



Libertatem Healthcare Group

Lone worker policy

Policy and Procedure

Notice to employees using a paper copy of this policy
The company Policies folder on the shared drive holds the most recent version of this document and all employees must ensure that they are using the most recent guidance.

Document Control

Document Name	Lone worker
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Purpose	The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure systems are devised and implemented to protect employees who are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks associated with working alone, and to meet the requirements of legislation.
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Introduction

Libertatem Healthcare Group recognise that our employees may be assigned to work in situations that involves them working alone. There is no general legal prohibition on working alone. However, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, we have legal duties to assess all risks to health and safety, including the risk of lone working.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone working as: *"those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision"*.

People who work alone face the same hazards in their daily work as other workers. However, for lone workers the potential for harm is often greater. So it is essential that the risks of lone working are taken into account.

Hazards which lone workers may face include:

- accidents or emergencies arising out of their work and the lack of immediate access to first aid equipment or assistance
- fire
- inadequate provision of rest, hygiene, and welfare facilities
- violence and abuse from members of the public, people we support or their family
- theft
- intruders
- manual handling incidents
- sudden illness.

Purpose of the policy and procedure

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure systems are devised and implemented to support the Policy commitment made by the Libertatem Healthcare Group to protect employees who are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks associated with working alone, and to meet the requirements of legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Libertatem Healthcare Group.

Responsibilities

Board of Directors

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that appropriate procedures and suitable precautions, including relevant training, are in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of lone workers.

Managers

Managers are responsible for raising awareness of this policy and assessing the need to work alone by:

- Carrying out and reviewing suitable and sufficient risk assessments of all lone worker activities which have a potential to cause harm to employee/s.
- Supporting those employees who have been involved in an incident and investigating such incidents and making recommendations to prevent recurrence.
- Use of electronic staff planning to account for and trace the whereabouts of lone workers.

- Ensuring that a full and complete risk assessment for each person we support has been undertaken and the relevant worker is fully apprised of all risks and control measures prior to placement.
- Ensure completion of full company induction and completion of mandatory training that includes information pertaining to safeguarding of the health, safety and welfare of lone workers.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the lone worker policy and procedure
- Managers must take account of the individual capabilities when allocating tasks to staff ensuring that the worker has the necessary capabilities, disposition and training for working alone.
- Ensure regular supervision of all employees as per supervision policy and determine increased frequency if required if high risk assignments.

Employees

There is a legal requirement for employees to bring to the notice of their employers any workplace health and safety risks or incidents. There is also a requirement for employees to co-operate with their employers to enable compliance with statutory duties.

Therefore, employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- Familiarising themselves with the lone worker risk assessments in place for activities they are involved in;
- Co-operating by following all procedures designed for safe working;
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate; and
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of this procedure

Libertatem Healthcare recommend that each member of staff purchases a first aid kit for personnel use which can be purchased from a high street

Risk Assessment

To address the problems of lone working a risk assessment must be carried out. Risk assessment is a process of identifying what hazards exist in the workplace and how likely it is that they will cause harm to employees and others. The risk assessment must be based on real risks, by using all available information.

It is important to include the following information:-

- the risk to the health and safety of the employees
- the risk to others who may be affected
- identify the preventative and protective measures needed (as far as is reasonably practical)
- establish procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger
- provide health and safety information, instruction and training for all employees
- have arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures

Considerations when undertaking risk assessment include:-

- Manual handling requirements
- Potential Fire Risks
- Use of Hazardous chemicals and other substances
- Unpredictable client and potential difficult behaviour situations.

- Location of client (isolated/ inner city)
- animals in the home
- what happens if individual becomes unwell

This list is not exhaustive.

Implement the safe working arrangements

The risk assessment will have identified the physical controls, systems of work, training and supervision necessary to ensure the safety of the lone worker. If all of these arrangements are not already in place, they will need to be implemented in a structured way before the lone working can be permitted to commence.

Monitor and review the safe working arrangements

Once the safe working arrangements have been implemented they need to be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they remain effective. Monitoring the way in which people are working is a routine day-to-day management function.

Lone workers are actively encouraged to report any incidents which could affect their safety, to allow a proper review of the adequacy of the working arrangements.

All risk assessments should be reviewed at regular intervals, at least once a year or whenever there is a reason to believe that the existing assessment is no longer valid. A record should be made of every review carried out.

Training

As part of the induction process Libertatem Healthcare Group require all employees to undertake mandatory training which includes Lone working, Health and safety, COSHH requirements, moving and handling and first aid training. This training provides education to help employees safely undertake their role.

Traceability of staff

Within the induction process information is provided that details how an employee may contact the office team for support, help and advice. This covers both the in hours and out of hour's period.

The whereabouts of each member of staff will be recorded on the Libertatem Healthcare Groups electronic roster system.

Libertatem Healthcare Group expect that each worker will ensure a mobile phone is carried at all times, that it is charged and with available credit, to enable contact via telephone and SMS text.

Supervision

It is important that staff who work alone are supervised on a regular basis. The significance of the risk should determine how often care workers are supervised.

Part of the supervisor's role is to provide guidance on specific areas of lone working about which the employee may be concerned. New workers may need more supervision than more experienced care workers.

Supervision can be office based, via the telephone or during a visit to check on care delivery.

The supervisor will need to determine whether the risk assessment is still valid and whether the safety measures are still working.

Incident reporting

Libertatem Healthcare has a robust system in place for care workers to report and record accidents, incidents and near misses.

Any accidents or incidents should be examined by the manager to see whether these are covered by the risk assessment and review whether any safety measures to ensure they are still valid. If the incident is new, or the safety measures are no longer valid, the risk will need to be re-evaluated and new safety measures arranged.

Near misses are useful to report too, as these are potential incidents waiting to happen and may influence the risk assessment along with any control measures that might be appropriate.