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Lone working policy v1.1

1. Purpose

As stated in its Health, Safety and Welfare Policy the Specialist Academic Support (SAS) recognises its duties and accepts its responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and of other people who may be affected by its activities so far as is reasonably practicable.

SAS will, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the safety of lone workers who sometimes work alone, by minimising the risks that they face and putting in place appropriate measures to improve their safety. This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify individual responsibilities and describe procedures to support the minimisation of risk.

2. Definition

Lone working can be described as any situation or location in which someone works without a colleague nearby; or when someone is working out of sight or earshot of another colleague. Lone working can take place when people are:

- working as individuals at a fixed site but are separated from others e.g. 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. 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

SAS management are responsible for the safety of all persons who are employed in providing services for which they have management responsibilities and will make

sure that adequate arrangements and resources are available to implement this policy.

SAS management must ensure that

- The policy is applied across all staff they are responsible for –
- They identify all staff who are lone workers, based on recognised definitions
- all relevant policies and procedures are disseminated to lone working staff and those staff have completed the Lone Working for Employees training
- where possible and appropriate, a risk assessment is conducted (in consultation with the relevant personnel) to ensure that all risks from lone working are identified and that control measures have been introduced to appropriately protect staff by removing, minimising or mitigating the risks before staff enter a lone working situation
- lone workers are provided with sufficient information, induction, training, and supervision before entering a lone working situation
- measures identified in the risk assessment to reduce risk are put in place and where appropriate, technology is made available to ensure the safety of lone workers
- lone workers have received training commensurate with their duties at the appropriate level
- there is a protocol in place of what will happen in case of emergency
- regular reviews are undertaken of hazards and associated risks to make sure that all measures are effective and continue to meet the requirements of the lone worker

Staff who lone work must ensure that they:

- do all they can to ensure their own safety and that of their colleagues. This is in line with current health and safety legislation
- seek advice and follow guidance, procedures and instruction to avoid putting themselves.
- ensure that their planned whereabouts is easily obtainable (e.g. by ensuring their online calendar is up to date). This is especially important when undertaking a trip or visit that might be higher risk
- conduct proper planning prior to a visit including identifying any pre-existing risk assessments, apply control measures and utilise continual dynamic risk assessment during a visit
- properly utilise all appropriate technology, which has been provided for their own personal safety, ensure that they attend training in the use of the technology and associated support services; and attend any relevant training before entering a lone working situation. This includes the corporate Lone Working for Employees training.



Guidelines

- Do not go into a person's home if they appear to be drunk 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.

4.2. 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

- Always keep windows closed and doors locked when driving alone, particularly at night and in isolated areas.
- Do not give lifts to strangers e.g. a hitchhiker, or accept lifts from a stranger if you breakdown or have an accident.
- 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

5. Working at home

SAS recognises that people work best when they have a satisfactory balance between their paid work and the remainder of their lives as individuals, carers and members of the community. Staff are increasingly working at home both on a permanent and temporary basis.

Potential hazards that may arise include:

- Handling of loads
- Use of work equipment
- Use of electrical equipment
- Working with Display Screen Equipment
- Stress/mental health issues arising through lack of regular contact or the opportunity for debrief after managing a challenging incident.

6. Risk Assessment

6.1. Prior to an activity

In the case of staff who regularly work with service users alone, whether on SAS property or in their own home or another place it will not be necessary to conduct a specific risk assessment for every service user. The expectation is that, under normal circumstances, a generic risk assessment will be carried out on the activities of the staff working in a team, taking into account the factors to be considered which are listed below.

Only in circumstances where the level of risk to staff is significantly different to that identified within a generic risk assessment should a specific/individual risk assessment be undertaken. For example, where there is evidence that a customer/service user presents a greater risk or there is a significantly greater risk because of the area that a member of staff is required to visit; then an individual risk assessment should be undertaken. See the example Risk Assessment at Annex A. There will be certain scenarios and activities that can be classified through a risk assessment as low-risk – for example, visits to clients that have visited several times before or meetings in a public area:

The following factors should be considered during the risk assessment process:

- type of incident risk, for example, physical assault/theft of property or equipment)
- working conditions: normal, abnormal and hazardous conditions, such as dangerous steps, unhygienic or isolated conditions, poor lighting

- the possibility of an increased risk of violence from service users due to a disability, alcohol or drug misuse, medical condition or mental health condition and the risk of violence from their carers or relatives
- working in or travelling between certain environments or settings
- lone workers carrying equipment that makes them a target for theft or makes them less able to protect themselves; and
- evaluation of capability to undertake lone working – for example, being inexperienced or pregnant, or having a disability.

6.2. During an activity – Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessment is a term used when the situation in which risk arises changes and consists of on the spot decision making. Lone workers should be able to recognise the risks presented by those who are under the influence of alcohol/drugs or are confused, or where animals may be present. Being alert to these warning signs will allow the lone worker to consider all the facts to make a personal risk assessment and, therefore, a judgement as to the best course of action (for example, to continue with their work or to withdraw). At no point should the lone worker place themselves, their colleagues or their patients/service users at risk or in danger.

However, dynamic risk assessment must not a substitute for the systematic assessment of risk arising out of activities undertaken by SAS staff. In all circumstances, controls must be put in place where there is reasonable likelihood that the health or safety of staff may be at risk.



SPECIALIST
ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Annex A
to SAS LWP
20 March 19

Model lone working risk assessment

Lone working definition

For the purposes of this policy, a lone worker is an individual who spends some or all of their working hours working alone. Lone working is not where individuals experience transient situations in which they find themselves alone, but where individuals are knowingly and foreseeably placed in circumstances in which they undertake work activities without direct or close supervision.

In practical terms, persons are considered to be working alone if they have neither visual nor audible communication with someone who can summon assistance in the event of an accident or illness.

Responsibility

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, [employer's name] as an employer has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. There is also contained in the legislation a general duty of care to protect students and members of the public. These requirements are applicable to all work situations, including where staff (and others) are working alone or outside normal working hours.

Employee responsibility

All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own safety and to cooperate with [employer's name] procedures. Employees should not knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk by working alone.

If a person finds that they are placed in a situation, which may be considered to be that of a 'lone worker', then they should ensure that their line manager is made aware of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity and then assist in the process of identifying the steps needed to either prevent the lone worker situation from arising, or, if this is not possible, assist in developing the precautions necessary to ensure their own safety.

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.

Identification of risks in relation to lone working

- assessment of the risks to lone workers
- implementation of measures required to reduce the risks to lone workers, including appropriate staff training to minimise these risks
- evaluation of the control measures to ensure that risks to lone workers are appropriately managed.



Control measures

- safe systems of work / permit to work
- first aid or emergency first aid at work training/provision of travelling first aid kits
- ensure staff are fully trained for the task and provide adequate information, instruction, supervision and training
- provide staff with mobile phones equipped with SOS app to ensure safe return to base.
- the health of lone workers; have they medical conditions and/or disability which would make it unsuitable and/or unsafe for working alone?
- arrangements for dealing with emergencies
- arrangements for dealing with threats of violence.



<u>GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT LONE WORKING</u>	
This risk assessment covers general activities which are of low risk, being undertaken at the convenience and discretion of the individual. It does not cover work with any hazardous machinery and/or substances, or the lifting/handling of loads that could cause injury, which should be subject to a specific risk assessment	
School/academy	
Department	
Categories of staff/students covered by this assessment	All fully trained teachers and support staff, post-grad students, employees and pupils
Location of lone working	
Likely reasons for lone working	
Periods when lone working will occur	
ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL RISK	
Provided the control measures listed below are applied, risks will be adequately controlled	
Name of line manager	
Signature of line manager	
Date	
<u>HAZARD</u>	<u>CONTROL MEASURE</u>
Individual	
Medical fitness. Is the employee subject to any medical condition that may place them at increased risk when working alone? [Where they may be in doubt refer the employee to Occupational Health]	The employee must ensure that any medical conditions which might be relevant to their working alone are fully discussed with their line manager and, if necessary, Occupational Health and own GP. Individuals must not work alone if



	<p>any such condition is assessed as placing them at increased risk. Any person who requires assistance to get out of the building in an emergency must not work alone.</p>
<p>Supervision What arrangements are in place to maintain contact with the employee?</p>	<p>The employee must comply with the out-of-hours log-in/out arrangements in operation within the building. Set up contact arrangements with staff and family members.</p>
<p>Training & competency: Has necessary information, instruction and training been given to the employee, and is the employee competent to carry out the work alone?</p>	<p>Any person authorised to be in the building outside normal hours must be fully competent to carry out the work safely and be fully conversant with emergency procedures.</p>