Keele
UNIVERSITY
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LONE WORKING CODE OF PRACTICE

1.   INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice forms part of the arrangements to implement the University Health and Safety Policy and must therefore be adhered to accordingly. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) place a duty on Keele University to identify hazards, evaluate and manage risks – including those associated with lone working whilst undertaking work, research or learning related activity. The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to take reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees while they are at work. This means Keele University must think about the risks to lone workers and then put in place proportionate measures to control those risks to an acceptable level.

2.   SCOPE

The purpose of this guidance is to support the University in fulfilling the above duties as well as to outline requirements concerning management of risks associated with lone working.

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. It can take place both out of hours and during the normal working day. However, a small group of people working together at a remote site can be just as 'alone' when it comes to calling for help in an emergency.

3.   RESPONSIBILITES

Executive Deans & Directors of Professional Services

- Ensure risk assessments covering lone working are in place and regularly reviewed.
- Provide appropriate resources required to implement this Code of Practice.

Heads of Schools & Heads of Departments

- Ensure processes are in place so that lone working activities are appropriately risk assessed and managed.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to implement this Code of Practice.

Line Managers

- All lone working activities are appropriately risk assessed and reviewed at appropriate intervals
- Controls identified in the risk assessment to reduce the risk to an acceptable level are implemented and monitored.
- Lone workers are appropriately trained in respect of lone working controls and personal safety.

- Lone working arrangements are appropriately communicated.

Employees, Students & Contractors

- Working safely in accordance with any lone working arrangements in place.
- Following this guidance and any specific control measures listed in their lone working risk assessment, to ensure their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Managing the Risk

As part of the risk assessment process, you should consider the following preventive and protective control measures to manage the risks associated with lone working:

- Avoid lone working if possible
- Restrict lone working to low-risk activities as much as possible
- Relevant training
- Communication and/or check in systems (e.g. SafeZone)
- Buddy systems
- Contact names / escalation procedures
- Lone working devices – tracking / listening / emergency response
- Clear procedures – as a result of your lone working risk assessment

4.2 Assessing the Risk

When assessing the risks associated with lone working activities (via the University's normal risk assessment procedure): You will need to consider the following factors:

- **Individual**
  - Who is going to be lone working?
  - Is the person suitably trained and competent to complete the task on a lone working basis?
  - Are they at any increased risk by working alone (e.g. young persons, inexperienced persons or expectant mothers)?
  - Do they have a health condition – are they suitably fit to work alone?
  - Do they have an injury or disability, which may increase risks to them by working alone?
  - Is English not their first language? If not, you should ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to provide clear communications, especially in an emergency.

- **Environment**
  - Where is the lone working to be completed?
  - Is the work environment suitable for lone working, does it present any particular risks for lone workers?

- o Is there safe access and egress to and from the place of work (including in the event of an emergency)?

- **Emergency arrangements**
  - o Are the normal fire safety and first aid arrangements different when the lone working is taking place (i.e. out of hours)?
  - o Does the lone worker fully understand how the emergency arrangements work?
  - o Are arrangements in place in the event that the lone worker is faced with violent or aggressive behaviour from a member(s) of the public? This may include assessing safe exit/escape routes, testing panic alarm arrangements etc.

- **Communication**
  - o Are there communication arrangements in place for the period that lone working will take place?
  - o Are buddy systems in place if required?
  - o Are relevant contact details held for the lone worker and secondary contacts in the event they are needed?
  - o Are clear escalation arrangements in place should they be required?
  - o Note: The University provides SafeZone a free app for students and staff that connects you to the Campus Safety Team should you ever experience an emergency, need urgent help, first aid or want to make an enquiry whilst on campus.

- **Travel arrangements**
  - o Is there any additional risk to the lone worker associated with travel to/from the place of work? This could include working in the community as well as out of hours/shift work and should consider arriving home safely following lone working.

- **Work, equipment and substances**
  - o Is the person competent to carry out the work that they will be doing on a lone working basis?
  - o Can all equipment and materials involved in the work be safely used including any lifting activities by one person, or are the risks increased?
  - o Is there a risk of accidental release of substances which could cause acute injury or require extensive decontamination? e.g. gas release, explosion, spillage, etc.. Please note: There are some situations under which lone working is prohibited – please refer to section 4.4.1 below.

- **Working with the public**
  - o Consider the design, layout and exit/escape routes from (for example) an office where the lone worker is with a member of the public e.g. research
  - o Has the lone worker been provided with personal safety, de-escalation, conflict resolution, breakaway training etc?
  - o If possible, consider the profile of those who the lone worker is coming into contact with – is there the risk of unpredictable or challenging behaviour?
  - o Consider the emergency arrangements in the event of violent or aggressive behaviour.

- **Psychosocial issues**
  - In the event that lone working is being undertaken over an extended period, have mental health related issues concerning isolation etc. been taken into consideration?

4.3   Monitoring and Review

To ensure that they are suitable and sufficient, lone working risk assessments should be reviewed annually or whenever there is a change that affects the risks involved. This guidance will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if there are any significant changes to legislation.

4.4   Risk Rating

Whilst there is no legal prohibition on all lone working, there are some specific areas of work classed as high-risk (e.g. confined space work) where lone working is prohibited.

In addition, your risk assessment may identify some medium-risk circumstances where the risks involved cannot be adequately controlled, where lone working is not acceptable and should be prohibited e.g. work with certain hazardous substances.

Note: Undergraduates are prohibited by the University from undertaking out of hours lone working on campus (off campus lone working should be considered based on an assessment of risk).

4.4.1   High-Risk Lone Working

High-risk lone working must not take place on university premises in the following situations (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- Entry into confined spaces where there may be a risk of asphyxiation, contact with hazardous substances (biological & chemical), fire or explosion risk etc.

- Working at or near exposed live electricity conductors or live uninsulated electrical conductors.

- Work with any hazardous substances where first aid treatment must be administered immediately.

- Working at height in any place where a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.

- Work in laboratories flammable liquids or/and gases, asphyxiants, toxic or/and corrosive substances, biological agents and any chemicals that present a risk to health.

- Working with dangerous machinery where there is a risk of entanglement, entrapment, crushing, impact or injury from cutting or shearing, stabbing or puncture is prohibited whilst lone working.

Therefore, these activities must always take place accompanied by another person.

4.4.2 **Lower-Risk Lone Working**

In many situations such as office work or routine cleaning, the risks of lone working are no greater than being alone at home and can take place without additional precautions or with only minor adjustments to working practices as part of the main risk assessment. The main perceived risk may be to personal safety and security, either from intruders in the building, or from walking alone to the car park or public transport, particularly if this is late at night or in the dark.

Basic precautions can be taken, such as locking the office door, arranging to walk to the car park with a colleague, keeping to well-lit areas and not taking short-cuts.

All staff and students should also download the SafeZone app and create an account for quick access to help for any emergency situation from the Campus Safety Team.

4.5 Escalation Process

It is important to outline a risk-based escalation process in the risk assessment detailing who should be notified if a lone worker cannot be contacted or if they fail to contact the relevant individual within agreed or reasonable timescales. The escalation process should provide identification of contact points at appropriate stages which may include, line manager, senior manager, Campus Security and, ultimately, the police. Any individual nominated in an escalation process should be fully aware of their role and responsibilities.

5. LONE WORKING SYSTEMS

5.1 SafeZone

The University provides SafeZone a free app for staff and students that when on campus, connects you to the Campus Safety Team should you ever experience an emergency, need urgent help or first aid. The SafeZone app can assist with personal safety whilst on university premises and it's recommended that all staff and students download the app and create an account.

They can then share their location with Campus Security using the following methods:

- Manual check in
- Automatic check in when entering the SafeZone area

If the lone worker requires assistance from the Campus Safety Team the app is fitted with an emergency button which when activated, immediately alerts the Campus Safety Team with the lone workers details and on campus GPS location.

5.2 **Buddy System**

It is essential that lone workers keep in contact with colleagues and ensure that they make another colleague aware of their movements. This can be done by implementing management procedures such as the 'buddy system'.

To operate the buddy system, managers must ensure that a lone worker nominates 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 movements of the lone worker

• Have all necessary contact details for the lone worker

• Attempt to contact the lone worker if they do not contact the buddy as agreed

• Follow the agreed local escalation procedures for alerting their senior manager and Campus Safety Team if the lone worker cannot be contacted or if they fail to contact their buddy within agreed and reasonable timescales.

The buddy must understand their role and what the procedures and requirements 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, or if the nominated person is away on annual leave or off sick.

5.3 **Lone working outside of working hours**

If the work is to take place outside normal working hours, authority to carry out the work must be given by the Head of the Department. There must be an escalation process and buddy system in place prior to out of hours working proceeding.

If a lone worker wishes to use SafeZone as a buddy system for working outside of working hours as well as the escalation process, they must use the check-in timer which automatically alerts Campus Safety Team if the timer is not extended or cancelled. Using this method, a note must be made to inform Campus Safety Team of the type of work as well as floor and room details. Approval to use this system instead of the traditional buddy system should be sort with the lone workers line manager or academic supervisor.

Undergraduates are prohibited by the University from undertaking out of hours lone working on campus (off campus lone working should be considered based on an assessment of risk).

6. **TRAINING**

A Lone Working training module is available to all staff in Learning Pool and must be completed by anybody undertaking lone working.

7. RELEVANT LEGISLATION, STANDARDS & GUIDANCE

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Confined Spaces Regulations 1997

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

British Standard: BS 8484:2016 Provision of lone worker services: code of practice

HSE: Managing home workers' health and safety Health and Safety Executive: Driving and riding safely for work

HSE: IND(G) 73 Protecting lone workers; How to manage the risks of working alone

HSE: Violence at work; A guide for employers

Trades Union Congress: Hazards at Work; Organising for safe and healthy workplaces

Trades Union Congress: Lone Working; A guide for safety representatives

Unison: Working Alone; A health and safety guide on lone working for safety representatives

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

[The table below should be completed by the document owner and included within every University Policy Document. The version control table will also be uploaded to the University Policy Documents webpage that hosts the procedure.]

Document Name	Lone Working Code of Practice
Owner	David Taylor – Head of Health and Safety, Legal, Governance & Compliance
Version Number	1
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For Office Use – Keywords	