



HEALTH & SAFETY
IECHYD A DIOGELWCH

Lone Working Policy Arrangements

HSA-10119

Contents

Document Control	3
Amendment Record	3
1. Scope.....	4
2. Introduction	4
3. Definition of lone working	4
4. Lone working management process.....	5
Figure 1: Lone working process.....	5
5. Roles and Responsibilities	6
5.1 Head of College/ PSU.....	6
5.2 Line manager or supervisor	6
5.3 Employees.....	6
5.4 Students	7
6. Risk assessment.....	7
7. The risk assessment process	9
8. Summary of actions required	9
9. Further Information.....	9
Appendix 1 – Lone Worker Checklist	11
Appendix 2 – Control Hierarchy Chemical.....	15
Table 1. Control Hierarchy.....	15

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0		Draft
1	27/09/09	Lone working procedure produced
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3		
4		
5		

1. Scope

These policy arrangements outline some of the potential hazards associated with lone working, defines roles and responsibilities and describes the practical steps that can be taken to minimise any risks and to comply with legislation. The document is intended to provide guidance that enables Colleges and Professional Service Units (PSUs) to develop suitable rules based on the principles of measured risk management. This guidance is not intended to prohibit lone working however the University does encourage minimising lone working as far as possible to reduce risks to the lone workers and others undertaking University business.

2. Introduction

The principal aim of these arrangements are to ensure any lone working carried out for the purpose of University business is undertaken in a controlled and co-ordinated manner therefore minimising any health and safety risks to members of staff and students. The document outlines some of the potential hazards associated with lone working, defines roles and responsibilities and describes the practical steps that can be taken to minimise any risks and to comply with legislation.

3. Definition of lone working

A lone worker for the purposes of these arrangements is defined as someone who works on their own, an individual who undertakes work activities without direct or close supervision or direct contact with other colleagues.

In practical terms, persons are considered to be working alone if they have neither visual nor audible communication with someone who can summon assistance in the event of an accident, emergency or illness.

Lone working is not where individuals experience transient situations in which they find themselves alone. e.g. Alone in an office whilst other office colleagues are in a meeting.

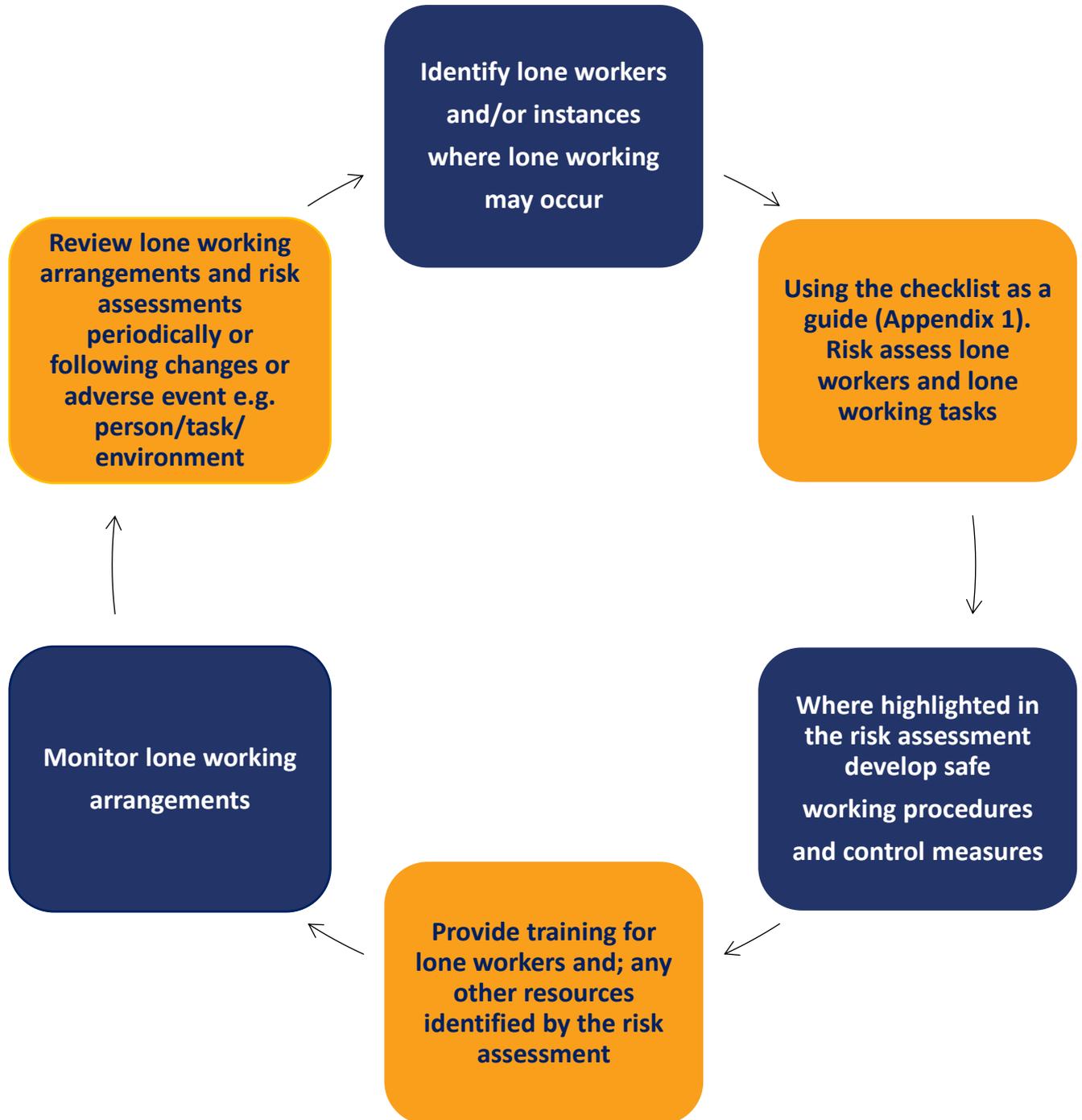
Lone working is undertaken by a range of University staff and students by virtue of either their working hours, remote location or methods of working. Some common examples include:

- security, librarians and grounds staff;
- cleaning and porter staff;
- maintenance staff and service engineers;
- individuals who work on their own in a laboratory or workshop;
- individuals who work on their own in office and lecture space;
- members of staff or students undergoing fieldwork within the UK or abroad;
- staff or students undertaking research based in the community;
- students undertaking practical or experimental work as part of their academic programme;
- home workers;
- members of staff travelling alone on University business;
- members of staff working outside of core hours may also be lone working.

4. Lone working management process

The process flow below shows the lone working management process that should be followed when allowing lone working to take place in the College/PSU.

Figure 1: Lone working process



5. Roles and Responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the University as an employer has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. There is also a general duty of care to protect students and members of the public. These requirements are applicable to all work situations, including where staff (and others) are working alone, both on or off campus or outside normal working hours.

5.1 Head of College/ PSU

- Ensure arrangements are in place to mitigate the risk from lone working and effectively manage lone working in their areas of responsibility.
- Have an understanding of what lone working activities are taking place in their area.
- Ensure that appropriate resources for the safety of the lone worker(s), including appropriate supervision, and lone working accountability arrangements are in place.
- Ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are being completed for any lone working activities and that these risk assessments are being reviewed periodically.
- Communicate these arrangements to all staff, students and visitors.

5.2 Line manager or supervisor

The Head of College/PSU meets their responsibility by delegating to line managers or supervisors who have the responsibility to ensure:

- All lone working activities are formally identified and appropriate risk assessments undertaken, which identify the risk to lone workers and the control measures necessary to minimise those risks, as far as reasonably practicable.
- Arrangements for lone working are communicated effectively and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone are explicit.
- The lone worker is made aware of the hazards and understands all the necessary control measures that need to be put in place.
- Reasonable enquiries are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit to undertake the work alone.
- Adequate supervision, instruction and training are in place and that the lone worker is competent. The extent of the supervision is a management decision, which is established through the risk assessment process. It should not be left to individual members of staff or students to decide if they require assistance/supervision.
- Agree communication and emergency arrangements for their areas.
- Monitoring of lone working practices is in place to ensure that control measures identified in the lone working risk assessment are being adhered to including monitoring the effectiveness of the communication pathways agreed.
- Review lone working risk assessments at appropriate periodical intervals.

5.3 Employees

- Take care of their own safety and to co-operate with University procedures.
- Should not knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk by working alone. If a person finds that they are placed in a situation, which may be considered to be that of a 'lone worker', then they should ensure that their line

manager is made aware of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity. They should then assist in the process of identifying the steps needed to either prevent the lone worker situation from arising, or, if this is not possible, assist in developing the precautions necessary to ensure their own safety.

- Lone workers have a responsibility to inform their line manager if they have any concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of the agreed arrangements and if there are any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or to continue to work alone in safety.

5.4 Students

- Comply with health and safety instructions, including the University's rules and regulations for students, and not to misuse or damage equipment provided. They may be held responsible for the consequences should they neglect to carry out a task required for the health or safety of others.

6. Risk assessment

To satisfy the legislative requirements and ensure risks are as low as reasonably practicable, it is necessary for the risks associated with lone working to be assessed. A College/PSU generic risk assessment covering all staff may be appropriate for a low risk environment e.g. lone working in an office completing desk based work. Specific risk assessments will be a requirement for high risk activities such as fieldwork in remote locations.

It is expected that the risk assessment process is undertaken as a collaborative exercise by both the lone worker and their line manager/supervisor and the agreed safe working procedures are recorded and communicated to all persons who may be required to work alone and any staff who have a role to play in ensuring their safety. All lone working risk assessments are to be completed in advance of the lone working activity.

Please refer to the risk assessment guidance:

The following outlines the five steps that must be taken for a lone working risk assessment:

- I. **Identify the hazards to which the person(s) may be exposed.** The hazards are likely to be the same for a particular activity whether lone working or not. The assessment of the risks to which a lone worker may be exposed must take into account normal and foreseeable scenarios.

Please note: not listing a hazard does not make it unforeseeable it just devalues the risk assessment.

a. The hazards may be such that the risk cannot be controlled sufficiently and therefore lone working is prohibited. Examples include:

- working in a high risk confined space where a supervisor may need to be present, along with someone dedicated to the rescue role;
- people working at or near live electricity conductors;
- other electrical work where at least 2 people are sometimes required;
- where ladders cannot be secured and therefore the ladder needs footing by another person;
- erecting/dismantling scaffolding;

- working with cryogenic substances.

b. High risk activities that require specific attention when planning safe lone working arrangements include working with:

- chemicals, particularly corrosive, toxic, explosive, flammable, asphyxiant, or narcotic substances, products or reactions;
- cryogenic substances;
- class 3B/4 lasers where the beam is not fully enclosed;
- power tools and machinery;
- working on or near water;
- working at height.

Lone working **must not** be undertaken where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk that the work might result in an adverse event or emergency, which would be sufficiently serious to require a second person to be available to summon help or provide assistance.

For these activities, the need to undertake lone working should be seriously considered. Where it cannot be avoided then only carefully planned activities are permitted to be lone worked. This is where the hazards have been reduced and risks minimised as far as possible and then reasonably controlled.

- II. **Identify all persons who may be required to work alone.** Consideration must be given to an individual's ability to carry out their activities safely on their own. Some individuals may be at greater risk than others, for example, new and expectant people and young persons or those who are new to a role. Consideration must also be given to students due to their possible lack of experience in the work they are doing. It may be necessary to make reasonable enquiries to ensure that lone workers are medically fit to undertake the work alone. Both routine work and foreseeable emergencies may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual. When medical advice is necessary, the University Occupational Health Service should be consulted.
- III. **Assess whether current controls are adequate**, and if not, consider what additional/alternative control measure(s) can be put in place to make the activity safe. Risks are to be reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority. Risks are to be controlled using the control hierarchy, Eliminate, Reduce/Substitute, Isolate, Control, PPE, Training/Discipline (appendix 2). Consider the headings in the order shown, do not simply jump to the easiest control measure to implement. Examples of control measures could include removing the requirement of lone working, reduce the hazard by using different chemicals/equipment, provision of suitable training, occupational health fitness assessments and/or effective communication strategies. It may be necessary to prohibit certain tasks or activities if the risks cannot be adequately controlled (see hazard section listed above).
- IV. **There are systems in operation locally for lone working monitoring.** Swansea University have signed up to SafeZone across all University sites. All lone workers are advised to check in on the SafeZone app and check out when leaving. Using the check in timer to alert security if you haven't check out. This will result in a curtesy call from

security to check your wellbeing. Those who work in environments where they do not have immediate access to their mobile phone can request V-ALRT devices from the security team.

- V. **Record the findings.** Record your risk assessment findings for any significant risks identified. Have a procedure in place that ensures the lone worker is made aware of the findings of the risk assessment.

- VI. **Monitor and review the risk assessment.** Arrangements which are implemented to ensure the safety of lone workers need to be subject to a monitoring regime which is commensurate with the risk, by their supervisor/line manager. This may range from simple periodic visits, to the more complex implementation of 'Permits to Work', Review the risk assessment regularly, for example, if any significant changes take place, following an adverse event or following any concerns being raised. Any review should ensure existing control measures are adequate and check if any additional controls are needed.

Where contingency plans form part of the arrangements, they are to be clear, precise, communicated, practised and subject to periodic monitoring and review.

7. The risk assessment process

To aid the risk assessment process these arrangements provide a list of key questions which can be used as a checklist to aid the completion of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. It provides an indication on whether the risks can be adequately controlled by one person (checklist has been provided with appendix 1).

All risk assessments, including those for activities, which involve lone working, should be subject to regular and periodic review. The review date, reviewer(s) and any changes are to be recorded on the risk assessment.

8. Summary of actions required

- Colleges and PSUs are to assess the risks to the lone worker by means of a risk assessment.
- Once the risk assessment has been carried out and agreed by both the lone worker and supervisor the necessary controls identified are to be implemented.
- If required, the lone worker will need the correct information and training with regards to the hazards identified and the controls in place.
- Arrangements are to be in place to establish a form of communication with the lone worker.
- Periodical monitoring of lone working practices are to be carried out to ensure all procedures are correctly working.
- Review lone working arrangements and risk assessments periodically or following changes or an adverse event e.g. person/task/environment.

9. Further Information

9.1 H&S webpage (Swansea University): <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/healthsafety/>

9.2 Security Webpage (Swansea University):

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/estates-and-facilitiesmanagement/ourservices/security/securityemergencyinformation/>

9.3 Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance:

'Working Alone – Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working'

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

Appendix One – Lone Worker Checklist

This checklist is an aide-memoir to assist in the production of a risk assessment and safe system of work. They are not exhaustive and should be developed and refined further for specific circumstances.

1. The Workplace and Work Risks				
Question	Rationale			
Why can't lone working be avoided?				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Control Measures
Does the workplace present any special risks to a person working alone? e.g. due to environment, location, contents, unfamiliarity, etc.?				
Is there safe access and egress? Both in the course of the normal work and in the event of an emergency? This may include information on not using lifts in an emergency.				
If there is temporary access such as ladders, trestle etc. Can they be safely used and handled by a lone worker?				
Can all plant and equipment to be used during the lone working be safely handled and used by a lone person? Will any additional controls be needed to lone work the equipment?				
Can all substances (and other hazardous materials such as biological material) be safely handled and used by a lone person?				
Can any manual handling that may be carried out be safely done by a lone person?				
Is the working environment appropriate – heating, lighting, ventilation, etc.?				

Is there a risk of violence?				
Will you be carrying valuable equipment or cash				
Are there adequate arrangements for travel to and from the work?				
Is the work outside the usual operating hours of the University?				
Are adequate first-aid facilities available?				
Is there a need to train the lone worker in first aid?				
In an emergency can help easily find and reach the lone worker?				
Will the person be using SafeZone?				
Will the person be familiar with the building and escape routes?				
Is there a high risk activity in the immediate vicinity?				
2. Communication and Supervision				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are there arrangements for regular contact between the lone worker and the supervisor?				
Will supervisors periodically visit the lone worker?				
Are automatic monitoring and warning devices appropriate and used (e.g. personal movement or inactivity alarms, radio panic alarms, etc)?				
Does the lone worker have access to a suitable means of communication, or other means of summoning assistance,				

should this be required – telephone, mobile phone, radio?				
Security Contact details provided to the lone worker: 333 from an internal line or use SafeZone +44 (0)1792 205678 for Swansea switchboard				
3. The Lone Worker				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Does the lone worker have any medical condition that increases the risk of working alone?				
Does the lone worker have any medical condition such that any foreseeable emergencies may impose additional physical and mental burdens which are unacceptable?				
Is the lone worker sufficiently experienced?				
Is the lone worker provided with adequate information about the risks involved with the tasks and the precautions to be taken?				
Is the lone worker provided with suitable training to allow the premises, equipment, any substances, and protective equipment to be safely used?				
Is the lone worker provided with suitable training to allow them to deal with any foreseeable emergencies?				
Is the lone worker more at risk due to their gender, age, disability, new/expectant people or inexperience?				

Are young workers (under 18 years) at a higher risk due to their lack of experience, knowledge, etc.?				
Does the lone worker have access to SafeZone?				
Does the lone worker need additional support to access SafeZone e.g. V.ALRT system (Wearable Personal Alert Device) ?				
4. Lone working off site				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Do you know who you are meeting?				
Is your meeting in a remote/isolated area?				
Do you have the emergency contact details for the University (both during normal working hours and out of hours)?				
Do you have a European Health Card? Ensure you carry this card if you are eligible and travelling in Europe.				

Appendix 2 – Control Hierarchy Chemical

Table 1. Control Hierarchy

<p>Most Effective Control</p>  <p>Least effective control</p>	Elimination	Rearrange to undertake the activity at a different time or location so the need to lone work is removed.
	Reduce the hazard / Substitute the hazard	<p>If the hazard cannot be completely eliminated then it may be possible to reduce the hazard at source - the hazard will still remain but it will inherently generate less risk. This might be done by modifying the existing hazard, e.g. a large load might be split up into smaller loads for manual handling purposes.</p> <p>Alternatively one source of the hazard might be substituted with another that generates less risk, e.g. one hazardous chemical might be substituted with another that is less of a health risk.</p>
	Isolate the hazard	<p>If the hazard itself cannot be eliminated or modified then it may be possible to separate people from the hazard in order to prevent contact.</p> <p>Alternatively the hazard might be put under lock and key to prevent unauthorised access, e.g. flammable liquids might be stored in a locked compound that only authorised workers have the key to. Or the hazard might be enclosed in some form of enclosure to prevent contact, e.g. a guard on a dangerous moving part of machinery.</p>
	Control	A safe system of work is the set of procedures and rules that govern a particular work activity. This might include any permit-to-work systems that apply to the work activity. In some instances the safe system of work is a simple set of instructions for performing a task or operating a piece of equipment, e.g. the operating instructions for an office printer. In other instances a safe system of work is a complex set of rules and procedures developed to control high risk work activities such as the maintenance of large, complex industrial plant.
	Personal Protective Equipment	Personal Protective equipment is the equipment and clothing that a worker might wear to protect them from one or more risks to their health and safety, e.g. hard hats, goggles, hi-visibility jackets, safety boots and gloves. In some instances personal protective equipment must always be worn by the worker to ensure their safety during a particular work activity.
	Discipline/ Training	<p>Make sure that all controls are monitored reviewed and enforced.</p> <p>Ensure the lone worker has suitable training to fulfil the controls.</p>