



SEND CARE

SENDING SPECIALIST CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND

Lone Working Policy

POLICY DECLARATION

Our commitment to providing a safe working environment for our employees who work alone, regardless of their working hours or environment, is unwavering. This policy sets forth the framework for mitigating risks associated with lone working, encompassing varying factors such as location, the nature of tasks, and potential interactions with others. Our controls are designed to align with these risks, ensuring the well-being of our lone workers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines SENDCARE's policy for creating a safe working environment for all employees who work alone, regardless of their working hours or environment.

While this policy aims to be comprehensive, it is essential to acknowledge that it cannot account for every possible scenario that may arise within the working environment. Technology can contribute to the protection of lone workers; however, its effectiveness is more effective when it is supported by:

Effective Risk Assessment: Both managers and specialist support workers must engage in thorough risk assessment processes to identify and mitigate potential hazards. This will be written at the initial assessment and reviewed regularly with staff and families to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the current risks

Robust Management Procedures: Clear and robust management procedures must be established to proactively address identified and potential risks and effectively manage incidents when they occur.

Shared Responsibility: Managers and specialist support workers should accept responsibility for and support the use of systems, procedures, and technology designed to enhance their protection.

Information Sharing: It is vital to foster the sharing of information within and outside the organisation regarding identified and potential risks.

Comprehensive Training: Quality training is crucial, whether it's aimed at helping staff prevent and manage violent situations or effectively use security and safety procedures, systems, or devices provided for their protection. Staff members will have restraint training online and personal instruction.

This document encompasses physical, procedural, and relational measures aimed at preventing incidents. It is a "living" document that will be regularly updated to:

- Adapt to new work environments.
- Incorporate insights into emerging challenges.
- Address evolving risks or threats.
- Accommodate changes in SENDCARE's staff's work patterns.

- Stay current with advancing technology.
- Keep up-to-date with changes in legislation.

Our primary objective is to ensure that all staff feel safe and secure, allowing them to carry out their duties without fear, fully aware that robust management procedures are in place to respond effectively if they encounter a threatening situation and require assistance.

Every employer and employee bears rights and responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) (1974), which mandates the provision of a secure working environment supported by safe working systems. Further information and guidance regarding this legislation can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

1. WHAT IS A LONE WORKER

The Health and Safety Executive defines a lone worker as *an individual who works by themselves without close or direct supervision*. Lone working is also sometimes described as those who are working out of sight or sound of a colleague – either some or all of the time.

2. ASSOCIATED RISKS OF WORKING ALONE

The risks associated with lone working vary based on factors such as:

- Location.
- The type of work performed.
- Interactions with others.
- Presentation of Children and Young People (CYP)

Controls implemented will be tailored to the specific risks associated with working alone.

3. WHY ARE LONE WORKERS AT INCREASED RISK?

Lone workers are at increased risk because they do not have colleagues nearby to assist in case of incidents such as violence, abuse, falls, or health issues. Therefore, the potential impact of one of these scenarios is much greater.

4. WHEN CONTROL MEASURES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED

Control measures for lone workers aim to safeguard employees who work alone, either occasionally or regularly. Operational control measures are in place for employees who:

- Work alone in the community.
- Work from home or have a hybrid arrangement.
- Require specific consideration due to medical issues.
- Visit unknown locations, alone.
- Travel for work (including at-risk commuters).

- Work alone when a colleague takes a break.

Any additional control measures should be documented in the risk assessment and monitored appropriately.

5. COMPLIANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SENDCARE prioritise the safety of our employees when working alone, aiming to minimise risks associated with violence, accidents, illness, and other hazards as reasonably practicable.

5.1 MANAGER AND EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers are accountable for conducting team-specific lone worker risk assessments, reviewing them regularly, keeping them up-to-date, and sharing them with employees, including those working from home. Individual ones may be required where those within the team face unique risks e.g. those with health conditions such as heart conditions or epilepsy.

When a lone working device or mobile application is designated as an operational control, managers must:

- Provide lone working devices or mobile application to relevant employees under their supervision.
- Ensure comprehensive and relevant training is provided and completed prior to device usage.
- Ensure proper use and wear of the device/app by these employees.
- Mandate device/app usage when working alone.
- Familiarise themselves with the lone working management portal, ensuring accurate and up-to-date information, including users' emergency escalation contacts and processes.
- Review colleagues' device/app usage through the portal and address any non-compliance.
- Add lone working as a regular agenda item at any relevant management meetings to ensure continual monitoring and suitably regular updates.
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5.2 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

Employees working alone should:

- Be responsible for their own safety while working alone, including regular dynamic risk assessments and appropriate responses.
- Notify a manager or colleague when they know they're going to be working alone or in a high-risk environment.
- Ensure someone is always aware of where they're going and how long they're expected to be there.

- Always inform a manager or colleague if they plan to deviate from their usual working pattern.
- Familiarise themselves with operational control measures specified in their team's risk assessment.
- Ensure their mobile phones are charged, functional, and always accessible.
- Report work-related incidents of violence, assault, abuse or accidents to their immediate Line Manager and/or the Health and Safety team (including near misses).

Employees who have been issued a lone working device or app are responsible for:

- Knowing how to properly use the device and completing necessary training (and completing refresher training whenever necessary).
- Ensuring their lone working device is fully charged and worn correctly when working alone.
- Regularly checking the device's status for battery, signal, and GPS location.
- Leaving alerts when they arrive at a location or begin a new task and choosing appropriate support depending on the Dynamic Risk Assessment.
- Promptly reporting any device faults to their manager.

Upon arriving at a location alone, employees should:

- Wear their lone worker device (or ensure their app is running on their phone).
- Inform a manager of their arrival at their destination
- Conduct a dynamic risk assessment and take appropriate actions, including activating an alert on the device when necessary.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Assessment and Improvement

Integral to prevention is the ability to assess each unique situation as it arises. This assessment serves as a cornerstone for refining procedures and determining the appropriate equipment needed for safe progression. Identified risks must promptly be reported to Line Managers to initiate risk management actions. Risk management involves practical measures aimed at safeguarding staff from potential harm and distress.

HSE's 'Five Steps to Risk Assessment'

SEND CARE follows 'The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)' who offer valuable guidance through the 'Five Steps to Risk Assessment,' which can be accessed on their website at [HSE Risk Assessment Guidelines](#). This straightforward yet effective method of risk assessment should be employed when evaluating the extent of exposure to hazards in the context of lone working activities.

Responding to Personal Safety Concerns

Following an assessment, if a staff member believes that their own or a colleague's personal safety is at risk or could be compromised, they should not attempt to negotiate the situation but instead prioritise their safety by removing themselves from the situation. Line Managers should be promptly notified, and the circumstances carefully reviewed. Initially, these concerns may be reported verbally, but it is crucial to follow up with a written report as soon as practicable.

7. ASSOCIATED RISKS AND PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW

Travelling and/or commuting for work

When travelling or commuting for work alone, it's important to be aware of potential risks and follow established procedures to ensure your safety.

Travelling to unsafe areas: if you are required to travel to an area known for safety concerns or high crime rates, make sure to:

- Notify your manager or a designated contact of your travel plans, including your departure and estimated arrival times.
- Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged and easily accessible.
- Avoid displaying valuable items or personal information that may make you a target.
- Use well-lit and populated routes, when possible, especially during late hours, and darker months

Confrontation or Harassment: If you encounter harassment or confrontational behaviour during your commute:

- Avoid escalating the situation or engaging with the individual(s) involved.
- Quickly leave the area and go to a place of safety.

Vehicle Breakdown: In the event of a vehicle breakdown or malfunction:

- Turn on hazard lights and make your vehicle visible.
- Safely pull over to the side of the road or into a well-lit and populated area, if possible.
- If you feel threatened or unsafe, remain in your locked vehicle and use your device to raise an alarm (apart from on the motorway where you should follow highway code guidance).
- Notify your supervisor or a designated contact of the situation and your location.
- Avoid accepting help from strangers and wait for a reliable source of assistance, such as roadside assistance or law enforcement.

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Public Transportation: When using public transportation for work-related commuting or travel:

- Be aware of your surroundings and any suspicious behaviour.
- Sit in well-lit and populated areas of the vehicle or station.
- Keep personal belongings secure and within your sight.
- Check in prior to entering any form of public transportation where a signal may not be possible, the underground for example.

Remember, your safety is our priority. If you encounter any situations that make you feel uneasy or unsafe during your work-related travels, please follow these procedures to ensure your well-being.

8. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

We, SENDCARE, will adhere to all relevant health and safety legislation and maintain documentation to support our legal obligations.

9. MONITOR AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or more regularly in the event of significant changes in legislation, guidelines, operational controls, or when incidents expose weaknesses in the policy that require addressing.

Consistent input will be required from lone workers to help drive and support this policy and the lone worker risk assessment.

10. SUMMARY

Sustaining Vigilance

The potential risks to personal safety may not always be apparent before visits or appointments. Therefore, it is imperative that staff remain vigilant and avoid becoming complacent.

Ongoing Document

This document is continuously evolving. It will be subject to annual reviews and regular updates to:

- Adapt to new work environments encountered by staff.
- Incorporate insights gained about the challenges faced.

- Address the evolving nature of risks or threats.
- Align with changes in the work patterns of SENDCARE staff.
- Stay current with technological advancements and changes.
- Keep up-to-date with changes in legislation.

An "increased risk environment" encompasses but is not limited to situations involving one or more of the following factors:

- Hours of darkness.
- Geographic areas with known safety concerns.
- Visits to CYP's with a history of violence or abuse.
- Presence of unknown individuals in the vicinity.
- Any other circumstances that raise suspicion.