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LBWF Health and Safety: Policy Guidance Note

Lone Working Policy

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Draft 2.0	Update of the 2011 policy to new style with clearer responsibilities and guidance

Lone Working Policy

1 Legal Requirements

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require the employer to assess the significant hazards of their undertaking and ensure adequate controls are put in place to manage these risks.

2 Background

Working alone is not illegal but it can bring additional risks to a work activity, primarily due to the lack of assistance from co-workers in an emergency. The Council has developed policies and procedures to control risks and protect employees, employees should be aware of and follow them. Apart from employees being sure that they can do the job on their own, the four most important things to be certain of are:

- a) The lone worker has full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she is being exposed.
- b) A colleague or supervisor knows the whereabouts of a lone worker and what he or she is doing.
- c) The lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong.
- d) There are communication procedures in place to summon help and support where necessary
- 3 Due to the diversity of the Council this guidance is broad in nature and requires development into local procedures by the relevant managers. Guidance Note 1 has an example of local guidance. This can be used as the basis for local procedures in other parts of the organisation from the developed risk assessment.
- 4 Senior Managers As per the Health and Safety Policy

5 Line Managers Responsibilities

Line Managers in consultation with staff must identify the significant hazards associated with their staff working alone. Having identified the significant hazards (e.g. aggressive client, faulty machinery, dangerous chemicals) the manager must develop suitable controls for staff to follow, including emergency procedures. Managers then need to share the results of the risk assessment with staff. Managers must ensure there is appropriate instruction, training and supervision available to staff for them to follow the controls developed.

- 6 When carrying out the assessment of risks, examples of areas to consider are given below. The assessment will include the identification of hazards from, for example, means of access and/or egress, plant, machinery, goods, substances, environment and atmosphere, etc. Consideration must be given to:
 - a) the remoteness or isolation of workplaces including environmental hazards such as water, ground conditions, slips, trips and falls, trenches, confined spaces, scaffolding, weather, restrictions, vehicles and transport, parking;
 - b) the ability of the individual, including any medical conditions, illness and first aid requirements, welfare facilities (toilets), pregnancy, ability and knowledge to use equipment and tools, lack of hazard awareness, e.g. young worker

- c) any problems of communication, checking of any warning systems, checking of other council and partner information about individuals, potential for uninvited visitors/trespassers, use of mobile phones.
- d) the possibility of interference, including violence or criminal activity from other persons, if there is any cash handling, animals, working during darkness;
- e) the nature of the work/task being carried out and the injury or damage to health and the anticipated "worst case" scenario, time constraints, permits to work, potential for fire, use of chemicals and equipment, manual handling, working at height, use of ladders, working outside of normal hours, noise, electrical issues;
- f) level of supervision required to ensure safe system of work are being followed and staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to follow them.
- 7 Blank risk assessment forms can be found on the health and safety pages of the Forest Hub and the Schools Hub.

8 Staff Responsibilities

Follow the procedures and safe systems of work developed. Attend appropriate training and follow instructions. Work with the manager to

- a) develop a suitable and sufficient written assessment of the significant hazards;
- b) test the emergency procedures to ensure they are working adequately;
- c) report instances of aggression and violence on the Council incident reporting system;
- d) bring any serious issues to the attention of your manager, for appropriate action to be taken;
- e) attend appropriate training to maintain and improve personal safety and competence for hazardous activities/equipment/substances/clients
- f) understand when and how to stop unsafe lone working safely.

9 Health and Safety Team Responsibilities

The health and safety team will ensure

- this policy is kept up-to-date with legislative changes and new guidance or is reviewed at least every three years;
- an appropriate training and assessment system is in place, which is accessible to employees to meet the Council's statutory obligations;
- undertake Health and Safety Audits using the Compliance Checklist (Guidance Note 4)

10 Information and Training

Employees and others will be given the necessary information, instruction, training to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone. The manger will ensure staff have the necessary knowledge and competence for the use of hazardous locations/equipment/substances by providing suitable instruction or training. Guidance can be sought from the Health and Safety Team.

11 Safe System of Work

Local rules and instructions should be developed, in writing, to cover the following:

- a) Required ability of employees, e.g.
 - a. Professional training
 - b. Qualifications and experience
 - c. Medical fitness
- b) Suitability of equipment, e.g.
 - a. Quality of hand tools
 - b. Level of personal protective equipment supplied by employer
 - c. Insulation of portable lighting and other electrical appliances
- c) Means of communication, e.g.
 - a. Two-way radio
 - b. Telephone / communication apps
 - c. Remote manual or automatic alarm system
 - d. Regular visits by a competent person
 - e. Specific check-in times
- d) Provision for treatment of injuries, e.g.
 - a. Portable first aid kit
 - b. Availability of first-aid
- e) Emergency and accident procedures, e.g.
 - a. Means of summoning help
 - b. Means of raising alarm
 - c. Rescue plans and equipment
 - d. Fire fighting equipment
- f) Maintaining some visual form of office/work diary/itinerary which colleagues are aware of. It is important to ensure that office based staff/management can monitor the movements of lone workers, as they will be the person who raises the alarm.
- g) Training, e.g. for safe use of specialised equipment and processes, etc.
- birect accompanied supervision, e.g. for trainees, young people or new recruits, who must be confirmed as competent to work alone before supervision is relaxed to the level of occasional accompanied visits.
- i) Random checks should be carried out by the line manager to ensure safe systems of work are followed.

12 Defined Working Limits

Managers must establish clear procedures, setting limits of what can and what cannot be done whilst working alone. Clearly, this is impossible to define in general terms, but examples might include permission to replenish fuel tanks but not to remove guards or covers in order to investigate a stoppage of machinery. The general precautionary principle of "if in doubt, ask a supervisor/manager" should always be promoted.

- 13 It is highly unlikely for the tasks below to be carried out by a lone worker:
 - working at height;
 - electrical repairs;
 - work in confined spaces;
 - handling large amounts of money, especially cash;
 - home visits with residents on a warning system with a do not visit alone recommendation or similar;
 - other tasks as defined by person's manager.

14 **Permits to Work**

In certain circumstances, particularly when the risk rating(s) is considered high or where specific legal requirements exist, some or all of the above procedures may be contained within a written permit to work, without which the activity may not take place. Copies of permits would normally be issued to everyone directly involved with the activity, e.g. the lone worker, the closest worker and the relevant manager. Where time limits are a consideration, e.g. to control exposure to noise, fatigue or to ensure essential supplies, such as breathing gases, are not exhausted; the permit would state the required starting and finishing times, or maximum duration of the task, e.g. working in sewers or other confined spaces, excessive heat/cold or with chemicals/ substances. Liaise with Facilities Management for information on permit to work systems.

15 This policy is supported with four Guidance Notes

- Guidance Note 1 Example of a team specific lone working home visits procedure
- Guidance Note 2 Checklists to help identify potential issues
- Guidance Note 3 Example Risk Assessment
- Guidance Note 4 Compliance Checklist

16 This policy is supported with the following Policies and Guidance

Unreasonable Behaviour Policy Violence at Work Policy Provision and Use of Work Equipment Policy Control of Substance Hazardous to Health Policy Reducing Stress and Increasing Resilience Policy Working at Height Policy

Example

Lone Working Home Visits – Good Practice Guidance

The following Good Practice Guidance has been written in the recognition that Practitioners within the Team may be exposed to unsafe situations in the course of their work.

It has been written after consultation with the key partners.

The guidance has been developed to control all the foreseeable significant hazards. However, this may not cover every eventuality and staff are required to use their professional judgement on ensuring their safety when working alone.

The employers and managers have responsibilities towards their employees in relation to safe working. It is the duty of employees to abide by policy and guidance to ensure their own safety during working hours and practice.

In particular this document is concerned with good working practice on home visits and lone working.

It is the Managers responsibility to ensure that:

- Local procedures relating to their service area are available and meet policy requirements.
- Arrangements for safe and healthy working are communicated to those at risk.
- Risk assessments are undertaken in writing and available.
- Risk assessments are monitored and reviewed annually or earlier, following a reported incident or near miss.
- There are established channels of communication with *local authority service providers* and the police.
- Staff training needs are assessed and offered, and staff are released to attend training relating to the risks they face in community working.
- Incidents and near misses are reported and are investigated using the Council's accident reporting procedure. Details of which can be found in the Health and Safety pages on Forest Hub.
- Staff are offered and released to attend debriefing, and where identified as necessary, counselling, following a work related stressful occurrence.
- Working in the community is continuously monitored.
- There are adequate means for staff to be contacted and for staff to contact base i.e. efficient and accessible means of summoning help in an emergency. This is achieved via the use of mobile phones, that have the office number programmed as the number 2 quick dial. Staff have been shown how to use the mobile phones

- A diary of visits and/or white board system is available at base for all lone workers, which is updated and checked regularly as plans change, to enable staff to be traced readily.
- There is an efficient 'reporting back' arrangement, e.g. contacting a base after each appointment or at regular intervals, particularly in the hours of darkness, end of day visits or in other identified high-risk situations. Where a call is not received 30 minutes after the meeting was scheduled to end then the duty officer/buddy will contact the lone worker and follow the agreed emergency plan.
- An emergency communication channel is established and an emergency plan is prepared and exercised, with police help where necessary.
- New and agency staff before carrying out any lone working will as part of their induction cover safe systems of work, ways to access information and action to take for help.
- New and agency staff do not make home visits alone until they are deemed competent to do so.
- All staff, including reception staff, administrators and clinical staff are aware of, and follow, safety and security procedures, and are involved in the review process.

Good Practice Guidance

- The Client files must be checked before any visit.
- An assessment must undertaken before all first visits to new/unknown clients. Where practicable the client's GP should be contacted to find out if there is any potentially violent behaviour known. Where there are concerns a two person visit should be considered.
- If a client is known to the team and known to present risks the assessment must indicate what precautions are required to ensure staff safety.
- Staff should read all available information about new/unknown clients and undertake risk assessment based on this information. Where staff have concerns they must raise them with their manager / duty manager.
- Where practicable the service user should be contacted prior to the visit to determine the mood of the individual.
- If practicable, arrangements should be made for clients to be seen at the base rather than at home.
- Staff should be aware, if possible, of potential problems and act appropriately to implement precautionary measures.
- Staff must ensure that they have used the systems available to inform the base of their visit (providing clients details), venue and expected duration.
- If attending a home visit, do not enter the house or premises if an aggressive or violent situation is in progress.
- Staff should check their means of escape, when entering a new environment.

- Staff must leave the house premises if they are obviously unwelcome, are asked to do so, or feel at all threatened.
- Staff should, where practicable, avoid interviews in kitchens and bedrooms
- As in all interviewing or treatment situations staff should try to place themselves nearest to the door, whenever possible.
- After the first visit set ground rules as appropriate, e.g. dog shut away before entering.
- Staff use the 'reporting back' arrangements appropriately.
- Staff are aware of and use the 'False Imprisonment Procedure', if and when appropriate (See Appendix A).
- Where staff are working "out of hours" then a buddy system / duty manager will be in place and the buddy / duty manager will have the member of staff's mobile phone number.

Staff Communication

Board

There are a list of abbreviations e.g. HV = home visit, NR = no return, RB = return to base, C = on course Information to be put on board Who – name or Matrix number Where = place of meeting / visit Times – in / out and return For annual leave indicate the date of return For sick leave indicate the predicted date of return

Individual staff

Complete communication book Any changes call admin staff/manager to have board amended Admin staff transfer information to board every morning

False Imprisonment Procedure

If you are not allowed to leave a house, ask if you can use a phone (mobile or theirs) ring the base, and give the emergency message as follows:

"It's.....I'm at (Client's name and address if possible). Would you please let Mrs Jones know I am unable to keep my appointment with her".

The administrative person receiving this message will know a member of staff is in a difficult situation, and will alert a manager/colleague and the police.

If the office/buddy has to contact the member of staff they should ask the following questions:

Hello,....are you running late?"

If answered YES then –

"Would you like me to let Mrs Jones know that you will be unable to keep your appointment with her?"

If answered YES then the emergency procedures must actioned. Remember the aggressor may be listening to both sides of the conversation.

Staff may be under duress at the time, so try and keep any other questions closed i.e. they only need yes / no answers

Emergency Procedures

Where a member of staff is in trouble, the police must be contacted and provided with as much detail as possible, including:

- Name of staff member
- Where the member of staff is and the name of the potential aggressor(s)
- All the information that has been obtained from the member of staff

Lone Working – Manager's Checklist

AR	EA FOR CONSIDERATION	OBSERVATI	ONS			
1.	Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person or are more people necessary?	YESD	NO□			
2.	Does the workplace present a special risk to lone workers, e.g. remoteness, time of day, etc.?	YES□	NO□			
3.	Has a risk assessment been carried out for the work activities?	YES	NO□			
4.	Have systems been put in place to prevent unsafe lone working, e.g. working at height, medical condition, etc.?	YESD	NO□			
5.	Can one person safely handle any necessary temporary access equipment, such as portable ladders or trestles?	YESD	NO□			
6.	Has any possibility of working in a confined space been identified and controlled?	YESD	NO□			
7.	Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?	YESD	NO□			
8.	Is a Permit to Work required to ensure all the necessary safety procedures are in place?	YESD	NO□			
9.	Will cash be handled and is there a risk of violence?	YESD	NO□			
10.	Are there arrangements if a lone worker becomes ill, has an accident, or if there is an emergency?	YESD	NO□			
11.	Are there procedures where supervisors periodically visit or otherwise monitor lone workers?	YESD	NO□			
12.	Can contact be made with the lone worker?	YESD	NO□			
13.	Is there access to suitable means of communication for emergency services?	YESD	NO□			
14.	Are there written Emergency Procedures for lone workers?	YESD	NO□			
15.	Has the lone worker been trained in personal safety etc.?	YESD	NO□			
	Note: If your observations column indicates that the problem identified cannot be eliminated, then a risk assessment must be carried out.					

Lone Working – Home Visits Checklist

AR	EAS FOR CONSIDERATION	OBSERVATIONS	
	MANAGER'S CHECKLIST		
Δre	your staff who visit		
1	Fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence?	YES□	NO□
2	Briefed about the danger areas?	YES□	NO□
3	Aware of attitudes, traits or mannerisms which can annoy clients etc?	YES□	NO□
4	Given all available information about the client from all relevant agencies?	YES□	NO□
Hav	e they…		
5	Understood the importance of previewing cases?	YES□	NO□
6	Left an itinerary?	YES□	NO□
7	Made plans to keep in contact with colleagues/manager?	YES□	NO□
8	The means to contact you – even when the switchboard may not be in use?	YES□	NO□
9	Got your home telephone number (and have you got theirs)?	YES□	NO□
10	A sound grasp of your service preventative strategy?	YES□	NO□
11	Authority to arrange an accompanied visit, security escort or use of taxis?	YESD	NO□
Do t	hey		
12	Know how to report and record incidents?	YES□	NO□
13	Understand the need for this procedure?	YES□	NO□
14	Use the telephone reporting system 03300 586 469?	YES□	NO□
15	Know your attitude to premature termination of interviews?	YES□	NO□
16	Know how to control and defuse potentially violent situations?	YES□	NO□
17	Appreciate their responsibilities for their own safety?	YES□	NO□
18	Understand the provisions for support by the service?	YES□	NO□

Lone Working – Home Visits Checklist

AR	EAS FOR CONSIDERATION	OBSER	OBSERVATIONS	
	STAFF CHECKLIST			
Hav 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	A sound grasp of your unit's safety policy for visitors? A clear idea about the area into which you are going? Carefully previewed your cases before your visit? Asked to 'double up' – take an escort or use a taxi if unsure? Made appointments rather than scheduled 'ad hoc' visits? Left your itinerary and expected departure and arrival times? Told colleagues, manager, etc. about possible changes of plan? Arranged for contact if your return is overdue?	YESD YESD YESD YESD YESD YESD YESD	NO□ NO□ NO□ NO□ NO□ NO□ NO□	
Do 9 10 11 12 13 14	you carry/know How to report incidents? A personal alarm or mobile phone? Does it work? Is it handy? A bag or briefcase; wear an outer uniform or display car stickers that may suggest you have money or drugs with you? If wearing this is wise, where you are going today or tonight? Out-of-hours telephone numbers etc. to summon help? Have you had all the relevant training about preventing violence to staff?	YESD YESD YESD YESD YESD	NO□ NO□ NO□ NO□ NO□	
15 16	Are you certain your attitudes, body language etc. won't cause trouble? Can you defuse potential problems and manage aggression?	YES□ YES□	NO□ NO□	

London Borough of Waltham Forest – Health and Safety Team



Risk Assessment

Guidance Note 3

Description of Activity / Person / Area / Equipment being assessed	
Section(s) / Team(s) covered	
Location(s) covered	
Date of Original Assessment	

What date did staff, covered by this risk assessment, have the opportunity to comment on this risk assessment?	??/	??/2020
Are staff covered by this risk assessment aware of the controls noted and understand them?	Yes	No
Copy of form sent to Trade Union Safety Representative	Yes	No

Has action been taken	YES / NO / ONGOING / NONE REQUIRED (Please circle)
Confirmed by Line Manager?	YES / NO
Lead Assessors name (print)	
Lead Assessor's signature	
Date:	

Has action been taken	YES / NO / ONGOING / NONE REQUIRED (Please circle)
Manager's name (print)	
Manager's signature	
Date:	

Review Dates

Future Review Date (depends on Action Plan findings)	Actual Review Date	Were Changes Made?	Name of Lead Reviewer	Date Staff updated about change
	??/??/21			

Hazard Identification and Current Controls

No	Hazard	People at risk	Existing control measure	Risk Rating : High or Medium use Form B
1	Physical assault	Lone worker	Follow Violence at work guidance on the Health and Safety page of Forest Hub	Low
2	Verbal assault	Lone worker	Follow Violence at work guidance on the Health and Safety page of Forest Hub	Low
3	Robbed while carrying work equipment	Lone worker	Provide suitable bags that make the equipment less obtrusive. Remind staff that equipment is insured and replaceable and that they are more important than the equipment so they must look after themselves first. Staff have attended personal safety training within the last three years	Low
4	Fall ill while off-site	Lone worker	Use first aid provision at centre being visited	Low
5	Vehicular accident	Lone worker	Follow driving safely guidance in the Health and Safety page of forest Hub and the Highway Code	Low
6	Road rage	Lone worker	Stay in car, shut windows and lock doors, report back when safe to do so	Low
7	Cycle incident	Lone worker	Use cycle routes where available. Use cycle helmet, where identified high risk of accident	Low
8	Have an accident at site	Lone worker	Use first aid provision at centre being visited	Low
9	Trapped in a lift	Lone worker	Use assistance button. Call back to base (if there is a signal) to let office know the problem	Low
10	Working at height	Lone worker	Follow Working at Height guidance in the Health and Safety pages on Forest Hub, this does not allow lone working at height. Appropriate personal protective equipment is to be worn at all times.	Low
11	Going straight to site from home	Lone worker	Information put up on whiteboard in office with an expected return to base time, information also kept on outlook diary.	Low
12	Going home from site	Lone worker	Write up on whiteboard and log on outlook diary. Call in at end of visit to let office know all is OK. Where call not received within ½ hour of end time, the office will contact lone worker	Low

hazard occurring

Medium = current controls still poor but consequences less serious: minor injury, short-term ill health with no lasting effects, <u>Low</u> = current controls are adequate to minimise the risk so far as reasonably practicable

Action Plan for Improvement

No.	Hazard	Action required	Residual Risk	By Whom	Target Date	Completion Date	Completed By
	No hazards unsuitably controlled	No action required					

Please ensure the cover sheet and Hazard Identification and Current Controls form are completed and attached.

Compliance Checklist

The Compliance Checklist is designed as a tool to record evidence policy requirements are being met. These areas will be reviewed by Corporate Health and Safety during the Health & Safety Audit

No	Manager Responsibilities	Yes/No/ N/A	Actions/Notes	Examples of evidence
1.1	Consulted with employees regarding any			Team meeting notes, discussion with staff
	lone working activities			and manger
1.2	Have identified significant hazards and			Up to date written risk assessment is in
	completed a written risk assessment			place, with a review date in the future
1.3	Shared results of risk assessment with team			Team meeting notes, discussion with staff
1.4	Provided appropriate training and			Training records, discussion with staff
	instruction for staff			
1.5	Have provided appropriate supervision for			Discussion with manager and staff,
	staff safety			relevant notes of 1-2-1 meetings
1.6	Tested the emergency response procedures			Records of emergency procedure tests are
	to ensure they function effectively			less than 6 months old
1.7	Action has been taken following reports of			Emails and written reports, discussion
	any serious issues reported by staff			with manager and staff
No	Employee Responsibilities	Yes/No/ N/A	Actions/Notes	Examples of evidence
2.1	Have been involved in the risk assessment and controls development			Risk assessment and discussion with staff
2.2	Tested the emergency procedures have			Discussion with staff, they are able to
	worked			provide emergency phrase to summon
				help
2.3	Have reported instances of aggression and			Records on Council reporting system and
	violence on Council incident reporting			staff discussion to check there is
	system			knowledge of how to report
2.4	Have brought any serious issues to the			Emails, discussion with manger and staff
	attention of their manager			

No	Health and Safety Team Responsibilities	Yes/No/ N/A	Actions/Notes	Examples of evidence
3.1	Have kept this policy up to date			Policy is within the review date and is available online
3.2	Have provided appropriate training			Records of training courses and attendance
3.3	Have undertaken audits to check compliance with this policy and guidance			Completed copy of this checklist that is dated and signed with an appropriate action plan for improvement

Start Date	End Date
Name of Assessor	
Signature of Assessor	
Name of Verifier	
Signature of verifier	