Lone working & Personal Safety Policy

Produced by	[Health, Safety & Wellbeing], [People and Organisational Development]
Date approved and agreed	10th July 2019
Review Date	July 2021
Document Reference	HSW/POL/LW/0615/02
Version	4.0

If you need this document in a different format please telephone
0161 474 3056 (internal 3056)

Contents

Lone working

1. Introduction and definitions

What is lone working?

There is no standard definition of lone working. The HSE define it as:

'Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'

The examples below indicate some of the likely types of lone working that workers may undertake:

- A person who works alone in a separate building,
- Anyone who works alone in an isolated part of a building,
- Someone who works alone outside normal office working hours, e.g. employee working late, duty officer, cleaner, caretaker,
- Those who work alone and visit service users at home or regularly attend other premises,
- Someone working away from their fixed base, in premises that are not leased or managed by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC).
- A person classified as a home worker.

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone, however the broad duties outlined in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply. These require identifying hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

Personal Safety

For the purpose of this policy "Personal Safety" can be defined as "personal precautions taken to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the individual"

Personal safety overlaps both lone working and work-related violence and, to some extent. Most of the personal safety guidance can be applied equally to work and/or non-work situations.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition above. This list is not exhaustive.

3. Policy statement

SMBC recognises that some members of staff will at times, be required to work on their own and/or away from their base location to undertake part of their duties.

The guidance below is provided for managers undertaking lone working assessments. This information will help to identify any risk posed by generic hazards associated with identified lone working activity.

This 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 not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities for the main parties involved in applying the Council's lone working policy.

4.1 Senior Managers (Heads of Service and above)

The senior management team has overall responsibility for health and safety, including the safety of lone workers. They must:

- Provide appropriate resources to enable the policy to be carried out effectively.
- Lead by example.
- Seek feedback on the performance of this policy.

4.2 Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders

In order to achieve the consistent application of this policy and its associated guidance the main responsibilities of Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders are to ensure that they:

- Identify staff who meet the definition of a 'Lone Worker'.

- Identify all staff that are lone workers and ensure that a lone worker monitoring system is set up for them.

- Inform staff of their responsibilities under the personal safety and lone working policy.

- Make the policy readily available to all staff members on induction and ensuring local procedures are in place.

- Ensure that risk assessments regarding the personal safety of staff, including those working alone are undertaken by competent persons.

- Review personal safety and lone working risk assessments on a regular basis, taking into consideration information provided by staff members regarding hazards relating to activities, environments and individuals.

- Assist in the development and implementation of safe systems of work to ensure the safety and well-being of all staff.

- Ensure that staff members comply with the policy and follow safe systems of work whenever appropriate to do so.

- Report accidents/incidents involving lone workers using the correct reporting procedure.

- Provide appropriate training, information or instruction.

- Provide equipment to enhance personal safety and to enable emergency communication such as SoloProtect ID devices, mobile phones and radios.

- Service areas will be responsible for carrying out an assessment of the risk posed to their employees and identifying the number of lone workers within their service who require SoloProtect ID devices.

- Service areas will be responsible for the purchase, budgeting and procurement of the SoloProtect ID devices.

- Service areas will be responsible for the management and administration tasks associated with the set up and on-going use of the SoloProtect ID devices.

- Service areas will be responsible for arranging the training of their workers that are associated with the use of the SoloProtect ID devices.

4.3 Employees

Every employee has a responsibility for ensuring that they:

- Comply with any precautionary measures including guidelines laid down by managers such as a Lone Worker Monitoring System.

- Report to their manager any unsafe or potentially unsafe situations or equipment, and to report incidents in which violence or aggression or threats using the incident reporting procedure.

- Take reasonable care for their own safety and not expose themselves to unnecessary risk.

- Use any protective equipment or devices (such as SoloProtect ID device) provided in accordance with training provided and Management instruction.

- Attend any training provided.

4.4 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team

The role of the Health Safety & Wellbeing Team is to:

- Recommend standards of safety to ensure compliance with current legislation regarding personal safety and lone working.

- Assist in the development of strategies and programmes for the reduction of risks associated with personal safety and lone working.

- Provide regular reports to the management in respect of health and safety issues and incidents involving lone workers to the directorate and corporate health & safety committees.

- Monitor accidents and incidents in the workplace.

- Regularly review this policy, in liaison with the directorate & Corporate Health and Safety Committees and Unions and make appropriate recommendations for amendments necessary to maintain compliance with current legislation and suggested best practice for personal safety and lone workers.

- Advise on training requirements.

- Be responsible for providing support and guidance to assist service areas in carrying out risk assessments.

- Arrange training in Lone Working and Personal Safety for those services which require it.

- Provide on-going support in terms of risk assessment, lone working & incident reporting.

5. Hazards

A hazard is something which has the potential to cause harm and risk is the likelihood that harm will occur. Often the hazards faced by lone workers will be the same as for other workers but they may face increased or additional risk. Some of the hazards are:

- Risk of violence
- Manual handling
- Slips, trips & falls
- Hazards associated with travel
- Medical emergency
- Lack of first aid provision
- Lack of emergency procedures for fire
- Inadequate rest/hygiene facilities

6. Risk assessment

Managers of persons considered to be 'lone workers' must complete a written risk assessment of the occupational role. This assessment identifies potential hazards, identifies existing precautions and assesses the risk. The reasons for assessing the risks of working alone are to establish:

- Whether the work can be done safely by an unaccompanied person; The arrangements necessary to ensure that an individual working alone is not exposed to greater risks than employees who work together.

Part of the risk assessment process is to identify and implement any additional measures that need to be implemented to avoid or control these risks. As with all risk assessments, their completion will involve appropriate involvement and feedback from those likely to be affected.

Risk assessment should be completed using the standard corporate risk assessment template.

The following should be considered:

The Workplace/Environment

Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker? Particular duties, such as working at height will always require the presence of others. Once again, the risk assessment will determine the precautions taken.

Consider access requirements, transport and parking arrangements, etc.

Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person?

Is there a risk of violence? Any risk of violence needs to be identified and foreseeable risks minimised or controlled. For example, in some cases panic buttons may be fitted in a particular fixed location, or employees given personal attack alarms, SoloProtect ID devices or mobile telephones. Instructions and appropriate equipment will be in place, if necessary, for the lone worker to make contact with others. Employees at the work base must be made aware of the appropriate action to be taken in the event of an emergency. Managers must have basic details such as vehicle registration number to assist in any search.

The Process/Equipment

Identify hazards specific to the work process, which may create particular risks for lone workers, e.g. work on electrical systems and work in the community.

Can any temporary access equipment which is necessary, such as portable ladders be safely handled by one person?

Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?

Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.

The Individual

Are women especially at risk if they work alone?

Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?

Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone? Managers must take reasonable precautions to satisfy themselves that there are no known medical problems with employees that would put the employee at risk when working alone. For example, it may be appropriate for Occupational Health checks to be completed to enable this judgement.

What happens if the person becomes ill, has an accident or there is an emergency?

Consider the lone worker's work pattern and how it relates to those of other workers, in terms of both time and geography.
Note: All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

7. Training

Initial induction training, provided by the manager/supervisor, is particularly important for lone working so that the employees concerned are confident about the health and safety arrangements and have a good understanding of the main elements of the job.

In this way, employees may avoid panic reactions in unusual situations, and will be sufficiently experienced to fully understand the risks and precautions. It is also important that employees know the limits of their responsibility so that they know when to stop work and seek advice.

In high risk situations an emergency rescue plan must be prepared. This rescue plan may require liaison with the Emergency Services.

8. Supervision

The extent of supervision required will depend upon the level of risks involved and the ability and experience of the lone worker. A few examples of supervisory measures, which may be useful in some circumstances, include:

- Periodic telephone contact with lone worker.
- Periodic site visits to lone worker.
- Regular contact (telephone, radio etc.)
- Automatic warning devices, (SoloProtect ID)
- Manual warning devices (e.g. panic alarms etc.)
- End of task/shift contact (i.e. returning keys).

9. Monitoring & Review

Managers/Supervisors must review risk assessments on a regular basis and immediately if there are any significant changes, such as:

- new or revised work practices
- changes to job content or procedures
- new work locations
- new work equipment
- major adjustments to working patterns

10.   Other policies, procedures and resources

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Guidance

- Accident/Incident/Near Miss Reporting procedure
- Work Related Violence
- Driving at Work Policy
- Fire Evacuation Procedure

See document INDG73 from the health and safety executive for more details on Lone Working. **http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf**

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust website contains much information and provides many resources in relation to lone working **http://www.suzylamplugh.org/**

Lone working | Health & safety employer advice | Healthy Working Lives **www.healthyworkinglives.com/advice/Legislation-and-policy/employee.../lone-working**

For further information on the SoloProtect ID devices please see the following link and **https://www.soloprotect.com/uk/lone-worker-solutions/** and also Appendix 1 of this document.

11. Personal Safety

It is not wise to solely rely on alarm systems or breakaway techniques to get you out of trouble – there are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place.

The Council has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves. This is not about raising anxiety levels, but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk.

Be aware of the environment

Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.

Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order. If your work takes you into areas which are isolated and/or poorly lit at night, make sure you:

- Have your keys in your hand or easily accessible
- Consider whether an area will be dark and isolated when you return to your car
- Park where possible, under street lighting
- Lock the car doors when you get into the car
- Take boxes/bags to the car when other people are around
- Try to park facing the way you want to drive off
- In a cul-de-sac do not park facing the dead end
- Try to park in a space where you will not be blocked in

Always use any lone worker system provided or follow any check in/out procedure for your service area.

If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you.

<u>Be aware of yourself</u>

- Think about your body language.
- What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.
- Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

<u>Be aware of other people</u>

- Take note of their non-verbal signals.
- Be aware of their triggers.
- Don't crowd people – allow them space.
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
- Listen to them, and show them you are listening.

12. Document Control

Version	Author	Reviewed By	Reason for Change	Date
1.0	H&S Team	Corporate H&S Committee/Unions	Policy Review	June 2015
2.0	H&S Team	A McCullough	Additional Guidance	Nov 2016
3.0	H&S Team	S Dodgson	Policy Review	June 2018
4.0	H&S Team	J Beck	Policy Review and introduction of new equipment	July 2019

13. Appendix 1 SoloProtect ID

The SoloProtect lone worker solution is fully managed, BS 8484 and EN 50518 approved, and designed to give employers an easy and effective way to protect all types of lone worker - over 260,000 people now use a SoloProtect product as their preferred lone worker device.

The SoloProtect ID is the most-widely used lone worker device in the UK, and has been supplied to over 260,000 lone workers since development (including when formerly known as 'Identicom').

Utilised primarily by anyone who may have to present identification as part of their job role - and suited for a lone worker carrying out appointments in people's homes, or if community-based.

With an ID badge form-factor that allows discreet operation without having to break eye-contact, the device links to 24/7 Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) monitoring at the push of a button.

Features include:

- Discreet operation during 'Red Alert'
- 24/7/365 ARC support
- Geolocation via GNSS for shorter time to fix / improved accuracy
- Incapacitation alarm (option)
- Rip Alarm
- Integrates with Mobile Workforce Management
- Easy on-boarding via SoloProtect Insights

Please see the following link for a guide for the use of the SoloProtect ID device:

https://www.soloprotect.com/uk/Data/Solution_Downloads/ID_QSG_Poster_Jan19.pdf

This product has been trialled and endorsed at Corporate Leadership Team level in June 2018.