

## GUIDELINES FOR HOME VISITS

On occasion, Trainee Clinical Psychologists may be required to visit clients at home. Although untoward incidents are unlikely, issues of personal safety do need to be considered. Supervisors are encouraged, therefore, to consider with the trainee on placement a range of simple measures that might be considered in order to minimise any potential risk on making a home visit. It is likely that each Trust system will also have its own overarching guidelines for home visits. As well as the more 'obvious' rules and regulations applicable to all staff in regard of ensuring their safety, it is also important that supervisors create an environment in their supervision with the trainee where any uncomfortable feelings in relation to a particular client can be openly discussed and acted upon if necessary.

Trainees need to ensure that they are aware of local policies and procedures relating to home visits. Discussion of the local protocol for home visits is an important aspect of the health and safety section of the ACC. The following points may also be useful:

- Obtain information about the client who is being visited at home. For example, does the client have a known history of aggression?
- Obtain information about the location of the home visit. For example, does the area have a reputation for being unsafe, isolated or poorly lit?
- Consider the nature of the therapeutic relationship between the client and clinician, and the purpose of the home visit. For example, is the client 'suspicious' of all professionals; is the trainee visiting to break 'bad news'?
- Ensure the trainee details where and when they are making a home visit and their anticipated return. When home visits are made at the end of the day, explore what possibilities exist to allow the trainee to inform another member of staff that they have completed the visit safely.
- Emphasise the importance to the trainee of maintaining therapeutic boundaries, for example by not disclosing personal information such as home address or telephone number.
- Should a trainee experience a potentially dangerous situation, consider what information needs to be passed on to other relevant staff to ensure their safety, public safety and that of the client him/her self.