

Connecting Families Team

LONE WORKING

1. DEFINITION

This document gives guidance on lone working. This is defined by the Council as working alone at any time of day or night, with families and or individuals in their homes or out in the community.

2. SCOPE

This Safe Working Practice (SWP) is for all staff working within the Connecting Families Team as part of People and Communities Department who carry out lone working, and are referred to in this SWP as Connecting Families Team.

3. STATEMENT OF POLICY

This policy has been determined by means of a quantitative risk assessment process that has identified various levels of risk associated with lone working activities within the Connecting Families Team. The following risk scales have been established for use:-

High	-	>75% lone working on site with a very high risk in a family home with an unknown family.
Medium	-	25% to 75% lone working in a family home with an unknown family.
Low	-	<25% lone working in a family home/at and activity/event with a known, and previously risk-assessed family.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Managers / Team Leaders

Managers and Team leaders have a duty, in consultation with the staff, to assess, organise, control and support the activities of lone workers in a safe manner by:

- Identifying tasks or work activities undertaken by lone workers.
- Identifying hazards from the activities based on observation, past experience, previous records and how they may recur.
- Assessing the probability of the hazard causing harm, the severity of that harm and who is at risk.
- Recording the assessments and informing those at risk of the outcome.

High Risk situations should not be undertaken, if a family or family member is considered dangerous/aggressive all visits should be done in pairs, and / or in a safe public venue should be used instead.

4.2 Employees

If lone workers find themselves in a work situation that in their opinion is hazardous, or they feel their personal safety may be threatened, they must immediately cease the activity and return to their office to seek assistance or an assessment of the activity's suitability for lone working. Management will support employees if duties are stopped on grounds of safety.

Employees must:

- Carry out a risk assessment of all families as soon as possible to ascertain risk. This should be updated as new risks are identified. For example: Considering each individual in the family, using previously known information to assess risk (e.g. The Police and Liquid Logic) and looking at risk assessment at different times of year including dark nights/mornings parking walking etc.
- Be suitably clothed, including footwear, and use of personal protective equipment e.g. If they are carrying out clearance/gardening.
- Attend training courses organised for them to assist them in dealing with possible threats of violence or actual violence if no recent training has been undertaken previously.
- Be aware of the need to add their daily itinerary in their MS Outlook calendar - stating names, and full addresses (including post code) of all visits appointments and check-in to the office at agreed times if requested by the Key Worker.

Having considered the guidance above the team is required to review or extend established control systems, provide additional guidance or to provide written instructions on the method of controlling risk as far as reasonably possible.

5. PROCEDURE

- Buddying - if you are working outside of office hours you are responsible to inform your team leader of your planned visit time and agree to text or call them when finished. If your team leader is not available then please find an appropriate member of staff who can act as your 'buddy'.

If you feel at risk during a home visit, please ring the office and ask for the 'Rainbow Folder' this will activate the emergency procedure. For questions asked, please refer to the file that is stored in the main office.

In cases where staff will be going directly to a family home or who are out of the office for a whole day then their whereabouts must be entered in their e-diary before they leave the office on the previous working day, complete with an indication of the time of return.

Staff who is out for long periods during the day should phone the team administrator in the event of a change to their itinerary, if they are not able to change their Outlook diary themselves.

In circumstances where staff receive a call to attend a family home on their way to work then they must contact the team administrator or their manager who must amend their Outlook diary accordingly if they are not able to change their Outlook diary themselves.

Team Leaders will have responsibility for monitoring the effective use of the Outlook diaries of their members of staff, and any errors or omission should be addressed as appropriate.

Where staff are working in family homes / offices after the hours of darkness, consideration should be given to parking of vehicles. If required these should be moved as close to the family home/office as possible. Alternatively access and egress to car parks should always be via road networks where possible.

Where lone workers find themselves in a situation, which in their opinion may be stressful or hazardous, then they should withdraw from the situation without fear of prejudice and request assistance where necessary. The work operation being undertaken should then be reassessed as to its suitability for lone working.

If at any time staff feel unsafe or they are concerned about the safety of any one they are working with they should phone the Police on 999.

If they are supporting family members out of office they should call the emergency duty team who deals with social care emergencies outside office hours and carries out urgent assessments.

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) can be contacted outside office hours, including weekends and public holidays, by calling 01454 615165. When you contact EDT, the duty worker will need to know:

- The reason for your call;
- Your name and address;
- Your telephone number;
- The details of other people concerned; and
- The name of any social worker involved (if any)

Please note: Members of the public can use this number and if they do not wish to give their personal details, they can still discuss their concerns. All information is treated in confidence, for example if you think a child is being ill-treated or neglected, or if urgent assistance and advice is required by families and/or carers.

6. REFERENCES

HSE – Working Alone in Safety

Health & safety at Work Act 1974

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

Quantitative risk assessments have been undertaken covering all staff employed within the Connecting Families Team, and the actions in respect of lone working have been incorporated into this safe working practice.

8. REVIEW

This procedure will be reviewed in one year – by August 2017.

9. AUTHOR

Paula Bromley – Connecting Families Service Manager – August 2016