



Learning Community Trust

LCT Lone Working Policy

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LCT Lone Working Policy

Many support staff across the Trust work alone as part of their everyday working lives. However, the Trust recognises that working alone can place staff in a vulnerable position; it may be more difficult to summon help if you have an accident or fall ill, or you may be more exposed to violence or abuse within other settings such as student homes. Regardless of the reason, the Trust believes none of its members should be more at risk in their jobs than other workers just because they are required to work on their own.

What is lone working?

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

Lone working can take place when people are:

- working as individuals at a fixed site but are separated from colleagues
- working alone in buildings or interviewing a patient/service user alone in
- interview rooms
- working in a remote location, including outdoors
- working alone away from base e.g. home visiting often involving contact with the public
- working outside normal working hours, e.g. alone in isolated buildings or working alone in the community
- travelling alone as part of their work e.g. travelling to meetings or travelling to the home of a patient/service user; and
- working on other employers' premises or working from home.

Many lone workers will come into more than one of these categories and each of these categories may present a different individual or combination of hazards. LCT 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. The main hazards facing lone workers are violence and aggression and lack of access to assistance in an emergency.

What are the risks of lone working?

There are many risks associated with support staff being required to work on their own. These can relate to their physical wellbeing and health and safety and can include:

- violence/abuse/bullying from students or other present in the location at the time of the visit
- personal safety issues while visiting students' homes
- onset of sudden illness
- feelings of stress and isolation
- accidents or emergencies requiring evacuation procedures or access to first aid

It is imperative that the Trust acknowledge the potential risks to the professional integrity of staff which could involve accusations of theft or misconduct and/or malicious allegations from

students/others present. Subsequent investigations or rumours can exact a great toll on the mental health of those accused as well as threaten their livelihood.

What does the law say?

Lone working is not illegal. It is accepted that some workers will be required to work all or some of the time on their own. However, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty of care on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees while at work. In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations state every employer should make a “suitable and sufficient” assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees. This includes lone workers and those who spend part of their time working alone.

The key principle that underpins the law is that those who work alone should not be placed at any greater risk than any other worker.

What should a lone-working risk assessment consider?

Risk assessments will be relevant to the circumstances of the staff member in question and the particular tasks being undertaken. Information on risks should be gathered from all available sources including, for example, pastoral notes, previous visit summaries, Police, external agency information.

Prior to starting lone working it is imperative Trust leadership discusses the role in detail with the member of staff. It is essential that staff are asked by the person carrying out the risk assessment if they have any concerns about working on their own. Often it is only the person doing the job that can identify all the risks associated with it.

The Trust will demand a detailed risk assessment is conducted for the general role and prior to specific visits. While not an exhaustive list, the following are some of the questions that a lone working risk assessment should ask:

- Is there a risk of violence or aggression?
- Is the member of staff vulnerable to malicious accusations?
- Is the member of staff vulnerable, e.g. pregnant/young/ disabled/have English as a second language/have a particular medical condition?
- What will happen in the event of an emergency e.g. if the staff member falls ill, has an accident or there is a fire alarm or emergency procedure?
- Is there access to first aid facilities?
- What age of students is the member is working with? Younger pupils may require a higher staff/student ratio.
- Does the family/student have any special needs e.g. behavioural/medical that require closer supervision and a higher staff/student ratio?
- Is the member of staff meeting in an isolated area?
- Concerns over exits or gaining support

What if risks are identified?

Where the assessment identifies risks to the lone worker, the first question asked must be whether the work needs to be carried out in the first place. If the answer is yes, which it will be for many

activities undertaken by Trust staff, then arrangements must be put in place to provide the lone worker with additional support systems or back-up.

What are known as 'control measures' must be introduced to reduce the risks identified as much as possible. The Trust considers the following as an example and not as an exhaustive list:

- The training and information that will be provided to the member of staff to help them recognise and deal with any situations which may arise that threaten their or their students' health and safety. This could relate to violence or aggression/basic first aid/emergency procedures in the event of fire, etc.
- The safety procedures for those working on their own including guidance and recommendations on staff.
- How lone workers will be contacted and accounted for during an emergency situation.
- The information and guidance provided to those paying home visits e.g. background information on families; to always let someone know where they are and how long they are expected to be; or contact information.
- Provision of equipment e.g. mobile phone, walkie-talkie or personal alarm for those who may be working in an isolated location or remote part of the school's premises.

Considerations to safely work in the community: Home Visits

Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard. The first priority is to plan to reduce any risk that exists. This should be done by carrying out a risk assessment. When planning home visits consider the following:

- Is a home visit really necessary? Could the person be interviewed at school/public venue?
- Can someone else be present such as a co-worker etc.? Could it be a joint visit with a colleague including partner agencies such as health/Police/Social?
- Is there a possibility of a service user, relative or friend being present which may add to the risk - try to check this out beforehand.
- Take into account what is known about the person and others likely to be present at the place and time of the visit/work. Any history of aggressive behaviour should entail a discussion with the line manager as to the best way of approaching a visit. With such situations preference will always be to interview them at school.
- Where possible plan the visit during daylight preferably in the morning this gives time to sort out a difficult situation if needed.
- Make sure that your manager or someone else in your team knows where you are going – keep your online diary up to date.
- Make sure that your manager or someone else in your team knows how to contact you – keep your online directory up to date.
- Make sure that your manager can contact your next of kin – keep your emergency contact details online up to date.
- Lone working staff must be competent in the method of communication/tracking with school. Staff have a legal responsibility to comply with local arrangements established to protect their personal safety.
- Always take a mobile phone, ensuring it is appropriately charged.
- In some circumstances it may be necessary to consider a personal alarm.

- Staff must carefully consider where they park their car to ensure there is quick exit should it be required. Consider always facing the direction of exit, make sure it is under street lighting and as close to the home as possible.
- Make a dynamic risk assessment of the environment when you arrive at the home. Consider signs of risk to staff and neglect to the child and make a decision to proceed with visit or terminate.
- Do not go into a person's home if they appear to be under the influence of alcohol/drugs or ill etc. unless you have another colleague with you and you both deem it safe to enter.
- When visiting an unknown building check out the layout and exit, try to sit near it. Be aware of potential weapons.
- Ask that dogs and other potentially dangerous pets are kept out of the room.
- Think about where you sit, avoid sitting on peoples' beds.
- If the person you are visiting/anyone else present starts to get abusive/aggressive then leave immediately.

Considerations to safely work in the community: Travelling by car

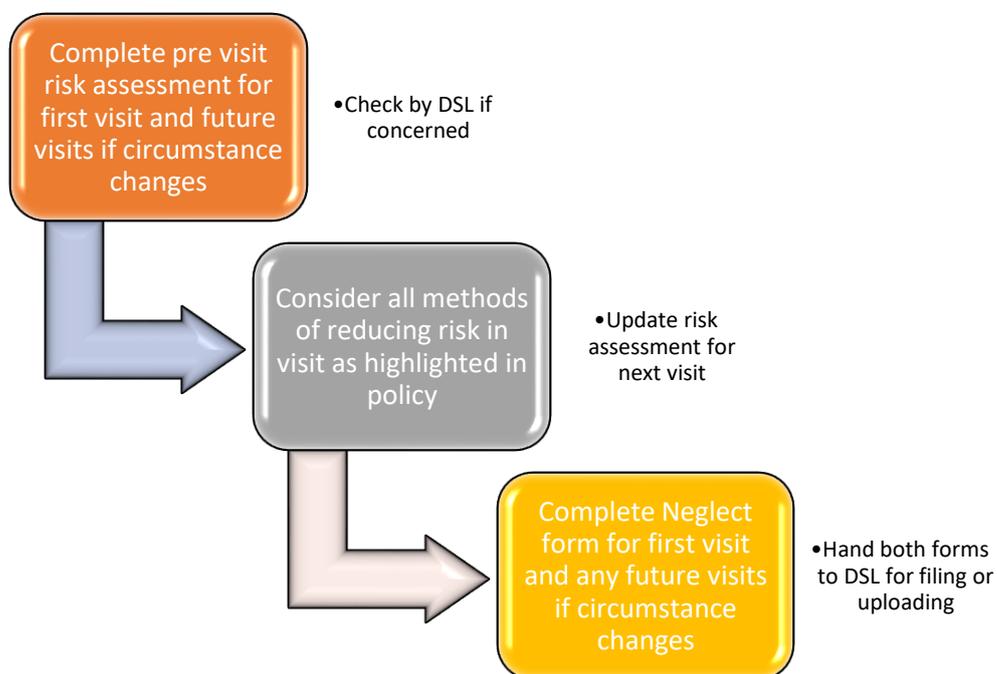
In the course of work staff may have to make journeys in their car alone. There have been a number of incidents nationally in the recent past, which have highlighted the potential dangers and have raised awareness of how vulnerable each of us could be despite the care we take. However, the risk of such an incident is extremely low. The advice given below is intended to give practical guidance on how to reduce the possible dangers that may occur whilst driving alone:

- Ensure that you know the location and have studied the route.
- Do not give lifts to strangers e.g. a hitchhiker, or accept lifts from a stranger if you breakdown or have an accident.
- Always keep windows closed and doors locked when driving alone, particularly at night and in isolated areas.
- If you see an incident or someone tries to flag you down, think first. Is it genuine? How would you best help? It might be safer and also more helpful and practicable to report what you have seen using your mobile phone.
- If you believe you are being followed, keep calm and continue driving to a busy place e.g. garage, police station etc. where help could be available. If necessary draw attention to yourself by sounding your horn.
- If other drivers or vehicle occupants try to attract attention e.g. indicating a fault with your vehicle, ignore them and avoid eye contact.
- If a car pulls in front of you and causes you to stop NEVER turn off the engine. If the driver or passenger approaches: reverse as far as is safely possible and ensure doors and windows are locked. If necessary draw attention to yourself e.g. by sounding the horn.
- When parking in daylight always try to imagine what the place would be like at night.
- When parking at night, park near a streetlight and as close to the service user's home as possible.
- Always lock away any valuables out of sight in the boot.
- Never leave the car unlocked or the ignition key in it when it is unattended.
- When returning to the car, always have the door key ready. It is better not to stand by the car searching for the key.

Considerations to safely work in the community: Travelling by foot or public transport

- Think ahead, be alert and be aware of your surroundings.
- Keep to busy, well-lit roads and avoid poorly lit or quiet underpass.
- Avoid carrying valuables (i.e. excessive amounts of cash or expensive jewellery).
- Always sit near the bus driver on a driver-only bus or stay downstairs.
- If possible, wait for the bus at a busy stop that is well lit, or a bus stop close to area of activity - for example, a garage or a late shop.
- Have the fare ready, separate from other money or valuables.
- Try to avoid having hands full with heavy bags.

Lone Working Simplified Process





Lone working Pre-home visit risk assessment



| | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Student Name: | | Year Group: | |
| Parents Names | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Reason for visit: | | | |

| Environment/Case specific Risk Assessment | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|-----|----|------------|
| Risk Factor High (often) Medium(occasionally) Low (rarely) No (risk not seen) | Considered Level of Risk | | | | Strategies |
| | High | Med | Low | No | |
| Parking/Exit route | | | | | |
| Home/Venue risks – Pets, weapons | | | | | |
| Child Protection/Police/External agency information available in confidential file that identifies risk | | | | | |

| Student Behaviours Risk Assessment | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|-----|----|------------|
| Risk Factor High (often) Medium(occasionally) Low (rarely) No (risk not seen) | Considered Level of Risk | | | | Strategies |
| | High | Med | Low | No | |
| Threatening behaviour towards adults | | | | | |
| Physical aggression towards adults | | | | | |
| Threatening behaviour towards peers | | | | | |
| Physical aggression towards peers | | | | | |
| Unpredictable and / or irrational behaviour | | | | | |
| Bullying – Verbal / Physical | | | | | |
| Has issues around Substance / Alcohol Misuse | | | | | |
| Has exhibited racist behaviour | | | | | |
| Has exhibited inappropriate sexual behaviour | | | | | |
| Has been found in possession of an offensive weapon | | | | | |
| Has damaged property | | | | | |
| Has made unsubstantiated allegations regarding school staff | | | | | |
| Other risk identified (Please specify) | | | | | |

| Student Behaviours Risk Assessment | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|-----|----|------------|
| Risk Factor High (often) Medium(occasionally) Low (rarely) No (risk not seen) | Considered Level of Risk | | | | Strategies |
| | High | Med | Low | No | |
| Threatening behaviour towards adults | | | | | |
| Physical aggression towards adults | | | | | |
| Unpredictable and / or irrational behaviour | | | | | |
| Bullying – Verbal / Physical | | | | | |
| Has issues around Substance / Alcohol Misuse | | | | | |
| Has exhibited racist behaviour | | | | | |
| Has exhibited inappropriate sexual behaviour | | | | | |
| Has been found in possession of an offensive weapon | | | | | |
| Has damaged property | | | | | |
| Has made unsubstantiated allegations regarding school staff | | | | | |
| Other risk identified (Please specify) | | | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--------------|--|
| Based on the above information it is agreed that the visit can take place by all parties | | | |
| Signed: Visit staff | | Date: | |
| Signed: Line Manager | | Date: | |

HLC Academy Neglect Assessment Tool

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------|--|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Staff: | | Student: | | Date: | | |
| <p>The following assessment tool is designed to provide a structure professional assessment when completing a home visit. HLC staff will complete the assessment and discuss outcomes with the appropriate DSL upon return to the Academy unless immediate contact with Family Connect/Police if the required action</p> | | | | | | |
| Category: Emotional and Behaviour | | | | Very Concerned | Sometimes | Not Concerned |
| Relationships with peers/support networks are poor | | | | | | |
| Child feels or is excluded by family | | | | | | |
| Evidence of emotional withdrawal | | | | | | |
| Attachment: Anxious, Avoidant, Socially unresponsive | | | | | | |
| Child seeks inappropriate physical comfort | | | | | | |
| Under-stimulation evident | | | | | | |
| Lack of online supervision, films, websites, porn | | | | | | |
| Episodes of missing or running away | | | | | | |
| Category: Environmental Factors | | | | Very Concerned | Sometimes | Not Concerned |
| Human and animal excrement | | | | | | |
| Unsafe and/or unhygienic home environment | | | | | | |
| Little or no bedding/furniture | | | | | | |
| Rural isolation/poverty | | | | | | |
| Animals pose a level of risk | | | | | | |
| Unidentified adults or young people in the home | | | | | | |
| Inadequate supervision | | | | | | |
| Category: Health/physical care | | | | Very Concerned | Sometimes | Not Concerned |
| Frequent attendance at A&E and/or hospital admission | | | | | | |
| Poor weight gain/nutrition | | | | | | |
| Poor hygiene – Dental, Odor, lice | | | | | | |
| Child and/or Adult Refusing help/services | | | | | | |
| Poor personal hygiene of child | | | | | | |
| Substance abuse of child/adult/household member | | | | | | |
| Inappropriately dressed, clothes not clean, out of season | | | | | | |
| Category: Health/physical care | | | | Very Concerned | Sometimes | Not Concerned |
| Poor inappropriate family support | | | | | | |
| Inappropriate language/poor boundaries (Adults) | | | | | | |
| Fails to give child appropriate boundaries | | | | | | |
| Substance abuse | | | | | | |
| Disguised compliance – appears to be co-operating to avoid suspicions | | | | | | |
| Aggressive /threatening behaviour towards professionals | | | | | | |
| Leaving children with inappropriate babysitters | | | | | | |
| Lives from day to day | | | | | | |
| Summary of meeting | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Action following meeting with DSL: | | | | | | |

