



LONE WORKING GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

KEY INFORMATION

Policy prepared, reviewed or amended by:	Bridgette Doyle and Suzanne Hilton – Chief Executive
Policy approved by Board of Trustees on:	24 August 2021
Policy became operational on:	28 July 2015. The policy was reviewed at the Board of Trustees on 28 August 2018.
Next Review Date	The Lone Working Policy and procedures and associated guidance does not form part of staff contracts of employment and may be reviewed and updated at any time. It will be reviewed no less than every three years, or sooner where there are significant changes to guidance or legislation. Minor updates will be made as required.

1. INTRODUCTION

Age UK Bolton’s staff and volunteers are its most valuable and prized assets and their health, safety, welfare and well-being are of the utmost importance and priority. In addition, the charity has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees and volunteers so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes a duty of care to reduce the risks associated with lone working.

Definitions of terms used in this guidance:

- A **LONE WORKER** is someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision.
- A **HAZARD** is something (e.g. an object, a property of a substance, a phenomenon or an activity) that can cause harm.
- A **RISK** is the likelihood that a hazard will actually cause its adverse effects, together with a measure of the effect.
- A **NEAR-MISS** is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage – but had the potential to do so.

2. SCOPE

This guidance outlines the procedures to be followed by all employees and workers (including temporary, voluntary, agency workers and those on

secondment or placement [see 4.1 and 4.2 below]) for Age UK Bolton and Age UK Bolton Enterprises Limited (*which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Age UK Bolton*).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This guidance:

- sets out standards for the management of lone working;
- defines the roles and responsibilities of staff and managers; and
- aims to ensure that lone workers are not exposed to additional or greater risk than other employees or volunteers carrying out the same duties with closer supervision.

4. OVERVIEW

4.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

4.2 During the course of their work some employees and volunteers will be required to work alone without close or direct supervision. Age UK Bolton considers these employees and volunteers to be lone workers and, as such, that they fall within the scope of this guidance.

4.3 Managers must identify the hazards associated with lone working and reduce the risk of injury or harm as far as possible. This will involve the identification, selection and implementation of suitable control measures: risk assessments must, therefore, be completed and documented. (*See section 7 and Appendix 1 for guidance and suggestions on how to do this and some of the typical controls that may help reduce risk*).

4.4 Age UK Bolton strives to follow best practice and recommends against lone working in high-risk workplaces/work activities, for example: work on ladders that cannot be secured and require footing; the use of machinery by any young person under the age of 18, until they have received sufficient training in the operation of that machine; where intelligence indicates a service user is potentially violent or otherwise abusive.

4.5 The perception of hazards or actual risks may be different for different people, for example: inexperienced or young workers may underestimate the risks of an activity; some workers may feel particularly vulnerable to violence away from the workplace or after dark; or a medical condition may make it unsafe for an individual to work alone.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Trustees should be aware of, and approve, the main provisions of this guidance, follow the principles within it and support the Chief Executive and managers in its implementation.

5.2 Chief Executive and managers should:

- ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that there are suitable and sufficient resources to meet the requirements of this guidance and alert the Trustees where this is not the case;
- take steps to ensure that all staff within their areas of responsibility are made aware of this guidance and its content;
- be satisfied that risk assessments are completed where lone working is unavoidable and that adequate control measures are in place;
- actively monitor practices to ensure that managers and employees are working in a safe manner and in accordance with the risk assessment;
- identify appropriate training and ensure that relevant staff and volunteers attend;
- take steps to ensure that an up-to-date risk assessment is completed for the situations in which their team members may work alone;
- check that all relevant staff and volunteers are aware of and complying with the control measures identified by the risk assessment;
- ensure all relevant staff and volunteers are provided with adequate information, instruction and training on the hazards and precautions to be taken when working alone;
- encourage staff and volunteers to withdraw from situations where they feel threatened or unsafe; and
- ensure that accidents and incidents where employees and volunteers have been verbally or physically threatened or attacked, are reported to managers and/or the Chief Executive using the accident report form.

5.3 Staff have a responsibility to:

- look after their own safety and that of colleagues and volunteers with whom they work;
- identify and report risks and/or situations where they feel threatened or in any way unsafe
- report and record accidents, incidents and events where they have been verbally or physically threatened, abused or attacked

- identify and report any information or circumstances which they feel could influence or impact on their own safety or that of others

6. INFORMATION AND TRAINING

- 6.1** Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced in the work activity to understand the risks and precautions associated with their work. Initial induction training and mentoring provided by their manager is therefore particularly important for lone workers.
- 6.2** Managers must ensure that limits - as to what can and what cannot be done when working alone - are identified, agreed and recorded in the risk assessment and shared with all relevant staff and volunteers.
- 6.3** Managers must ensure that employees and volunteers are competent to deal with circumstances which go beyond the scope of training, for example, when to stop work and seek the advice of a manager or the Chief Executive.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

- 7.1** An assessment of risk is simply a careful examination of anything that can cause harm to employees or others during the course of their work. The Chief Executive and managers are responsible for ensuring these are in place.
- 7.2** The risk assessment will help staff and managers to decide what control measures or safe working arrangements need to be put in place to protect employees and volunteers from harm. Risk assessments must be carried out in all areas of work where working alone poses an actual or potential risk.
- 7.3** Lone workers should not face any more risks than other employees within the organisation. Extra measures may be necessary to control hazards specific to lone working.
- 7.4** The 5 step process, outlined below, should be followed when assessing risk to lone workers.
 - Identify the hazards associated with the activity and those specifically posed by lone working;
 - Identify which workers could be affected and how they could be harmed;
 - Evaluate current control measures and assess if you need to do more;
 - Record the risk assessment and share it with relevant employees and volunteers.

- Review the risk assessment on a regular basis.
- 7.5** Risk assessment should take account of both normal work and foreseeable emergencies including fire, risk of violence, aggression and containment, as well as sudden illness and accidents.
- 7.6** Risk assessments should be carried out by those with sufficient knowledge and experience of the job to understand the hazards and implement control measures.
- 7.7** Employees should be involved in the risk assessment process; ongoing consultation will help to assure managers that the assessments are fit for purpose.
- 7.8** Once completed, the risk assessment will provide an indication about whether the work can be done safely alone. If the risk assessment indicates unacceptably high levels of risk that cannot be adequately controlled then lone working should not be undertaken. Further safe working arrangements should be identified and implemented.
- 7.9** Managers should consider whether lone workers have any medical conditions that may make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek advice if necessary. It is important to consider both routine work and any foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional physical and/or mental burdens on an individual.
- 7.10** Lone working risk assessments must be reviewed periodically and, particularly, if the work activity changes or an accident/incident occurs: updated assessments must be shared with staff.
- 7.11** Further suggestions and guidance to help managers and staff complete lone working risk assessments can be found at Appendix 1 and 2 of this policy.

8. SAFE WORKING PROCEDURES

- 8.1** The risks that lone workers face should be reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable. To achieve this managers should develop safe working procedures that staff and volunteers can follow when they are working alone. The complexity of the safe working procedure will depend on the findings of the risk assessment, local circumstances and work activities.
- 8.2** Safe work practices for lone workers should be detailed in relevant service contingency plans and could include:
- provision of a mobile phone;

- provision of personal alarms;
- keeping an up-to-date Outlook calendar/diary;
- Using Teams chat, relevant monitoring apps or buddy systems
- maintenance of a signing out and in log/book;
- calling managers/colleagues before and after visits;
- developing and practising emergency arrangements; and
- maintaining next of kin/emergency contact details

8.3 Calendar/Diary/Logging Systems

As a minimum a record should be maintained of:

- details of the person/premises to be visited away from the normal workplace;
- address/location of the meeting/appointment/visit;
- mobile telephone number or other contact details of employee(s);
- time of appointment and expected duration of visit

All visits, including meetings outside the normal workplace, should be logged on this system.

8.4 All employees must provide their managers with appropriate personal information including, as a minimum, their home address, home and mobile telephone numbers and their next of kin / emergency contact(s) details. Managers must only use this information in an emergency and must ensure it is held securely to avoid inappropriate disclosure.

8.5 Employees and volunteers who use their vehicles for business travel should provide managers with information of the make, model, colour and registration of their vehicle.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1 Any accidents or incidents involving lone workers will be reported to the Board of Trustees. These incidents and information provided by managers (following their investigation) will be used to identify the adequacy of existing controls and the effectiveness of the guidance document.

9.2 This guidance document will be reviewed every 3 years, or earlier if:

- New legislation is published or existing legislation is updated;
- New guidance is published or existing guidance is updated;
- Research, monitoring or auditing suggests that a review may be required;
- Incident investigation suggests that a review may be required

10. FURTHER INFORMATION/GUIDANCE

- Bolton Council Health and Safety Team
Telephone: 01204 336500
- Health and Safety Executive - Working Alone
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>
- Health and Safety Executive – Violence at Work (guide for employers)
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg69.pdf>
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust - Information and tips on how to reduce risks from lone work and practical tips for employees and the general public.
<http://www.suzylamplugh.org/>

EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER CONSENT STATEMENT

I (name of employee/volunteer) hereby confirm that I have read, understood and will comply with the lone working guidance and procedure.

Signed.....

Date

APPENDIX 1

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

The sort of hazards faced by a lone worker will be similar to most other work activities, they may be aggravated as the individual is working alone and perhaps not in the immediate vicinity of aid and assistance. For example:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to summon help or administer first aid;
- Violence or the threat of violence when there is no one available to provide support;
- Risk of fire;
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, for example strenuous lifting or use of unwieldy equipment;
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building (for example danger of being accidentally locked in);
- Faulty equipment;
- Remoteness or isolation;
- Work at height;
- Slips, trips, falls

The following table contains some questions/considerations which managers and staff may find useful when they are identifying hazards associated with lone working. This list is not exhaustive and additional hazards related to specific activities should be considered.

Possible Hazards	Consider
Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?	Consider the work environment and the location – for example is it remote? In an area of above average crime? Are mobile phone signals poor? Is there risk of harm from animals? Is the employee unfamiliar with the workplace? Could sharps be present? etc.
Is the person medically fit to carry out lone work?	Employers need to check that lone workers have no medical conditions that may make them unsuitable for working alone. It is important to consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional physical and mental burdens on an individual.

Does the activity present a special risk to a lone worker?	Is the activity/process difficult for a person to complete alone? Does it pose a risk? Consider substances used, how will equipment be powered? Is the employee carrying valuables or medicines? Could they be perceived to be doing so?
Is there safe access and egress for one person?	Both in the course of normal work and in an emergency. For example, is there a risk of exits being blocked unintentionally or intentionally? Could the worker get locked in? Is the environment safe?
Is the location unfamiliar?	A pre-visit to risk assess the environment, are there different/unusual factors to consider? Is there an increased likelihood of violence or aggression within that area?
Is the person they are meeting unfamiliar?	Ensure suitable information on the individual is gathered, communicated and assessed and relevant control measures implemented.
Can the equipment be adequately controlled and handled safely by one person?	Does the equipment used pose a risk to the lone worker; is it unwieldy, heavy, hazardous, etc.
Can all goods, substances and materials be safely handled by one person?	Are substances hazardous? Flammables, toxins, pathogens, etc. How are they used, stored, disposed?
Is the work environment appropriate?	Heating, light, ventilation, housekeeping, flooring? Is there risk of fire?
Are welfare facilities adequate and accessible?	Toilet, washing, drinking water, etc.
Does the lone worker have access to first aid?	First aider training, first aid kit.
Does the lone worker have access to a suitable means of communication or other means of contacting or summoning assistance?	Telephone, mobile phone, pager, alarm, etc.
Is there a risk of violence associated with the work activity or location?	Is there a database that records clients with previous aggressive behaviours? Is it up to date? Does the team liaise with other agencies and share relevant information? Have you set up buddy systems? Do staff receive suitable training to equip them to deal with difficult situations?

Is lone worker more at risk due to inexperience?	Review training needs, determine supervision levels, etc.
Has the lone worker received sufficient information, instruction and/or training to enable the work to be completed safely?	Is employee competent? Review/confirm training. Do you observe employees completing the activity before they work alone?
Is there an emergency plan in place? Has the lone worker had specific training to enable them to deal with routine and non-routine situations?	Fire safety, spills, aggression, ill-health, etc. Do employees know when to refer situations/seek clarification from managers?
What arrangements are in place to ensure adequate supervision?	Periodic visits, signing in/out, contact by phone, diaries, one to ones.
Are there procedures in place to deal with an emergency or "missing" employee? Are plans well known and well- practiced?	Would you and colleagues/lone workers know what to do in the event of an emergency? How do you practice your procedures? How often?
Do you (if necessary) limit what can/cannot be done whilst employees working alone?	What activities should be prohibited, how will this be documented and communicated?

Some other specific hazards must be assessed on a separate risk assessment and be cross referenced with the lone work risk assessment. These include:

- Hazardous substances (COSHH);
- Display screen equipment;
- Manual Handling; and
- Work equipment

APPENDIX 2

SOME SUGGESTED CONTROL MEASURES FOR STAFF WORKING AWAY FROM BASE

Managers and staff may wish to consider some of the following safe systems of work (*where appropriate to their own business/work activity*) when they are developing risk assessments:

1. When arranging a first meeting with clients or other individual(s) employees should ask for a telephone number and ring back to confirm the arrangement (if appropriate).
2. If available, check the records for intelligence, for example:
Ensure as much information as possible is known about the identity of the person/location to be visited.
Any suitable systems or databases, should also be checked.
3. If working with external partners speak to relevant persons to share information. This will help prepare risk assessments and identify control measures.
4. Employees going out on visits to potentially difficult clients/locations should speak with their manager and discuss the control measures identified in the risk assessment. One option would be for staff to be accompanied on those visits.
5. As an additional safeguard, provide a visual record for teams, trips, visits. Meetings out of the office or off-site, should be recorded clearly in the office in a designated book, whiteboard or similar. Ensure that it is one of the team's responsibility to check this record at the end of the day and alert the manager of any problems, i.e. if a member of staff has not called in to report that they have finished a visit.
6. Employees going home after a potentially difficult visit, at the end of the day, to call their manager/colleagues in the office, or at home as they finish their meeting.
7. Employees' to wear sensible footwear and the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimise the risk of slips, trips and falls or other accidents/incidents.
8. If employees are on a site visit and it is clear that they are going to be back to the office later than anticipated, they should ring in to make their manager/colleagues aware of the situation and provide an estimated return time.
9. If employees need to attend an evening meeting or home visit, their manager should assess if it is safe to do so. Consideration should be given to whether two members of staff should attend the meeting/visit together, if so (and if possible) they should arrange to meet and go together to the venue.
10. Managers/employees should consider arranging meetings with clients, at the office (in normal office hours).where intelligence suggests they are potentially violent.

11. Employees to carry a personal alarm, if it is identified as a control. Make sure that it is loud enough. The noise of the alarm may frighten the aggressor – he/she may back off for long enough for employees to leave. Do not rely on it to summon help.
12. Employees may need to carry a first aid kit if identified in the risk assessment as a control measure.
13. A mobile telephone should always be used if provided. Employees must ensure that it is fully charged and switched on. Managers/colleagues should be provided with contact details.
14. The office and other emergency numbers should be programmed into the mobile phone, preferably as speed dial.
15. Consider having a coded message of perhaps four or five words for employees to alert the office that they are in trouble. For example “*Is Mr Clooney there?*”

SOME SUGGESTED EXAMPLE CONTROL MEASURES FOR MANAGERS WITH STAFF WHO WORK ALONE IN AN OFFICE BASE

Managers may wish to consider some of the following safe systems of work (*where appropriate to their own business/work activity*) when they are developing risk assessments:

1. Managers should always be aware of and approve lone working.
2. Employees should be provided with information on which tasks they can/cannot complete when they are working alone.
3. Managers should be satisfied that their employees have sufficient training to complete their work safely.
4. If appropriate, staff should always let managers and colleagues know if they are working outside “normal” working hours.
5. Employees should ensure that the main entrance doors are closed and properly secured behind them.
6. Managers must ensure that employees working alone have access to a telephone and first aid equipment at all times they are working alone.
7. Procedures for raising the alarm, i.e. dealing with illness, accidents, etc. must be in place and communicated to all lone workers.
8. Employees working alone must not open the doors to let unauthorised visitors into the building, no matter what identification they have. If they are meant to be there, they will either have keys or will have arranged to meet someone to allow them into the building.
9. Employees should not enter a building alone if there is any indication of a security breach.
10. External/internal lighting must be well maintained.
11. Key codes for access should be changed from time to time and as a matter of course if a breach of security is suspected.
12. Intruder detection systems should be in place and used.

APPENDIX 3

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

These are suggested procedures which may assist teams in establishing their own methods for controlling emergency situations.

Procedure to be followed for missing employee

The following procedure is suggested where an employee fails to reach an appointment, make contact with a colleague as previously agreed or return to the office. The manager or nominated deputy must:

1. Call the employee's mobile phone and home telephone.
2. Contact a person (for example, client, colleague or contact name) at each location noted in the diary, whiteboard or other recording system.
3. If no contact can be made by any method, the Chief Executive should be informed. Consideration should be given to contacting the Police and next-of-kin.
4. If possible, two colleagues should travel to the employees expected place of work along the potential route of visits.

APPENDIX 4

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS (FOR STAYING SAFE WHEN OUT AND ABOUT)

The following tips have been developed using guidance from the Suzie Lamplugh Trust.

Public Transport

1. View timetables and decide time of travelling in advance.
2. When waiting for transport after dark, wait in well-lit areas and near any emergency alarms and CCTV cameras.
3. If using public transport, sit near the driver; move to a safer seat when possible; be aware of where the emergency alarm button is situated.
4. If something or someone makes you feel uncomfortable, act on your instincts and move seats, be ready to raise the alarm.

Taxis and Cabs

1. Only use marked taxis.
2. Try making your bookings for outbound and return journeys before you leave.
3. If you can't book in advance, keep details of several firms on you to increase chances of successful booking.
4. When booking, ask for driver and/or car details so you can make sure you are getting into the right car.

Driving

1. Ensure your car is well maintained and that you don't run out of petrol; lock your car doors whilst travelling between visits; try to park in a well-lit area. Consider joining a national breakdown organisation.
2. Keep an emergency kit in your car – extra coat, torch, water, spare change, telephone charger, etc.
3. Always have the necessary maps and directions in the car reducing the need to stop and ask.
4. When arriving back at your car be aware of your surroundings, have your keys ready and check inside of car before entering.
5. Do not keep valuables on a seat where they could be seen and grabbed through a window.
6. If you break down, be aware of your surroundings and only get out of your car when and if you feel it is safe to do so.

7. Road rage incidents are rare and, by not responding to aggression from other drivers, can often be avoided.
8. If the driver of another car forces you to stop, keep your engine running and, if you need to, reverse to get away.
9. When parking in a car park, consider where the entrances and exits are. Try to avoid having to walk across a lonely car park to get to your car. Park away from pillars/barriers and, if possible, reverse into your space so you can drive away easily.
10. When you park in daylight think *“What the area will be like when I return in the dark?”*
11. Keep all valuables out of sight, for example, locked in the boot.
12. Lock your car, even if you only go to pay for petrol on a garage forecourt.
13. If you are working on paperwork in the car, keep the activity to a minimum, park in a well-lit area, keep doors locked and try to remain aware of your surroundings. Think *“Is this a safe place for me to park?”*
14. Try not to use isolated car parks.
15. If you are approached and feel uncomfortable, use your horn to attract attention or discourage the other person.
16. If you see an incident or accident or someone tries to flag you down don't stop to investigate without thinking – *“Is it safe?”* Could you help or would it be safer and more useful if you went for help?

Walking/Out And About

1. Try to avoid walking alone at night.
2. Keep to well-lit or busy streets and avoid isolated areas or danger spots as much as possible.
3. Avoid areas where you know groups hang about.
4. Walk facing oncoming traffic.
5. If you have to walk in the same direction as the traffic and a driver stops simply turn and walk the other way.
6. If you think you are being followed, cross the street several times. If you still think you're being followed, get away from the situation – run if necessary to a busy area and seek assistance, for example, go into a shop, office building or go to a 'lit'-house and ask for help.
7. Adopting a confident appearance, for example, walking tall, normal pace, arms relaxed, will make you look less vulnerable
8. A shout for assistance: a clear instruction such as *“call the Police”* may work. This is worth doing even if there is no-one else nearby; it could frighten off potential attackers.
9. Reduce the amount of bags or paperwork you carry. It could affect your ability to move quickly. Try to keep one hand free whenever possible.

10. Don't limit your awareness of your surroundings by wearing a personal radio or stereo.
11. Consider carrying a personal safety alarm.
12. Remain alert and aware of your surroundings at all times.
13. Try to avoid danger rather than confront it. Walking away can be a simple but effective way to prevent an incident.
14. Carry your bag securely, if possible put the strap across your body. You may prefer to carry laptops, etc. in a backpack (with some padding) rather than a laptop bag. If possible, remove any logos/stickers on the bag which may identify it as containing computer equipment.