

Lone Working Management Standard

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Scope

This policy applies to all lone workers.

Policy Summary

This Policy describes the responsibilities held by managers and workers in the NAS with respect to Lone Working. The NAS will assess risks to lone workers through the risk assessment process, and as far as is reasonably practicable implement measures to eliminate or, where elimination is not possible, control the risks associated with lone working.

Introduction

Lone working accidents may have a much more serious outcome. The fact that a person is alone and therefore, potentially, out of reach of timely assistance, may increase the extent of an injury, e.g. a deep cut may result in larger amounts of blood being lost, challenging behaviour from a person being supported could escalate, etc.

Definition of Lone Worker

Within the NAS there are a significant number of personnel who, during the course of their work, are required to work alone. The definition of a lone worker adopted by the NAS is:

“A person who works in any environment where there are no other workers or other responsible persons present who could reasonably be expected to respond appropriately in the event of an unusual occurrence or emergency.”

NAS personnel may be required to undertake activities alone and unsupervised either formally as part of their job role, for example, working in a remote room on a one to one basis, or in the community, with a person we support; or as a result of circumstances, e.g. a person working outside of normal office hours or a person working away from their base, or carrying out maintenance in a remote part of the building.

The following list of personnel may be required to work alone. This list is NOT exhaustive and line managers need to consider the applicability of this Policy in relation to each job function under their control.

- Support Workers
- Development Staff
- Office Workers
- Family Service Workers
- Befrienders
- Domiciliary Workers
- Maintenance Staff
- Lone Drivers
- Cooks and Domestic Staff
- Cleaners
- Home Workers

Line managers must also consider the safety of non-employees such as volunteers and contractors working for the NAS.

Responsibilities

The NAS Health and Safety Manual generally, and specifically in Section 3, sets out what risk management responsibilities are required of all levels of management, as well as employees. All personnel must be familiar with the responsibilities listed in Section 2 of this manual since these requirements also apply to lone working situations. However, this Lone Working Policy sets out to highlight particular responsibilities and how they are to be met.

Directors

The overall responsibility for the execution of this Policy lies with the Director of the relevant department.

The Director must ensure that all personnel are competent to act on their responsibilities for managing risks associated with lone working, thus ensuring that the necessary skills are in place for managing the requirements of this Policy.

The Director will ensure that sufficient resources are provided to ensure that appropriate training takes place and that the requirements of this Policy are met.

Area Managers and Principals

Area Managers, Principals and other managers who have delegated health and safety responsibilities from Directors must ensure that managers under their control are meeting the requirements of this Policy.

Line Managers

Line Managers have direct influence on what lone working activities need to be carried out on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, in particular they shall:

- Carry out risk assessments of lone working tasks and implement adequate risk controls as per this Policy and Section 3 of this manual;
- Pay particular attention to risks that may arise from visiting or working with someone in their own home;
- Monitor the risks arising from lone working for any significant change that may affect the risk level and to ensure the continued effectiveness of implemented risk controls. This is an on-going requirement as part of day to day operational activities;
- Ensure that a formal review is carried out, at least, annually;
- Establish clear procedures and set defined working limits on what can or cannot be done whilst working alone. Where necessary, further advice should be sought from the SQE Team, especially on questions of legal compliance;
- Investigate accidents, incidents and near misses arising from lone working, ensuring that the NAS Accident/Incident Report Form (see section 7 of this manual) is completed correctly. The completed copy must be forwarded to the Area Manager or Director;
- Recommend, via appropriate channels, any improvements to this Policy or its associated safe systems of work if weaknesses are identified.

Under the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA), a line manager (employer) is not only responsible for employees directly under management, but also any other NAS worker or contractor's employee who may be affected by the local undertaking. Therefore it is the delegated responsibility of the local line manager to pass relevant local risk information to interested parties internally who may send other NAS personnel to work alone, e.g. maintenance staff etc. This duty extends to liaison with certain

external organisations to ensure that risk information is exchanged with external contractors whose employees may be working alone at a particular location. For example, agency staff providing supported living services.

The line manager must also ensure that all employees are adequately informed of the risks they face when lone working. This requirement extends to arranging appropriate training for risk control measures in place for their lone working situation, especially where the lack of training would significantly increase the level of risk faced. A manager must not expect or allow any employee to undertake a lone working task if they have not been appropriately trained to do so. The most important factors to be covered in the training are:

- The risks to which the lone worker will potentially be exposed;
- The control measures including safe systems of work, and how they are to be maintained, e.g. emergency call systems use and routine checking for serviceability;
- General personal safety principles;
- What emergency procedures are in place and how they will operate, including what to do if something goes wrong and how to obtain first aid;

Line managers will arrange refresher training to take place at suitable intervals, not exceeding 3 years.

It may not be reasonably practicable for temporary staff to be placed through formal NAS training for lone working situations. The line manager is therefore to make every effort avoid lone working situations for such people. If lone working situations cannot be avoided then appropriate training must take place, if that is an agreed control measure.

The line manager may provide equipment of various kinds for the employee where it would enable them to carry out the work efficiently, where it would reduce risk or where it would enable them to summon help. To ensure the effective use of such equipment each line manager should:

- Keep an inventory of the equipment;
- Not authorise employees to use any equipment until appropriately trained;
- Ensure that routine testing and preventative maintenance of the equipment is carried out. This must be carried out as recommended by the manufacturer.

Managers are responsible for the continual development and effective implementation of this Policy and its associated safe systems of work. All staff are responsible for assisting their Manager in the discharge of this duty.

Persons Managing Volunteers

The management of volunteers with respect to lone working must be performed in the same way as for paid employees. However, particular attention should be paid to the need to conduct volunteer risk assessments so that any peculiarities associated with volunteering are addressed. For example:

- unfamiliarity with NAS safety culture,
- a desire to assist without due regard for personal safety,
- lack of awareness of autistic behaviours
- inexperience.

Persons Managing Contractors

All persons requiring work to be performed by a third party will ensure that appropriate consideration is made, during the tendering phase of contracts, to ensure that contractors have sufficient arrangements in place to protect their workers from risks associated from lone working when on NAS premises. Where necessary, this will require formal liaison with local NAS line managers to obtain local risk information prior to the start of the contract so that local risk information can be passed to the contractor. This responsibility includes ensuring that appropriate records are kept. Where there are significant lone working hazards the contractor will be required to provide a risk assessment which is acceptable to the NAS manager responsible for the contract.

Safety Action Groups

The local Safety Action Group will ensure that:

- The aims of this policy are achieved;
- Appropriate resources are made available to minimise any significant risk associated with lone working;
- They monitor the effectiveness of risk controls and safe systems of work implemented to minimise the risks associated with lone working;
- Risk management actions taken to minimise lone working risk comply with specific legislative requirements;
- Competent technical advice is made available when needed.

Health and Safety Team

The responsibility of the Health and Safety Team to provide health & safety information and advice also extends to the risks arising from lone working. Where a question is outside of managers' competence, he/she must approach

the Health and Safety Team who will arrange for them to obtain suitable advice.

The Health and Safety Team shall:

- Provide advice to line managers;
- Assist managers at all levels of NAS, when requested, to design adequate lone working risk control measures;
- Monitor and carry out formal investigations, where necessary, for accidents and incidents arising from lone working activities, with a view to identifying trends and advising the NAS on corrective action;
- Assist local line managers and training managers to identify lone working training needs;

Employees

The HSWA also places a duty on employees to comply with health & safety arrangements and to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work activities. It is a statutory duty of all employees of NAS to comply with this Policy. Failure to comply will lead to disciplinary action being taken.

Employees in particular shall:

- Follow the requirements of the control measures identified in the lone working risk assessment, including safe systems of work;
- Inform their line managers of any risks or concerns they encounter whilst lone working;
- Indicate where their competency may be insufficient;
- Report any health problems or injuries that may adversely affect their safety whilst lone working;
- Report unsafe conditions or unsafe working equipment or results of any on-the-spot risk assessments;
- Familiarise themselves with the emergency procedures associated with lone working.

Risk Assessment

When carrying out Lone Working risk assessments it is vital that the true nature of the risk is fully examined for each type of hazard. For example, a volunteer befriending and meeting someone with an autistic spectrum

disorder for the first time may be exposed to types of hazard that are significantly different to those of, say, someone driving alone at night on an unfamiliar road in the dark.

When lone workers are involved in providing supported living services then the workplace risk assessment for supported living (HS-0313) must be completed.

The range of lone working scenarios is huge and it will be necessary for the risk assessor to fully involve lone workers in the risk assessment process. The assessment is only going to achieve its aim of fully identifying all of the associated hazards, assessing the risks and introducing effective and workable control measures, if lone workers are properly consulted.

The risk assessor and the manager must satisfy themselves that any additional control measures that have been recommended will reduce the residual risks to the lone worker to a tolerable level. In other words, they must be sure that they have done all that is reasonably practicable to reduce the risks.

The first consideration when aiming to reduce lone working risks must always be to eliminate lone working, i.e. to find ways of achieving the same outcome without putting individuals at risk. Where this is not possible then the frequency and duration of tasks which require working alone must be kept to a minimum and the following control measures should be considered. In order to reduce the lone working risks to a tolerable level it may be necessary to introduce more than one of these control measures.

Control Measures

Simple, auditable means of regular supervision and/or reporting should be introduced where possible in order to establish the wellbeing of lone workers and reduce foreseeable risks, e.g. reporting in to an office at predetermined intervals.

Particular emphasis must be given to ensuring that lone workers are present at the end of their period of work, e.g. following a visit to a person's home, at the end of a shift, at tea breaks, at lunch time, at the end of the working day, etc.

Where vulnerable persons travel alone then a system to verify safe arrival must be used. The likelihood of violent or sexual attack of lone workers must be carefully assessed.

Where diary systems are used to log visits they must be backed up with sufficient reliable office based support to enable them to function effectively under all circumstances, e.g. when the normal person responsible for monitoring visits is absent from work.

The chosen system(s) must take into account the degree of risk and the appropriateness of the control measure. Engineered solutions that do not rely

on human behaviour are likely to be best. However, all systems rely heavily on the lone worker taking a high degree of responsibility for their own welfare.

The system may include the use of one or several of the following resources:

Resource	Benefits	Disadvantages
Personal Attack Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap • Handy • Easy to use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of no use if not always available • No good if out of earshot • No good if unconscious
Pendants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will only work over limited range • Will not normally identify precise location • No good if unconscious
Local Paging Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence required • Will only work over limited range • Will not normally identify precise location • No good if unconscious
Portable (DECT) Phones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited range • Difficult to use in an emergency • Rarely carried • No good if unconscious
Mobile Phones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readily available • Handy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not always in range • Difficult to use in an emergency • Not always carried • No good if unconscious
Call Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manned 24 hours • Can respond to set of agreed instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive if used on small scale • Need to regularly update instructions
Mobile Phone Tracking Eg. "Locate Mobiles"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not require user input • Always available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly expensive • Only locates within 50 metres

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of privacy
GPS Trackers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locates user accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Lack of privacy

Resource	Benefits	Disadvantages
Locally Installed Panic Alarm Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor made to meet the need • Easy to use • Can work with “man over” mercury switch if unconscious • Response good with trained staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive to install • Requires routine maintenance • Will only work at the installed location
Automatic Phone Based Recall Systems, e.g. Guardian24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily tailored to suit situation • Failsafe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires the lone worker to use routinely • Fairly expensive • Needs robust escalation procedures
Buddy Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy • Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unreliable because it relies on both parties following set procedures
Diary Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy • Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unreliable because it relies on both parties following set procedures • Requires one person to be present in the office/base

More information on any of these resources can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team.