**Procedure Title: Lone Working**

Last Reviewed: November 2019

**Table of Contents**

[1 Introduction 1](#_Toc24538245)

[2 Definition 1](#_Toc24538246)

[3 Legislation 2](#_Toc24538247)

[4 Responsibilities 3](#_Toc24538248)

[5 General Procedures and Guidance 3](#_Toc24538249)

[6 Record Keeping 8](#_Toc24538250)

[7 Document History 9](#_Toc24538251)

# Introduction

## This document must be read in conjunction with the procedural arrangements on personal safety and others, which impose duties to carry out workplace risk assessments.

## Leonard Cheshire accepts its responsibility so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure the health and safety of all people who come directly or indirectly into contact with our activities. People working alone can face additional risks when carrying out a work activity. Leonard Cheshire has developed policies and procedures to control the risks, and protect employees and others, and so all of our people should know and follow them.

## Leonard Cheshire will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees and others who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety. Measures will also be adopted to protect anyone else affected by solitary working.

# Definition

## Lone working means any individual who is working or volunteering in a location where there are no other workers or volunteers present and without close or direct supervision.

## Lone working and lone volunteering can include working or volunteering:

* Alone in a building
* Separately from others
* From home
* Outside normal working hours
* Away from the normal place of work
* Travelling for work and volunteering (outside of normal commuting)
* Responding to an emergency situation, such as an alarm sounding in a building for which they are a key holder, and
* Visiting a person in their home.

# Legislation

## Leonard Cheshire have general responsibilities under section 2 and 3 of the **Health and Safety at Work, etc Act** (HSWA) for the health and safety of all employees and others who might be affected by work activities. This duty cannot be transferred to employees who work alone. All employees have their own duty under section 7 of HSWA to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by the work activity.

## Regulation 3 of the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations** (MHSWR) requires the need to make an assessment of risks involved with activities at work, which must be written down. Clearly, working alone, must in many cases, be considered to involve risks requiring assessment under MHSWR.

## Some specific legal requirement specifically prohibits working alone. The following are examples of such activities/legislation where the law requires more than one worker. The list below is not a complete one and managers must undertake a risk assessment.

1. certain fumigation work and other work with substances hazardous to health, under the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)** and related codes of practice
2. young people using prescribed dangerous machinery which require supervision
3. using unsupported access equipment
4. erecting scaffolding, and
5. working in confined spaces.

## The **Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations** place a general responsibility to provide adequate first aid facilities. If a lone worker sustains a minor injury, he or she may be able to use a first aid box or phone for help. However, a more serious injury may mean that the worker cannot help him or herself or use the telephone. Where more serious injuries are foreseeable then the absence of a colleague to administer or at least organise help could be construed as insufficient first aid cover.

# Responsibilities

## Managers must ensure that:

* Employees and volunteers who work or volunteer alone are identified
* Risk assessments are carried out for lone workers
* Risks are reduced to an acceptable level
* Appropriate control measures determined and are implemented
* Employees and volunteers are provided with appropriate information, instruction and training in relation to lone working and the control measures in place, and
* Appropriate levels of supervision are provided.

## Employees and volunteers must ensure that they:

* Ensure their own personal safety at all times by thinking about their safety and being aware of their surroundings and environment
* Use any control measures implemented or equipment provided to reduce the risks associated with lone working
* Report any accidents or incidents which occur whilst lone working, and
* Report to their manager any concerns relating to lone working.

# General Procedures and Guidance

## **Risk Assessment**

## Managers, ideally with the assistance of those involved in the tasks, should plan ahead before lone working is undertaken, to consider the risks and put in place measures that will reduce those risks to an acceptable level.

## A good lone working risk assessment will consider:

* The remoteness or isolation of workplaces
* Any problems with communication
* The possibility of interference, such as violence or criminal activity from other persons
* The nature of injury or damage to health, and
* The likelihood of the anticipated “worst case” scenario.

## Lone workers and lone volunteers need to be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions.

## There may be particular outcomes from the risk assessment that need to be considered:

* When risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work or volunteering to be done safely by a lone worker or lone volunteer, arrangements for providing help or back-up should be put in place.
* Where a lone worker or lone volunteer is working at another employer’s workplace that employer should inform both the lone worker (or lone volunteer) and their organisation of any risks and the control measures implemented.

## The risk assessment should consider the following:

* Can the risks of the role be adequately controlled by one person?
* Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker or lone volunteer?
* Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person?
* Can all equipment and materials be safely handled by one person?
* Is there a risk of violence and aggression?
* Are women especially at risk if they work or volunteer alone?
* Are young person’s especially at risk if they work or volunteer alone?
* Is the person medically fit and suitable to work or volunteer alone?
* What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?
* How will the person be supervised?
* Although lone workers and lone volunteers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still an organisation’s duty to ensure their health and safety at work.
* The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker or lone volunteer to identify and handle health and safety issues.

## **Monitoring**

## Procedures will need to be put in place to monitor lone workers and lone volunteers to see they remain safe. These may include:

* Electronic and shared diaries
* The lone worker or lone volunteer ensuring that their manager is advised in advance of working plans
* Manager’s visiting and observing people working and volunteering alone
* Regular contact between the lone worker or lone volunteer and supervisor using a telephone or other means
* Automatic warning devices which operate if specific signals are not received periodically from the lone worker or lone volunteer, and
* Checks that a lone worker or lone volunteer has returned to their base or home on completion of a task.

## **Emergency Situations**

## As well as the day to day activities, plans to look after lone workers should also account for emergency situations.

* Lone workers and lone volunteers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies.
* The risk assessment process should identify foreseeable events.
* Emergency procedures must be established, and employees and volunteers trained in them.
* Lone workers and lone volunteers should carry a means of communication where a risk assessment establishes the requirement so that help and assistance (including first aid response) can be obtained.

## **Personal Safety – In the Workplace**

## The following should be considered for lone working in the normal place of work for those people:

* Avoid being alone in a building if possible
* Make sure that someone knows that you are alone, if it is necessary for you to be in that situation
* Where appropriate, lock all external doors
* Do not let anyone in who is unknown to you
* Use the chain, spy hole or intercom to identify visitors
* Do not meet with a visitor alone in the building if the visitor is not known
* Ask unexpected visitors to introduce themselves, and
* Where possible, meeting rooms should be “visible” - i.e. they should have windows or partitions and be near to other offices and staff whilst respecting the need for privacy and confidentiality so that colleagues can monitor what is happening.

## **Personal Safety – Home Visits**

## The following advice might be appropriate for our staff and volunteers who need to undertake visits to other people’s homes as part of their role:

* Do not put yourself at unnecessary risk.
* It is better to escape a threatening situation and find alternative ways of providing the service, than to jeopardise your own safety.
* Ensure that you have nothing or no-one blocking your exit from a room / building.
* Do not undertake visits to unknown people in circumstances that you have little control over.
* Find out as much as you can about the people and place to be visited before you go (for example, the police or the internet).
* If you believe that your personal safety may be under threat, do not undertake the visit.
* Make prior arrangements with the person to be visited, agreeing the time of arrival, duration of the visit and the time of departure.
* Plan your journey in advance.
* Consult a map and familiarise yourself with the route.
* Take a map with you so that you do not need to ask strangers for directions if you become disorientated.
* Allow adequate time for your journey and for risk assessment on arrival at the home.
* Assess the situation on approach and be prepared to abandon or postpone the visit if concerned for your safety.
* Dress appropriately for the area and the person to be visited, particularly when the person’s culture demands that people should be well-covered up.
* Do not wear expensive looking jewellery.
* Do not give your personal contact details
* When the visit or meeting is complete, ensure supervisor/managers are notified in accordance with the whatever pre-agreed local lone worker system is in use in your team.

## **Personal Safety – Driving**

## Driving is an activity where risks may be elevated by being alone. The following considerations should be taken into account:

* Plan your journey in advance
* Consult a map and familiarise yourself with the route
* Drive with doors and windows locked
* Drive with bags, drugs and equipment concealed so you are not seen to be hiding them as you park
* Clinical staff should not display anything that identifies the vehicle is used by a healthcare professional
* Where possible, travel on well-lit or well-used roads
* When returning to your vehicle, have your key ready and check the back seat for intruders before getting in
* If you believe you are being followed, keep driving and note the registration number of the vehicle and try to drive to the nearest police station or other public place where other people will be around e.g. a petrol station
* At traffic lights remain alert and ready to move quickly if your safety is threatened, sounding your horn as you go
* Wherever possible, park in well-lit areas facing the direction in which you wish to leave
* Do not leave spare keys hidden in your vehicle
* Do not leave personal items in view. Even if items are not valuable they may give a clue to the gender or purpose of the driver, and
* Do not stop to help individuals who appear to require assistance or look like they may be involved in an accident, instead drive to the nearest safe point and call the emergency services for help.

## **Personal Safety – Public Transport**

## The following may need to be considered when making work journeys on public transport:

* Try not to stand at lonely bus/train/tube stations.
* Make sure you know the bus/train times.
* Be aware of where you choose to sit and who is around you.
* Avoid sitting in an empty compartment.
* Sit where you are visible and where escape routes are clear.
* Sit near the front of the vehicle.
* Try to travel light.
* Buy all tickets in advance.
* Do not fall asleep or become so engrossed with any work you are doing or with reading that you become unaware of your surroundings.
* Do not advertise that you are travelling alone by divulging personal information to strangers.
* When getting off a bus, train or tube at night or in an unfamiliar area, attach yourself to groups of people and walk purposefully to your destination.
* When using taxis, use a reputable well-known firm and ask for identification and wait for them to call your name.
* Also note the registration number of the vehicle and the driver identity number.

## **Responding to an Alarm**

## There may be times where our people need to respond to an alarm or emergency notification and find themselves acting alone. How to undertake such tasks should be planned in advance before they happen.

## When an individual acting as key holder or another official capacity is notified of a potential security incident at a location arising from alarm activation or other means, they must not attend site without first having ascertained that a member of the police or other security service (if in place) will meet them.

## No Leonard Cheshire employee or volunteer should respond to an alarm or incident and attend site alone and, even when accompanied by a partner or colleague, should still not enter the building without police or security services.

# Record Keeping

## **Training Records**

## Managers must ensure that written details are kept of specialist training provided and qualifications awarded to those engaged in lone working. These may range from simple records of verbal instruction given, to certification for safe operation of machinery, first aid, manual handling, dealing with challenging behaviour, lone working, etc.

## **Medical Records**

## If a certain level of medical fitness is prescribed for lone workers, records must be kept of the dates and results of medical examinations and when they are next due.

## **Information and Training**

## Individuals will be given all necessary information, instruction, training, and appropriate level of supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone.

## Everyone involved in lone working will be required to follow the safe working procedures devised.

## **Safe Systems of Work**

## Rules and instructions must be developed in writing and to cover the at least the following:

* Required ability of employees
* Suitability of equipment
* Means of communication
* Provision for treatment of injuries
* Emergency and accident procedures
* Training, and
* Supervision.

# Document History

Procedural Arrangement commenced: 13th November 2019

Last full review: 13th November 2019

Lead Person: Head of Health, Safety and Environment

Next full review due: 31st May 2022

Department: Human Resources

Procedural Arrangement Owner: Head of Health, Safety and Environment