



Lone Working Policy

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Position: Director / Head of Centre



Introduction

Early Life Enterprise has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff while they are at work. At any given time, there are numbers of staff who are working alone, whether as a substantial part of their working life or on an occasional basis. The Provision Leadership team have the responsibility to assess the risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary; and 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.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to outline Early Life Enterprise's responsibilities towards staff working alone by:

- Defining what 'lone working' is
- Taking action to reduce risk to lone workers
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibility to use necessary guidance to assist lone workers

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including temporary workers and those employed on a casual basis. It should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those 'who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. They may include:

- People working separately from others in a building
- People who work outside 'normal' hours
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues, e.g. visiting people in their homes
- People who work at home

The definition can cover 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. This policy will refer to high risk and low risk activities. Some staff members may spend most of their working lives with others but find themselves working alone occasionally, for example, when working late. Others will work alone on a daily basis. This policy will refer to frequent lone workers and occasional lone workers.

Potential Hazards of Lone Working

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 happen when there is no-one to summon help or first aid
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Fire
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, e.g. heavy lifting, or use of certain equipment
- Lack of a safe way in or out of a building (e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in)

The perception of these hazards or the actual risks may be different for different people. For example, some workers may feel particularly vulnerable to violence away from the workplace or after dark; or a medical condition may make it unsafe for an individual to work alone.

The Provision must consider these factors when doing risk assessments. If there are lone workers within an area the manager must take appropriate steps to reduce the risk, particularly for frequent lone workers or lone workers engaged in high-risk activities.

They should consider:

- Does the workplace present any special risk to a lone worker?
- Can all the equipment, substances and goods used on the premises be safely handled by one person? Is any manual handling involved safe for a single person?
- Is there a risk of violence or the threat of violence? Is the nature of a visit or the person being visited likely to increase the risk? Will the staff member be alone in a dark or remote location?

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment for any further staff who wish to work alone should be completed as required.

Measures to Reduce the Risk of Lone Working

Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. However, line-managers can ensure that staff understand the risks associated with their work and the relevant safety precautions. They can put into place arrangements for the individual to contact a line manager if they need additional guidance. Occasional site visits may be appropriate, particularly if there are high-risk activities. Staff new to a job or undergoing training may need to be accompanied initially. Regular contact by phone or radio may be appropriate. The Centre Manager (person in charge of Health and Safety) should assess what level of supervision is required.

Checking System

All out-of-hours lone working staff should establish their own checking in and out system with either family, friends, or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number (eg Line Manager's) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.

Reporting Back

For occasional lone workers or low risk lone workers, they should inform a colleague where they are going and when they are expected back; arranging to ring the office at the conclusion of the visit or call; issuing a mobile phone number to allow a contact call to be made if the staff member's return is overdue. Use of diary systems or notice boards to indicate whereabouts can form part of this system. All staff involved share a responsibility to maintain such informal systems for safe lone working. It is imperative that staff make their line manager aware of their intended visit and the nature of the visit as it may be deemed appropriate that an additional member of staff supports the visit.

The provision should also consider staff who meet with visitors on a one-to-one basis on the provision premises. Whilst they are not alone in the building, they may be alone with the visitor in a place where other colleagues cannot see them. The provision should consider systems for ensuring that they have emerged safely from such a meeting and systems for raising an alarm if necessary.

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 provision staff, or it may be prudent for an individual frequently working away from the base to carry a basic first aid kit if there is a foreseeable risk of injury. Staff working alone should be able to access a first aid kit. It is also necessary for staff working alone in a building or part of a building to let the Centre Manager know they are there, so they can be accounted for in case of fire.

Medical Conditions

Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

Task Not Suitable for Lone Working

Risk assessment will identify the hazards of work. When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place, or the work reassigned to another member of staff or done in hours when they are not alone. For example, a staff member who arrives before other colleagues may be instructed not to attempt heavy manual lifting until another colleague arrives to assist.

Intruder

Staff should not enter the provision premises if there are signs of intruders but are advised to immediately contact the police.

Violence at Work

Staff who undertake home visits must use a system to reduce the risk of violence by not visiting alone or meeting in another location. The risk of violence may not be directly related to a particular property. It may be associated with the 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 behaviour which may reduce the risk (up to and including terminating the visit). All incidents of violence must be reported.

Student Lone Working

The member of staff in charge of the lone worker should ensure that the student understands the risks associated with lone working and the relevant safety precautions. The staff member should ensure that they check on the lone worker at least every half an hour and more frequently if necessary. Students should be informed that if the fire alarm sounds they should leave the building by the nearest fire exit and not return to the teacher. Student Lone Working Guidance is given to students prior to carrying out independent work expected as part of their studies (Appendix 1).

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 extra risk factors. The provision must ensure that they have not only introduced measures to reduce any risk but must also ensure that they have communicated their expectations to lone workers and trained them appropriately. All staff, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and all staff can take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with their normal working life.

Possible Scenarios of Lone Working at Early Life Enterprise

Scenario	Control Measures
Visiting a student or staff member's home for work reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If travelling via own transport, staff member must have business insurance on their vehicle ● Liaison with line manager of location of visit and purpose for the visit (it may be deemed that an additional member of staff is required depending on the nature of the visit) ● First aid kit taken ● Sign out ● Inform Centre Lead what time they are expected back ● If the time expected back at work is later than the contracted hours of the centre lead then inform managing partner
Working with a student on a one-to-one basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure work completed is situated in view of CCTV ● Work should be completed in a room with a vision panel ● Work should be completed near to where help can be given quickly – i.e. near a classroom
Member of staff takes a group of student (s) on a visit by themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offsite risk assessment is completed and checked by Centre lead and managing partner ● Students attending the visit with the member of staff should have the cognitive ability to raise alarm and get help if something was to happen to the member of staff ● Staff should have the facility to raise alarm and know who to contact in an emergency (i.e. mobile phone) ● Students attending the visit should be capable of remaining safe and following instructions in the event of an emergency.
A meeting with a visitor where a member of staff is by themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration of seating plans to ensure the staff member is close to a point of exit must be employed. ● Meeting should occur near to where a member of staff can get assistance quickly ● Where possible it is advised for a staff meeting to be conducted in a room where CCTV is in operation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If staff have any concerns or anxieties about having a meeting alone they should see their line manager. ● Anxieties about face-to-face meetings can be mitigated by conducting these on the phone or via MS Teams.
<p>A member of staff transporting a student between the provision and home or placement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Risk assessments should consider individual pupil needs such as known tendency to abscond and/or increased risk of allegations. ● It is advised that drivers are accompanied by another adult when transporting young people as this significantly reduces the risk of distraction, accident and injury and allegation of misconduct or abuse. If this is not practically possible the risks must be assessed and measures put in place to ensure that the risks are reduced to the lowest level. ● Young people should never be left in the vehicle unattended. ● A mobile phone should be available for use when stationary, in the event of an emergency ● Emergency transportation - Circumstances may sometimes arise where the risk of not transporting a young person is greater than doing so, for example where a child is left at school without transport and the distance to home is too far or too dangerous to walk or where the pupil is unwell and requires medical attention at a level below the threshold for an ambulance callout. ● Parents must give their permission for pupils to be transported in a staff member's vehicle. Where it is not practically possible to gain written consent then verbal consent should be recorded noting date and time.
<p>A member of staff works out of hours and is on their own</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any staff who have medical conditions that may result in loss of consciousness will be covered by individual risk assessments. ● All staff must be offsite by 6pm unless agreed in advance by the managing partner ● Staff must have the ability to make and receive calls through MS Teams and/or a Mobile Phone. ● Recommended that family members of staff have the managing partner's number to contact in case they do not return home from work. ● Staff members MUST sign in and out

Appendix 1

Student Lone Working Guidance – Working Offsite and Onsite Without Staff Supervision

At times students may work alone on tasks outside of the school classroom and it is important that students and parents assess the risks and take steps to avoid or control these where necessary, as responsibility for safety and welfare when undertaking such activities out of the classroom lies with the school. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those ‘who work by themselves without close or direct supervision’.

Potential hazards of lone working:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may happen when there is no-one to summon help or first aid
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Fire
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, e.g. heavy lifting, or use of certain equipment
- Lack of a safe way in or out of a building (e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in)

Students should understand the risks associated with lone working and the relevant safety precautions.

Consideration should be given to the following:

- Does the work area present any special risk to a lone worker?
- Can all the equipment, substances and goods used be safely handled by one person? Is any manual handling involved safe for a single person?
- Is there a risk of violence or the threat of violence?
- Will the student be alone in a dark or remote location?

Accidents and Emergencies

Medical conditions

- Students should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness but should make arrangements for somebody to accompany them.

There are specific situations in which lone working is highly inadvisable and students should be accompanied (e.g. work on or near to bodies of water).

As well as the danger of personal injury, the possibility of exhaustion or hypothermia should be considered.



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