



Lone Worker Policy

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The CCG is committed to an environment that promotes equality, embraces diversity and respects human rights both within our workforce and in service delivery. This document should be implemented with due regard to this commitment.

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Version Control Sheet

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1 INTRODUCTION

Bolton CCG recognises that during the course of their work, it may be essential for workers to work alone. This may occur as a regular part of an employee's working practice or may occur on an occasional basis. In either situation it will arise from an understanding that this is the most appropriate and effective way of delivering a particular CCG service.

The safety of employees is paramount. The CCG is committed to minimising the risk of lone working for all its employees.

All possible steps will be taken to ensure that employees who work for the CCG are not put at risk through lone working.

Due to the nature of their work, lone workers need to be provided with additional organisational support, management, training and instruction to deal with increased risks, as well as being enabled and empowered to take a greater degree of responsibility for their own safety and security.

Health & Safety Legislation places a responsibility on an employer for ensuring that the risks associated with staff working alone are properly assessed and managed. Therefore, failure to implement this policy will place the CCG in breach of its legal duties. Key pieces of legislation are the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Guidance on this legislation is available from the Health and Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk).

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, agency workers, contractors, board members etc. This policy is specifically aimed at those whose work is intended to be carried out unaccompanied or without immediate access to another person for assistance; this mainly includes those who tend to work alone, work from home, visit patients and work across other NHS sites.

3 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all managers and employees are aware of their responsibilities and take suitable precautions in relation to lone working.

4 DEFINITION

The term 'lone worker' is used in this policy to describe a wide variety of staff who work, either regularly or occasionally on their own without access to immediate support from work colleagues, managers or others. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 defines a lone worker as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'.

Lone working occurs when employees travel by themselves, carry out work in the community by themselves are working from their base alone, are in a distant or secluded area of the workplace or work away from their base.

5 HAZARDS OF LONE WORKING

Working alone can sometimes put people in a vulnerable position because it may be more difficult for them to summon help if things go wrong or their health and safety is at risk.

The degree of risk of harm for lone workers is often greater than for other workers.

For example the risks from the following hazards may be increased

- Accidents or emergencies arising out of work for example verbal abuse, physical assault, road traffic accident.
- Manual handling.
- Fire.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Chief Officer

The Chief Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring the CCG puts in place the necessary management systems for the effective management of lone working, and for ensuring the provision of sufficient resources to implement the Health and Safety Policy and for ensuring the CCG complies with the requirements of health and safety legislation.

6.2 Managers

Managers are responsible for undertaking risk assessments and implementing control measures to ensure that lone workers for whom they are responsible are able to get help if things go wrong. Where staff undertakes lone working, managers must ensure that structures and procedures are in place and adhered to in order to demonstrate as far as is reasonably practicable that staff are safe if something untoward occurs. Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy.

6.3 Employees

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they have read and understood this policy and for reporting any incidents relating to lone working, so that risks can be identified and suitable measures developed to control those risks as far as is reasonably practicable. Staff have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their work and co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal goals. Staff must plan appropriately and not put themselves at risk. Employees must ensure if applicable that their partner/next of kin has the details of how to contact the line manager if they fail to return home.

Employees must also ensure that they keep their work records up to date regarding next of kin details, vehicle details etc., and must also ensure electronic work diaries are kept up to date so that managers and team members can see their movements at a glance.

6.4 Health and Safety Committee

The committee has delegated responsibility from the Chief Officer for ensuring that the health and safety management systems relating to Lone Workers are effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed in accordance with the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

6.5 Governing Body

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the health and safety management systems relating to Lone Working are effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed in accordance with the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.

6.6 HR Provider / Occupational Health Provider / Staff Counselling Provider

Staff are reminded of the support mechanisms available to them including Occupational Health, staff counselling service and People Services.

7 GUIDANCE

7.1 General Points for all managers to consider

Each team/base/department must have in place locally agreed robust systems to ensure that at least one other work colleague expressly knows:

- The planned work schedule (to include who is to be visited, the addresses/contact numbers and expected time and duration of visits).
- The details of the vehicle the staff member will use.
- The staff member's contact details (including mobile phone number where available).
- Emergency contact name and phone number.
- The time that the lone worker expects to finish work for the day and go off-duty.
- Home phone number to be contacted should they fail to contact base.
- The course of action to take if there is any cause for concern relating to the lone-worker.

In addition some teams may wish to introduce a buddy system or ensure staff carry emergency equipment e.g. map, torch, first aid, telephone numbers etc.

All lone workers should keep their mobile phone with them and charged. Always ensure someone knows where you are and ensure you know how to contact manager/colleague or raise an alarm. Keep diaries up to date.

If you are the contact for the lone worker and you need to leave work unexpectedly you must pass the lone worker's details and responsibility for their safety to another colleague.

7.2 Specific Types of Lone Worker

The following sections relate to certain categories of lone worker and managers of such workers should ensure that they read the relevant sections

7.2.1 Lone Working Staff visiting Patients Homes

In some circumstances an employee of the CCG may be required to visit a patient in their own home. If this need arises, advice should be sought from the Chief Nurse or Head of Quality & Patient Safety before any visit takes place.

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration:

- Review any existing information regarding the patient including the last documented risk assessment where applicable.
- Ensure systems are developed and implemented regarding the recording of each lone worker visit including mode of contact, names and addresses of the clients being visited, times of appointments, order of visits and expected time of return. Do not make unscheduled visits without following local procedure.
- Carry appropriate identification.
- Lone working staff should consider carefully where their cars are parked, taking into account lighting, isolation, passageways, crime "hot spots" and remote locations etc.
- Advise work base of any changes that arise to the timetable e.g. if the employee finds that they will not return at the expected time.
- Notify Line Manager of arrival and agree a time limit. If there is no contact at agreed time then the emergency procedure is invoked.
- Report back to Line Manager (by phone if they aren't there) at work base when visit/s are concluded.
- As they enter the property, they should make a mental note of your access and exit. Check that it is safe and that you could get out quickly if required. If the environment is unsafe or you feel threatened or vulnerable you must withdraw immediately and complete an incident report.

In all instances, incidents must be reported using the CCG's incident reporting system as soon as possible after the event.

7.2.2 Lone Workers in Office Premises

Wherever possible staff should aim not to remain alone working in their work base after the premises officially close, but there are times when this is unavoidable. If this situation arises they should where possible ensure most / all of the following are adhered to:

- Ensure that they have control of the access to the building / room.
- Only give access to others if they are sure they know who they are.
- Check they have access to a telephone.

- Check on the means of escape from the building in an emergency e.g. fire doors and escapes.
- Arrange appointments so that there are other people in the building at that time.
- Keep valuables etc. out of sight.
- If assaulted or threatened, contact the Police immediately on 999 or 101 (for non-emergency calls).
- If verbally abused or in receipt of an indecent telephone call, report the matter immediately to your Line Manager. Ensure you have their contact details.
- Outside of office hours - arrange for Line Manager or Lone Worker contact to ring them at a predetermined time to check they are all right. Agree a code word for the Lone Worker to use if they are in trouble.
- Move their car closer to the building if necessary during the course of the day in order to minimise the risks of leaving the building on their own.
- Not use lifts when they are on their own in a building, as they may become trapped inside and not be able to gain assistance.
- Do not carry out lifting and handling activities alone.
- Do not work at a height e.g. using a step ladder alone.
- Not repair or tamper with the controls of any equipment should a problem be discovered. Any issues relating to equipment should be reported as soon as is practicable

Where it is expected that staff work 'after hours' there must be a system in place, enabling staff to make contact with their Manager.

In all instances, incidents must be reported using the CCG's incident reporting system as soon as possible after the event.

7.2.3 Lone Workers and Vehicles/Public Transport

Lone workers should:

- Ensure they have adequate fuel.
- Give themselves enough time for the journey to avoid rushing or taking risks.
- Items such as bags should never be left visible in the car.
- Always hold the vehicles keys in their hand when leaving premises to avoid being distracted by searching for them when outside.
- A visual check should be made of the outside and inside of the vehicle before entering.
- Once inside the vehicle lock all doors especially when travelling at slow speed or stationary at traffic lights.
- Park close to location and avoid shortcuts through deserted areas. When dark or poor weather park in flood light car parks ensuring windows and doors locked.
- Especially at night do not stop even for people who may appear to be in distress or require help. The lone worker should drive to the nearest manned and well lit building to request assistance (also do this if concerned that they are being followed).
- In case of accident or breakdown notify their manager immediately.
- Avoid carrying items containing their personal information such as home address.
- If booking a taxi ensure that they use a reputable firm.

Lone workers travelling by foot or public transport should follow the same principles eg plan the journey, walk briskly without stopping, avoid isolated paths, have a buddy to remain in contact with, avoid using mobiles phones overtly, on public transport sit near

the driver avoiding upper decks on buses and empty (or one other passenger) train compartments.

In all instances, incidents must be reported using the CCG's incident reporting system as soon as possible after the event.

7.3 Action to take when an employee does not call in after a visit.

If the contact or line manager does not hear from the staff member within 30 minutes of the expected finish time the following action should be taken:

- Telephone the employee on their mobile phone, work and/or personal. If no reply:
- Telephone the last patient booked to be visited by the lone worker/office reception number. If no reply:
- Telephone the employee's home number.
- Inform next of kin.
- Contact the police.

In order to avoid any inappropriate instigation of these emergency procedures it is vitally important that employees alert their work base/contact if they are running late with their visits or appointments.

If the individual is subsequently found not to be missing and implementation of this emergency procedure is due to their failure to comply with the working practices agreed by their team, disciplinary action may be taken. The procedure failure should be reported via incident reporting mechanisms.

8 RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessments must be carried out in all areas of work where there are lone workers. The identification of risks relies on using all available information in relation to lone working to ensure that the risk of future incidents can be minimised. This includes learning from previous incidents and involving feedback from staff. Therefore it is essential that staff are encouraged to report incidents and near misses.

The risk assessment should:

- Identify risks in relation to the specific lone working situation.
- Assess the likelihood of an incident occurring.
- Identify control measures to reduce the risks to lone workers, including appropriate staff training to minimise these risks.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of control measures.
- Record the risk assessment (wherever...Feed into the corporate risk register and quality assurance framework where appropriate).

The risk assessment should consider:

- The environment – location, security, access.
- The context – nature of the task e.g. carrying controlled drugs, imparting unwelcome news, carrying equipment that makes them a target for theft.

- The individual concerned – pregnancy, disability/medical condition (seek Occupational Health advice), inexperience, indicators of potential or actual risk.
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations in which case assess frequency/likelihood of incident occurring and severity.
- Any other special circumstances.

Refer to HSE 5 steps to risk assessment.

9 Training

Training is of particular importance for lone-workers, as there will be limited supervision to control and advise in uncertain situations. Training should be designed to enable lone-workers to manage unexpected circumstances where they could be exposed to violence and/or aggression.

The CCG will provide relevant training (determined by a Training Needs Analysis) to all staff who fall within the definition of “lone workers”. This will primarily be conflict resolution training including an element of personal security awareness (other examples could be training in disengagement techniques, H&S, cultural awareness diversity and racial equality, first aid training) but more specific training will be provided where indicated through a lone worker risk assessment.

The CCG should be clear what work is able to be completed safely by a lone-worker and ensure that workers are competent to do the job alone and recognise when advice should be sought.

10 Monitoring Compliance

This Policy will be monitored by the Health and Safety Committee, taking into consideration expert health and safety/security management advice where necessary. The Executive Lead who has overall responsibility for monitoring the policy is the Chief Officer.

11 References

Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (a) - The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/1996.htm>

Directions to the NHS bodies on tackling violence against staff 2003 and guidance of 2004 issued by CFSMS (Department of Health)

<http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/SecurityManagement/Documents/lsm nomination.pdf>

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

<http://www.hseni.gov.uk/manslaughterhomicideact07.pdf>

Not Alone – A Guide for Better Protection of Lone Workers in the NHS (NHS Protect, 2005)

http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/SecurityManagement/Documents/Lone_Working_Guidance_final.pdf

APPENDIX 1 RISK ASSESSMENT FOR LONE WORKERS

ASSESSMENT	
Department:	Location:
Employee name:	Date of assessment:
Risk Assessment carried out by:	Review date:

Main risk and issues of concern	Yes	No
Does the staff member work alone?	(1)	(0)
Does the staff member work out of hours?	(1)	(0)
Does the staff member meet with clients/patients in isolated locations (including client homes)?	(1)	(0)
When working away from base, does someone at base know who the staff member is visiting what time they intend to return?	(0)	(1)
Are there adequate emergency procedures and an effective means of communication should an incident occur?	(0)	(1)
Is the building secure?	(0)	(1)
Is there adequate access to the building?	(0)	(1)
Is there access to first aid if the staff member becomes ill or has an accident?	(0)	(1)
Will the staff member be working in confined spaces?	(1)	(0)
Are regular supervisor or colleague checks done during activities?	(0)	(1)
Are entrance security systems in use (e.g. swipe cards)?	(0)	(1)
Is there security lighting around access points?	(0)	(1)
Are panic buttons linked to manned locations?	(0)	(1)
Are reporting AND checking-in systems in place?	(0)	(1)
Are staff trained on basic personal safety?	(0)	(1)
Are staff trained in strategies for preventing and managing violence?	(0)	(1)
Do staff have access to forms for reporting incidents or near misses and appreciate the need for this process?	(0)	(1)

Now total up the scores from the questions above to ascertain the overall level of risk appropriate to the lone worker :

Total = _____

Score	Level of Risk	Timescale for next scheduled lone worker risk assessment and follow-up required
0-4	Low	One year
5-10	Medium	Six months
11-14	High	Three months – seek advice on reduction of risk from Corporate Governance Team, consider changes to working practices
15-17	Extreme	Seek immediate advice on reduction of risk from Corporate Governance Team and LSMS as immediate changes to working environment/practices may be necessary

Action Plan to Manage the Risks

Action Plan to Manage the Risk				
(Consider what needs to be done to reduce the level of risk identified overleaf, being as specific as possible. Examples might be provision of staff training, improving security, changes to working practices, calling estates to repair something)				
What needs to be done?	Who will do it?	By when?	What could prevent this happening?	Date action completed

Appendix 2 Checklist for Managers

Are your staff –

1. *Issued* with all relevant policies and procedures relating to lone working staff?
2. *Trained* in appropriate strategies for the prevention and management of violence (in particular, have they received conflict resolution training)?
3. *Given* all information about the potential risks for aggression and violence in relation to patients/service users and the appropriate measures needed to control these risks?
4. *Issued* with appropriate safety equipment and the procedures for maintaining such equipment?
5. *Trained* to be able to confidently use a device and familiar with the support service systems in place before being issued with it?
6. *Aware* of how to report an incident and of the need to report all incidents when they occur?
7. *Issued* with the necessary contacts for post-incident support?

Are they –

8. *Aware* of the importance of doing proper planning before a visit, being aware of the risks and doing all they can to ensure their own safety in advance of a visit?
9. *Aware* of the importance of leaving an itinerary of movements with their line manager and/or appropriate colleagues?
10. *Aware* of the need to keep in regular contact with appropriate colleagues and, where relevant, their nominated 'buddy'?
11. *Aware* of the need to carry out continual dynamic risk assessments during a visit and take an appropriate course of action?
12. *Aware* of how to obtain support and advice from management in and outside of normal working hours?
13. Aware that they should never put themselves or colleagues in any danger and if they feel threatened should withdraw immediately?

Do they –

14. *Appreciate* the organisation's commitment to and support for the protection of lone workers and the measures that have been put in place to protect them?
15. *Appreciate* that they have their own responsibilities for their own safety?
16. *Appreciate* the circumstances under which visits should be terminated?
17. *Appreciate* the requirements for reporting incidents of aggression and violence?
18. *Understand* the support made available to lone workers by the CCG, especially post-incident support and the mechanism to access such support?

Appendix 3: Lone Worker Information Sheet for Team Manager

Name of Team: _____

Name	Car Details Make Registration Colour	Work Mobile No	Personal Mobile No	Home Address & Phone No	Emergency Contact Details Name Home no Mobile no