

**Oxford Professional Education Group**

**January 2024**

**Review date January 2025**

**Reference number 18**

**Lone Working Policy**

**1. Lone Working Policy Statement**

OXPEG recognises that as training provider a large proportion of our employees and contractors may at times be working alone. This policy is designed to alert employees to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation and to describe procedures, which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give employees a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy.

**2. Purpose**

This policy and accompanying procedural guidance is designed to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees who work alone are not exposed to risks to their Health and Safety and to outline the steps to reduce and improve personal safety to staff who work alone by identifying the:

- Responsibilities each person has in this situation;
- Describe procedures that employees can follow to minimise such risks.

**3. Scope**

This policy applies to all staff who, may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as ‘those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision’. This means for example that Health Care Assistants who work unaccompanied for large periods of time are classed as lone workers. This can include employees who, work by themselves in the following situations:

- Work outside normal working hours e.g. working with or observing candidates/learners in the evening, at night, during weekends and bank holidays;
- Travelling to quiet rural areas, or high-risk urban areas;



- Using their home as a base;
- Using their car as a base.

OXPEG recognised that following employees can be considered as lone workers as although they do not work in complete isolation all the time they do on occasions:

- Employees required to attend meetings and who may travel alone;
- Office based employees who may be alone for parts of the working day;
- Office based employees who may work late or work at weekends;
- Employees who occasionally work from home.

Employees and candidates/learners can encounter a number of problems associated with these situations, for example:

- Being accosted by people on the street in quiet areas, during darkness;
- Parking in unlit, isolated areas;
- Car accidents or car breakdowns;
- Hazardous driving conditions;
- Theft;
- Accidents from using equipment belonging to or used with the Service Users;
- Manual Handling problems;
- Aggressive pets or other animals;
- Sudden illness;
- Risk of catching infectious diseases;
- Violence from candidates/learners, a candidates/learners clients, their friends or relatives.

## **4. Responsibilities**

**4.1 The Director Rosemary Craig** Is responsible for ensuring that:

- The policy is regularly reviewed and maintained;
- Risk assessments are carried out and reviewed by line managers;
- The procedures are followed by all employees;
- Put systems in place so lone workers can identify their locations whilst on duty;



## 4.2 Line Managers

Line managers will aim to ensure that the lone workers are aware of the basic safety procedures that they are required to follow, in order to minimise personal risk by:

- Carrying out a risk assessment;
- Put systems in place to enable employees who work alone to make themselves safe;
- Record all assessment and safety measures identified to alleviate the risk;
- Check that lone workers have no medical conditions that may make them unsuitable for working alone and may take medical advice if necessary;
- Regularly evaluate the systems to ensure that they are still valid;
- Ensure that if a risk cannot be made safe two workers carry out the task;
- Ensure that staff training takes place;
- Ensure lone workers are supervised regularly.

## 4.3 Employees

**4.3 Employees** have **responsibilities** under Health & Safety legislation to:

- Take reasonable care of their own and other people's safety;
- Inform their Line Manager of any medical conditions that may impact on lone working;
- Have an awareness of their surroundings and the possible threat to their personal safety when working alone;
- Be involved in on going assessment of risk and identifying safety measures required;
- Leave the working environment if there is an imminent danger to their safety;
- Undertake and follow training provided to ensure their safety and follow Practice Guidance issued at Induction Training;
- Ensure that they take regular breaks to avoid working excessively long hours;
- Follow the Organisation's Policies and Procedures set up to protect their safety;



- Use equipment in accordance with the training given and not misuse it;
- Tell the employer when safety measures are not adequate;
- Tell the employer when they have encountered a 'near miss' or have identified additional risks to their safety that were previously unidentified;
- Report to the employer any actual accidents or incidents that occur. Using proper organisational procedure.

## **5. Lone Working Policy Implementation – Procedures**

### **5.1 Security of Oxford Branch Office**

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible;
- Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder;
- If applicable, key codes for access should be changed from time to time and when a member of staff or sub-contractor that knows the code leaves and as a matter of course if a breach of security is suspected;
- When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms;
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit;
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering;
- External doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone.

### **5.2 Working alone at another building/location**

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building/room and that emergency exits are accessible;
- They are familiar with the fire and, if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of both exits and alarms;
- When making a booking at a venue there will be somebody else present in the building (i.e. Building Manager or Caretaker) and that this person can be contacted in the event of an emergency;
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit;



- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering;
- Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures;
- Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area;
- Ensure sign in and sign out procedures are followed.

#### **4.1 Personal safety**

Employees are responsible for taking care of their own safety by:

- Avoiding working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people should leave together;
- If having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is not a sufficient safeguard in itself, the first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk;
- Taking all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances;
- Before working alone, carrying out an assessment of the risks involved in conjunction with the Line Manager if appropriate;
- Ensuring that they sign in and out of building registers;
- Informing their Line Manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base;
- Informing their line manager or on call employee of any deviation to a pre-planned rota;
- If an employee does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary. Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team;
- Where employees work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation;
- Employees working away from the office should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Staff may use their own mobile



'phone for this purpose. Employees are responsible for checking that the mobile 'phone is charged, in working order, and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider.

**'Reasonable precautions' might include:**

- checking directions for the destination;
- ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover;
- ensuring someone knows where you are and when are expected home;
- avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas;
- taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night;
- ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly.

For more information see the Suzy Lamplugh Trust website

<http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety/personal-safety-tips/> which gives further advice and information.

#### **4.2 Employees working at home**

Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure their own safety this can include:

- Ensuring that their address and telephone number remain confidential;
- Being aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display, and can be retrieved on 1471. To prevent the person you call accessing your number, dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone;
- Remaining in regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods;
- Managers should be particularly aware of the importance of such arrangements for employees that live alone.

#### **4.3 Monitoring and Review**

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager or with the whole team, as appropriate.

### **Appendix 1 – Lone Worker Guidance**

There are generally 4 main hazards to consider when you are working alone:

- Illness;
- Injury;
- Aggression;
- Violence.

Working alone can be isolating and sometimes Customers/Learners can behave aggressively towards employees.

### **Customers/Learners with Challenging Behaviour**

This service user group is usually identified either when they are referred to us, or during the initial visit to their home.

#### **Be aware of yourself**

- Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be sarcastic or patronising;
- Think about what you are wearing, in a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

#### **Be aware of other people**

- Take note of their non-verbal signals;
- Be aware of their triggers;
- Don't crowd people – allow them space;
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf;
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
- Listen to them and show them you are listening.

#### **Walking Alone**

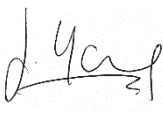
- Use your senses and be aware of your surroundings, wearing earphones will dull your hearing;
- Try to keep to well-lit streets and walk facing oncoming traffic;



- Avoid poorly lit subways, car parks, deserted buildings, waste grounds or alleyways;
- Don't be tempted to take short cuts through potential danger spots, especially if you are in a hurry;
- Be on guard with strangers, be wary of cars parked with engines running and people sat in them. If trouble does arise try to get away. If you think that someone is following you, check by crossing and re crossing the street. If they persist, move quickly to the nearest place with people and phone the police;
- If a vehicle stops next to you and you feel threatened, turn and move in the opposite direction – you can turn faster than a car.

### **Cycling**

- Cycling can be hazardous as there is little protection when cars or people meet the bike. This could lead to injuries from falling to the ground etc.;
- Adverse weather and road conditions can present additional hazards;
- Keep your bike in good order: check lights, brakes and tyres regularly;
- Dress to be seen and be safe: helmet, luminous stripes, toe clips etc.;
- Have mirrors and a loud horn;
- If a route is new to you, plan it before you leave home;
- Avoid short cuts, even if you are in a hurry;
- Ensure you cycle responsibly and account for other road users.

Signed: 

Date: January 2022