

Lone Working Policy

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www.shropshiretelfordandwrekinccg.nhs.uk

Printed copies or those saved electronically must be checked to ensure they match the current online version.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (STW CCG) is committed to ensuring that the health, safety, security and welfare of anyone affected by its work activities are safeguarded. It is acknowledged that many CCG employees work alone either regularly or occasionally and that their health, safety, security and welfare should be protected, whether they work alone on CCG premises or elsewhere in the wider community.
- 1.2 The CCG acknowledges its duty to make adequate provisions for the health and safety of lone workers. Lone working is acknowledged as a risk and all foreseeable risks associated with lone working should be identified, assessed and controlled as appropriate.

Definitions

NHS Protect defines lone working as: 'Any situation or location in which someone works without a colleague nearby; or when someone is working out of sight or earshot of another colleague'.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone working as: 'those who work by themselves without direct or close supervision' and requires that a risk assessment is undertaken for all of these staff)

The term lone worker is used to describe a wide variety of staff who work either regularly or only occasionally, on their own and who may face lone working situations and therefore, may face increased risks to their security and safety. (See appendix 5 for examples of lone working and associated risks.

The term lone worker refers to those staff who:

- Work in the community (e.g. Continuing Health Care Staff, Medicines Management);
- Work alone at CCG sites 'after hours' (e.g. first in, or last out);
- Work alone in out-based locations (e.g. Clinics, Doctor Surgeries etc.);
- Travel alone between sites.
- Work agilely or even in the home environment.

Many employees may occasionally work alone, although this would not normally be their role. The standards outlined in this guidance document still apply.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy and the guidelines it contains is to reduce and prevent risks involved to members of staff undertaking lone working as part of their daily work routine for STW CCG.
- 2.2 The policy provides action that will be taken by STW CCG to identify, manage and reduce the risks to members of staff involved in Lone Working.

- 2.3 The CCG recognises the importance of following the lone working process:
 - Good systematic risk assessment processes;
 - Clear and robust management procedures that put into place measures to address identified and potential risk, and deal with incidents when they may occur;
 - Managers and staff accepting responsibility for, and supporting the need to operate systems, procedures and technology provided for their enhanced protection;
 - Sharing information from within and outside of the CCG on identified and potential risks;
 - The introduction and implementation of relevant and effective physical and technological systems and devices;
 - The provision of training, whether this is to help staff to prevent and manage violent situations, or to use procedures, systems or devices provided for their security and safety, to their best effect;

3 Responsibilities

This Policy applies to all CCG employees who regularly work alone and those staff who on occasions work alone in CCG buildings. The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of staff.

The CCG supports lone working staff with protected characteristics especially disabled workers who may be working from home and will make any reasonable adjustments to allow them to do so.

3.1 The Accountable Officer

The Accountable Officer has overall responsibility for the protection of lone workers by gaining assurance that policies, procedures and systems to protect lone workers are implemented and will do all they reasonably can by:

- Being committed to increasing the general awareness and understanding of lone working with the CCG;
- Recognise and understand the importance of skilled management of employees by the provision of appropriate training on an ongoing basis for managers and staff;
- Providing the resources needed to support measures identified by senior managers to reduce the risk of harm to CCG staff affected by lone working.
- Ensuring that those senior managers designated with supporting and monitoring this policy carry out their responsibilities as shown in this policy.

3.2 Executive Directors and Deputy Directors

It is the responsibility of directors & managers to ensure that there are suitable and sufficient arrangements in place to implement the Lone Working Policy within their sphere of responsibility, including:

- Disseminate and implement this policy within their area of responsibility and ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under this policy;
- Identify staff in their area / service who are lone workers;
- Ensure that risk assessments on lone workers are being carried out within their areas of responsibility;
- Ensure that actions which have been deemed necessary as a result of a risk assessment are implemented where ' reasonably practicable';
- Ensure that managers and employees are given the time and resources to carry out lone working risk assessments;
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to account for and trace the whereabouts of lone working employees and that these systems are regularly checked;
- Ensure all staff are appropriately supervised whilst working alone.
- Monitor the use of technology used to reduce the risks to lone workers e.g. lone worker alarm devices or mobile phones;
- Ensure that staff members are given time off to attend essential training relating to lone working and personal safety if applicable;
- Ensure that all incidents and near misses that happen to lone workers are reported to them and are investigated accordingly.
- Ensure that appropriate support is given to staff following an incident.

3.3 Specialist Staff

Health and Safety Team (Currently provided by MLCSU)

It is the responsibility of the Midlands and Lancashire CSU Health and Safety team to:

- Provide advice and guidance on this policy;
- Provide assistance and training to managers and staff in undertaking risk assessments;
- Provide advice to managers and staff in implementing risk reduction measures;
- Provide support and advice on local incident investigations;
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and use of lone worker alarm devices(where applicable) by means of a safety audit;
- Participate in training sessions relating to lone working and personal safety as necessary.

3.4 Line Managers

Managers are to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out prior to lone working activities commencing. This process should identify the hazards associated with specific lone working activities and will determine appropriate control measures which must be implemented (see Appendices 1 to 4 for further information on risk assessment and risk reduction measures).

3.5 All Staff

It is the responsibility of employees to:

- Co-operate by following procedures designed to protect their safety as a lone worker;
- Be mindful of their own safety and that of colleagues, particularly when working alone;
- Provide information on their whereabouts during working hours to a manager or colleague;
- Where indicated, use technology provided for their safety e.g. mobile phone, lone worker alarm devices or personal attack alarms.
- Attend lone worker or personal safety related training sessions as directed by their manager;
- Report all incidents related to lone working.

3.6 Committees and Groups

Health and safety performance (including Lone Working) will be measured by the MLSCU Health & Safety Officer and reported back to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis by:

- Monitoring corporate performance standards.
- Regular auditing and undertaking inspections.
- Accident/incident reporting and investigation.

4 **Procedures / Processes**

4.1 Supervision

Although lone workers are not subject to constant supervision, it is the CCG'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.

Employees Working agilely

Employees should carry out their own dynamic assessment of risk before undertaking any activity which involves working alone. They should make themselves aware of any formal generic risk assessments/safe systems of work (procedures).

Employees working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential;

There should be regular contact with their line manager or other designated person if working agilely for extended periods.

Serious and Imminent Danger

Employees who believe themselves to be in serious and imminent danger should, where possible, cease or postpone the work activity and remove themselves to a place of safety. The member of staff is to inform their manager of any such situation and the reasons for their actions at the earliest opportunity. It is impossible to give precise advice for every situation, however a decision taken at the time in the interest of their own or another person's safety will be supported by the CCG.

Employees in these circumstances should ask themselves the following: 'Should I be here; is it safe to remain; should I seek assistance?' - If in doubt, the employee should leave and inform their manager ASAP.

Employees should also consider, without hesitation, contacting the Police on 999 should they feel distressed or in danger or should they find themselves in vulnerable situations and in fear of their safety.

4.2 Medical Fitness

Consideration must be given to ensure that lone workers are medically fit to carry out the work. Should the risk assessment identify hazards where a standard of medical fitness may be required, management should consult the Occupational Health Service/HR department for further advice and guidance.

4.3 Escalation Procedures

Line managers, who have lone workers, should ensure their whereabouts of their employees at all times during lone working situations. This could be done through diary tracking but should also come from the findings of a risk assessment. An escalation procedure should be developed and tested regularly to ensure that if a member of staff has not reported in or seemingly gone missing, that a procedure is being followed the following contact details are available;

- Their personal mobile phone
- Their work mobile phone
- The location/venue they are attending
- Their next of kin to see if they have made contact
- Senior manager of CCG
- Emergency Services e.g. Police

4.4 Incident Reporting

In order to manage lone worker risks it is important that incidents, accidents and concerns are reported through the CCG's Incident Reporting System. Regular monitoring of incidents/accidents will allow lone worker issues to be considered and investigated when required. Near misses should also be reported as this allows risks to be identified before any staff member is harmed.

Incident reporting is an integral part of the risk management process. It allows the necessary information to be gathered to identify actual or potential problems so that lessons can be learned and solutions developed to prevent recurrence.

It is essential that where lessons can be learnt that they are incorporated into revisions of local procedures and systems to ensure that lone workers are provided with the best possible protection, if the risks they face are to be minimised.

Staff Support Following an Incident

Following any incidents managers should ensure that staff are given the opportunity to discuss the incident in a debriefing session and receive assistance in the preparation of appropriate Incident reports.

Staff should also be given the opportunity to contact supportive agencies. The Occupational Health Service can fulfil this role and arrange referral to external agencies if necessary, including an independent counsellor.

Arrangements for time off to attend supportive agencies should be made in consultation with line managers.

5 Related Documents

The Lone Working Policy is supported by a number of other operational policies/procedures that provide more detailed guidance on certain aspects of health and safety. These documents do not supersede this policy but should

be read in conjunction with it. These documents are all available on the CCG Staff intranet.

A list of supporting policies/procedures are:

- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Wellbeing Management Policy
- Accident & Incident Reporting Procedure
- Display Screen Equipment Policy
- Office Safety Procedure
- Security Policy
- Agile Working Policy

6 Dissemination

These guidelines will be disseminated by the following methods:

- Directors to disseminate within their areas
- Staff via News Flash bulletin / article
- Published to the Website
- Awareness raising by the Health Safety Fire & Security Officer

7 Advice and Training

7.1 Advice

Contact details

Mark Jump Health & Safety (Fire) and Security Manager – 07771996217 Sarah Hunter – Health and Safety (Fire) and Security Officer – 07919303749

7.2 Training

All employees are provided with basic health and safety training as part of the induction process. The requirements for additional training related to lone working will vary depending on the nature of the work and work arrangements of the person concerned. Training needs should also be picked up through risk assessment of the person's role building on mandatory training if required.

Employees are to be given all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone. All training and briefing records must be recorded.

8 Review and Compliance Monitoring

8.1 Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years or more often if required in the light of good practice or experience.

8.2 Compliance Monitoring

Managers are to monitor the effectiveness of the control measures implemented as a result of the risk assessment process to find out how successful they have been. This will allow managers to identify those control measures and strategies that are not working, or which have unforeseen consequences, and modify or replace them where appropriate.

There are two types of monitoring, which managers should carry out:

Active Monitoring: Managers should ensure that systems and procedures are working without waiting until something goes wrong. It will confirm whether agreed procedures are being complied with by employees and whether they are workable in the individual circumstances and have the desired effect of preventing accidents or incidents.

Reactive Monitoring: Managers should investigate all accidents, incidents and near misses so that everyone involved can learn from the experience. Managers must ensure that employees understand the incident reporting and recording system and that all such incidents are reported. Information gained from this process will also assist in the effective review, and modification if necessary, of risk assessments and control measure.

9 Fraud Bribery and Corruption

- **9.1** Unfortunately fraud, bribery and corruption, as well as theft, does occur throughout the NHS, and as such all NHS employees have a duty to ensure that public funds are protected. The CCG is committed to reducing the level of fraud, bribery and corruption (economic crime) within the NHS to an absolute minimum and keeping it at that level, freeing up public resources for better patient care.
- **9.2** If an employee, manager or volunteer suspects that there has been a potential act of fraud, bribery or corruption against the CCG or the wider NHS, or has seen any suspicious acts or events, they must report the matter to the CCG's Counter Fraud Team (contact details can be found on the CCG's public website) or report the matter to the NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting Line on 0800 028 4060. Alternatively reports can be made through the online reporting tool at https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud. Further advice on counter fraud issues is available from the Executive Director of Finance, Deputy Executive

Director of Finance/Fraud Champion and the CCG's Counter Fraud Team.

CCG Counter Fraud Contact details:

Paul Westwood (Heads CW Audit's Counter Fraud Team and is the CCG's nominated Local Counter Fraud Specialist)

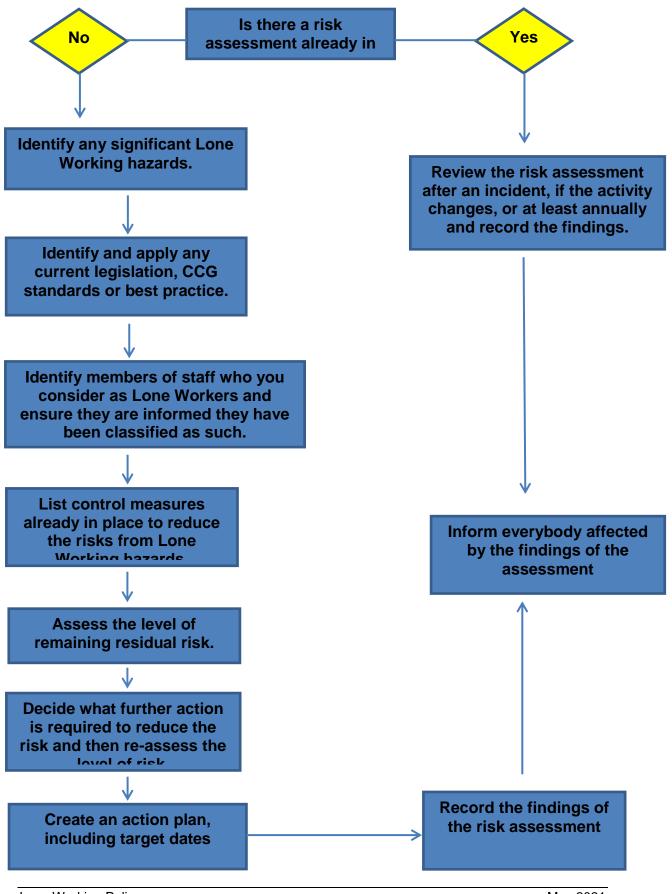
Tel: 07545 502400 Email: <u>paul.westwood@cwaudit.org.uk</u> Email: <u>pwestwood@nhs.net</u> (secure)

10 Counter Fraud

10.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the CCG's policies covering counter fraud, bribery and corruption which can be found on the CCG's website (<u>www.shropshiretelfordandwrekinccg.nhs.uk</u>) or you can contact a member of the Team who will be able to supply a copy.

11 References

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR);
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (a) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b);
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007;
- NHS Protect document 'Not Alone: A guide for the Better Protection of Lone Workers in the NHS
- The Health and Safety (HSE) leaflet Working alone Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working (http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf)



Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Flow Chart

Lone Working Policy

Establishing and managing safe working arrangements for lone working is no different than that of organising the safety of other employees. Lone workers may face particular problems and some of the issues which require extra consideration when planning safe working arrangements are as follows.

- Is the employee a new member of staff or trainee?
- Is the employee medically fit and suitable to work alone;
- Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person or are more people necessary?
- Does the workplace present a special risk to lone workers?
- Is there a safe way in and out for one person?
- Can all equipment, substances and goods be safely handled by one person?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women or young workers especially at risk if they work alone?
- What training is required to ensure competency in safety matter?
- How will the person be supervised?
- What happens if an employee becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an emergency
- Will the lone worker know how to respond correctly in the case of any emergency
- What is the lone worker to do when a problem arises and there is nobody to ask for assistance

The key to maximising safety wherever lone working is being considered is the performance of a satisfactory risk assessment, which should address two main features:

- Whether the work can be done safely by lone workers;
- What arrangements are required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the lone worker is at no more risk than employees working together;

When carrying out the risk assessment particular consideration should be given to:-

- The remoteness or isolation of workplaces;
- Any problems of communication;
- The possibility of interference, such as violence;
- Criminal activity from other persons;
- The nature of potential injury or damage to health;

- Previous incidents/accidents in relation to lone workers and their work activities;
- The level of experience and knowledge of individuals;
- Existing risk assessments and safe systems of work;
- Anticipated Worst Case scenario;
- The availability of first aid facilities;
- Access to relevant information held on customer alerts register;
- Hazards that may affect certain groups of employees e.g. race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation.

Dynamic risk assessment

During a lone working visit or a site visit, a dynamic risk assessment focuses on reducing the prevalence of a problem. This is done by minimising known or suspected risk factors and by early intervention (when violence is perceived to be imminent, while it is occurring or immediately post-incident).

A dynamic risk assessment can be defined as a continuous process of identifying hazards and the risk of them causing harm, and taking steps to eliminate or reduce them in the rapidly changing circumstances of an incident. The dynamic risk assessment involves staff:

- If staff feel there is a risk of harm to themselves, they should leave as soon as possible.
- placing themselves in a position to make a good escape, i.e. where possible, being the closest to an exit;
- Being aware of all entrances and exits;
- Being aware of the positioning of items, including those belonging to the lone worker that could be used as a weapon;
- Making a judgement as to the best possible course of action for example, whether to continue working or withdraw;
- Utilising appropriate physical security measures (e.g. using a lone worker device to raise an alarm);
- Ensuring that when they enter a confined area or room, they can operate the door lock in case they need to make an emergency exit;
- Avoiding walking in front of a patient/service user, and not positioning themselves in a corner or in a situation where it may be difficult to escape;
- Remaining calm and focused during an incident in order to make rational judgements being aware of their body language (as well as that of the patient/service user), as there is a risk of exacerbating the situation.

Risk Reduction Measures

As a minimum, risk reduction measures should include:

- A manager or other responsible person must hold information on the whereabouts of lone workers during their working day. Approximate times and locations should be logged on a log sheet;
- A system of supervision of lone workers is implemented;
- As a minimum, lone workers who carry out home visits should be provided with a means of raising the alarm, which will be a CCG provided mobile phone. Lone workers working at a base location should have easy access to a working land line. Where access to a landline is not available they should have access to a CCG provided mobile phone;
- Lone workers must receive adequate training including personal safety and conflict resolution training if deemed necessary;
- Staff not returning to their base at the end of the visit should call a manager, or other responsible person to state that they have finished their visit;
- Safe Systems of work should be put into place when either unlocking or locking up buildings at the end of the day.

		Risk Assessment Check	_			
Staff	Details:		Date:			
Location:			Completed By:		sy:	
Ser		Action		Yes	No	Remarks
1.	1.Are there any staff who work in isolation (i.e. alone in a building or part of a building), in people's homes or who travel as part of their job?		Yes	No	-if NO do not proceed any further	
2.	Have you read and understood the Lone Working Policy?			Yes	No	
3.	Have you considered the advice provided in document in appendix one?			Yes	No	
4.	Are lone working procedures covered as part of induction for new staff?			Yes	No	
5.	arrangem • Ri ris • St du • Er kr • Ao m cc • M re • Ao su • Er th • St ris	 e lone working statement i lents for (where applicable): sk assessing new clients for sisks to staff? aff checking in and out with buring the day? asuring staff whereabouts are hown / traceable ccess to and appropriate use obile phones and/or other ommunications devices? aking staff aware of incident porting requirements? ccess to out-of-hours manage upport for staff? mergency procedures for staff ought to be missing? equirements for recording car gistration numbers? haring information about know sks with other aff/services/agencies? 	safety ase of	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	No No No No No No	N/A N/A N/A N/A
		uidelines on not leaving prope CG or personal) in vehicles	erty			N/A

Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment Checklist

	wherever possible?			N/A
				N/A
				N/A
6.	Is the lone working statement reviewed and updated each year as applicable?	Yes	No	

Appendix 3 - Guidance on Personal Safety When Travelling

This guidance should be used to assist in the development of local procedures and safe systems of work following risk assessment of lone working activities.

Traveling by car

- Consider time of day;
- Plan your route in and out;
- Lock your car while traveling if possible;
- Don't leave items on view in your car even whilst driving;
- Keep equipment/documentation in the boot and ensure they are easily accessible;
- Make sure fuel is replenished prior to commencing journey;
- In cases of road rage do not make eye contact or gestures and always drive to a place of safety;
- Consider places of safety on the route, e.g. garages, shops, police station;
- Beware of faked 'accidents' and other ploys to get you to stop.

Traveling by Public Transport

- Plan your route in and out;
- Don't carry too much;
- On buses try to sit near the driver, as they have a radio which is accessible;
- On trams and trains, try to sit near the front of the carriage;
- Sit near other people if possible;
- Have change for your fare ready and easily accessible.

Walking

- Don't carry too much;
- Always notify your colleagues that you will be walking to your destination;
- Do plan your route, avoid waste ground, subways or other isolated and poor lit areas;
- Do keep to well-lit routes and paths, short cuts are rarely safe;
- Do be alert and look confident, don't switch off to the world by listening to music through headphones;
- Do wear suitable shoes and clothes that do not restrict movement;
- Consider places of safety on route e.g. garages, shops;
- Walk facing oncoming traffic, you cannot be kerb crawled by oncoming traffic;
- Keep to the outside of the pavement;
- Never accept lifts from strangers;

- Keep at least one hand free;
- Always know where your mobile phone or personal alarm is and make sure it is accessible in the event of an emergency;
- If you must carry a handbag make sure it is small, holds little of value and ideally can be worn diagonally across the shoulder;
- Keep your car and house keys and a small amount of money separate from your bag;
- Don't walk with your hands in your pockets;
- Continually assess the situation, if in doubt be prepared to abandon or postpone the visit.

Parking

- Lock your car;
- Close all windows and sunroof.
- Don't leave anything on view;
- When parking in daylight imagine what the area will be like in the dark;
- Locate your nearest observable busy road and park closely to it;
- Do not leave visible permits/notices indicating that you are a health professional;
- Reverse park so that you can drive right out;
- Never leave car registration documents in your car;
- Have your car keys ready when returning to your car;
- Check the interior of your car before getting in;
- Be particularly vigilant and careful when getting equipment into and out of the boot.

Appendix 4 - Guidance on Lone Working in Office Environments

This guidance should be used to assist in the development of local procedures and safe systems of work following risk assessment of lone working activities. Staff working alone within a department during office hours should consider taking the following precautions as necessary:

- Ensure that they are near a telephone to call for help if needed;
- Secure valuables in an appropriate place;
- Ensure that keys are secured and not accessible to visitors;
- If you become anxious regarding your safety, call a colleague for assistance;
- Avoid arranging meetings with people they don't know if they are alone in the workplace;
- If they are meeting someone, let other people know who they are meeting, when, where and telephoning them to let them know that their visitor has arrived and that they will get back to them at a certain time;
- Report any incidents to the relevant Manager as soon as practicable after any events;
- Never assume it won't happen to them plan to stay safe.

Interviewing in the Office (Service Users)

In addition to advice already given earlier in this document when interviewing in the office consider the following:

- Use interview rooms with panic buttons fitted (where possible);
- Sit nearest the exit;
- Staff should make themselves aware of locks, bolts etc. on exit doors an observe how they work;
- Ensure that colleagues are aware that an interview is taking place;
- If there is ever a need to take a client/visitor through a coded security door ensure that the client/visitor cannot see the code or knock on the door and be let through to maintain security.

Staff working alone within a department outside office hours should consider taking the following precautions:

From time to time, employees may need to carry out their office-based work outside of normal office hours, early mornings and evenings or even weekends. The following precautions should be considered to ensure that your health and safety continues to be protected:

• If you are working late at night/ early in the morning or weekends, consider letting a friend or relative know your whereabouts and the

time that you are expected back. Contact them at regular intervals to verify that you are OK. If you change your plans, let your contact know immediately;

- Ensure that all windows and doors are secured to prevent unauthorised access, so that the working environment is as safe as possible;
- Do not open the doors to any strangers no matter what identification they have. If they are meant to be there, they will either have keys or another means of access;
- Never give security codes or keys to any stranger. Again, there are channels they can use to gather information if they are legitimate and are meant to have access;
- Make sure your fire escape routes are available to you and not locked (as may happen outside working hours);
- Do not use lifts at these times, as you may become trapped inside and unable to gain assistance or attention;
- Should the fire alarm activate whilst you are in the office alone, you must leave the building immediately by the nearest fire exit. Make your way to the front of the building, a safe distance away and wait for the emergency services to arrive;
- Should you discover any problems with equipment whilst in the office, do not attempt to repair or tamper with the controls. If it is not serious, report it to your manager the following working day;
- On leaving a Department, ensure that all windows are closed, and doors locked.
- Ensure you have access to a phone in case you need to call the emergency services;
- Park as close to the building as possible in a well-lit area. (Move your car closer to the building during normal hours if you know you will be leaving late to minimise the risks when leaving the building on your own);
- If an incident occurs, follow the incident reporting procedure;
- Never assume it will not happen-plan to stay safe.

Appendix 5

CCG Potential Lone Workers and Associated Risks

Health and safety legislation: applies to agile workers and home workers in the same way as it applies to officebased staff. An employer has a duty to take reasonable care of an employee's physical and mental health. The steps an employer would normally take in the workplace to assess health and safety should also be taken at home.

