

Lone Working Policy

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Policy authors	Health and safety manager
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Summary of changes in this review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management and employee responsibilities have been added
Related policies and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and Safety policy• Health and Safety at Work Act 1974• Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations• Risk Assessment and Risk Management Guidance• Risk Assessment Template

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, the policy will be reviewed as per the review cycle. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

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1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy is the overarching framework document concerning lone working. It should be read in conjunction with the health and safety Policy and including other departmental and service specific policies and procedures relating to lone working or safe working practices.
- 1.2 Dixons Academies Trust understands that in many of its academies lone working may be a key feature of working activities. Senior leaders have a legal responsibility to ensure all staff that face particular risks whilst working alone are effectively assessed and managed. This responsibility extends to contractors and self-employed persons who are carrying out work on behalf of our trust.
- 1.3 Employees have the responsibility of taking reasonable care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their work.
- 1.4 It is not against the law to work alone and in many cases; it is safe to do so. However, health and safety legislation places legal duties on employers to carefully consider and deal with any health and safety risks posed by working alone.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
- 1.5 The guidance applies to all managers and staff who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in this policy.

2.0 Purpose

This guidance document is designed to:

- alert managers and employees to the risks presented by lone working
- identify the various elements to safely manage lone working and describe processes to minimise risk
- provide managers and employees with a framework for managing potentially risky situations
- this procedure is not intended to unnecessarily raise anxiety of managers and employees

3.0 Definition

- 3.1 Within the guidance, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues without close or direct management supervision or without access to immediate assistance.
- 3.2 There may be a situation where a number of employees are working in a building, but due to its design and layout, some may be in isolated areas working alone.
- 3.3 Considering the variety of working activities carried out across our trust, the following examples are likely to feature lone working (this list is not an exhaustive list).
- employees working outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns
 - reception staff (school holidays)
 - working from home
 - maintenance working
 - home visits
 - cleaning
 - grounds/landscape working
 - security (inc. CCTV)
 - site Services
 - peripatetic work
 - ICT support teams
 - construction/demolition

4.0 Planning

- 4.1 All working activities involving lone working must be suitably planned to ensure the proposed work can be carried out in reasonable safety. This includes assessing the risks applicable to the task and implementing suitable controls. Ad-hoc or unauthorised lone working should be avoided.
- 4.2 Line managers are responsible for agreeing, facilitating lone working arrangements, importantly organising, and setting the limits of the work in accordance of the known operating conditions and risks.
- 4.3 Those involved in lone working must be fully briefed of the task, the related risks, the agreed control measures and the limitations of the work.



4.4 Lines of communication need to be established i.e. checking in/out, fall back and the emergency arrangements. Employee movements and their expected starting, finishing or return times must be known and suitable methods of contact to be agreed.

5.0 Responsibilities

Management are responsible for:

- ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are conducted and reviewed regularly
- providing appropriate training and guidance for lone workers
- implementing control measures to minimize risks associated with lone working
- maintaining records of lone working activities and incidents
- ensuring suitable communication systems are in place
- Employees are responsible for:
 - following the lone working procedures set out in this policy
 - taking reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others
 - reporting any concerns, hazards, or incidents to management
 - maintaining regular contact with a designated colleague or manager
 - use appropriate communication tools, such as mobile phones or personal alarms

6.0 Risk Assessment

6.1 Managers are legally required to identify the hazards arising from working tasks and activities, assess the foreseeable risks involved, and implement measures to avoid, eliminate or control those risks.

6.2 A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, at work, activity, premise, workplace, groups or individuals could cause harm. It is a process that helps managers make decisions that are informed, rational and structure that will manage risks, and taking action that is proportionate to the risk identified.

6.3 A risk assessment must be carried out for all lone working activities to identify hazards and implement necessary control measures. Key considerations include:

- the nature of the task being performed.
- the individual's experience, training and competency
- the location and environment of the work area
- access to emergency assistance.
- communication methods in case of an incident.

6.4 For a risk assessment process to be successful, managers need to consult with employees to find out what they consider the risks of working alone. It is important to talk to employees, as they are a valuable source of information. Their input will help to ensure that all relevant hazards are identified and appropriate controls are chosen.

6.5 The existing lone working risk assessment template and guidance is a useful reference and should be used to formally record the risk assessment.

6.6 The risk assessment process should consider the following as a minimum:

- the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances
- the environment – location, security, access, weather conditions
- equipment to be used
- the individual(s) concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
- person carrying out the task including any medical conditions, young, new or pregnant employees
- history – any previous incidents in similar situations
- lack of, or no training
- emergencies (ill health, accident, incident, violence, equipment failure etc.)
- any other special circumstances



- supervision and monitoring
- review

6.7 The findings of the risk assessment should be shared with all employees it affects, so they are aware of the risks and the precautions they need to take to do the job safely. The information should be used to create a suitable safe working arrangement or safe system of work.

6.8 Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of lone working, consideration must be given to stopping or withdrawing from the task, sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

7.0 Safe Working Arrangements

7.1 Once the risk assessment is complete, the identified control measures are used to create safe working instructions or safe systems of work. This allows those involved to fully understand what is expected and importantly any limitations, including the roles and responsibilities, equipment needed, training, supervision, emergencies and review. These processes help, support, safeguard managers and employees to create an auditable trail.

8.0 Training

8.1 Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in any situations of uncertainty. It is necessary to enable employees to become competent in the task, when they are not able to seek assistance from more experienced colleagues. It acts as an aide to cope with unusual situations or where they may experience violence and aggression. Anyone working alone needs to be sufficiently experienced and understand the risks and precautions.

8.2 Managing risk requires managers to set the limits of what can and cannot be done while working alone, eliminating any ad-hoc decision making by the lone worker. They need to make sure that employees are competent to deal with requirements of the task or activities and are able to recognise when to seek advice from elsewhere, e.g. from a supervisor or line manager.

9.0 Supervision

9.1 Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, managers still have a duty to ensure their health and safety at work. Supervision can help employees to understand the risks associated with their work and the necessary safety precautions that must be followed. Supervisors can provide guidance in situations of uncertainty and act as a point of contact.

9.2 The extent of supervision required is a managerial decision based on the findings of the risk assessment process. The higher the risk, it is likely the greater the level of supervision required. This decision is based on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues; those new to a job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied in the initial stages.

10.0 Monitoring

10.1 Managers need to ensure that procedures exist to monitor their lone workers as one effective method of communication. Other methods of communication with employees would include; the use of periodical visits/observations, pre-arranged meetings, use of phones, radios, email, auto-warning devices, start and finish calls to base or agreed contact.

10.2 Risk assessments and safe working procedures must be reviewed:

- On a regular basis
- Where there is sufficient change
- Following an incident
- If it is believed to be no longer valid

10.3 This is to ensure that the risk assessment is applicable to the task, it is valid and the safe system of work reflects how the task or activity is completed.

10.4 Where employees may have concerns or issues regarding any aspect of lone working, they must bring them to the attention of their supervisor or line manager in the first instance.

11.0 Policy review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if significant changes in working practices occur. Feedback from employees, risk assessment findings, and incident reports will be considered to ensure the policy remains effective and up to date. The following measures will be taken:



- **annual review:** the policy will undergo an annual review to incorporate any changes in legislation, feedback from lone workers, and lessons learned from incidents
- **employee consultation:** lone workers will be consulted to understand challenges and provide input on potential improvements
- **training and awareness updates:** regular training sessions and refresher courses will be provided to ensure employees understand their responsibilities and safety measures
- **compliance checks:** management will conduct routine checks to ensure all control measures outlined in the policy are being followed
- **reporting and record-keeping:** all incidents, risk assessments, and policy updates will be documented for auditing and continuous improvement purposes.