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1. Introduction

This procedure sets out the Institution's arrangements for the ensuring suitable and efficient management of risks associated with lone work. This document outlines some of the potential hazards associated with lone working, defines roles and responsibilities and describes the practical steps that can be taken to minimise any risks in order to comply with legislation.

1.1. Scope

This procedure applies all staff, students and visitors of City, University of London. The document is not intended to prohibit or place rigid restrictions on lone working but rather to provide guidance to enable Schools and Services to develop their own local rules based on the principles of measured risk management.

This procedure does not apply to Fieldwork which is covered by a separate safety procedure (SP39).

1.2. Definition of lone work

According to the HSE, a lone worker is "*someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision*". This includes circumstances where individuals are knowingly and foreseeably placed in situations in which they undertake work activities without direct or close supervision, and there:

- are no other members of staff present, and/or
- no visual or audible communication with other members of staff who could provide or summon assistance in the event of an incident.

This can also include a person working alone in the community and/or working from home during normal working hours; and more importantly outside normal working hours where contact with colleagues will tend to be less frequent.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. Deans/Professional Service Directors

- a) Deans/Directors are responsible for ensuring that the arrangements set out in this document are in place to eliminate the risk from lone working where possible and effectively manage lone working in their areas of responsibility and that these arrangements are communicated to all staff, students and visitors.

2.2. Managers (i.e. Heads of Departments/Line Managers/Supervisors)

Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- a) All lone working activities are identified and documented on a general risk assessment form. These must identify the hazards, persons at risk and the control measures necessary to minimise those risks, as far as reasonably practicable.
- b) Lone work arrangements are communicated effectively and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone is explicit and clear.
- c) Lone workers are made aware of hazards and understand all the necessary control measures that need to be in place.
- d) Reasonable enquiries are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit to undertake the work alone.
- e) Adequate supervision, instruction and training are in place and that the lone worker is competent.
- f) Monitoring of lone working practices is in place to ensure that control measures identified in the lone working risk assessment are being adhered to.
- g) Review of risk assessments at specified intervals or when a change to the task/activity/person occurs.
- h) Lone worker risk assessments are communicated to all staff members involved in the activities; and keeping signed documentary evidence that those employees have read and understood the risk assessment and will comply with the control measures put in place for their safety.
- i) All reported incidents are fully investigated.
- j) Appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.

- k) Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through a suitable system of reporting, investigation and recording of incidents.

2.3. Occupational Health

- a) Provision of advice for the risk management of lone workers with identified medical restrictions.

2.4. Safety Office

- a) Provision of advice for the risk management of lone workers

2.5. Staff

- a) All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own safety, to co-operate with University procedures, including: taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of this procedure; and not knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk by working alone. Staff members should report to their Managers if they find themselves in circumstances which constitute 'lone work'.
- b) Lone workers have a responsibility to inform their line manager if they have any concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of the agreed arrangements and also if there are any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or to continue to work alone in safety.

2.6. Students

- a) Students also have responsibilities to comply with health and safety instructions, including the University's rules and regulations for students. Students must follow any local rules with regard to lone working on University premises during their learning and/or research activities.

3. Risk Assessment

Risk management is required to satisfy legislative requirements, however it is also essential to document a risk assessment in order to demonstrate that the identified risks have been assessed and mitigation measures put in place. Risk assessments must be completed on the University's Risk Assessment Template (SF22).

It is expected that the risk assessment process is undertaken as a collaborative exercise by both the lone worker and their line manager/supervisor and that the agreed safe working procedures are recorded and communicated to all persons who may be required to work alone and any other employees who have a role to play in ensuring their safety.

The following outlines the five steps that must be taken for a lone working risk assessment:

3.1. Hazard identification

The hazards are likely to be the same for a particular activity whether lone working or not. The assessment of the risks to which a lone worker may be exposed must take into account normal and foreseeable scenarios. The hazards may be such that the risk cannot be controlled sufficiently and therefore lone working is prohibited.

Examples of **high risk activities that require specific attention** when planning safe lone working arrangements include working with:

- chemicals, particularly corrosive, toxic, explosive, flammable, asphyxiant, or narcotic substances, products or reactions;
- cryogenic substances;
- class 3B/4 lasers where the beam is not fully enclosed;
- power tools and machinery;
- working on or near water;
- working at height;
- working alone in warzones, and/or areas with a high level of exposure to violence

Lone workers should not be placed at more risk than other employees and extra control measures may be required in order for the lone work to be permitted. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

Risk assessments should consider questions such as:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to a lone worker e.g. due to environment, location, contents, unfamiliarity, etc.?
- Does the work activity present a special risk to a lone worker – equipment, process, substance, location, time, members of the public?
- Can one person safely handle all plant, substances and goods involved in the work?
- Can one person safely handle any necessary temporary access equipment, such as portable ladders or trestles?
- Is there safe access and egress? (This may include the immediate local environment or the surrounding location)
- Is there safe entry and exit from the location for one person – both in the course of the normal work and in the event of an emergency? (This may include information on not using lifts in an emergency)
- Are the welfare facilities adequate and accessible?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Is the working environment appropriate – heating, lighting, ventilation, etc.?
- Does the lone worker have, or have access to, first aid facilities?

3.2. Persons at risk

All persons who may be required to work alone must be identified in the risk assessment. Consideration must be given an individual's ability to carry out their activities safely on their own. Some individuals may be at greater risk than others for example new and expectant mothers and young persons or those who are new to a role.

Consideration must also been given to students due to their possible lack of experience in the work they are doing. It may be necessary to make reasonable enquiries to ensure that lone workers are medically fit to undertake the work alone.

Both routine work and foreseeable emergencies may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual. When medical advice is necessary, the University Occupational Health department should be consulted.

3.3. Suitable and sufficient controls

Assess whether current controls are adequate, and if not, consider what additional/alternative control measure can be put in place. Examples of control measures include the provision of suitable training, occupational health fitness assessments and/or effective communication strategies. It may be necessary to prohibit certain tasks or activities if the risks cannot be adequately controlled.

The key issues which should be given special attention include:

- Can one person adequately control the identified risks?
- Is the lone worker medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?
- How will the person be supervised?
- What happens if the lone worker becomes ill, has an accident or emergency?

University Security Services are not able to provide a monitoring service to staff or students who are working alone in a University building. However, Security Services will provide a service to escort staff to their car after normal office and can be contacted on ext. 8047.

The physical controls, systems of work, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety of the lone worker must be implemented prior to lone work commencing. The risk assessment

should be updated once all the control measures are in place to ensure that the **existing control measures** can be distinguished from additional/preventative planned control measures.

Appendices A, B and C provide further information and detail regarding the considerations for risk assessments on the various types of lone work activities which University staff engage in.

3.4. Training, information and instructions

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty or emergency. It may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and be able to understand the risks and precautions fully. Managers should establish clear safe working procedures, including:

- How to undertake their duties safely
- The set limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone. There should be an agreement as to the circumstances in which it is reasonable to stop work and seek advice.
- Instructions on what to do if work has to be stopped
- Communication strategies established as a result of the risk assessment
- Emergency response procedures

The level of training required by each staff member will be determined by the outcome of the risk assessments undertaken by relevant groups. It is a management responsibility to ensure employees are competent to carry out the work unaccompanied and are competent to deal with circumstances that are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training.

3.5. Supervision

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, there is still a duty on the employer to provide appropriate control of the work. It also provides guidance in situations of uncertainty. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle unforeseen health and safety issues.

The extent of the supervision is a management decision, which should be established through the risk assessment process. As a guide, the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision. It should not be left to individual members of staff or students to decide if they require assistance/supervision. Procedures that may need to be in place to monitor lone workers include:

- Supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone;
- Supervisors maintaining contact with lone workers using either a telephone or radio or possibly e-mail or SMS as available.
- Contact arrangements should be documented as part of the risk assessment;
- The use of signing in/out system; and
- Checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of their tasks.

Contingency plans should specify the action to be taken if a pre-arranged contact cannot be established, or if an alarm device is activated, and should be included as part of the risk assessment.

3.6. Medical fitness

If a lone worker has a medical condition, Managers must check whether they require any additional support in order for them to work alone safely (and this must be documented in the risk assessment). When medical advice is necessary, the Occupational Health department should be consulted.

3.7. Emergency Response processes

Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events and emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them.

3.8. Record keeping

Risk assessments must be documented on the Generic Risk Assessment template (SF22) and maintained locally by the School/Professional Service in accordance with their safety documentation record keeping processes. A record should be made of every review carried out.

3.9. Monitor and review

Arrangements which are implemented to ensure the safety of lone workers need to be subject to a monitoring regime which is commensurate with the risk, by their supervisor/line manager. Review the risk assessment regularly, for example if any significant changes take place, following an accident / incident or following any concerns being raised. Any review should make sure existing control measures are adequate and check if any additional controls are needed. Where contingency plans form part of the arrangements, they should be clear, precise, communicated, practised and subject to periodic monitoring and review.

4. References and further reading

- Suzy Lamplugh Trust, <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/>
- *Improving safety for lone workers: a guide for lone workers*, THE NHS Staff Council, www.nhsemployers.org/publications
- *Not Alone: a guide for the better protection of lone workers in the NHS*, 2009, NHS CFSMS
- *Working Alone: Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working*, HSE, <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indq73.pdf>

5. Document Control

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1.0	19/6/2017	P. Tear		19/6/2020

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This document replaces:	N/A
Other supporting documentation:	SP10 Risk Assessment SF22 Generic Risk Assessment template SP24 Out of hours access SP39 Field work

6. Appendix A – Working alone in buildings/on campus

The purpose of this appendix is to provide guidance relating to the safety of staff working alone in campus buildings. This includes activities such as conducting interviews with candidates/participants alone, or counselling members of the public. This list is not exhaustive and staff must comply with any further measures identified through a risk assessment for lone work. Work after hours on campus requires permission from relevant managers and notification to Security. Please follow the Out-of-hours Access Procedure (SP24).

Risk Assessment Considerations

When considering the associated risk of working alone in a building/facilities, managers must take into account the following factors:

- Risk associated with the activity being undertaken;
- The individual's capacity to undertake the activity;
- Security of the building and grounds; and
- The known or potential behavioural characteristics of participants/interviewees.

To reduce the risks to the lowest level reasonably practicable, the risk assessment must consider control measures. Entry to buildings should be controllable so that unwanted visitors do not gain access. Progress beyond a reception area should be restricted to staff who are responsible for admitting people into the body of the building. A risk assessment for lone workers in buildings and grounds (maintenance, cleaners, porters, security staff etc.) should be undertaken with **preventative actions** in place before the work commences.

Communication/contact procedures should be agreed and implemented so that others are aware of the presence and movement of lone workers and what procedures to follow should the lone worker fail to make contact at predetermined times. Personal alarms, panic buttons, security cameras and quality of lighting should be considered.

In addition to the above, all lone working staff must undergo relevant training appropriate to the level of risk, as determined in the risk assessment. This training shall include any or all of the following:

- Information and instruction on contact procedures and local risk management protocols;
- What can and cannot be done while working alone. There should be an agreement as to the circumstances in which it is reasonable to stop work and seek advice.
- Basic personal safety awareness;
- Strategies to prevent and/or manage violent and aggressive incidents;
- Moving and handling training;
- If applicable, procedures for safe handling of COSHH substances; and
- Emergency response and instructions on reporting procedures for incidents, however minor.

Staff working alone on campus during working hours should:

Ensure they have access to a telephone to call for help if needed;

- Ensure that keys/access cards are secured;
- Call security or emergency services as appropriate if they become anxious regarding their safety; and
- If an incident occurs, report the circumstances, no matter how minor to your manager as soon as practicable after the event.
- Be aware of any personal risk factors arising from a medical condition

Staff working alone on campus outside office hours, as a matter of routine, should:

- Ensure that all windows and doors are secured to prevent unauthorised access, so that the working environment is as safe as possible;
- On leaving the department, ensure that all windows are closed and doors locked; and
- If an incident occurs report the circumstances, no matter how minor to your manager as soon as practicable after the event.

7. Appendix B – Domiciliary visits

This appendix has been written to provide guidance for staff who are expected to carry out work in other people's private homes. This could include, for example, HR practitioners, line managers conducting home visits to staff, researchers visiting the homes of NHS patients taking part in medical research projects or other similar situations.

Risk Assessment Considerations

It is essential that all such visits are subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. Therefore, when considering the associated risks, managers must take into account factors including:

- Known history of the person being visited;
- Family circumstances;
- Living arrangements;
- Concerns considered relevant by the referrer;
- Travelling to isolated or rural areas;
- Travelling between appointments;
- Communication availability ; and
- Personal safety and security.

To reduce the risks to the lowest level reasonably practicable, the risk assessment must consider control measures such as:

- Arrange for meetings to be held on campus or other suitable premises rather than at the service user's home, where possible;
- Allocate two members of staff to make visit, particularly if this is a first visit;
- Implementation of a management control system ensuring that information (such as where the lone worker is going; who they are visiting; contact address and telephone number; estimated arrival time and duration of visit; time expected to return to office; time and location of next visit or, time when they are due to arrive home to at base) is shared with colleagues;
- Make a note of your exit points, and arrange the layout of the meeting room so that you have easy access to exits and telecommunication – avoiding obstacles.
- Ensure there is a communication plan in place, for example an agreement to call at scheduled intervals. Arrange a code word, which can be used to alert supervisors/others to high risk situation and the need for assistance.
- Training appropriate to the level of risk. This may include any or all of the following:
 - Information and instruction on contact procedures and local risk management protocols
 - Basic personal safety awareness
 - Strategies to prevent and/or manage violent and aggressive incidents
 - Moving and handling training
 - Violence and Aggression training in Breakaway Techniques
 - Procedures for safe handling of any substances or waste
 - Instructions on the procedures for reporting of all incidents, however minor.
 - Emergency response and instructions on reporting procedures for incidents, however minor.

8. Appendix C – Lone work in the community

The purpose of this appendix is to provide guidance on the safe management of staff working alone in the community which may include foreign, remote and/or rural areas.

Risk Assessment Considerations

When considering the associated risk of carrying out work in the community, whether urban or rural, managers must take into account the following factors:

- Risk associated with the activity being undertaken;
- The individual's capacity to undertake the activity;
- Suitability of equipment in use for exposure to elements
- Availability and suitability of personal protective equipment for use in exposed situations
- Distance from nearest A&E and other emergency services and First Aid provision;
- Risks associated with travel in remote/secluded areas;
- Likelihood of having to deal with confrontation;
- Communication availability;
- Personal safety and security; and
- If applicable, foreign travel advice

To reduce the risks to the lowest level reasonably practicable, the risk assessment must consider control measures such as:

- Whether a minimum of 2 people should be allocated to this activity
- Whether alternative communication technology is available for use in isolated situations
- Implementation of a management control system ensuring that information (such as where the work is taking place; the duration of the activity; anticipated time of arrival on site, departure from site and return to normal work base; any special contact arrangements; location and contact details of accommodation etc.) is easily available to manager or other suitable colleagues
- Ensure there is a communication plan in place, for example an agreement to call at scheduled intervals. Arrange a code word, which can be used to alert supervisors/others to high risk situation and the need for assistance.
- Consider the use of a personal alarm for the lone worker. The purpose of a personal safety alarm is to shock and disorientate an attacker, giving lone workers vital seconds to get away. Set off the alarm, holding it as close to the attackers face as possible. Once you have set off your alarm, leave the situation as quickly as you can, moving to a busy area if possible.
- Provision of alternative work equipment for use in exposed conditions
- Provision of basic or enhanced first aid equipment
- Advanced notification of the work activity to emergency services
- Training appropriate to the level of risk. This may include any or all of the following:
 - Information and instruction on contact procedures and local risk management protocols
 - Basic personal safety awareness
 - Strategies to prevent and/or manage violent and aggressive incidents
 - Moving and handling training
 - Violence and Aggression training in Breakaway Techniques
 - Procedures for safe handling of any substances or waste
 - Procedures for safe use of equipment
 - Instructions on the procedures for reporting of all incidents, however minor
 - First Aid training suitable to the circumstances.
 - Emergency response and instructions on reporting procedures for incidents, however minor.

Additional Cautionary Notes for Staff

- Avoid taking expensive equipment/valuables unless absolutely necessary
- Computer equipment needs to meet relevant Data Protection and Encryption levels
- Do not advertise valuables – keep in deep pockets, keep passes/emergency money in separate pockets and out of sight.