

Policy on:	Lone Working Policy
Compliant with Charter Outcomes and Standards:	Health & Safety
Compliant with Equal Opportunities:	For this policy, the key issues are around being safe and consistent in dealing with staff lone working.
Compliant with Business Plan:	Objective 4 Organisational – Strengthen our internal capabilities and resilience.
Compliant with Risk	This policy ensures that the Association effectively manages lone working. Risk Assessment – Low if the actions contained within this policy are implemented.
Date for Approval:	September 2021
Date for Review:	September 2023
Responsible Officers:	Julie Allison – Head of Housing



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This policy is available, on request, in different languages and in other formats such as large print, audio format and braille as required.



Lone Working Policy

1 Introduction

Shire Housing aims to limit the risks from lone working where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is happening, we will take all reasonable steps to make sure our staff are safe while they work for us. This includes limiting the risks from periods where staff are working from home as part of our hybrid working pilot underway between August 2021 and January 2022 and any future adoption of a hybrid working model.

Within Health & Safety law our staff should not be put at any greater risk if lone working compared to someone who is not. We have a duty to assess lone working risks and take any reasonable, practical measures to reduce and where possible, eliminate these. Our staff have a duty of care to co-operate, provide us with relevant information and abide with the measures that have been put in place.

2 Scope of Policy

Our business requires some staff to work alone, out-with the office environment, to deliver services to customers and in the communities we serve. The purpose of this policy is to complement our health and safety policy. It was designed in consultation with staff who carry out duties out-with the office environment.

Our objectives are to;

1. Provide staff training and awareness of personal safety when working alone
2. Have in place a robust communication method for Staff to regularly check-in when out and about alone.
3. Risk Assess lone working and ensure that safe systems of work are in place to reduce risks so far as is reasonably practicable
4. Make sure that appropriate support is available to staff who work alone
5. Encourage full reporting and recording of any incidents relating to lone working
6. Minimise the number of lone working related incidents or injury to staff.
7. To embrace new technology that supports lone worker safety where appropriate.

This policy and related procedures apply to all employees, managers, governing body members, contractors, volunteers and workers.

3 Legislation

Although there is no single piece of legislation that explicitly applies to lone workers, there are a number of legislations that apply indirectly, these are:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974



- The Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- The Management of Health at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 3 and 13
- Protection from Harassment 1997

4 Definition of Lone Workers

There are many definitions of a lone worker however, this policy applies the Health and Safety Executive definition, describing a lone worker as someone who: *“works by themselves without close or direct supervision”*.

In Shire Housing, a lone worker is likely to include:

- Working outside normal office hours, even on a one-off basis.
- Working with the public on their own or away from colleagues.
- Working on their own, in an office, at home or some other location.
- Working in other’s homes or premises.
- If our staff travel alone as part of their job (this does not include commuting).
- Working in the reception area alone, and isolated from the rest of Shire Housing.
- Working in the office but, away from colleagues.

5 Employer Responsibilities

As an employer, we have a responsibility to make sure our staff are safe while they work for us, and this includes any time they are lone working.

To do this, we will:

1. Make sure risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly or as and when required.
2. Provide procedures for working safely based on the risks identified in the risk assessment.
3. Make sure our staff are provided with appropriate and relevant training.
4. Have reporting systems in place to record, investigate and review any near misses and incidents.
5. Report near misses/incidents on behalf of our staff if our staff are unable to do this.
6. Review near misses/incidents, this will include a review of the risk assessment and working procedures.
7. Inform HSE using RIDDOR procedures (if required).
8. Make sure our staff have appropriate supervision.
9. Provide our staff with appropriate aftercare and support (in the event of any incident).
10. Make sure our staff are issued with a copy of this policy.
11. Review this policy and update it as is appropriate
12. Involve our staff when considering potential risks and control measures.

6 Employee Responsibilities



Our staff also have responsibilities, which we expect them to fulfil. These are as follows:

1. Act responsibly in their work with us at all times.
2. Not intentionally provoke or inflame a potentially aggressive situation.
3. Not knowingly put themselves at risk.
4. Remove themselves from any situation they do not feel comfortable and/or safe in.
5. Report all incidents and near misses, by following our reporting procedures.
6. Complete the near miss/incident report form, (if the staff member is able to do so).
7. Attend training when this is provided.
8. Take part in the formal risk assessment process.
9. Carry out an informal/dynamic risk assessment as and when necessary.
10. Know, understand and follow this policy and the procedures.
11. Speak to their line manager if our staff are unsure of anything.
12. Ensure their emergency contact person is provided with their line managers' contact details in line with Shire Housing procedure.

Personal Safety Guidance is provided at Appendix 1 and Covid Home Visit Guidance is provided at Appendix 2.

7 Training

All staff will receive regular training to refresh awareness of the potential risks and to control and reduce these as far as is reasonably practical.

Training shall also be aimed at helping to equip staff to deal with their personal safety while at work and working out-with the office.

We will provide personal safety training at all new staff inductions and thereafter, every two years for all staff who require to work alone.

8 Managing Risks

Risk assessment is led by the Health & Safety Administrator (Asset Manager) and reviewed at regular intervals. It identifies potential risk of lone working tasks or activities. It will identify those staff affected and the control measures or safe working practices required to remove or ameliorate the risk. It will take account of all potential risks such as fire, illness, accident, personal safety and violence. All staff are encouraged to participate to consider a range of potential risks.

The purpose of risk management is to identify, eliminate, reduce, and control risks.

This means:

- Where possible, eliminate risks and/or hazards or the likelihood of them occurring.
- Reduce the effects of the risks as far as is

- reasonably practicable and appropriate.
- Isolate the risk or hazard.
- Control the working practice, through appropriate measures.

We conduct the formal risk assessment process for the different operations we perform as a business. Where necessary, further specific risk assessments will be carried out depending on the job function.

The risk assessment will:

- Adequately assess the H&S risk to staff.
- Identify what tasks/roles results in a lone worker.
- Identify what hazards lone workers could face.
- Assess/discuss the level of severity against and likelihood of each risk.
- Assist in implementing appropriate and proportional risk control measures.
- Establish appropriate procedures for serious and imminent danger, including emergency response procedures.
- Provide information to our staff on risks and control procedures.
- Highlight any particular groups at risk.
- Provide for an opportunity for information to be shared to assist in continuing to control and reduce risks.

The risk assessment will be written in a formal style and our staff will be issued with a copy of this. If our staff are unable to locate the risk assessment, they should speak to their line manager.

A formal risk assessment will take place prior to all known lone working situations however, it is important that our staff are aware and are comfortable to undertake a dynamic risk assessment in any lone worker situation our staff may find themselves in. If guidance is needed on this, a line manager can assist.

9 Near Miss and Incident Reporting

It is vital that our staff report any near miss situations or actual incidents as soon as it has occurred to their line manager. If it is not possible to report immediately, it must be reported within 12 hours of occurring. The line manager will make sure the appropriate steps are taken to share this information with Shire Housing and any governing bodies, if required, and that the risk assessment is updated if appropriate. All near miss and incident information must be reported to the Health & Safety Administrator along with a near miss and an incident form completed.

Once our staff have reported the incident to their line manager the following will happen:

- The line manager will have an informal, private discussion with the staff member and discuss any support where appropriate.
- The staff member submits near



miss/incident form to be reviewed by their line manager. If it is not possible for staff to complete this, their line manager will complete this with their input.

- The line manager will share any appropriate information with Shire Housing and any governing bodies, if required, and inform if the risk assessment should be reviewed.
- A review of the control measures will take place.
- Any updated information will be issued to our staff.

10 Reporting, Recording and Monitoring

All incidents or potentially dangerous situations reported to the line manager or Health & Safety Administrator will be recorded on the Health & Safety Incident Form and will be investigated.

The Board receive a monthly Health & Safety report which includes any incident reports.

11 Review of Policy

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed at least every 2 years or at any relevant legislative change.

12 Regulatory Standards and Financial Management

In carrying out this policy the Association aims to demonstrate compliance with the following standards:-

1. The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

1.5 Governing body members and senior officers understand their respective roles, and working relationships are constructive and effective. The governing body provides the necessary challenge and holds the senior officer to account for his/her performance.

4. The governing body bases its decisions on good quality advice and identifies and mitigates risks to Shire Housing.

4.3 The governing body identifies risks that might prevent it achieving the RSLs purpose and has effective strategies and systems for risk management and mitigation, internal control and audit.

6 The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

6.5 The governing body is satisfied that the senior officer has the necessary skills and knowledge to do his/her job.



Appendix 1 – Personal Safety Guidance

Personal Safety – Staff Awareness

Safety at work is a mutual responsibility for both staff and the employer. Staff are asked to;

1. **Avoid Risk** – always sign out when our staff leave the office with details of where our staff are going and when our staff are expected back. Avoid shortcuts and if their plans change let the office know.
2. **Be aware** – trust their instinct! If our staff feel scared or uneasy, do not ignore the warning – act on it.
3. **Be alert** – be aware of their surroundings, where our staff are going and how our staff are getting there.
4. **Walk away** – if confronted with an aggressive client get away. Defend them self only if necessary.
5. **Always report any incident** – however trivial. Not doing so could put others at risk.

Personal alarm, torches and mobile phones are available to staff who require to work out-with the office.

Signing Out – Do we know where staff are going?

The sign out sheets at reception should be completed each time staff leave and return to the office. Details of where they are going, addresses and number of visits and expected return time should be clearly listed in electronic calendars or on the Notice Board in the main office. If plans change, staff are asked to keep the office informed.

Late Visits – between 4.30 p.m. – 6.30 pm.

Late visits can be conducted in pairs if required. Authorisation to conduct late visits must be sought from the Customer Service Manager, Asset Manager or Head of Housing. Evening visits will only be authorised if absolutely necessary.

Details of such visits must be noted in outlook calendars. Each visiting officer can verify the other has set off home safely.

Travelling by Car – “Avoiding Risk”

When travelling in pool or own cars the following points should be noted:

1. Keep the car in good working order and have it regularly serviced.
2. Breakdown cover details of office cars in the glove compartment.
3. Conceal any valuables in the car, lock personal belongings in the boot.
4. Lock doors if someone approaches, open the window slightly.
5. Always carry mobile phone and use ‘hand free’ calling.
6. Park in well lit areas when dark.

Cash handling – Office and out in the estates

As there are limited secure facilities for the handling of cash in our office cash can only be accepted in exceptional circumstances ie. to avoid eviction or to make a new tenancy advance payment.

Internal procedures apply to the handling and safeguarding of any cash.

Under no circumstances should cash be accepted by a staff member when out in the estates.

Appendix 2 – Covid Home Visit Precautions

Government guidelines relating the control levels of the spread of the Covid 19 virus are applied prior to any home visits to customers being conducted.

Protecting our staff, customers and communities remains our top priority and visit's customers' homes may be restricted to exceptional circumstances in relation to current government control levels in place. Prior to any visit, staff must clearly record the visit on their electronic calendar and must ask the customer to take the following precautions:

1. Ask the Covid screening questions when arranging the visit and again on their doorstep. If there is any doubt on the questions, we are happy to rearrange the visit.
2. Ask the customer to make sure that the visit is on a one-to-one basis and any other family members stay out of the room where the visit is taking place.
3. Ask the customer to open windows for ventilation, wear a mask and maintain social distancing during the visit.
4. Always wear a mask, maintain social distancing, and use hand sanitisers before and after each visit.

Covid Screening Questions to ask all customer prior to visits by staff, contractors or Shire representatives.

Do you or any member of your household/family:

- have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19?

Do you or any member of your household/family:

- waiting for a COVID-19 test result?

Have you or any member of your household/family, in the last 10 days:

- travelled internationally?
- had contact with someone with a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19?
- had contact with a person who has been in a RED list country*?

Do you or any member of your household/family have any of the following symptoms?

- high temperature or fever
- new continuous cough
- loss or alteration to taste or smell

