



Lone Working Policy	
Latest Review: May 2024	Next Review: May 2025
<p>Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act (2007) • Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) • Health and Safety Offences Act (2008) • Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) 	
<p>Associated Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Manslaughter Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Incident Reporting Policy 	
<p>1. INTRODUCTION</p> <p>Assist Trust recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct support or supervision. This may involve working in isolated work areas and outside of normal office hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff as far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working.</p> <p>This policy has been developed to maximise the personal safety of staff and volunteers and where appropriate contractors who work alone, through guidance and communication mechanisms that will reduce exposure to unpredictable situations and enable staff to take every reasonable precaution whilst working alone.</p> <p>The following guidelines in this policy are set out to ensure the safety of all Assist Trust’s staff and volunteers at all times and especially whilst working alone.</p> <p>Statistics show that the chances of being involved in a serious incident are low. However, sometimes at work, because of the situations we find ourselves in, the risk is increased. It is both an organisation and individual responsibility to reduce or eliminate any potential risk.</p> <p>2. KEY PRINCIPLES</p> <p>The aims of this policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect against exposure of risks to staff, volunteers and service users • To ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of their roles, responsibility and accountability with regards to lone working. 	

- To ensure that the arrangements for protecting staff from risk as far as concerned are clear.
- To ensure that lone workers are fully inducted and trained where necessary, that they receive regular monitoring and instruction on all matters relating to Health and Safety through effective line management supervision.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers are covered by employers liability insurance irrespective of their work providing they are on Assist Trust business.
- To ensure that risk assessments are conducted on all lone working practices and that these are reviewed regularly.
- To ensure that any incidences and near misses are reported and investigated.
- To ensure that Assist Trust complies with all current legislation ensuring that safe standards are maintained.
- To minimise the risk of complaint or other action against Assist Trust.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Environmental considerations are an important factor of lone working. Staff and volunteers are advised to consider the building that they are based in and the neighbourhood/community which they may need to work in. Individuals should familiarise themselves with local issues and include these in their risk assessment.

4. REDUCING THE RISK

For staff working in the main offices, especially outside normal working hours, Assist Trust must ensure they do so in relative safety. The following points are guidance for reducing risk:

- All premises used by Assist Trust staff and volunteers to be risk assessed by the person with designated responsibility for Health and Safety.
- Security arrangements will be of a high standard. All staff should sign in/out of the premises they are in if possible and should make a colleague/manager aware of all booked appointments.
- Employees should be encouraged to lock themselves in when working alone.
- Only people known to that employee should be permitted entrance after normal working hours.
- Volunteers are not allowed to work in the Assist Trust office on their own or outside of normal working hours.
- Telephone numbers of the emergency services and appropriate personnel should be displayed clearly, within easy access of all telephones.
- It should not be obvious from the outside of the building that people may be working alone inside.
- Large sums of money should not be left on site and valuable equipment should not be visible from the outside.
- On leaving the building exit routes should be well lit, as should the car park.

5. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Line Managers must ensure that risk assessments systems are in place to meet the needs of all lone workers within their area of control.

The requirement for risk assessing lone working applies to both individuals who are office/site based but work in isolation as well as mobile staff whose work takes them out into the community. Controls should be introduced to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

6. TRAVELLING SAFELY

The following advice is not exhaustive and there may well be other issues which can help to keep staff safe.

Travelling by foot

Anyone who is on foot should develop a sensible level of awareness to danger that is relevant to the circumstances. The use of a few sensible precautions should minimise risks:

- Avoid short cuts through dimly lit or enclosed areas.
- After dark keep away from bushes, doorways and alleyways.
- Tell a work colleague your destination and expected time of return.
- Walk facing oncoming traffic; this avoids a vehicle coasting quietly.
- Walk confidently and purposefully. Avoid sending out signals of fear and vulnerability.
- Carry a personal alarm and know how to use it.
- Do not wear a personal stereo; it will reduce awareness of your surroundings.
- Wear sensible footwear; do not wear footwear which may impede your actions if alarmed.
- If you think you are being followed, check by crossing the street. If they follow you, move quickly to the nearest place with people and call the police.
- Trust your instincts. If you are wrong then you have lost nothing.
- Keep your distance if asked for directions.
- Be careful not to enter a house/building or park on an invitation of some unexpected person.

Carrying money and valuables

- Do not carry more cash than is absolutely necessary.
- Keep wallets in inside pockets.
- Carry bags containing money close to the body on the side away from the kerb.
- Make sure that fastenings on the bag are secure.
- If someone grabs your bag or wallet, let it go. Trying to hold on to it can result in serious injury. Personal safety is paramount.

Be on your guard with strangers.

- Be cautious in conversation; do not give away any personal details, and avoid confrontation on controversial topics.
- Trust your instincts and avoid crowds or groups of people who may appear threatening.
- Be wary of stationary vehicles with engines running and people sitting in them.
- If a car stops and you are threatened, use your personal alarm (if you have one) and move quickly in the opposite direction.

Travelling in a car

If you are travelling by car please ensure that you check:-

- The car is roadworthy and maintained regularly checking tyres, oil etc.
- Make sure that your vehicle is insured for business use in accordance with the Corporate Manslaughter Act.
- There is enough fuel to get to and from the destination.
- Plan your route.
- The personal alarm is handy.
- If there is a mobile phone handy take it with you and switch it on.
- Always carry change for the telephone or alternatively carry a phone card.
- Any appropriate risk assessment has been done and read.
- Is this a doubling up situation?
- The staff member feels safe doing this task.
- Someone knows the details of this visit ie. name/address of person being visited and possible duration of visit.
- The emergency contacts and arrangements have been set up.
- If possible, take out breakdown cover.
- The journey is planned, roads to take, whereabouts of destination and car parks.

When on the road

- Keep bags and other valuables out of sight – even during the journey.
- Keep doors locked and windows closed as much as possible, especially in stop-go traffic.
- Do not pick up hitchhikers.
- If followed, drive to the nearest police station or concentration of people and, if necessary, telephone the police.

If you breakdown

- Pull off the road as far as you can and if necessary switch on your hazard warning lights.
- If someone offers help, and you feel uncertain about them, stay in your vehicle with the doors locked and ask them to phone the rescue service. Do not get into a car with a stranger or try to hitch a lift.
- Walk to the nearest telephone or use your mobile, noting the road name/any landmarks and call your breakdown organisation or a garage. (If you are a woman on your own they will usually give you priority).

If you feel threatened

- If you think you are being followed, drive to a busy place.
- If the occupants of a car beside you at traffic lights or road junction, etc, try to attract your attention for any reason, simply ignore them.
- If a car travels alongside you at the same speed, slow down and let them pass. If the driver persists, drive to a busy place, and telephone the police.
- If a car pulls up in front, forcing you to stop, leave the engine running. If the driver gets out and approaches you, reverse and get away. Activate your hazard warning lights and sound your horn continuously.
- Trust your instincts and act on them.

Parking

When parking at your destination always ensure that you:-

- Park in well lit areas if possible.
- Always lock your vehicle.
- Park with the car facing the direction to leave and lock any personal belongings in boot.
- In a multi-storey car park, reverse your vehicle into a parking space and leave it as close to the exit as you can, near ground level and away from pillars.
- Carry keys before getting near the car and check inside before getting in.

Travelling on public transport

Check:-

- Plan ahead, get full timetables.
- Keep alternative in hand, e.g. taxi numbers.
- Do not get into a space where you are the only person.

7. HOME /OFF SITE VISITING

When carrying out home or off site visits your own personal safety must be your first priority. It is impossible to say precisely what you should do in every situation but these guidelines should help. If you have a medical condition, consider wearing a bracelet or pendant which shows brief details.

Before you go –

Visits should be made during your normal working day. Allow yourself enough time to finish the visit by 5pm. Don't schedule visits late on an afternoon before a day off, particularly if you live alone.

Make sure you fill out any diaries or log books as required by Assist Trust with the following information:

- Your name and mobile number.
- Details of person and organisation you are visiting including address and telephone number.
- Time and date of the visit and the time you expect the visit to finish or when you will be back in the office.

- Your mode of transport including any car details i.e. registration number and model.
- If you are not going back to your base, arrange to telephone at the end of the visit. The responsibility is with you to inform others of your movements.
- If there are any causes for concern about the safety of a visit either two people attend or the visit is refused.
- Make appointments and arrangements in advance, never cold call.
- Ensure that people back at your base know where you are going, who with and when you expect to return. Ensure these same people know you have returned safely.
- When meeting people on site indicate to them that you have undertaken the above precautions and that you are expected back at a certain time.
- Always check the validity of a new client before undertaking a visit. This can be done via contacts at work, other agencies, etc.
- If a meeting in a secluded place cannot be avoided, have an exit route planned and work out in advance a means of transport back.
- Do not give your home number or address to clients.
- Wear clothes which give out the signals you intend to give (a casual appearance may not always be the most appropriate).

8. RECOMMENDED ACTION TO TAKE

If a violent incident has occurred which affected your personal safety then the following action is recommended in the first instance:-

- Use your common sense.
- Ensure your safety and that of others.
- Defuse the situation if you are able.
- Get immediate help if possible.
- Use your safety equipment.
- Summoning the police immediately after an incident promotes effective enquiries and enables the relevant persons to be interviewed. Everyone should support a police investigation when it proves necessary. Any person who assaults a member of staff or volunteer during the course of their duties renders themselves liable to prosecution.
- A senior member of staff should be available to accompany the staff/volunteer to the police station and should remain with him or her during questioning and while statements are taken.
- Any person who sustains shock or injury should be encouraged to consult a doctor as soon as practicable.

If you are contacted by a colleague who is lone working and feels concerned for their safety and contacts you the following procedure should be adopted.

- Try to remain calm whilst going through this procedure.
- If necessary use another phone or get a colleague to call the emergency services while you keep talking to your colleague.

ALWAYS USE DIRECT QUESTIONS SO THE PERSON YOU ARE TALKING TO ONLY HAS TO ANSWER YES OR NO.

	YES	NO
Are you O.K.?		
Do you need me to call 999?		
Do you need the police?		
Do you need an ambulance?		
Do you need the fire brigade?		
Do you want another member of staff to come to you?		
Do you want me to phone you back in a few minutes so I can make excuses so you can leave?		
Tell your colleague to phone and confirm to someone in the office that they are safe after leaving.		

9. RECORDING VIOLENT AND UNTOWARD INCIDENTS

You should record any incident of this type.

Your line manager will ensure that all incidents are recorded and any trends noticed so Assist Trust can minimize and reduce any potential risks.

Whilst all incidents need to be reported and treated seriously, a distinction needs to be drawn between serious incidents which give rise to a legal action and less serious incidents which may only need to be monitored.

A report of incidents is sent to the Chief Executive annually.

Debrief

Your line manager will talk you through the incident as soon as possible after the incident. He/she will make notes so, for instance, if there is a court case, accurate contemporary records are kept. A debrief will help to deal with the incident. You will be able to talk about what you did well and what might have been done better. Your line manager should make a preliminary investigation of the circumstances and instigate a written report. Post incident risk assessments should be carried out to minimize any re-occurrence.

Peer support

Your line manager may put you in touch with another member of staff who may have been through the same type of incident for moral support.

Longer term help

You may need longer term help and Assist Trust will provide support if, for example, counselling sessions are needed.

Do not be afraid to take up the offer of counselling, even if there has been a long period of time since the incident. Sometimes, the shock does not sink in until later.

10. USE OF PERSONAL ALARMS

The following advice is not exhaustive and there may well be other issues which can help keep staff safe.

- These are primarily designed for use as a distraction to allow you to escape from a potentially violent or threatening situation.
- Always make sure that the alarm is in good working order and fully operational through regular checks.
- Make sure the battery is working, or if aerosol based, it is not about to run out.
- Make sure it is carried so that it can easily and quickly be reached ready for use.
- Always point the device towards the assailant, away from yourself.
- Audible alarms are primarily to 'stun' an assailant for at least a couple of seconds, thereby allowing you to make your escape. There is no certainty of assistance, they often sound like car alarms and will be ignored.
- Discard the personal alarm so that the assailant's attention is diverted to silencing the alarm.

11. USE OF MOBILE PHONES

The following advice is not exhaustive and there may well be other issues which can help keep staff safe.

- A mobile phone should always be kept as fully charged as possible.
- Make sure you know how to use the mobile phone properly. Read the instruction manual.
- Keep your mobile close to hand – not in the bottom of your bag.
- Never leave your phone unattended.
- Always check the signal strength before entering into a situation where you are alone. If there is no signal, contact your manager or a colleague ahead of a visit, stating your location and the nature of your visit, along with an estimated time at the visit. Once the visit is completed contact your manager or colleague to let them know you are safe.
- Keep emergency contacts on speed dial as this will speed up the time of making a call to raise an alarm.
- The use of a mobile phone could potentially escalate an aggressive situation so remember to use it in a sensitive and sensible manner.
- Be as discreet as possible with your phone as it could be a target for thieves.

- Never use a hand held mobile phone while driving this is extremely dangerous and against the law.

12. DATA PROTECTION

In the implementation of this policy, the organisation may process personal data and/or special category personal data collected in accordance with its GDPR and data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which this policy is invoked will only inform the organisation for the benefit of implementing this policy. All data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of this policy. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's GDPR and data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Signed and Authorised by:

Name:

Role:

Date:

Name:

Role:

Date: