

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

July 2005

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NOTE:

Wherever the designation “manager” is used throughout this policy, it is taken to mean Head of Service, Head Teacher, Line Manager, Supervisor and the Officer in charge or anyone who has responsibilities for employees in the course of their work.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the policy and outlines the protective and preventative measures to be implemented by Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Authority) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees in relation to lone working.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the arrangements and responsibilities for managing lone working in the Authority.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Authority recognises that its employees are its most valuable resource in delivering high quality services to the community and will take all practical steps to ensure the health and safety of the Authorities employees, contractors and visitors to and users of council premises by not exposing them to hazards associated with lone working.
- 2.2 The Authority recognises there are inherent risks associated with lone working and will consider alternative safer systems of work where possible.
- 2.3 Where lone working is necessary, the effective control of these risks will be controlled through the correct management of lone working in the Authority as set out in this policy and the provision of appropriate training, instruction and supervision. To be effective this policy requires the full co-operation of management and employees at all levels.
- 2.4 The Authority accepts it has specific duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy has been agreed with the Trade Unions and applies to all employees except; initially school based staff, though the Council would recommend that School Governing Bodies adopt the policy.
- 3.2 This policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure it is in line with current legislation.
- 3.3 The effective date of the policy is:

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 For the purpose of this policy, lone working can be defined as the following:
 - 4.1.1 Only one employee works on the premises. For example in small workshops, small offices, home workers etc.
 - 4.1.2 Employees working separately from others. For example in factories, warehouses, leisure centres etc.

4.1.3 Employees working outside normal hours. For example cleaners, security, maintenance or repair staff etc.

4.1.4 Mobile employees working away from their fixed base. For example forestry workers, rent collectors, social workers, home carers etc.

4.2 This definition applies to those employees who habitually work alone and for whom working alone is part of their role.

5. LEGISLATION

5.1 This policy along with its supporting procedures is designed to ensure the Authority meets its legal obligation as stated in:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

NB: Please note that all employees have a legal responsibility to comply with health and safety law and the provisions of this policy. Failure to do so could result in personal and / or Corporate liability.

6.1 The Chief Executive Officer will:

- Be ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

6.2 Directors will:

- Be responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this corporate policy and associated directorate arrangements within their service areas.
- Ensure that appropriate resources are made available for the effective operation of the policy including training.

6.3 Managers with responsibilities for employees will:

- Identify all persons who fall into the lone working category.
- Notify Occupational Health of identified lone workers to enable paper screening in accordance with the lone working questionnaire (see appendix 3) to be carried out.
- Ensure a suitable and sufficient lone working risk assessment has been carried out for all identified jobs.
- Risk assessment should be carried out by the line-manager who should have received suitable training in risk assessments.

- Receive a copy of the lone working risk assessment and communicate the findings of the assessment and implications to the relevant employees.
- Co-ordinate the completion of any recommendations required as a result of the lone working risk assessment.
- Ensure the lone working risk assessment is reviewed when there is reason to suspect the assessment is no longer valid or there has been significant changes in the work to which the assessment relates.
- Ensure the documented lone working risk assessment is kept until a new assessment is produced or the assessment revised.
- Ensure identified lone workers are suitably experienced, trained in emergency procedures, have received instructions and if necessary, training on the risks they are exposed to and know the control measures.
- Ensure where identified by the risk assessment lone workers are issued with mobile phones, know how to use the mobile phone, ensure emergency numbers are pre-programmed in the phone and the number communicated to the line manager and any other relevant people considered necessary.
- Ensure a 'Violent Incident Report Form' is completed when an employee is exposed to any verbal or physical abuse, the form signed by the employee and their manager and then forwarded to the Directorate Health and Safety officer and Corporate Health and Safety Unit.
- Ensure employee's carry out a search on 'INCHECK' (Corporate System), 'ACADEMY' (Housing System), 'SWIFT' (Social Services System) or the appropriate system before carrying out any visits.
- Ensure lone workers have access to adequate first-aid facilities and carry a first-aid kit, to HSE standard, where identified as necessary following a risk assessment.
- Ensure this policy is communicated to their employees.
- Ensure their employees comply with this policy and associated Directorate arrangements for lone working derived from this policy.

6.4 Each employee of the Authority will:

- Comply with any working procedure or precautionary measure introduced to minimise the risk of lone working.
- If working outdoors respond accordingly to the changing weather conditions at the time.
- Ensure their Manager is notified immediately if there are changes in their personal health which may affect their ability to work alone.

6.5 The Corporate Health and Safety Unit will:

- Ensure that the lone working policy is reviewed at least annually to ensure it is in line with current legislation.
- Provide advice and information on legislation or guidance relating to Lone Working.
- Audit compliance with the policy.

6.6 Directorate Health and Safety Officers will:

- Ensure that any necessary Directorate arrangements are developed in accordance with the Corporate Policy on lone working.
- Ensure the communication of the Corporate Policy and Directorate arrangements to all managers.
- Monitor the effective implementation of the Corporate Policy and Directorate Arrangements.

6.7 Occupational Health Department will:

- Initially paper screen all identified lone workers.
- If identified through the paper screening, carry out a health assessment to ensure the employee is fit for lone working.
- Maintain records of any health assessment of employees relating to above. These records will be kept for at least forty years.

6.8 The Directorate Personnel Unit will:

- Send out the lone workers health surveillance questionnaire (see appendix 3) on recruitment where the job has been identified as involving lone working.

7. ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 Lone Workers:

7.1.1 Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. They are found in a number of jobs in the Authority. Some examples are:

- People working alone in an interview room, reception, post rooms, residential homes and day centres.
- People working totally alone in a building, department or service with no one in close proximity, for example, cleaners, premises officers, staff in training establishments and libraries.

- People working alone or with a customer or client in their home and there are no other persons that could provide assistance. For example home care workers, social workers, rent collectors, property services and building works repair operatives
- People working outside normal hours, for example support staff, maintenance or repair staff, telephonists and emergency duty team.
- People working in premises that are closed such as schools at weekends, in term holidays and outside term time or void properties.
- People working on their own away from their fixed base or in premises not occupied by their normal client base for example in the street, construction site.
- People working out of normal hours in an office.
- Environmental health officers, safety officers, parking control officers working outside the normal flexi bandwidth.

7.2 Risk Assessments:

- 7.2.1 Risk assessment is a line management responsibility for those who are responsible for lone working.
- 7.2.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty on employers (The Authority) to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the Health and Safety risks to which their employees (and other not in their employment) may be subjected.

7.3 Contents of the Risk Assessment:

- 7.3.1 The assessment must identify and assess any specific risks taking into account, the hazards, who is at risk, an evaluation of severity and frequency, the current controls and any residual risk remaining. It may be necessary to take the following considerations into account during a risk assessment, where appropriate;
- The fitting out and layout of the workplace and the particular site where they will be working.
 - The nature of any physical, biological and chemical agents they will be exposed to, for how long and to what extent, e.g. cement, glues, mastics and sealants, cleaning chemicals.
 - What type of work equipment will be used and how this will be handled.
 - How the work and processes involved are organised.

- The need to assess and provide health and safety training.
- The requirement for any Personal Protective Equipment

7.3.2 Managers are required to follow up any hazards identified through the risk assessment with arrangements to ensure the risk are either eliminated or adequately controlled. When it is not possible to devise arrangements for the work to be carried out safely by one person, alternative arrangements providing help or back-up must be devised.

7.3.3 The risk assessments have to be carried out by a competent person.

7.3.4 Competent means somebody with the necessary knowledge, experience, skills and training as appropriate.

7.4 Assessment Records:

7.4.1 Any lone working risk assessments carried out must kept by the line-manager until a new assessment is made.

7.4.2 The lone working risk assessment shall be reviewed when there is reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid, or there has been a change in the work to which the assessments relates.

7.5 Medical Fitness for lone working:

7.5.1 The authority shall check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone. Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens of the individual.

7.6 Violence to Staff:

7.6.1 Any employee who feels that they have experienced an act of aggression, either physical or verbal must verbally report as soon as reasonably practicable to their Supervisor/Manager.

7.6.2 This is to be followed up with a written statement of events using the standard format within 48 hours or if it falls on the weekend returned within 2 working days.

7.6.3 The Supervisor/Manager must include actions taken to prevent a recurrence.

7.6.4 The completed form should be signed by the employee and their manager who will forward a copy to the Directorate Safety Officer and Corporate Health and Safety unit. The Directorate Health and Safety Officer will then arrange for the incident to be investigated if appropriate, and send copies to the relevant Directorate Personnel Unit and Corporate Health and Safety unit.

7.6.5 For further information on Violence at Work, the 'Violence at Work Policy' can be found on the Caerphilly County Borough Council Intranet.

7.7 INCHECK, SWIFT, ACADEMY or appropriate system:

7.7.1 INCHECK, SWIFT and ACADEMY all used as a Violent Persons And Dangerous Address Register.

7.7.2 The Authority has implemented a computerised Corporate Register of violent people or addresses systems, INCHECK, SWIFT and ACADEMY to address Violence at Work. It is imperative that the relevant checks are carried out **prior** to any home visits. This should be used to ensure that suitable and sufficient controls are in place.

7.8 Supervision:

7.8.1 Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is the Authority's duty to ensure their Health and Safety at work. Supervisors can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with the job.

7.8.2 The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker. The level of supervision is a management decision and should be based on the findings of the risk assessment.

7.9 Training:

7.9.1 If identified through the risk assessment relevant training should be provided to lone workers.

7.10 Emergency Procedures:

7.10.1 Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. The risk assessment should identify foreseeable events.

7.10.2 Emergency procedures should be established, communicated and training provided for employees.

7.10.3 A risk assessment should be carried out on first aid requirements; this should determine whether lone workers (and mobile workers) should carry a first-aid kit. Where the risk assessment shows there is a need for a first aid kit to be provided this should be in accordance with HSE guidance (L73 First Aid at Work ACOP and Guidance). Those provided with first aid kits should not administer first aid where they have not been trained to do so.

7.10.4 Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.

7.11 Accident Reporting:

7.11.1 All managers must investigate and report all accidents and incidents in line with the Authorities policy relating to Accident Reporting and Investigating.

7.12 Weather Conditions:

7.12.1 When lone workers are working outdoors employees are expected to act accordingly to the changing weather conditions.

7.12.2 If the change in weather conditions makes it genuinely unsafe to continue with works, then employees will stop works until it is safe to carry on.

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

8.1 Guidance:

8.1.1 Working Alone in Safety – HSE Guidance ISBN 0717615073 INDG 73(rev)

8.1.2 Caerphilly County Borough Council's Policy on Violence at Work.

8.1.3 Caerphilly County Borough Council's Policy on Young Persons/Work Experience.

8.1.4 Caerphilly County Borough Council's Policy on Home working.

APPENDIX 1 – Generic procedure for carrying out lone working visits.

The following document is a **generic** procedure for carrying out a lone working visit and can be **used to form all or part** of your local arrangements for lone working visits.

1. Minimising Risk.

Each officer must take the following steps to minimise the risks associated with lone working visits:

- All alternatives must be considered before carrying out a lone working visit.
- Consider whether a visit is actually necessary. Can the matter be dealt with on the telephone, in the office or could an arrangement be made to meet in a public place?
- Check the history of the person they are visiting as thoroughly as possible. This may include:
 - Looking at the INCHECK, SWIFT, ACADEMY or appropriate system,
 - Asking colleagues,
 - Liaising with other parties who may have had an involvement with the person, e.g. Social Services.
- Where a risk is identified, ensure any control measures identified are complied with.
- Give consideration to the area and timings of the visit. It may be better to avoid certain areas later in the day or when children are not at school.

2. Information provisions.

Prior to carrying out any lone working visit, each officer must:

- Complete a visit list that clearly states the location of their visits, the people they are visiting and approximate timings. (See attached). This should be kept in a clearly labelled file, which is easily accessible to those staff remaining at their base.
- Update the team notice board, (where applicable) to indicate when they will be off site.

3. Remaining in Contact.

While out on visits staff must:

- If identified through the risk assessment take a mobile phone ensuring it is fully charged.

- Ensure that they are familiar with the phone and that it is pre-programmed with office and emergency numbers.
- Ring in at least twice to their office if they are out visiting all day.
- Update their base if they are changing the course of their visit.
- Ring in at the end of the day to 'sign-off'. If an officer has not rung in to do this by an agreed time then it is the responsibility of the staff in the office to make contact with them. This may involve ringing them at home to ensure they have arrived safely, if they cannot be contacted by mobile.

4. During Visits.

Officers are instructed to use sensible precautions such as:

- Keeping a clear route to the door or means of egress.
- Being alert to the person's behaviour.
- Keeping the phone available throughout the visit. It may be helpful to state that a call from the office is expected at any time.
- Leaving the property if they feel even slightly uneasy.
- Devising and using a pre-determined safety signal to indicate help is needed when ringing the office such as, 'the information about Mr X is in the red file on my desk'. This will then enable the staff in the office to identify your location from the visit list and request attendance at that address from the police.
- Consider items of clothing that could be used in a violent attack, e.g. ties.

APPENDIX 3 – Lone Working Medical Questionnaire



MEDICAL IN CONFIDENCE	
LONE WORKER QUESTIONNAIRE	
<p>Assessments may initially be carried out by medical questionnaire and this form is intended to ensure that you are fit to undertake lone working.</p> <p>Please complete the form as accurately as possible, printing where necessary. If you have answered yes to any of the following questions you must provide details including dates.</p>	
SECTION A – PERSONAL DETAILS	
Surname:	Forename:
Date of Birth:	Job Title:
Directorate:	National Insurance Number:
Home Address:	Location:
Postcode:	Telephone Number:
NAME OF GP:	ADDRESS:
Telephone Number:	
Job Applied for/held:	
GENERAL OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY	
Previous jobs	Dates from/to
1.
2.
3.
<p>Do you have any medical conditions which may affect you at the present time</p> <p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you have answered yes to the question, please complete Section B on this form</p>	

MEDICAL IN CONFIDENCE

SECTION B

Have you ever suffered from:	YES	NO	Details (including medication)
1. Epilepsy:			
2. Black-outs			
3. Fainting Fits			
4. Diabetes			
5. Heart or circulatory disorders			
6. Stomach or intestinal disorders			
7. Medical conditions affecting sleep			
8. Chronic chest disorders			
9. Other medical disorders			
10. Rupture or hernia			
11. Serious operation/accident or injury			
12. Back or limb disorder			
13. Nervous or mental disorder			

Please provide additional information where you have indicated that you have a medical condition. This should include relevant information where your condition is controlled by medication. This information may be checked with your doctor and is important to assess health and safety implications of working alone.

Do you consider that you have a disability that may affect your ability to work alone?

YES

NO

If yes, please give details.

Employee signature:

Date:

OUTCOME

Fit

Call for further investigation

Recall Date:

Checked by: