

Lone Worker Policy, Procedure Guidance

Lone working- what are your responsibilities?

Context

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers "to prepare... a written statement of general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of employees". You must also put in place "systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health".

Policy Implementation.

What is lone working? Definition -

In the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance document working alone, a lone worker is defined as someone who "***works by themselves without close or direct supervision.***"

To avoid confusion in this instance we are not talking about staff, who are left alone momentarily in the workplace or staff, such as managers in offices working alone.

What we are referring to is staff, who may go out alone to do home visits, staff attending training or instances when a member of staff may stay late to finish some work after everyone has gone home. Work alone off site or visiting children, young people and their families in their home or on trips. These are just a few examples and there may be others in your workplace, depending on how you work.

Putting in place a Lone Worker Policy and procedures will help minimize the risks that lone workers face and enable all appropriate measures to be in place to improve their safety and safeguard the children and young people they may be working with.

Why do I need a policy?

Having a Lone Working policy in place ensures that you are assessing the risks that lone workers face and demonstrates your commitment towards your employee's safety. It should detail both the employer and employees' responsibilities, how and when to report incidents and the action that will be taken.

The policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is designed to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

It should be a working document that is easily accessible to all staff and succinct enough to be read through and applied to working environments throughout an organisation

A good lone worker policy should make reference to the following;

- ✓ Lone workers in fixed establishments
- ✓ Mobile workers working away from their fixed base
- ✓ Legal requirements
- ✓ Applicable Laws
- ✓ Places of Work
- ✓ Personal responsibility
- ✓ Working outside normal hours
- ✓ Lone Worker Risk Assessment
- ✓ Health & Safety
- ✓ Safe System of Work
- ✓ Organisational responsibilities
- ✓ Safeguarding & how to report a concern
- ✓ Supervision
- ✓ Training of the workforce & induction
- ✓ Review date

Your Lone Worker Risk Assessment will be part of your overall policy document. You should ensure that staff members have 100% understand for the reason for developing the risk assessment, and that they actually comply with the procedures.

Risk Assessment for Lone Working

As with all risk assessment, the purpose is to identify the risk and then put in place measures to control or avoid them. In the case of lone working, this is identifying times and situations where staff may be out of the building and not directly supervised.

As an example, and to look at this in practical terms, we should go back to staff attending training. If your staff are attending an all day training event, would they necessarily come into the setting first? Chances are probably not and they would go straight to the venue from their home.

This is where the identification of risks (or the 'what ifs') come in. What ifthat the member of staff had an accident on the way to venue? How would you know? When would you know? Would it be once the school phoned to ask why that member of staff had not collected their children at the end of the day? Or maybe once their partner had arrived home from work to find nobody home? Makes you think doesn't it?

In this case, a really simple control measure would be for staff to text the manager (or another designated person) to say that they had arrived safely and likewise at the end of the

day when they have returned home. In most cases a simple text message or telephone call is all it takes to control the risks to staff.

However, employers should not be complacent in thinking that a risk assessment and a mobile phone is enough to keep staff safe and should introduce measures wherever possible to avoid lone working. Staff should also be provided with information on their personal safety when working alone. It helps if the risk assessment process is designed to be user friendly. The more accessible the process, the higher staff uptake.

Staff Member's Personal Safety and Care

Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Line Manager.

Staff members should avoid working alone if not necessary, *where possible two people should leave together.*

Staff should inform their Line Manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed.

Where required, staff must ensure that they sign in and out of building registers.

Violence and Abuse

Staff will not tolerate any instances of work-related violence, including verbal, racist, threatening, intimidating, bullying behaviours, assaulted or abuse. Staff have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect. Immediately report incidents of violence, harassment or intimidation to your Line Manager and the Police.

Mobile Phone

Staff working away from the office should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times; they must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a **reduction of risk**.

Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, and in working order.

Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.

This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base.

Staff such as tutors, who work to a pre-planned programme of sessions, should inform their Line Manager if they deviate from the programme.

If a member of staff does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information, if necessary.

Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues to take into account include:

Staffing levels and availability;

Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.

Staff Visiting Business Clients or Client's Property

Ensure your appointments / whereabouts are known and are recorded before leaving the office by keeping schedules/diaries up-to-date, using wipe boards, transmitting e-mails etc.

Check records to ascertain the type of client you are about to visit and decide what, if any, safety precautions may be required.

Carry a mobile phone and a personal attack alarm if they wish, ensuring it is fully functional charged before leaving. .

Details of your vehicle should be available within your organisation (it may be required by the police).

If for any reason you are to be delayed, inform your Line Manager. Always inform your Line Manager / colleague of your return, or if going directly home, phone to confirm all is well.

If any employee fails to return to the office or their home the person monitoring the trip must communicate the failure to management who will

Managers are responsible for:

- ensuring all staff within their teams are familiar with the procedures for reducing the risks associated with lone working;
- organising sufficient mentoring arrangements for new or inexperienced staff;
- identifying lone working situations;
- ensuring appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and control measures introduced where possible to reduce the risks;
- providing staff with the necessary information, instruction and training;
- recording and investigating all incidents of violence directed towards staff, and take any remedial action that may be required;
- providing Support Mechanisms in the event of an incident for staff.

Staff are responsible for:

- ensuring managers are aware of their location when working away from the office;
- following the measures contained in risk assessments knowing how to report an incident;
- minimising the risk to themselves by not doing anything that puts them in danger. If they are unsure or have a sense of danger, they should not proceed until someone else is around;
- immediately reporting incidents of violence, harassment or intimidation to your Line Manager and the Police;
- recording details of all incidents by completing a critical incident form;
- reporting all incidents, difficulties or risks raised from lone working, however minor, to your Line Manager, even if you do not wish further action to be taken. Failure to report an incident could put others at risk.

This policy and procedures should be read alongside other policies and procedures on:

- Safer recruitment, induction and training;
- Role of the designated safeguarding person;
- Dealing with disclosure and concerns about a child or young person or their family;
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers;
- Recording and sharing information;
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- Complaints;
- Whistle blowing.

Effective supervision and monitoring of lone working

During supervision meetings, issues related to lone working and safeguarding should be discussed each time to review risk assessments, discuss any concerns, training issues or requests for further support.

Safeguarding Information Sharing

Every child and young person should be kept safe, and **everyone is responsible for protecting children and young people from harm.**

If you are worried about a child or young person: in either Kingston or Richmond

Call - Single Point of Access (SPA) 020 8547 5008

for advice or to make a referral. Or Out of Hours - 020 8770 5000

Or if you feel a child or young person is at immediate risk

Police 999

Or NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) 24 hour helpline,

Call - 0808 800 5000

Safeguarding Adults

For Kingston

For further information, advice or support or if you or someone you know is concerned about an adult at risk who may be experiencing abuse, harm or exploitation, please contact:

Kingston Adult Safeguarding Service

020 8547 5005

adult.safeguarding@kingston.gov.uk

Kingston Safeguarding Adults' Partnership Board

www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200368/help_to_stay_safe/233/policies_and_strategies_for_adult_social_care/2

For Richmond

Richmond Adult Access Team

020 8891 7971

18001 020 8891 7971

adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk

www.richmond.gov.uk/report_adult_abuse

Richmond Safeguarding Adults' Board

<http://www.richmond.gov.uk/sab>

Further guidance

- From the HSE and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.
<http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety/personal-safety-tips/> which gives further advice and information.