



Lone Working Policy

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Contents

Contents	2
Version Control	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Scope of this policy	4
3. Definitions	4
4. Working Alone on Site	4
5. Working Away Off-site	5
6. Potential Hazards of Working Alone	5
7. Measures to Reduce the Risk of Lone Working	5
Risk Assessment	5
8. Working Alone	6
9. Supervision	7
10. Accidents and Emergencies	7
11. Violence at Work	7
12. Reporting and Record Keeping	7
13. Conclusion	7
14. Review and Improvement	8

Version Control

Version	Author	Date	Changes
V 1.0	SAS Mentoring Manager	August 2023	First Draft
V 1.2	HR Director	August 2024	Reviewed
V 1.3	Executive Administrator	January 2025	Edited to include Version Control, change 'pupils/students' to 'learner', change formatting
V 1.4	HR Director	July 2025	Changed Executive Business Manager to Health & Safety Lead. Changed author to Executive Leadership Team.

1. Introduction

Our provision is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to learners with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, including those who may present high-risk behaviours, such as violence or weapon possession.

This Lone Working Policy has been developed to establish a framework for all staff who engage with these learners individually. The policy outlines clear procedures and guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of mentors, staff, and learners alike, fostering a secure and conducive environment for mentoring interactions.

The Provision has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff while they are at work, as set out in our Health and Safety Policy. We have a responsibility to assess the risks to lone workers and to take steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Staff have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Lone working is not inherently unsafe and proper precautions can reduce the risks associated with working alone.

Some staff may spend most of their working lives working with others and find themselves working alone occasionally. Others will work alone on a daily basis. This policy refers to frequent lone workers and occasional lone workers and to high risk and low risk activities.

By implementing this Lone Working Policy, our provision underscores its commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment, allowing staff to provide invaluable guidance to learners while mitigating potential risks associated with lone working. This policy aligns with our steadfast dedication to prioritising the safety, well-being, and holistic development of all stakeholders within our provision.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy encompasses all staff members involved in one-on-one interactions with high-risk learners who require SEMH support within our provisions premises. It applies to scenarios where staff work alone with s learners, whether within the provision premises or off-site during activities. The policy encompasses risk assessment, communication protocols, emergency responses, and reporting mechanisms.

Staff engaging with high-risk learners will undergo specialised training to equip them with the essential skills needed to address complex situations effectively. The policy emphasises the safety of all employees and learners, while encouraging a proactive approach to risk assessment, communication, and de-escalation of conflicts.

3. Definitions

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. E.g.;

- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues
- People who work at home other than in low risk, office-type work

The definition covers staff in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures.

4. Working Alone on Site

For many provision staff, working alone forms an integral part of their day-to-day duties at work. These can include the following scenarios:

- One-to-one working for HLTAs, teaching assistants, career advisers and counsellors

- HLTAs working alone with small groups of learners away from the main classroom or being on their own while providing playground supervision
- Staff being responsible for whole-class supervision on their own
- Staff being left on their own to supervise learners while waiting to be collected if session has ended/suspension
- Office and maintenance staff being left on their own in premises during parts of the day and during some holiday and provision closure periods

5. Working Away Off-site

Some activities and duties also require staff to work away from their base location. Most commonly these involve:

- One-to-one mentoring, either at the learners home, within the community or at the mentoring base
- Trips and scheduled academic sessions, e.g. to swimming pool (with changing room supervision)
- Home/provision liaison visits to learners homes.
- Transporting learners

6. Potential Hazards of Working Alone

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available
- Fire
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone such as physical restraint

7. Measures to Reduce the Risk of Lone Working

We undertake the following measures to reduce the risk of lone working:

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment of the situation will be undertaken if appropriate.

Information on risks should be gathered from all available sources including, for example, the accident book and any incident log books.

It is also essential that staff are asked by the person carrying out the risk assessment if they have any concerns about working on their own. Often it is only the person actually doing the job that can identify all the risks associated with it.

While not an exhaustive list, the following are some of the questions that a lone working risk assessment should ask:

- Is there a risk of violence or aggression?
- Is the learner under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol?
- If working in the home, is there a risk of verbal or physical aggression from a family member?

- Is the staff member vulnerable to malicious accusations?
- Is the staff member vulnerable, e.g. pregnant/young/disabled/have English as a second language/have a particular medical condition?
- Will the staff member be using machinery/equipment/ handling chemicals that could be hazardous?
- Will the staff member be working at height e.g. putting up or dismantling a display?
- What will happen in the event of an emergency e.g. if the staff member falls ill, has an accident or there is a fire alarm or emergency procedure?
- Is there access to first aid facilities?
- What age of learner is the staff member working with? Younger learners may require a higher staff/learner ratio.
- Do the learners have any special needs e.g. behavioural/medical that require closer supervision and a higher staff/learner ratio?
- Is the staff member working in an isolated part of the provision or in a separate annexe/cabin/ playing field?
- Type of activity being undertaken? Are the learners on the move? Are they in the playground or using equipment as this could increase the risk of an accident?

Where the assessment identifies risks to the lone worker, the first question asked must be whether the work needs to be carried out in the first place. If the answer is yes, which it will be for many activities undertaken by provision staff, then arrangements must be put in place to provide the lone worker with additional support systems or back-up.

‘Control measures’ must be introduced to reduce the risks identified as much as possible. Preferably these control measures should be outlined in the provisions lone working policy (which may form part of the general workplace health and safety policy) and should include details of the following:

- The training and information that will be provided to staff to help them recognise and deal with any situations which may arise that threaten their or their learners’ health and safety. This could relate to violence or aggression/basic first aid/emergency procedures in the event of fire, etc.
- The safety procedures for those working on their own including guidance and recommendations on staff/ learner ratios in certain circumstances, eg, in libraries at lunchtimes or exclusion units.
- How lone workers will be contacted and accounted for during an emergency situation.
- The information and guidance provided to those paying home visits e.g. background information on families; to always let someone know where they are and how long they are expected to be; or contact information.
- Provision of equipment e.g. mobile phone, walkie-talkie, handheld metal detection wands and personal alarm for those who may be working in an isolated location or remote part of the provisions premises.
- Proper training and provision of personal protective equipment for those dealing with hazardous substances.
- Consultation arrangements with staff and health and safety representatives to ensure that lone working arrangements and risk assessments are reviewed on a regular basis.

8. Working Alone

Where you are concerned that you may be unsafe working alone in any particular context, you should discuss your concerns beforehand with your line manager or Safeguarding Lead.

In any situation where you feel unsafe whilst working alone, you should remove yourself from that situation immediately, and report the incident to your line manager or Safeguarding Lead.

Staff should ensure front doors are locked behind them when working alone. This is particularly important when in the building alone, out of working hours.

9. Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. We will ensure that you understand the risks associated with your work and the relevant safety precautions.

Lone workers new to a job or undergoing training may need to be accompanied initially and any arrangements necessary for this will be put in place as appropriate to the circumstances.

Regular contact by phone may be appropriate and we ensure that lone workers have a mobile phone available at all times to enable them to contact the office in the event of an emergency

10. Accidents and Emergencies

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. This should include being made aware of special arrangements for out of hours incidents. First-aid may be available from others, or it may be prudent for an individual frequently working away from the office to carry a basic first-aid kit if there is a foreseeable risk of injury.

The Provision is committed to training lone workers in first aid as relevant and appropriate to their role.

Staff working alone in the office out of hours are responsible for adhering to security and fire regulations

11. Violence at Work

You must ensure that violent incidents are reported to ensure that any associated risk can be communicated to all. The risk of violence may not be directly people related, it may be associated with environmental issues like working alone outside after dark, or a situation may arise where there was no previous history of incidents.

Staff likely to be lone workers in such situations should be trained in dealing with difficult people, in ways to recognise a risk and in behaviours which may reduce the risk e.g. up to and including terminating the event.

The Provision has a protocol in place which allows staff to alert the provision in the case of the staff member fearing they are in a vulnerable position or at risk of violence. The staff member will call any other staff member and inform them of their location and state they have forgotten the red folder. This receiver of the call will immediately dial 999 and inform the police that a staff member is in danger, passing on the address and any other relevant information.

12. Reporting and Record Keeping

All lone working sessions with high-risk learners should be documented, including the purpose, date, time, location, and outcomes.

Incidents, near misses, or concerns related to lone working must be promptly reported to the designated safeguarding lead and recorded in the provisions incident log.

13. Conclusion

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff but the risk assessment must take account of any additional risk factors.

We will ensure that measures are in place to reduce risk and that expectations have been communicated to lone workers and appropriate training provided.

All staff, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe working practices as prescribed and communicated to them by the Provision, and should take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with their normal working life.

This policy is in line with our commitment to maintaining a secure and nurturing learning environment for all stakeholders.

14. Review and Improvement

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

Feedback from mentors, staff, and safeguarding teams will be considered for policy enhancement.