Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

- Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) constantly reviews its Health & Safety procedures and as part of this process we have looked at circumstances where our staff might encounter an "at risk" situation.

- The nature of the work that DBC does means that some staff can be required to work alone or can find themselves in such circumstances.

- Therefore it is important to support and guide staff on the procedures and systems that should be followed to ensure they are safe when lone working.

Definition of Lone Working

Lone working can be described as "*work that is carried out by unaccompanied persons, especially out of normal office hours, without direct supervision or immediate access to another person for assistance*".

Please note that this definition does not apply to individuals who are working from their home.

- Lone working may expose employees/others to additional health and safety risks which do not usually present themselves in other circumstances. Through a process of risk assessment, significant risks will be identified and controls put in place to eliminate/reduce the risk.

- To ensure safety, it requires the co-operation of everyone involved and all levels of management and individual staff members need to follow the rules and work together to develop and implement safe systems of work.

2. Policy Aims

- This policy (and the accompanying training, support, technology and local procedures) are designed to ensure the following:
  - The lone worker understands the need to stay safe.
  - The lone worker understands the risks and hazards to which they are likely to be exposed.
  - The lone worker understands the controls and measures in place to keep them safe.
  - The lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong.
  - Someone knows the whereabouts of the lone worker and what to do in an emergency.
  - We learn from any data and information on how the lone working policy is operating.

3. Our Approach

Policy Statement

- Working alone is sometimes unavoidable, but it can bring additional risks to a work activity. Our approach is therefore to employ controls and measures to reduce the exposure to those risks or eliminate the risk all together.

- In the event that an incident does happen, we will take immediate steps to ensure the safety of the staff member (and other individuals involved) and address the situation.

- We will also make sure that lessons are learned from any issues that may occur.

- **NB: It is important that this corporate policy is read in conjuction with the local working protocals.**

Managing the Lone Working Risk – Policy into Practice

- In order to keep staff safe, the following policy and practice guidelines must be followed before undertaking any lone working:

  o Reliance Lone Worker Devices – Lone workers must always wear their Reliance Device while in a lone working situation. Training and support will be provided to let staff know how to use it effectively (**more information is provided in Appendix 1**).

  o Team Risk Assessments - Each Department will publish a *Lone Working Risk Assessment.* This will set out the key risks and the steps that staff need to follow to address the issues raised. Lone workers will familiarise themselves with this.

  o Door Stop Risk Assessments - Lone workers will be trained to undertake 'door step risk assessments'. This the ability to identify and understand potential risky situations and have the confidence to not put themselves in a harmful scenario. ****A staff member should never enter into a situation where they believe there is a genuine risk – in this circumstance, they should return to the office and speak to their Line Manager****

  o Cautionary Database - Lone workers will check the cautionary database (and any other relevant databases) to identify if their visit is with a potential 'high risk individual'. Any advice on the database must be followed e.g. 2 person visit, visit with Police etc. All incidents should be reported to the Group Manager (Resident Services) and CC to the CH&S via the incident form.

- o Making Electronic Diary Available – Lone workers will make sure their electronic diary is available to view, with full read/view access, by their Line Manager, Team Leader and Group Manager. If an individual appointment is private, this should be marked as confidential (using the confidential button) and their Line Manager should be made aware.

  - For all appointments record :
  - Location – full address, for commercial premises name of business, for new developments or sites with no address as detailed description as possible e.g. site next to BSI on Maylands Avenue). For residential premises the full address.
  - Name of person you are meeting
  - Telephone number of the person/business you are meeting
  - Start and finish time of visit
  - Time expected back at Office

- o Lone Worker Calling After A Delay – If a lone worker has been delayed and will not be returning to the office at the time estimated, they MUST call the office, ideally THEIR line manager (if they are not available then call a colleague who will cascade this information electronically). Lone workers should ensure they have an up-to-date list of contacts.

- o Manager Calling After A Delay – It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that they investigate if an individual is more than 30 minutes late without an explanation. Due to the varied nature of tasks undertaken by DBC staff the time limits for initiating action will be determined by the risk assessment but no later than 30 minutes after the expected time of return of the employee.

- o For 'Out of Hours' - In the exceptional circumstance when a line manager is not available the above details (paragraph 4 above) should be logged with the CCTV Control Room on 01442 228778 or extension 2778. Officers working out of ours, such as standby arrangements, should also use this function.

- **NB: Lone workers MUST NOT go into a lone working situation unless they have followed or undertaken EACH policy and proactive activity identified above.**

Personal Safety – Policy into Practice

- In order to keep staff safe, the following policy and practice guidelines must be followed while staff are on foot or in cars (please note this list is not exhaustive):

  - DO NOT provide lifts to service users in your own vehicle – you should always arrange for the use of a recognised taxi service.

  - Make sure you carry your mobile phone with battery fully charged or coins/phone card for an emergency.

  - Plan your route before setting off, when you have the choice use main roads or footpaths. Try to avoid any darks or unlit routes.

  - Tell someone the route you will be taking and when you expect to arrive.

  - Let someone know if you change your journey plans.

  - Have the directions in your phone or on a map, so you do not have to stop to ask.

  - Do not have valuables visible when driving or walking.

  - When you leave the car, lock personal belongings, equipment, drugs etc in the boot, not on display.

  - At night, park in a place, which is well lit, and if possible busy. Try to avoid car parks or areas where you and your vehicle are not clearly visible

  - Have the keys ready before you get into the car, check the back seat.

  - If you see an incident or accident, ask yourself if it is genuine and if you could really help – it might be best to phone for help or drive to the nearest Police station.

  - Staff should consider appropriate footwear and clothing to avoid items that could be used to harm you and to ensure no restriction to movement.

  - Do not take short cuts, unless you know they are as safe as the longer route.

  - Carry a torch.

4. Monitoring, Management & Reporting

Monitoring and Reporting

- All instances of abuse or incidents MUST be reported and staff should complete the Incident Form[2] (on document centre) which is then sent to the designated person (Group Manager – Resident Services).

- The Corporate Health and Safety Team will publish an annual review of Lone Working with analysis of the nature and scale of incidents and recommendations for improvements in practice. This will be reported to CMT and the Health and Safety Committee.

Management

- Training and support will be provided to lone workers to ensure that they are able to follow the policy and practice guidelines.

- As a minimum all staff will receive training on the Reliance Device and Lone Worker Training covering risk awareness, dynamic risk assessments, undersanding of DBC policy and how to keep themselves safe. This will be mandatory.

- However, if a lone worker is found to be non compliant with the guidelines (including not using the Reliance Device), they maybe subject to the Council's disciplinary procedures including for a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Appendix 1 – Reliance Lone Worker Devices

- **Lone workers must always wear their Reliance Device while in a lone working situation. Training and support will be provided to let staff know how to use it effectively.**

- **Devices should be regulary tested and charged before use to ensure it is fully functioning.**

- **This is a device worn around the neck which also holds the identity badge. Prior to making a visit, the details of the visit including the name of the person being visited, time, property no, road name, postal town and full postcode must be spoken into the machine.**

- **If the red button on the device is pressed, a response call centre can listen in and send the emergency services / summon help to the last address recorded.**

- **It is vital the employees who have a lone worker device ensure that they charge their lone worker device every evening and that they leave details of their visits (as above) and regularly update this. In the event of visiting remote areas or blocks of flats you may wish to add further information to enable you to be located quickly.**

Appendix 2 – A summary of risks you might encounter and the suggested controls follows:

Risk Identified	Health & Safety Procedure
Verbal/Physical Abuse	1. Warn and if necessary terminate calls from abusive callers 2. Consult Cautionary Database and departmental databases before visiting customers 3. Complete electronic diary and complete in/out board in your area. 4. Make sure you have an up-to-date list of contact phone numbers for your line manager, team leader, administration contact for your department 5. Line managers are to ensure that they have an up to date contact numbers for their staff. 6. If you have been delayed and will not be returning to the office at the time you have estimated, call the office, ideally your line manager. 7. Report all instances of abuse to your manager and complete the Incident Form which is then sent to Julie Still. 8. Personal attack alarms/Lone working devices are available on request from your Line Manager if not issued as a result of the Lone Working Risk Assessment for your department. 9. All staff who undertake lone working activities should attend lone worker personal safety training.
Aggressive dogs	1. Do not enter gardens/premises if potentially dangerous dogs are believed to be on the loose. 2. Request customer to control their dog. 3. Report all instances of dog attack to your line manager, who will forward the information to the dog warden.

Risk Identified	Health & Safety Procedure

Out of Hours Visits	1. You should undertake all the necessary checks of the cautionary database and departmental databases
	
	2. For visits out of normal working hours including weekends contact CCTV Control Room 01442 228778 giving the following information:
	
	   a. your name,
	
	   b. mobile phone number on which you can be contacted,
	
	   c. the contact details of your line manager
	
	   d. person and place to be visited, and
	
	   e. expected duration of visit.
	
	3. Your visit will be logged-in. Log-in details are recorded for your personal security only; details will not be released other than if an incident occurs.
	
	4. Contact CCTV Control Room on completion of your visit or if there are changes in itinerary.
	
	5. Failure to contact CCTV and respond to a follow-up call will result in your line manager or the Police being notified.

Appendix 3 – Useful Links:

Tips: https://www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/FAQs/Category/personal-safety

Texting the police: http://www.emergencysms.org.uk/
http://www.btp.police.uk/61016_text_service1.aspx

Aggressive dogs:
https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs/behaviour/aggression

Stalking: https://www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/Category/national-stalking-helpline

Telephone app examples: https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT207021
http://skp.samsungcsportal.com/integrated/popup/FaqDetailPopup3.jsp?seq=1045790&cdsite=in&status=a