

LONE WORKING PROCEDURE

Policy Group: Health and Safety

Effective: **1st** May 2019

Approved: Gail Crossman, Director of
Performance and Development

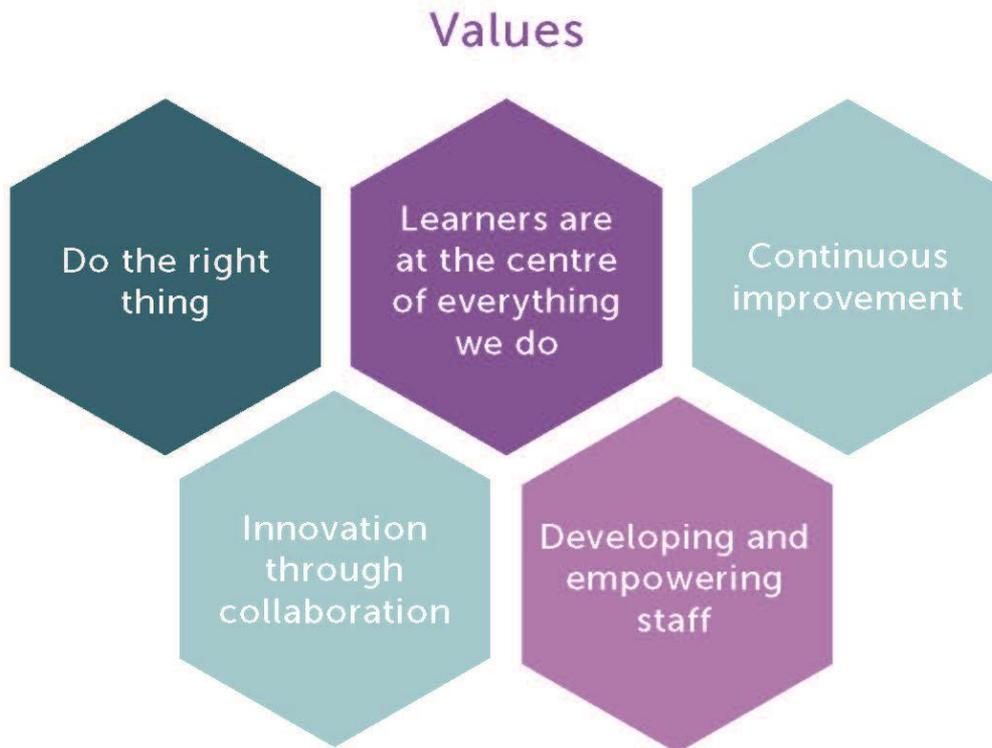
Responsible officer: Mark Fletcher

Next renew due: May 2020

Ref no.: 2.1.5

GUIDANCE

Values | Vision | Tone of Voice



Vision

Transforming lives through learning

Tone of voice

Our tone of voice takes its direct influence from our core values.

We are passionate about people and learners and are driven to get the best out of everyone by getting to understand them. We are caring and supportive, as well as being determined and strive for growth. We talk with purpose and enthusiasm in a way that connects and empowers people.

Innovation is at the heart of Learning Curve Group and we're always thinking about what's next!

SUMMARY CHANGES

Date	Page	Details of amendments

I. INTRODUCTION

This procedure outlines our requirements for lone working within Learning Curve Group. It is designed to:

- alert colleagues to the risks presented by lone working
- identify the responsibilities each person has in this activity
- implement procedures which will minimise any identified risks.

It is designed to ensure that any colleague who is identified as a lone worker or, in the course of your daily routine, you are working remotely at any point on behalf of Learning Curve Group, we assess any risks that may be present and reduce those risks as far as reasonably practicable.

Applies to:

It is applicable to all colleagues, with particular reference to business development managers, sales staff, recruitment officers, inductors and remote assessors. It is also applicable for colleagues working on our behalf alone and out of hours in any location.

Reason for procedure:

This procedure is in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other relevant legislation, and it applies to all our sites and activities.

II. PROCEDURE

Identifying Lone Workers

Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone. Examples of where you may be classed as a lone-workers can include:

- colleagues with responsibility for opening up and closing buildings
- colleagues working outside normal working hours, i.e. 18:00 – 08:00
- colleagues working in an isolated part of a building
- colleagues working in an environment away from an office

This list is by no means exhaustive.

Assessing the Risks from Lone Working

We have a duty to assess and control risks to lone workers arising from them carrying out our undertakings. This must include:

- involving colleagues when carrying out the initial risk assessment to consider potential risks and implementing measures to control them
- taking steps to ensure risks are removed where possible, or putting control measures in place to lower the risk to a suitable level
- providing instruction, training and supervision for all colleagues involved
- reviewing risk assessments when there has been a significant change in working practice

This may include:

- being aware that some tasks may be too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by an unaccompanied colleague
- where a colleague is working at another employer's workplace, informing the other employer of the risks and the required control measures

Carrying out a risk assessment will help responsible managers decide on the right level of supervision, and they must record the significant findings of all risk assessments. To assist with a risk assessment, some questions to consider when identifying specific hazards of lone working are set out in Appendix A at the end of this procedure.

Planning

When planning any lone working activity, the safety of colleagues should be paramount in everything that we do, with everybody involved in the initial assessment who may be affected. All colleagues must be fully briefed in relation to any risk arising from the activity as well as the task itself. In addition, the following must be accounted for:

Responsible managers must ensure that a 'buddy' system is in place for all lone workers to ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time:

- Lone workers should always leave an itinerary of their movements or make available their electronic diary to their Manager or an equally responsible person. All electronic diaries should be kept updated at all times, with any changes notified to their 'buddy' or Responsible manager
- Where colleagues are home based or are working from home, regular contact should be made between them and their office during the day

The following should also be taken into account for any lone working activity at the planning stage:

- Where possible, you should avoid working alone if not necessary
- You must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk
- You should take all reasonable precautions to ensure your own safety, as you would in any other circumstances, e.g. parking inside or next to the venue you are visiting, phoning ahead to make sure they are expecting you, knowing the route you are going to take beforehand, not leaving any valuables on display in your vehicle, disguising any high value electrical items in different bags, etc.
- Where required, you must ensure that you sign in and out of building registers and ensure you follow any site rules in place
- You must inform your line manager or other identified person ('buddy') when you will be working alone, giving accurate details of your location, and must follow an agreed plan to inform them when the task is completed. This includes occasions where you expect to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base
- Tutors, who work to a pre-planned programme of sessions in predetermined locations, must inform your line manager if you deviate from the programme
- If a colleague does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate using emergency contact information if necessary
- If a colleague has a medical condition, are they able to work alone?

The above list is not exhaustive and the checklist in Appendix B can be used to identify other control measures.

Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues to take into account include:

- Staffing levels and availability – developing links with a manned office or senior manager may be the best out of hours solution
- Where colleagues work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, responsible managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation

If colleagues are working away from the office, you should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times. You may use your own mobile phone for this purpose or may be able to borrow one from our internal IT team.

You are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, in working order and with sufficient credit remaining with the relevant provider.

Responsibilities and Control Measures

Having carried out a risk assessment affecting lone workers, it is important to ensure that suitable and sufficient control measures are identified and put in place. A summary of suitable controls would be as follows:

- Effective lines of communication have been established, communicated, understood and monitored
- Emergency procedures have been identified, and colleagues are aware of these and clear about the action to be taken if necessary
- Colleagues have received the appropriate training and information to enable them to undertake lone working safely
- Colleagues stop for regular breaks and, if possible, change activity after prolonged periods
- Colleagues must inform their line manager of any relevant medical conditions
- Clear procedures have been established which the lone worker can follow, as identified in the risk assessment
- Colleagues are encouraged to seek advice/assistance from their line manager if they are unsure about a situation

Prevention

Responsible managers must identify situations where colleagues work alone and consider the following:

- Does the workplace present a specific risk to the lone worker (for example, due to times of access, medical conditions, access and egress in an emergency, isolation from other areas with poor mobile signal, etc.)?
- Is there a risk of violence and/or aggression?
- Are there any reasons why the individual might be more vulnerable than others and particularly at risk if they work alone (for example, if they are young, pregnant, disabled or a trainee)?
- If the lone worker's first language is not English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communications, especially in an emergency?

Lone Working and Travelling

Ensure your vehicle is safe and capable of carrying out the task required. Items such as bags, mobile phones etc. should be out of sight and preferably stored in the boot. For personal safety, having doors locked at slow speeds would be advisable.

Try to park close to the location being visited. In dusk/night and in poor weather conditions, park in a well-lit area and facing in the direction in which you will leave.

Always lock the vehicle.

Lone workers driving alone should not stop for people who may be in distress. Instead, stop in a safe place as soon as practicable and contact the emergency services.

If you are being followed, or have reason to believe you have been followed, continue to the nearest police station or manned and lit building, such as a petrol station, to request help. In the case of breakdown, contact your 'buddy' and manager immediately and maintain contact throughout.

When using public transport, use a timetable, wait at a busy or well-lit stop, avoid empty upper decks on buses and, where possible, sit near the driver. If threatened by another passenger, inform the driver immediately.

Taxis should be pre-booked with a reputable company. If not pre-booked, go to a recognised taxi rank to hail a cab, sit in the back, be aware of child locks and central locking (most black cabs will lock the doors whilst in transit) in the cab, and avoid giving out personal information.

When walking, avoid using a mobile phone overtly in any area. If someone tries to steal what you are carrying, relinquish it, try to keep mobile and house keys in different locations (use of a wallet or purse with petty cash and expired credit cards may also be useful), inform the police as soon as possible, make a note of the time and date of events, contact the responsible manager or Head of Health and Safety, Estates and Environment as soon as possible and inform them of the incident.

Staff Working from Home

If you are based from or working from home, we still have a duty of care to ensure your safety. In relation to lone working, colleagues must ensure that:

- you take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential
- you are in regular contact with their line manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods

Responsible managers should be particularly aware of the importance of such arrangements for colleagues that live alone.

Incidents

All incidents, regardless of how minor they seem, must be reported to the responsible manager or Head of Health and Safety, Estates and Environment as soon as possible.

Appendix A

Questions to consider when identifying specific hazards of lone working

Question	Consideration
Does the workplace present a special risk to a lone worker?	Due to the environment, location, contents, unfamiliarity, etc.
Does the activity present a special risk to a lone worker?	Equipment, process, substances, location, time, members of public, handling cash, etc.
Is there a safe way in and out for one person?	In the course of normal work and in the event of an emergency, etc.
Can the equipment be adequately controlled and handled by one person?	Manual handling, operation of essential/emergency controls, etc.
Is the working environment appropriate?	Heating, lighting, ventilation, etc.
Are the welfare facilities adequate and accessible?	Toilet, washing, drinking water, etc.
Does the lone worker have first aid facilities or access to them?	First aid kit, first aider, eye wash station, etc.
Does the lone worker have access to a suitable means of communication, or other means of summoning assistance if required?	Telephone, mobile, radio, inactivity alarm, etc.
Is there a risk of violence associated with the work activity or location?	Previous history of verbal threats, violence, interaction with public, high crime areas, etc.
Is the lone worker more at risk due to their gender or inexperience?	Maturity, familiarity with procedures, knowledge and experience, particularly young and new workers.
Has the colleague received sufficient information, instruction and training to enable the work to be undertaken safely whilst alone?	Is the colleague competent? Is the emergency plan appropriate?
Has the colleague received specific training in how to respond to foreseeable emergencies that may arise in the course of their work alone?	Fire safety, etc.
Is the colleague medically fit to undertake the work alone?	Health checks, health monitoring, etc.
What arrangements are in place to provide adequate supervision?	Periodic visits, use of local security staff, signing in/out, periodic contact arrangements, open diaries, CCTV, etc.
Are there contingency plans in place should an alert or alarm be raised by a lone worker? Are these plans well known and rehearsed?	Would you or your colleagues know what to do and who to contact? If not, appropriate information or training must be given. Managers must check that workers fully understand the procedures.
Are clear written procedures established? (limits set as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone, when to stop work and seek advice, etc.)	What activities should be prohibited?
Do you know where colleagues are at all times?	If not, it is imperative that adequate record is kept of the whereabouts of all workers. Good practice dictates that people in the office have these details in order to pass on

	appropriate information in an emergency. The system should detail time, place of visit, name of the person visited and if possible a telephone number, the venue of the meeting and time of return.
If colleagues change their plan, do they inform the team?	If not, devise and implement a system of informing the team if plans are changed.
If colleagues don't return at the stated time, what happens?	If nothing would happen, devise and implement a system for contacting colleagues, places visited, etc. Include in the plan the point at which the emergency services would be contacted.
Can colleagues be contacted?	Ensure that contact numbers are held or accessible by all team members.
Do colleagues leave details in the office of their emergency contact person, etc.?	If not, devise and implement a system. This should give: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact details • telephone number • details of any dependants who may be relying on them, e.g. children to be picked up from school • make and registration number of the worker's car
Do colleagues check in when working alone or in isolated situations?	If not, devise and implement a system for colleagues working alone to check in.
Is there a check in system for colleagues that will be undertaking visits out of normal office hours?	If not, devise and implement a system for colleagues working alone to check in. This may involve workers acting as contact 'buddies' for one another.
Where will cars be parked? Is it safe?	Colleagues must think about where they park their car and how safe it is, particularly after dark.
Which route will be used – quickest or safest?	Safest routes must always be used. Shortcuts through isolated or problem areas should not be advocated.
Will there be a risk of aggression or violence?	If there is a risk of aggression or violence, Managers must consider the risk and determine what appropriate action should be taken.

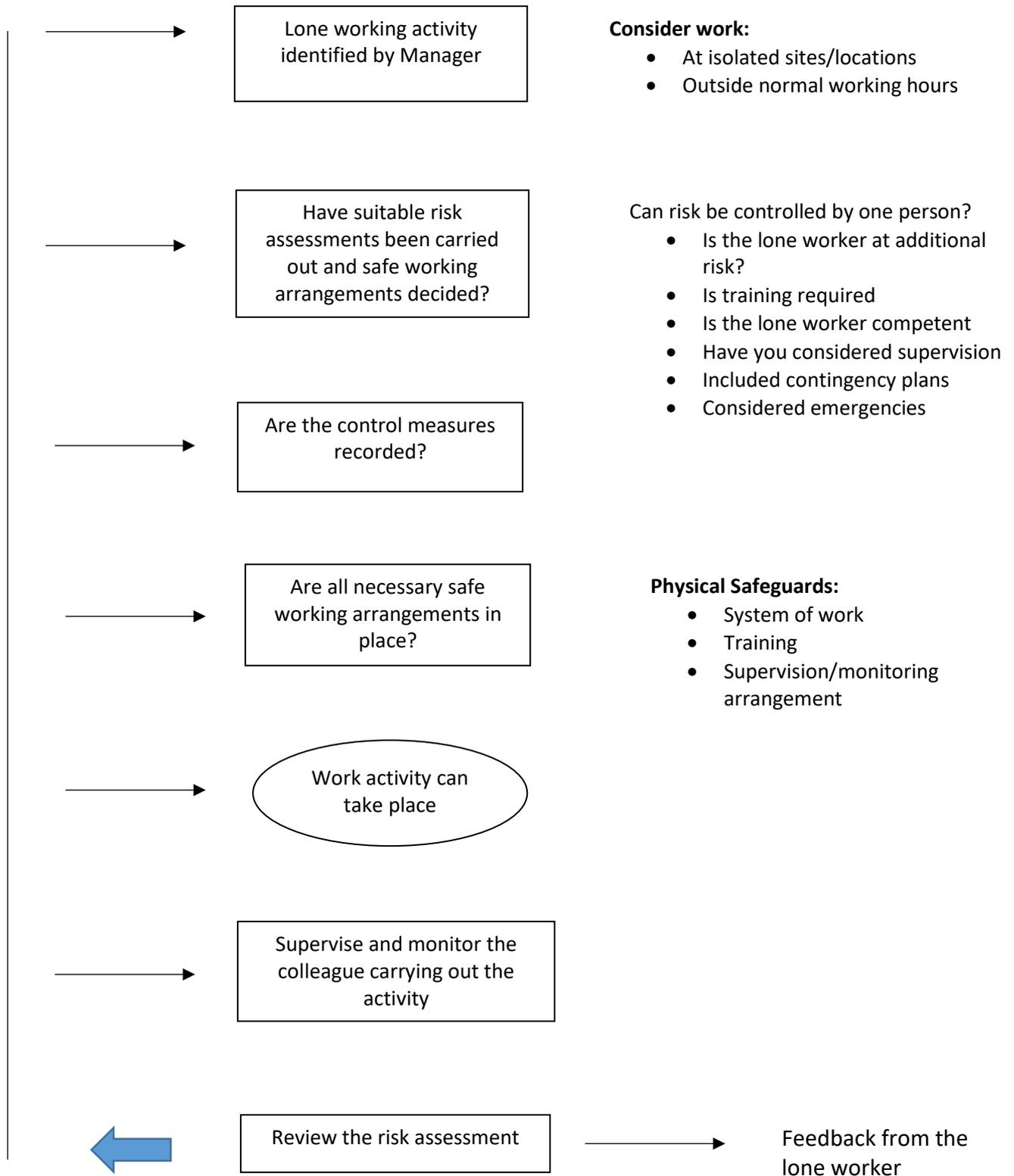
Appendix B

Practical guidance – personal safety

Reasonable precautions might include:

- Check directions for the destination.
- Ensure your car, if used, is road-worthy and has breakdown cover.
- Ensure someone knows where you are and when you are expected home.
- Avoid, where possible, poorly lit or deserted areas.
- Take care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night.
- Ensure that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly.
- If your work takes you into areas which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates, arrange to check in when the visit is over.
- Do other colleagues know where you are going, how long you will be and your estimated time of return? If another colleague is around, they should be informed of an expected time of return and know what to do in the event of overdue contact.
- Can you make contact with other colleagues or can they make contact with you? Ensure a communication network is in place throughout the working day preferably by having a mobile phone with you or a number at which they can be contacted.
- Always trust your instincts – if you are in any doubt or feel unsafe, remove yourself from that situation. Act in a confident manner and terminate the visit apologetically (for example, by saying you have to be at another meeting which you had forgotten about).
- Consider where you park and always reverse into a space, so it is easy for you to drive out.
- If using public transport, sit where there are other people, not on your own.
- If walking, use well-lit public streets – do not use shortcuts.
- Ensure you always have your mobile telephone switched on and to hand

Appendix C Lone working flowchart



III. DEFINITIONS

Term	Explanation
Lone working	Situations where colleagues, in the course of their duties, work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance.
Risk assessment	A systematic process of evaluating potential risks that may be involved in an activity.
Responsible Manager	The senior person responsible for an office or site, which includes Centre Managers and Business Directors.
Home worker	A colleague who works from home either continuously or for part of their employment.
Reasonably practicable	The likelihood of a risk occurring against the cost of countering it.
Fixed establishment	A permanent place of work where colleagues are based full-time.
Buddy	A colleague ('buddy') who has agreed with another colleague to be available on the end of a phone or to agree a work plan with when they are out of the office.
Mobile worker	A colleague who may not have a fixed place of work or who spends a large amount of their work time travelling between different venues

IV. RELATED POLICIES

HSP 2.1 Health and Safety Policy

Appendix

HSF 2.1.81 Risk Assessment Form