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Signature:	Chris Garcia	Next review date:	March 2026

Owner and version control

Lone Worker Policy

Scope

This policy outlines Best Practice Network's commitment to providing a safe working environment for all colleagues (staff and associates) who work alone, irrespective of their working hours or location.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines a lone worker as someone who operates without direct or immediate supervision.

Purpose

Lone workers lack immediate support from colleagues in the event of an incident, such as violence, abuse, accidents, or health emergencies. This policy establishes control measures to safeguard colleagues who work alone—whether occasionally or regularly (e.g., those visiting schools, colleges, or community settings).

Policy Principles

1. Colleague Responsibilities

- Adhere to all lone working controls implemented by Best Practice Network.
- Take proactive steps to protect their own safety while working alone.

2. Manager Responsibilities

- Identify and mitigate risks associated with lone working.
- Provide necessary equipment, training, and practical support to ensure colleague safety.

Legislation

Best Practice Network is committed to full compliance with all applicable health and safety legislation, including but not limited to:

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

This Act establishes fundamental duties for both employers and employees, with specific relevance to lone working, workplace violence, and personal safety. Key provisions include:

- **Section 2:** Employers must ensure, so far as is **reasonably practicable**, the health, safety, and welfare of all employees. This includes providing:
 - Adequate **information, instruction, training, and supervision**.
- **Section 7:** Employees must:
 - Take **reasonable care** of their own and others' safety.
 - Cooperate with employers to fulfil legal obligations.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

- **Regulation 3:** Requires employers to conduct **suitable and sufficient risk assessments**.
 - Lone working, workplace violence, and personal safety risks **must be explicitly considered**.
 - Where significant hazards are identified, **specific risk assessments must be carried out** and control measures implemented.

Protecting colleagues

Best Practice Network prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all colleagues, ensuring robust measures are in place to mitigate risks associated with lone working, including violence, accidents, ill health, and other hazards.

Risk Factors

Lone working risks vary depending on:

- **Location** – Remote workplaces, community settings, or home environments.
- **Nature of work** – Tasks requiring interaction with the public or high-risk activities.
- **Potential interactions** – Contact with unfamiliar individuals or volatile situations.

Control measures will be implemented to reduce risks **as far as is reasonably practicable**.

Manager Responsibilities

- Conduct, review, and update **team-specific lone working risk assessments** (including home working).
- Implement a **buddy system**, ensuring lone workers check in after each site visit (e.g., school/setting).

Colleague Responsibilities

Each lone worker must:

1. **Prioritise personal safety** by:
 - Conducting dynamic risk assessments and responding appropriately.
 - Familiarising themselves with control measures in their team's risk assessment.
2. **Maintain effective communication** by:
 - Sharing and updating their Outlook calendar **daily** with:
 - Location details (setting/school name, postcode).
 - Contact information for the person being visited.
 - Ensuring their mobile phone is **fully charged, operational, and accessible** at all times.

3. **Report incidents promptly** by:
 - Notifying their line manager **immediately** of any violence, assault, or abuse.
 - Raising safeguarding concerns per the **BPN Safeguarding Policy**.
4. **Adhere to buddy check-ins** by:
 - Confirming their safety with their nominated buddy **by 6pm** after any site visit.

Lone working in the BPN Office

Best Practice Network strongly advises against staff working alone in the office for extended periods. To ensure colleague safety, the following measures apply:

Guidance for Office Lone Working

Avoidance where possible:

- Colleagues should plan their office hours to overlap with core working times (e.g., 10am–4pm) to minimise isolation.
- Where lone working is unavoidable, it should be limited to short durations (e.g., under 2 hours).

Safety precautions:

- Inform your line manager and team of your lone working schedule in advance.
- Ensure office access systems (e.g., key cards, alarms) are functional before staying late.
- Keep a charged mobile phone accessible at all times.

After-hours working:

- Pre-approval from a manager is required for early/late office hours outside core times.
- Use the buddy system—check in with a colleague before and after lone working.

Manager Responsibilities

- Monitor office lone working patterns and address recurring instances.
- Ensure staff are aware of emergency procedures (e.g., first aid, building security contacts).

Lone Working in Other Locations (e.g., Home, Remote Sites)

When working remotely for Best Practice Network, colleagues are responsible for maintaining their health, safety, and data security while being supported by organisational policies and resources.

Colleague Responsibilities

1. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- Maintain an ergonomic workspace with:
 - Proper **lighting, seating, and ventilation**
 - Regular **breaks** from screens (follow the 20-20-20 rule*)
 - Structured working hours to prevent overwork
- Prioritise **mental wellbeing** by:
 - Taking scheduled rest periods
 - Maintaining social connections with colleagues
 - Accessing BPN's **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** for confidential support
- Contact **HR** for:
 - Equipment requests (e.g., monitors, ergonomic chairs)

- Adjustments to working patterns
- 2. **Security of BPN Information and Equipment**
 - Strictly follow the **BPN Data Protection Policy**:
 - Use **strong passwords** and multi-factor authentication
 - Never leave devices unattended with sensitive data visible
 - Secure physical documents in locked storage
 - Immediately report:
 - Lost/stolen devices to **IT Helpdesk**
 - Any data protection concerns to your line manager

Manager Support

- Ensure all remote workers:
 - Complete a **home working risk assessment** annually
 - Have access to **mental health first aiders**
 - Receive regular wellbeing check-ins
 - Are aware of all support services (EAP, Occupational Health)

Wellbeing Resources

BPN provides:

- ✓ **Mental Health First Aiders** - Available for confidential conversations
- ✓ **Employee Assistance Programme** - 24/7 counselling and advice
- ✓ **Wellbeing Hub** - Online resources for physical/mental health

Monitoring and Review

Best Practice Network is committed to ensuring this policy remains effective, compliant, and aligned with operational needs.

1. Scheduled Reviews

- This policy will undergo a **formal review every year**, or more frequently if required.
- Reviews will be led by the **Quality & Compliance Director** in collaboration with senior management.

2. Triggered Reviews

Immediate reviews will occur if:

- **Legislation changes** (e.g., updates to the Health and Safety at Work Act).
- **Operational changes** (e.g., new work environments or roles).
- **Incidents** highlighting policy weaknesses (e.g., near-misses or safeguarding concerns).

3. Review Process

- **Stakeholder consultation**: Input will be sought from managers, lone workers, and HR.
- **Documentation**: All changes will be version-controlled, with dated amendments communicated to staff.

- **Training:** Updates will be reflected in mandatory lone working training.

4. Performance Indicators

Effectiveness will be measured through:

- **Incident reports** related to lone working.
- **Compliance audits** (e.g., buddy system adherence).
- **Staff feedback** via annual wellbeing surveys.

Lone Worker Risk Assessment

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Best Practice Network must ensure—so far as is reasonably practicable—the health, safety, and welfare of all employees, including lone workers.

Hazard & Considerations	Controls Required	Action Required	Risk Level	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
Medical Fitness <i>Does the employee have a condition that increases lone working risks?</i>	- Health disclosure to line manager - Occupational Health referral if needed - Prohibition of lone work if risk is identified	- Employee discloses relevant conditions - Line manager reviews with OH/GP - Adjust duties if required	Medium	Employee/Line Manager	During induction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervision <i>How is contact maintained?</i>	- Mandatory buddy system check-ins - Daily updates to line manager	- Employee checks in post-visit (by 6pm) - Use of shared Outlook calendar	Medium	Employee	Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding <i>Safe 1:1 work with learners/trainees</i>	- No home visits/lifts - Work in visible spaces (open doors/windows) - Professional boundaries (no personal social media)	- Adhere to BPN Safeguarding Policy - Parents present for under-18s	High	Employee	Per session	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Aid <i>Response to illness/accidents</i>	- Return home if unwell - Contact line manager for assistance	- Emergency contacts accessible - Buddy system awareness	Medium	Employee	Immediate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Display Screen Equipment (DSE) <i>Ergonomic workspace setup</i>	- DSE assessment completed - Regular breaks (20-20-20 rule)	- IT provides equipment guidance - Employee self-checks posture	Low	Employee/IT Team	At induction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driving <i>Vehicle safety & breakdowns</i>	- Business insurance - Locked boot for sensitive items - Charged phone/hazard lights if stranded	- Pre-journey vehicle checks - Breakdown protocol shared	Medium	Employee	Per journey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Transport <i>Safe travel practices</i>	- Use well-lit stops - Notify manager of delays	- Charged phone - Avoid isolated areas	Medium	Employee	Per trip	<input type="checkbox"/>

Taxis <i>Reputable providers</i>	- Pre-book with known companies (e.g., Uber) - Share route details	- Verify driver details - Charged phone	Medium	Employee	Per booking	<input type="checkbox"/>
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