



Williamsburgh

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

• Limited •

Lone Working Policy

This policy can be made available in different languages and other formats such as Braille, large print or tape, on request.

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1. Introduction

Williamsburgh Housing Association recognises, as an employer, our duty under health and safety legislation to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the working environment for all our employees is healthy and safe. This policy has been introduced in response to our acceptance that current health and safety legislation and good practice requires that all reasonable steps be taken to assess and control risks faced by employees. We would generally achieve this through undertaking a risk assessment.

2. Policy Statement

Williamsburgh Housing Association takes, extremely seriously, the health, safety and welfare of all our staff. We recognise that some staff are required to work by themselves, for periods of time, without close or direct supervision, in the community or in isolated work areas. The purpose of this policy is to enable Williamsburgh Housing Association to meet its obligation to protect such staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks of lone working.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff including temporary and agency staff, contractors, volunteers, students and those on work experience. It forms an integral part of Williamsburgh Housing Association's Health and Safety strategy and applies, along with specific local guidance, to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of our staff.

4. Definition of Lone Workers

Williamsburgh Housing Association defines lone workers as:

'staff whose working activities involve situations where they are without any kind of close or direct supervision'.

5. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working,
- make sure that the risk of working alone is assessed, in a systematic and ongoing way and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place, to reduce the risk, so far as is reasonable practicable,
- make sure that appropriate training is available to staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety, when working alone,
- make sure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone,
- encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working, and
- reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

6. Responsibilities

Lone working environments present a unique health and safety problem. Although there is no specific legal guidance on working alone, under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, as amended, Williamsburgh Housing Association must organise and control the health and safety of lone workers.

The Director is responsible for:

- making sure that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working,
- providing resources for putting the policy into practice, and
- making sure that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Management Committee regularly review the effectiveness of the policy.

Section Heads are responsible for:

- making sure that all staff are aware of the policy,
- making sure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly,
- putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate, or reduce, the risks associated with working alone,

6. Responsibilities Contd.

- making sure that staff groups and individuals, identified as being at risk, are given appropriate information, instruction and training (including training at induction, updates and refresher training), as necessary,
- making sure that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident, and
- managing the effectiveness of preventative measures, through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

All staff are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions,
- co-operating, by following rules and procedures designed for safe working,
- reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance, as appropriate,
- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy, and
- reporting any dangers they identify, or any concerns they might have, in respect of working alone.

7. Assessing Risk

Lone workers should not face any more risks than other staff within the organisation. Setting up safe working arrangements for lone workers is no different to organising the safety of other staff, so Williamsburgh Housing Association must follow the general principles of risk assessment. If a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, other arrangements must be put in place. Risk assessment should take account of both normal work and foreseeable emergencies, such as fire, illness and accidents. The risk assessment process is summarised below. It consists of five distinct stages and action points, to support effective assessment of the risks involved in lone working.

	Process	Action Point
1.	Identifying lone workers.	Establish and identify lone workers for each work area.
2.	Identifying associated hazards.	Isolate the range of dangers associated with work areas and processes. Review a generic risk assessment to ensure these issues are included.
3.	Assessing the degree of risk for generic or individual situations.	Review the generic risk assessments and complete individual or local risk assessments, if necessary. Then prioritise the level of associated risk.
4.	Putting control measures in place and developing safe systems of work.	Assess how effective the existing control measures are and update them if appropriate. Develop local procedures, or action plans, if necessary.
5.	Evaluating and review.	Evaluate and record how effective the control measures are. Review when the assessments or controls are no longer required.

7. Assessing Risk Contd.

Risk assessments must be carried out in all areas of work, where working alone poses an actual or potential risk to staff. The risk assessment will involve identifying all potential dangers and the risks associated with specific work tasks or activities. It should identify who will be affected and how, and the control measures which are needed to get rid of, or reduce, the risk to the lowest level reasonably possible. Risk assessment should be carried out by competent people and should be recorded and shared with relevant others. Factors to consider when carrying out the risk assessment include the following:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- What training is needed to make sure the staff member is competent in safety matters?
- Have staff received the training which is necessary to allow them to work alone?
- How will the person be supervised?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are people of a particular gender especially at risk, if they work alone?
- Are new or inexperienced staff especially at risk, if they work alone?

7. Assessing Risk Contd.

- Are younger workers especially at risk, if they work alone?
- What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or if there is an emergency?
- Are there systems in place for contacting and tracing those who work alone?

Details of the risk assessment should be recorded and should include:

- the extent and nature of the risk,
- factors that contribute to the risk, including job content and specific tasks and activities, and
- the safe systems of work to be followed, to eliminate or reduce the risk.

Information from the risk assessment should be passed to staff. Risk assessments should be reviewed, as part of the risk assessment review programme (or sooner should circumstances change).

8. Managing Risk

The risk which lone workers face, should be reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable. Using safe systems of work, depends largely on local circumstances. Local procedures or protocols should be in place that provide specific guidance for staff, in relation to lone working and the associated risk reduction. Issues to consider in developing safe systems of work include:

- joint working with others for high-risk activities,
- improvements to security arrangements in buildings,
- security lighting in parking areas,
- using checking-in and monitoring systems,
- communication systems for sharing information on risk with colleagues in other departments and agencies, and
- using personal protective equipment or mobile phones and personal alarms.

Each type of lone-working situation will need to be assessed and, where necessary, take account of local circumstances. Arrangements for managing risk should include:

- guidance for lone workers on assessing risk,
- details of when to stop and get advice, and
- the procedures to be followed in the event of an incident or emergency. All staff must be familiar with these local protocols and procedures.

8. Managing Risk Contd.

There may also need to be detailed guidance to tackle specific areas of risk, such as:

- lone workers travelling alone on work-related business,
- home visits,
- working outwith normal office hours, and
- duty at area surgeries.

9. Staff Training

Williamsburgh Housing Association will provide training, where required, to allow lone working. The training will be based on the needs identified in the risk assessment.

10. Reporting and Recording

Staff should report all incidents (including near misses) to their line manager at the earliest opportunity. These should be recorded on an incident form and the line manager should investigate all reports. Local statistics and incident reports will be reviewed regularly, in order to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy and associated local protocols.

11. Evaluation and Monitoring

Williamsburgh Housing Association seeks to adopt a positive approach towards ensuring the safety and welfare of our employees.

Having accepted our duty of care, the Association will monitor this policy to ensure that it is being implemented effectively and is achieving its aims. The monitoring arrangements will include:

- Collecting and analysing all reported incidents submitted to the Health and Safety Administrator.
- Reporting incident statistics and considering safety improvement measures at each Health and Safety Committee meeting.
- Reviewing risk assessments and identifying associated training provided by the Health and Safety Committee.
- Reporting incidents and risk reduction proposals to the Management Committee, on an annual basis.

12. Review

Unless the monitoring arrangements identify serious issues with the policy, it will be examined by the Management Committee every three years, to ensure that it responds to any changing circumstances.

This review will take place following the appropriate consultation with residents, as outlined in our Tenant Participation Strategy and with our staff through the One Group, Trade Union and Health and Safety Representatives.