**WORK PLACE CHAPLAINCY SCOTLAND**

**Listening & caring - in confidence**

**LONE WORKING & RISK ASSESSMENT**

**PURPOSE OF LONE WORKER GUIDELINES**

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide managers and employees with guidance for council employees and others who may be “lone workers” and the practical steps to be taken to keep people safe when they are at work whether on Council premises, shared offices or elsewhere in the community. People who work alone should not be at any greater risk than others.

**When is a worker a lone worker?**

A ‘Lone Worker’ is any person whose work involves either brief or a large portion of their time in situations where there is no close, frequent or regular involvement with other workers or supervision. By this definition very few chaplains should ever be in this situation but for the few occasions where this may be unavoidable this policy aims to offer best practise to ensure that WPCS personnel are kept as safe as possible.

**Who is a lone worker?**

• Where only one person is in the premises, it could be an administrator in an office working early or late, a single person in a workshop, kiosk or shop or someone working at home - people who work outside of normal office hours, cleaners, security or maintenance workers.

• Service workers, social workers, parking attendants, pest control workers, drivers, teachers and other workers who visit commercial or domestic premises.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

***Team leaders and Regional Organisers -*** Are responsible to the National Director for the day-to-day maintenance of health, safety and welfare of the employees and volunteers within their areas of control.

***Employees and Volunteers -*** Are responsible for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and members of the public who may be affected by their work activities.

**Can workers legally work alone safely?**

There is no general reason why people cannot work by themselves. The answer to this question will be based on the outcome of your risk assessment, the environment and conditions that apply.

**Risk Assessment (See http://insight/riskassessment.pdf)**

The procedure for carrying out risk assessments is no different from the normal work place assessment process, i.e.:

1 identify the hazards

2 decide who can be harmed and how

3 evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

4 record your findings and implement them

5 monitor and update them as necessary.

**1 The Hazards (things with the potential to cause harm)**

Whilst the hazards are similar to everyday working situations they may be exacerbated by the fact that a person is alone and perhaps not in the immediate vicinity of aide and assistance, e.g:

• abusive clients

• animal attacks

• defective vehicles

• driving and/or road rage

• fire

• noise

• poor or lack of training

• remoteness or isolation

• slips, trips or falls

• sudden illness rendering the worker unable to summon help

• violent clients or members of the public.

**2 Who can be harmed?**

Employees or other people who may potentially be injured or ill as a result of work being carried out. In particular you should consider vulnerable groups such as those with special needs, young or pregnant workers and those called upon to rescue or give aid to injured people.

**3 Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions (see Precautions appendix 2)**

In consultation with employees and their representatives decide on the level of risk posed by the situation, whether or not extra precautions are required and whether or not the job can be undertaken safely by a single person. Depending on the results you may need to introduce new precautions, safe working practices or provide personal protective equipment, e.g:

* access to communications
* first aid equipment & training
* further specialist training
* introducing a “buddy system”
* maintenance checks on equipment and vehicles
* personal alarms
* regular supervisory meetings
* safe working practices

**4 Record your findings & implement them**

Keep records of the significant findings of your risk assessments. Ensure people are informed of the results and any new safe working practices. Records of risk assessments should be retained for as long as they are effective or superseded. In the majority of cases they should be held for the minimum of one year.

**5 Monitor and update findings as necessary**

Risk assessments and the outcomes will be monitored as often as required to ensure they remain effective. They should be reviewed or updated when there are major changes to the organisation, work practice or working environment. Should an accident or incident occur which indicates a failure of the precautions that have been developed then they should be reviewed immediately.

**High risk situations**

Where a risk assessment identifies that lone working poses a high risk to a lone worker, lone working should be avoided or arrangements for providing assistance and support put in place. Where a lone worker is working at another employer’s workplace similar arrangements will apply.

**Home visits or out of office visits**

Chaplains should avoid visiting people in their own homes or in isolated situations However if this is necessary it should be discussed with the relevant Regional Organiser, and details of your expected movements recorded with them.

After finishing a visit the chaplain should instigate a contact procedure, e.g. mobile phone call. If there is no contact when expected the Regional Organiser should go directly to the last known address or alert the police.

**Communications**

Mobile phones should always be kept fully charged. However, phones should not be relied on as the only protective measure. They provide a degree of comfort and support to those working alone in the community, but chaplains must also ensure they have left a record of their visit with their Regional Organiser or nominated person.

**Information and Training**

Employees and others will be provided with the necessary information, training and supervision, to support them in the recognition of hazards and appreciation of the risks associated with working alone (and in any other working environment) and the precautions or safe working practices they should be using. Employees are required to follow the safe working practices which will include contact arrangements, keeping safe in lone working situations, and emergency procedures. Regional Organisers are responsible for ensuring that their chaplains and volunteers attend the appropriate training. Everyone should remember that their own personal safety should be a priority and they should not get involved in any situation that is escalating or where there are concerns that it might result in violence.

If an individual’s personal safety is compromised they should:

• get out of the situation

• summon help

• call security or the police.

Where people are involved in an incident where they felt threatened or intimidated they should complete an accident/occurrence report and report it to their Regional Organiser.

WPCS will support individual staff members in line with the zero tolerance stance towards violence and aggression towards its employees.

**Working from home**

Whilst employees are working from home they have the same level of support and assistance as they would if they were working from an office or other council building. Line managers should ensure that suitable risk assessments are completed prior to people working from home and consider the additional measures which may need to be taken to keep the employee safe and healthy. These measures would include considering the security of the home e.g. keeping doors locked when alone; not giving out home addresses or phone numbers to clients; and any other equipment and training which may be required.