

# Manchester Institute of Education - Conducting fieldwork alone

## Researcher guidance

Your personal safety working off-campus is paramount. It is considered more important than the successful completion of interviews.

### You SHOULD NOT:

- Enter someone's home if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Enter a house if the person you have arranged to see is not there.
- Undertake an interview or assessment in a bedroom.
- Give a personal telephone number or address to an interviewee.

You can also **enhance your personal safety** when conducting interviews alone and off campus by:

1. Asking a colleague to accompany you if you feel uncomfortable.
2. Let interviewees know you have a schedule. Upon arrival, establish you have the correct person by asking "by what name do you prefer to be called?" Explain your research role and the conditions of confidentiality to the interviewee(s) and offer them the opportunity to ask questions.
3. If you prefer to decline refreshments, avoid offence by carrying your own water bottle.
4. Develop an appropriate exit strategy (what to say etc) should you wish to terminate an interview early.
5. Take steps to leave a situation immediately if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
6. Adopt a friendly and professional manner when conducting interviews but be careful not to be over-familiar.
7. Dress modestly and taking account of any cultural or religious sensitivities of your interviewee.
8. Avoid sitting on settees next to the interviewee and try to sit nearest to the exit.
9. Ask for household pets to be shut in another room if their presence during the interview is a cause of concern.

### During a fieldwork visit:

1. You must contact your nominated person when you arrive at the interview location. In the presence of the interviewee, you should inform them where you are, and who you are with.
2. Once the interview has been completed, you should contact your nominated person to let them know you have left safely. If the interview goes on longer than anticipated, you should contact your nominated person to inform them.
3. Once the interview has been completed, you should contact your nominated person to let them know you have left safely. If the interview goes on longer than anticipated, you should contact your nominated person to inform them.

**If at any point during the interview, you feel unsafe;** you should excuse yourself, go to another room, and use your mobile to call for assistance.

**You may wish to consider introducing codes in case of a threatening situation.** For example, phoning to ask the contact to check if you have left a ring-binder on the desk could be a code for "I do not feel safe; please send someone to the house."