



Lone Working Policy – advice on what should be included

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Key Points

As part of meeting the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, Councils have Lone Working Policies in place. This briefing is for Councils who are considering updating their lone working policies and the areas for potential inclusion in their policy. The regulations and rules surrounding COVID-19 will mean that many workers who would not typically be lone workers are now subject to these policies (e.g. single operative operations to avoid multiple people travelling in one vehicle).

1.0 Things to include in your policy

A lone working policy is an essential part of delivering public services. As part of an analysis of many different local authorities' policies, below is a list of the different sections that should be considered for inclusion in your own lone working policy. Other council policies might be affected and should be considered alongside any changes to your lone working policy (e.g. safe manual handling).

Definition of lone working / Types of lone workers

A policy should have a clear definition of what lone working means and have examples of types of lone workers. The Health and Safety Executive define lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". Types of lone workers in an organisation might include one person working alone in an office or mobile workers away from their base (such as personal carers). Some policies also contain classifications of lone workers by different levels of risk

(e.g. low risk = staff working outside normal hours in a council office, high risk = visiting premises where risk of aggression is reasonably foreseeable).

Policy statement / Scope of the policy

The policy statement should outline why the policy has been introduced and what it aims to achieve (e.g. ensuring adequate management systems are in place to control risks associated with lone working). The scope of the policy should outline all of the employees that the lone working policy applies to and the other policies it compliments. Some councils have also included a section on the aims of the policy.

Training

Information should be provided on the types of training courses the council offers in relation to lone working and how this training can be requested. Types of training might include things like handling aggression training (e.g. de-escalation techniques, self defence), safe systems of work training, mental resilience training and many others.

Roles and responsibilities

Your policy should ideally have a section outlining the different roles and responsibilities of the different job roles in your organisation and their responsibilities with regards to lone working (e.g. Chief Executive, Directors, Heads of Service, Team Leaders, Supervisors). This should make it clear for anyone reading through the policy what their role is and who to contact in relation to queries.

Relevant legislation

It is useful to include a section outlining the duties of the council in meeting the requirements of UK legislation. There is no overall lone working legislation, but the council is required to fulfil the requirements of these two main pieces of legislation:

- ... Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 – employers have a general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees at work
- ... The Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999 – employers are required to assess the risks to the health and safety of employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work (including lone working)

Depending on the type of work carried out, other legislation for potential inclusion in this section includes the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, Welfare provisions under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992 and Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.

Risk assessment procedures

Having clear risk assessment procedures is an important part of ensuring that any potential hazards as a result of lone working are identified before it is undertaken. For instance, your approach might include having a lone worker checklist for workers to complete for site based lone working and a risk assessment for mobile lone working. The council should be mindful of the regularity with which these processes are carried out and evaluated.

Reporting of incidents

It should be made clear to employees the procedures in place for the reporting of incidents, and who is responsible for recording incidents. This section should contain information on contacting and involving the police with regards to violent incidents, and generally on how to report incidents or "near misses" to the appropriate person. If appropriate, information should also be included on employee debriefing processes following an incident (e.g. where a line manager would be required to provide support to an employee in order to obtain an initial assessment of the situation and use this as the basis for further investigation).

Monitoring and review

A section should be included on who is responsible for reviewing the suitability of the policy and the timeframe over which this review is carried out. Policies may also wish to include a section on regularly reviewing data to determine the suitability of lone working for the authority, should persistent issues occur. Where possible and appropriate, agreeing policies and any changes in policies in consultation with trade unions is recommended.

Other sections you may wish to include

- ... General advice on staying safe while visiting people's homes as part of lone working
- ... Advice on the use of apps/devices being employed as part of lone working procedures
- ... Contact details for key council employees who are involved in lone working

2.0 Useful resources

There are many easily accessible and useful resources online for the preparation of your council's lone working policy. Legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 ([link](#)) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations ([link](#)) and other relevant legislation can be accessed at www.legislation.gov.uk.

The Health and Safety Executive have several guides available:

- ... Lone working: Protect those working alone ([link](#))
- ... Protecting lone workers: How to manage the risks of working alone ([link](#))
- ... Protecting home workers ([link](#))

These guides cover things like managing risks; environment and equipment; stress, mental health and wellbeing; work related violence; training; supervision; monitoring and keeping in touch. The HSE also have many other useful resources such as a temporary working at home workstation setup video ([available here](#)).



Unison also have a useful guide entitled 'Working Alone: A health and safety guide on lone working for safety representatives' ([link](#)).

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust have a useful rundown of the different types of lone worker apps and devices which are available on the market for local authorities to assist in their lone working strategies ([link](#)).

3.0 APSE Comment

APSE recommends the introduction and continued development of your local authority's Lone Working Policy. People who undertake lone working are key to the delivery of public services. Safeguarding staff who carry out these kinds of roles is paramount to ensuring that we are able to keep providing these services to communities. In these uncertain times with the situation with COVID-19, it is important to have a robust Lone Working Policy. The information contained within this briefing should serve as a useful starting point for evaluating the quality of your local authority's policy.

Reminder: APSE has set up a COVID-19 Information Hub to deal with frontline service issues as they arise, ensuring greater resilience and learning between each other during this difficult time. You can access this hub by [clicking here](#) and you can also join our WhatsApp Support Network by [clicking here](#).

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