

Voluntary**Action**Islington

Lone Working Policy (Including HSE Risk Assessment Framework)

1. Purpose and Objectives

This policy aims to protect staff **and volunteers** who may be working alone and to reduce risks associated with lone working.

It applies to staff who may:

- Work alone on Organisation premises or at external venues
- Travel alone as part of their duties
- Work in isolated or unsupervised environments

The Organisation is committed to ensuring that no member of staff is expected to place themselves at unnecessary risk. Staff are supported in withdrawing from any situation they believe to be unsafe.

This policy is underpinned by the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** and follows HSE guidance on lone working risk assessment.

2. Definition of Lone Working

Lone working includes any situation where staff:

- Work without close or direct supervision
- Work alone on Organisation premises or external venues
- Travel alone for work purposes
- Are isolated from immediate assistance

3. Responsibilities

The Organisation will:

- Ensure lone working risks are assessed and managed
- Maintain emergency contact information for all staff
- Provide personal safety alarms where appropriate
- Ensure staff movements are recorded (e.g. Outlook calendars or equivalent system)
- Provide training and guidance on lone working safety

Staff will:

- Follow this policy and any related procedures
- Keep their whereabouts and travel plans updated
- Report incidents, near misses, or concerns immediately

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- Use provided safety equipment were issued
- Trust their instincts and prioritise personal safety

4. HSE-Style Lone Working Risk Assessment Template

This template follows the HSE five-step approach: **hazard, who might be harmed, existing controls, risk rating, and further action required.**

4.1 Risk Assessment Table

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Existing Controls	Risk Level (L/M/H)	Further Action Required
Working alone in building (late/early hours)	Staff member, visitors	Locking procedures, alarm system, staff check-ins, mobile phone access	Medium	Consider buddy system for out-of-hours work; review CCTV coverage
Intruder or unauthorised person entering premises	Staff member	Controlled entry, locked doors, visitor identification procedures	Medium	Reinforce visitor policy; ensure panic alarm availability
Aggressive or unknown visitor	Staff member	Staff training, ability to refuse entry, emergency contact procedure	Medium/High	Provide de-escalation training; ensure lone working avoided where possible
Fire or emergency while alone	Staff member	Fire alarm system, evacuation procedures, regular drills	Medium	Ensure staff know evacuation routes when alone; review lone working during alarm tests
Travelling alone (public transport/walking/taxi)	Staff member	Journey planning, mobile phone, emergency contact, safe route guidance	Medium	Encourage use of tracked journeys or check-in calls for late travel

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Working at external venues alone	Staff member	Pre-arranged appointments, risk awareness, option to reschedule	Medium	Require confirmation of multiple attendees where possible
Medical emergency while alone	Staff member	Mobile phone access, emergency contact details held by organisation	Medium	Consider personal alarm or check-in system for higher risk roles

4.2 Risk Rating Guidance

- **Low (L):** Risk is adequately controlled, no further action required
- **Medium (M):** Additional controls should be considered to reduce risk further
- **High (H):** Work should not proceed alone without additional safeguards or mitigation

5. Working Alone on Organisation Premises

Before Entering

Staff must:

- Check for signs of forced entry or unusual activity
- Not enter if anything appears unsafe
- Contact a manager if concerns arise

On Entry

Staff must:

- Check that the premises are safe and secure
- Leave immediately if anything appears suspicious or unsafe

While Working Alone

Staff must:

- Work near a telephone or mobile phone
- Keep doors locked where appropriate
- Not disclose that they are alone when speaking to unknown callers
- Not open doors without confirming identity
- Trust instincts and avoid unsafe situations

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If an unknown person enters:

- Remain calm and non-confrontational
- Ask who they are and their purpose
- State that no appropriate staff member is available
- Ask them to leave
- Contact management or emergency contacts if needed

6. External Venues

Where possible, staff should avoid attending external meetings alone where unknown individuals are present.

If attending alone:

- Risk must be assessed in advance
- Alternative arrangements (e.g. Organisation premises or virtual meeting) should be considered

If staff feel unsafe:

- They must leave immediately
- Report the incident to their line manager

7. Travelling Alone (P.L.A.N. Principle)

P – Prepare

- Plan route in advance
- Share journey details via calendar or manager notification
- Carry essentials and emergency contacts

L – Look confident

- Stay alert and aware of surroundings
- Avoid distractions
- Keep phone charged and accessible

A – Avoid risk

- Avoid isolated or poorly lit routes
- Do not accept unsafe transport alternatives
- Do not change plans without reassessing risk

N – Never assume

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- Do not assume “nothing will happen”
- Trust instincts and remove yourself from unsafe situations

8. Incident Reporting

All incidents or near misses must be reported immediately, including:

- Date, time, and location
- Description of event
- Actions taken
- Witness details (if available)

Reports must be submitted to the line manager and recorded in line with organisational procedures. All incidents will be reviewed to identify improvements to safety controls.

9. Key Safety Statement

No work task is so important that it cannot be paused, delayed, or cancelled if personal safety is at risk.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically or following any incident, legislative change, or operational requirement.