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LONE WORKER PROCEDURE

Introduction and Aim

The procedure outlines the overarching process for lone working, covering all Directorates and applies to All Public Health Wales NHS Trust staff.
The purpose is to protect staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working. To protect the wellbeing of staff from criminal attacks, abuse or sudden onset of ill health when engaged in lone working situations. The Trust fulfils it legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and outlines responsibilities for the Chief Executive and delegated responsibility as outlined in the Health and Safety Policy.

Linked Policies, Procedures and Written Control Documents

All corporate policies and procedures are available on the Public Health Wales website

- Health and Safety Policy
- Violence and Aggression Procedure
- Incident Management Policy
- Risk Assessment Procedure
- All Wales Violence and Aggression Information and Passport Scheme

Scope

All persons employed or engaged by Public Health Wales, including part time workers, temporary and agency workers, those holding honorary contracts and those engaged by the NHS Wales Health Collaborative and Finance Delivery Unit, who experience or supervise lone working as part of their role.

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	An Equality, Welsh Language and Health Impact Assessment has been completed and can be viewed on the policy webpages
Approved by	Health and Safety Group

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Disclaimer

If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the Board Business Unit

Summary of reviews/amendments				
Version number	Date of Review	Date of Approval	Date published	Summary of Amendments
V3	2023	13/10/23	22/02/24	
V2	2018	09/04/18	16/04/18	
V1	2019	11/2005	11/2005	

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1   Introduction

Public Health Wales has a duty of care to its lone working staff, both in the community and on its property. Working alone is not in itself against the law and will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone.

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act etc., 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply. These require identifying the hazards, assessing the risks, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks identified. Public Health Wales is committed to ensuring this duty is fulfilled, by providing lone workers sufficient information, instruction and training to make them competent to deal with hazards that may be found in the workplace.

This procedure covers all Public Health Wales employees, contractors and the self-employed who have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and of others who may be affected by their activities and to cooperate with the employer in meeting their legal obligations.

Within the organisation managers have delegated responsibility for ensuring the pro-active risk assessment of activities within their area/remit for lone workers is completed by competent staff. Managers should promote staff participation in the risk assessment process and ensure that health and safety issues that may affect lone workers are identified and discussed and included on the risk assessment form.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Trust Health and Safety Policy and the Management of Violence and Aggression Procedure and Incident Reporting Policy.

2   Scope

All persons employed or engaged by Public Health Wales, including part time workers, temporary and agency workers, those holding honorary contracts and those engaged by the NHS Wales Health Collaborative and Finance Delivery Unit.

3   Legislative and national initiatives

- Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- All Wales Violence and Aggression Information and Passport Scheme
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- HSE Working alone guidance INDG73(rev 4) published 03/20

4   Definitions

A Lone Worker can be defined as any staff member who carries out their work activity alone without close or direct supervision and out of visual / aural contact with other members of staff who would be available to assist in an emergency.

This includes staff who:

• work at a fixed location
• work from home
• are mobile and move from one location to another
• work with patients in the community
• work on call or out of hours.

Lone working activities are performed in office, laboratory, hospital, home and community environments by a wide range of staff including, occupational therapists, health protection, receptionists, drivers, cleaners, new-born hearing screeners, not an exhaustive list). Explanation of any key terms used throughout the policy.

The Health and Safety Executive definition is "Lone Workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision" either in a fixed location or mobile workers. Working alone: Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working – http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

5   Roles and responsibilities

5.1   Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall accountability for the management of Lone Workers and for ensuring an effective Trust Lone Working Procedure is implemented.

5.2 Deputy Chief Executive / Executive Director of Operations and Finance

The Deputy Chief Executive /Executive Director of Operations and Finance is the Executive Lead for Health and Safety and responsible for ensuring that the procedure is promoted and communicated across the Trust.

5.3 Executive Directors and Executive Team Members / Director of the NHS Wales Collaborative

Will support the Deputy Chief Executive / Executive Director of Operations and Finance to ensure that an effective Risk Management System is in place within their Directorates/Divisions and Teams. Also responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are completed in line with Trust Policy, local procedures are introduced, and safe systems of work are adopted. Risk controls should be identified that are proportionate to the risk.

5.4 Managers/Supervisors

The line manager/supervisor has explicit responsibility to identify and record all those staff members who are lone workers under their control. The local record of lone workers must be periodically reviewed and updated. The line manager has a responsibility to ensure that the lone worker procedure is implemented and disseminated to lone working staff for which they are responsible. They must ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is conducted in consultation with appropriate people (e.g., lone workers, security lead and health and safety manager), thus ensuring that all risks from lone working are identified and appropriate control measures introduced to minimise, control or remove them.

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring pro-active risk assessment of any lone working tasks or activities within their remit. The risk assessment should identify hazards that the workplace itself presents, and should include the risk to the lone worker of violence and aggression, or from the activity being completed whilst working alone e.g., manual handling, working at height etc. Managers/supervisors should also consider the individuals medical suitability to work alone and where appropriate refer staff with medical conditions to Occupational Health for advice.

These control measures will include ensuring that lone workers receive sufficient information, training, instructions and advice. The line manager must also ensure that any physical measures are put in place, appropriate technology is made available and, where the safety of lone workers is threatened, that alternative arrangements can be made. The line manager must undertake a periodic review to ensure that all measures are effective and continue to meet the requirements of the lone worker.

If a lone worker incident occurs, the line manager must ensure that the employee involved completes an incident report (Datix), conducts an investigation into the incident and reviews existing control measures. If an incident occurs, i.e., the staff member goes missing; the line manager should contact the police and the trust lead for security.

5.5   Staff

All staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety, and ensuring others are not harmed or injured by their activities. Staff must cooperate with the employer, by reporting health or medical conditions which may make them more vulnerable when working alone. Also discussing safety related issues and participate in risk assessment when requested.

The key areas for staff are:

- ensure that you perform your duties in a safe way
- follow the Trust policies, local procedures and safe systems of work
- take reasonable steps to protect yourself when working alone
- do not take unnecessary risks
- discuss health or medical conditions with your manager
- ensure someone is aware of your whereabouts

5.6   Lone Workers

Staff members have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and to cooperate with the Trust under health and safety legislation. This includes making full use of risk assessments, client/patient information, local standard operating procedures, appropriate training and training in the use of any technology issued and advice from their line manager regarding lone working.

Staff should plan appropriately and risk-assess before commencing lone working, undertake continuous dynamic risk assessment of the

situation that they find themselves in, being aware of any changing circumstances and taking necessary action to minimise the possibility of an incident occurring.

Under no circumstances must an employee put themselves at risk. If a situation arises that they are unfamiliar with or in which they feel unsafe, they should withdraw to a designated place of safety and seek further advice and assistance.

If an incident occurs, even if it is considered a minor incident, the staff member must complete an incident form so that the line manager can complete an investigation and review the lone worker risk assessment.

6   Lone Working Undertakings

Management instructions to staff should make it clear that they should not enter into a lone working situation where they feel their safety or the safety of their colleagues/others could be compromised. Staff should not be penalised for not performing their duties if they perceive that their personal security and safety may be in jeopardy. However, this needs to be balanced against providing a good standard of care for the client/patient or undertakings of the Trust. Where there are perceived or real risks, alternative provision should be made, such as arranging appointments in a secure premises or organising accompanied visits.

7   Lone Worker Movements (Whereabouts)

Lone workers should always ensure that someone else, a manager or appropriate colleague, is aware of their working locations and travel arrangements. This means providing them with the address of where they will be working, details of the people they will be working with or visiting, telephone numbers and expected arrival and departure times. Details of vehicles used by lone workers should also be left with a manager or colleague, for example, registration number, make, model and colour.

Arrangements should be in place to ensure that if a colleague with whom details have been left leaves work, they will pass the details to another colleague. If details have been left on a whiteboard they must not be erased until it has been confirmed that the lone worker has returned safely or completed their duties that day. Procedures should also be in place to ensure that the lone worker is in regular contact with

their manager or relevant colleague, particularly if they are delayed or have to cancel an appointment.

Where there is genuine concern, as a result of a lone worker failing to attend a visit or meeting within an agreed time, or to make contact as agreed, the manager should ascertain whether they turned up for previous appointments that day. Depending on the circumstances and whether contact through normal means, mobile phone, pager, etc., can be made, the manager or colleague should involve the police.

If it is thought that the lone worker may be at risk, it is important that matters are dealt with quickly, after considering the available facts. If police involvement is needed, they should be given full access to information held and personnel who may hold it, if that information might help trace the lone worker and provide a fuller assessment of any risks they may be facing.

See Appendix A for further information and guidance and details of specific scenarios where lone working can occur and areas for consideration.

8   Buddy System

It is essential that lone workers keep in contact with colleagues and ensure that they make another colleague aware of their movements. Implementing management procedures such as a 'buddy' system can do this. To operate a buddy system, a lone worker must nominate a work colleague as 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 work locations and travel arrangements of the lone worker
- have all necessary contact details for the lone worker, including next of kin
- have details of the lone workers known breaks or rest periods
- attempt to contact the lone worker if they do not contact the buddy agreed
- follow the agreed local escalation procedures for alerting their senior manager and/or the police if the lone worker cannot be contacted or if their buddy within agreed and reasonable timescales.

The following are essential to the effective operation of the buddy system:

- the buddy must be made aware that they have been nominated and what the procedures and requirement for this role 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 shift, if the shift varies (if applicable), or if the nominated person is away on annual leave or off sick.

8.1   Code Words / Phrases

Code words or phrases can be used to signal for help, for instance if the lone worker calls the base or their 'buddy' and asks ... "Did I leave a red file on my desk?" this could be a signal to trigger an emergency response. (This is only an example)

It is important to bear in mind that frequently used or well-published code words and phrases may also be well known to the clients.

9   Escalation Process

It is important local standard operating procedures include an escalation process, outlining who should be notified if a lone worker cannot be contacted or if they fail to contact the relevant 'buddy' or manager within agreed or reasonable timescales. The escalation process should include risk assessment and identification of contact points at appropriate stages, including a line manager, senior manager and, ultimately, the police. Any individual nominated as an escalation point should be fully aware of their role and its responsibilities.

A flowchart providing further detail of this process is included in Appendix D.

10   Management of the Lone Worker Risk

Public Health Wales is required to implement measures to manage, control and mitigate risks to lone workers. The measures should be proportionate to the level of risk. The measures should be achievable, commensurate with the risk identified, and realistic. Any associated costs need to be included not only in terms of resources and purchasing equipment but also staffing, training and expertise. Measures might

include removing systemic weaknesses that have allowed these incidents to take place, indemnifying further training needs of staff in relation to the prevention and management of violence, or other training such as correctly identifying and operating any relevant technology.

11   Risk Assessment

The identification of risks relies on using all available information in relation to lone working to ensure that the risk of future incidents can be minimised. This includes from operational experience or previous incidents and involving feedback from staff and stakeholders. It is therefore essential that staff are encouraged to report all incidents, so that a risk assessment can be carried out, appropriate action taken, and control measures put in place.

Further information and guidance on the risk assessment and process including the risk assessment template can be found in the appendices.

11.1   Key to Risk Assessment

To understand how and why incidents occur in lone working situations and learn from that understanding is key to make improvements to controls and systems to reduce the risk of lone workers. To achieve this, the following factors should be considered and documented; type of incident risk (e.g. physical assault/theft of property or equipment), frequency/likelihood of the incident recurring and having an impact on individuals, resources and delivery of care/or service, severity of the incident: costs to the NHS organisation in human and financial terms, confidence that the necessary control measures are in place or improvements are being made, the level of concern and rated risk, what further mitigation action needs to be taken to ensure that improvements are made and risks reduced.

11.2   Identification of risk for lone workers

The risk identification process should be carried out to identify the risks to lone workers and any others who may be affected by their work. This information is needed to make decisions on how to manage those risks and ensure that action taken is proportionate. Risk factors might include:

- community lone working groups

- working conditions – abnormal and hazardous conditions, such as an isolated workplace, poor lighting etc.
- risk to lone workers with medication on their person, particularly controlled drugs
- staff delivering unwelcome information or bad news
- increased risk of violence from service users/clients/patients due to alcohol or drug abuse, drug misuse or non-compliance in relation to their clinical condition or response to treatment, and the risk of violence from their carers, relatives or visitors
- lone worker wearing uniforms, travelling between certain environments or setting and visiting the same destination over a number of occasions especially at the same time
- lone workers carrying equipment that makes them a target for theft or makes them less able to protect themselves
- evaluation of capability to undertake lone working – for example, being inexperienced.

12   Dynamic Risk Assessment

During a lone working community visit, a dynamic risk assessment focuses on reducing the prevalence of a problem which wouldn't have necessarily been foreseen. 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 or 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.

12.1   The dynamic risk assessment involves staff

- being alert to warning signs as covered in appropriate 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 good escape, i.e., where possible, being 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 (scissors, scalpels etc.), 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., mobile phone, or other appropriate devices to raise the alarm)
- ensuring that when they enter a confined area or room, they can operate the door lock/release mechanism in case they need to make an emergency exit
- avoid walking in front of service user/patient/client, and not positioning themselves in a corner or in a situation where it may be difficult to escape
- remaining calm and focussed during an incident in order to make rational judgements
- being aware of their body language (as well as that of the service user/patient/client), as there is a risk of exacerbating the situation

12.2 Recognising warning signs

Lone workers should be able to recognise the risks presented by those who are under the influence of alcohol/drugs or are confused, or where animals may be present. Being alert to these warning signs will allow the lone worker to consider all the facts to make a dynamic risk assessment and, therefore, a judgement as to the best course of action (for example, to continue with their work or to withdraw). At no point should the lone worker place themselves or their service user/patient/client at risk of danger.

13 Dealing with 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 animal before arrival of the PHW staff. 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, to minimise the possibility of a reaction from the animal. Alternatively, 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 an aggressive animal confronts a lone worker on a visit to a patient, they should not put themselves at risk. If necessary, they should abandon the visit and report the incident. This information should then

be disseminated to other relevant PHW staff to reduce the risk of another incident occurring.

14   Lone Working and Vehicles

Before setting out, lone workers should ensure that they have planned the journey and have adequate fuel for their journey. They should give themselves enough time for the journey to avoid rushing or taking unnecessary risks. Items such as bags, cases, controlled drugs and other equipment should never be left visible in the vehicle. These should be out of sight, preferably in the boot of the vehicle. Lone workers should always hold the vehicle keys in their hand when leaving the premises, to avoid being distracted by searching for them when outside. A visual check should be made of the outside of the vehicle. The inside of the vehicle should also be checked for possible intruders before entering.

Once inside the vehicle, all doors should be locked, especially when travelling at slow speed, when stationary at traffic lights and when travelling in high-risk areas. Some staff may understandably feel that a locked door may prevent them from escaping or receiving help in the event of an incident. However, modern vehicles and rescue techniques make this less of a factor than it may seem. Lone workers should always try to park close to the location they are visiting and should never take short cuts to save time. At night or in poor weather conditions, they should park in a well-lit area and facing the direction in which they will leave.

They should ensure that all the vehicle's windows are closed, and the doors locked. Lone workers should avoid parking on the driveway of the property they are visiting as their vehicle may be blocked in, delaying or preventing escape. The Health and Safety Executive's safe driver training programmes advise that lone workers should reverse into car parking spaces so that the door can act as a barrier.

Lone workers driving alone, especially after dark, should not stop, even for people who may appear to be in distress or require help. The lone worker should stop in a safe in a safe place and contact the emergency services as appropriate. If followed, or concerned that they might have been followed, lone workers should drive to the nearest police station or manned and well-lit building, such as a petrol station, too request assistance.

In case of vehicle breakdown or incident, lone workers should contact their manager, 'buddy' or colleague immediately. If they need to leave the vehicle to use an emergency telephone, they should put their hazard warning lights on, lock their vehicle and ensure that they are visible to passing traffic. Lone workers should not display signs such as 'doctor on call' or 'nurse on call' as this may encourage thieves to break into the vehicle, to steal drugs for example. Lone workers should avoid having items in their vehicle that contain personal details, such as their home address.

15   Lone Working Travelling by Foot

Planning before a journey should include determining the safest route for lone workers. When setting off, lone workers should walk briskly, if possible, and not stop in areas that are unknown to them (for example, to look at a map or ask for directions). If they require assistance, they should go into a safe establishment, such as a police station, petrol station or reputable shop and ask for directions or, if necessary, to call for assistance from their manager, colleague or 'buddy'.

Lone Workers should avoid using mobile phones overtly in any area and, if carrying equipment, should ensure that this is done using bags that do not advertise what they are carrying. Lone workers should stay in the centre of pavements, facing oncoming traffic. They should remain alert to the people and environment around them, staying on well-lit paths and areas if possible. They should avoid waste ground, isolated pathways and subways, particularly at night.

If someone attempts to steal what he or she is carrying, they should relinquish the property immediately without challenge. If carrying a handbag or similar, they should consider carrying their house keys and mobile phone separately.

16   Incident Reporting

All incidents, including lone worker device malfunction involving a lone worker, should be reported and managed as per the Trust Incident Reporting policy and recorded on Datix. The lone worker's manager must complete a review of lone worker risk assessments and control measures as part of the incident investigation.

17   Lone Worker Systems

It is essential to recognise that lone worker systems 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 add an additional layer of protection for lone workers. Lone workers should still exercise caution even if equipped with such systems and continue to use the dynamic risk assessment process. The requirement for technology should result from risk assessments, pre-or post-incident reviews and analysis of relevant reports and operational information. It is essential that the relevant Health and Safety Manager and the Head of Estates and Health and Safety, with support of the Managers, take responsibility for ensuring that technology is used appropriately and effectively and that it is proportionate to the problem it is intended to address. Technology should not be seen as a solution in itself. Technology, however, can play an important part in helping to protect lone workers. Technology can only be effective if it works alongside:

- a rigorous risk assessment process for managers and staff
- clear and robust management procedures that put in place measures to address identified and potential risks and to deal with incidents when they occur
- managers and staff accepting responsibility for and supporting technology provided for their protection
- the sharing of information from within and outside the NHS on identified and potential risks
- support and proportionate response from the police and technology support services when a lone worker system is activated
- the provision of good-quality conflict resolution training to help staff prevent and manage violent situations
- system-specific lone worker safety training including scenarios that reflect the fact that lone workers have been issued with a device and that support services are in place
- commitment from staff to use the technology appropriately it is essential that lone workers receive appropriate training and instruction in the use of such systems. They must be given sufficient time to become familiar with lone worker procedures and systems before they are expected to use them in their day-to-day work.

18   Training

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision and control, guidance and help in situations of uncertainty. Therefore,

training maybe critical in order to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Information should be provided to an adequate level to ensure that lone workers understand the risks of their work, the precautions that are needed, including, if necessary, the use of any equipment provided and what they should do in an emergency.

Training should also be comprehensive enough to ensure that employees are competent to deal with circumstances that are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, for example, when to stop working and seek advice from a manager/supervisor and how to handle aggression.

A number of courses are available, and you must contact the Learning and Development team for information on training packages. These packages are available through e-learning and face to face.

The Violence & Aggression Module B, E-learning programme contains a module on Lone Working. The programme introduces the learner to the general concept of violence & aggression and personal safety awareness. The programme is divided into 4 sections:

- Personal Safety and De-escalation
- Legal Requirements
- Lone Working
- Precautions against Violence and Security Incidents

Where the use of Lone Worker devices has been risk assessed and deemed essential, training in the use of the devices will be given upon dissemination of devices and in the event of any upgrades / changes to the devices and delivered either in a classroom session or via e-learning. No refresher training is required where staff can demonstrate frequent use of the device.

19   Monitoring and auditing

Regular local monitoring through the review of Datix incidents must be undertaken by the Trust to ensure:

- lone worker incidents are being reported
- safe systems are in place
- staff have received adequate training
- the devices are being used correctly and to acceptable levels (Staff should be reminded of their legal obligations under Health and Safety legislation to encourage compliance)
- any operational issues are identified, reported and further control measures identified and put in place

Risk Assessments will need to be reviewed periodically and updated if it is suspected it is no longer valid or after any significant changes, such as new staff, processes, equipment or changes in legislation.

The effectiveness of control measures should also be monitored to ensure they are appropriate for the task. This will involve monitoring control measures in practice, to ensure they are properly and consistently used by:

- Undertaking routine inspection of control measures
- ensuring correct use of control measures
- ensuring full implementation of safe systems, policies and procedures
- ensuring staff are fully aware of risks
- undertaking regular health and safety inspections, clinical and quality audits
- implementing appropriate training programmes.

20 Non-Compliance

Disciplinary action under the terms of Public Health Wales Disciplinary Policy will be taken against any member of staff, regardless of position, who shows wilful disregard with the terms of this procedure. Where a total disregard affects the health or safety of themselves or that of any other employees, the employee may be dismissed, following an investigation and disciplinary hearing, in line with the disciplinary policy.

21 Information Governance Statement

As any incidents reported will be logged into the Public Health Wales DATIX system, access to this controlled environment is on a 'need to know' basis and meets Information Governance requirements.

Managers and staff should be aware that whilst entering information into DATIX about an incident, if possible, the individual's identity should be anonymised, where reasonably practical, so that it person identifiable information does not appear in any management DATIX report.

22 Appendix A- Guidance notes

This guidance note is intended as generic guidance risk assessment for Public Health Wales staff to use as a template and should be read in conjunction with other Health and Safety Policies and Procedures (corporate and local).

Definition: A lone worker is an employee who performs an activity that is carried out in isolation from other **workers** without close or direct supervision. Such staff may be exposed to risk because there is no-one to assist them and so a risk assessment may be required.

22.1.1 Risk assessments for Lone Workers

General Principles

- *Risk assessments* must be completed for all lone working tasks. Please refer to Notes on Conducting Risk Assessments set out in **Appendix B** describing these and how to document them.

- In most cases these will be electronic, accessed through Datix.

- In the event that the risk assessment is in paper or electronic format, it must be available to be viewed before carrying out the task.

- Where a risk assessment cannot be completed in advance (e.g., urgent visit/activity/health protection, the Lone Worker must follow the principles of Dynamic Risk Assessment outlined in Appendix 1

- Where practicable the assessment should be available to lone workers to inspect ahead of any visit.

- Where legally permissible, the information should be communicated with other agencies who may work with the same service users as part of the overall risk management process. In the event of any query about release of information to other agencies, advice should be sought from Public Health Wales Information Governance team.

- If there are known risks, managers/workers should consider rescheduling the visit or task to a particular time or location where they can be accompanied, or the situation can be managed more appropriately.

- Lone workers should be alert to risks presented from those under the influence of drink or drugs, who are confused or where animals may be present. All the facts should be considered to allow a personal dynamic risk assessment to be made and a judgement as to whether the work continues, or they withdraw.

- It is essential that lone workers remain alert throughout the visit or the work that they are undertaking and ensure that they are aware of entrances/exits in the event of an emergency.

- If a violent situation develops or any incident that they feel is no longer manageable then colleagues should immediately terminate the visit and leave the location.

Buddy Systems and Lone Workers

- Buddy systems must be used to identify to managers and other colleagues the location of lone workers, this can be in conjunction with any other control measure identified as part of the risk assessment.

- Ensure details are up to date on the emergency contact list. Liaise with your line manager to ensure they have an updated list or arrange for it to be updated.

- The 'buddy' should be fully aware of the movements of the lone worker and be in a position to contact the lone worker as agreed if the lone worker fails to contact the buddy as agreed.

- Arrangements must be in place to cover lone workers operating outside of normal working hours.

- The escalation procedure detailed in the lone working buddy process at Appendix 2 should be agreed and followed if the lone worker cannot be contacted.

- Contingency arrangements should be in place for someone else to take over the role of the 'buddy' in case the nominated person has to leave.

During visits

- Lone workers should be prepared and fully briefed having concluded any necessary risk assessments ahead of the visit or read a pre-documented risk assessment if this is available.

- A dynamic risk assessment should be carried out on arrival and constantly throughout the visit. If animals are present, consideration should be given to ask for them to be moved to another room.

- On entering the house, lone workers should familiarise themselves with access/egress points and door locks, in case they need to make an emergency exit, and ensure they have a means of contacting the office/buddy in the event of an issue – e.g., keep mobile phone on and check the signal.

- Lone workers should try to follow a patient or service user rather than walk in front.

  They should not position themselves in a corner or location where it may be difficult to escape.

- If a risk becomes unmanageable the lone worker is empowered to leave, ensuring the matter is escalated appropriately once a place of safety has been reached.

Driving

- Lone workers should ensure the vehicle has adequate fuel for the journey. And ensure their vehicle is kept in good condition, maintained and unlikely to break down.

- They should plan sufficient time for the journey to avoid taking unnecessary risks.

- Bags, valuables or anything which personally identifies the lone worker, their address or family details should not be visible in the vehicle.

- Lone workers should always hold vehicle keys in their hand when leaving premises to aid quick entry into the vehicle.

- Once inside, it is recommended that all doors should be locked, especially when travelling slowly or stopped at traffic lights.

- Ensure when attending a home visit, cars are parked in a manner which allows them to be driven away immediately, without turning or reversing.

- Do not display signs such as 'nurse on call' as it may encourage criminal activity if drugs are believed to be in the vehicle.

- Park where possible in well-lit areas and try to avoid parking in driveways.

- When driving alone, after dark, do not stop to offer assistance to anyone who may appear to be in distress. Stop in a safe place and contact the emergency services. If followed or in doubt, drive to the nearest police station or well lit, populated building such as a petrol station to request assistance.

- In case of breakdown, lone workers should contact their

manager, colleague or 'buddy' immediately. If using a mobile phone and the signal is poor, or there is no signal at all, they should put their hazard lights on. If they need to leave the vehicle to raise assistance, the vehicle should be locked, and they should remain visible to passing traffic.

Lone workers and public transport

If lone workers intend to use public transport, they should:

- Avoid isolated stops if possible and use busy stops or those that are well lit.

- Lone workers should be in possession of a timetable for the type of transport and route taken. These details should be left with the manager, colleague or 'buddy'. If the route is changed or there is a significant delay, they should inform the aforementioned.

- They should always sit close to the public vehicle driver, preferably in an aisle seat.

- They should avoid upper empty decks on buses or empty train compartments and also where there is only one other passenger.

- If threatened by other passenger(s) they should inform the driver/guard immediately.

Taxis

- Wherever possible, a taxi should be booked in advance from a reputable company, with driver and company name being obtained.

- Only recognised taxi ranks and companies should be used.

- They should sit in the back, behind the driver's seat and where practicable take a picture of the car's license plate/taxi badge number and send to a friend before starting the journey.

- They should not give out personal information to the driver (whilst in conversation or over a mobile phone) or the purpose of their trip e.g., a Nurse on call may encourage criminal activity if drugs are believed to be on the person/in bags.

Pedestrians

- Lone workers should always try to walk tall and confidently, this has proved to be a deterrent to unwanted approaches.

- Do not display your name badge as this could cause unwarranted attention.

- Do not stop to assist strangers with a 'light' or the 'time'.

- Bags should be carried with the opening against the body.

- Headphones/mobiles should not be worn/used as they shield the sound of people approaching from behind.

- Mobile phones should not be used overtly in any area.

- If an attempt is made to steal anything being carried, the property should be relinquished immediately without challenge.

- Always walk in the centre of the footpath, facing oncoming traffic.

- Lone workers should avoid waste ground, isolated pathways and subways, particularly at night.

- Consideration should be given to keeping house keys and mobile phones separately.

- If there is any risk or danger, of being followed, then find a public place with plenty of people there – e.g., shop or department store. Contact the buddy/manager if continue to feel at risk.

- Any theft should be reported to the police and internally.

Animals

- It is acceptable when making arrangements to attend an address to ask whether the occupier has any animals.

- The occupants should be asked to remove or secure the animal in another room before arrival.

- If a lone worker is confronted with an aggressive animal on a first visit to a service user's address, they should not put themselves at risk. It should be reported, risk assessed and if necessary, the visit abandoned. Post visit, a warning marker should be considered. Remember that a request to remove an animal may in certain circumstances provoke a negative reaction with the patient.

Office Workers – During office hours

- Lone workers within a department during office hours should note where emergency exits are and familiarise themselves with emergency procedures.

- Lone workers should notify other colleagues if they intend to hold a meeting with unknown guests and provide details of when, where and how long it will last.

- Lone workers should ensure that information that they are alone in the workplace is only shared as part of their buddy support system.

- If anxious, they should call for assistance either from other colleagues, security or the emergency services.

- Colleagues working alone within a department outside of office hours should ensure that they comply with current Health and Safety legislation.

- Always let a caretaker, security guard, receptionist or cleaning colleagues know if you are staying behind in the office at the end of a normal working day.

Office Workers - Out of Office hours

Anybody intending to work alone out of normal office hours must ensure that current Health & Safety and other relevant policies permit lone working within the building.

- If working at weekends or late at night/early in the morning, let a manager, colleague, friend or relative know your whereabouts and the time you are expected to finish/return home. Maintain regular contact with them to verify that you are okay.

- If plans change, the contact should be notified immediately.

- Ensure all windows and doors are secure to prevent unauthorised access.

- Do not open doors to strangers no matter what identification they may produce.

- Never give security codes or keys to strangers.

- Make sure any fire escape routes are clear and not locked, which can occur outside normal working hours in some premises.

- Never use lifts at these times as you may become trapped inside and unable to raise the alarm.

- If a fire alarm sounds, you must leave the building and go to the recognised muster point and await the emergency services.

- If a lone worker discovers a fault with equipment, they should not attempt to fix it or tamper with the controls.

- On leaving, ensure all windows and doors are secured.

- Park as close to the building as possible. If necessary, move the vehicle nearer to the building prior to cease work.

23 Appendix B- NOTES FOR CONDUCTING RISK ASSESSMENTS

A risk assessment is ideally a written record of hazards and control measures however may also be dynamic (See paragraph below). The five-step process, outlined below, should be followed when assessing situations generally and dynamically:

- Identify any hazards
- Decide if the person(s) may be affected/harmed and how
- Evaluate the risk arising from the information you have already gathered
- Record your findings and eliminate the risk or put control measures in place to reduce the level of risk to the lowest level practicable
- Review the assessment on a regular basis

Risk assessments must be carried out in all areas of work where working alone poses an actual or potential risk to colleagues. Risk assessments should be carried out by competent persons, be recorded, evaluated by a line manager and communicated to all who may have a need to know the risk during their work. Factors to consider when carrying out the risk assessment include the following:

- Does the activity need to be carried out alone?
- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a record or history of violence, aggression, verbal and physical abuse or racism at the location, either from the client, relatives or neighbours?
- Is there a potential risk of violence/aggression?
- Does the task being undertaken with the person have the potential to cause them to become angry?
- Are there any security concerns regarding the area?
- Is there a safe way in/out for one person?
- Can the building be secured to prevent entry but still maintain sufficient emergency exists?
- Are there known drug, alcohol or mental health issues which

need to be considered?

- Can the equipment, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?

- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

- Does the task require any specialist training to allow them to work alone?

- How will the person be buddied?

- Consider whether protected characteristics of an individual may increase the lone worker risk

- Are new, inexperienced or young colleagues especially at risk if they work alone?

- What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident or if there is an emergency?

- Will the visit/meeting be taking place out of hours?

Details of the risk assessment should be recorded on paper and or a retrievable electronic database i.e., Datix and should include:

- The extent and nature of the risks

- Factors that contribute to the risk, including job content and specific tasks and activities

- The safe systems of work to be followed to eliminate or reduce the risk

- The numbers of colleagues and others affected by the activity

- Any changes, recommendations, training, policy and procedural reviews necessary

- Who is responsible for ensuring the identified actions in the risk assessment are followed through to a logical conclusion

- Environmental factors, lighting, temperature, noise, floor conditions, etc.

23.1.1 Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessment follows the same processes however is a continuous mental process whereby the environment and situation are checked and mentally monitored to ensure that the original risk assessment remains valid.

If the risk increases during this process and the belief is the change makes the risk unmanageable then the lone worker is empowered to

remove themselves from the situation ensuring the matter is appropriately escalated and reported once a place of safety has been reached.

24   Appendix C- Risk Assessment Form

				Consequence					
TASK	**Lone working**	**ASSESSMENT No**	**GEN/LW/002**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
				1	1	2	3	4	5
Source	**Lone Working Policy**	**Date of Assessment**	**20.4.17**	**2**	2	4	6	8	10
				3	3	6	9	12	15
PREMISES	**Countywide**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**All staff**	**4**	4	8	12	16	20
				5	5	10	15	20	25

Likelihood

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
01	Lone working (community)	Staff	Verbal Abuse (Psychological injury	3	2	6	Lone worker policy/procedures	ü		2	1	2
							Violence and aggression policy	✓				

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
			Upset Fear Time off work Fear of returning to the location)				Electronic warning markers on patient records policy Conflict resolution training Risk assessment and ongoing monitoring Dynamic risk assessment De-escalation techniques Empowerment to leave Exit strategy Incident reporting and management	ü ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓				
02			Physical Abuse (Physical Injury	4	1	4	As per Ref No 01	✓		3	1	3

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
			Psychological injury Upset Fear Time off work Fear of returning to the location)									
03			Inability to leave/False imprisonment (Physical Injury Psychological injury Upset Fear Time off work	5	1	5	As per Ref No 01 with the addition of: Mobile phone buddy systems Incident reporting and management	✓ ✓ ✓		4	1	4

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
			Fear of returning to the location)									
04			Found Weapons (Physical Injury Psychological injury Upset fear Time off work Fear of returning to the location)	3	1	3	Dynamic risk assessment Empowerment to leave Mobile phone Incident reporting and management	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		3	1	3
05			Travelling (Area unknown, property difficult to find)	2	3	6	Risk assessment Buddy systems	ü		2	1	2

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
							Provision of Sat Nav or atlas at service discretion (Awareness of how to deal with issues).	ü				
							Sharing specific location hazards	✓				
							Mobile phone	✓				
								✓				
								✓				
06			Car breakdown	2	1	2	Buddy system	✓		2	1	2
							Operational Road Risk Policy (Advice on car inspection).	✓				
							Mobile phone	✓				
								✓				

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
								✓				
07			Operating in darkness (Unable to locate destination/lack of conspicuity)	3	2	6	Dynamic risk assessment Local buddy system Appropriate PP/Equipment for task.	✓ ✓ ✓		2	1	2
08			Inaccessible access/egress	2	1	2	Dynamic risk assessment Empowerment to leave Incident reporting and management	✓ ✓ ✓		2	1	2
09			Animals (Bite	2	2	4	Risk assessment	ü		1	1	1

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
			Phobias Allergies Time off work Fear of returning to the location)				Agreements with owners to remove animals during visit Empowerment to leave/not enter Incident reporting and management	✓ ✓				
10			Health conditions/Injury	2	1	2	Buddy systems Mobile phone Incident reporting and management	✓ ✓ ✓		2	1	2
11			Reduced support/ communication with/from colleagues (working out of hours/nights	3	2	6	Buddy systems Mobile phone Incident reporting and management	✓ ✓ ✓		2	2	4

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
12	Lone working (Office or Home)	Staff	Accident	3	1	3	Flexible working and working from home guidelines	✓		3	1	3
							Lone working policy	✓				
							Buddy systems	✓				
							Incident reporting and management	✓				
							Means of communication	✓				
13			Access to unlit buildings	3	1	3	Risk assessment	ü		2	1	2
							Dynamic risk assessment					
							Provision of torch by service	✓				
							Householder advised of hazards and asked to take action.					
							Access issues passed to all	✓				

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
							visitors to ensure vigilance.					
							Review visit times to daylight hours.	✓				
							Consider suspending visits.	✓				
								✓				
								✓				
14			Slip/Trip hazards on premises. Rugs, trailing wires	3	1	3	Risk assessment Dynamic risk assessment	ü		1	1	1

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
							Householder/landlord advised of any hazards and asked to take action. Premises issues passed to all visitors to ensure vigilance	ü ✓ ✓				
15			Drugs/equipment (Exposure to cytotoxic drugs etc)	4	2	8	Policies/procedures Training in safe handling. Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Provision of spill kits.	ü ✓ ✓		1	1	1

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
							Provision of disposal arrangements. ✓ ✓					
16			Working at height/Confined space/compressed gas/electrical installations (Death, serious injury)	5	2	10	Specific risk assessments for task must be written and adhered to Up to date training/competency ✓ Local buddy systems to be in place ✓	ü		5	1	5

Ref No	Hazard	Person(s) exposed to Hazard	Risk Identified	Pure Risk Rating			Control Measures Required	In place		Residual Risk Rating		
				C	L	R		Y	N	C	L	R
							Appropriate PPE	ü				
✓							Mobile phone	✓				

Consequence X Likelihood = Risk Total (C x L = R)

RED   IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED   Top Priority – must not be allowed to continue   *ALL RED risks MUST be reported to your line* ORANGE ATTENTION REQUIRED   As soon as possible.   Manager

YELLOW   RISK REDUCTION REQUIRED   As soon as reasonably practicable

GREEN   NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED   Risk is tolerable for the time being, needs reviewing regularly, especially after changes.

25   Appendix D- Escalation process for a missing lone worker

- Staff should ensure their calendars are up to date daily with their whereabouts to include absences (annual leave, TOIL, training etc).
- Staff are also responsible for ensuring that their information on the Emergency Contact List is up to date with their line managers.
- All staff's calendars should be available to all Team Managers.

Lone worker to identify a buddy and let them know:
- Destination (these details should also be available on your calendar)
- How long you expect to be – especially if going to a 'poor signal' area.
- If you are returning to the office afterwards or not.

Buddy → Note the details for the lone worker, including the expected completion deadline and their mobile number.

Contact should be maintained with buddy if appointment takes longer than expected, or if plans change.

Buddy → Buddy to maintain contact with staff member.

When the appointment is completed, contact your buddy again to let them know you are leaving.

Buddy → If the agreed deadline for the appointment has passed and the lone worker has not contacted you, ring them on their mobile and check ledger if appropriate.

Manager
Review actions taken to date. Consider if further actions are necessary – Risk assess (Exec on call)

Escalate ← If still no response, ring again 10 minutes later. Continue calling at 10 minute intervals up to four times. If no response escalate to team/line manager

REPORTING PROCESS
Review with the buddy actions taken to date
Inform the police of a missing person and obtain incident number -
Non-emergency 101
Emergency 999