

# Eastwood Park Academy Trust (EPAT)

EPAT

Believe Succeed Together

## Lone Working Policy

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## 1.0 Lone Working Activities

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as *'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'*. Staff do not have to be working out in the community to be alone, they may be working in an isolated part of an office, establishment or in a service user's room. Many staff work alone, for all or part of their time, in situations where colleagues are not within hearing distance. The following are examples of lone working:

People in fixed establishments where:

- Only one person works at the premises, e.g. first person in/last person out.
- People work separately from others, e.g. in isolated areas of the site.
- They are working from home.
- People work outside normal hours, e.g. maintenance staff, cleaners, night staff.

Mobile or peripatetic workers operating away from their fixed base:

- 'Service' workers, e.g. specialist support teachers and school staff making home visits.
- Visitors to other workplaces, e.g. staff attending meetings, on construction or maintenance activities.

## 2.0 Lone Working Risk Assessment

Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, a risk assessment of lone working tasks must be carried out.

Lone working issues may be considered as part of an overall risk assessment of a job role or activity. However, where lone working has not been considered as part of other risk assessments, a specific risk assessment must be carried out. To assist in this process a Lone Working Risk Assessment Form is provided in **Appendix 1**.

The main principle to be applied when assessing the risk of lone working is one of 'foreseeability' i.e. that it is possible, based on knowledge and experience, to predict the nature of risks that an employee could be subjected to. It follows that, it is therefore possible to consider what arrangements could successfully eliminate, or where this is not possible, reduce the risk to an acceptable level. The knowledge of the job that and of the potential risks to which staff may be exposed will assist to make the assessment.

Although it is possible to establish some generic type rules and arrangements that will help to control the risks of working alone, in most cases there is still a need to also consider each set of circumstances separately.

### 2.1 Identifying Lone Working Tasks and Activities

The first stage in the risk assessment process is to identify known and foreseeable lone working tasks and activities.

It is recognised that the hazards presented by a particular lone working task may vary, e.g. meeting members of the public compared to meeting members of the public with a known history of

violence. The factors that could make a task more hazardous should be identified when listing lone working activities.

Where lone working has the potential to lead to violence and aggression it is essential to identify the causes in order to prevent it. It is recommended that the following areas are considered in the risk assessment:

**The client** – anything the client brings to the situation that could contribute towards violence, e.g. previous history/lack of history.

**The employee** – factors which may increase or decrease the chances of violence occurring, e.g. level of appropriate training and experience, representing authority.

**What the work involves** – the interaction which takes place between employee and client, for example, enforcing rules, carrying out inspections.

**Working environment** – this involves looking at the physical setting in which the work is carried out, for example, a home visit, rural areas.

## 2.2 Identifying the Hazards

The second phase of the risk assessment is to identify the potential hazards. This can be achieved by considering the various factors involved in any given work situation e.g.

### Time and Place

- The degree of isolation.
- Safe access and egress.
- Whether the workplace is in a known 'high risk' area.
- Type and effectiveness of any communication systems.
- Condition of building/work space, i.e. state of repair, lighting, etc.
- Increased risk times, i.e. time of day or day of the week.
- Travel arrangements, including vehicle breakdown whilst driving alone.
- Environmental conditions, i.e. weather conditions, temperature, sunlight, pollution, levels of light, etc.

### The Task

- Risks whilst travelling/driving/travel on foot.
- Risk of violence/aggression.
- Visiting clients' homes.
- Manual handling tasks, can they be done safely by a lone worker?
- Can all potentially hazardous substances, (chemicals, biological agents) be safely used?
- Can all plant and equipment to be used be safely handled and used by a lone worker?
- Does the task involve the handling of money or valuables?
- Does the task involve the use of statutory powers?
- Does the task involve breaking bad news, changing/withdrawing a service?

- Client factors, both group generic and person specific.
- Does the task involve working with electrical equipment and appliances?
- Working at heights, below ground or on uneven ground such as construction sites.
- Risk from hot work processes.
- Confined spaces.

### **Fitness and Competence**

- Does the lone worker have a medical condition, i.e. disability, pregnancy, injury?
- Is the lone worker sufficiently competent for the task, including for emergencies, (young workers are specifically at risk due to their lack of experience)?
- Gender, physical ability, age.
- Is the lone worker provided with information about the risks involved with the tasks?
- Are there any arrangements for contact between the lone worker and colleagues/managers?

### **Tasks that are Unsafe to be Carried Out by a Lone Worker**

In circumstances where, even with all the controls in place, the risk assessment identifies that it is not possible for a task to be carried out safely by a lone worker, then it should only be done by two people.

### **2.3 Controls**

There are a number of controls that can help to reduce risk when working alone. It is always advisable to avoid working alone if to do so increases the risk of harm. Where this is not practical, or necessary, appropriate controls should be agreed and implemented to ensure that the risks of working alone are reduced to acceptable levels.

Where there is no regular supervision, to control and guide in situations of uncertainty, lone workers need to fully understand the risks involved and the necessary precautions.

Procedures for emergencies should be agreed and employees must be competent to implement them correctly and appropriately and should include consideration of:

- Security of site and buildings e.g. one way closing, entry-phone system, etc.
- Call in arrangements or employee contact after a specified period of no contact.
- Suitable means to respond to any distress call or failure to communicate when one is expected.
- Access to a telephone to call emergency services, preferably mobile.
- Contact points in the event of an emergency, including key personnel.
- Clear and easy access to a first aid box or emergency first aid.
- Panic alarms/personal alarms.
- Personal safety training.

When out and about alone, staff should remember:

- Trust your intuition. If you feel concerned do not ignore the feeling, act immediately.
- Always be alert, keep your head up when out walking and look confident.

- Avoid unlit areas, short cuts and unfamiliar territory.
- Always know where you are going and how to get there.
- Walk facing traffic (if forced to use the road).
- Keep away from obstructions that could provide cover for would be assailants.
- Always inform the office/manager if you change your arrangements.

# Appendix 1

## Lone Working Risk Assessment Form

Name of team/section/unit:	Assessment by:	Date of assessment:
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Lone working tasks/activities with risks (List below)	Who is at risk?	How can the hazards cause harm? (E.g. violence, falls from height, manual handling injuries, etc.)	Normal Control Measures	Are normal control measures adequate?	
				Yes	No
Lone Working Working offsite alone Home visits etc. Carrying cash / valuables	Staff colleagues	Accident / injury, delayed assistance in emergency  Physical assault / verbal abuse / threatening behaviour  Cuts/abrasions, muscular skeletal and other physical injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For home visits background information on the family/address is gathered beforehand, and perhaps a specific risk assessment conducted if necessary</li> <li>Where higher risk identified visits not to be conducted alone.</li> <li>Reduce time spent working alone so far as is reasonably practicable.</li> <li>All staff to be familiar with lone working procedures</li> <li>Mobile phone available charged and switched on.</li> <li>Lone worker devices supplied to staff (see appendix a)</li> <li>Agreed schedule – times and location of visits to be known.</li> <li>Call in arrangements in place (enter details).</li> <li>Response procedure in event of overdue contact.</li> <li>Contact point available in office</li> <li>Staff own experience and training in recognising signs of aggression and avoiding / de-escalating this.</li> <li>Regular supervision and arrangements for debrief / feedback from staff.</li> </ul>		

<b>Are all people carrying out lone working tasks medically fit to work alone?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If no, discuss this with the individuals concerned and record separately (to maintain confidentiality) any adjustments to their work that are necessary.		

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<b>Additional Control Measures</b> <i>(to take account of local/individual circumstances including changes such as working practices, equipment, staffing levels).</i>	<b>Action by Whom</b> <i>(list the name of the person/people who have been designated to conduct actions)</i>	<b>Action by When</b> <i>(set timescales for the completion of the actions – remember to prioritise them)</i>	<b>Action Completed</b> <i>(record the actual date of completion for each action listed)</i>	<b>Residual Risk Rating</b>
Consideration given to staff at increased risk i.e. new or expectant mothers, fractious history or relationship with client, inexperienced staff etc. and lone working activities avoided where practicable.				
<b>DATE OF REVIEW:</b>	<b>COMMENTS:</b>			