

## Lone Worker Policy

Document Details		
<b>Title</b>	Lone Worker Policy	
Main points	Regarding those that are to work alone during the working day (home visits etc)	
Who is the document aimed at?	All staff	
Author		
Approval process		
Approved by (Clinician/Manager)	EMT	
Most recent approval date	January 2024	
Category	Clinical	
Sub Category	Lone working	
Next review date	January 2025	
Distribution		
Who the policy will be distributed to	All staff	
Document Links		
Required by CQC		
Other		
Amendments History		
No	Date	Amendment
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

## Scope

This protocol is applicable to all staff who work regularly on their own (such as doing home visits) and staff who on occasions are alone in office and receptions areas. It applies to employees in all locations and includes temporary employees, contractors, and locums.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and take suitable precautions in relation to lone working.

## Definition

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone working as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

Lone working occurs when employees travel by themselves carry out work in the community by themselves or work away from their base.

## Hazards of Lone Working

Working alone can sometimes put people in a vulnerable position because it may be more difficult for them to summon help if things go wrong or their health and safety is at risk.

People who work alone face the same hazards in their daily work as other workers. However, the degree of risk of harm is often greater than for other workers.

Hazards which lone workers may face include:

- accidents or emergencies arising out of work for example verbal abuse, physical assault, road traffic accident etc
- fire
- inadequate provision of rest hygiene and welfare issues
- manual handling

## Responsibilities

The Manager has overall responsibility to ensure that it puts in place the necessary management systems for the effective management of lone working, and for ensuring the provision of sufficient resources to implement the Health and Safety Policy and for ensuring that they comply with the requirements of health and Safety legislation.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that lone workers for whom they are responsible are not placed at increased risk. Where staff undertake lone working, managers must ensure that structures and procedures are in place and adhered to demonstrate as far as is reasonably practicable that staff are safe if something untoward occurs. Managers are responsible for ensuring all staff are aware of this policy.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they have read and understood this policy and for reporting any incidents relating to lone working and undertaking risk assessments, so that risks can be identified and suitable measures developed to control those risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

## Employer's Legal Duties

Although there is no legal prohibition on working alone (although it should be noted that in certain high-risk types of work that there may be specific prohibition on working alone), the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) says that the employer must ensure as far as reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of employees and those affected by the work.

## Employees Legal Duties

Employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their work and cooperate with their employers in meeting their legal goals.

## Arrangements

All employees must be instructed to report any incidents which could affect their safety as such information is essential when reviewing the adequacy of working arrangements. Staff should be informed of the procedures used and should be given support by their line manager regarding the reporting procedure.

Assessing the Risk – The need for staff to work on their own in or out of normal hours should be discussed with their line manager. Some of the factors that need to be addressed within the risk assessment include;

1. Communications (how to summon assistance if required)
  - Is anyone notified that there is a lone worker in the area?
  - Is the line manager aware that the person will be working alone especially if outside normal working hours?
  - What emergency arrangements in addition to existing ones are required?
  - Are the means of access to the area adequately controlled to prevent unauthorized access?
  - Are those activities being carried out suitable for one person?
  
2. The ability to facilitate or maintain flexible working.

When considering these issues and identify areas of risk they should be discussed with the line manager to consider any possible solutions and actions which can be taken to minimize the risks.

Prior to carrying out the overall service risk assessment a lone worker survey can be carried out with staff identifying potential risks.

## Post-incident advice for managers

- Take concerns of people seriously even if the incident seems to have been minor.
- People not at the accident cannot judge how serious the incident was to the people involved.
- Hold regular team meetings to discuss problems and learn from them.
- Conduct a debriefing session with staff involved; allow staff to talk through the incident. Do not apportion blame. Provide support to ensure they are coping.
- Make a full investigation into the incident and examine how procedures can be improved to prevent recurrence.
- Staff to complete formal report forms for all incidents, including apparent minor ones.
- Be aware that minor problems can sometimes be the precursor to more serious incidents.
- Follow up at a later date to ensure staff are fully recovered and working normally, and that any amendments to procedures are being followed.

## Procedures

Following the completion of the risk assessments each service must establish clear local procedures and set limits as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone. There must be agreement as to the circumstances in which it is correct to stop and seek advice.

## Actions for staff lone working outside of the practice

1. For all workers to ensure that their Line Managers / supervisors and administration team support have access to their diary.
2. For workers to ensure all their visits are logged into the diary – including the patient number of the patient being visited - and time returning to office.
3. Workers need to ensure that if they record personal information which includes information about service users names and addresses this should not be shared on an open calendar outside of the GP Surgery.
4. If there is a whiteboard signing in /out – please ensure your whereabouts, and expected time back is logged as above.
5. If there are any concerns about the household / service user, the worker visiting needs to discuss with their line manager or/ deputy, the nature of the risk and a risk assessment completed and any risk alert factors logged on the patient record. Actions to minimise the risk need to be noted and discussed with either line management or at clinical supervision.
6. Workers need to ensure that their mobile phone is taken on home visits with them and it is kept fully charged.
7. It is the Practice Manager and Line manager's role to ensure that there is a record of all the team members Mobile phones and that this is easily accessible. Details should also include home address, contact numbers, vehicle registration etc. to ensure quick and rapid response and support to family members.
8. If the expected time of return is more than 90 minutes later than stated, the person allocated by the worker should call the worker to ensure they are safe.
9. Should the contact person fail to contact the worker, contact to be re-attempted by phone for the next 30 minutes before consideration is given for further action by raising the matter with Senior Management. [This means the worker will be 2 hours later on the visit than expected]
10. If a worker is conducting a late visit in the afternoon or working away from the area, and will not be returning back to the office following a visit or activity, it is expected that they inform their contact person via Text, e mail or phone, once their visit has concluded.
11. If visits are occurring before the worker reports into the office, this needs to be logged into the diary and placed on the Whiteboard as normal, the day before.