

Lone Working Policy

In the course of their work many staff will make unaccompanied visits to sites, members of the public or other organisations. This policy sets out the responsibilities that exist so that both the Council's duty of care towards its employees is met, and that individual employees manage their own safety whilst at work.

It must be read with the Council's Violence at Work Policy which gives specific advice on dealing with situations where violence arises or could be anticipated.

Responsibilities

Everyone has a role to play to make sure that lone workers are safe. The specific responsibilities are set out below.

Departmental Responsibilities

Each department is expected to:

- Have a logging system that at minimum requires staff to record :
 - the location(s) of visit(s) and expected time(s) of arrival and departure, including call outs when working "on call".
 - the name(s) and contact details of person(s) it is intended to meet
 - the expected time of return to the workplace
 - the number of mobile phone carried or other contact number.
 - Car registrations and vehicle descriptions
- Require staff to make appointments prior to visits, wherever appropriate
- Make sure staff have a contact number to call when:
 - working at home
 - making a visit before coming in to work
 - changing an itinerary of visits

- it is likely that they will return more than 30 minutes later than originally stated on the site visit log.
- returning home directly from a visit
- Provide training on the logging system and where appropriate or requested, on dealing with potentially violent and aggressive situations.
- Provide a mobile phone for use by staff making unaccompanied visits
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment and make sure it is used
- Keep a register of sites considered hazardous, for whatever reason, make staff aware of it, and ensure that staff in other departments are advised accordingly
- Keep a record of service users considered to be potentially dangerous or threatening
- Avoid the need for staff to make visits outside normal office hours where possible.
- Carry out a general risk assessment in relation to lone working, and implement any additional steps identified to minimise the risks.

Employee Responsibilities

Individuals are expected to:

- Follow the departmental rules on logging visits and calling in
- Wear or use any personal protective equipment provided
- Comply with any health and safety arrangements in force at the place visited
- Inform their manager immediately if they change the timing of visits or add other visits when out
- Leave a visit immediately if dangerous animals, materials, objects or substances suspected of being potentially hazardous to health are encountered.
- Leave a visit immediately if threatened with verbal or physical violence, or confronted with any other unacceptable behaviour.

- Report violent incidents immediately, and complete an Incident Report form on returning to the office.
- Remember that their first concern is to themselves, then to members of the public, then any aggressor and finally to property or valuables

Monitoring

As part of the annual health and safety audits, checks will be made to make sure that an up to date lone worker risk assessment and visit logging system is in place and being used.

Failure to Return

If a member of staff fails to return within an hour of the logged return time, departments must attempt to make contact to ascertain their whereabouts. If contact is difficult this may include a visit to the last known location, the person's home, contact with family etc. Great care should be taken not to unnecessarily cause alarm to others, but it must be established that the member of staff is safe.