



Lone Working: Policy, Procedures and Practice Guidance

Policy Statement

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member, senior members of staff and managers have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

Purpose

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.

Scope

This policy applies to all Always Consult staff, managers and Associates who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

Context

Lone workers face the same risks as anyone else, as well as those directly related to their work. Within Always Consult's overall policy relating to safer working practices, support for lone workers is an essential part, and the same principles apply, particularly: a) A commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices, b) Recognising and reducing risk, c) A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff a clear understanding of responsibilities, d) The priority placed on the safety of the individual over property a commitment to providing appropriate training for staff, e) Equipment such as mobile phones, personal alarms and torches will be made available as appropriate.

Definition

A lone worker is someone who performs an activity that is carried out in isolation from other workers without close or direct supervision. Such staff may be exposed to risk because there is no-one to assist them and so a risk assessment may be required.

Mandatory Procedures

Personal Safety

- Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances. Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with a senior and/or line manager.
- Staff must inform their line manager (or other identified person) when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following a visit rather than returning to base.
- Managers must ensure that there is a robust system in place for signing in and out, and that staff use it. Staff such as Home Support Workers, for example, who work to a pre-planned programme of visits, must inform their line manager if they deviate from the programme.
- If a member of staff does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate.
- Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues to take into account include: staffing levels and availability, the identified risks, measures in place to reduce those risks.
- Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation. Staff working in the community should have a mobile phone; they are responsible for checking that it is charged, in working order, and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider. Personal alarms may also be provided.
- Staff must ensure that online calendars are up to date, contain detailed information of whereabouts including contacts names of visits.
- Online Calendars must be shared with members of the Senior Leadership team as well as key members of staff within the business

Assessment of risk

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances: The environment – location, security, access. The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances. The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk. History – any previous incidents in similar situations any other special circumstances. 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. While resource implications cannot be ignored, safety must be the prime concern.

Planning

Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself. Communication, checking-in and fall back arrangements must be in place. The senior/manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the team.

Reporting

Should an incident occur, the reporting and de-briefing should follow standard Always Consult company guidelines (which can be found in the extended Lone Worker Policy document). The identified person should debrief in the first instance; if this is not the staff member's line manager, that manager should be informed as soon as practicable and continue the process.

Lone worker devices

It is the senior's/line manager's duty to ensure that each member of the team is issued with a lone worker device, if appropriate. The manager should ensure that device users receive adequate training and are competent in the use of their devices. Managers are responsible for overall monitoring of lone worker device usage. Staff are responsible for keeping their devices in good working order, reporting any problems with devices and for ensuring that device batteries are fully charged before working alone.

Known Risks and Procedures

Here you will provide known risks and procedures that should be followed in such circumstances.

Monitoring and Review

The ongoing implementation of the Lone Working Policy will be monitored through the Standardisation and/or Self-Assessment process. Lone working and risk assessment will be regular agenda items for team meetings. Any member of staff with a concern regarding these issues should ensure that it is discussed with their senior or with the whole team, as appropriate. The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of reviews, unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.

External Support

- Health and Safety Executive (HSE): <http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence>
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm>
- Resource to read on HSE and also available in Always Consult -Protecting Lone workers: How to manage the risks of working alone :
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.htm>

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