



LONE WORKING POLICY

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers in order to reduce the risks of lone working.

Definition

A lone worker is anyone who works in isolation from their colleagues without close or direct supervision.

Legal requirements

JRH Support has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of their employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 places a duty on employers, to identify significant risks within the organisation and implement suitable risk treatments, to reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Personal responsibility

Section 7 of the act requires employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

This policy should ensure that such persons do not take short cuts or employ dangerous practices but that they are instructed to consider and identify potential hazards and to implement a form of risk assessment to ensure the safety of themselves and any of other persons they may be working with.

Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff who work alone are not exposed to risks to their Health and Safety and to outline the steps to reduce and improve personal safety to staff who work alone.

The policy also aims through its rollout to raise awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure:

1. That risks inherent in lone worker situations are assessed and suitable precautionary measures taken
2. There is a local safe system of work which:

- Records the whereabouts of lone workers
- Tracks the movement of lone workers
- Identifies when lone working is no longer appropriate

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is the overall process of performing a systematic written risk analysis and risk evaluation in order to identify methods to control the severity of the risk.

Risks to be assessed during the process include:

- Violence and Aggression.
- Isolated areas/ difficult terrain.
- Sudden illness
- Building condition
- Substances Hazardous to Health
- Animals
- Vehicle breakdowns
- Weather hazards

This list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

Monitoring of support worker movements

Community Support staff

Support workers working within the Care at Home and Outreach service will be sent a timesheet every Friday which tells them who they will be supporting the following week and at what times.

Support/care workers have a responsibility to contact the office if any visit times change, and should ensure their mobile phones are turned on (vibrate) so they are contactable by office staff whilst at work.

Travelling on public transport

If care/support workers travel on public transport in the course of work, they should be aware of their surroundings and risks to their personal safety during the journey. If they notice aggressive behaviour they should remove themselves from the vicinity. They should be mindful of paying for bus/train/tram fares and the risk of robbery. Having the correct change ready will help.

The availability of timetables for transport departure and arrival times are available in the staff section of the company website in the 'Useful staff resources' section.

The provision of panic alarms to enable support workers to call for help may be valuable in a difficult situation. These can be requested by staff.

Driving safety measures

There are a number of hazards associated with driving and a number of measures that can be adopted to ensure safer driving conditions for care/support workers.

Staff should ensure they don't get too low on fuel and should make sure they are aware of the local petrol stations, and the distances they might have to travel between stations.

Staff should be careful not to encourage 'road rage' from others by responding to the aggressive behaviour of other drivers.

A GPS system may assist support workers to travel safely and directly to unknown areas.

Care/support workers should not have any valuables on show in the car. These should be kept in the boot, or in a place where they cannot be seen.

Before leaving from any visit, support workers should have their car keys to hand so that they can get into the car quickly. Also they should lock their doors while driving between visits. These suggestions are especially important when travelling at night or in quiet rural areas or high risk urban areas.

If driving in hazardous weather conditions, support workers should not put their own safety at risk. When driving through a storm or torrential rain, it may be safer for the support worker to stop and let the worst of the storm pass by. This may prevent an accident occurring. It may not be safe for support workers to drive through thick snow and alternative methods of transport or personnel based closer to the addresses to be visited may be a safer option.

Parking safety measures

Assessment will highlight any parking problems, but care/support workers should be mindful of alternative places to park, especially if the visit is taking place in dark or in unlit areas. Also, the support worker should be aware of car park entrances and exits, payment machines and their own personal safety when parking. Any incidents or suggestions for a safer method of parking should be communicated to the manager and other staff visiting the same address.

Accident and breakdown procedures

If the support worker is involved in a car accident or breakdown (and if they are able), it is important to summon help as soon as possible from the appropriate emergency or breakdown services. They should also let their own organisation know that they are unable to continue their visits.

When waiting for services (unless attending an injured person), the support worker should stay in the car with the doors locked. (Except if on the hard shoulder of a motorway or similar road, as per Highway Code guidance.) If anyone stops to help, support workers should be aware of their motives for doing so, and let them know, without fully opening the door or window, that the emergency services will be arriving in two minutes. If a support worker is in any way concerned, they should also tell the person that the police will be arriving in two minutes, then summon the help of the

police as soon as possible. For more detailed advice, see the Highway Code, sections 274 and 275.

Visits to unknown people and locations

The first time a support worker visits a new person or location, they will be unsure of the situation they are entering and so should remain alert for any sign of threat.

If the person to be visited is not present, the support worker should not enter the address, and should explain to the person at the door that another appointment will be made.

Care/support workers should pay particular attention to entrances and exits, how doors are opened and shut and whether the door would need to be unlocked in order to leave the property – in which case a care/support worker should say that it is company policy not to work in anywhere that they are locked in. They should always follow someone into the building, not enter first.

Care/support workers should be wary of any changes in behaviour of the person being visited or others present. They should try to keep calm and distance themselves from any angry or aggressive person.

Care/support workers should not meet aggression with aggression. They should try to stay calm and diffuse the situation.

If the care/support worker feels uncomfortable in any way, they should remove themselves from the house as soon as possible, making an excuse such as having to get some paperwork or equipment from the car. They should then phone for advice or help. If they do not want to go back into the house, they should call the person visited on the phone to say they have been called back to the office urgently. Future visits would then need to be planned in pairs if deemed safe.

Theft

Care/support workers should be mindful of their own personal safety and not do anything that will jeopardise this. They should take into an address only that which is needed for the visit. Additional unnecessary baggage may afford an opportunistic thief the chance of stealing something more easily.

If a thief tries to steal something from the support worker, it is safer to let them have the items. Fighting back may cause injury to the support worker.

If able, the care/support worker should summon help during the attack or, if not, as soon as practicable afterwards.

Supported Living Staff

When assessing the risk of staff working alone then it is essential to ensure that staff are sufficiently experienced and understand the risks involved. Staff should also be assessed as being competent to deal with unusual circumstances or incidents.

When considering Lone working Managers should ask questions such as:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?

- If equipment is involved can one person safely handle the work?
- If the work involves handling and lifting can one person manage?

The following are situations that could occur.

Fire at night

Staff member could become ill

Service user could require medical attention

Service user may require staff support in the night

Burglary

Service users leaving the house late at night.

The following is a list to cut down on the risks

Regular fire practices

Staff to have mobile phones with the Team Leader's, owners and Operations Manager's phone numbers in the memory

All service users in the supported living properties know where the sleep in room is to inform staff if ill etc.

System in place for service users in the supported living properties who are unable to get to the sleep in room e.g. bell system

Staff to do regular health and safety checks

Staff to have access to a phone and list of emergency numbers

Staff to follow missing persons procedure if necessary

Staff not to do a sleep in until they are confident

All staff to read service users support plans

When out in the community staff should ensure that others are aware of their plans and that they can be contacted if necessary. If an incident occurs whilst you are out ensure your own safety and the safety of the service user you are with. If necessary call for assistance from the police or your team as appropriate.

If staff and/or service users do not return from an outing at the expected time then staff should try to contact them to ensure that they are OK (all staff carry mobiles and most of the service users have mobiles). If it is not possible to contact them by telephone then staff should try to contact any places that they know they may have visited. If there is still no news then staff should follow the missing persons procedure.

A risk assessment will be carried out to identify the risks involved and to look at the actions that need to be taken to reduce the risks.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that they follow safe working practices. This would include:

- Not taking unnecessary risks
- Making Managers aware of any medical conditions they might have developed
- Following health and safety procedures
- Report any incidents including threats and any potentially dangerous situations using the incident reporting form.

If an incident of physical or verbal aggression/violence occurs

- Put your own safety first. Leave a situation if you feel unsafe. Professional codes of conduct do not require you to jeopardise your own safety. It is better to leave and find an alternative way of providing support to the service user.
- If a service user is aggressive, but the aggression is not directed at you personally, allow them to 'let off steam', then calm them and help them to think of ways of resolving their problems,
- Do not be confrontational. Never use control and restraint techniques when working alone.
- Call for assistance from the police or your team as appropriate.

After the incident has occurred

- Contact your line manager and return to base
- Allow yourself time to recover and if necessary seek practical support from colleagues
- Ask for debriefing and for further counselling if the post-trauma condition continues.
- Share information with others who might lone work.
- Report the incident through the procedure

LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT

Task/Activity:	Travelling on public transport	Risk Assess. No.:	1
		Date Prepared:	03/08/2011

HAZARDS		Likelihood			Severity					Risk Score
Ref.	Key hazards associated with the above task/activity.	Probable	Occasional	Remote	Catastrophic	Critical	Serious	Marginal	Negligible	Likelihood x Severity
	Score:	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
1	Aggression/violence from other passengers			x			x			3
2	Loss of bus pass			x				x		2
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

Risk Assessment Scores:	10+ Very High Risk	5-9 High Risk	1-4 Low Risk
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PERSONS AFFECTED					
Members of Staff	x	Members of Public		Visitors	
Contractors		Young Persons		Others	

PPE REQUIREMENTS					
Safety Footwear		Hi-Viz Clothing		Respiratory Protection	
Hearing Protection		Eye Protection		Head Protection	
Gloves		Mobile phone	x		

ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES	
Information/Instruction/Training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff should be aware of their surroundings and the risks to their personal safety during the journey. Staff should remove themselves as soon as possible if they noticed aggressive behaviour If staff do not have a bus pass available they should ensure they have the correct change available to pay the fair. Staff should avoid opening wallets or purses in public areas Staff should carry mobile phones and ensure they have credit so they can call for help if necessary 	

LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT

Task/Activity:	Driving safely	Risk Assess. No.:	2
		Date Prepared:	03/08/2011

HAZARDS		Likelihood			Severity					Risk Score
Ref.	Key hazards associated with the above task/activity.	Probable	Occasional	Remote	Catastrophic	Critical	Serious	Marginal	Negligible	Likelihood x Severity
	Score:	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
1	Running out of fuel			x				x		2
2	Road rage from other drivers			x			x			3
3	Getting lost		x					x		4
4	Theft from car			x					x	2
5	Adverse weather conditions		x					x		4
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

Risk Assessment Scores:	10+ Very High Risk	5-9 High Risk	1-4 Low Risk
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PERSONS AFFECTED					
Members of Staff	x	Members of Public		Visitors	
Contractors		Young Persons		Others	

PPE REQUIREMENTS					
Safety Footwear		Hi-Viz Clothing		Respiratory Protection	
Hearing Protection		Eye Protection		Head Protection	
Gloves		Mobile phone	x		

ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES	
Information/Instruction/Training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff should ensure they monitor fuel consumption, have available funds to purchase fuel if necessary and carry a mobile phone to seek help if necessary. Staff should ensure they do not encourage road rage from others Staff should plan their routes, have an A to Z map or GPS system to avoid getting lost Staff should not leave valuables on display in their vehicles. Keep them in the boot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special care should be taken in adverse weather conditions. Staff should ensure their vehicle is in good repair and carry a mobile phone to seek help if necessary.

LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT

Task/Activity:	Parking safely	Risk Assess. No.:	3	
		Date Prepared:	03/08/2011	

HAZARDS		Likelihood			Severity					Risk Score
Ref.	Key hazards associated with the above task/activity.	Probable	Occasional	Remote	Catastrophic	Critical	Serious	Marginal	Negligible	Likelihood x Severity
	Score:	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
1	Theft from vehicle			x				x		2
2	Getting mugged			x			x			3
3	Damage to car			x				x		2
4	Parking fines and clamping		x					x		4
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

Risk Assessment Scores:	10+ Very High Risk	5-9 High Risk	1-4 Low Risk
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PERSONS AFFECTED					
Members of Staff	x	Members of Public		Visitors	
Contractors		Young Persons		Others	

PPE REQUIREMENTS					
Safety Footwear		Hi-Viz Clothing		Respiratory Protection	
Hearing Protection		Eye Protection		Head Protection	
Gloves		Mobile phone	x		

ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES	
Information/Instruction/Training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff should not leave valuables on display in their vehicles. Keep them in the boot. Staff should park in well-lit areas whenever possible Staff should avoid opening wallets or purses in public areas Staff should carry mobile phones and ensure they have credit so they can call for help if necessary Staff should be aware of parking regulations and never park in restricted areas 	