

On Call Policy

1) Policy

1.1.1 Dudley Mind are committed to ensure that systems are in place to support staff and service users in the Housing Support section to deal with emergency situations arising out of hours. The policy allows residents at our supported housing to contact management out of office hours in the event of a housing related emergency. Provisions are also in place to allow staff working at weekends or after 5pm Monday to Friday to contact management for health and safety reasons and in the event of an emergency. This will be known as the on-call service.

1.1.2 Dudley Mind aims to ensure that all emergencies are dealt with professionally and with minimum disruption to services.

1.1.3 The on call system operates seven days a week throughout the year on a rota basis.

1.1.4 The on call number is strictly for use outside of normal working hours and only in an emergency. Routine contact should be made via the head office number.

1.1.5 Dudley Mind's on-call provision offers housing related support not emergency mental health care. Clients who require emergency mental health care are encouraged to use the regular emergency services in a crisis and they are given a list of emergency contact numbers by their support worker.

1.2 Who may use the on-call service?

- The on-call service may be used by Dudley Mind staff working outside of 'normal' working hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).
- Service users resident at Dudley Mind premises (see scope) outside of normal office hours.

1.3 Examples of serious situations when the on-call manager may be contacted:

Any death or serious injury of staff or service user
A fire causing extensive damage to premises and contents
A violent incident involving member of staff/service user
Any incident requiring relocation of staff or service user
Any incident likely to lead to media interest
For staff to sign in and out of work outside normal office hours

1.4 Situations where the on-call service must not be used:

Emergency mental health assessment
Dealing with emergency maintenance

1.5 Guidelines for persons on-call

The person on call must:

- ensure that they have the on call phone switched on, charged and with them at all times.
- ensure they have access to the on call folder at all times. The folder should contain a copy of the on-call procedure, the contingency plan and emergency contact details for staff, service users, and organisations that can assist in a housing related emergency. As the folder contains confidential material, care must be taken to ensure that it is kept in a safe, secure place and not left unattended.
- be fit for work at all times and not be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs whilst undertaking on-call duties.
- have an appropriate vehicle and stay within a 30 mile radius of Dudley at all times.

2) Scope

The On-call Policy applies to all Dudley Mind staff and service users being supported in Dudley Mind premises. For the purpose of this policy any property let, leased, licensed to and/or managed by Dudley Mind will be regarded as 'premises'. All managers expected to be on call duty will be made aware of this policy and will attend when required.

3) Procedure

The procedure provides guidance to staff and service users on the assistance they might expect to receive when calling the on-call service. It also details the procedure that on-call managers should follow to deal with situations that may arise whilst on call.

3.1 Using the on-call service

To contact the on-call, telephone : **07951 580792**.

3.2 Procedure for tenants

3.2.1 In the event of a serious incident such as fire, gas leak, tenants are encouraged to contact the emergency services prior to consulting the on-call. This is covered in more detail in the tenants' handbook

No response from on call staff

3.2.2 In the unlikely event that a tenant/staff member uses the on-call system and gets no response they must report this to the Chief Executive Officer who will investigate the matter to ascertain how and why there was no response.

3.3 Procedure for persons on call

3.3.1 When contacted, the person on call should respond in a calm manner and attempt to obtain clear information about the nature of the problem. In some instances it may be possible to deal with the situation simply by giving phone support and advice.

3.3.2 In some serious cases an on site visit may be required - **this will constitute a call-out**. They can ring the Operations Manager or the Chief Executive Officer if necessary.

3.3.3 If it is a serious incident the person on call may need to inform the emergency services of the situation, irrespective of whether a service user says emergency services have already been contacted.

3.3.3 Following any incident, the person on call should record full details on the on-call record sheets and place a copy on the service user's file, as soon as practical.

3.3.4 The person on call can ring the Operations Manager, or the Chief Executive Officer at any stage for advice.

Responding alone

3.3.5 Those on call duty are not expected to put themselves at risk and should pay attention to the lone working procedure at all times.

3.3.6 If you have any concerns about the situation you are called to eg. entering a premises following a violent incident or break in, you should consider ringing another manager to accompany you or a member of the duty social work team if appropriate. As a last resort consider having the police present.

Action to be taken on receipt of a call:

3.4.1 Identify who is calling

3.4.2 Confirm reason for call – depending on the reason follow steps below.

3.4.3 Staff member signing in or out of work – make a note of name and time of call and forward on to relevant team manager the following day.

3.4.4 Staff member calling in sick – make a note of name and time of call and forward on to the relevant team manager and HR Officer the following day. Arrange cover if necessary.

3.4.5 Staff member failing to sign in or out/missing staff member

Follow lone working procedure:

1) Telephone the person on their mobile twice leaving a message to make urgent contact.

2) Contact the place the staff member last visited in order to ascertain their whereabouts. In the case of day services staff, contact the person they were last working with to confirm their colleague left the premises safe and well. If

this does not provide useful information call the places the staff member visited before and / or after their last known location.

3) Call emergency contact, which will be taken for all staff by Human Resources as part of induction and is listed in the oncall handbook.

4) Call Police and share our knowledge of whereabouts.

For floating support staff working after 5pm, head office should contact the on-call person to inform of their last whereabouts, contact details and expected finish time.

3.4.6 Call from a service user:

Gather as much information as possible on the telephone through the caller

Assess the situation

Decide whether your attendance is required or not

Advise the caller on what immediate action to take

Make calls on behalf of the service user if necessary

Contact other relevant services if required

Follow the Emergency Contingency Plan if appropriate.

Document action taken in on-call record book

3.5.7 Service users who are locked out

Dudley Mind only holds key to the properties it manages with the explicit prior agreement of the tenant. These are not available to the tenant after office hours. Therefore, should any tenant lock themselves out or lose their keys the on-call manager will arrange with Dudley Mind's contracted locksmith to have the locks changed. The tenant will be charged in full for this service (approximately £170). They must be advised of this by the on-call manager before proceeding with instructing the lock smith.

This is made clear to tenants at tenancy sign-up and in the service user handbook. Tenants are to be advised to leave a spare set of keys with a trusted family member or friend.

3.4.8 Death of service user

If there has been a death/suspected death on Dudley Mind premises confirm that emergency services have been called. If not, ask the caller to call them and call you back after doing so (and call emergency services yourself if appropriate).

Help staff/service users to act in a calm manner

Instruct them:

Not to touch the body

To ensure that the area and premises/property is secure

To stop other non-emergency personnel from entering the area

To be aware that the police will initially treat the death as suspicious

That if the ambulance takes the body to hospital, they will request some basic details such as name; date of birth; name, address and telephone number of

GP; current medication; name of person who found the body and when; name and contact details of team manager/support worker. The Police will also ask for details, if this information is not immediately available it should be provided at the earliest opportunity by the team manager.

3.4.9 Fire at Dudley Mind premises/supported housing

If there has been a fire check that emergency services have been called, if not ask the caller to call them and call you back after doing so (and call emergency services yourself if appropriate).

Confirm that the building has been evacuated and everyone is safe and accounted for.

If the fire has damaged the premises to such an extent that the service users cannot re-enter ensure that they can all get home safely.

If the fire has damaged a supported house to such an extent that the service user(s) cannot re-enter the Emergency Contingency Plan should be followed.

3.4.10 Recording

Full details of any incident involving a service user should be recorded in the on-call recording file and a copy placed on their personal file as soon as is reasonably practical. A serious incident form should be completed if required under the serious incident policy.

4) Payment for on-call duties

4.1 Those employees who are required to remain 'on-call' after normal business hours will be paid a rate of £5.00 per day. This is to cover being on call, taking phone calls as required and documenting any follow up action.

4.2 Should the employee be called out (see 3.3.2) whilst on-call the following provisions apply:

4.2.1 Staff should record the amount of time spent at the project including travelling time which will be payable at double their normal hourly rate of pay or they may choose (with agreement from their line manager) to take double the equivalent time off in lieu.

4.3 The Operations Manager will ensure that the on-call returns are submitted to the Finance Officer in time to be included in the salaries (by the 1st of each month).

5) The on-call rota

5.1 The nominated on-call managers will share responsibility of being on duty for this service on a weekly rota basis.

5.2 The Operations Manager shall set up a rota and inform those concerned.

5.3 Staff must plan their holidays well in advance so that allowances for annual leave are catered for on the on-call rota.

6) Hand over of on-call mobile phone

- 6.1 The person who was last on call is responsible for handing over the phone to the next person.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the person taking over the on-call system to ensure that the phone is charged.

7) Sick whilst on call

- 7.1 Where a member of staff falls sick or is unable to fulfil their duties whilst on-call for any other emergency reason they must contact another manager who has on-call responsibilities (Appendix 1) to arrange the safe hand-over of the on-call phone, this may be done via mini cab or courier.
- 7.2 Where a staff member is due to be on the rota and falls sick they must make arrangements for the on-call pack to be handed to another member of on-call staff who can be available.

8) Mobile Phone Coverage

- 8.1 The mobile phone system has UK coverage for 98% of the population however, there are some areas where the system has no reception such as underground stations, basement areas and remote places such as the Lake District. These places should be avoided if at all possible whilst on call.
- 8.2 If in any doubt about the reception you must move to a place with reception and make a test call and check for any messages which may have been recorded every 30 minutes.

9) Dealing with the media

- 9.1 The On-call person should not have any dealings with the media.
- 9.2 Any requests from the media to make a statement regarding any incident should be directed to the head office where the CEO shall respond themselves or through an authorised person.

10) Availability of on-call number

The on-call number will be permanent and made available to all stake holders: relevant staff, service users of housing services, security staff at Bushey Fields Hospital, CHADD, Jephson Housing, ADT alarm services, the Police, and Emergency Duty Team.

11) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

12) Related Policies and Procedures

Lone Working
Contingency plan
Serious Incident Policy and Procedure
Holding Tenant's Keys

13) Changes

Dudley Mind reserves the right to change the provisions of the On-call policy and procedure by way of addition, deletion, amendment or substitution of new procedures from time to time at its discretion. All stakeholders will be notified of any changes by appropriate means.

Appendix 1 – Oncall staff

The nominated on-call staff are as follows:

Katherine Allen (Operations Manager)

Martin Mueller, (Chief Executive Officer)

Nagheena Qamar (Day Services Manager)

Reviewed: January 2010

Next Review: January 2011