



Lone Worker Policy and Procedure

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Introduction

This guidance is to support Lone worker exercising the duties of their role. It aims to highlight safety issues relating to lone working and how Lone worker can organise support when engaging in this activity. The guidance is not intended to be prescriptive, however, there is an expectation that Lone worker will take the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the guidance and implement its contents. It is acknowledged that there is already a considerable amount of awareness and experience of these issues amongst Lone worker. This guidance seeks to consolidate and build on this. It is advisable for Lone worker to reconsider their practice and approach to health and safety issues on a regular basis.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as;

“those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”.

Examples given by the HSE which seem to most closely apply to Lone worker are;

“those who work away from a fixed base” and/or “are self-employed”.

Remember

As independent practitioners, Lone worker are responsible for their own safety arrangements, however, the Lone worker Panel Team are available for discussion as required. This guidance should assist Lone worker when considering and making lone working and safety arrangements.

Lone working activity

In order to fulfil the role, Lone worker will often carry out associated tasks in the homes of individuals and at other venues. It is the responsibility of each Lone worker to assess the circumstances and associated risks when carrying out the role and have an appropriate support system in place at the time of the lone working activity.

The likelihood of a negative incident associated with lone working is low but the potential severity is high enough to require some control measures such as those listed below under the section on support arrangements and the Safety Checklist.

Assessment of risk and safety issues

It is the responsibility of each Lone worker to assess the level of risk and to consider safety issues involved in visiting someone in their home and to have an appropriate support system in place at the time of this activity. It is recognised that any assessment of risk cannot account for every possible situation, however, it should help manage foreseeable risks and safety issues associated with lone working activities. Lone worker should avoid making unannounced visits for this reason.

When considering risk and safety issues, Lone worker are advised to consider the general safety guidance included in this document and appendix 1, Safety Checklist for Lone worker

Prior to Home Visits.

i. issues to consider

When making 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

ii. information from other sources

A risk assessment should include checking with those agencies that have knowledge of the individuals, location or venue to be visited before arranging the visit. It may be that there already exists a relevant risk assessment relating to person/s and circumstances that will be beneficial to consider. This information may highlight safety concerns, such as identifying visits which should not be carried out in the evening or alone.

iii. Collaboration with colleagues

If a Lone worker concludes that there are concerns about making a lone visit, then arrangements should be made to use an appropriate neutral venue. If a Lone worker felt that it would be beneficial to have an additional person in attendance, that person should be a professional who is already involved and not a colleague or friend. This decision will require discussion with the professionals involved as in some instances the presence of a particular professional or representative of that discipline may exacerbate the risk rather than reduce it.

If a Lone worker determines that it is not appropriate to meet an individual in their home, place of work or other location proposed by that individual (whether this determination is based on advice from any source or the Lone worker's own assessment of risk to the health and or safety of him or herself or others or for any other reason), when arranging to meet at a venue operated by a third party, such as the school premises, the Lone worker should consider what information may be relevant to that third party in order that they can make a decision about whether they can accommodate the meeting and what, if any, arrangements need to put in place.

Consideration of General Safety Guidance

The following general guidance (which is not exhaustive) should be considered before engaging in activities which take a Lone worker away from their home or other work base and an appropriate response is put in place. This is particularly important before visiting properties to interview people in connection with safeguarding role.

Before undertaking a visit:

As outlined in the section above, Lone worker should contact organisations who are already involved with the person/s to be visited or have relevant information about them e.g. Social Work Department /CAMHS.

Where a risk assessment has been completed by other agencies, consider how this applies to the activities associated with the role and carry out an assessment of the situation as outlined above.

Consideration should be given to the location and timing of the visit/ meeting, taking into account any relevant issues/ risk factors. If there are risks to personal safety, Lone worker should consider using a neutral venue and

whether it is necessary to carrying out a joint visit with another party.

Lone worker should plan their route, both ways, by either vehicle or public transport. It is not recommended that Satnavs be relied on as the sole method of navigation, other facilities such as Streetmap are also available <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/>.

Lone worker should establish whether car parking is available and consider whether or not they wish the identity of the car used to be available to the child or family.

As part of pre-interview contact, it may be advisable to call in advance to clarify the Lone worker role, manage expectations and determine who should be present. Unannounced visits are not encouraged or recommended. It is also advisable to check regarding any pets that may be in the household. For example, ask that dogs are kept in another room during the visit. Even if they do not show any signs of aggression, they may react in response to upset or aggression shown by their owners. Pet allergies should also be considered.

Lone worker should be prepared to change arrangements if at all uncertain and advise their AHT contacts or Heads PA of any last minute changes.

Lone worker should ensure their mobile phone is fully charged and check signal coverage of the planned area. The mobile phone should be accessible during the visit and switched to silent.

It is strongly advised that lone working support arrangements are used to allow monitoring of the visit (see Support Arrangements section).

On Arrival/During Visit:

Lone workers are advised to park safely in a well-lit area and in position for a quick exit (if possible reverse in to the parking space so the car is facing the direction of travel). Personal possessions should be kept to a minimum and out of view.

Lone worker should park close to the place to be visited unless there is a reason not to e.g. the Lone worker does not wish the identity of their car to be known. Lone worker should be aware of the area around the home and any people present in the immediate area and have a reason to explain their presence if challenged.

Lone workers are advised to avoid carrying any valuables or using a mobile phone when walking to the location of their visit. If no-one answers the door of the home being visited, Lone worker should refrain from walking around the house and looking in windows and should only enter a house if they are satisfied regarding any risks or concerns.

Lone workers should establish that the person they have arranged to see is home and only enter if that person is available. If there are children on their

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own, any child protection issues will have to be considered and may need to be acted upon. Further information is available in Child Protection Policy and Procedure for Lone worker.

Before and on entering the property, Lone workers should make an initial assessment of the attitude, demeanour, and behaviour of the person being visited for signs of aggression, violence, substance use, or other unusual or suspicious behaviour.

Lone workers should consider the principles of 'safe contact' when meeting children in their home and may wish to get advice/ guidance on this from relevant professionals/organisations. If a confidential discussion with the child is thought to be appropriate, alternative arrangements may be required, with the child being accompanied by another professional/trusted person who is known by the child.

When inside the house, Lone workers are advised to adopt a position to allow maximum vision of the area and an unobstructed exit and, if possible, sit closest to the exit (do not allow internal doors to be locked after you).

During the interview:

Lone workers are asked to have considered and planned for how and when to deliver any unwelcome information and anticipate any reactions and plan how this will be managed.

Lone worker should have an awareness of how to deal with/ defuse aggressive or potentially violent situations. It is advised to remain alert and observant to all behaviours. Should newcomers enter the home, be prepared to end the visit at this stage.

Lone workers should consider ending the visit where they feel their safety is being threatened or compromised.

Lone workers should be prepared to raise the alarm if safe to do so or call for assistance from the police if necessary.

Prior to any visit, Lone workers should consider support options and put necessary arrangements in place.

If the Lone worker has any doubts or feel ill at ease with in a situation they should seek out advice and support from the Safeguarding Team.

Support Arrangements

Lone worker should consider a basic arrangement which will promote safety by making sure a 3rd party is aware of a lone working activity. Depending on individual circumstances, a Lone worker may be able to access and use an existing system through their workplace; may have made arrangements with a family member/ friend to take on the role of the 3rd

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party contact or have engaged the Children 1st Home Visit Protocol. There should be a very clear agreement and arrangement with those acting as the 3rd party contact about what steps they should take should the Lone worker not return/check in with them at the expected time.

These types of arrangements are designed to summon help, should that be necessary. They don't replace the need to take a planned and preventive approach to safety issues when arranging a home visit.

It is strongly recommended that Lone worker use the "check-in/out" arrangement put in place by the safeguarding team. Should Lone worker wish to instigate a check in check out procedure at weekends they are able to do so by contacting: -

Vikki Harris-Jones AHT (Attendance) – Mobile Phone Number - 07485 368 804
Peadar McLaughlin DHT (DSL) - Mobile Phone Number - 07485 368 800

The procedure detailed below will then be followed.

The named school contact will be provided with a schedule of visits for the Lone Worker each day.

Check in

Lone worker should contact the named school contact on each occasion:

the name and address of the person/s to be visited (there is no requirement to give names unless they are not the sole occupants at the address and these details are kept, mindful of confidentiality, and only shared when necessary in the interests of the Lone worker safety);

the car registration along with make/model/colour or other method of transport to the visit the time the visit will start the expected duration and finishing time.

alternative contact details for use in emergencies (e.g. friend or relative).

This checklist may also be helpful for use if you decide to use a family member or other person as the 3rd party instead, however consideration will need to be given to what information about the individuals to be visited is shared with 3rd parties.

Check out

Lone worker should contact the named school contact on each occasion:

If a Lone worker does not make contact within **10 minutes** of the designated close down time, to close the safety arrangements, AHT (Inclusion) will start an escalation process which will consist of:

contacting the Lone worker;

if there is no response, the alternative contact person will be contacted;

if there is no answer to this and a further attempt is unsuccessful, the emergency services will be contacted.

Linda Ledson (Deputy Office Manager) – - To be contacted by lone worker for check in/ check out process.

Safety elsewhere:

It is recognised that for many, certain Lone worker tasks can be undertaken in your home such as making telephone calls or reviewing information and writing reports. In the main, this takes place without incident and to ensure that practice continues to be safe, a Lone worker may wish to seek personal safety advice guidance from the police. There are issues (listed below) which are also worth considering:

Meetings with the child and/or others involved with the child should always take place away from the Lone worker's home.

A Lone worker may prefer to have their home phone number listed as ex directory and consider a separate mobile for the purposes of Lone worker duties. To avoid the telephone number being displayed on the receiver's phone, a Lone worker can alter the settings or use pre dial code.

Lone worker who use social media sites for personal use should ensure that the privacy settings are set high to ensure that personal information cannot be accessed and should not share any information whatsoever relating to their safeguarding role on such sites.

Lone worker should have immediate safety arrangements in place, should an individual connected to their Lone worker role turn up at their home, particularly if this would cause alarm and/ or distress.

Lone worker should advise the Lone worker Panel Team of any incident which has caused concern about personal safety.
Incident Reporting and Recording

Any incident which occurred while a Lone worker was exercising their duty that has caused personal injury; fear or alarm; or damage to property (or had the potential to do so) should be reported to the DSL/Human Resource Manager. This is in addition to any workplace system (where applicable) that may be in place.

Lone worker should be aware of and implement local child and adult protection procedures when, in the course of their duties, they identify protection issues. Further information is available in the Child Protection Guidance for Lone worker.

Debriefing

It is acknowledged that Lone worker face challenging situations and absorb difficult

and distressing information. Options for support can be discussed with the safeguarding team and Lone worker are encouraged to contact the team.

Review of guidance

Relevant information and feedback will be used to review this guidance and for it to be re-issued as necessary.

Appendix 1

Safety Checklist for Lone worker Prior to Home Visits

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and should be adapted as required;

*NA is an abbreviation for not applicable.

Issue Yes/No/NA* Action Required

Have you contacted any other organisations who have previous knowledge?

Have you received any information which causes you concerns or highlights risks?

Have you assessed the location/venue and can it be judged to be safe?

If you are travelling by car have you identified a safe place to park?

Is your mobile phone fully charged and does somebody know where you are?

Have you considered meeting at a neutral venue?

Are you aware of the precautions to take during the visit?

Park safely and in a position to make a quick exit

Minimise and hide any personal possessions

Only enter the house if you feel safe to do so

Take a position in the house with an unobstructed exit

Are you confident that you are aware of how to conduct the interview?

Being aware of how to deal with aggressive situations

Being alert to behaviours of others

Being prepared to end interview

Knowing how to raise the alarm

Are you happy that your privacy arrangements are adequate and there could be no unwelcome intrusion in to your private life due to yours safeguarding duties?

Appendix 2

Significant Incident Reporting form – Children 1st Lone worker Panel

Date of Incident: Lone worker:

SCRA ID No:

Name and role of person completing form:

Details of incident:

-Location and time of incident:

-Description of incident:

-Outcome/Action taken:

-Debrief and Support offered:

Notifications:

Internal - when and by whom:

External – when and by whom:

Comments by line manager:

Signature: Date:

Comments by Assistant Director/ Senior Manager:

Signature: Date: