Ref: QS30

LONE WORKING POLICY

Executive Sponsor & Function:	Director of Strategic Transformation, Planning and Digital Health and Safety Function
Document Author:	Trust Health and Safety Manager
Approved by:	Quality and Safety Committee
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1. Policy Statement

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 details the employers' duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Welfare of employees whilst at work. This policy sets out how Velindre University NHS Trust will ensure the safety of its lone workers.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff employed by or contracted to the Trust, including those within Hosted Organisations, that are required to work alone, whilst on or off site.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to provide general advice and guidance to staff on lone working issues and ensure compliance to the:

• Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974
• Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The objectives of the policy are to:

• raise awareness across all levels of staff to understand their responsibilities when lone working
• highlight that lone working is an activity requiring risk assessment
• provide guidance for Managers to ensure that staff performing lone working activities are safe to do so and that activities being performed whilst lone working are appropriate
• outline support mechanisms in place

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall accountability for the management of Lone Workers and for ensuring an effective Trust Lone Working Policy is implemented.

4.2 Director of Strategic Transformation, Planning and Digital

The Director of Strategic Transformation, Planning and Digital is the Trust Lead for Health and Safety and responsible for ensuring that the policy is promoted and communicated across the Trust.

4.3   Divisional Directors / Directors of Hosted Organisations

The Director is responsible for ensuring that an effective Risk Management System is in place within their Division. Also responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are completed in line with Trust Policy. Risk assessments should consider the activities performed by lone workers and the suitability of staff. Risk controls should be identified that are proportionate to the risk.

4.4   Managers/Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring pro-active risk assessment of any lone working tasks or activities within their remit. The risk assessment should identify hazards that the workplace itself presents, and should include the risk to the lone worker of violence and aggression, or from the activity being completed whilst working alone e.g. manual handling, working at height etc. Managers should also consider the individuals medical suitability to work alone and where appropriate refer staff with medical conditions to Occupational Health for advice. To assist local managers, a check list of items for consideration is attached at Appendix 1.

Managers should develop local procedures e.g. buddy system that support and protect lone workers. Managers are also responsible for promoting the policy within their department and for ensuring lone workers are made aware of it.

Managers must ensure that their staff are trained and assessed as competent to perform their full range of duties whilst working alone and that the duties are assessed as appropriate for one person. They should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone and should ensure staff are competent to deal with the requirements of the job and are able to recognise when to seek advice from elsewhere.

4.5   Employees

All employees are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety, and ensuring others are not harmed or injured by their activities. Staff must cooperate with the employer, by reporting health or medical conditions which may make them more vulnerable when working alone. Also discussing safety related issues, and participate in risk assessment when requested.

The key areas for staff are:

• ensure that you perform your duties in a safe way
• follow the Trust policies, local procedures and safe systems of work
• take reasonable steps to protect yourself when working alone
• do not take unnecessary risks
• discuss health or medical conditions with your Manager
• ensure someone is aware of your whereabouts

General safety advice for lone workers can be found at Appendix 2.

4.6   Control of Contractors

Managers are responsible for the work being completed in their area/department and must ensure that estates/facilities are notified and local procedures for the management of contractors are followed. Contractors may be classed as lone workers whilst on site and therefore safe systems of work should be employed. As a recommended minimum all contractors should sign in and out and should provide method statement prior to the start of any work, and must detail when, who and how many contractors will be completing the work. When reviewing these statements particular attention to hazardous jobs where two people are required, is essential to protect contractors and staff who may be affected by the work being completed.

5. Definitions

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define a lone worker as: -

"those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision"

Lone workers may be out of visual/aural contact with other members of staff who would be available to assist in an emergency.

Lone workers that have easily recognisable roles, include workers in the community. However, further consideration and safeguards should be applied to members of staff / contractors / volunteers that work within our premises on call or out of office hours, providing there is no immediate assistance available to them should incidents occur.

To be classed as a lone worker, staff have to be engaged on their official trust duties, as a result, apart from those that work from home, travelling to and from work is not covered in this policy.

Volunteers e.g. drivers, should also be afforded the same levels of protection and supported to the same standards of designated trust staff so far as is reasonably practicable.

6. Implementation/Policy Compliance

6.1   Training

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and assist staff in uncertain situations and may be crucial in enabling staff to cope in unexpected circumstances. As a lone worker may be unable to ask a more experienced colleague for help, they need to be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions involved in their work and the location that they work in.

6.2 Risk Assessment

Managers are responsible for ensuring that the risks of lone working activities are assessed in line with organisational policy. The assessment should include staff who work alone, the activities being completed, and should consider the staff suitability to work alone. The assessment should include an evaluation of the controls in place and whether they are practical and appropriate. The checklist at Appendix 1 can be used to inform the Risk Assessment.

6.3. Incident Reporting

Staff must report all accidents or incidents that occur during the course of their duty this includes official business and on call. All staff must ensure that the incident is recorded within the Datix risk management system, in line with the Trust incident reporting policy. Incidents will be discussed with the individual concerned to establish whether any additional controls can be put in place to minimise risk of harm.

All incidents that are recorded on the Datix system are received both locally and at the Trust Estates Assurance meeting on a quarterly basis. Where there is no electronic access to Datix, an alternative form of reporting must be in place.

6.4. Occupational Health Service

Occupational Health is available to all Velindre staff; local procedures are in place for accessing the service within divisions and hosted organisations. Staff are able to obtain further details via their Workforce and Organisational Development department. Where staff report health or medical conditions Occupational Health will assess whether staff are able to work alone.

6.5. Measuring Performance

It is essential that lone working is discussed across the Trust and at appropriate Divisional/Hosted Organisations meetings. A number of mechanisms will be used to measure success including: having an up to date policy in place, supporting local buddy systems, adequate risk assessment, number of incidents reported whilst lone working.

6.6. Non Compliance

If any Trust employee fails to comply with this policy, the matter may be dealt with in accordance with the Trusts Disciplinary Policy. The action taken will depend on the individual circumstances and will be in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedures. Under some circumstances failure to follow this policy could be considered to be gross misconduct.

7. Equality Impact Assessment Statement

This policy has been screened for relevance to equality. No potential negative impact has been identified.

8. References

[HSE Working alone guidance INDG73(rev 3) published 05/13](#)

9. Getting Help

Advisors for certain aspects of Health, Safety and Risk Management have been incorporated within the Trust structure, to provide specialist advice as outlined below:-

Assistant Director of Estates, Environment and Capital Development	Jason Hoskins Velindre NHS Trust Headquarters 2 Charnwood Court Heol Billingsley, Parc Nantgarw Cardiff CF5 7QZ E-mail: JasonHoskins@wales.nhs.uk
Health and Safety	Helen Jones Velindre University NHS Trust Headquarters 2 Charnwood Court Heol Billingsley, Parc Nantgarw Cardiff CF5 7QZ E-mail: Helen.Jones56@wales.nhs.uk
Occupational Health	Cardiff and the Vale University LHB Heath Park Cardiff CF14 4XW E-mail: occupational.health@wales.nhs.uk Telephone; 02920743264

Occupational Health provision has been established via formal service level agreements with the above named local health boards. Staff working outside the Geographical region of South East Wales are provided with Occupational Health services via local arrangements with their Occupational Health provider. Where practical, the occupational health provision should cover pre-employment checks, formal health surveillance, health assessments in connection with fitness to work, identification of occupational hazards and risks, along with support and advice for staff.

10. Related Policies

There are numerous policies that should be considered alongside this policy, which are available via the [trust's intranet page](#).

11. Main Relevant Legislation

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

Appendix 1

Managers Checklist

This checklist is to be used specifically for "Lone Workers" see previous classification.	YES	NO	N/A
1. Have you identified staff in your area who are classed as lone workers?			
2. Have you formally Risk Assessed the tasks that are being performed by lone workers?			
2.1 Are there any hazardous or high risk activities being performed?			
3. Have staff classed as lone workers left an itinerary –details of where they are going, and who they are visiting?			
3.1 Are staff given the relevant information about the service users?			
3.2 Do staff have the authority to rearrange a visit, taking a colleague if needed?			
4. Do lone workers make plans to keep in contact with colleagues? (buddy system)			
4.1 Are staff able to rearrange visits if they feel threatened or vulnerable?			
5. Have you (the Manager) discussed health or medical conditions that would make staff more vulnerable when lone working?			
5.1 Have staff been referred to occupational health for an assessment if fit to work alone?			
6. Do staff sign in / out when working out of hours or on call?			
6.1 Is there a security presence on site?			
6.2 Is the location a secure area?			
6.3 Is the location covered by an alarm system?			
7. Have there been any incidents of violence or aggression towards lone working staff?			
8. Are staff aware of emergency procedures when lone working?			
Any additional comments:			
Manager Sign and date:			

Copy to be kept with personnel file.

Appendix 2

General Safety: Lone working

Managers are responsible for ensuring the safety of staff within their working area and for risk assessment of the tasks/activities lone worker/s perform.

Lone workers are encouraged to participate in the risk assessment process to provide views on hazards faced, this joint approach will often identify hazards and realistic control measures that can be implemented to minimise the risks where possible.

If you have any concerns regarding your health or safety whilst lone working, you must discuss these with your manager. For any concerns when home visiting, if you feel threatened or vulnerable you should rearrange the visit and discuss other options in line with local procedures with your manager.

Take reasonable steps to protect yourself when working alone and do not take any unnecessary risks.

Lone workers must wear an official identification badge on every visit and carry a mobile phone. If you do not have access to these items please discuss with your manager.

Lone workers should log in and out with colleagues (buddy system) using the local procedures in place

Lone workers who work after hours or on call should sign in and out as local procedure require.

Security

As general guidance, staff should be aware of the following recommended good practice

- Park as close as practical to the building you are visiting, in a well lit position if possible.
- Have vehicle keys in hand when leaving the building (saves time looking for keys whilst stood outside vehicle, thereby preventing a personal safety risk.)
- Never leave items on display in vehicles e.g. laptops, handbags, brief cases, CDs etc. Place all items out of sight in the boot.
- You must report any accidents or incidents that happen within the course of your working day. This includes any aggressive or threatening behaviour, verbal abuse or physical assault etc.