and safety.

Sharing of Information

Information sharing between the external worker and SoLO would be on the basis of 'needs to know' and always where the best interests of the member are paramount. If required, an information sharing agreement can be signed by the person with a learning disability (if aged over 18 and able to give consent) or by the person's parent or carer.

Financial Protocols

The external worker's out of pocket expenses will have to be met by the employer and agreed prior to the activity. SoLO will not take responsibility for covering entrance fees or refreshments costs in relation to the external worker.

Where possible, SoLO would encourage members to handle their own money and will send receipts home for anything that is purchased with the member's own resources. In relation to the externally placed member, the responsibility for their finances would remain with the external worker and they must agree protocols with the employer.

Grievances/Disciplinary Matters

A disciplinary matter arises when something is happening that is not acceptable and gives rise to someone voicing concerns. The issues could be identified through whistle blowing, an external complaint, or a specific incident.

In the case of a concern being raised about an external worker, the Project Manager would, in the first instance, speak to the external worker to seek to bring about a localised solution to the issue and improve the practice.

If the concern indicated that the issue was more serious, or unacceptable behaviour has reoccurred, this could be deemed to be misconduct. In this situation, the concerns would be relayed to the SoLO Manager who would contact the employer direct, to enable them to deal with the issue through their own grievance procedures.

If the issue constituted gross misconduct and puts the learning disabled member or others at risk, the Project Leader would contact the SoLO

Policy Name: External Workers Supporting Members on a SoLO Project
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Manager at the earliest practical opportunity and the employer would be contacted as soon as possible to enable them to take immediate action.

Complaints

Complaints will be dealt with, at the informal stage, by SoLO, but where it applies to the practice of an external worker, the employer will be kept informed. If the complaint is not completed at the informal stage, the employer will be informed and their complaints procedure will be followed.

Insurance

Insurance of external workers will be covered by their employer's insurance policy.

Termination of placement where an external worker is employed

SoLO is committed to ensure that all workers who participate in any SoLO activity, whether directly employed or not, are treated fairly, in accordance with the law and with correct attention to health and safety. SoLO may seek reassurance that correct policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the employment is appropriately organised, and where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case, SoLO reserves the right either to not allow the placement to begin, or to terminate an existing placement



External worker guidance

We are pleased that you are supporting a member with a learning disability to enjoy a SoLO Activity!

We want to work with you to ensure that the person you support has the highest quality experience.

Our commitment to you:

- We will inform you about what we are doing that relates to you or the person you support.
- We will treat you with respect
- We will respond to any concerns that you may have
- We will direct you, if required, whilst on our project
- We will provide you with a safe, positive environment to work in

• Our expectations of you:

- You will have an up to date DBS and be permitted to work in the UK
- You will have received care certificate training or equivalent
- You will have all of the necessary emergency information for the person you are supporting
- You will be covered by your employer's insurance
- You will respect the confidentiality of our members and will not take any images on your phone when you are on project
- You will dress appropriately for the project
- You will act in a respectful manner
- You will not use your phone unless it is directly required to support your member
- You will adhere to our safeguarding, equal opportunities, health and safety and data protection policies which are all available on our website <http://www.solihullsolo.org/corporate>