



LONE WORKING POLICY

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**South Lincolnshire CCG
South West Lincolnshire CCG**

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Lone Working Policy

Policy Statement

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Background | South Lincolnshire and South West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (SLCCG and SWLCCG) recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time in the community without close or direct supervision, in isolated work areas and often on occasions out of normal working hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks of lone working. |
| Statement | SLCCG and SWLCCG takes extremely seriously the health, safety and welfare of all staff. It recognises that violence towards staff is unacceptable and that staff have the right to be able to perform their duties without fear of abuse or violent acts. No member of staff should consider the receipt of violence or abuse to be an acceptable part of their job. |
| Responsibilities | Compliance with the policy will be the responsibility of all SLCCG and SWLCCG managers and of all staff who work alone as part of their duties. All incidents including near misses pertaining to lone workers should be reported using SLCCG and SWLCCG Incident Reporting Procedure (Datix). |
| Training | Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that awareness training is available and that staff access this as appropriate. |
| Dissemination | Website and via email. |
| Resource | The CCGs will be required to provide appropriate management tools and facilities in order to ensure staff health and safety eg technology systems for tracking staff whereabouts. |

POLICY STATEMENT - LONE WORKING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

South Lincolnshire and South West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (SLCCG and SWLCCG) recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time in the community without close or direct supervision, in isolated work areas, alone in the office and often out of normal working hours. Within SLCCG and SWLCCG; lone working may be a constituent part of a person's usual job or it could occur on an infrequent basis, as and when circumstances dictate. Lone working is not unique to any particular group of staff, working environment or time of day. The purpose of this policy is to protect staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks of lone working.

There are many different situations where staff are required to work alone and it would be impractical to address each situation individually. This policy has been designed to be as wide ranging as possible but still assist managers and staff to minimise the risks of lone working.

SLCCG and SWLCCG acknowledge that there are processes already in place locally to minimise the risks of lone working, this policy is designed to support and strengthen those arrangements. The Policy takes into account the NHS guidance on protecting health staff and the options available to take action against those who abuse or assault them.

SLCCG and SWLCCG also recognises it has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999), for the health, safety and welfare at work of its staff. These responsibilities apply equally to those staff who, for whatever reason, work alone. They require SLCCG and SWLCCG to identify hazards, assess the risks and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

1.1 Hazards of Lone Working

Staff who work alone face the same hazards in their daily work as other workers. However, for lone workers, the risk of harm is often greater. Hazards facing lone workers may include:

- Fire may pose difficulties for an isolated worker in evacuating a building when the fire alarm activates;
- Manual handling tasks may pose more risk to an individual member of staff;
- Violence and personal safety are a greater risk for SLCCG and SWLCCG staff working alone in offices to which members of the public may be able to gain access or when leaving the offices alone;

In practice this policy will apply to a small number of staff, especially when they are working in isolated locations and/or when carrying out known high-risk activities. High risk activities may include:

- Undertaking work within isolated areas
- Undertaking work within known high risk areas
- Working alone at base
- Working with people who have known risks e.g. violence and/or aggression
- Times when staff are carrying medication, equipment or valuables
- Times when employees are travelling between site/homes/offices

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all SLCCG and SWLCCG employed staff and also includes temporary and agency staff, contractors, volunteers, students and those on work experience. The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of our staff.

3. DEFINITION OF LONE WORKERS

SLCCG and SWLCCG define a lone worker as any individual who, in the process of carrying out their duties on behalf of SLCCG and SWLCCG, may find themselves working alone or in an area isolated from colleagues. This will include:

- Health professionals on home visits
- Ancillary/security staff working in buildings on their own or patrolling on their own
- Staff who work from home
- Last member of staff in the CCG headquarters building
- Staff working out of hours or returning to the site when on-call
- Staff working separately from others, or on their own in offices of other Lincolnshire CCG's
- Drivers

SLCCG and SWLCCG recognises that any member of staff may spend a limited amount of their working time 'alone'.

There are some circumstances where staff are required by law not to work alone. These situations are:

- Young persons under the age of eighteen years who must be working under direct supervision of a competent person
- People who work in confined spaces
- Persons who work at or near electrical conductors

4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Lone working environments present unique health and safety challenges. Although there is no specific legal guidance on working alone, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, SWLCCG must organise and control the health and safety of lone workers. All incidents including near misses pertaining to lone workers should be reported in accordance with SLCCG and SWLCCG Incident Reporting Policy [2016].

4.1 The Accountable Officer is responsible for:

- Promoting and supporting the aims and objectives of this policy
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working
- Ensuring appropriate resources are in place for putting implementing and embedding the policy into practice
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the CCG Board reviews the effectiveness of the policy

4.2 The Corporate Board Secretary is responsible for:

- Promoting and reporting security management issues to the Governing Body

- Ensuring that, in the event of a physical assault on a member of staff, systems are in place so that police are contacted immediately either by the person who has been assaulted or an appropriate manager or colleague and that full cooperation is given to the police in any investigation

4.3 **Senior and Line Managers are responsible for:**

- The operational management of health and safety in their services/localities
- Promoting and supporting the aims and objectives of this policy
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy
- Identifying staff in their services who are lone workers
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Assessing the need for staff in their services working alone
- Ensuring that staff are aware of the risks of lone working, and the arrangements/protocols in place locally to reduce risks to lone workers
- Putting procedures, devices and/or safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone
- Ensuring that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updates and refresher training as necessary
- Ensuring that all information about patients/clients referred from other departments or agencies is passed on, where appropriate, particularly if there is a known risk or previous history of violence or aggression
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident
- Recording, reporting, and investigating any incidents involving a lone worker and making recommendations to minimise risk/s of recurrence
- Ensuring mechanisms are in place to account for, and trace, the whereabouts of lone working employees and that these systems are regularly checked

4.4 **All South Lincolnshire CCG and South West Lincolnshire CCG employees** – all staff, including temporary, agency, seconded, work experience and volunteer staff are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions
- Familiarising themselves with relevant health and safety policies and procedures
- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working
- Considering and assessing potential risks to their health and safety
- Reporting all incidents, difficulties or risks raised from lone working, however minor, to their manager even if they do not wish any further action to be taken. Failure to report an incident may put others at risk;
- Ensuring that all information about patients/clients referred from other departments or agencies is passed on if applicable. Particularly if there is a known risk or previous history of violence or aggression
- Attending all training designed to meet the requirements of the policy
- Reporting any dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone or the safe working arrangements
- Maintaining an up to date diary of their appointments that is accessible to others whilst they are out working alone
- Not interfering or misusing anything provided for their, or others, safety.
- Being certain of three important things:

1. That they have full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which they are exposed;
2. That they know what to do if something goes wrong; and
3. That someone knows their whereabouts, what they are doing and when they are due back.

4.5 **Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:**

- Ensuring relevant policies are in place to protect the health and safety of staff
- Monitoring the number of incidents relating to lone workers
- Ensuring that lessons learned from incidents are communicated throughout the organisation
- Considering sickness statistics and recommending action in relation to health and safety
- Monitoring training statistics and feedback

5. **ASSESSING RISK**

The assessment of risk is simply a careful examination of anything that may cause harm to staff or others during the course of their work.

A risk assessment is the first step in deciding what prevention or safe working arrangements (control measures) need to be taken to protect staff from harm. All staff whose work contains an element of lone working should carry out a risk assessment of the work, for example, at the time of the first contact with a new patient. Lone workers should not face any more risks than other staff within the organisation. They may, however, need extra measures put in place to control specific risk.

The risk assessment will provide an indication as to whether the work can or cannot be done safely alone. If the risk assessment indicates unacceptably high levels of risk then the work should not be undertaken unless further safe working arrangements are implemented, for example, two people visiting together.

Risk assessment should take account of both normal work and foreseeable emergencies including fire, potential risks such as violence, aggression and containment as well as illness and accidents. The format of the assessment will become a written record and will show any significant findings of any person who may be particularly at risk. The 5 step process, outlined below, should be followed when assessing risk:

- Identify any hazards.
- Decide if the person/s may be affected/harmed, and how.
- Evaluate the risk arising from the information you have already gathered.
- Record your findings and eliminate the risk or put control measures in place to reduce the level of risk to the lowest level practicable.
- Review the assessment on a regular basis.

Risk assessments must be carried out in all areas of work where working alone poses an actual or potential risk to staff. Risk assessment should be carried out by competent persons, be recorded, evaluated at appropriate staff and managerial levels and communicated to all whom their contents may have a bearing upon during the performance of their work.

A template for Lone Worker Risk Assessment is available from SLCCG and SWLCCG Corporate Admin Team. A staff member's line manager can also assist with the conducting of the risk assessment if there are any queries.

Information from the risk assessment should be passed to staff. Risk assessments should be reviewed and updated each year, or sooner should circumstances change or there is an incident involving a lone worker.

Lone Worker Risk Assessments that are deemed to be high risk will be reported to the Joint Risk Management Group for discussion and may be included on the CCGs' Risk Register.

6. **MANAGING RISK**

Once identified by risk assessment, the risks that lone workers face should be reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level. Using safe working arrangements depends largely on local circumstances, local procedures and protocols. Local procedures and protocols should be put in place to provide staff with specific local guidance in relation to lone working and the associated risk reduction techniques. Issues to consider in developing safe systems of work include:

- Having in place reporting systems to ensure that the whereabouts of staff are known.
- Consider working patterns and hours of work which at certain times of day or night could reduce risks.
- Pre-arranged joint working with other colleagues/ agencies for high-risk activities.
- Improvements to security arrangements in buildings.
- Security lighting in parking areas.
- Training to increase staff awareness of risk and the precautions to be taken.
- Supervision and auditing of working practices.
- Using personal protective equipment [PPE] or mobile phones and personal alarms.
- Joint communications meetings with other services (Police, Social Services, Probation Service etc.)
- Communication systems for sharing information on risk with colleagues in other disciplines and agencies.
- Removing identification from cars.

Arrangements for managing risk should include:

- Guidance for lone workers on assessing risk.
- Details of when to stop and get advice.
- The safe working arrangements for logging in and out with base so that staff can be traced and located when working alone out in the community.
- Procedures to be followed in the event of an incident or emergency.
- All staff must be familiar with these local protocols and procedures. There may also need to be detailed guidance to tackle specific areas of risk, such as:
 - Lone workers travelling alone on work-related business
 - Home visits
 - Working outside normal office hours

7. **SUPERVISION**

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still SWLCCG's responsibility to ensure staff safety as far as is reasonably practical. Supervision can help to ensure that staff understand the risks associated with their work and that necessary safety precautions are carried out. Supervisory staff can also provide guidance in situations of uncertainty.

Supervision will also be needed when checking progress and compliance with any existing or new control measures that have been put in place as a result of the risk assessments. Procedures will

need to be put in place to monitor lone workers to ensure that lone workers remain safe, these may include:

- Supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone.
- Regular contact between the lone worker and any form of supervision by telephone or face to face.
- Regular checking of procedures designed to raise the alarm if contact is lost with a lone worker.
- Regular checking of other safety devices to ensure that they still work.

8. **MOBILE PHONES**

SLCCG and SWLCCG provide a number of mobile phones for staff who work alone in the community. SLCCG and SWLCCG Mobile Phone and Remote Access Policy (2014) outlines how many mobile phones can be accessed in each locality/service.

Using a mobile phone can itself create hazards and those members of staff who have mobile phones must use them in a manner that does not endanger themselves or others. For example, mobile phones must not be used whilst driving. As current legislation outlines, if the phone rings whilst the staff member is driving, they should pull over to the side of the road, when it is safe to do so and where it is safe to park, before answering the call.

Staff should make discrete calls if using a mobile phone, as to not draw attention to themselves or the phone and therefore alleviate the risk of theft/mugging.

9. **TRAINING**

SLCCG and SWLCCG will provide health and safety training to staff annually. This has been prioritised as mandatory training which all staff must attend/ complete and is available as part of the online mandatory training package.

In relation to Lone Working, staff should be aware of how to deal with potential incidents, and be able to recognise how their own actions can influence or even trigger an aggressive response. SLCCG and SWLCCG provide Conflict Resolution Training, in line with national guidelines. Conflict Resolution training will include as a minimum:

- Common causes of conflict.
- Forms of communication.
- Examples on how communication can breakdown.
- Examples of communication models.
- Patterns of behaviour.
- Warning and danger signs.
- Impact factors.
- Use of distance when dealing with conflict.
- Examples and description on the use of reasonable force.
- Description on different methods of dealing with possible conflict.

10. **REPORTING AND RECORDING**

All staff should familiarise themselves with SLCCG and SWLCCGs' accident/incident reporting procedure (Datix). Staff should report all accidents/incidents to their line manager at the earliest opportunity.

Staff should also report 'near misses', where they feel threatened, or 'unsafe', even if this was not a tangible event/experience. Failure to report an incident may put others at risk.

11. **IMMEDIATE SUPPORT FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT**

In the event of an incident involving a lone worker, the manager should immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours the on-call manager should be contacted.

Managers should be sensitive to the employee's need to talk about the incident and offer any assistance possible. If the employee is a member of a Trade Union or Professional Association, they may find this an appropriate source for practical and emotional support.

The importance of colleague support should not be underestimated; they may be seen as primary emotional support.

Staff should be made aware of the confidential counselling service offered by the CCG. The CCG can access Sugarman, for occupational Health support, referrals are made via Optum Commissioning Support Services, appointments can be made on the staff member's behalf by their line manager on Tel: 01476 406292. CCG employees are also able to access the Livewell Employee Assistance Programme, a 24 hour helpline, on 0800 292193, all calls are free of charge and confidential.

12. **INVOLVING THE POLICE**

If a situation arises which requires Police attendance, the employee at risk, or other relevant person, should contact the Police immediately. SLCCG and SWLCCG will seek to take legal action in all cases of physical violence and in specified cases of verbal violence, if deemed appropriate, in line with the Directions to the NHS bodies on tackling violence against staff (2003). The victim of the assault will be kept informed of the investigation's progress and offered such support as is necessary or desirable in the circumstances.

13. **DE-BRIEFING**

After an incident of violence against a member of staff (whatever the severity from verbal abuse to physical assault) it is important that there should be an opportunity for the staff member to discuss the incident with their line manager as soon as possible after the incident.

The purpose of the de-brief is to:

- Discuss the incident in order to support the member of staff.
- Discuss the need for expert/further counselling for the member of staff.
- Ensure the Lone Working Policy has been followed.
- Examine the details of the incident and if the policy and protocols worked.
- Ensure any protective factors or actions needed are implemented following the incident to protect staff or property; and ultimately learn lessons from the incident to prevent recurrence, and ensure that the learning is spread shared and disseminated throughout SLCCG and SWLCCG.

14. EQUALITY – DUE REGARD

This policy has been reviewed in relation to having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010 to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations.

The review indicates that certain staff are more at risk when working alone – these are young people, who are not covered by this policy as they are not allowed to work alone, and women. This policy has a beneficial impact on women, as it ensures that all staff are kept safe when working alone. In addition, section 8 of this policy will ensure that women are trained in conflict resolution and dealing with escalation.

15. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

There are no identified financial impacts associated with the general implementation of this policy, although mitigating risks in individual cases may involve use of resources.

Implementation of this policy should provide value for money by enhancing the CCGs' ability to support its staff in the delivery of full and effective services.

16. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY

Compliance with the policy will be taken into account during the investigation of any incident affecting a lone worker. Annual audit of health and safety arrangements at the SLCCG and SWLCCG offices will include consideration of whether adequate lone worker risk assessments have been carried out. The results of such analyses will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team.

17. REFERENCES

Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

NHS Lincolnshire - Lone Worker Policy (2008)

Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust - Lone Worker, and Violence and Aggression at Work Policy (2016)

Lincolnshire East Clinical Commissioning Group – Lone Working Policy (2016)

Appendix One – Risk Assessment

This risk assessment form aids the reduction of various factors which may be linked to violence, harassment, theft and criminal damage. Use one form for each lone worker.

Guidelines for Managers and/or Assessors

Where lone working takes place in the community, the following minimum precautions must be observed:

- The lone worker must have a means of signing in and out of visits, with the destination being recorded, alongside an estimation of time to be spent. This must be done even in an emergency.
- A procedure must be in place whereby Managers or nominated persons monitor the whereabouts of staff out on calls.
- A system must be put in place to ensure that workers on call have adequate communications between themselves and others, and that the system is used, audited, and tested.
- The lone worker must be provided with an aid to communication, such as a mobile telephone.
- Lone workers should be provided with a personal attack alarm, or other Lone Worker Safety Devices, where there is a risk of violence.
- Lone workers must receive adequate training including security awareness and conflict resolution training.

Appendix Two – Risk Assessment Form for Lone Working

| ASSESSMENT | |
|--|---------------------|
| Activity being covered by this Assessment: | Department: |
| Employee Name: | Date of Assessment: |

| Home Visits (Please complete this section if you undertake home visits) | YES | NO |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Does this staff member work in patient's homes? | | |
| Does this staff member work alone? | | |
| Does this staff member have a mobile telephone, radio or panic alarm device to contact others? | | |
| Are there means of communication between this person and others? | | |
| Could this staff member be located easily at any given time? | | |
| Are there checks to see if any communication policy is adhered to? | | |
| Is the Manager, or nominated person, notified of all staff visits and timings even when called out on emergencies? | | |
| Is there a monitor to call for help should a lone worker fall out of contact with the Base Office? | | |
| Has this staff member attended the NHS conflict resolution training? | | |
| Has a personal attack alarm been provided for this person? | | |
| Are visits made at quiet times such as weekends or nights? | | |
| Is there a visit list record? | | |
| Are potential violent patients seen on hospital premises rather than visiting in the community? | | |
| Would self-defence / breakaway training be considered in the future? | | |
| Does the person feel safe when visiting an area? | | |
| Does the person feel safe when visiting a home? | | |
| If the person has voiced concerns about an area of work, has the person been re-located? | | |

| Home Visits and CCG HQ (Please complete this section if you work alone at CCG HQ and undertake home visits) | Yes | No |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Is the lighting adequate in the area around the office/visited? | | |
| Is there any lighting? | | |
| Is the area around the office/visited quiet / unfrequented? | | |
| Is the area used after dark? | | |
| Is the area quiet at weekends? | | |
| Is an escort available when/if needed? e.g. car parks at night etc. | | |
| Is there CCTV in the area? | | |
| Is there a Police station nearby? | | |
| Are there any local late night shops etc. for refuge if required? | | |
| Is there a need to use underpasses or tunnels etc.? | | |

Other concerns please specify:

List any possible immediate remedial action:

Managers/Assessors Notes

Use the information gathered so far with the worker to assess the probability of a security threat, or threat of violence against a worker. Complete the Risk Probability Table and record your findings in the overall risk rate section then move on to the next step.

Use the table to assess the risk rating; **example**

Risk Level 1 (low) + Severity Level 1 (minor injury) + Likelihood Level 1 (not likely) = 3

Risk – can be defined as the level of risk the particular activity being assessed carries;

Severity – can be defined as the level of injury that may occur during an activity;

Likelihood – can be defined as the perception of a violent or dangerous occurrence happening;

Major Injury – can be defined as death, amputation, disability, severe wounding and broken limbs;

Modest Injury – can be defined as fractures, cuts and bruising;

Minor Injury – can be defined as including emotional upset, shock;

Not likely – can be defined as very remote

Likely – can be defined as an incident could occur

Very Likely – can be defined as an incident will occur

Risk Probability Table (where common sense & experience suggest the criteria)

| Risk Level 1-3 | Risk Level 1-3 | Risk Level 1-3 | Overall Risk Rate |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1.Low | 1. Minor Injury | 1. Not Likely | |
| 2.Medium | 2. Modest Injury | 2. Likely | |
| 3. High | 3. Major Injury | 3. Very Likely | |

Risk Probability (Part 2)

Use the scale below to assess how you must now proceed

| Overall risk rate | Next Step |
|-------------------|--|
| 3-4 | Needs to be reviewed annually at re-assessment date |
| 5-6 | Needs to be monitored and reviewed regularly |
| 6-7 | Changes must be made to work practice and procedures |
| 7-9 | This activity must be judged as very dangerous |

Control Measures

Please specify any measures you think are essential to reduce the risks, use page 1 as a guide to minimum precautions.

| Alterations to Department Procedures | | Expected Date of Completion |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |
| 6. | | |
| 7. | | |
| 8. | | |
| 9. | | |
| 10. | | |

| Alterations to Safety Practices (equipment, training etc.) | | Expected Date of Completion | Expected Date of Training |
|---|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |

| Alterations to Staff Working Systems | | Expected Date of Completion |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

Copies of the Risk Assessment to be sent to:

Department Manager Yes/ No

Corporate Secretary Yes/No

Management Review:

Name and title of the person who completed this assessment:

Name: _____ Title: _____

The date of planned review of this assessment:

NOTE: A review should take place following any significant incident, or change in work practice.

Re-Assessment Notes

When re-assessing please take note of the following:

- Identify any reasons why dates of completion where not met (if any)
- Identify any reasons for none compliance (if any)
- Have any violent incidents occurred since the date of the assessment was first done, If so, please specify how the incident was reported?

Have there been any changes to the department or the workers job that is likely to affect this Risk Assessment?

| Yes | No |
|---|--|
| Complete new Risk Assessment with worker involved; Keep this old Assessment on file. | No need to complete a new Risk Assessment; Ensure current Risk Assessment reviewed regularly. |

Date Reviewed:

Next Planned Review Date: