

## LONE WORKING POLICY

<b><i>Purpose:</i></b>	To establish DPHA's policy and set out our position on our duty of care towards staff to ensure that they are safe while carrying out their employment.
<b><i>Review Date:</i></b>	June 2022
<b><i>Guidance:</i></b>	EVH model policy, May 2019 Health & Safety Control Manual, February 2024
<b><i>Regulatory Standards:</i></b>	Standard 1: The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.  Standard 4: The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.
<b>Other Relevant Policies</b>	Health and Safety Control Manual Absence Management Policy Grievance Policy
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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Dalmuir Park Housing Association (DPHA) aims to limit lone working where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is necessary, we will take all reasonable steps, in accordance with our duty of care towards you to make sure you are safe while you work for us.

1.2 In line with our duty of care, you should not be put at any greater risk if you are lone working compared to someone who is not. We have a duty to assess lone working risks and take any reasonable, practical measures to reduce and eliminate these as much as we can. This will be done via our risk assessment process. You are expected to co-operate and follow these measures; this will assist in keeping you safe.

## **2.0 SCOPE OF POLICY**

2.1 This policy and the procedures it contains applies to all employees, Team Leaders, Board members, contractors, volunteers and workers.

## **3.0 LEGISLATION**

3.1 Although there is no single piece of legislation that explicitly applies to lone workers, the following apply indirectly:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- The Management of Health at Work Regulations 1999,
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

## **4.0 DEFINITION OF A LONE WORKER**

4.1 There are many definitions of a lone worker; for our own purposes, we will use the HSE definition: a lone worker is someone who:

“works by themselves without close or direct supervision”.

4.2 Within DPHA, a lone worker is likely to include the following:

- Working out with normal office hours, even on a one-off basis.
- Working with the public/service users on your own or away from colleagues (out of sight or earshot)
- Working on your own in an office, at home or some other location.
- Working in others’ homes or premises.
- Travelling alone as part of your job (this does not include commuting).
- Working in the reception area alone, or in another area isolated from the rest of the organisation.
- Working in the office but away from colleagues.

- Any other situation identified through the risk assessment process.  
(This above list is not exhaustive.)

## **5.0 EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 As your employer, we have a responsibility to make sure you are safe while working for us and this includes any time you are lone working. To do this we will:

- Make sure risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly or as and when required.
- Provide procedures for working safely while you are lone working.
- Make sure you are provided with appropriate and relevant training to understand our procedures.
- Have reporting systems in place to record, investigate and review any near misses and incidents.
- Involve you when considering potential risks with lone working and reasonable control measures.
- Make sure you are issued with a copy of this policy.
- Review this policy and update it as is appropriate.

## **6.0 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1 You also have responsibilities which we expect you to fulfil. These are as follows:

- Abide by our lone working procedures and speak to a manager if you are unsure of anything.
- Not knowingly put yourself at risk.
- Remove yourself from any situation you do not feel comfortable and/or safe in.
- Report all lone working incidents and near misses, by following our reporting procedures.
- Attend training when this is provided.
- Take part in our lone working risk assessment process.
- Whilst in a lone working situation carry out an informal/dynamic risk assessment.
- Know, understand and follow this policy and the procedures.
- Ensure your emergency contact person is provided with our contact details in line with our procedure.

## **7.0 MANAGING RISKS**

7.1 The overall purpose of risk management is to identify, eliminate, reduce and control risks.

7.2 It is recognised that lone working can present increased risks to staff. It is therefore the responsibility of both of us to manage these.

7.3 In practice this means that we will carry out Lone Working Risk Assessments which will identify any potential risks. We will also consider the following during the exercise:

- the remoteness of the workplace;
- potential communication problems;
- the likelihood of a criminal attack;
- potential for verbal and physical abuse;
- consideration of lone workers' potential feelings of isolation, stress and depression;
- whether or not all equipment, materials, etc can be handled safely by one person;
- whether or not the person is medically fit and suitable to work alone;
- how the lone worker will be supervised;
- how the lone worker will obtain help in an emergency such as an assault, vehicle breakdown, accident or fire;
- whether or not there is adequate first-aid cover.

7.4 In conducting the Lone Working Risk Assessment we will:

- give consideration to the additional risks to expectant mothers and young persons;
- where practical have the person that owns the risk conduct the risk assessment, where this is not possible or practical, they will as a minimum be involved in the process and in the development of safe working methods;
- maintain a file of all lone working assessments;
- make sure those working alone are provided with adequate information, instruction, and training to understand the hazards and risks and the safe working procedures associated with working alone.

7.5 A formal risk assessment will take place prior to all known lone working situations however, it is important that you are aware and are comfortable to undertake a dynamic risk assessment in any lone worker situation you may find yourself in. If you feel you require guidance on this, please speak to your team leader.

## **8.0 NEAR MISS AND INCIDENT REPORTING**

8.1 It is vital that you report any lone working near miss or incident as soon as possible to your line manager. If it is not possible to report immediately, the incident must be reported within 12 hours of it occurring. On reporting the incident, the Team Leader must act in accordance with our reporting procedures as detailed in our Health & Safety Manual and they will update you accordingly.

8.2 All near miss and incident information must be reported to one of the First Aiders and a near miss/incident form completed. The form is available from [Near Miss Reporting Form](#)

## **9.0 LONE WORKING PROCEDURE**

9.1 Where lone working is being undertaken you will:

- Follow our safe working arrangements which are as follows:
  - See appendix 1, extract from Health and Safety Control Manual: Safe Working Arrangements
- Make reasonable steps to ensure your own safety.
- Remove yourself from any situation you feel unsafe or uncomfortable and move to a place you feel safe and report to your line manager.
- Inform your line manager/assessor of any near misses, incidents or safety concerns.
- follow the emergency procedures below when lone working if it is required;
  - If you find yourself in an emergency situation contact your line manager, or alternative line manager as soon as it is safe to do so
  - Advise them of what has happened and what action you have taken e.g. *you have fallen indoors, you have injured your head and have contacted the emergency/ medical services.*
  - If you require your line manager can contact your next of kin that is detailed within your personnel file and advise them of what has happened on your behalf.
  - Keep your line manager up to date of your situation and advise of possible medical treatment, expected time off or return to work duties.
  - Follow the absence reporting protocol as detailed within the Absence Management Policy.
- Make sure you have read and understood the lone working risk assessments and all the control measures in place
- Make sure arrangements are in place so that someone else is aware of your whereabouts at all times.
- Review and update your Risk Assessment when there is a change to work location and/or if your health changes.

## **10.0 TRAINING**

10.1 All staff will be trained in line with our lone working procedures to make sure they are aware of the potential risks and our own procedures to reduce and eliminate these.

## **11.0 EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

11.1 We are committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging fairness, diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. This is reflected in our Equality and Human Rights Policy.

## **12.0 DATA PROTECTION**

- 12.1 We will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how data will be used and the basis for processing data is provided in our Employee Fair Processing Notice.

## **13. DISSATISFACTION**

- 13.1 Any employee not satisfied with the implementation of this Policy can in the first instance raise their concerns with their manager or the senior officer dealing with the situation. If the employee remains dissatisfied, they should refer to the Association's Grievance Policy and procedures.

## **14. REVIEW**

- 14.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Board every 3-years or earlier if required.

## Safe Working Arrangements

### Guidance Notes for Staff

Staff occasionally find themselves in situations, which are potentially or actually violent. While only a small minority of staff will encounter violence, all staff need to be aware of the risks and be prepared to cope with such incidents.

This guidance note outlines some simple routines to reduce the risks of attack both inside and outside of the office. If you require clarification and further advice, ask your Team Leader.

### Inside the Office

1. The layout and design of offices and reception areas can influence the risks of violence. If you consider that they create potential dangers, inform your Manager about your concerns so that they can take appropriate action.
2. Reception areas and interview rooms should be kept as tidy as possible – ensure that there is nothing an interviewee can grab as a weapon.
3. Assume that all interviews may be demanding and be prepared for any eventuality. However, don't create "invisible barriers" which may encourage anger.
4. Do not speak down to the interviewee – try to place yourself in their predicament and have empathy. Do not be patronising.
5. If the conversation during an interview is becoming heated, try to diffuse the situation. Try to be one step ahead and if there is no way forward, then terminate the interview and leave.
6. Remember that staff often have to say "no" and it is important to be able to gauge the person's reaction and be able to cope with their frustrations if necessary.
7. Do not carry out interviews of a private nature in public.
8. Be aware of the office security system. Make sure a panic button can be reached and activated in any situation.
9. Ensure that there is always a member of staff who can be summoned in an emergency – never be completely alone.
10. Always know the escape route.

## **Responding to an Incident**

If an incident occurs or an alarm is activated, please use the following procedure: -

1. A Manager or the Chief Executive should take charge of the situation as appropriate.
2. Direct aid should be given to any victim by a trained office First Aider.
3. Liaison with any external bodies contacted (e.g. Police) should be co-ordinated by the member of staff in charge.
4. If appropriate the offices should be closed to members of the public and all staff in the building advised of the situation.

## **Outside the Office**

1. Be prepared, obtain as much information as possible before a visit about an interviewees background.
2. Visit in pairs if there is a known history of violent behaviour, Manager will identify when this is required.
3. If a potential danger is anticipated, where possible conduct the interview at the office.
4. Ensure staff know where you are at all times. If you are working outside the office out with normal hours, ensure that your Manager knows where you are.
5. Do not be unnecessarily late for an appointment. If this is unavoidable, try to make contact with the person beforehand.
6. If you are inspecting a property, or making a home visit, remember you are a guest and do not have a superior manner or be over sympathetic; the correct balance needs to be achieved.
7. If you feel uncomfortable, do not go into a particular home.
8. Always enter a room after the tenant/applicant.
9. When in a room/ensure that the way to the exit is clear.
10. Do not sit with your back to the only door.
11. Do not inspect a room if you sense that there may be someone else in the room who presents a threat.
12. Remember that, legally, the use of "reasonable" force is acceptable to repel violence - reasonable means the amount of force that is sufficient to stop the attack or prevent oneself being injured.

13. Be aware of the procedures for reporting incidents, including threatening behaviour, and be sure to follow them.
14. If there are other measures, which you feel could improve safety, discuss them with your Manager.
15. As a matter of routine, it is best practice for staff working out of office to carry a fully charged mobile phone on them, for use in case of accident, emergency or incident.

### **Post-Incident**

1. If an incident occurs report it immediately to your Manager who will ensure that the incident is recorded and appropriate action is taken. If someone has suffered physical injuries, medical advice should be sought.
2. Following either actual or threatened violence, seek support from other members of staff.
3. If legal or other advice is required, speak to your Manager and/or trade union representative.