



Brooke V.C. CoE Primary School

Lone Working Policy

May 2017

To be reviewed May 2019 (every 2 yrs)

1. Lone working policy

Lone working activities are a normal part of service delivery in Norfolk County Council.

Norfolk County Council recognises its health and safety responsibilities towards employees who are involved in lone working processes and others who may be affected by these activities. Lone workers should not be put at more risk than other employees and specific control measures may be necessary in order to achieve this.

This document outlines a sensible risk based approach towards lone working. Safe lone working can be achieved by ensuring that safe systems of work are made available through management processes and used by all employees.

Periodic review will take place to ensure that these measures are effective.

All employees are expected to report all incidents which occur in relation to lone working in order to ensure that the organisation can prevent future events.

2. Defining lone working

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. Lone workers may be found in a range of situations:

- People in fixed establishments where:
 - Only one person works at the premises.
 - People work separately from others, e.g. in isolated areas of a site.
 - People work outside normal hours, e.g. maintenance employees.
- Mobile, or peripatetic workers operating away from their fixed base:
 - On construction, maintenance, inspection activities or unfamiliar sites.
 - 'Service' workers, for example, Social Workers, Tutors, Mobile Library Drivers, Enforcement Officers.

3. Note on lone working risk assessment

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone. However, a risk assessment of lone working tasks must be carried out.

Lone working can be included as part of an overall risk assessment for an activity or a specific lone working assessment must be carried out. A lone working risk assessment template and an example of a Lone Worker Risk Assessment is included with this guidance.

The manager is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out, however, this task can be delegated to a competent person.

4. Identify the hazard

Activities identified needs to be assessed to determine the level of risk they present. This involves looking at factors such as:

- The potential for violence and aggression
- The environment and other activities taking place in the same working area. Examples of these two areas include adverse weather, working on an unfamiliar construction site.

In addition the risk assessment must take account of foreseeable emergencies which may arise, such as equipment failure, illness and accidents.

4.1 Potential for violence and aggression

It is recognised that the hazards presented by a particular lone working activity will vary, e.g. carrying out unwanted enforcement activities, cash handling, driving for business.

The following table identifies four areas for consideration as they are applicable when assessing lone working risks. This table does not contain an exhaustive list and should be used as a starting point.

The client	Individual characteristics can have the potential to contribute towards violence and aggression, e.g. previous history, or the fact that the person is unknown and there is no available information to use as part of the risk assessment process.
The employee who is lone working	Factors which may increase or decrease the chances of violence and aggression occurring, e.g. their competence (level of training, experience, cultural awareness etc), role (e.g. representing authority in enforcement work) and the things they might do (e.g. arriving late for a home visit)
Interaction	The interaction which takes place between the employee and the client, for example, enforcing rules, carrying out inspections, asking questions about family backgrounds, carrying valuable items, transporting people who use the service.
The work environment	<p>Off NCC Sites For example; a home visit on another person's property, visiting rural areas that are without lighting, court visits etc. The table below provides further information about the work environment.</p> <p>On NCC Sites Lone working employees need to be able to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>Where there is the potential for violence and aggression involving a client, both employees and visitors need to be able to move to a place of safety if a difficult situation arises, for example, exit the meeting room that you are working in.</p>

4.2 Physical hazards

The working environment and activities may present particular hazards and should be considered as part of the lone working risk assessment, for example:

Work environment	<p>The level of risk varies from one working environment to another, higher risk environments can include: construction sites; docks; farms and working on or near to water (including the coastline). Lower risk lone working environments can include working at offices that are secure and driving alone on short duration journeys in built up areas.</p> <p>There must be a safe way in and out of the workplace. This can be difficult to achieve when working on premises which are not under the control of NCC, for example when making a first home visit.</p> <p>Other areas for consideration include when using third party owned electrical appliances (home visits), poor lighting.</p>
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Activity being undertaken	The level of risk varies by activity. Examples of higher risk activity includes working off ladders to carry out maintenance work, carrying out bridge inspections, animal handling on farms, working on highways, using hazardous machinery. Lower risk lone working activity includes attending meetings at another office base belonging to NCC and home working.
Plant, equipment, substances	Some equipment used to carry out work may not be easily and safely handled by one person, e.g., temporary access equipment such as ladders or trestles. Other manual handling activities may also not be suitable for one person. It should be established whether equipment can be used and controlled safely by a lone worker, for example, a reversing a heavy goods vehicle in an area with high pedestrian movement. Specific warnings may be provided by the manufacturer or identified through the way in which the work is being done which indicates a need to avoid lone working, for example, when using certain chemicals or hazardous substances.
Communication with others and supervision.	Means of communication vary depending on the work activity and location. There are areas in Norfolk where a mobile phone signal is not available. This also impacts on the ability to summon assistance in the event of an emergency.

5 Who is at risk (and when)

The lone working assessment must consider who might be harmed as a result of our activities, for example, employees, visitors and contractors.

The following table provides details of some specific aspects for consideration when assessing the suitability of lone working for NCC employees:

New and expectant mothers	Impaired ability to carry out physically strenuous work. Later stages of pregnancy may increase the risk of falls through reduced visibility and changes to mobility. Risk of early labour or miscarriage through physical assault. Please note: a specific risk assessment is provided for New and Expectant Mothers on Schools' PeopleNet.
Young people	Lack of experience and level of maturity. Inability to concentrate for long periods.
Disability	Impact on ability to make unassisted evacuation. Ability to identify that evacuation is required.
New employees, trainees including inexperienced volunteers	Lack of familiarity through level of experience or training needs.
Specific medical conditions	Some individuals may have medical conditions that make them unsuitable for working alone. These may include some health conditions, such as unstable epilepsy or diabetes. The consideration of medical conditions should include both routine activities and foreseeable emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

The following table provides examples of individual consideration for non-employees

Contractors	Unfamiliar with site layout, emergency procedures, adjacent activities and site hazards.
Person who uses the service attending an NCC site for a one to one meeting.	Unfamiliar with exit route from meeting room, may become agitated and need to leave the room in anger.

A lone worker may be seconded to NCC from another organisation or vice versa, in both cases adequate lone worker arrangements must be put in place.

Lone working may be encountered during part of a working day as well as for lone working occupations, for example, locking and opening up an office base, driving to different work bases to attend meetings.

All of the above considerations are just a guide and are not exhaustive. Each risk assessment must consider the vulnerabilities of the person involved in the lone working task, and identify controls to reduce to an acceptable level.

6 Controlling the risk

It is important to ensure that control measures are proportionate to the risk.

A key factor in controlling lone worker risk is to ensure that lone workers are competent in adapting to a foreseeable range of changing and developing situations with little or no contact with their supervisor. The extent of supervision must be proportionate to the risk and the competency of the lone worker. The manager is responsible for ensuring that safe working arrangements are in place for the all stages of the activity, from the task planning, to implementation and completion. These arrangements include ensuring that lone workers are competent in adapting to a foreseeable range of changing and developing situations with little or no contact with their supervisor.

6.1 Withdrawing from lone working activity

Head Teachers / Managers must ensure that the lone worker is supported if they decide that they need to terminate the work they are carrying out to protect their (or others') safety. For example, when working at height and wind speeds increase during the course of the work or visiting a person who uses a service who becomes verbally aggressive and threatening. In this instance a review of the arrangements for similar future work must be carried out.

6.2 Unsafe lone working

In circumstances with all control measures in place, if the assessment identifies that it isn't possible for the task to be carried out safely then lone working should not proceed.

If you are unsure about what controls are needed because the task is considered higher risk or requires more technical/specialist knowledge, further guidance should be sought from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.

6.3 Supervisory monitoring of lone working

The manager must ensure that lone worker monitoring takes place. Monitoring can include:

- Supervisor visits sites in person or observes people who are working alone
- Making regular contact with the lone worker using mobile phones, radio, telephone or use of automated devices (please refer to Emergency Arrangements in this document for the arrangements needed if a lone worker cannot be contacted). An overview of contact systems are detailed below.

6.3.1 In house buddy systems

A buddy system is used to maintain telephone contact at pre-determined intervals between a nominated buddy and lone worker in order to confirm safety. The lone worker must provide the buddy with an itinerary. A template for the buddy system is provided on Schools' PeopleNet. In house buddy systems rely on:

- All buddy employees knowing the actions to be taken in the event of a lone worker either raising an alert or emergency.
- Employees having the time and concentration to be able to fulfil the requirement of the role
- Full participation of all employees who are involved in system use in order to ensure that it remains robust and has credibility.

A buddy can also be used to monitor lone workers in person and respond to meeting room alarms, for example, when meeting with a service user at the work base. The buddy can check through a door vision panel into the room where meetings are carried out /or come into the room and ask a set question at a predetermined time; if assistance is needed it can be established through the response made without raising an alert to the other person(s) in the room.

6.3.2 Automated lone working alarm or tracking devices

Automated systems are provided to higher risk lone workers in order to either raise an alarm or to record and identify their location. Training in the use of these devices and the circumstances under which the device is to be used is of paramount importance as it has been identified that lone workers do not use or understand these systems fully where appropriate training has not been received. In addition line management of all employees who may be involved in receiving an automated emergency alert must be able to deal with the response procedure effectively. The type of lone working device selected will depend upon the type of lone work activity involved.

6.4 Mandatory control measures for potentially violent and aggressive situations

Where there is the potential for violence and aggression the following three risk categories and mandatory control measures are provided. Some employees may fall into more than one category of lone working, therefore all control measures against each individual category may apply.

Additional information is provided for consideration, this information is a guide only and isn't a fully inclusive list of control measures.

Risk Category	Control Measures
<p>Category 1 Employees working in offices or other secure locations outside of normal working hours or who routinely work in these locations on their own. Work of a low risk office type.</p> <p>Examples would include: Teachers, office based employees, travelling to meetings.</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees must be briefed on the measures required to ensure their workplace is secure if they are lone working and emergency procedures. • All employees must record an itinerary of their movements that is accessible to their manager/colleagues. Details made available should include location, car make, model, registration number and mobile phone number.
	<p>For guidance and consideration</p> <p>Refer to low risk office lone working procedure</p>

**Lone Working Risk Assessment
Form Number F617**

Name of team/section/unit/school:	Date of assessment: / /
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Lone working tasks/activities (E.g. home visits and driving). (List below)	Lone working risk category (violence and aggression related only)	Foreseeable hazards involved (E.g. violence, falls from height, manual handling injuries, etc.)

Are all people carrying out lone working tasks medically fit to work alone? Yes No
 If no, discuss this with the individuals concerned and record separately (to maintain confidentiality) any adjustments to their work that are necessary.

Are there any other specific considerations for the individual lone worker Yes No
 (Examples include pregnant worker, a young person, new employee)

Please state the specific considerations below (unless confidentiality is needed).

Non employees who might be affected by the activities

Control measures

Possible control measures	Detail actions/existing controls in place	Further actions/controls required
Written instructions/procedures/information which is specific to the lone working activity.		
Details of prohibited lone working (E.g. work at height in adverse weather, home visits to people with known history of violence, etc.)		
Information, instruction and training		
Additional arrangements for new members of staff who will be lone working or young person (As a minimum cover the lone working procedure at induction.)		
Available information checked (for example, previous incidents relating to a similar activity, risk of violence is indicated.		
Arrangements in place for supervising lone workers (E.g. periodically accompanying lone workers.)		
Arrangements are in place for tracking lone workers? (E.g. periodic visits to lone worker, calling in to base by the lone worker.)		
Fixed or portable alarms which can be used		

Other equipment provided (including Personal Protective Equipment)		
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Other lone working issues
Please use the space provided below to list any other lone working issues and control measures not covered above.

Lone working issue	Further actions/controls

Foreseeable emergencies during lone working (Refer back to lone working activities listed earlier. E.g. lone worker fails to return from site, lone worker is attacked, lone worker sets off an emergency alarm etc.)	Action to be taken/emergency procedure For example, buddy arrangements to response to an emergency.

Additional controls that will be put in place for tasks/activities that are unsafe to be carried out by a lone worker (E.g. working in pairs)

Name of assessor:	Signature:	Date: / /
Manager/headteacher must sign below to accept the assessment and ensure that remedial actions are implemented.		
Managers/headteacher name:	Signature:	Date: / /