

# Lone Working Policy

<b>Job Title of Policy Author</b>	M&L CSU
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### Consultation Schedule

Name and Title of Individual	Groups consulted	Date Consulted
Staff Engagement Group		24.09.2020
Staff Engagement Group		November 2024

### Ratification Schedule

Name of Committee approving Policy	Date
Communications, Engagement, Equalities & Employment Committee	06.10.2020
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Integrated Care Board	01.07.2022
People, Culture and Inclusion Committee	December 2024
Integrated Care Board	December 2024

### Version Control

Version	Version/Description of amendments	Date	Author/amended by
1	New Policy	2017	Caroline Lawrence
2	Amended to include all six ICBs	Sept 2020	Jane Chapman
3	Amended to include reference to agile working	May 2021	Caroline Lawrence
4	Adapted for the ICB	July 2022	Jane Chapman
5	Reviewed as per review schedule	Sept 2024	MLCSU HR Team

### Impact Assessments – available on request

Type of Impact Assessment	Stage	Complete	Comments
Equality Impact Assessment	Initial	February 2025	
Quality Impact Assessment			N/A
DPIA			N/A

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## **1 Policy Statement**

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Line Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policies.

## **2 Purpose**

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

## **3 Scope**

This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone, at any time, or in any of the situation.

## **4 Context**

Some staff work outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns. The ICB's principles for supporting lone workers include:

- A commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
- Recognising and reducing risk
- A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff
- A clear understanding of responsibilities
- The priority placed on the safety of the individual over property
- A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff, e.g. Fire Training
- Equipment such as mobile phones will be made available (for relevant staff)

## **5 Definition**

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas. As most of the ICB workforce work agilely from home, this also applies to working from home.

## **6 Mandatory Building Procedures**

### **6.1 Security of buildings**

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:-

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building and that emergency exits are accessible
- Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder
- When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms.
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering

External doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone

### **6.2 Working alone at another building/location**

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:-

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building/room and that emergency exits are accessible
- They are familiar with the fire and, if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of both exits and alarms
- When making a booking at a venue there will be somebody else present in the building (i.e. Building Manager or Caretaker) and that this person can be contacted in the event of an emergency
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering
- Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures
- Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area
- Ensure sign in and sign out procedures are followed

Where the duties of the role means colleagues attend the home address of a service user, they must ensure they update their line manager or nominated colleagues of their whereabouts to maintain safety.

A colleague is expected to undertake the following points when visiting a home address:

- Nominate a colleague (usually their line manager) to inform of their whereabouts
- Inform the colleague upon their arrival at the address
- Inform the colleague of their departure from the address
- Inform the colleague when they have arrived back at their normal working location

Should the nominated colleague not receive updates at any stage and after a maximum of 30 minutes, they should aim to contact the employee to confirm they are safe, if there is no response to this request after 30 minutes, the nominated colleague must raise their concerns with their head of service to review what next necessary steps may need to be undertaken to ensure continued safety of the concerned colleague.

## **7 Personal safety**

As the majority of ICB staff work agilely, managers should always check if staff are safe at home and if there is any support required.

- Staff should avoid working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people should leave together
- Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk
- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances
- Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Line Manager
- Where required, staff must ensure that they sign in and out of building registers
- Staff must inform their Line Manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base
- If a member of staff does not report in as expected an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary

### The identified risks

- Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.
- Staff working away from the office should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Staff may use their own mobile phone for this purpose.
- Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged and in working order.

## 8 Assessment of risk

- In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:
- The environment – location, security, access
- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations
- Any other special circumstances

All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task

## 9 Planning

- Staff safety should be considered when choosing locations for courses etc
- Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself
- Communication, checking-in and fall back arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time
- The Line Manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the staff member

## 10 Supervision

Although lone workers are not subject to constant supervision, it is the ICB's responsibility to ensure the safety of employees so far as is reasonably practicable. This is particularly important for new and less experienced staff. Procedures are to be put into place to monitor lone workers to ensure that lone workers remain safe, these procedures may include:

- Manager's periodically visiting and observing staff working alone; (Does not include home visits, these can be done via TEAMS calls)
- Managers must ensure that they are in regular contact with their lone working staff either by telephone, email or Teams calls to establish the physical safety and mental welfare of their staff.
- Regular checking of procedures designed to raise the alarm if contact is lost with a lone worker.

## **11 Staff working at home (this applies to the majority of the workforce)**

The ICB workforce is mostly working from home as part of the agile working framework

- Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential
- Staff working from home should be in regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods
- Managers should be particularly aware of the importance of such arrangements for staff that live alone
- Staff working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display and can be retrieved on 1471. To prevent the person you call accessing your number dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone

## **12 Practice Guidance – Personal Safety**

Reasonable precautions' might include:

- Checking directions for the destination
- Ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover
- Ensuring someone knows where you are and when are expected home
- Avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas
- Taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night
- Ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly

## **13 Monitoring and Review**

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager or with the whole team, as appropriate.

## **Appendix 1 - Personal Safety**

### **1. Personal Safety**

- 1.1 There are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The organisation has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves
- 1.2 This is not about raising anxiety levels but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for service users in your care

### **2. Be aware of the environment**

- 2.1. Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances and the location of the first aid supplies
- 2.2. Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use, and ensure that faults are reported /dealt with
- 2.3. If your work takes you into areas which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates arrange to check in when the visit is over
- 2.4. Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings you control.

### **3 Be aware of yourself**

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

## Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment

Assessment	
Department	Location
Employee name	Date of assessment
Risk assessment carried out by	Review date

Main risk and issues of concern	YES	NO
Does the employee work alone?		
Does the employee work out of hours?		
Does the employee meet with patients and the public in isolated locations?		
Do you know where emergency equipment is held?		
When working away from base, does someone at base know who the employee is visiting and what time they intend to return?		
Are there adequate emergency procedures and an effective means of communication should an incident occur?		
Is the building secure?		
Is there adequate access to the building?		
Is there access to first aid if the employee becomes ill or has an accident? Do the employee know who the designated first aiders are?		
Will the employee be working in confined spaces?		
Are regular supervisors or colleague checks undertaken?		
Are entrance security systems in use (e.g., key fobs)?		
Is there security lighting around access points?		
Are reporting and checking-in systems in place?		
Do employees know the reporting process for incidents or near misses?		

Total up the scores from the questions above to ascertain the overall level of risk appropriate to the lone worker:

**TOTAL** : \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Score</b>	<b>Level of Risk</b>	<b>Timescale for next scheduled lone worker risk assessment and follow-up required</b>
0 – 4	Low	One year
5 – 10	Medium	Six months
11 – 14	High	Three months – seek advice on reduction of risk from Corporate Services Manager or Head of Governance
15 – 17	Extreme	Seek immediate advice on reduction of risk from Corporate Services Manager or Head of Governance, as immediate changes to working environment/practices may be necessary

**Action Plan to Manage the Risks**

Consider what needs to be done to reduce the level of risk identified, being specific as possible. Examples might be provision of staff training, improving security, changes to working practices

What needs to be done?	Who will do it?	By when?	What could prevent this happening?	Date action completed?