LONE WORKING POLICY

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| **For further information please contact:** | | | |
| **Name** | **Position** | | **Contact** |
| **Tammy Aucott** | Health & Safety Manager | | barmoorhub@hotmail.com |

**LONE WORKING POLICY**

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# POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets out the approach that Barmoor Hub will undertake in managing Lone Working. Barmoor Hub has a legal duty to look after the health, safety and welfare of its employees and this includes a duty of care to reduce, as far as reasonably practicable the risks associated with lone working within the workplace. These duties are set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Safety Representatives Safety Committee Regulations 1977.

**OUR COMMITMENT**

Barmoor Hub is committed to the provision of a safe place of work for all employees, clients, visitors, contractors, volunteers and those affected by or involved in activities. We will ensure that lone workers are not exposed to additional or greater risk than any other workers. More specifically we will, ensure that Lone workers are identified, hazards and risk are assessed and appropriate action is taken to reduce these risks.

# DEFINITION OF LONE WORKING

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

This can be spilt into two main groups

* + - People who work in fixed establishments e.g. site agents, homeworkers etc.
    - Remote Workers working away from fixed base e.g. drivers, healthcare professionals, social workers, public protection etc.

There is no general legal prohibition on lone working, however the employer must identify the hazards, assess the risks involved, and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks. If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, then other arrangements need to be put in place.

**Classification of Lone Workers**

To assist in determining the level of risk we have identified examples of Low, Medium and High risk.

Category 1 - **Lower risk** situations includes:

* Staff working outside normal hours in an office, library or similar e.g. cleaners, caretakers, security staff.
* Staff who travel alone for significant periods or in circumstances that may give rise to additional risks.

Category 2 - **Medium risk** situations includes:

* use of receptions, counters and interview rooms, and similar where risk of violence and aggression or dangerous situation is reasonably foreseeable and where colleagues cannot be readily called on by the lone worker in the event of an adverse situation arising.

Category 3 - **High risk** situations included:-

* visiting domestic and commercial premises where risk of violence and aggression or dangerous situation is reasonably foreseeable.
* Working out of hours (not in a controlled council facility)
* Working alone with hazardous plant, tools, equipment or chemicals
* Where serious injury may be incurred by the type of work being carried out

# RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO LONE WORKING

Barmoor Hub is responsible for implementing arrangements to ensure lone working is effectively managed and that all employees are made aware of this policy statement and accompanying guidance.

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE’S RESPONSIBILITIES**

* + - Ensuring sufficient resources are made available for the identification and protection of lone workers.
    - Identify any posts that undertake lone working.
    - Putting in place suitable lone working protection systems for all activities within their areas of responsibility.
    - Ensure that lone working risk assessments are undertaken.
    - Ensuring all staff receive relevant training to ensure competency in safety matters.
    - Ensure Lone Workers are not put at more risk than other employees.
    - Ensure all staff receives training in dynamic risk assessment and plan ‘B’ exit strategies.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

* + - Ensure that conflict resolution / lone working/personal safety training is available through the corporate learning and development program.
    - To monitor lone worker training.
    - To maintain a central list of lone workers.
    - Assist Managers to identify the levels of control measures.
    - Advising Managers on the correct lone worker monitoring device if identified by risk assessment.

**MANAGERS / SUPERVISORS RESPONSIBILITIES**

Lone working should carry no more risk than normal working but managers must recognise that the risks to lone workers are greater because there is a reduced level of immediate support available. By following normal risk assessment methods, managers should be able to eliminate, or reduce to an acceptable level, the risks associated with lone working.

* + - * To identify lone workers and hazards by completing a lone worker hazard checklist (appendix 1) for staff or a work team.
      * To carry out a lone working risk assessment (appendix 2) for employees or work team.
      * To implement suitable control measures as identified in risk assessment.
      * To monitoring lone worker protection systems.
      * Ensure that any accident, hazard and violent incidents are reported and any control measures identified are implemented.
      * Ensuring that identified lone working staff, attend relevant training.
      * Ensure that employees, agency and voluntary workers, during their induction period, have adequate additional controls in place.
      * To ensure procedures are in place in an emergency.

**EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITIES**

* + - * Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
      * To assist their manager in completing a lone working hazard checklist.
      * Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working.
      * Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others.
      * Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; and
      * Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

# TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Training to ensure competency is particularly important where supervision is limited. Training may also be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced to understand the risks and precautions fully. Managers and supervisors need to set limits on what can and cannot be done when working alone. Employees must be competent to deal with circumstances that should arise.

Personal safety training will be provided to staff lone working and cover:

* + - Advice and guidance not to go into a situation if you feel at risk.
    - Use of conflict resolution or defusing techniques. These include being aware of non-verbal communication; how to behave in a non-confrontational way; the importance of good customer care; being polite; and listening to clients.
    - To be aware of surroundings .and your own actions and how others may perceive you.
    - Dynamic risk assessments
    - If you feel threatened, make your excuses and leave. Make sure you can leave the premises quickly if you need.

# RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Risk assessment is an integral management tool that should be completed to ensure that employees are safe in their work.

To identify lone workers and the hazards when lone working takes place a Manager should complete a lone worker hazard checklist for an individual or work team (appendix 1).

Hazards include, travel and transport, animals, working practices and patterns e.g. working out of hours, full details on the hazards and risk reduction measures are detailed in G05 Guidance to managing lone working and violence and aggression.

If it is highlighted from the lone worker hazard checklist that the employee/work team are lone workers then their line manager must complete a risk assessment for the individual/work team (appendix 2

**Lone worker identification and risk assessment flow chart**

To identify Lone Working and the hazards

Manager to complete lone worker hazard checklist (appendix 1) for individual employee or work

team

Is lone working occurring?

No

NFA

Yes

Manager to complete a lone working risk assessment (appendix 2)

Are control measures adequate?

Yes

Review procedure and implement further control measures

**Assessment of risk**

No

Review assessment on a regular basis (at least annually)

Staff making an initial visit should have access to all available relevant information in order to make a reasoned judgement of any potential risk.

To facilitate this directorates must share all relevant information and this should be placed on the Special Interests register.

The following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

* + - The environment – location, security, access
    - The context – nature of the task, special circumstances, likely outcomes
    - The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
    - Violence register check - history of any previous incidents in similar situations
    - Any other special circumstances The environment
* It is the responsibility of the manager to assess the risks presented by the building itself – access, layout, furnishings, lighting and temperature control – and to take appropriate action.
* Alarm systems must be accessible, and tested regularly.
* All staff must be familiar with the alarms, and be given clear instructions on how to respond to them.
* If service users are being accompanied on transport or in a public place, or visited at home, there must be an appropriate assessment of the risks this might present.

Personal

* + In order to make a complete assessment, any history of challenging behaviour should be investigated.
  + Any information regarding known triggers must be recorded.
  + Staff must be aware of the effect they may have on the situation through their verbal and non-verbal communication, and take steps to avoid provocation.

Sharing Information

* Information stored locally or on the Special Interests Register should be shared but mindful of issues of confidentiality and data protection.

**Dynamic risk assessment**

Whilst a lone worker risk assessment has been carried out during lone worker the employee should be reviewing their situation as part of a dynamic risk assessment.

If at any time the lone worker is uncomfortable with their position they should call for assistance or remove themselves from the risk. Personal safety training will cover dynamic risk assessments.

**Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring Lone Working - Managers may make periodic visits to locations to ensure their workers are safe e.g. isolated parks, building sites etc. They should also regularly check that measures identified in the risk assessment are in place. For example checking buddy systems work, details of visits are recorded, contact details are up to date and is provided with a monitoring device are being used correctly.

**Review of risk assessment**

All risk assessments must be reviewed at least annually or following a change in circumstance e.g. as reported incident, change in work pattern etc.

General personal safety advice for employees

It is not wise to solely rely on alarm systems or breakaway techniques to get you out of trouble – there are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. Central Bedfordshire Council has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves.

This is not about raising anxiety levels, but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for service users in your care.

**Be aware of the environment**

* Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
* Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use, and ensure that faults are reported /dealt with.
* If your work takes you into areas, which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates, arrange to check in when the visit is over, or work with a partner.
* If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.
* Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings you control.

**Be aware of yourself**

* Think about your body language. What messages are you givingThink about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything, which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.
* Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
* Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

**Be aware of other people**

* Take note of their non-verbal signals.
* Be aware of their triggers.
* Don’t crowd people – allow them space.
* Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don’t make promises which can’t be kept, either on your own or someone else’s behalf.
* Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
* Listen to them, and show them you are listening.

Always report any incidents of violence and aggression to your line manager.

**Appendix 1**

Appendix 1 Lone Worker Hazard Checklist

The checklist below may be used to help managers define the hazards when lone working takes place. The information can then be used within the lone working risk assessment process.

Name of Staff Member or Work Team

Job Title

Description of lone working duties:

Managers name Date checklist completed

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General | Yes/No |
| Do staff work alone? |  |
| Do staff work at a fixed establishment e.g. library, office, home? |  |
| Do staff carry out remote working away from a fixed base? |  |
| **Category 1 Low risk** | |
| Do staff work outside normal office hours in an office, library or similar e.g. cleaners, caretakers, security staff? |  |
| Do staff travel alone for significant periods or in circumstances that may give  rise to additional risks? |  |
| Do staff work in their own home? |  |
| Do staff work in isolation from other at the workplace? |  |
| Do staff visit other employers’ premises but no risk of violence? |  |
| **Category 2 Medium risk** | |
| Do staff use receptions, counters and interviews rooms alone? |  |
| **Category 3 High risk** | |
| Do staff visiting domestic and commercial premises where risk of violence and aggression or dangerous situation is reasonably foreseeable? |  |
| Do staff travel from your own home to visit Clients / Pupil families in their own home then go back home again |  |
| Working out of hours (not in a controlled council facility)? |  |
| Working alone with hazardous plant, tools, equipment or chemicals? |  |
| Where serious injury may be incurred by the type of work being carried out? |  |
| Do staff work outside normal office hours? |  |
| Do staff work on their own in the community |  |
| Do staff travel and work out of county? |  |
| Personal alarms | |
| Have you issued mobile phones to staff? |  |
| Have you issued personal attack alarms to staff? |  |
| Do staff have any other personal alarm or protection devices? |  |
| The staff member | Yes/No |
| Are there any factors why an individual member of staff may be more at risk  when working alone such as: gender, age, disability, race, new or expectant mother, inexperience etc |  |
| Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone (some medical |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| conditions may make lone working more hazardous for the staff member)? |  |
| Has the worker got sufficient information about the job, equipment or substances? |  |
| Are staff trained in safe working practices for lone working? |  |
| Has the staff member demonstrated their ability to do the task satisfactorily? |  |
| Is there appropriate supervision? |  |
| Are staff aware of the emergency procedures in place? |  |
| The general workplace | Yes/No |
| Is the person a key-holder to the premises? |  |
| Is the access to, or exit from, the workplace safe? |  |
| Is the lighting around the premises adequate? |  |
| Do you use entrance security systems (i.e. digital locks or swipe |  |
| cards)? |  |
| Does the workplace allow access to members of the public/service users? |  |
| Are reception/public areas designed in line with Council guidance? |  |
| Is there a risk of violence from members of the public? |  |
| Where work can be carried out away from public areas is this made possible? |  |
| Knowledge of job/location or service user | Yes/No |
| Has the member of staff got sufficient background information on the client/service user? |  |
| Do you include potential or known risk factors in referral documents and care plans? |  |
| Do you share risk information with other professional(s) bodies and agencies? |  |
| Have you a method in place to define whether additional staff (or other agencies such as the Police) need to be present? |  |
| When staff travel to a new location or meeting place are they provided with  sufficient information about the location and site access e.g. parking? |  |
| Meetings and Home Visits | Yes/No |
| Can meetings take place in the main office / interview rooms rather than at a person’s home? |  |
| Are interview rooms designed and set up in line with Council guidelines? |  |
| If interviews take place in a service users home has a plan been made of who must be present and why? |  |
| Do the staff know and understand the Council’s guidelines on carrying out interviews with members of the public in council premises? (Refer to G05  Guidance to Managing Lone working and violence and aggression) |  |
| Do the staff know and understand the Council’s guidelines on carrying out  interviews with members of the public in their own home? (Refer to G05 Guidance to Managing Lone working and violence and aggression) |  |
| Have staff been fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence? |  |
| Do staff carry out visits in high-risk locations (i.e. areas with high crime rates) |  |
| Do staff carry out visits in isolated rural areas? |  |
| Do staff visit unfamiliar clients or service users? |  |
| Do staff visit a high-risk or unstable or unpredictable client group? |  |
| Do staff carry out visits during unsocial hours? |  |
| The type of work | Yes/No |
| Will any part of the work present a physical risk? |  |
| Is equipment safe and regularly maintained? |  |
| Do staff activities involve working in confined spaces? |  |
| Do staff activities involve handling dangerous substances? |  |
| Do staff use machinery? |  |
| What risks will the worker be exposed to in the event of equipment failure? |  |
| Can substances and goods be handled safely/can they be handled by one person? |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Where lifting/manual handling takes place – can the lone worker carry this out in a safe manner? |  |
| Does the worker have the appropriate PPE and is he/she trained in its use? |  |
| Are cash/valuables or medical drugs being carried? |  |
| What First Aid provision is in place? |  |
| Intruders | Yes/No |
| Are procedures in place for dealing with intruders in Council premises? |  |
| Are all staff aware of these procedures? |  |
| Emergency Call-Outs | Yes/No |
| When a call out system is in place are there guidelines to follow in terms of who can attend? |  |
| Have arrangements been made for different times of day/night on who can  attend? |  |
| Are staff aware of these guidelines? |  |
| Travel and Transport | Yes/No |
| Have you considered how staff will travel to and from appointments? |  |
| Are travel arrangements considered as part of the work plan? |  |
| Do staff provide an itinerary when they are working away from the office base? |  |
| Are staff aware of the Council guidelines on travel and transport? |  |
| Do staff have a defined means of contacting managers & colleague if necessary? |  |
| Do you use reporting checking-in systems? |  |
| Do you use mobile phones or other communication systems? |  |
| When valuables are carried in a vehicle are staff aware of the procedures to follow in the storage of these items? |  |
| Supervision | Yes/No |
| Do you carry out regular supervisor or colleague checks during activities? |  |
| Are less experienced and new team members subject to greater supervision as necessary? |  |
| Information and Training | Yes/No |
| Do staff have information and training on basic personal safety? |  |
| Are staff trained in strategies for preventing and managing violence? |  |
| Are staff aware of the lone working procedures for their team and/or workplace? |  |
| Do staff have access to forms for reporting incidents or near misses and |  |
| Reporting systems | Yes/No |
| Are staff aware of the reporting procedures and systems in place (e.g. Violence and Accident Reporting)? |  |
| Other Hazards | Yes/No |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Appendix 2 - Lone Working Risk Assessment template

**Dated**

**LONE WORKER RISK ASSESSMENT**

(To be completed by Line Manager with employee input)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Employee name/work team | | Job Title | |
| Brief description of work: | | | |
| **Hazard** | **Risk**  **L/M/H** | **Control Measures** | **Additional Control Measures to**  **be Considered** |
| **Workplace:** Identify any hazards specific to the workplace / environment which may create particular risks |  |  |  |
| **Process:** Identify any hazards specific to the work which may create particular risks for lone workers e.g. visiting people in their own homes. |  |  |  |
| **Equipment:** Identify any hazards specific to the work equipment which may create particular risks for lone workers  e.g. use of screens |  |  |  |
| **Working with People:** Identify any hazards specific to the working with people (not violence) which create particular risks for the lone workers e.g. manual handling |  |  |  |
| **Violence:** Identify the risk of violence (refer P06 CBC Violence and Aggression policy) |  |  |  |
| **Individual:** Identify any hazards specific to the individual which may create particular risks for lone workers e.g. medical conditions, female, age inexperience. |  |  |  |
| **Work Pattern:** Consider how the lone worker’s work pattern |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| integrates with those of other workers in terms of both time and geography. | |  |  | |  | | | |
| **Training:** Identify the level of information, instruction and training required | | | | | | | | |
| **Has the necessary information, instruction and training been given.** | | | | | | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** |
|  | | | | | |  |  |  |
| **Supervision:** Is suitable supervision in place? (Identify all necessary supervisory measures) | | | | | | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** |
| Periodic telephone contact with lone workers? | | | | | |  |  |  |
| Periodic site visits to lone workers | | | | | |  |  |  |
| Regular Contact (telephone) | | | | | |  |  |  |
| Automatic warning devices | | | | | |  |  |  |
| Manual warning devices e.g. panic alarms etc | | | | | |  |  |  |
| End of task / shift contact | | | | | |  |  |  |
| **Additional Information**  Identify any additional information relevant to the lone working activity, including emergency procedures, first aid provision | | | | | | | | |
| Categorisation of lone work | | | | | | Cat 1 | Cat 2 | Cat 3 |
| Is a Lone Working Device required? Please Yes N | | | | | | | | |
| **Comments:** | | | | | | | | |
| **Assessment carried out by** |  | | |  | | | | |
| **Name** | **Date** | | | **Signed by employee** | | | | |
| **Signature** | **Review Date** | | | **Print Name** | | | | |