

LONE WORKING POLICY

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hebridean housing
partnership

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Partnership is fully committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all employees and people who work in its behalf in any capacity.
- 1.2 A suite of Health and Safety policies are in place to support this commitment and risks are regularly reviewed through the Partnership's Risk Management processes.
- 1.3 We recognise that lone working presents unique risks and hazards.
- 1.4 This policy ensures that robust systems are in place to identify, assess, and minimise these risks and hazards.

SCOPE

- 2.1 A lone worker is any individual who works entirely by themselves without close or direct supervision. This may include Board Members, employees (including temporary employees, contractors, volunteers, students and those on work experience).
- 2.2 This includes anyone working in-office or working remotely or at home, operating outside standard hours, or visiting external sites alone.
- 2.3 Procedures and Risk Assessments cover:
 - a) routine home working;
 - b) working alone out of hours;
 - c) high-risk tasks carried out at home;
 - d) welfare and isolation risks;
- 2.34 While the partnership provides safe working frameworks, procedures, training, and emergency communication tools, all employees share a legal and moral responsibility to follow these procedures, report new hazards, and actively prioritise their own personal safety.

AIMS

- 3.1 To increase employee awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- 3.2 Safety risks may include (not inclusive):
 - a) Visits where there is known history of aggression;
 - b) Working in Remote locations;
 - c) Working in Bad Weather;
 - d) Out-of-hours work;
 - e) Cash handling or transportation, if applicable

- f) Visits where mobile/communication signal may be poor
 - g) Office Opening/Being the last member of staff in the office
- 3.2 To ensure the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 3.3 To ensure appropriate training is available to employees in all areas, equipping them to recognise risk and provide practical advice on safety when working alone.
- 3.4 To ensure appropriate support is available to employees who work alone.
- 3.5 To encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.
- 3.6 To reduce the number of incidents and injuries to employees related to lone working.

The above list is not exhaustive.

Definition of a Lone Worker

The Health and Safety Executive defines a lone worker as someone who
"works by themselves without close or direct supervision"

At HHP a lone worker includes someone:

- Working outside normal office hours, even on a one-off basis
- Working with the public on your own or away from colleagues
- Working on their own, in an office, at home or some other location
- Working in other's homes or premises
- Traveling alone as part of their job (this does not include commuting)
- Working in the office but away from colleagues
- Who is a employee or an independent contractor working on HHP's behalf.

LEGISLATION

- 4.1 Although there is no single piece of legislation that explicitly applies to lone workers, the following apply indirectly:
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999,
- The Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007
- Equality Act 2010
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 As an employer, we have a responsibility to make sure employees are safe while working for us and this includes any time lone working.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of this Policy.
- 5.3 Our Health & Safety Committee supports the implementation and monitoring of this Policy. The Committee's membership, remit and responsibilities are set out in the Health & Safety Policy.
- 5.4 Through the Health & Safety Committee, the Partnership will:
- a) Ensure all equipment and systems that may pose a hazard are regularly checked and maintained;
 - b) Provide procedures for working safely while you are lone working;
 - c) Make sure you are provided with appropriate and relevant training to understand our procedures;
 - d) Have reporting systems in place to record, investigate and review any near misses and incidents;
 - e) Involve you when considering potential risks with lone working and reasonable control measures;
 - f) Make sure you are issued with a copy of this policy; and
 - g) Review this policy and update it as is appropriate.
- 5.5 Incidents, trends, and learning will be reported through the Committee Chairperson to the Chief Executive and to the Board.
- 5.6 All lone workers must have regular personal contact with their Line Manager at least once a week, or other defined period as required based on the individuals circumstances. In the instance of managers being on leave or long-term illness another manager must be put in place to maintain regular personal contact.

- 5.7 Operational procedures and oversight for safety check-ins before, during, and after higher-risk lone working are in place for staff.
- 5.8 All lone workers will be informed by their Line Manager who they should contact for help and support in fulfilling their duties. Where possible the contact will be an office-based employee, and readily available. In the event that the contact is unavailable and advice is urgently required, employees should contact Customer Services on telephone: 0300 123 0773.
- 5.9 All lone workers have quick and easy access to first-aid facilities. If appropriate, lone workers will be provided with a first-aid kit. The first aid requirements of all current lone workers will be assessed, and provision will be made as necessary.
- 5.10 In circumstances where we accept that a lone worker could have difficulty in raising the alarm in an emergency, we will install or provide an alarm system appropriate to the situation. (This system includes suitable monitoring and response actions).
- 5.11 Where lone workers are mobile during their working day, systems may be established whereby the location of individuals at any particular time can be determined; this may include the requirement to report to a central point at the end of an appointment or working day. Such systems must be strictly adhered to.
- 5.12 Any location or other data gathered here will meet GDPR/Data Protection legislative requirements.
 - a) It will be proportional and only be used for safety purposes;
 - b) It will only be accessed in emergency situations, or where a legitimate concern has been raised;
 - c) It will only be retained for the period of the risk period in question (and then no more than 1 week afterwards);
 - d) Any access will only be with Director approval
- 5.12 No ad hoc lone working will be permitted without prior written authorisation from the relevant Director.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 You also have responsibilities which we expect you to fulfil. These are as follows:
 - a) Abide by our lone working procedures and speak to a manager if you are unsure

- of anything;
- b) Not knowingly put yourself at risk;
- c) Remove yourself from any situation you do not feel comfortable and/or safe in;
- d) Report all lone working incidents and near misses, by following our reporting procedures;
- e) Attend training when this is provided;
- f) Take part in our lone working risk assessment process;
- g) Whilst in a lone working situation carry out an informal/dynamic risk assessment;
- h) Know, understand and follow this policy and the procedures; and
- i) Ensure your emergency contact person is provided with our contact details in line with our procedure.

MANAGING RISKS

- 7.1 The overall purpose of risk management is to identify, eliminate, reduce and control risks.
- 7.2 It is recognised that lone working can present increased risks to staff. It is therefore the responsibility of all of us to manage these.
- 7.3 In practice this means that we will carry out lone working risk assessments which will identify any potential risks. We will also consider the following during the exercise:
 - a) The remoteness of the workplace;
 - b) Potential communication problems;
 - c) The likelihood of a criminal attack;
 - d) Potential for verbal and physical abuse;
 - e) Consideration of lone workers' potential feelings of isolation, stress and depression;
 - f) Whether or not all equipment, materials, etc can be handled safely by one person;
 - g) Whether or not the person is medically fit and suitable to work alone;
 - h) How the lone worker will be supervised;
 - i) How the lone worker will obtain help in an emergency such as an assault, vehicle breakdown, accident or fire; and
 - j) Whether or not there is adequate first-aid cover.
- 7.4 In conducting the lone working risk assessment we will:

- a) Consider individual circumstances, reasonable adjustments, pregnancy or maternity, disability, mental health, neurodiversity, language/communication needs, and any other relevant protected characteristics;
 - b) Where practical, have the risk owner conduct the risk assessment. Where this is not possible or practical they will, as a minimum, be involved in the process and in the development of safe working methods;
 - c) Maintain a file of all lone working assessments; and
 - d) Make sure those working alone are provided with adequate information, instruction, and training to understand the hazards and risks and the safe working procedures associated with working alone.
- 7.5 A formal risk assessment will take place for all known lone working situations and be signed off by the relevant Director. A review of risk assessments should occur annually, and may also be triggered following a change in role, location, health, or work pattern
- 7.6 These reviews will also be considered by the Health & Safety Committee. However, it is important that staff are aware and are comfortable to undertake a dynamic risk assessment in any lone worker situation you may find yourself in. If anyone feels that they require guidance on this, they should speak to their line manager.

COMMUNICATING THE POLICY

- 8.1 We will inform all employees, who operate from our offices, from their home and in any other designated location, about the Lone Working Policy. This will be through or normal digital channels for policies and procedures.
- 8.2 Line Managers responsible for implementing and operating the Policy will receive regular in-depth training. All employees will be regularly trained in the procedures and the operation of the Policy.
- 8.3 All new appointees to lone working positions will receive comprehensive induction training. All employees must satisfy their Line Manager that they are competent in:
- a) the duties of the particular post;
 - b) Dynamic risk assessment;
 - c) De-escalation strategies/personal safety;
 - d) Incident reporting;

- e) The use of lone worker technology; and
- c) Emergency procedures: fire, accident, illness, physical attack.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

- 9.1 This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years. More frequent reviews will be considered if, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy guidance.
- 9.2 The Health & Safety Committee will be the primary monitors of lone working safety, and will review and take appropriate action in relation to:
 - a) incidents and near misses;
 - b) missed check-ins;
 - c) training completion;
 - d) risk assessment completion;
 - e) use of lone worker devices/apps;
 - f) audit findings;
 - g) feedback from staff.

INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

The following interpretation and abbreviations are used in this policy:

WORD	INTERPRETATION
<i>We/our/us/Partnership</i>	Hebridean Housing Partnership/HHP
<i>Board</i>	Means the Board of the Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board Members</i>	All Members of the Board including co-opted Members
<i>Lone Workers</i>	Any individual who works entirely by themselves without close or direct supervision. This may include Board Members, employees (including temporary employees, contractors, volunteers, students and those on work experience).
<i>H&S</i>	<i>Health and Safety</i>
<i>Home Workers</i>	Employees who have been given permission to work from their home on a pre-agreed schedule
References to any gender in this policy include all individuals, regardless of gender.	



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