

<b>Staffordshire County Council</b>		<b>HR Policy Handbook</b>		
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<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Lone Working</b>			

## **Contents**

1. Application
2. Introduction
3. Aims & Objectives
4. Arrangements for Applying the Policy
  - 4.1 Risk Assessment
  - 4.2 Information, Instruction and Training
  - 4.3 Incident Reporting
  - 4.4 Servicing and Testing
  - 4.5 Monitor and Review
5. Legislative Framework
6. Further Advice and Information
7. Related Factsheets
8. Standard Documents
  - County Council Accident Report Form
  - County Council Violence Report Form
9. Appendices
  - Appendix 1 Lone Worker Hazard Checklist
10. Glossary of Terms

## Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Changes	Reasons for Alterations
Issue 1	April 2009	Original Policy to replace individual Directorate Guides and Policies	To ensure there is one County Council Policy
Issue 2	October 2012	Separation of Guidance Document	Ease of use of information

## Success Indicators

The following indicators will demonstrate the level of compliance with this policy and its procedures:

- a) Managers have identified with their staff any Lone Working which is taking place
- b) Managers must consider whether this Lone Working is necessary and if the practice can be avoided.
- c) Managers must identify who is carrying out Lone Working and when this is taking place.
- d) Managers (with their staff) have assessed the risk of lone working and defined how the risk can be eliminated or reduced by introducing control measures.
- e) Control measure have been developed and communicated to all staff
- f) The use of control measures is monitored by managers.
- g) The risk assessment and any control measures are reviewed regularly and after any incident are reported.
- h) Staff are aware of the requirement to report any incidents which occur when working alone.

## 1. Application

This policy applies to all County Council workplaces and work situations

## 2. Introduction

“Lone working” in the context of this policy refers to staff who work by themselves without close or direct supervision who may be at risk when working alone.

In some jobs within the County Council, staff may have to work alone. Lone working is not considered to be hazardous under normal situations and lone working does not, in itself, create a risk to staff.

Physical risk could include hazards from equipment and machinery being operated, the type of work being carried out or violence or physical harm from others in the vicinity.

Lone workers are found in a wide range of situations which can be site based or mobile. Examples of staff that *may* be considered Lone Workers are staff;

- who may be working in premises physically separated from colleagues e.g. reception areas
- who may be working outside normal working hours e.g. “on call” staff
- working alone in the community e.g. libraries
- working in non County Council premises e.g. visiting the homes of County Council service users.

- who may be the only staff member present in a County Council establishment and / or may be without access to immediate assistance.

Managers have the responsibility of defining whether an employee is a lone worker. This can be done by identifying the hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

It is important to consult with employees, examine job descriptions, determine what duties employees should be doing and review the service provided by the team on a regular basis.

(For a definition of the term Lone Worker see Glossary of Terms)

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

Managers will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that employees who work alone are protected through a process of risk assessment and risk elimination. Where elimination of risk is not possible, managers and staff must work towards reducing risks to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

## **4.0 The Arrangements for Applying the Policy**

### **4.1. Risk Assessment**

Managers and staff must work together to define those members of staff who may be considered a “lone worker” by the nature of the tasks being carried out and the location and duration of this work.

In all cases it should be considered whether lone working is necessary and if the practice can be avoided. If this is not possible and lone workers have been defined, managers have a duty to risk assess the work situation and define how the risk can be eliminated or reduced by introducing control measures.

**Managers must** follow five steps to risk assess lone working.

#### **STEP 1 IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS**

The hazards of lone working should be recorded. (It is important to remember that working alone in itself is not necessarily hazardous.) Discussions with staff members should take place to identify if employees feel aspects of their work could involve hazardous lone working.

A checklist of lone working may be used to define the hazards more clearly, this should be completed by the manager and the staff member or team who may be working alone. (See Appendix 1)

#### **STEP 2 RECORD WHO MIGHT BE HARMED AND HOW**

Where hazardous lone working has been identified managers must define which staff members and which roles within the team are carrying out “lone working”.

### STEP 3 ASSESS THE RISK AND IMPLEMENT CONTROL MEASURES

Managers must consider in the first instance whether lone working is necessary and try to avoid the need for lone working if possible.

Where lone working will take place, managers must assess the risks and define and implement control measures to reduce this risk.

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees therefore managers must conduct the risk assessment process as they would for any other work situation.

Risk assessments for *site based* lone workers should include:

- the provision of safe access and exit
- □□ risk of violence
- safety of equipment or materials for use by the individual when on their own
- channels of communication in an emergency
- site security and security arrangements
- level and adequacy of on/off site supervision

Risk assessments for *mobile* lone workers should include:

- client risk assessment where applicable
- written arrangements for visits where necessary
- travelling between appointments
- reporting and recording arrangements
- communication and traceability
- personal safety/security

When considering risk assessments, lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees.

Managers must establish risk controls and precautions and these should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, this should be defined in writing and arrangements for controlling the risk should be put in place e.g. written guidelines for working when two officers or more may be needed.

Control measures for any lone working situation may include;

- Induction processes (e.g. dual visits/completion of training courses prior to lone working)
- Job specific instruction and training (e.g. in anticipating and diffusing potential conflict where lone workers may encounter this)
- Required levels of supervision (e.g. where this is appropriate for the individual, the job or the risk)
- Electronic devices and equipment (e.g. mobile phones, automatic warning devices or alarms)
- Written working procedures (e.g. signing in and out of base, keeping to written schedules)

Managers should take steps to check that control measures are used and review the risk assessment regularly to ensure it is still adequate. Staff must implement any control measures, take part in any training and follow the rules and procedures designed for safe lone working.

Further information on control measures and action to reduce lone worker risk can be found in Guidance G01/HR117 & HR118 “Lone Working and Violence and Aggression Risk Reduction Measures”

#### STEP 4 RECORD THE FINDINGS

Managers must ensure that the details of the lone working risk assessment are recorded on the risk assessment record for the staff member/ post. Risk assessments and their associated control measures must be communicated to staff and others who may be affected by its contents.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the control measures to be used in all situations, and the requirement placed upon them to follow and/or use control measures as laid down in the assessments.

#### STEP 5 REVIEW THE ASSESSMENT

Managers must review the risk assessment periodically or when a change has occurred in the type of work or work location. The circumstances of the individual must also be taken into account when reviewing the risk assessment.

### **4.2. Training**

It is important that staff are equipped with skills and techniques to deal with any risks that may arise during lone working. This may include training to deal with specific risks such as the risk of aggressive behaviours or training on personal safety.

Staff must be able to operate any equipment allocated to them to be specifically used whilst working alone.

Information and instruction on all safe working procedures must be given to the lone worker and their knowledge must be updated as necessary.

Managers must ensure that training takes place and is refreshed regularly.

### **4.3. Incident reporting**

Any incident which occurs involving a lone worker must be reported immediately and investigated thoroughly by the individual’s manager. If the staff member has been injured the appropriate Accident Investigation Form or Violent Incident Report Form must be completed.

If an incident has occurred the manager must also review the lone working arrangements and the risk assessment for the job as soon as possible after the incident.

## **5. Legislative Framework**

1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
2. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
3. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences. Regulations (RIDDOR).

## 6. Related Factsheets

HSE Leaflet - Working Alone in Safety INDG 73  
HR118 Management of Violence and Aggression

## 7. Glossary of Terms

HSE defines a **lone worker** as:

Someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision who may be at risk when working alone. Lone workers include those who:

- work from a fixed base, such as one person working alone on a premises (eg, receptionist);
- work separately from others on the same premises (eg cleaners);
- work outside normal hours;
- work away from a fixed base (eg, surveyors, community care workers, caretakers);
- work at home (homeworkers); and
- mobile workers (eg, attendant drivers, highway inspectors).

## 8. Standard Documents

County Council Accident Report Form  
County Council Violence Report Form

## 9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Lone Worker Hazard Checklist  
Appendix 2 Guidance G01 Risk Reduction Measures

## 10. Further Advice and Information

This policy document is for general guidance only. If you need any further advice on how to apply this policy please contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.

Further background information on this topic is available on the following Websites:

[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)  
[www.cica.gov.uk](http://www.cica.gov.uk)

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact your HR Advisor.

### Lone Worker Hazard Checklist

The checklist below may be used to help managers define the hazards when lone working takes place. The information can then be used within the lone working risk assessment process.

Name of Staff Member or Work Team \_\_\_\_\_

Managers name \_\_\_\_\_ Date checklist completed \_\_\_\_\_

General	Yes/No
Do staff work alone?	
Do staff work outside normal office hours?	
Do staff meet with clients or service users in isolated locations/on the street?	
Have you issued mobile phones to staff?	
Have you issued personal attack alarms to staff?	
Do staff have any other personal alarm or protection devices?	
The staff member	Yes/No
Are there any factors why an individual member of staff may be more at risk when working alone such as: gender, age, disability, race, new or expectant mother, inexperience etc	
Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone (some medical conditions may make lone working more hazardous for the staff member)?	
Has the worker got sufficient information about the job, equipment or substances?	
Are staff trained in safe working practices?	
Has the staff member demonstrated their ability to do the task satisfactorily?	
Is there appropriate supervision?	
Are staff aware of the emergency procedures in place?	
The general workplace	Yes/No
Is the person a key-holder to the premises?	
Is the access to, or exit from, the workplace safe?	
Is the lighting around the premises adequate?	
Do you use entrance security systems (i.e. digital locks or swipe cards)?	
Does the workplace allow access to members of the public/service users?	
Are reception/public areas designed in line with County Council guidance?	
Is there a risk of violence from members of the public?	
Where work can be carried out away from public areas is this made possible?	
Knowledge of job/location or service user	Yes/No
Has the member of staff got sufficient background information on the client/service user?	

## Appendix 2

Do you include potential or known risk factors in referral documents and care plans?	
Do you share risk information with other professional(s) bodies and agencies?	
Have you a method in place to define whether additional staff (or other agencies such as the Police) need to be present?	
When staff travel to a new location or meeting place are they provided with sufficient information about the location and site access e.g. parking?	
<b>Meetings and Home Visits</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Can meetings take place in the main office / interview rooms rather than at a person's home?	
Are interview rooms designed and set up in line with County Council guidelines?	
If interviews take place in a service users home has a plan been made of who must be present and why?	
Have staff been made aware of County Council guidelines on carrying out interviews with members of the public in CC premises?	
Have staff been made aware of County Council guidelines on carrying out interviews with members of the public in their own home?	
Have staff been fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence?	
Do staff carry out visits in high-risk locations (i.e. areas with high crime rates)	
Do staff carry out visits in isolated rural areas?	
Do staff visit unfamiliar clients or service users?	
Do staff visit a high-risk or unstable or unpredictable client group?	
Do staff carry out visits during unsocial hours?	
<b>The type of work</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Will any part of the work present a physical risk?	
Is equipment safe and regularly maintained?	
Do staff activities involve working in confined spaces?	
Do staff activities involve handling dangerous substances?	
What risks will the worker be exposed to in the event of equipment failure?	
Can substances and goods be handled safely/can they be handled by one person?	
Where lifting/manual handling takes place – can the lone worker carry this out in a safe manner?	
Does the worker have the appropriate PPE and is he/she trained in its use?	
Are cash/valuables or medical drugs being carried?	
Is first aid provision required?	
<b>Intruders</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Are procedures in place for dealing with intruders in County Council premises?	
Are all staff aware of these procedures?	
<b>Emergency Call-Outs</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
When a call out system is in place are there guidelines to follow in terms of who can attend?	
Have arrangements been made for different times of day/night on who	

## Appendix 2

can attend?	
Are staff aware of these guidelines?	
<b>Travel and Transport</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Have you considered how staff will travel to and from appointments?	
Are travel arrangements considered as part of the work plan?	
Do staff provide an itinerary when they are working away from the office base?	
Are staff aware of the County Council guidelines on travel and transport?	
Do staff have a defined means of contacting managers & colleague if necessary?	
Do you use reporting checking-in systems?	
Do you use mobile phones or other communication systems?	
When valuables are carried in a vehicle are staff aware of the procedures to follow in the storage of these items?	
<b>Supervision</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Do you carry out regular supervisor or colleague checks during activities?	
Are less experienced and new team members subject to greater supervision as necessary?	
<b>Information and Training</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Do staff have information and training on basic personal safety?	
Are staff trained in strategies for preventing and managing violence?	
Are staff aware of the lone working procedures for their team and/or workplace?	
Do staff have access to forms for reporting incidents or near misses and	
<b>Reporting systems</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Are staff aware of the reporting procedures and systems in place (e.g. Violence and Accident Reporting)?	
<b>Other Hazards</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>