



Lone Working Policy

REVIEWED 9TH JANUARY 2023

DUE FOR REVIEW 31ST JANUARY 2025

Policy Statement

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Line Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Safeguarding policies including, where relevant, those of partnership organisations.

Purpose

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in a situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

This policy applies to all staff who work alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

Context

Some staff work outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns and/or to undertake their job role. The Prout Bridge Project's principles for supporting lone workers include:

- A commitment to supporting staff and managers both establishing and maintaining safe working practices,
- Recognising and reducing risk,
- A clear understanding of responsibilities,
- The priority placed on the safety of the individual over property,
- A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff,
- Equipment such as mobile phones will be made available as appropriate.

Definition

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situation where staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. The last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may create isolated areas.

Legal Requirements

Applicable Laws

Prout Bridge Project has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of their employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 places a

duty on employers, to identify significant risks within the organisation and implement suitable risk treatments, to reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Places of Work

Where workers are on premises where someone other than their employer has control, their safety is the responsibility of the main occupier of those premises provided that the occupier is also an employer or conducting an undertaking there. (S.3 (2) of the Act).

Where an employer does not exercise control over the premises it is more difficult to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Regulation 10 of MHSWR requires employers (including self-employed i.e., Independent Contractors) to provide comprehensible information on health and safety for others who are working on or visiting their premises.

Personal responsibility

Section 7 of the act requires employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

This policy and training should ensure that such persons do not take short cuts or employ dangerous practices but that they are instructed to consider and identify potential hazards and to implement a form of risk assessment to ensure the safety of themselves and any of other persons they may be working with.

Mandatory Building procedures

Security of buildings

Line managers and employees must ensure that:

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building and that emergency exits are accessible,
- Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder,
- When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms,
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit,
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering,
- External doors are locked to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone.

Working alone at another building/location

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that:

- All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building/room and that emergency exits are accessible,
- They are familiar with the fire emergency procedures and, if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of exits and alarms,
- When making a booking at a venue there will be somebody else present in the building (i.e., staff, caretaker) and that these individuals can be contacted in the event of an emergency,
- There is access to a telephone and first aid kit,
- If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering,

- Staff are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures,
- Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit busy area,
- Ensure sign in and sign out procedures are followed.

Fire Instructions for Lone Working

Line Managers and their employees must ensure that in the case of the Fire Alarm sounding the member of staff must:

- Help others to evacuate the building using the nearest fire exit as appropriate,
- Contact the Fire Service – give clear address details and wait until these have been repeated back to you,
- Assemble at the designated assembly point,
- Liaise with the leader of any group(s) in the building to ensure everyone has evacuated the building,
- Prevent people from re-entering the building from your position of safety at the assembly point,
- Meet the Fire Service and immediately let them know if anyone is still in the building,
- Do not re-enter the building until told to do so by the Fire Service.

Personal Safety

Staff should avoid working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people on site should leave together.

Staff 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.

Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.

Before working alone an assessment of the risks involved should be sent to Line Manager.

When required, staff must ensure that they sign in and out on building registers.

Staff must inform their Line manager or “other identified person” when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location, and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base.

A staff member, who works to a pre-planned programme of sessions, must inform their Line Manager or other identified person if they deviate from the programme.

If a member of staff 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.

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

- Staffing levels and availability,

- The identified risks,
- Measures in place to reduce those risks.

Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make the provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.

Staff working away from the office should ensure they have access to a mobile phone at all times. Staff may use their own mobile phone for this purpose. Staff are responsible for checking that the mobile phone is charged, in working order and with sufficient credit remaining with relevant provider. Please see appendix 1 for further guidance

Assessment of risk

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access,
- The context – Nature of task, any special requirement,
- The young person or client concerned- indicators of potential or actual risk,
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations,
- Skills and experience of staff,
- Any other special circumstances.

All available information should be considered and checked or updated, as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in any given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete their tasks.

Planning

Staff safety should be considered when choosing locations for courses and project delivery etc.

Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.

Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected return time.

The Line Manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operational conditions affecting the staff member.

Staff Working at Home

It is not standard practice to work from home; however, this may be agreed in exceptional circumstances, with Line Manager.

Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.

Staff working from home should be in regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person if working from home for extended periods.

Staff working from home should be aware that even ex-directory and mobile numbers will show up on Caller Display and can be retrieved on 1471. To prevent the person you call accessing your number, dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile or service provider.

Practice guidance – Personal Safety

Checking the directions for the destination.

Ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has breakdown cover.

Ensuring someone knows where you are and when you are expected home.

Avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas.

Taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night.

Ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly.

For more information see the Suzy Lamplugh Trust Website <http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety/personal-safety-tips/> which gives further advice and information.

Monitoring and Review

Any member of staff with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their Line Manager or with the Director if this is not possible.

Signed:Paula Tuff.....

Name and position in group: ...Director.....

Date:24th January 2023.....

Date for Review:1st January 2024.....

Appendix 1 – Personal Safety

Personal Safety

There are several things you can do to avoid trouble. Prout Bridge Project has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of staff, but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves.

This is not about raising anxiety levels but about recognising potential danger and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for service users in your care.

Be aware of the environment

Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.

Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use and ensure that faults are reported/dealt with.

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.

If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.

Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings you control.

Be aware of yourself

Think about your body language. What message are you giving?

Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be interpreted as sarcastic or patronising.

Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?

Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

Be aware of other people

Take note of their non-verbal signs.

Be aware of their triggers.

Don't crowd people – allow them space.

Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises that can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.

Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?

Listen to them and show them you are listening.

Where practical try to deflate difficult situations. **If you feel that a meeting is out of control, stop the meeting** and arrange follow up, as necessary.

Appendix 2 – Guidance for Lone Working

Health and Safety

Staff must ensure that they sign in and out of the building

Lone Working within Working Hours (9am-5pm)

Staff must ensure that they have notified the Line Manager or a Buddy (strictly staff member) prior to any Lone Working.

Staff must ensure that their appointments are logged with their appropriate manager.. Logged information should include:

- Where the staff member will be working i.e., room and time/length of meeting (approx. if not known),
- Appropriate details of the person/s they will be meeting,
- Notified contact (Name of contact providing support).

Project staff are required to lock the main door to prevent the entry to the building from an unknown visitor as this situation poses the greatest risk to staff and the premises.

Lone Working Outside of Normal Working Hours

Staff must ensure that they have notified the Line Manager or a Buddy (strictly staff member) prior to any Lone Working.

Staff Lone Working outside of opening hours (9am-5pm) should ensure external doors are locked.

Working Alone (with or without young person) at another building other than at prout Bridge

Staff must ensure that they have notified the Line Manager or Buddy (strictly staff member) prior to any Lone Working.

Staff must ensure that their movements/appointments are logged within their appropriate manager. Logged information should include:

- Where the staff member will be working and time/length of meeting
- Details of the person/s they will be meeting (including contact telephone numbers if known)
- Notified contact (Name of contact providing support)

The Line Manager or nominated Buddy must be aware of the movements of the staff member and have access to their contact and whereabouts details.

Recorded details should be kept in a secure location to prevent breaches of General Data Protection Regulations where neither young people nor members of the public have access.

Staff must agree a time and method of contact with identified person to confirm completion of tasks. (This should be no longer than 1 hour after expected finish time).

Where there is a concern for a staff member's wellbeing (if they have not returned from a visit, maintained contact with their Buddy and/or cannot be contacted), the Line Manager be informed, and the police should be called.

If you have 1:1 case work, the following procedure is more in depth and may be useful for your situation

Prout Bridge Project's, lone working procedures for working with children, young people and families.

Lone working

Prout Bridge Project procedure:

If planning to lone work, ensure that a risk assessment has been completed and any precautionary measures have been taken to reduce any risks identified, and that your phone is charged.

Ensure that up to date with details of Family name and address you are intending to visit, and any details of visit you feel will help to ensure your whereabouts are known.

Ensure that a 'phone in' appointment has been sent to agreed member of staff and that they have accepted this as an appointment.

Phone in to HQ immediately after your appointment finishes.

If your appointment goes over the planned end time, then you must phone in to inform them that you have not finished and confirm an amended finish.

Other staff responsibilities

Ensure all 'phone in' requests are accepted and that you will be in the office when the 'phone in' is due to take place. If you are out of the office at this time, ensure that another member of staff can take responsibility for this and inform your appropriate manager of this change.

If you have not received a 'phone in' up to 30mins after expected finish time you must try to contact the appropriate manager. If no response then the Director or a member of the trustees must be informed and they will take the necessary steps to locate the worker, including contacting the police providing details of where the worker is expected to be.

Lone working outside of office hours (Before 9am and after 5pm and weekends)

Prout Bridge Project procedure:

If planning to lone work outside of office hours, ensure that a risk assessment has been completed and any precautionary measures have been taken to reduce any risks identified, and that your phone is charged.

Ensure that up to date with details of family name and address you are intending to visit are available and any details of visit you feel will help to ensure your whereabouts are known.

Ensure that a 'phone in' appointment has been sent to an agreed 'buddy' (normally a manager) and that they have accepted this as an appointment. This should start at the time you are due to finish your appointment and have duration of between 15-30minutes.

Phone or text your 'buddy' immediately after your appointment finishes.

If your appointment goes over the end time you have arranged, then you must phone or text your 'buddy' to inform them that you have not finished and confirm a new expected finish time.

Buddy responsibilities:

Ensure all 'phone in' requests are accepted and that you are available to accept the 'phone in' at requested time. If you are not available, then you must inform the worker of this so that they can arrange with a different buddy.

If you have received a phone call no further action is required. However, if a text is received you must respond within 1 hour to this to confirm you have received it.

If you have not received a 'phone in' up to 30mins after expected finish time you must try to contact the Family Link Worker. If no response:

Step 1 - Contact Manager/Director/trustee Chair to explain situation agree next step,

Step 2 - Contact Police, informing them of expected location,

Step 3 - Continue to try and contact individual.

End of 1:1 procedure

Transport

Staff transporting passengers/young people are expected to complete Travel Plans prior to any journey.

All travel plans must be made available to Line Manager or Senior Manager prior to journey.

Travel Plans are to include:

- Journey Destination
- Start and finish times of journey (Including return journey where applicable)
- Vehicle information
- Staff and Passenger/Young person names and emergency contact information
- Staff and Young person's medical information
- Any additional information that will reduce the risk of journey.

Planning ahead

With all activities you must assess the risks to your personal safety and take steps to minimise them. The best strategy for keeping safe always is to plan well ahead of time. Thinking things through and planning for the unexpected helps you to feel confident and react well in an emergency. If you are in any doubt, please discuss it with your Line Manager.