

**corporate health & safety policy ARRANGEMENTS**

**lone working**

**AUTHORISED BY:** Chief Officer

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1. **OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE:**

Lone Working is one of a number of safety management procedures forming the Trust’s Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy written arrangements in compliance with general duties under the [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents).

This Standard sets out the corporate policy and procedures to be followed in order to identify and minimise the risks from lone working, as far as reasonably practical. Whilst it is recognised that there is no legal bar to lone working, there is a requirement to consider the specific risks which may arise as a result of lone working as part of the risk assessment process.

Any reference to the Council in this document will refer to East Ayrshire Council.

1. **RESPONSIBILITY:**

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this standard belongs to the Chief Officer, Head of Corporate Services and Development Managers. Development Officers, Co-ordinators and employees are responsible for ensuring arrangements are fully implemented within their areas of control.

Services will need to supplement this standard with written details of any local arrangements, including completed risk assessments where lone working has been identified as a risk to employees.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires reasonable steps to be taken to protect the health, safety and welfare of all employees whilst they are at work. This includes provisions to protect employees from any foreseeable risks which may arise through lone working, as far as is reasonably practical.

Lone working in itself does not cause harm and there are no legal restrictions to working alone, however, there are situations which may arise in the workplace which could result in an increased risk to the lone worker.

Lone working takes place on a daily basis across a variety of Trust services and at some point most employees will carry out tasks which require them to work “alone” under the definition outlined within this standard.

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# DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Trust is responsible, as far as is reasonably practicable, for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees and others who may be affected by Trust activities.

The Executive Management Team and Development Managers have overall responsibility for ensuring that suitable control strategies are in place to reduce any foreseeable risks arising from lone working to Trust employees.

Development Officers and Co-ordinators have a responsibility to ensure that risk assessments are completed identifying any significant hazards to lone workers and implement control that prevent or reduce the associated risks.

Employees have a responsibility to follow the controls which to protect their health and safety and report any issues or concerns to their line manager/ supervisor.

**3. LONE WORKING**

3.1 Definition of lone working

The Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE) definition of a lone worker is “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”.

**3.2 Which jobs involve lone working**?

Lone working can take place in a wide variety of settings and whilst employees are undertaking a range of work activities, including:

* Conducting site visits
* Conducting home visits
* Working remotely from others whilst in the same building e.g. cleaners, janitors,   
  caretakers etc.
* Travelling from workplace to workplace
* Working outside normal hours e.g. evenings, weekends and public holidays
* Working from home

Some people will spend the majority of their normal day lone working, whilst others will only spend a proportion of their day either engaged in tasks or working in environments where they are alone.

3.3 Risk assessment

Managers must assess the risks arising from any work activities which involve lone working and ensure suitable controls are put in place to either remove or reduce those risks.

The main risks arising from lone working include:

* Violence and aggression
* Accidents
* Illness or injury
* Emergencies
* Extreme weather or other environmental conditions

These risks are of course not restricted to lone working situations. If a person is working alone, the consequences and severity of an incident may be more significant due to the absence of immediate support.

The risk assessment process should start by identifying potential risks, including risks within specific working environments or work activities.

Trade Union’s representing employees who work alone in environments which present foreseeable risks, should be consulted as part of the risk assessment process.

When carrying out risk assessments, the following five questions can act as helpful prompts to identify any significant risks associated with lone working:

* Can the work be undertaken safely by a single person?
* Is there a “flag” or alert in place regarding attending a work location alone?
* Is the person medically fit and able to work alone?
* Is the person more vulnerable to working alone than others, for example new or expectant mothers or young/ inexperienced workers?
* What arrangements are required to ensure the lone worker is at no more risk than employees working together?

Where risks are known e.g. a building or home delivery, **risk reduction information should be shared between the services** who work in the “at risk” environment.

Even though all foreseeable risks arising from lone working should be identified within the risk assessment, unforeseen situations may still occur which require employees to act immediately. It is therefore essential that lone workers feel empowered to make decisions based on their dynamic assessment of situations where personal safety may be compromised.

Decisions taken dynamically may include immediately withdrawing from the situation or seeking guidance from a line manager before working alone.

3.4 Risk reduction measures

If the risk assessment identifies risks associated with lone working, risk reduction measures must be implemented, as far as is practical, to reduce the likelihood and/or severity of incidents occurring.

Examples of risk reduction measures includes:

* Sign in-out boards/ sheets
* Electronic calendars
* Vehicle tracking devices
* Conducting meetings with service users/clients at base
* GPRS tracked mobile phones
* Conflict management training
* Personal alarms
* Contact procedures e.g. base calling lone workers at specified times

The principle risk reduction measure, when lone working is to organise the work so that lone working can be avoided altogether. However, in many circumstances this will simply not be practical and a package of control measures such as those listed above will be required.

Once the procedures above are in place it is important that where there has been a failure, i.e. a lone worker not calling to confirm their safe home arrival after work shift then this is identified and appropriate actions taken to confirm that they are safe. Contact procedures must be implemented to monitor lone workers as effective means of communication are essential. These may include:

* Supervisors periodically visiting employees who are working alone
* Regular phone/radio contact with lone workers
* Implementing a robust communication procedure where lone workers contact a supervisor or nominated person to inform of their safe arrival home.

3.5 Illness and emergencies

Any employees who have a known medical or other condition which may impact on their health and safety whilst lone working must be considered within the risk assessment process. Where required, Occupational Health can provide advice regarding the fitness of an employee to work alone.

Emergency situations, such as becoming stranded in a vehicle or being injured whilst working alone should also be considered. Vehicles should carry a first aid kit and lone workers should have access to a suitable means of contacting help, if necessary, such as mobile phone or in-cab radio.

3.6 Training and information

Lone workers should be provided with appropriate training and information on personal safety and any control measures which are in place to minimise the risks from lone working.

The level of training should be proportionate to the identified risks and can either be delivered by managers/supervisors in the form of induction, short training sessions or through EAC Organisational Development where more in-depth training may be required.

Violence and aggression can pose a specific risk for lone workers and an awareness of the risks and how to deal with a violent incident is needed, should it occur. Appropriate crisis intervention training will enable employees to recognise the early signs of potentially violent incidents and how to avoid or manage them.

Typically, crisis intervention training will include:

* The causes of violent behaviour
* Warning signs
* Preventative strategies
* Managing confrontation
* Interpersonal skills
* Systems support
* After incident support and care

**Crisis intervention courses are not a substitute for safe systems and safe places of work**; such training should be seen as part of an overall risk assessment and preventative strategy.

Some Sections within the Trust, due to the nature of work or client base, may require enhanced or specific training and refresher training on a rolling programme.

Further information on the procedural arrangements for violence and aggression at work is available in health and safety standard: Violence and Aggression in the Workplace

3.7 Incident reporting

All incidents, including incidents of violence towards employees, should be reported through the Council’s incident reporting system (SHE). This enables trends and patterns to be identified and helps to develop and improve strategies for the reduction of incidents.

Where a service user or contractor is subjected to any kind of violence in a premises/activity under the control of the Trust, the details surrounding the incident should also be recorded.

Managers should follow up reported incidents and, wherever practical, put in place suitable interventions to prevent or minimise the risk of reoccurrence.

For further information on the incident reporting system is available from the Incident Reporting Health and Safety Standard.

## **3.8 Workplace Violence Policy Statement**

Violence at work can be defined as *“Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”*

The Trust is committed to reducing acts of violence directedtowards employees while at work. Management views violent or aggressive behaviour as unacceptable and anyperson known to abuse Trust employees, either verbally or physically may be subject to legal action and/or a restriction in service provision.

Violence and aggression behaviour directed towards employees will be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable. This will be achieved by adopting a risk assessment approach and having in place effective preventative strategies and interventions to minimise the risk to employees.

The guidance provided in Violence and Aggression in the Workplace Health and Safety Standard supports this Policy Statement and is designed to help managers ensure that:

* The risks of violence to employees in the workplace are identified and assessed, as far as is reasonably practical
* Employees are actively involved in the risk assessment process and the outcome of assessments are fully communicated to those at risk
* Suitable preventative strategies and interventions are developed and implemented in Trust workplaces where there is a risk of violence
* Employees are provided with information, instruction and training to enable them to avoid and/or deal effectively with violence in the workplace
* Employees are actively encouraged to report incidents of violence through the Trust’s incident reporting system to enable trends, patterns or habitual offenders to be identified
* Post incident support mechanisms for individuals who have been the victim of violence at work are in place.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION

**4.1 Contact Information**

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EAC Intranet:[Health and Safety](http://eacintranet/Services/HealthandSafety/HealthandSafety.aspx)

**APPENDIX 1 – WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INFORMATION POSTER**

