

Lone Working Policy

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Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Purpose	3
3.0	Scope	3
4.0	Definitions	3
5.0	Legislation	4
6.0	Roles and Responsibilities	4
6.1	Governing Body	4
6.2	Directors and Managers	5
6.3	Employees	5
6.4	LSMS & Health and Safety	5
7.0	Risk Assessment	6
8.0	Advice and Guidance for Lone Workers	6
9.0	Supervision	6
10.0	Employees Working at Home	6
11.0	Serious and Imminent Danger	6
12.0	Medical Fitness	7
13.0	Incident Management and Emergency Procedures	7
14.0	Incident Reporting	7
15.0	Sanctions	7
16.0	Staff Support following an Incident	8
17.0	Management of Animals	8
18.0	Training and Equipment	8
19.0	Monitoring	8
20.0	Equality Analysis Assessment	9
21.0	References	9
Appendix 1	Risk Assessment	10
Appendix 2	Guidance for Lone Workers Visiting Service Users/Patients in Their Own Homes or Premises	13
Appendix 3	Guidance on Personal Safety When traveling	16
Appendix 4	Practical suggestions on the use of Mobile Phones and Personal or Audible Screech Alarms	18
Appendix 5	Guidance on Lone Working in Office Environments	20
Appendix 6	Good Practice Checklist for Managers	22

1. Introduction

It is the policy of NHS East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) that the health, safety, security and welfare of anyone affected by its work activities are safeguarded. It is acknowledged that many the CCG's employees work alone either regularly or occasionally and that their health, safety, security and welfare should be protected, whether they work alone on CCG premises or elsewhere.

The CCG acknowledges its duty to make adequate provisions for the Health and Safety of lone workers. Lone working is acknowledged as a significant risk and all foreseeable risks associated with lone working should be identified, assessed and controlled as appropriate.

In 2005 the NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service (CFSMS) developed guidelines for all NHS Organisations to implement, in order to protect lone workers from the risk of violence and aggression. This policy is based on those guidelines and guidance on working alone, as published by the Health and Safety Executive which covers other potential risk to lone workers.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and the guidelines it contains is to reduce and prevent risks involved to members of staff undertaking lone working as part of their daily work routine for the CCG.

The policy provides action that will be taken by the CCG to identify, manage and reduce the risks to members of staff involved in Lone Working.

The CCG recognises the importance of the following in the lone working process:

- Good Systematic Risk Assessment processes;
- Clear and robust management procedures that put into place measures to address identified and potential risk, and deal with incidents when they may occur;
- Managers and staff accepting responsibility for, and supporting the need to operate systems, procedures and technology provided for their enhanced protection;
- Sharing information from within and outside of the CSU on identified and potential risks;
- The introduction and implementation of relevant and effective physical and technological systems and devices;
- The provision of training, whether this is to help staff to prevent and manage violent situations, or to use procedures, systems or devices provided for their security and safety, to their best effect;

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all CCG employees who regularly work alone and those staff who on occasions are alone in office and reception areas. The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of staff.

4. Definitions

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines Lone Working as: *'those who work by themselves without direct or close supervision'* and requires that a risk assessment is undertaken for all of these staff.

The HSE defines **Work Related Violence** as: ‘Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work’.

The term ‘Lone Worker’ is used to describe a wide variety of staff who work either regularly or only occasionally, on their own and who may face lone working situations and therefore, may face increased risks to their security and safety.

The term lone worker refers to those staff who:

- Work in the community (e.g. Continuing Health Care Staff, Medicines Management);
- Work alone at CCG sites ‘after hours’ (e.g. first in, or last out);
- Work alone in out-based locations (e.g. Clinics, Doctor Surgeries etc);
- Travel alone between sites.

It is appreciated that many employees may occasionally work alone, although this would not normally be their role. The standards outlined in this guidance document still apply.

5. Legislation

There are no absolute restrictions on working alone: it will depend on the findings of a risk assessment.

There are two main pieces of legislation that will apply;

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: Section 2 sets out a duty of care on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst they are at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: Regulation 3 states that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of –

- The risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and
- The risk to health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

The following specific organisational responsibilities apply:

6.1. Governing Body

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the protection of lone workers by gaining assurance that policies, procedures and systems to protect lone workers are implemented and will do all they reasonably can do to so by;

- Being committed to increasing the general awareness and understanding of Lone Working with the organisation;
- Recognise and understand the importance of skilled management of employees by the provision of appropriate training on an ongoing basis for managers and staff;
- Providing the resources needed to support measures identified by senior managers to reduce the risk of harm to CCG staff affected by Lone Working.
- Ensuring that those directors/senior managers designated with supporting and monitoring this policy carry out their responsibilities as shown in this policy.

6.2. Directors and Managers

It is the responsibility of Directors and Managers to ensure that there are suitable and sufficient arrangements are in place to implement the Lone Working policy within their sphere of responsibility, including:

- Disseminate and implement this policy within their area of responsibility and ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under this policy;
- Identify staff in their area / service who are lone workers;
- Ensure that risk assessments on lone workers, and prior to lone workers undertaking home visits are being carried out within their areas of responsibility;
- Ensure that actions which have been deemed necessary as a result of a risk assessment are implemented where 'reasonably practicable';
- Ensure that managers, and employees are given the time and resources to carry out lone working risk assessments;
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to account for and trace the whereabouts of lone working employees and that these systems are regularly checked;
- Ensuring that any known information about patients / clients referred from other departments / areas or agencies is passed on. Particularly if there is a known risk or previous history of violence and aggression;
- Monitor the use of technology used to reduce the risks to lone workers e.g. lone worker alarm devices or mobile phones;
- Ensure that staff members are given time off to attend essential training relating to lone working and personal safety if applicable;
- Ensure that all incidents, and near misses, that happen to lone workers are reported to them and are investigated accordingly.
- Ensure that appropriate support is given to staff following an incident.

6.3. Employees

It is the responsibility of employees to:

- Assist, and with regards to domiciliary visits, implement local risk assessment process;
- Co - operate by following procedures designed to protect their safety as a lone worker;
- Be mindful of their own safety and that of colleagues, particularly when working alone.
- Provide information on their whereabouts during working hours to a manager or colleague;
- Where indicated, use technology provided for their safety e.g. mobile phone or lone worker alarm devices;
- Attend lone worker or personal safety related training programmes as directed by their manager.
- Report all incidents related to lone working.

6.4. Local Security Management Specialist & Health and Safety Manager

- The provision of advice and guidance on this policy;
- Providing assistance and training to managers and staff in undertaking risk assessments;
- Providing advice to managers and staff in implementing risk reduction measures;
- Providing support and advice on local incident investigations;

- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and use of lone worker alarm devices by means of a safety audit;
- Participating in training programmes related to lone working and personal safety as necessary.

7. Risk Assessment

There are many situations where employees may be required to work alone, but in some cases this may constitute all, or a significant part, of their working time. When employees work alone they will be exposed to hazards which need to be identified and risks that must be assessed, in the same way as would be done for employees working in teams or in fixed locations.

Managers are to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out prior to lone working activities commencing. This process should identify the hazards associated with specific lone working activities and will determine appropriate control measures which must be implemented (See Appendix 1 for further information on risk assessment and risk reduction measures).

8. Advice and Guidance for Lone Workers

Employees should carry out their own dynamic assessment of risk before undertaking any activity which involves working alone. They should make themselves aware of any formal generic risk assessments/safe systems of work (procedures) – organisational and/or local. Further information can be found at Appendix 2 – 5).

9. Supervision

Although lone workers are not subject to constant supervision, it is the CCG's responsibility to ensure staff's safety so far as is reasonably practicable. This is particularly important for new and less experienced staff. Procedures are to be put into place to monitor lone workers to ensure that lone workers remain safe, these procedures may include:

- Manager's periodically visiting and observing staff working alone;
- Regular contact between the lone worker by telephone;
- Regular checking of procedures designed to raise the alarm if contact is lost with a lone worker.

10. Employees Working at Home

- Employees should work in accordance with the CCG's Flexible Working Policy;
- Employees working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential;
- There should be regular contact with their line manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods, and an appropriate reporting – in system should be used if making visits from home.

11. Serious and Imminent Danger

Employees who believe themselves to be in serious and imminent danger should, where possible, cease or postpone the work activity and remove themselves to a place of safety. The member of staff is to inform their manager of any such situation and the reasons for their actions, at the earliest opportunity. It is impossible to give precise advice for every situation, however a decision taken at the time in the interest of their own or another person's safety, will be supported by the CCG.

Employees in these circumstances should ask themselves the following: '**Should I be here; is it safe to remain; should I seek assistance?**' - If in doubt, the employee should leave and inform their manager **ASAP**.

Lone visits **MUST NOT** be made to clients or locations where there is a history of violent incidents. Staff should only visit these places in very exceptional circumstances, where there are no practicable alternatives, as sending staff in pairs cannot be relied upon to reduce the risks.

12. Medical Fitness

Consideration must be given to ensure that lone workers are medically fit to carry out the work. Should the risk assessment identify hazards where a standard of medical fitness may be required, management should consult the Occupational Health Service/HR department for further advice and guidance.

13. Incident Management / Emergency Procedures

It is essential that every directorate where employees undertake lone working practices produce and communicate local procedures for emergencies and loss of contact. These procedures must be kept up-to-date and tested at least every six months to ensure that they are effective.

14. Incident Reporting

In order to manage lone worker risks it is important that incidents, accidents and concerns are reported through the Incident Reporting system. Regular monitoring of incidents/accidents will allow lone worker issues to be considered and investigated when required. Near misses should also be reported as this allows risks to be identified before any staff member is harmed.

Incident reporting is an integral part of the risk management process. It allows the necessary information to be gathered to identify actual or potential problems so that lessons can be learned and solutions developed to prevent recurrence.

It is essential that where lessons can be learnt that they are incorporated into revisions of local procedures and systems to ensure that lone workers are provided with the best possible protection, if the risks they face are to be minimised.

15. Sanctions

There are various sanctions that can be taken against individuals (or groups) who abuse NHS staff and professionals, or who steal or inflict damage on its property. These range from criminal prosecutions and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders to civil injunctions.

Professional investigation of incidents by LSMSs' will inevitably lead not only to more intelligence about the problems and possible solutions, but also to more sanctions being taken against offenders. This can be achieved by close working with the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

If staff who report incidents are part of the investigation process, feel supported and see that improvements in working practices are made to reduce the levels of risk from violence and aggression, the more confident they will be in reporting future incidents. As a consequence, they will feel safer and more secure in their working environment.

More sanctions against offenders, where appropriate, will help develop a strong deterrent message: that the NHS will take firm action to protect its staff, particularly those who work alone to deliver vital healthcare to the most vulnerable in the community.

16. Staff Support Following an Incident

Following an incident, managers should ensure that staff are given the opportunity to discuss the incident in a debriefing session and receive assistance in the preparation of appropriate Incident reports.

Staff should also be given the opportunity to contact supportive agencies. The Occupational Health Service can fulfil this role and arrange referral to external agencies if necessary, including an independent counsellor.

Arrangements for time off to attend supportive agencies should be made in consultation with line managers.

Staff should be aware of the possibility that complaints against their own conduct may arise after an incident. Support and advice from both management and staff organisations will be available in case a complaint about the conduct of a staff member is made when dealing with an incident.

17. Management of Animals

If there is a known problem with animals at a particular address or location, the occupants should be contacted and politely requested to remove or secure the animals before arrival of staff (bearing in mind that this could provoke a negative reaction). All possible efforts should be made to ensure that the situation is managed and de-escalated, should hostility become evident. If this is not possible, alternative arrangements should be made to carry out the visit.

Even if there are no known problems with animals, the request should still be made for them to be secured, as the animal's presence may be disruptive, so it may be prudent to request that it be removed or placed in a different room.

If a lone worker is confronted by an aggressive animal on a visit to a patient/service user's address, they should not put themselves at risk. If necessary, they should abandon the visit and report the incident in accordance with local procedures. This information should then be disseminated to all relevant internal (and, where possible, external) parties, including social care and ambulance staff.

Ask the client to make sure that everyone who is in the premises is aware that the animals must not be loose during visits by staff.

18. Training & Equipment

Employees and others e.g. agency staff working on behalf of the CCG are to be given all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone. All training and briefing records must be recorded.

19. Monitoring

Managers are to monitor the effectiveness of the control measures implemented as a result of the risk assessment process to find out how successful they have been. This will allow managers to identify those control measures and strategies that are not working, or which have unforeseen consequences, and modify or replace them where appropriate.

There are two types of monitoring, which managers should carry out:

Active Monitoring: Managers should ensure that systems and procedures are working without waiting until something goes wrong. It will confirm whether agreed procedures are actually being complied with by employees and whether they are workable in the individual circumstances and have the desired effect of preventing accidents or incidents

Reactive Monitoring: Managers should investigate all accidents, incidents and near misses so that everyone involved can learn from the experience. Managers must ensure that employees understand the incident reporting and recording system and that all such incidents are reported. Information gained from this process will also assist in the effective review, and modification if necessary, of risk assessments and control measure.

20. Equality Analysis Assessment

This document forms part of Staffordshire & Lancashire CSU's commitment to create a positive culture of respect for all staff and service users. The intention is to identify, remove or minimize discriminatory practice in relation to the protected characteristics (race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious or other belief, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity), as well as to promote positive practice and value the diversity of all individuals and communities.

The Equality Analysis Checklist initial screening, which was used to determine the potential impact this policy might have with respect to the individual protected characteristics, and the results from this initial screening indicate that this policy will not require a full Equality Analysis Assessment.

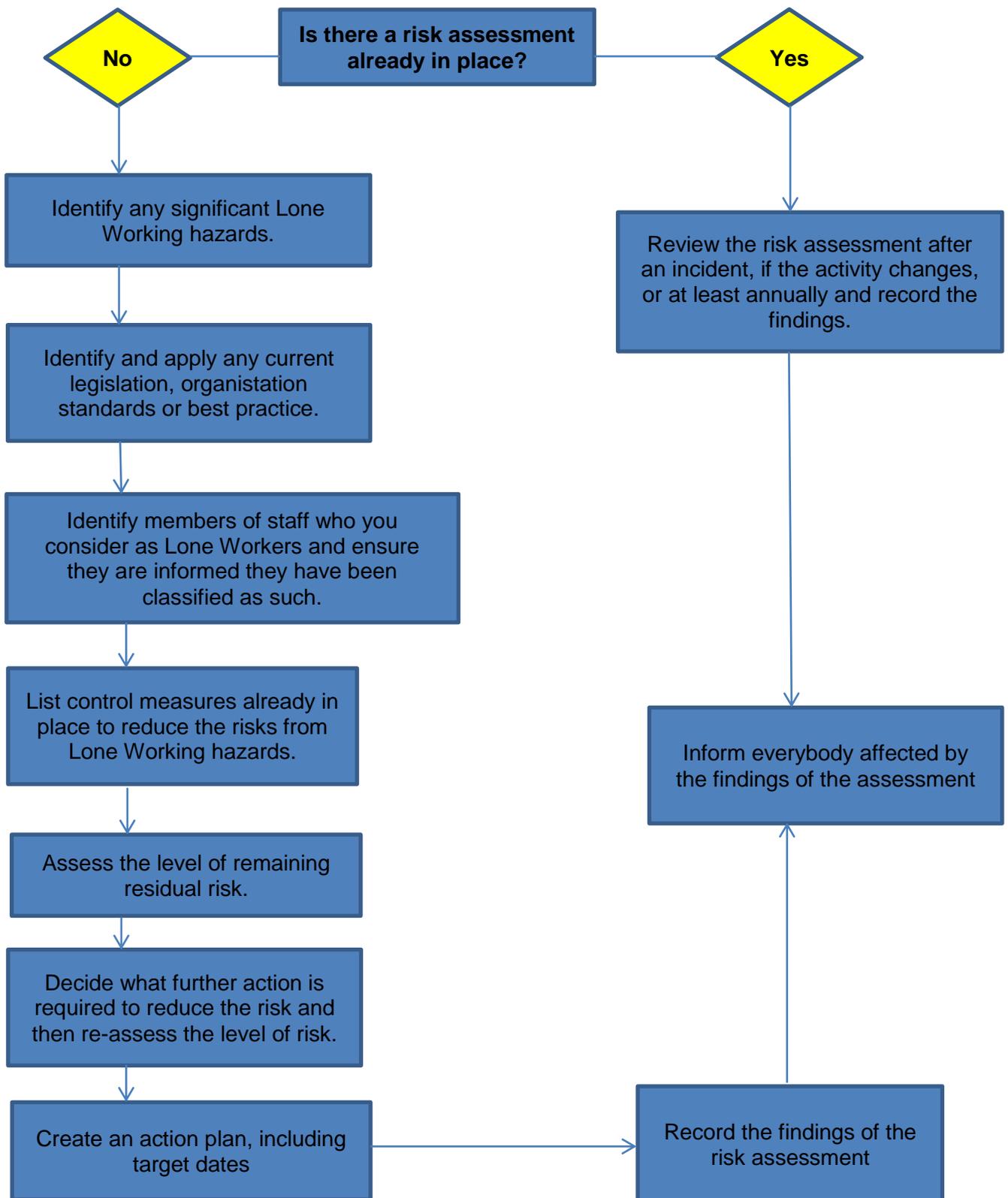
21. References

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this guidance. All are available online and can help NHS organisations develop lone working policies and procedures.

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR);
- Safety Representatives and Safety committees Regulations 1977 (a) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b);
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007;
- Secretary of State Directions;
- Health and Safety (HSE) leaflet – *Working Alone in Safety: Controlling the risks of solitary work*.

Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment

Risk assessment flow chart



Establishing and managing safe working arrangements for lone working is no different than that of organising the safety of other employees. Lone workers may face particular problems and some of the issues which require extra consideration when planning safe working arrangements are as follows;

- Is the employee a new member of staff or trainee?
- Is the employee medically fit and suitable to work alone;
- Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person or are more people necessary?
- Does the workplace present a special risk to lone workers?
- Is there a safe way in and out for one person?
- Can all equipment, substances and goods be safely handled by one person?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women or young workers especially at risk if they work alone?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- What training is required to ensure competency in safety matter?
- How will the person be supervised?
- What happens if an employee becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an emergency
- Will the lone worker know how to respond correctly in the case of any emergency
- What is the lone worker to do when a problem arises and there is nobody to ask for assistance

The key to maximizing safety wherever lone working is being considered is the performance of a satisfactory risk assessment, which should address two main features:

- Whether the work can be done safely by lone workers;
- What arrangements are required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the lone worker is at no more risk than employees working together;

When carrying out the risk assessment particular consideration should be given to:-

- The remoteness or isolation of workplaces;
- Any problems of communication;
- The possibility of interference, such as violence;
- Criminal activity from other persons;
- The nature of potential injury or damage to health;
- Previous incidents/accidents in relation to lone workers and their work activities;
- The level of experience and knowledge of individuals;
- Existing risk assessments and safe systems of work;
- Anticipated *Worst Case* scenario;
- The availability of first aid facilities;
- Access to relevant information held on customer alerts register;
- Hazards that may affect certain groups of employees e.g. race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation.

Dynamic risk assessment

During a lone working visit or a site visit, a dynamic risk assessment focuses on reducing the prevalence of a problem. This is done by minimising known or suspected risk factors and by early intervention (when violence is perceived to be imminent, while it is occurring or immediately post-incident).

A dynamic risk assessment can be defined as a continuous process of identifying hazards and the risk of them causing harm, and taking steps to eliminate or reduce them in the rapidly changing circumstances of an incident. The dynamic risk assessment involves staff:

- Being alert to warning signs as covered in conflict resolution training carrying out a '10-second risk assessment';
- If staff feel there is a risk of harm to themselves, they should leave immediately placing themselves in a position to make a good escape, i.e. where possible, being the closest to an exit;
- Being aware of all entrances and exits;
- Being aware of the positioning of items, including those belonging to the lone worker that could be used as a weapon;
- Making a judgement as to the best possible course of action – for example, whether to continue working or withdraw;
- Utilising appropriate physical security measures (e.g. triggering panic buttons to call assistance from staff nearby/security/the police or using a lone worker device to raise an alarm);
- Ensuring that when they enter a confined area or room, they can operate the door lock in case they need to make an emergency exit;
- Avoiding walking in front of a patient/service user, and not positioning themselves in a corner or in a situation where it may be difficult to escape;
- Remaining calm and focused during an incident in order to make rational judgements being aware of their body language (as well as that of the patient/service user), as there is a risk of exacerbating the situation.

Risk Reduction Measures

As a minimum, risk reduction measures should include:

- A manager or other responsible person must hold information on the whereabouts of lone workers during their working day. Approximate times and locations should be logged on a log sheet;
- A system of supervision of lone workers is implemented;
- As a minimum, lone workers who carry out home visits should be provided with a means of raising the alarm, which will be a CCG provided mobile phone. Lone workers working at a base location should have easy access to a working land line. Where access to a landline is not available they should have access to a CCG provided mobile phone;
- Lone workers must receive adequate training including personal safety and conflict resolution training if deemed necessary;
- Staff should be made aware of the guidance in Appendix's 2 – 5;
- Staff not returning to their base at the end of the visit should call a manager, or other responsible person to state that they have finished their visit;
- Safe Systems of work should be put into place when either unlocking or locking up buildings at the end of the day.

Appendix 2 - Guidance for Lone Workers Visiting Service Users/Patients in Their Own Homes or Premises (Adapted from the CFSMS Guidance on Lone Working)

This guidance should be used to assist in the development of local procedures and safe systems of work following risk assessment of lone working activities. When making lone worker visits it is important to communicate with others about your intentions during the delivery of your services.

You should inform a colleague of:

- The location of the visit/meeting;
- A contact telephone number, if possible;
- The time of the appointment;
- The likely or estimated length of the meeting/visit;
- The time when you are expected to return to the office/base or call in;
- If not returning to the office, the time and location of your next visit ;
- If driving, car details including make, model and registration.

Visits to a patient's home represents a series of particular risks to which a lone worker and the Trust should aim to minimise as far as reasonably practicable. Before making a home visit alone, the member of staff should assess the risks relating to the visit first to ascertain whether it is safe enough to attend alone. If they have any concerns regarding the safety of a particular home visit, they should either take a colleague with them, or rearrange it for a time when the risks can be minimised.

Prior to a home visit taking place the employee should: -

- Obtain as much information as possible about the service user, their families and the location to be visited;
- Review available existing information regarding the patient such as case notes, GP records, previous referrals, etc.;
- Review the last documented risk assessment, or if this is unavailable or there isn't one, contact the referrer to ascertain whether or not there are any relevant risk factors present and/or whether there is any reason why it would be unadvisable to visit the service user alone;
- Double-check the address and telephone number;
- In the event that no records or information is available and there is concern regarding potential risk, consider if possible whether or not it would be more appropriate to invite the service user into the workplace or a safe place, therefore avoiding the need to make a home visit;

If it is decided that a home visit is required, the employee should:-

- Consider whether it would be appropriate to arrange to have a 2nd staff member present for the duration of the visit if there is a known risk i.e. potential for violence or aggression or manual handling;
- Always ensure that fellow workers know where you are. Details should include: details of expected time of return, names and addresses of the clients being visited and time of appointments when visiting alone, mode of contact (e.g. mobile phone numbers);
- Make sure that you carry appropriate personal identification e.g. name badge/identification card to verify your authenticity;
- Wear shoes and clothes that do not hinder movement or ability to run in case of an emergency;

- Ensure that the means of communication and any personal alarms are working and accessible. Programme the work base number into mobile telephones so they can be 'speed dialled'.

On arrival

- Be alert, aware, safe;
- Assess the situation on approach and be prepared to abandon or postpone the visit if in there is a concern for safety;
- Have identity badges available on request;
- If the person answering the door makes you feel uneasy about entering then an excuse should be made not to enter; for instance when the patient or relatives are drunk or 'high' on non-prescribed drugs; **If in doubt, Do not enter premises – seek advice/ assistance;**
- Remain alert while in the house look for anything that may present a problem;

IF VIOLENCE IS THREATENED – LEAVE IMMEDIATELY

Known High Risk Home Visits

- If any visit is deemed to be a potential high risk, it may be necessary to visit in pairs. The need for such additional support should be discussed with your Manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made;
- For such visits it is recognised as good practice for the employee to report back to their work base to confirm that the visit has ended and that they have safely left the premises.

To Reduce the Risk of Provocation

- Introduce yourself politely;
- Express clearly and concisely your reasons for being there and any actions you are taking;
- Avoid criticism of the person you're talking to;
- Avoid unfriendly gestures;
- Leave yourself an alternative course of action;
- Stay calm;
- Show sympathy;
- Remain engaged in conversation with the person.

What to do if a Difficult situation Occurs

Try to defuse the situation

- Listen and acknowledge that the person is distressed;
- Perhaps something can be done to help?

Help the person to feel in control of themselves

- Remain calm and don't take the aggression/abuse personally.

If you feel at risk from violence

- Leave the situation **IMMEDIATELY** and report the occurrence. **If unable to leave protect yourself;**
- Place barriers between yourself and the assailant - continue talking and tell the Service User/Client you mean them no harm;

- Use reasonable force to protect yourself if absolutely necessary and only as a means of last resort.

Observe people's behaviour closely and be aware of non-verbal communication ('body language')

- facial expression;
- eye contact;
- tone of voice;
- physical touch;
- appearance;
- posture;
- proximity;
- hand and foot movement

Appendix 3 - Guidance on Personal Safety When Traveling

This guidance should be used to assist in the development of local procedures and safe systems of work following risk assessment of lone working activities.

Traveling by car

- Consider time of day;
- Plan your route in and out;
- Lock your car while traveling if possible;
- Don't leave items on view in your car even whilst driving;
- Keep equipment/prescription drugs in the boot and ensure they are easily accessible;
- Make sure petrol is replenished prior to commencing journey;
- In cases of road rage do not make eye contact or gestures and always drive to a place of safety;
- Consider places of safety on the route, e.g. garages, shops, police station;
- Beware of faked 'accidents' and other ploys to get you to stop

Traveling by Public Transport

- Plan your route in and out;
- Don't carry too much;
- On buses try to sit near the driver, as they have a radio which is accessible;
- On metros and trains, try to sit near the front of the carriage;
- Sit near other people if possible;
- Have change for your fare ready and easily accessible.

Walking

- Don't carry too much;
- Always notify your colleagues that you will be walking to your destination;
- Do plan your route, avoid waste ground, subways or other isolated and poor lit areas;
- Do keep to well-lit routes and paths, short cuts are rarely safe;
- Do be alert and look confident, don't switch off to the world by listening to music through headphones ;
- Do wear shoes and clothes that do not restrict movement ;
- Do plan your route and know where you are going;
- Consider places of safety on route e.g. garages, shops, pubs;
- Walk facing oncoming traffic, you cannot be kerb crawled by oncoming traffic;
- Keep to the outside of the pavement;
- Never accept lifts from strangers;
- Keep at least one hand free;
- Always know where your mobile phone or personal alarm is and make sure it is accessible in the event of an emergency;
- If you must carry a handbag make sure it is small, holds little of value and ideally can be worn diagonally across the shoulder;
- Keep your car and house keys and a small amount of money separate from your bag;
- Don't walk with your hands in your pockets;
- Continually assess the situation, if in doubt be prepared to abandon or postpone the visit.

Parking

- Lock your car;
- Close all windows and sunroof ;
- Don't leave anything on view;
- When parking in daylight imagine what the area will be like in the dark;
- Locate your nearest observable busy road and park closely to it;
- Do not leave visible permits/notices indicating that you are a health professional;
- Reverse park so that you can drive right out;
- Never leave car registration documents in your car;
- Have your car keys ready when returning to your car;
- Check the interior of your car before getting in;
- Be particularly vigilant and careful when getting equipment into and out of the boot.

Appendix 4 - Practical suggestions on the use of Mobile Phones and Personal or Audible Screech Alarms

Lone working devices

It is essential to recognise that lone worker devices will not prevent incidents from occurring. They will not make people invincible, nor should they be used in a way that could be seen to intimidate, harass or coerce someone. However, if used correctly in conjunction with robust procedures, they will enhance the protection of lone workers. Lone workers should still exercise caution even if equipped with such devices and continue to use the dynamic risk assessment process. Finally, lone workers should remember that a device will only be useful if checked regularly, properly maintained and kept fully charged.

Currently we do not use bespoke lone working devices at the CSU. If you would like more information about these devices then contact the LSMS.

Practical suggestions on the use of Mobile Phones

Where possible a mobile phone must always be kept as fully charged as possible at all times.

The employee should always ensure that they know how to use the mobile phone properly through familiarising themselves with the users instruction manual.

A mobile phone should never be relied upon as the only means of communication. Lone workers should always check the signal strength before entering a situation where they are alone. If the lone worker knows the area they are to go into has a low to no signal they should contact their manager ahead of the visit stating the location of the visit and how long they think they will spend at the location. Once the visit is finished they should contact their manager or colleagues letting them know they are safe.

Emergency contacts should be kept on speed dial as this will speed up the process of making a call to raise an alarm.

A mobile phone should never be left unattended but should be kept close at hand in case of an emergency.

The use of a mobile phone could potentially escalate an aggressive situation and the lone worker should use it in a sensitive and sensible manner.

Any code words or phrases should be agreed and used that will help lone workers convey the nature of the threat to their managers or colleagues so that they can provide the appropriate response such as phoning the police.

The mobile phone could also be the target of thieves and great care should be taken to be as discreet as possible, whilst remaining aware of risks and keeping it within easy reach at all times.

Mobile phone usage should be kept to a minimum and used in emergency situations only and in implementing the lone worker policy e.g. calls from managers or calling ahead of a visit where there is no signal. Non urgent calls should be made when the employee finishes their meeting / business.

The mobile phone should never be used whilst driving as it is against the law. Employers should consider providing staff with hands – free equipment, where appropriate.

Practical suggestions on the use of a personal audible or screech alarm

Primarily designed for use as a distraction to allow the member of staff to escape from a violent or threatening situation. The lone worker/manager should ensure the alarm is in good working order and fully operational through regular checks (away from a working environment to prevent false alarms), especially before leaving for a visit or ahead of a situation where they will or might be working alone;

They should also ensure the battery is working, or if it is aerosol based, ensure that it is not about to run out;

The lone worker should ensure that it is carried in the hand, in an easy to reach pocket or clipped onto a belt, ready for use and not concealed in a bag;

The devices should be used pointing towards the potential assailant, away from the lone worker;

The lone worker should also ensure that they are aware of the procedures for sounding an alarm and the expected response, if a personal attack alarm is triggered. The assumption has to be that there will be no certainty of assistance, because they sound like car alarms and everybody ignores them: audible alarms are primarily to “stun” an assailant for at least a couple of seconds, allowing the lone worker to make their escape; and;

It is also recommended that the lone worker discards the personal alarm so that the assailant’s attention is diverted to silencing the alarm. Some experts are not particularly keen on advising the use of personal alarms in a workplace environment, because of the risk of escalating the situation or where there are no clear escape routes. Their view is that these alarms are more suitable for use in a “street” environment.

Practical suggestions on other forms of lone worker protection devices

Line managers should ensure that lone workers have received appropriate training on a particular product or device. They should be satisfied, as far as possible, that the lone worker is confident in handling it and familiar with the procedures and systems in place to support its use. If in any doubt, instruction should be offered and the lone worker should feel comfortable in requesting such training.

Great care should be taken to ensure that the device is in good working order and that it is fully charged or its batteries are changed regularly. The lone worker should test the device as suggested in instruction manuals, in training or by their manager.

Agreed ‘code’ words or phrases should be used. The device should be kept nearby so that it may be activated quickly. The lone worker should be familiar with the response they can expect if an alert is raised.

Appendix 5 - Guidance on Lone Working in Office Environments (Adapted from the CFSMS Guidance on Lone Working)

This guidance should be used to assist in the development of local procedures and safe systems of work following risk assessment of lone working activities. Staff working alone within a department during office hours should consider taking the following precautions as necessary:

- ensure that they are near a telephone to call for help if needed;
- secure valuables in an appropriate place;
- ensure that keys are secured and not accessible to visitors;
- if you become anxious regarding your safety, call a colleague for assistance;
- avoid arranging meetings with people they don't know if they are alone in the workplace;
- if they are meeting someone, let other people know who they are meeting, when, where and telephoning them to let them know that their visitor has arrived and that they will get back to them at a certain time;
- not tell anyone that they are alone in the workplace;
- report any incidents to the relevant Manager as soon as practicable after any events;
- never assume it won't happen to them – plan to stay safe.

Interviewing Service Users in the Office

In addition to advice already given earlier in this document when interviewing in the office consider the following:-

- Use interview rooms with panic buttons where possible;
- Sit nearest the exit;
- Staff should make themselves aware of locks, bolts etc. on exit doors and observe how they work;
- Ensure that colleagues are aware that an interview is taking place;
- If there is ever a need to take a client/visitor through a coded security door ensure that the client/visitor cannot see the code or knock on the door and be let through to maintain security.

Staff working alone within a department outside office hours should consider taking the following precautions:

From time to time, employees may need to carry out their office-based work outside of normal office hours, such as weekends, early mornings and evenings. The following precautions should be considered to ensure that your health and safety continues to be protected:

- If you are working at weekends or very late at night/ early in the morning consider letting a friend or relative know your whereabouts and the time that you are expected back. Contact them at regular intervals to verify that you are OK. If you change your plans, let your contact know immediately;
- Ensure that all windows and doors are secured to prevent unauthorised access, so that the working environment is as safe as possible;
- Do not open the doors to any strangers no matter what identification they have. If they are meant to be there, they will either have keys or another means of access;
- Never give security codes or keys to any stranger. Again there are channels they can use to gather information if they are legitimate and are meant to have access;

- Make sure your fire escape routes are available to you and not locked (as may happen outside working hours);
- Do not use lifts at these times, as you may become trapped inside and unable to gain assistance or attention;
- Should the fire alarm activate whilst you are in the office alone, you must leave the building immediately by the nearest fire exit. Make your way to the front of the building, a safe distance away and wait for the emergency services to arrive;
- Should you discover any problems with equipment whilst in the office, do not attempt to repair or tamper with the controls. If it is not serious, report it to your manager the following working day;
- On leaving a Department, ensure that all windows are closed and doors locked;
- Ensure you have access to a phone in case you need to call the emergency services;
- Park as close to the building as possible in a well-lit area. (Move your car closer to the building during normal hours if you know you will be leaving late to minimise the risks when leaving the building on your own);
- If an incident occurs, follow the incident reporting procedure;
- ***Never assume it won't happen– plan to stay safe.***

Appendix 6 - Good Practice Checklist for Managers (Adapted from CFSMS Guidance on Lone Working)

Are Your Staff -			
	Yes	No	Comments
Trained in relevant and appropriate strategies for the diffusion and prevention of violence?			
Briefed about local procedures and safe systems of work for the area where they work?			
Given all relevant information available about the potential for aggression and violence service users?			
Issued with appropriate safety equipment?			
Aware of the procedures for maintaining such equipment?			
Are Staff -			
Aware of the importance of previewing cases?			
Aware of the importance of leaving an itinerary?			
Aware of the need to keep contact with colleagues?			
Aware of how to obtain support and advice from management in and outside normal working hours?			
Aware of how to obtain authorisation for an accompanied visit?			
Do Staff -			
Appreciate the circumstances under which meetings/interviews should be terminated?			
Appreciate their responsibilities for their own safety?			
Understand the provisions for staff support by the CCG and the mechanism to access such support?			
Appreciate the requirements for reporting and recording incidents in relation to lone working			