



Rickmansworth Children's Centre

Lone Working Policy (November 2010)

This policy represents the agreed principles for lone working throughout the Children's Centre.

The staff of the Children's Centre, the Children's Centre Advisory Body and the Governors of the Lead Agency, Shepherd Primary School, have agreed this policy. All Partners of the Children's Centre will be expected to have regard for the policy and procedures for lone working. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety Policy.

Aims:

The Children's Centre is committed to ensuring, as far as reasonably possible, the personal safety of its employees.

Definition of Lone Worker

Someone who works by him/herself without direct or close supervision, whether office based or in the local community.

In accordance with the above the Children's Centre will:

- Assess and categorise the risks associated with lone working,
- Assess and categorise the risks associated with out of hours working,
- Provide adequate controls based on these assessments.

Examples of such controls will include the provision of:

- Suitable training,
- Occupational Health fitness assessments for workers,
- Suitable emergency equipment and emergency arrangements,
- Adequate supervision,
- Adequate staffing to undertake the work safely,
- Defined work activities including written safe systems of work.

All lone working or work activities undertaken out of hours must be subject to a risk assessment by the line Manager/Supervisor.

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk-control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:

1. Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
2. Is there a risk of violence?
3. Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
4. Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?
5. Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
6. What happens if the person becomes ill, has an accident or there is an emergency?

If the lone worker's first language is not English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communication, especially in an emergency?

Lone workers and medical conditions

Employers need to check that lone workers have no medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek medical advice if necessary. Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional physical and mental burdens on an individual.

Training for lone workers

Training will be given to ensure all staff are aware of how to handle any situation and to ensure staff avoid panicking in unusual situations.

This is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions. Employers should set the limits as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone. They should ensure employees are competent to deal with any circumstance which is new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, for example; when to stop work and seek advice from a supervisor on how to handle aggression.

Illness, accidents and emergencies

Although staff should not put themselves in a position of danger, lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. Risk assessment should identify foreseeable events. Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them.

Information regarding premises' emergency procedures and danger areas should be given to lone workers. They should have access to adequate first-aid facilities, and mobile workers may wish to carry a first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

All staff working at the Children's Centre will be 1st aid trained and have access to basic medical supplies as required.

Office based lone workers

Where a member of staff is in a lone working scenario, most if not all of the following points should be followed:

- Ensure staff member has control of the room/building
- Ensure that a quick safe exit is available,
- Arrange for someone to ring at a pre-determined time to check you are alright
- Check access to a telephone
- Check access to an escape route in case of emergency i.e. fire
- Try to make appointments when other people are in the building
- Keep all valuables out of sight
- Keep personal alarm on at all times and if you are assaulted or threatened, press button to alert call centre.
- Report any instances of verbal abuse or indecent telephone calls immediately

Lone workers undertaking home visits

Managers and staff have a responsibility to ensure working arrangements are as safe as possible. It is important that when home visits are planned, the following points are adhered to:

- Ensure a manager or other staff member knows where you are going and how long you plan to be
- Plan your route carefully
- Plan your visit for daylight hours
- Telephone first to make sure they will be home
- If, when you arrive, anything gives you cause for concern, leave and make other arrangements
- Do not enter a house if you are suspicious
- If a visit takes longer than planned, telephone the office to give revised details
- Domestic pets and other animals can cause concern, ask for them to be removed to another room if you feel unsafe
- Keep car doors locked when travelling
- Keep valuables out of sight in the car
- Park in open, well-lit places
- If someone approaches you whilst in your car, do not get out. Lock the doors, open the window a fraction and offer telephone assistance only.
- When returning to your car, have the key ready and enter quickly. Lock all doors
- Avoid walking in poorly lit, isolated places or subways wherever possible

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that

- They consider all the risks involved with lone working and carry out the necessary checks, following the recommended procedures.
- They report any problems encountered whilst working alone to the manager
- They are personally responsible for ensuring they comply with all necessary procedures
- They are accountable for their own actions

Monitoring

This policy will be assessed and reviewed annually, taking into account any updated legislation.