

LONE WORKING POLICY

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Signed by Trust/Committee Chair

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1. Lone Working Activities

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. Staff do not have to be working out in the community to be alone, they may be working in an isolated part of an office, establishment or in a service user's room. Many staff work alone, for all or part of their time, in situations where colleagues are not within hearing distance. The following are examples of lone working:

People in fixed establishments where:

- Only one person works at the premises, e.g. first person in/last person out.
- People work separately from others, e.g. in isolated areas of a site.
- Working from home.
- People work outside normal hours, e.g. maintenance staff, cleaners, night staff.

Mobile, or peripatetic workers operating away from their fixed base:

- 'Service' workers, e.g. Specialist support teachers; school staff making home visits, Approved Social Workers.
- Visitors to other workplaces, e.g. staff attending meetings, on construction or maintenance activities

2. Lone Working Risk Assessment

Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, a risk assessment of lone working tasks must be carried out.

Lone working issues may be considered as part of an overall risk assessment of a job role or activity. However, where lone working has not been considered as part of other risk assessments, a specific risk assessment must be carried out. To assist in this process a Lone Working Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 3) is provided with this guidance.

The main principle to be applied when assessing the risk of lone working is one of 'foreseeability' i.e. that it is possible, based on knowledge and experience, to predict the nature of risks that an employee could be subjected to. It follows that, it is therefore possible to consider what arrangements could successfully eliminate, or where this is not possible, reduce the risk to an acceptable level. The knowledge of the job that and of the potential risks to which staff may be exposed will assist to make the assessment.

Although it is possible to establish some generic type rules and arrangements that will help to control the risks of working alone in most cases there is still a need to also consider each set of circumstances separately.

3. Identifying Lone Working Tasks and Activities

The first stage in the risk assessment process is to identify known and foreseeable lone working tasks and activities.

It is recognised that the hazards presented by a particular lone working task may vary, e.g. meeting members of the public compared to meeting members of the public with a known history of violence. The factors that could make a task more hazardous should be identified when listing lone working activities (e.g. home visit – client with no history of violence, home visit – client has a known history of violence).

Where lone working has the potential to lead to violence and aggression it is essential to identify the causes in order to prevent it. It is recommended that the following areas are considered in the risk assessment:

- **The customer/client** – anything the client brings to the situation that could contribute towards violence, e.g. previous history/lack of history.
- **The employee** – factors which may increase or decrease the chances of violence occurring, e.g. level of appropriate training and experience, representing authority.
- **What the work involves** – the interaction which takes place between employee and client, for example, enforcing rules, carrying out inspections.
- **Working environment** – this involves looking at the physical setting in which the work is carried out, for example, a home visit, rural areas.

4. Identifying the Hazards

The second phase of the risk assessment is to identify the potential hazards. This can be achieved by considering the various factors involved in any given work situation, for example:

An assessment should consider the following:

Time and Place

- The degree of isolation
- Safe access and egress
- Whether the workplace is in a known 'high risk' area
- Type and effectiveness of any communication systems
- Condition of building/work space, i.e. State of repair, lighting, etc
- Increased risk times, i.e. time of day or day of the week
- Travel arrangements, including vehicle breakdown whilst driving alone
- Environmental conditions, i.e. weather conditions, temperature, sunlight, pollution, levels of light, etc.

The Task

- Risks whilst travelling/driving/travel on foot
- Risk of violence/aggression
- Visiting client's homes
- Manual Handling tasks, can they be done safely by a lone worker?
- Can all potentially hazardous substances, (chemicals, biological agents) be safely used?
- Can all plant and equipment to be used be safely handled and used by a lone worker?
- Does the task involve the handling of money or valuables?
- Does the task involve the use of statutory powers?
- Does the task involve breaking bad news, changing/withdrawing a service?
- Client factors, both group generic and person specific
- Does the task involve working with electrical equipment and appliances?
- Working at heights, below ground or on uneven ground such as construction sites
- Risk from hot work processes
- Confined Spaces

Fitness and Competence

- Does the lone worker have any medical condition, i.e. Disability, pregnancy, injury?
- Is the lone worker sufficiently competent for the task, including for emergencies, (young workers are specifically at risk due to their lack of experience)?
- Gender, physical ability, age
- Is the lone worker provided with information about the risks involved with the tasks?
- Are there any arrangements for contact between the lone worker and colleagues/managers?

Tasks that are Unsafe to be Carried Out by a Lone Worker

- In circumstances where, even with all the controls in place, the risk assessment identifies that it is not possible for a task to be carried out safely by a lone worker, then it should only be done by two people.

5. Controls

There are a number of controls that can help to reduce risk when working alone. It is always advisable to avoid working alone if to do so increases the risk of harm. Where this is not practical, or necessary, appropriate controls should be agreed and implemented to ensure that the risks of working alone are reduced to acceptable levels.

Where there is no regular supervision, to control and guide in situations of uncertainty, lone workers need to fully understand the risks involved and the necessary precautions.

Procedures for emergencies should be agreed and employees must be competent to implement them correctly and appropriately. The Central HR Team can advise managers further on any of the examples set out below, but generally Emergency arrangements should include Management consideration of:

- Security of site and buildings, for example, one-way closing, entry-phone system, etc.
- Call in arrangements or employee contact after a specified period of no contact.
- Suitable means to respond to any distress call or failure to communicate when one is expected
- Access to a telephone to call emergency services, preferably mobile or radio.
- Contact points in the event of an emergency, including key personnel.
- Clear and easy access to a first aid box or emergency first aid.
- Panic Alarms/Personal alarms
- Lone Working Devices (see appendix 2)
- Personal Safety Training

When out and about alone, staff should remember:

- Trust your intuition. If you feel concerned do not ignore the feeling, act immediately.
- Always be alert, keep your head up when out walking and look confident.
- Avoid unlit areas, short cuts and unfamiliar territory
- Always know where you are going and how to get there.
- Walk facing traffic if forced to use the road
- Keep away from obstructions that could provide cover for would be assailants.
- Always inform the office/manager if you change your arrangements
- Staff should always remove their school badge when off the premises as identification of where the staff member works is a risk to both the school and to the staff member themselves.

Lone Working

CEO/HEADTEACHER/MANAGER CHECKLIST

Managers have the responsibility to ensure that the requirements of this guidance are implemented.

The checklist below identifies key actions involved in controlling the health and safety risks arising from lone working. Further information about each of these points is contained in this document.

- Have you identified lone working activities within your areas of control?
- If you have, are these reviewed annually?
- Has a risk assessment of these lone working activities been carried out?
- Are the risk control strategies, based on the risk assessment findings, designed to ensure that the risks of the job can be adequately controlled by one person?
- Have you ensured that the individual staff member knows their own responsibility for ensuring their own safety and in following safety professional practice?
- Have you identified any additional control measures that are required and have these control measures been implemented?
- Has the individual staff member received appropriate training if appropriate e.g. Personal Safety Awareness?
- Has a written lone working procedure or best practice guidelines, specific to the team, been developed and communicated to relevant staff?
- Would you know what to do if a lone worker could not be located, or did not return from a site visit?

Lone Worker Monitoring (Guidance on Lone Worker Devices)

Introduction

Lone Worker monitoring is the practice of monitoring the safety of employees who may be exposed to risk due to work conditions in which they are located out of sight and sound from a person who may be able to offer aid in the event of an emergency.

A Lone Worker device is seen as the most efficient and effective way for monitoring employee's safety. They provide a system for direct communication to their employers and/or an alarm receiving centre as well as, if necessary, the emergency services should they ever be exposed to an incident that puts their safety at risk.

This guidance has been designed to offer information to lone workers on the different types of Lone Worker Devices available to them.

Lone Worker Devices:

Numerous devices have been developed and are currently in use by companies world-wide. These devices include:

Phone based check-in systems which require employees to call in to a designated receiver after a predetermined time. Check-ins are often performed hourly or bi-hourly.

Safety monitoring smart phone applications that allow employees to quickly request aid has become more feasible thanks to the widespread adoption of smart phones. These applications may provide a panic button or allow for prompt check-in without requiring a phone call to be made. The benefit of this type of device is it's designed as a tool for two-way communication, and enables vital information to be exchanged for the safety of staff, and is not simply a mechanism for a manager to see where employees are located

Safety monitoring devices are not routinely provided to employees within SECAT as it is considered that, providing all of the above checks and risk assessments are made, the normal working patterns of our staff do not cause concern.

However, if a line manager/headteacher/Manager feels that there are individuals who are at risk, there are dedicated monitoring devices which have become a new best practice in employee safety monitoring. Should this be the case, the line manager/headteacher should contact the CEO to discuss what should be put in place.

For information only:

Typically, products of this type offer multiple methods of alerting including both automated and manual methods, as well as real-time location awareness and alerting. Examples are;

Identity Card Holders - designed to be easy to wear and discreet to use, containing mobile phone (GSM) technology enabling a 24/7 link to Alarm Receiving Centre's.

SOS Devices – can look like modern car fobs and are kept on a keyring. Contains GPS technology, pre-designated number speed dialling, SOS button to Central Monitoring Station, SIM card capabilities (GSM), loudspeaker, microphone and a USB charging port.

Lone Worker Alarms - designed to be carried in a pocket, or worn in a carrying pouch (supplied). It features buttons allowing the lone worker to call for help and triggers an alarm should the lone worker collapse, or be injured.

They have a pull-cord which may be clipped to a belt and an alarm that is triggered should the unit be forcibly removed.

Costs:

The most popular pay method available is to pay monthly, where you would pay an upfront minimal cost followed by fixed monthly payments. The monthly fee can range from as a little as £6 (per unit) per month up to £30 (per unit) per month with most contracts averaging 36 months.

Some companies offer a 30-day free trial where you can use their devices and services with no obligation to buy.

A fully managed solution for your lone workers can be provided by a variety of companies, the following are a few examples:

- Connexion 2
- Skyguard
- G4S
- Peoplesafe
- Relianceprotect
- Secom

The Skyguard system is currently the most used device within the Local Authority

Risk Assessment - Lone Working

Please refer to the Lone Working Policy when completing this risk assessment.

Name of team/section/unit:	Assessment by:	Date of assessment:
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Lone working tasks/activities with risks (List below)	Who is at risk?	How can the hazards cause harm? (E.g. violence, falls from height, manual handling injuries, etc.)	Normal Control Measures	Are normal control measures adequate?	
				Yes	No
Lone Working Working Offsite alone Home Visits etc. Carrying cash / valuables	Staff Colleagues	Accident / injury, delayed assistance in emergency Physical assault / verbal abuse / threatening behaviour Cuts/abrasions, muscular skeletal and other physical injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For home visits background information on the family/address is gathered beforehand, and perhaps a specific risk assessment conducted if necessary • Where higher risk identified visits not to be conducted alone. • Reduce time spent working alone so far as is reasonably practicable. • All staff to be familiar with lone working procedures • Mobile phone available charged and switched on. • Lone worker devices supplied to staff (see appendix a) • Agreed schedule – times and location of visits to be known. • Call in arrangements in place (enter details). • Response procedure in event of overdue contact. • Contact point available in office • Staff own experience and training in recognising signs of aggression and avoiding / de-escalating this. • Regular supervision and arrangements for debrief / feedback from staff. 		

<p>Are all people carrying out lone working tasks medically fit to work alone? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, discuss this with the individuals concerned and record separately (to maintain confidentiality) any adjustments to their work that are necessary.</p>

<p align="center">Additional Control Measures <i>(to take account of local/individual circumstances including changes such as working practices, equipment, staffing levels).</i></p>	<p align="center">Action by Whom <i>(list the name of the person/people who have been designated to conduct actions)</i></p>	<p align="center">Action by When <i>(set timescales for the completion of the actions – remember to prioritise them)</i></p>	<p align="center">Action Completed <i>(record the actual date of completion for each action listed)</i></p>	<p align="center">Residual Risk Rating</p>
<p>Consideration given to staff at increased risk i.e. new or expectant mothers, fractious history or relationship with client, inexperienced staff etc. and lone working activities avoided where practicable.</p>				
<p>DATE OF REVIEW: <i>Record actual date of review</i></p>	<p>COMMENTS: <i>Record any comments reviewer wishes to make. Including recommendations for future reviews.</i></p>			
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