

Liverpool Hope University

Lone Working Code of Practice



LIVERPOOL HOPE
UNIVERSITY
1844

Document Control

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1. Introduction

The University recognises that lone working can present specific health and safety risks to staff, students, Degree Apprentices, Post Graduate Researchers (PGR's), visitors, and contractors. Individuals working alone may face increased vulnerability, and as such, lone working activities must be risk assessed to identify any significant hazards. Appropriate control measures should be implemented to eliminate or reduce those risks as far as reasonably practicable. Importantly, lone workers should not be exposed to greater risks than those working alongside others.

2. Duty of the University

The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 requires the University to take reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff, students, visitors and contractors.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999 provides a duty for the University to identify hazards and evaluate and manage health and safety risks, including those associated with lone working whilst undertaking work, research or learning related activity. The University must manage risks to lone workers by:

- Conducting a suitable and sufficient risk assessment
- Providing information, training, supervision and monitoring of lone workers
- keeping in touch and responding to any incidents
- Ensuring staff are protected while working off campus

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, requires the University to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their work. Lone working may present an increased risk of sexual harassment.

3. Definition of Lone Working

A lone worker is defined as somebody who is engaged in activities which places them in a situation without direct contact with University staff or without direct supervision.

Some examples include:

- Only one person present, such as reception staff, front of house staff.
- People working separately from others, such as Plas Caerdeon staff, kitchen staff, Hope shop workers, maintenance workers.
- Working alone in an office and receiving visitors.
- People working outside of normal hours, such as researchers, domestic staff, campus officers, library staff, student recruitment and outreach and transition Team.

4. Responsibilities

Executive Deans and Directors of Professional Services

- Ensure risk assessments covering lone working are in place and regularly reviewed.
- Provide appropriate resources required to implement this Code of Practice.

Heads of Schools and Heads of Departments

- Ensure processes are in place so that lone working activities are risk assessed and managed.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to implement this Code of Practice.

Line Managers

- Ensure that all lone working activities are risk assessed and reviewed at appropriate intervals.
- Controls identified in the risk assessment to reduce the risk to an acceptable level are implemented and monitored.

- Lone workers are appropriately informed/trained in respect of lone working controls and personal safety.
- Lone working arrangements are authorised and appropriately communicated.

Health and Safety Advisor

- Ensure compliance with this Code of Practice through audit, inspection and incident investigation with lone working risk factors.
- Support staff with compliance through guidance and risk assessment.

Staff, Students, PGR's, Degree Apprentices, Visitors and Contractors

- Work safely in accordance with lone working arrangements.
- Follow guidance and specific risk assessment control measures.
- Ensure their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

5. Foreseeable Lone Working Risks

Risks that particularly affect lone workers include:

- Violence at work
- Sexual harassment
- Stress, mental health and wellbeing
- A person's medical suitability to work alone
- The workplace itself, for example, a higher risk hazard environment, a distant, rural or isolated area, travel and international travel.

6. Best Practice and Permissions for Lone Working

- Lone working must be justified and anyone who needs to work alone must receive permission from their line manager.
- During periods of low occupancy, such as evenings, weekends and shutdown periods, staff resources to support health and safety and emergencies, such as fire marshals and first aiders are significantly reduced, and so awareness of staff on campus during low occupancy periods is essential, particularly while lone working.
- When non-routine or ad-hoc working is necessary and not part of an established event, staff should follow health and safety best practice by informing Campus Services at the campus security lodge of their working location and expected duration of work. This ensures support can be provided in the event of an emergency, such as a fire or medical incident.
- Working on campus during university shutdowns, such as the Christmas period should be avoided. The Estates Services Manager and Health and Safety Advisor should be consulted for the purposes of health and safety assessment if working during such periods is necessary.
- Lone working off campus should be captured and mitigated by following University international travel risk assessment template guidance with specific risk sections on lone working and female lone working, and UK based assessment and short travel checklist for travel such as conferencing and meetings.
- University staff working from home should consider any potential lone working risks or vulnerabilities and discuss these with their line manager. Staff should follow guidance set out in the [Guidance and Health and Safety Checklist for Homeworking](#).
- When a line manager receives a request for permission to undertake lone working, a risk assessment with suitable control measures is required. The University risk

assessment template form is available on the University website together with risk assessment guidance. If you require training on how to complete a risk assessment, please contact the University Health and Safety Advisor.

- When a line manager has completed a risk assessment in collaboration with the lone worker, the line manager must then seek approval from the Head of School, Department or Director/Head of Professional Service. Where lone working is authorised, the managers and the lone worker must ensure that the necessary control measures have been put in place.
- Students, PGR's, Degree Apprentices and visitors should be told to report to Campus Security Lodge if they are planning on working alone, especially if it is out of normal hours or if the person requires assistance in the event of a medical emergency or an emergency evacuation. The responsibility for this will rest with those who have invited the visitors onto University premises and in the case of students, PGR's and degree Apprentices, their academic tutors/lecturers.
- The risks associated with groups of people using University buildings outside of hours should be considered. This is of particular importance when the group is external and is not being supervised by a person(s) who is familiar with the emergency procedures for the building. The University department responsible for hiring out the space to the group should ensure that the group is provided with appropriate information and foreseeable risks have been considered in discussion with the group leader.
- Not all lone working can be managed in advance as some will need to occur at short notice. In such circumstances, dynamic risk assessments will need to be made.
- Consistent with best practice, any staff, students, PGR's, Degree Apprentices or visitors working alone outside of standard working hours, must inform a responsible person of their whereabouts. This person may be a Campus Operative located in the Security Lodge if at Hope Park or at the Creative Campus. The lone worker should provide their location and expected time of duration of work at other locations staff must comply with local requirements for lone working.
- Anyone wishing to work on their own must consider the risks involved, take care of their own health and safety and must not undertake activities that put them or others at significant risk.

7. Practical Guidance - Completing a risk assessment

The lone worker and their line manager should undertake a lone working risk assessment as a collaborative exercise. The agreed safe working procedures must be recorded and communicated to everyone who may be required to work alone, and any colleagues who have a role to play in ensuring their safety.

In addition to ([Appendix 1](#)), the following table contains some key questions to consider when identifying the specific hazards of lone working. These questions should be evaluated when undertaking a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

Question	Example Considerations
Does the workplace present a special risk to a lone worker?	The environment, location, contents, unfamiliarity, medical condition of the person.
Does the activity present a special risk to a lone worker?	Equipment, process, substances, location, time, members of public, handling cash etc.
Is there a safe way in and out for one person?	In the course of normal work and in the event of an emergency.
Can the equipment be adequately controlled and handled by one person?	Manual handling, operation of essential/emergency controls
Can all substances and materials be safely handled by one person?	Flammables, chemicals, toxins.
Does the lone worker have access to first aid materials and support?	Work environment and locations are there adequate first aid arrangements, materials and first aiders.
Does the lone worker have access to suitable means of communication and means of summoning assistance if required?	Telephone, mobile, radio, inactivity alarm, personal alarm.
Is there a risk of violence associated with the work activity, location and/or persons involved?	Previous history of verbal threats, violence, interaction with public. Has the person had specific training to deal with this?
Is there a risk of sexual harassment associated with the work activity, location and or/ persons involved?	University staff should be well informed of sexual harassment reporting procedures and University sexual harassment policy to allow them to recognise and respond to sexual harassment from interactions with any third party.
Is the lone worker more at risk due to inexperience?	Maturity, familiarity with procedures, knowledge and experience, particularly young and new workers.
Has the employee received sufficient information, instruction and training to enable the work to be undertaken safely whilst alone? And, has the employee received specific training in how to respond to foreseeable emergencies that may arise in the course of their work alone?	Examples of relevant training and considerations may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have they completed fire awareness training? • Are they competent with required equipment? • Are they aware of relevant emergency plans?
What arrangements are in place to provide adequate supervision?	Periodic visits, use of local security staff, signing in/out, periodic contact arrangements, open diaries, CCTV, inactivity alarms, 'permits to work'.
Are there contingency plans in place should an alert or alarm be raised by a lone worker? Are these plans well known and rehearsed?	Would you or your colleagues know what to do and whom to contact?
Are clear written procedures established by Schools and Departments?	What activities should be prohibited for lone working (e.g. working in the laboratories or in workshop areas.)

8. General Control Measures – Reducing the risk of lone working

For every lone working hazard, controls should be put in place to minimise the risk. Staff should consider alternative work methods, training, supervision and protective equipment.

Risk control considerations:

- Specific information, instruction and training (emergency procedures, out-of- hours procedures, personal safety training).
- Increased communication systems or procedures (regular prearranged contact by mobile phone for example).
- Increased supervision.
- Increased security (CCTV, secure access, personal alarms).
- Use of safe systems of work (“permit to work” to control scope of activities).
- Buddy systems.
- Increased lighting at entrances, exits, car parks.

9. Further Guidance

- HSE Document “Working Alone” INDG73 <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>
- ACAS Guidance on sexual harassment at Work <https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment>
- HSE Guidance on Violence and aggression at work. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/>
- University [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

Appendix 1: Lone Working Risk Assessment – Detailed Guidance

Managing the Risk

As part of the risk assessment process, you should consider the following preventive and protective control measures to manage the risks associated with lone working:

- Avoid lone working
- Restrict lone working to low-risk activities when possible
- Undertake relevant training
- Communication and/or check in procedures
- Buddy systems
- Contact names/escalation procedures
- Clear procedures – as a result of your lone working risk assessment

Assessing the Risk

When assessing the risks associated with lone working activities (via the University's standard risk assessment procedure): You will need to consider the following factors:

Individual

- Who is going to be lone working?
- Is the person suitably trained and competent to complete the task on a lone working basis?
- Are they at any increased risk by working alone (e.g. young persons, inexperienced persons or expectant mothers)?
- Do they have a health condition – are they suitably fit to work alone?
- Do they have an injury or disability, which may increase risks to them by working alone?
- Is English their first language? If not, you should ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to provide clear communications, especially in an emergency.

Environment

- Where is the lone working to be completed?
- Is the work environment suitable for lone working, does it present any particular risks for lone workers?
- Is there safe access and egress to and from the place of work (including in the event of an emergency)?

Emergency arrangements

- Are the normal fire safety and first aid arrangements different when the lone working is taking place (i.e. out of hours)?
- Does the lone worker fully understand how the emergency arrangements work?
- Are arrangements in place in the event that the lone worker is faced with sexual harassment, violent or aggressive behaviour from a member(s) of the public? This may include assessing safe exit/escape routes, testing panic alarm arrangements etc.

Communication

- Are there communication arrangements in place for the period that lone working will take place?
- Are buddy systems in place if required?
- Are relevant contact details held for the lone worker and secondary contacts in the event they are needed?
- Are clear escalation and reporting arrangements in place should they be required?

Travel arrangements

- Is there any additional risk to the lone worker associated with travel to and from the place of work? This could include working in the community as well as out of hours/shift work and should consider arriving home safely following lone working.

Work, equipment and substances

- Is the person competent to carry out the work that they will be doing on a lone working basis?
- Can all equipment and materials involved in the work be safely used including any lifting activities by one person, or are the risks increased?
- Is there a risk of accidental release of substances which could cause acute injury or require extensive decontamination? e.g. gas release, explosion, spillage, etc. Please note: There are some situations under which lone working is prohibited.

Working with the public

- Consider the design, layout and exit/escape routes from (for example) an office where the lone worker is with a member of the public e.g. research
- Has the lone worker been provided with personal safety, de-escalation, conflict resolution, breakaway training etc as necessary?
- If possible, consider the profile of those who the lone worker is coming into contact with. Is there a risk of unpredictable or challenging behaviour?
- Consider the emergency arrangements in the event of violent or aggressive behaviour.

Psychosocial issues

- In the event that lone working is being undertaken over an extended period, have mental health related issues concerning isolation etc. been taken into consideration?

Sexual Harassment

Staff who work alone may face an increased risk of sexual harassment. The University provides an online sexual harassment [Reporting Tool](#) to allow staff to access advice and support.

Staff working alone should be aware of what actions to take if subject to sexual harassment, and the [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Handling of Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) provides information on University sexual harassment and misconduct procedures. The University can mitigate the risk of sexual harassment during lone working by:

- Notifying known third parties of University standards surrounding sexual harassment.
- Conducting regular check-ins with lone workers to ensure their wellbeing and help identify any potential sexual harassment issues.
- Considering the implementation of safety measures, which may serve as deterrents and provide a sense of security. The University has established methods for this such as CCTV and panic buttons in higher risk areas.
- Avoiding lone working and make efforts to ensure that there are two members of staff on duty whenever possible.

Monitoring and Review

Lone working risk assessments should be reviewed annually, following an incident or whenever there is a change that affects the risks involved. This guidance will be reviewed if there are any significant changes to legislation.

Risk Rating

While there is no legal prohibition on all lone working, there are some specific areas of work classed as high-risk (e.g. confined space work) where lone working is prohibited.

In addition, your risk assessment may identify some medium-risk circumstances where the risks involved cannot be adequately controlled, where lone working is not acceptable and should be prohibited e.g. work with certain hazardous substances.

High-Risk Lone Working

High-risk lone working must not take place on University premises in the following situations (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- Entry into confined spaces where there may be a risk of asphyxiation, contact with hazardous substances (biological and chemical), fire or explosion risk etc.
- Working at or near exposed live electricity conductors or live uninsulated electrical conductors.
- Work with any hazardous substances where first aid treatment must be administered immediately.
- Working at height in any place where a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.
- Work in laboratories with flammable liquids or/and gases, asphyxiants, toxic or/and corrosive substances, biological agents and any chemicals that present a risk to health.
- Working with dangerous machinery where there is a risk of entanglement, entrapment, crushing, impact or injury from cutting or shearing, stabbing or puncture is prohibited whilst lone working.

The high-risk activities above must always take place accompanied by another person.

Lower Risk Lone Working

In many situations such as office work or routine cleaning, the risks of lone working are no greater than being alone at home and can take place without additional precautions or with only minor adjustments to working practices as part of the main risk assessment. The main perceived risk may be to personal safety and security, either from intruders in the building, or from walking alone to the car park or public transport, particularly if this is late at night or in the dark. Basic precautions can be taken, such as locking the office door, arranging to walk to the car park with a colleague, keeping to well-lit areas and not taking short-cuts.

Escalation Process

It is important to outline a risk-based escalation process in the risk assessment detailing who should be notified if a lone worker cannot be contacted or if they fail to contact the relevant individual within agreed or reasonable timescales. The escalation process should provide identification of contact points at appropriate stages which may include, line manager, senior manager, Campus Services and, ultimately, the police. Any individual nominated in an escalation process should be fully aware of their role and responsibilities.

Buddy System

It is essential that lone workers keep in contact with colleagues and ensure that they make another colleague aware of their movements. This can be done by implementing management procedures such as the 'buddy system'.

To operate the buddy system, managers must ensure that a lone worker nominates a buddy. This is a person who is their nominated contact for the period in which they will be working alone. The nominated buddy will:

- Be fully aware of the movements of the lone worker
- Have all necessary contact details for the lone worker
- Attempt to contact the lone worker if they do not contact the buddy as agreed
- Follow the agreed local escalation procedures for alerting their senior manager and Campus Services if the lone worker cannot be contacted or if they fail to contact their buddy within agreed and reasonable timescales.

The buddy must understand their role and what the procedures and requirements are. Contingency arrangements should be in place for someone else to take over the role of the buddy in case the nominated person is unavailable, for example if the lone working situation extends past the end of the nominated person's normal working day or period of work if this varies, or if the nominated person is away on annual leave or absent.