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Owner and version control

BPN Lone Worker Policy & Risk Assessment

Scope

This policy outlines Best Practice Network’s commitment to providing a safe working environment for all colleagues (employee 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.

Lone working is not inherently unsafe; however, it must only take place where a suitable and sufficient risk assessment demonstrates that the activity can be carried out safely with appropriate control measures in place.

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

Colleague Responsibilities

- Adhere to all lone working controls implemented by Best Practice Network.
- Take proactive steps to protect their own safety while working alone.
- Conduct dynamic risk assessments and withdraw from situations where risk becomes unacceptable.

Manager Responsibilities

- Identify and mitigate risks associated with lone working.

- Ensure lone working is only permitted where risks can be adequately controlled.
 - Provide necessary equipment, training, and practical support to ensure colleague safety.
 - Agree proportionate supervision and contact arrangements based on risk.
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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

- Section 2: Employers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all employees.
- Section 7: Employees must take reasonable care of their own and others' safety and cooperate with their employer.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

- Regulation 3: Requires suitable and sufficient risk assessments.
 - Lone working risks, workplace violence, and personal safety must be explicitly considered.
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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.

Risk Factors

Lone working risks vary depending on:

- Location
- Nature of work
- Interaction with others
- Travel requirements
- Individual circumstances (including health and wellbeing)

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

Training and Competence

All lone workers must receive appropriate information, instruction, and training including:

- Lone working procedures and responsibilities
- Dynamic risk assessment

- Conflict management and de-escalation (where relevant)
- Safeguarding expectations and boundaries
- Emergency procedures and escalation
- Safe travel and site visit practices

New or inexperienced employee, or those undertaking unfamiliar tasks, may require increased supervision or accompaniment.

Monitoring, Communication and Escalation

Communication Requirements

- Maintain an up-to-date Outlook calendar with location, contact details, and visit information.
- Carry a fully charged mobile phone at all times.

Buddy System

- A named buddy must be assigned for all lone working activity.
- Check-in times must be agreed in advance and proportionate to risk.
- Default check-in is by 6pm unless otherwise specified.

Escalation Procedure

If a colleague fails to check in:

1. Attempt contact within 15 minutes (call, message, Teams).
 2. Buddy informs line manager.
 3. Line manager attempts contact and checks known location.
 4. Contact emergency services if there is concern for safety.
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Violence, Aggression and Personal Safety

Colleagues must:

- Avoid high-risk situations where possible.
- Position themselves safely (e.g., near exits).
- Leave immediately if they feel unsafe.
- Report all incidents including verbal abuse, threats, and near misses.

Managers must ensure additional controls are in place for known higher-risk environments.

Manager Responsibilities

- Conduct and regularly review team-specific risk assessments.
 - Monitor lone working patterns and intervene where necessary.
 - Ensure employees are trained and supported.
 - Ensure emergency procedures are understood.
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Colleague Responsibilities

Each lone worker must:

Personal Safety

- Conduct dynamic risk assessments.
- Follow all control measures.

Communication

- Maintain accurate calendars.
- Keep communication devices accessible.

Incident Reporting

- Report all incidents, near misses, or concerns immediately.

Buddy Compliance

- Complete agreed check-ins.
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Lone Working in the BPN Office

- Lone working should be avoided where possible.
 - Must be pre-approved outside core hours.
 - Limited to short durations unless otherwise agreed.
 - Employee must inform colleagues and use buddy systems.
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Lone Working in Other Locations

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- Maintain safe and ergonomic workspaces.
- Take regular breaks.
- Manage workload and working hours.

Mental Wellbeing

- Maintain regular contact with colleagues.

- Access EAP and wellbeing resources.

Medical Suitability

- Fitness for lone working must be considered confidentially.
 - Occupational Health input may be required.
 - Adjustments must be made where appropriate.
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Travel and Off-Site Working

- Plan journeys in advance.
 - Avoid unnecessary high-risk travel.
 - Use reputable transport providers.
 - Follow safe driving practices.
 - Share travel details where appropriate.
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Data Security

- Follow Data Protection Policy at all times.
 - Secure devices and documents.
 - Report breaches immediately.
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Not Permitted When Lone Working

- Activities assessed as high risk.
 - Entering unsafe environments.
 - Situations involving known aggression without controls.
 - Any task requiring immediate support or supervision.
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Wellbeing Resources

BPN provides:

- Mental Health First Aiders
 - Employee Assistance Programme
 - Wellbeing Hub
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Monitoring and Review

Scheduled Reviews

- Annual review or sooner if required.

Triggered Reviews

- Legislative changes
- Operational changes
- Incidents or near misses

Performance Indicators

- Incident data
- Audit findings
- Employee feedback

Lone Worker Risk Assessment (Enhanced)

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Controls Required	Further Action	Risk Level	Responsible	Review Date
Medical fitness	Employee	OH referral, adjustments	Monitor wellbeing	Medium	Manager	Annual
Communication failure	Employee	Buddy system, phone	Test escalation	High	Manager	Quarterly
Violence/aggression	Employee	Risk assessment, training	Review high-risk visits	High	Manager	Ongoing
Safeguarding	Employee/learners	Follow policy	Audit compliance	High	Employee	Ongoing
First aid/emergency	Employee	Emergency contacts	Awareness training	Medium	Manager	Annual
DSE	Employee	Assessments	Equipment provision	Low	IT	Annual
Driving	Employee	Insurance, checks	Monitor incidents	Medium	Employee	Ongoing
Public transport	Employee	Safe travel	Review risks	Medium	Employee	Ongoing
Environment	Employee	Site awareness	Pre-visit planning	Medium	Employee	Ongoing
Stress/fatigue	Employee	Workload mgmt	Wellbeing checks	Medium	Manager	Ongoing