
Lone Working Procedure

Confident Place, Confident People

Document summary and control

Name of procedure
Lone Working
Purpose and Scope of the procedure
<p>To safeguard the health of employees and others by introducing formal measures to assess and control risks to health and safety from lone working.</p> <p>To guide managers in the discharge of responsibilities for completing risk assessments.</p> <p>To reaffirm safe working practices and promote these principles throughout the council.</p> <p>The scope of this procedure applies to all council employees, contractors and others who undertake work involving activities that arise out of, or in connection with the council. This also includes school-based employees, temporary staff and agency staff that work under the direct management of the council.</p>
Related documents
Personal Safety Guidance Lone worker risk assessments

Approval process

Approved by: HR & OD Services – Health and Safety Team

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1. Introduction

This procedure outlines the council's approach and guidance for employees that are required to work alone or in isolation, to ensure correct implementation of health and safety policy requirements.

Management arrangements for lone workers must be supported by risk assessment to evidence that suitable and sufficient precautions are in place, including arrangements to reduce risk.

This procedure will help ensure that managers and staff comply with both council policy and legal requirements.

2. Definitions

In the context of this procedure:

Lone workers are those that work by themselves without close or direct supervision for any part of their duties. This could include:

- Work in establishments where only one person occupies the premises.
- People working in isolation, separately from others, for example, in libraries, leisure centres, large office accommodation and outdoor spaces including parks and highways.
- People that work outside of normal hours, for example, security and cleaning staff.
- Mobile workers that work away from their normal place of work, for example, maintenance staff, social care staff, Wellbeing officers working in the community, etc.
- Service providers, for example, social workers, enforcement officers, pest control, etc.
- Drivers carrying out activities that are in connection with work, i.e., not commuting.

3. Procedure

3.1. Assessment of Risk

All lone working activities must be systematically risk assessed in the same manner as any other work activity; lone workers should not be at greater risk than other employees and this might require extra risk control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, for example, equipment failure, fire, medical first aid, exposure to violence, vehicle emergencies, etc.

Managers or nominated competent persons are required to complete lone worker assessments for employees and prioritise any necessary corrective action as needed. It is important that reference is also made to other task specific risk assessments as necessary to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the lone worker, for example, consider

use of equipment, tools and hazardous substances. For complex issues, advice and support is available from HR & OD services health and safety team.

It is important that the lone worker(s) are consulted during the initial risk assessments as they will be a valuable source of information for hazard identification and can judge whether any control measures proposed are practical and workable.

Once the risk assessment has been undertaken, the lone worker should also be capable of carrying out an ongoing on-site appraisal as the situation may well change due to many factors. The worker should check for anything different that might invalidate the assessment and report any problems to their manager.

Controls measures should be proportionate to the risks identified for the work involved including consideration of the locations and duration of work taking place.

A lone worker risk assessment form (appendix 1) can be found under – [manager documents](#).

For further information on completion of assessments, please see 'risk assessment' under - [related links](#).

Risk assessments must also be completed or reviewed following any adverse incident that has, or could have, resulted in harm.

3.2. Smart working - remote, home and agile work

Many employees can now work agile in a hybrid way from different locations, including working from home. This does not exclude the requirement for risks of agile working to be assessed and these will include lone working.

Where an employee's home is designated their permanent place of work (work-base) then arrangements to ensure safety whilst at work will be subject to risk assessment; where necessary, additional equipment might need to be purchased to facilitate safe working.

If an employee occasionally works away from their designated office or other fixed work base, for example from home, or is expected to work from another location, then the manager will also be responsible for ensuring that a suitable and sufficient assessment of work activities is completed.

In all cases, managers will need to evidence that appropriate arrangements are in place to maintain contact with staff working away from base, when either alone or in isolation. In some cases, emergency response arrangements will need consideration, especially if an employee has declared diagnosed ill-health or a medical condition that will put them at increased risk, for example, epilepsy, diabetes, heart conditions, etc. Referral to occupational health for a professional medical opinion might be needed.

3.3. Monitoring and Review

Line managers must monitor lone work activities, including those that have already been assessed, for their own service area or team. This will help demonstrate compliance and also evidence that appropriate control measures are in place for significant health and safety concerns. It is important that documentation is maintained to show that significant risks are being managed appropriately.

Copies of risk assessments relating to employees and lone working activities involving clients must be kept available for inspection and audit purposes.

3.4. Frequency of Assessment

Managers **must** ensure that risk assessments are reviewed if there is any reason to believe that the assessments are no longer valid, for example, following any adverse incident or accident in the workplace, or any significant changes to the workplace, work activities, individual capabilities of employees or safety procedures.

There is no specified legal time frame for review of a risk assessment. It is at management discretion to decide when a review is deemed necessary, but the risk assessment is a working document and, as business practices change, this information must be recorded and updated. As a guide, it is recommended that risk assessments are reviewed by managers on an annual basis, unless significant changes or events dictate otherwise.

3.5. Training

Suitable and sufficient training must be provided for employees before they are expected to carry out lone work activities. Managers must be able to demonstrate that employees have the required experience and are competent to carry out the necessary work activities when alone or unsupervised.

The council learning offer currently includes:

- Virtual/Tutor delivered: Working Safely - Lone Working
- Virtual/Tutor delivered: Conflict Resolution and Dealing with Aggressive Behaviours
- Wigan Council online training: Personal safety (Lone Worker)
- Wigan Council online training: Handling violence and aggression at work

To request training, login to My-Job or My-E learning or contact [HR Learning](#).

If employees have been provided with technical equipment or processes to control risks of lone working, e.g., tracking applications, then staff must receive suitable information and instruction on correct use.

3.6. Risk Assessment Forms

A council assessment form (appendix 1) for lone working can be found here - [Manager Documents](#)

For further information and guidance on completion of risk assessments see 'risk assessment' under - [related links](#)

4. Responsibility

Responsibility for correct implementation of this procedure is delegated to managers and staff or anyone with responsibility for undertaking or overseeing work that is carried out by lone workers.

The completion of risk assessment is a management responsibility. All employees are also responsible for ensuring that they take reasonable care for their own health and safety, in line with relevant information, instruction and training and council health and safety policy requirements.

With regard to contractors, they must have their own arrangements in place for lone workers and will need to undertake their own risk assessments; council managers can use these assessments to check control measures.

5. Further Information

For further information and guidance on completion of risk assessments see 'risk assessment' under - [related links](#)

Assessment checklist - [Manager Documents](#)

Personal safety guidance for employees can be found here: [Related links](#) "Helping you to stay safe"

Further information relating to lone working can be found through the HSE link at: [Related links](#)

6. Documents

The following documents are maintained in support of this procedure:

- Risk assessments including lone worker assessments
- Standard (safe) operating procedures (SOP)

- Method statements

7. Legislation and guidance

This procedure has been produced in support of the following legislation and approved guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Working Alone in Safety HSE INDG73

8. Audit

This procedure may be subject to audit at any time by the council to ensure standards are being met and maintained.