



Lone-working Policy

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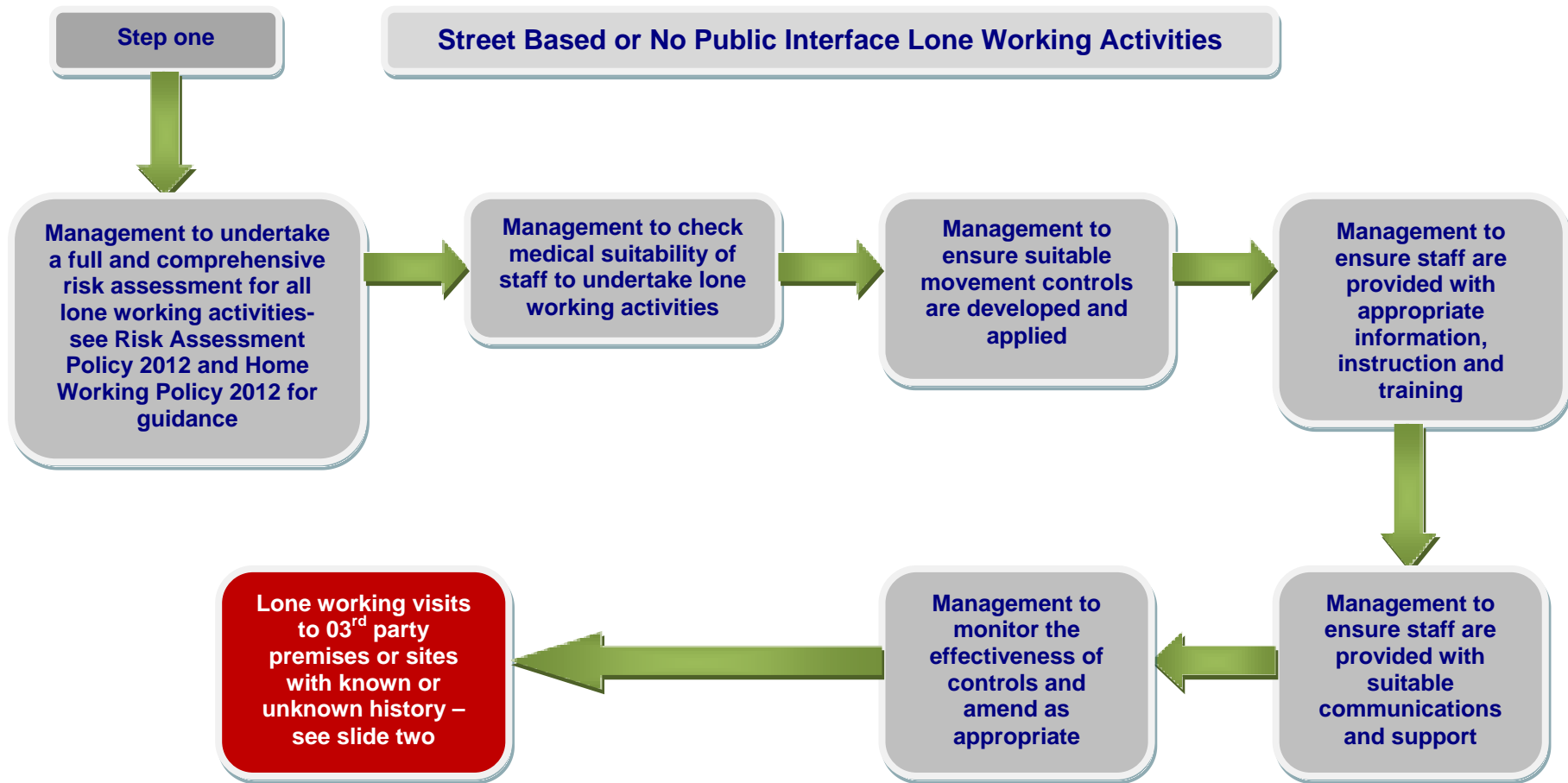
CLICK [HERE](#) FOR QUICK REFERENCE TO KEY ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY



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Press Ctrl + Home on the keyboard to come back to the front page.

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017



Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Step one

Visits to Sites or Premises with Known or Unknown History

Slide 2

Management to check PV database, Planning Database, and CDRT Database for occupier or premises history

Management to decide on site visit strategy- see risks and risk controls strategies in lone working policy for guidance

Management to ensure staff required to undertake lone worker inspections/visits have received the appropriate information, instruction and training

Management to ensure requirements of site visit strategy is agreed with staff prior to site visit occurring

Management to monitor the effectiveness of controls, review controls and amend controls as

Management to ensure staff are provided with support-escalation procedures in the event of an incident occurring

Management to ensure all relevant information obtained during the visit is updated onto the PV, CDRT and Planning Database

Management to ensure staff are provided with adequate communications and back up support in the event of an incident

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

QUICK REFERENCE

Introduction

Aim

Scope

Policy

Responsibilities

Miscellaneous

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Introduction

The management of lone working forms a part of Westminster City Council's strategy for managing risks to staff. Health and safety legislation does not prevent staff from working alone or unsupervised, only, that such activities are assessed for risk, and that suitable and appropriate controls are identified and applied to minimise the risk of harm. Westminster City Council recognises and accepts this responsibility and will endeavour to ensure adequate measures are identified and applied in pursuance of this requirement.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out and define in general terms the procedures and responsibilities of those manager's who have a direct responsibility for the management and control of work related risk. This policy also makes reference to appropriate control strategies and measures applicable to the management of lone working activities.

Scope

The content of this policy applies to all WCC service areas and lone working activities.

Policy regarding the control and management of Lone-Working activities

- It is the policy of Westminster City Council (WCC) to ensure:
- All work activities are assessed for risk
- All lone working activities are assessed for particular risks
- Suitable and appropriate lone working controls are identified and applied to lone working activities
- Staff receive appropriate lone working information, instruction and training
- Staff are provided with suitable equipment and communications
- Staff are provided with adequate support and emergency response systems
- Adequate resources are made available in pursuance of the objectives of this policy
- Adequate competent advice is made available to managers and staff in pursuance of the objectives of this policy
- Management provide safe defined systems of working and controls
- The effectiveness and appropriateness of lone working controls are kept under review and modified as appropriate.

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Responsibilities

Corporate Health and Safety shall be responsible for ensuring:

- This policy and its contents are maintained on behalf of Westminster City Council
- This policy and its contents are made available to managers, staff and appropriate third parties
- A suitable medium is used to disseminate this policy and its contents
- The contents of this policy are periodically tested with a view to ensuring its appropriateness and effectiveness

Management shall be responsible for ensuring:

- All work activities are assessed for risk
- All lone working activities are assessed for risk
- All risk assessment findings are recorded
- Staff are provided with appropriate lone working information, instruction and training
- Staff are provided with appropriate safe systems of working
- Staff are provided with appropriate means of communication
- Staff are provided with suitable means of raising the alarm and summoning help in the event of an incident
- They monitor the effectiveness of controls and review controls where appropriate
- They set a good personal example

Staff shall be responsible for ensuring:

- They co-operate with management instructions
- They attend training as directed
- They do not recklessly interfere with any equipment or systems provided for their safety
- They report to management with immediate effect any defects or matters they believe may be relevant
- They set a good personal example

Miscellaneous

What Constitutes Lone Working

Lone workers are staff who work by “themselves without close or direct supervision”. These staff may be found in a wide range of WCC services and may include:

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

- Flexible location workers- (home workers)
- Environmental Health and Highways inspectors
- Planning and Enforcement officers
- Mobile workers (meals and wheels deliveries) and staff who are required to undertake out of office visits such as social workers etc

What are Managers required to do?

- In short managers are required to identify the hazards and risks faced by lone workers.
- Managers are required to identify suitable controls and ensure that measures are in place to control and avoid such risks as have been identified.
- Managers are required to monitor the effectiveness of the controls and amend them where required.

What are the steps a Manager should take?

1. **Undertake a risk assessment** - start a formal risk assessment exercise looking at the, (who, what, where, when and how).
2. **Involve staff** - when undertaking the risk assessments ask staff what they think and more importantly ask them what they know
3. **Establish**- if there are existing control measures in place (ask questions such as have staff received information, instruction and training, are there defined safe systems of working, what special or additional controls have been specified and are in place, are the controls working. check accident and incident records for useful evidence
4. **Review** - existing risk assessments to establish if they are a true and accurate reflection of the hazards and risks staff will encounter during their work
5. **Check** - existing controls with a view to establishing if the controls specified are still current and valid
6. **Consult** - staff on your findings and proposed controls
7. **Inform, instruct and train** - staff on the controls and what is required of them
8. **Monitor the effectiveness of your controls**

What control options are available to Managers and Staff?

Having completed the risk assessment managers should consider the lone working options (controls) available to them. The type and suitability of control will depend upon the “risks” staff are likely to encounter and management should note there is no uniform “fix” for all cases of lone working. In all cases management must refer to the risk assessment findings and establish the risks staff are likely to encounter prior to their deciding upon the type and adequacy of the control(s) they want to introduce/apply.

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Risks and Risk Controls – (Examples)

Staff Undertaking Street Based Activities with No Public Interface:

Staff who undertake street based activities with no or minimal public interface and staff working from home are unlikely to encounter significant risks. Staff travelling from one council office to another for the purpose of attending a meeting are going to be subject to the same risks as any other member of the public and will require little additional controls. .

In this case management should apply general movement controls that require staff members to notify their manager of their travel plans and their expected time of return. In general terms a movement book or movement calendar should be developed for the staff group and applied for all out of office activities.

If the meeting is expected to exceed normal hours the member of staff must contact their manager by telephone and inform them of such. It is good practice for the employee to notify their manager that they are logging out and finishing their shift.

In the case of home working staff should be provided with adequate communications and be required to log in and log off at the end of their work shift.

Staff Visits to Third Party Premises or Sites with known or unknown history:

In the case of visits to third party premises or sites that are not council premises management should seek to ensure the site or premises' being visited hold's no special or specific risks for the staff member concerned.

A visit to a WCC contractor or partners offices should offer minimal risks and should be treated in the same manner as an out of office visit with no public interface-see "Street Based Activities with No Public Interface" above .

A visit to a third party site or dwelling (member of the public) requires a higher level of planning and control as the site may contain both known and unknown risks for the member of staff. Management should consider issues such as the risk of violence from occupiers and/or their pets. There may be additional risks such as construction or traffic or general building risks. There site may have a known history of drug use.

Management must ensure adequate checks concerning the above are conducted and suitable controls developed prior to arranging a site visit to a site that falls within this category.

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

General Information on potentially violent occupiers and their location can be obtained from interrogating the WCC Potentially Violent Database.

Speaking to Building Control can provide information on known property or active construction site risks.

Management must also check if the site or premises has a history of anti-social behaviour or drug use. This can be done by checking with the WCC Crime Disorder Reduction Team (CDRT).

Having established the “facts” management need to consider what controls would be appropriate for the visit. For example, in instances where staff are required to visit a third part site that is known to have an occupier with a history of violence towards Council staff management may consider:

- Avoiding the site visit if possible by having the member of the public come to a Council office (controlled environment) for an interview.
- Conducting a telephone interview if possible
- Sending two officers on the visit instead of one.
- Fixing a visit time so exposure times to known risks are reduced
- Sending an officer with more experience.
- Organising the visit for a time of day that is convenient to the member of staff rather than at the end of their shift when access to support and backup may not be available
- Ensuring the member of staff only conducts the meeting/visit in a public arena

Management must also ensure staff are provided with the following:

- Suitable and appropriate information, instruction and training on how to avoid violence and aggression
- Suitable information and instruction about the risks likely to be encountered at the site
- A suitable means of communication for contacting management and for raising the alarm
- Suitable support and response should the alarm be raised
- Suitable support and response should the employee not respond to management calls or prompts after the allocated visit time has expired

In relation to sites offering construction or specific risks suitable Personal Protective Equipment and safe systems of working should be provided.

Once the visit has been completed any new or relevant information obtained must be updated onto the PV database for the use of other council staff and services.

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Special Considerations

Management need to ensure they check that lone workers have no medical conditions that may make them unsuitable for working alone. Management should ensure staff are referred to the WCC Occupational Health Unit for opinion when there is any doubt.

Additional consideration should be given to new and expectant mothers.

Special consideration needs to be given to site visits involving female members of staff working alone and outside normal working hours or at weekends.

In the above instances management must ensure property checks and support controls are robust and effective. It would also be appropriate to consider how these staff can safely return to their normal place of work from third party venues after late meetings.

Management must not forget to share information about known risks with relevant third parties and contractors they employ to undertake work on their behalf

In the event of an incident occurring management must have access to the relevant employee's personal data so that appropriate measures can be made to notify the next of kin in the event of a "significant incident"

A "significant incident" is any incident where the member of staff has been injured and requires medical attention.

All incidents however slight must be captured and recorded on the WCC accident, incident and near miss reporting system. All instances involving violence towards staff (from a known address or occupier) must be updated into the Potentially Violent Database.

Any instance where the system or part of the system fails must be brought to the attention of the Corporate Health and Safety Team with immediate effect.

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Lone Working and Site Visit Risk Assessment		Section/Team		
Group/Unit		Date of Assessment		
Who Might Be Harmed?		How Many Staff Are Affected?		
Hazards	Existing Control Measures OK	Yes/No	If "Yes" specify the controls that are in place inclusive of training provided, written instructions and guidance and equipment provided.	If "No" state the action to be taken with timescales, or indicate any additional control measures required, including training and equipment etc
Planning/Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are staff "competent (e.g. trained) to carry out their work activity? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are formal procedures in place within the section/ team relating to lone working activities? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have all staff been made aware of the lone working procedures/requirements by the manager? 	Yes/No		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there arrangements in place for reviewing lone working procedures following a near miss, accident, incident or act of violence etc? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are arrangements in place for staff to raise their concerns relating to working arrangements e.g. weekly staff meetings? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are procedures and checks in place to inform staff of any hazards or risks associated with a lone working visit or particular premises or occupier 	Yes/No		
Staff specifically at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has consideration been given to staff particularly at risk e.g. new and expectant mothers, females, individuals who may be medically unfit to work alone, new staff etc? 	Yes/No		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are lone working activities avoided for this group of individuals, as far as practicable • If lone working activities cannot be avoided for this group of individuals, are adequate controls and monitoring arrangements in place? 	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		
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<p>Arrangements for staff working early / late/ weekends and on holidays</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are staff required to work alone early, late, weekends and/or holidays etc? • If so, do the lone working procedures cover this situation? • Has consideration been given to the provision of an electronic lone worker and support management system? 	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

<p>Means of Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do staff have access to adequate communication devices i.e. mobile phones, two way radios etc? • Are the contact details for staff displayed, i.e. mobile phone numbers or contact numbers for locations being visited? • Are arrangements in place to ensure cover is available at all times to receive calls from staff on visits? • If staff carry out visits out of normal working hours, i.e. evening meetings etc, are arrangements in place for them to report in and sign off? 	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		
<p>Reporting in and out procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there arrangements for staff to record details of their visit, i.e. on a designated notice board or white board etc? 	<p>Yes/No</p>		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do details include expected times of return to the office? • Are there arrangements for staff to contact the manager between visits if carrying out multiple visits? • Are there procedures in place if staff do not report back to the manager by their expected time of return? • Are there effective signing in/off procedures for staff attending site directly from home or returning home directly from site? 	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		
Mode of Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are staff aware of good practice as regards the parking of vehicles i.e. in well lit open areas and as near to the entrance to a premises as possible avoiding cul-de-sacs or potential hiding places etc 	<p>Yes/No</p>		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are staff aware of the need to park the car in the direction of travel so as to initiate a speedy escape if required 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When walking, are staff instructed to choose the safest route – which may not always be the shortest route? 	Yes/No		
Home Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can lone working be avoided by other means i.e. attending home visits in pairs, conducting interviews in controlled locations i.e. at the place of work rather than at the home? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are staff familiar with the premises being visited? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the risks inherent at the premises been identified? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the member of staff been informed of the risks 	Yes/No		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a preliminary visit been undertaken, where necessary with at least two members of staff attending? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have records been checked to ascertain if there has been any history of violence and or verbal abuse- Potentially Violent Database, Crime Disorder Reduction Team, Planning Database 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are staff instructed to ask for dogs to be kept secure e.g. in another room when necessary? (see ROSPA leaflet How should you cope with an unfriendly dog is available on request from the health and safety team 	Yes/No		
Conducting Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can lone working be avoided by conducting interviews in pairs? 	Yes/No		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are systems in place to check for a history of any violent behaviour prior to the interview being arranged 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there procedures in place for interviewing potentially violent/ abusive individuals? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are items removed from interview areas that could be used as potential weapons? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an effective means of raising the alarm and summoning help/assistance, i.e. two way radios, mobile telephones, panic button, coded telephone call etc? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are managers and staff aware of the procedures for responding to the alarm once raised? 	Yes/No		
Violent/Physical Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are staff aware of de-escalation techniques in the event of a situation arising 	Yes/No		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have staff received violence and aggression training? • Have relevant staff received information, instruction and training on dealing with challenging behaviour? • Are personal attack alarms and escalation protocols available to staff? • Are staff familiar with violent incident reporting procedures? • Are staff aware of the Corporate Policy on Violence and Aggression? • Has a Prevention of violence risk assessment been completed? • Have staff received training on how to defuse conflict? 	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Hazardous activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have staff been instructed to avoid hazardous activities whilst lone working e.g. working at height manual handling, working in confined spaces, handling and transport of large amounts of cash etc? 	Yes/No		
Information and instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is Guidance and information on Working Alone Safely freely available to staff from the lone working policy? 	Yes/No		
Lack of counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are staff familiar with the City Council's free confidential Personal Advice line? For more information contact J Parmar – Corporate Health and Safety ext 3290 	Yes/No Yes/No		
Lack of debriefing/feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are arrangements in place for debriefing/feedback from staff after a visit? 	Yes/No		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Assessment Conducted By	Service Area/Team or Individual Assessed	Assessment Date	Review Date
Name			
Signature			

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017

Policy Revision History			
Policy Issue Date	Review Date	Revised	Revised By:
June 2001		February 2009	Corporate H&S
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	February 2015	January 2015	Corporate H&S
	January 2016	January 2016	Corporate H&S
	January 2017		

Date of first issue	Date of this issue	Review date
June 2001	January 2016	January 2017