

Lone Working Policy and Procedure

This Policy Relates to the following Legislation

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Part 3: para 6; para 7 (a) and (b); para 10; para 11; para 14; para 15; para 16 (a) and (b). Part 5: Para 25

This Policy Relates to the following Regulations

- Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

This Policy Relates to the following Guidance

- Every Child Matters 2004
- Statutory Guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of The Children Act 2004
- The OfSTED publication “Safeguarding children, young people and adults policy 2015”
- The HMSO publication “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (updated 09.12.20)”
- The DfE publication, “Guide to Children’s Home Standards Including Quality Standards April 2015”
- The HSE publication, “Protecting Lone Workers: how to manage the risks of working alone (March 2020)”¹
- Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures
- Reference to the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP)²

This Policy Applies To:

- a) All those directly employed by The Lioncare Group and who are in positions and roles that require them to interact with or work alongside or around or in proximity to the children in our care.
- b) All those indirectly employed by The Lioncare Group by virtue of being sub-contracted or commissioned and paid by The Lioncare Group to carry out work on behalf of The Lioncare Group and where such work causes them to interact with or work alongside or around or in proximity to the children in our care.
- c) All those working in partnership with The Lioncare Group in the form of voluntary work or student placements and where such work or activity involves interacting with or work alongside or around or in proximity to the children in our care.

Responsibilities Associated with this Policy

All employees, whether they are ‘front-line’ engaged directly in the task of caring for, educating, and supporting the children in our care, or ‘ancillary’ (e.g. House Keeper, Maintenance Worker, Administrator etc.), are personally responsible for managing their own conduct in relation to following this policy.

All employees whether they are ‘front-line’ or ‘ancillary’ are also responsible for supporting their colleagues and co-workers to follow this policy.

All employees must be provided opportunities to raise any concerns regarding health and safety, any risks must be assessed, recorded, / managed in-line with Health and safety guidance on the risk of lone working. It is the responsibility of employees to follow these arrangements and to raise any additional concerns, changes in working

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

² <https://www.bhscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/12/BH-Safeguarding-Children-Partnership-Arrangements-Final-1.pdf>

practices or situations etc. with their line manager as soon as they arise.

Members of the Management Team (Senior Therapeutic Carers, Senior Learning Support Assistant, Senior Pastoral Lead, Senior Teacher, Deputy Managers, Head Teacher, Registered Managers) are responsible for ensuring all those employed directly or indirectly or on a voluntary basis or as a student placement are made aware of this policy and guidance, and for monitoring their safe and proper conduct whilst interacting with or work alongside or around or in proximity to the children in our care and for taking such action as necessary to prevent children being at risk of harm because of an adult's failure to follow this policy and guidance.

The Executive Team (Assistant Directors and Chief Executive Officer) are responsible for reviewing this policy and at least annually and more frequently if and when it is considered necessary to do so, and for ensuring this policy remains fit-for-purpose.

It is the responsibility of managers to assess the potential risks of lone working to employees and to ensure that arrangements are in place to reduce these risks to the lowest possible level in accordance with related policies and procedures. Managers must also ensure that all employees have received appropriate information, instruction and training relating to lone working and provide them with opportunities to raise any concerns through Induction, Supervision, Team meetings and other training available

Monitoring and Review of this Policy

The implementation of this policy and its corresponding guidance will be monitored continuously, and the policy itself will be reviewed at least annually by the Executive Team and in consultation with relevant others including where possible and feasible those involved in caring for, educating, and supporting the children in our care, and consultation with the children themselves.

Anyone with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their manager or with the whole team, as appropriate.

Policy Statement

The Lioncare Group believes that sound Risk Assessment and Risk Management around situations where an employee is required to undertake lone working, is an essential tool for ensuring a safe approach to care is embedded in practice. Implementing our Lone Working Policy helps minimize the risks that lone workers face and enable The Lioncare Group to put in place appropriate measures to improve their safety.

For the purpose of this policy, The Lioncare Group defines Lone Working as situations where in the course of their duties employees work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other people in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

Our Lone Working policy is designed to alert all employees of The Lioncare Group to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give employees and colleagues a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

Where circumstances or situations require that an employee of The Lioncare Group work alone, both the individual 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.

Health and Safety Legislation imposes a general duty on all employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, (this includes agency staff), whilst at working for The Lioncare Group. This requirement includes the need to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place whilst employees are working alone.

It is the policy of The Lioncare Group to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health, safety and welfare.

Our Principles for Supporting Lone Workers

The Lioncare Group's principles for supporting lone workers include:

- a commitment to supporting employees and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
- recognising and reducing risk
- a commitment to the provision of appropriate support for colleagues
- a clear understanding of responsibilities
- the priority placed on the safety of the individual over property
- a commitment to providing appropriate training

Security of buildings

Employees and their Line Managers 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

Employees and their Line Managers 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 and, if applicable, intruder alarm procedure and know the location of both exits and alarms
- When making a booking at a venue there will be somebody else present in the building (i.e. Building Manager or Caretaker) and that this person 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
- They are familiar with the no-smoking rules and procedures
- Whenever possible that they park in a well-lit and busy area
- Ensure sign in and sign out procedures are followed

Lone Working with Children

In The Lioncare School, lone working with children is rare and exceptional and should only happen under the direct risk assessment of the school Head Teacher and in their absence the Assistant Director for Education & Learning (with Designated Safeguarding Lead Responsibility) supported by the Senior Team of the School.

In the Children's Homes, lone working with children occurs more often and is at some level a necessary and important aspect of the work by those caring for the children in the home environment in line with normal parenting practice. Routines such as Casework sessions, settling times, visits to GP's and dentists, and quality individual time with a child may necessarily require an adult to in effect be 'lone working' with a child.

However, there are clear measures that must be taken to ensure the safety and protection of both the child and the

adult is maintained at all times, and include remaining within proximity to another adult and/or child where possible, adults informing colleagues of their intentions and actions and whereabouts before engaging in such work and again when completing such work, and ensuring a clear and accurate record is made of such work including times and locations and events etc.

Adults should not have contact with children outside of the boundaries of the working relationship. This includes contact via social media. If a child initiates contact with an adult outside of that adults' normal working hours i.e. when that adult is not 'on-duty', it should be explained to the child that this is not allowed and contact should be ended without further engagement. The adult must report the matter without delay to their respective manager and to the Executive Team to ensure proper safeguarding protocols are maintained at all times.

Where a child's individual Safeguarding Risk Profile indicates lone working with that child to be an unsafe practice or where the risk is deemed 'too great', adults must not place themselves in a lone working situation with that child and instead must follow the strategies and measures set down in the Safeguarding Risk Profile.

Lone Working - Adults

Lone working by adults is an everyday feature of work at the Lioncare School, as much of the management and administration tasks happen outside of the school working day. Lone working is likely to happen at the weekends and in the school holidays and before 08:30 hrs and after 18:00 hrs on weekdays in term time. All adults are responsible for their own safety in these situations and should note the following guidelines:

- Adults are not expected to be in the school before 07:00 hrs. Anyone arriving after 07:00 hrs on a school day need take no further action unless there is an unusual situation such as extreme weather, evidence of break-in etc. In such cases they must call the Head Teacher or, where more appropriate, the emergency services.
- Adults leaving the building after 17:00 hrs should check which colleagues are in the building and inform them they are leaving. They should inform colleagues if they note a lone working situation arises as a result of their leaving. Adults leaving a colleague in a lone working situation should ensure all external doors and downstairs windows are closed as they leave. Any adults left alone should not attempt high/medium risk tasks involving working at height or moving and handling and should not allow visitors into the building without alerting colleagues across the organisation. A lone working adult should set the alarms when leaving and inform the Head Teacher by text or email when they have done so. If the Head Teacher is the last person to leave the building and has any concerns on doing so she should inform a senior colleague.
- Any adult lone working at the weekends should also inform the Head Teacher of their arrival and exit.
- The Head Teacher and/or Senior Teacher should inform the Assistant Directors and/or Chief Executive Officer of any lone working occasions if these are unusual or extended.

Lone working by adults in the homes occurs infrequently due to the 24/7 nature of the home (i.e. never closes) and the high staffing levels maintained. That said, there may be occasions when an adult remains working in the home when the children are away from the home attending school or on a group activity and other colleagues are away from the home engaged in other activities (e.g. meetings or training sessions etc.). Lone working in the home may also occur at times when the children are on holidays away from the with other adults and a minimum roster is in effect.

In addition to the separate lone working policy, all employees who find themselves in a lone working situation in the home should follow the guidance set out below.

Summary of Employees Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety
- co-operate with their employer so far as is necessary to enable compliance with the above duties
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- inform the employer of any serious risk

At The Lioncare School, employees achieve this by:

- At all times sharing their thinking in a way that allows for a flexible, creative curriculum that exposes children to the managed risk necessary for their supported growth and development
- Filling out forms correctly for activities that require this
- Staying up to date with legislation and guidance
- Informing colleagues and the Head Teacher and/or Assistant Head Teacher of any risk that they perceive
- Taking action to reduce physical hazards in the environment
- Demonstrate good practice within the therapeutic education ethos of The Lioncare School to work with the behaviours and communications presented by children throughout their attendance at school.

In the Children's Homes, employees achieve this by:

- At all times sharing their thinking in a way that allows for a flexible, creative and collaborative approach to safe care practice that allows children to take managed risks necessary for their healthy growth and development whilst ensuring they are protected from suffering any and all avoidable harm.
- Undertaking and completing all necessary and essential administrative duties including recording and reporting and logging.
- Maintaining their own knowledge and understanding of current legislation and regulation and guidance and best practice in relation to effective Risk Assessment and Risk Management.
- Informing colleagues and the Registered Manager and/or Senior Managers of any risk identified or suspected and taking necessary action to minimise or avoid such risk and/or as instructed.
- Taking personal responsibility for carrying out action to identify and reduce physical hazards in the environment
- Demonstrate good practice within the therapeutic ethos of home and wider organisation to work with the behaviours and communications presented by children throughout their stay at the home.

Personal safety

Employees should avoid working alone if not necessary and where possible the final two people in the building or premises should leave together. They 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. They 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 made in conjunction with the Line Manager. Where required, employees must ensure that they sign in and out of building registers. They 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 an employee expects to go home following an external commitment rather than returning to their base. If an employee 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 take into account include:

- Staffing levels and availability – developing links with and across the three Children's Homes, where there is 24 hour staffing and therefore a 'safe point of call' may be the best 'out-of-hour's' solution
- The identified risks
- Measures in place to reduce those risks

Where employees work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation. Employees working away from their work-base should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times.

There are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The organisation 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 themselves. This is not about raising anxiety levels but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for service users in your care.

Take reasonable precautions to protect yourself and those in your care. Reasonable precautions might include:

- checking directions for the destination
- ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover
- ensuring someone knows where you are and when 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

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 and other mechanical 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 messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen 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 signals.
- 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 which 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.

Identification and 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 the task, any special circumstances.
- The individuals concerned; indicators of potential or actual risk.
- History; any previous incidents in similar situations.
- Any other special circumstances.
- All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

Identification of Risk: Additional Guidance

Managers should establish clear procedures to set limits of what activities can and cannot be carried out whilst working alone. It is not possible to list all possible scenarios within this policy. However, examples may include;

- Spending time alone with a child known to have violent tendencies
- Assisting in an emergency situation in another work-base setting owned and operated by The Lioncare Group that requires spending time alone with a child where the assisting adult has limited information about that child
- working alone in an office area outside of standard working hours

Lone working may expose employees and others to particular hazards which may not be apparent in normal circumstances. The Lioncare Group's aim is to eliminate these hazards completely or, where this is not possible, to reduce them to an acceptable level.

In carrying out a Lone Working Risk Assessment particular consideration should be given to:

a. **Task/activity to be carried out:**

1. Timing and whether or not it is appropriate for the task to be carried out alone;
2. Level of risk;
3. Staff/police response time;
4. Complexity of task;
5. Training requirements;
6. Additional information.

b. **The ability of employees:**

1. Training provision/requirements;
2. Relevant qualifications and experience;
3. Medical fitness;
4. Competence for task including supervision issues for new employees.

c. **The remoteness or isolation of workplaces:**

1. Means of communication;
2. Means of raising an alarm;
3. Time required for help to arrive;
4. Access and egress routes;
5. Transport arrangements.

d. **The risk of injury, violence or criminal activity etc.**

1. Awareness of the contents of Individual Safeguarding Risk Profiles, Positive Behaviour Support Plans, Placement Plans etc.
 2. Awareness of known associates and/or relatives of the child;
 3. Information relating to previous incidents occurring during lone-working situations.
 4. Awareness of medication needs and other potential trigger events (e.g. fear of dogs);
- e. **Means of communication:**
1. Mobile phone;
 2. Landline telephone;
 3. Personal alarms;
- f. **Emergency and accident procedures, e.g.:**
1. Means of summoning assistance;
 2. Means of raising the alarm;
 3. Reporting of accidents, incidents, injuries etc.
- g. **The nature of any potential injury or damage and anticipated "worst case" scenario:**
1. Control measures for dealing with the situation;
 2. Procedures to be followed in an emergency;
 3. Contact points, including those for 'out of hours' working.
- h. **Backup/support contacts:**
1. Line Manager / Manager / Head Teacher;
 2. Managers of other Homes
 3. Assistant Directors;
 4. Chief Executive Officer / Responsible Individual;
 5. Emergency services – police, fire, ambulance;

Planning

The safety of colleagues should be considered when choosing locations for courses etc. Colleagues should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself. Communication, checking-in and fallback arrangements must be in place. Employees 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 operating conditions affecting the individual employee and their specific circumstances.

Home-Working

Employees working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential. They should be in regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods. Managers should be particularly aware of the importance of such arrangements for employees that live alone.

Employees 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 that you call accessing your home number dial 141 before their number, or check the instructions for your mobile phone.