



# **PREVENTING AND MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR**

## **A POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT**

### **(LONE WORKERS)**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR LONE WORKING

This document includes guidance for lone workers relating to issues of personal safety and preventing and managing challenging, aggressive or violent behaviour. It is designed to assist managers and professional departments in discharging their health and safety responsibilities. The subject of this policy and guidance deals with workers who work by themselves, without close or direct supervision. In particular the document takes into account the requirements of the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**.

For More detailed guidance on the legal and general requirements you should obtain a copy of Working Alone in Safety – HSE Books.

**Note:** Managers and professional departments must develop local arrangements to comply with this policy and incorporate them within their respective Health and Safety procedures and guidance.

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **Lone Working Policy**

Organisations have a duty to make sufficient provision for the management of health and safety in the workplace. Managers and others responsible for staff wellbeing have a responsibility to implement the policy within the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 by providing the facilities, procedures and resources to effect a suitable and sufficient health and safety management system.

The operational responsibility for discharging the health and safety requirements with regards to this policy lies with the appropriate Executive Members. In addition, the appropriate Heads of Department have primary operational responsibility. A key role in implementing this policy lies with departmental heads and line managers who must ensure all of the following requirements are addressed and implemented.

Duties of implementation for both these areas may be delegated to individuals in a manner that accurately reflects their existing levels of competence and responsibility. These individuals must plan, organize, control, monitor and review their health and safety management systems. However, in certain circumstances, the advice and assistance of specialist advisors may be required.

## **2 WHO ARE LONE WORKERS**

### **Summary Guidance**

Lone workers can be anyone who works by himself or herself without close or direct supervision. Some common examples are;

- A person working on their own in a building, office or unit
- A person working on their own in the community
- A person working at home on their own
- A persons visiting a service users home or residence
- A person working outside normal hours on their own
- Mobile workers who work away from the main place of work or office on their own

### **Action Required**

- Identify all persons who are lone workers
- Identify the locations and the tasks carried out by lone workers

## **3 CONTROLLING THE RISKS**

### **Summary Guidance**

As required by the management of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 a suitable assessment should be carried out to identify the hazards and the level of risk that lone workers are exposed to. Suitable control measures will need to be identified within the assessments to reduce or eliminate the level of risk exposure. Depending on the level of risk identified, there may be some higher risk activities or areas where lone working will not be permitted e.g. visiting a service user with a known history of violence; or high crime areas or other recent events.

### **Action Required**

- Comprehensive risk assessments on all lone working activities/areas
- Control measures to be identified, prioritized; implemented and reviewed
- Higher risk activities/areas identified and formal decisions made on authorization/cessation of lone working
- Formal systems/procedures to be developed for particular activities/areas

## **4 REQUIREMENTS OF LONE WORKERS**

### **Summary Guidance**

It is important that lone workers are considered for known medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for working alone. This aspect of the assessment is conducted through Occupational Health. Consideration will be given to routine work and foreseeable emergencies which may impose additional or specific risks.

Lone workers must be suitably experienced, have received suitable instructions and if necessary, training on the risks they may be exposed to and the precautions to be used.

It is organisations responsibility to ensure adequate supervision is provided. The adequacy of the supervision will depend on the level of risk, types of risk; and duration of exposure. Adequacy of supervision may involve some of the following;

- Periodic checks for lone workers, e.g. visual
- Periodic contact with lone workers, e.g. telephone
- Systems of communication with other lone workers e.g. records/information kept
- Systems for raising the alarm in an emergency
- Checks on lone workers to ensure they have returned to the office or home on completion of activities

### **Action required**

- Check and monitor adequacy of supervision
- Ensure any emergencies equipment, e.g. alarms, mobile phones are regularly checked and maintained