



## **PLINY Standard Operating Procedure**

**PLINYP02**

# **Safe Working Practices**

Effective date: 25.06.2012

Version number: 1.0

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## HOME VISITS

When going on home visits it is important that you action the following.

### ***a) General***

- Check that you know the team's emergency procedures if you, or someone else, encounter a problem.
- Ensure that your car is insured for work purposes.  
<http://cics.dept.shef.ac.uk/transport/WorkRelatedDrivingPolicy.pdf>
- If travelling by public transport ensure you have planned the journey, know the timetable and route. See link to Sheffield journey planner.  
<http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/>
- If the buses are cancelled or you miss the last bus ensure you have a taxi number programmed into your phone. Ask for a receipt.
- Dress appropriately for the area or candidate/participant to be visited to ensure that you don't become a target.
- Avoid taking large amounts of personal valuables with you on visits or cash.
- Wear shoes and clothes that do not hinder movement or your ability to run away in an emergency.
- Think about whether you need to carry everything in a large bag or can leave some things locked in the boot of your car.
- Ensure that your means of communication and any personal alarms are working and accessible e.g. your phone is charged and you have a signal. If possible programme the safe visiting number into your mobile phone so that it can be rung by pressing one button.
- Ensure your vehicle has sufficient petrol and is well maintained (refer to Work Related Driving Policy  
<http://cics.dept.shef.ac.uk/transport/WorkRelatedDrivingPolicy.pdf>)
- Park as near as is practicable to the address to be visited, in such a position as to be able to drive straight off, and in a well-lit area at night.
- Avoid, as far as possible, waste ground, isolated pathways and subways, particularly at night.
- Keep aware of the nearest place of safety such as shops.

- Researchers should not give lifts to candidates/ participants or to carry out sessions in their cars. If asked, say that it is against university policy to do so, i.e. you are not refusing them you are simply not allowed.
- At the end of a visit when calling in to report to the safety checker park up out of sight of the candidate/ participant (i.e. round the corner) to make the call, to avoid raising unnecessary suspicion.

***b) When arriving at a candidate/ participant's home:***

- Assess the situation on approach and be prepared to abandon or postpone the visit if in doubt of your safety.
- Stand well clear of the doorway after ringing or knocking. Stand sideways on so that you present a narrow, protected target.
- Show your University of Sheffield ID card, but do not wear them as this may make you a target.
- Let the participant know (honestly) how much of their time you will need.
- Do not enter a location if you are uneasy about your safety. Make an excuse not to go in if the person answering the door gives any cause for concern, for example if you suspect they are drunk or if the person you arranged to visit is not in.
- Wait to be invited in or at least ask if you can go in. Follow the occupants in when entering houses and other buildings.
- Check as you go in how the front door locks.
- Study your surroundings. Look for an exit.
- Don't spread your belongings around. You may need to leave in a hurry. In an emergency leave your belongings. Personal safety is more important than your belongings.
- Remain aware of the behaviour of all persons in the house, looking for any signs or signals that may indicate a potential problem.
- Remain aware of the environment and maintain escape routes in case problems arise.
- Treat candidates/ participants courteously, remembering that you are a guest in their home.

- If at any time during the visit you have any concern for your safety, make your excuses and leave. Have some set phrases so you don't have to think on your feet, ones that you feel comfortable with.
- If an escort is accompanying they will be able to assess the surroundings more vigilantly than the interviewer. There will need to be some agreement between interviewer and escort prior to the visit as to how the escort can communicate any problems that may arise during the visit with which they feel uncomfortable. This could be a code word or phrase which suits both parties. For example, the escort could say "I'm just keeping an eye on the time, we do need to remember to get back to the office in time for that meeting" as way of an excuse.

### ***c) Specific Safety Check Procedures***

The following Safety Check Procedures must be adhered to for all lone visits.

#### **Proforma available in Appendices A**

- (1) Candidate/participant's name and address.
- (2) Candidate/participant's home telephone/ mobile phone number if available.
- (3) Details of how the researcher will be travelling to the appointment (e.g. bus, car, train...)
- (4) Description and registration number for the car which the researcher will be travelling in (if travelling by car).
- (5) Name of researcher who will be making the visit, including details of any escort.
- (6) Mobile number of researcher making visit.
- (7) Time of appointment.
- (8) Check-in deadline.
- (9) Emergency contact.

On the day of the visit, the researcher should telephone the safety checker to say they are going on the visit. Prior to making a visit ensure you have alerted someone and asked them to be your safety checker for this visit.

At the end of the visit, before the check-in deadline, the researchers must ring the safety checker. The deadline is often 30 minutes after the planned end of visit time. This allows the visit to run over if necessary. However, always phone in when you finish the visit. Do not telephone from outside a client's home.

The safety checker should be contactable by phone for the whole duration of the visit.

The researchers should keep their mobile phone on during the whole visit; this could be on discrete/ vibrate.

In the event of wanting to report an emergency without raising the alarm of the client, the researchers will ring the safety checker and say **"I forgot to bring the**

**coping questionnaire".** The safety checker would **immediately ring the police on 999** and ask for assistance at the person's address.

If the researchers do not ring the safety checkers by the allotted time

- (1) The safety checker should ring the researcher on their mobile phone.
- (2) If they do not answer, the safety checker should then ring the candidate/ participant on the telephone number provided.
- (3) If there is still no answer then the safety checker should ring the police on 999 and request immediate assistance at the address.
- (4) The safety checker should then ring the principal investigator or trial manager to inform them of what is happening.

## Appendix A

### ***SAFETY CHECK PROFORMA***

<b>Date</b>				
<b>Appointment Time</b>				
<b>Check-in deadline</b>				
<b>Candidate/ Participant Name</b>				
<b>Address</b>				
<b>Telephone Number</b>		<b>Mobile Number</b>		
<b>How is the researcher travelling to the meeting</b>				
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Work's Mobile</b>	<b>Personal Mobile</b>	
<b>Researcher 1</b>				
	Vehicle Details: (if applicable)			
<b>Researcher 2</b>				
	Vehicle Details: (if applicable)			
<b>In case of Emergency call:</b>				