

CORPORATE PROCEDURE

LONE WORKING

1 Aims of the procedure

The aim of this Corporate Procedure is ensure that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) complies with its legal obligations under relevant legislation, and to ensure the risk of Lone Working is kept to the lowest level reasonably practical.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Corporate Directors

Corporate Directors shall be responsible for the overall implementation of this corporate procedure.

2.2 Heads of Service

Heads of Service shall be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this Corporate Procedure and will ensure the provision of the necessary resources to ensure a safe system of work, comply with the requirements of the policy and the regulations.

2.3 Governing Bodies of Schools Maintained by Education Authority

There is a shared overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare between the LEA, governing body and Headteacher.

2.4 Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers

Managers/ Team Leaders/Headteachers are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Corporate Procedure within their workplaces to comply with management guidance.

3 Risk Assessment

3.1 Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers are required to identify hazards through risk assessments and to ensure that risks are either eliminated or adequately controlled. When it is not possible to devise arrangements for the work to be done safely by one person, alternative arrangements for the provision of help or assistance must be devised. For guidance on risk assessments view the Corporate Procedure [CP/05/01](#).

3.2 The significant findings of the risk assessment shall then be used to develop local safe working practices. These must be tested and reviewed/revised as necessary.

3.3 Employees who work alone shall also assess their method of working. The following risks shall be considered by Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers:-

- Is their location known to others?
- If they change their plans, who do they inform?
- Check or vet people they are going to meet alone?
- Is there a potential risk of violence?
- Can the employee be contacted?
- Do the employees use the check in system?
- Do employees consider where they park - is it safe?
- Do employees consider the route they take i.e. quickest or safest?
- Do employees carry money or valuables?
- Do employees carry an alarm, and do they know how to use it?
- Is it safe for employees to use a particular item of equipment or machinery alone?
- Are the employees sufficiently competent to use the equipment alone?
- Does the induction cover lone working?
- Are employees medically fit to work alone?
- Does the work present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Are young persons especially at risk if they work alone?

This list is not exhaustive.

4 Guidance for Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers On Lone Working

The following is intended to provide practical guidance for Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers in undertaking risk assessments and preparing local Working Practices within the context of the Corporate Lone Working Policy.

4.1 Activities that Carry Risk

The following are examples of some of the activities carried out by lone workers that could expose them to risk.

- Working alone in buildings i.e. support services employees.
- Called out after hours to deal with emergency situations e.g. key holders responding to reported activations of intruder alarm systems.
- Handling/carrying cash.
- Officers who carry out enforcement tasks.
- Undertaking initial home visits.
- Visits or meetings terminating late in the evening.
- Traveling on foot, particularly after dark.
- Areas lacking good public transport.
- Parking restrictions which prevent parking close to intended destinations.
- Working alone with hazardous machinery.

This is not an exhaustive list and site examples will vary.

4.2 Employees Working Arrangements

4.2.1 Solitary workers face particular problems and some of the issues, which need to be addressed when planning safe working environments are identified in the following paragraphs.

4.2.2 Solitary workers should not be exposed to significantly more risks than employees who work together. Precautions should take account of normal working conditions and foreseeable emergency situations, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness, violent incidents and accidents. Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers should identify all the circumstances where their employees work alone and ask:

- Does the workplace or activity present a special risk to the solitary worker?
- Is there safe access and exit for employees?
- Are employees aware of emergency procedures out of hours?
- Can one person safely handle all of the circumstances, which are likely to arise?

- Can one person safely handle all of the equipment, substances and processes involved in the work? (The work may involve lifting objects and people who are too difficult for one person to manage alone or without special equipment).
- Will cash be handled?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- How will the person be supervised?

4.2.3 Although solitary workers cannot be subjected to constant supervision, it is still the Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers duty to provide appropriate controls of the work.

4.2.4 The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved, and the competence of employees to identify and handle safety issues. Employees new to the job, undergoing training, doing a job, which presents special risks, or dealing with new situations may need to be accompanied. The extent of supervision required is a local management decision, and it should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance.

4.2.5 Solitary workers should also be capable of responding correctly in emergency situations. Emergency procedures must be established where necessary, and employees trained to implement them.

4.2.6 Suitable systems must be devised to monitor the locations of solitary workers.

It is advisable to consider:

- Working Practices where Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers periodically visit and visually monitor people working alone.
- Working Practices where regular contact occurs between the solitary worker and supervision is maintained by telephone.
- A “reporting back” procedure must be considered in conjunction with recording the whereabouts of employees particularly where visits take longer than planned, or are completed at the end of the day, in the evening or over the weekend.
- Nominated relatives of workers could be provided with a telephone contact to call if the worker fails to return home. Alternatively the Authority currently utilise the lone working software system “Guardian Angel” for employees who work out of office hours or weekends, where other alternatives are not practicable.

4.3 Handling Money and Valuables

Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers should consider providing protective equipment, training and safe systems of work that reduce the risk of lone working. Measures could include :-

- alternative banking systems that negate the need for employees to handle or carry money.
- the need to double-up on employees who are required to handle and collect cash and valuables.
- the security of the environment in which cash is received and handled.

4.4 Working alone with Machinery

4.4.1 A number of working environments are equipped with machines which have the potential to cause serious injury. Employees working alone in buildings or otherwise out of immediate emergency contact with other people should not use such machines unless a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been undertaken.

4.4.2 All such machines should also be capable of being isolated when not in use.

4.5 Violence to employees

Violence can occur in any environment, however serious acts of violence towards employees who work alone are relatively infrequent.

4.6 Reducing the likelihood of violence

The following notes give further information on how to reduce the likelihood of encountering aggressive incidents and what to do if violence occurs.

4.6.1 Safety on visits

To minimise the risk of violence it is essential that there is consistency in practice for dealing with visits outside the office. The following are points to be observed.

4.6.2 Joint visits

- Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers should ensure that lone employees must never visit clients who are known to be violent. If it is suspected that violence is likely to occur during a visit then where possible the meeting should be arranged at an appropriate safe venue. Where this is not possible employees should go with a colleague and/or the Police.

- If employees are to be accompanied by the Police, their respective roles should be clear, i.e. the employees will complete the task and the Police are there to keep the peace. It is possible that consideration will have to be given to the effects of arriving with a Police Officer. Remember that if there is a high risk of violence and there is no alternative to a home visit, then that risk is reduced if you involve the Police.
- Visits to be attended by two or more employees need to be planned beforehand in regard to their respective roles.

4.6.3 Client information

- When meeting someone for the first time employees should ascertain whether it is possible to arrange the first meeting in an appropriate safe venue such as an interview room at one of the civic centres.
- Employees should make sure that they know as much as possible about the identity/character of the person they are going to see. They should read the client file if one exists, and find out whether colleagues have had previous contact. If so, it is important for them to talk to those colleagues.

4.6.4 Time of visits

- Daylight gives a feeling of greater security and employees should try to arrange visits during daylight working hours when it is easier to obtain assistance (e.g. being accompanied by another employees or reporting back etc.).
- If employees need to attend an evening meeting they should try to travel with a colleague, leave complete details of the visit with their manager (or an appointed officer) including name, address and approximate time of completion.
- When the visit has been completed employees should inform their Contact Person (this may be a manager, partner or colleague). If the Contact Person receives no communication from and cannot contact the visiting officer, then the agreed emergency procedures should be initiated.

4.6.5 Home visits

- After knocking at the door, do not peer through the letterbox - fingers and eyes may be injured if someone, intent on causing harm, is on the other side of the door.
- If you feel uneasy do not enter a property or particular room.

- Make a mental note of escape when entering a property. Where possible, close the door and follow the person inside. Stay nearest to the exit.
- Once in a room ensure the way to the exit is clear.
- Be aware of someone's personal space. It can be threatening when someone in authority makes a visit, particularly if you appear judgmental or officious and do not respect the person's privacy. At all times act as a guest in the person's home.
- Be aware of any animals in the household and if necessary request they are put in a separate room or outside.

4.7 Recording movements

4.7.1 It is imperative that an adequate record is kept of the movements of all employees. Good practice dictates that people in the office have these details in order to pass on appropriate information in an emergency.

4.7.2 Ensure that visits by employees, whether or not visiting a member of the public, are recorded clearly in the office in a designated book, workplace diary/white board etc. This should include an accurate description and record of the following information:

- The intended destination, i.e. contact name, address and telephone number.
- Who is to be met (client, relative, colleague).
- An estimated time of arrival.
- Estimated time of return to the workplace or arrival at home when traveling directly home from a visit.

4.7.3 Also ensure that it is someone's responsibility in your section to check the diary every day. If visiting arrangements change, employees must ensure that base records are kept up to date.

4.7.4 Where possible employees should advise colleagues how long they intend to be away from the office. If going straight home following a visit they should telephone the office to let someone know.

4.7.5 If employees are on a visit and it is clear that they are going to be back in the office later than originally planned, they should ring the office to provide a new estimate of their anticipated absence.

4.7.6 Consideration should also be given to subscribing to the Corporate Guardian Angel scheme. Contact your Line Manager for further information.

4.8 Safety in the establishment

If you are working late on your own you must inform Security or a colleague to let them know you are there.

Working alone should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

4.9 Mobile phones

Consideration could be given to the provision of mobile phones to employees working alone or on remote sites. Although such phones can give extra reassurance, they do not provide complete protection, and employees should still be alert for their own personal safety at all times.

4.10 Training

4.10.1 Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers must ensure their employees receive Lone Working/Personal Safety Awareness training as part of induction procedures.

4.10.2 It is essential that Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers ensure that training in personal safety awareness, coping with violence and developing risk assessments are given top priority.

4.10.3 The training needs of existing employees should also be assessed, and the training provided to meet their needs.

4.10.4 All Managers/Team Leaders/Headteachers should ensure that their employees take full advantage of the training opportunities made available.