

LONE WORKING

1. Introduction

Fife Alcohol Support Services recognises the risk of lone working and has developed this policy to ensure the safety of all staff, workers and volunteers when working alone.

The aim of this policy is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of SSS and its staff, workers and volunteers, in order to fulfil its legal obligations and to take action to minimise the risks of lone working. The policy also aims to increase staff awareness of safety issues related to lone working and to ensure that all lone working is assessed in a systematic and consistent manner.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all members of staff and volunteers who work in the Headquarters, KY Clubs, Councillors and work from home and should be read in conjunction with SSS Health and Safety Policy. Any reference to 'lone workers', 'member of staff' or 'employees' hereafter includes staff and volunteers.

3. Definition of Lone Workers

For the purpose of this policy Lone Workers are defined as anyone who works alone, whether they are at work or are at home.

4. Policy Statement

SSS recognises that some members of staff are required to work by themselves without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or during out of normal hours. The organisation acknowledges that these workers and volunteers are potentially at risk and that these risks must be minimised as far as reasonably practicable.

SSS has a duty of care to advise and assess the risk for all workers under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. As such standard procedures have been developed and set out within this policy, and these should be followed and adhered to at all times, prior to or when working alone.

It is important that all staff are aware of the definition of a Lone Worker (see Section 3 above) as they may find themselves, or those under their direct supervision, falling within the definition of a Lone Worker irregularly or infrequently and need to be able to recognise this situation and act appropriately to mitigate the risks.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The SSS Board of Directors

The Directors have overall responsibility for Health and Safety for all employees and volunteers and for ensuring mechanisms are in place for the overall implementation, monitoring and revision of the policy.

The Directors also have a responsibility to ensure that all employees are able to implement the aims and objectives of the policy and that certain arrangements exist for the provision of safety systems and procedures.

The Directors are also responsible for reviewing and updating the policy and procedures following recommendations from the CEO for approval of the updated Lone Worker Policy.

5.2 Managers

It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure:

The Lone Worker Policy is brought to the attention of all new members of staff in their inductions and reiterated to staff under their supervision through team meetings and 1:1s;

That their staff attend training events on health and safety, lone working and risk management as appropriate;

That staff are aware of their own responsibilities with regards to lone working;

All lone work activities are identified and recorded;

All assessment and safety measures identified are recorded;

All incidents relating to lone working are reported and recorded in line with the SSS Incident Reporting Procedures;

An investigation is carried out regarding any incident involving a lone worker and recommendations made to prevent a reoccurrence; and if a risk cannot be made safe two workers must carry out the task, or if not practical to do so the service should be withdrawn.

5.3 Individuals' Responsibilities:

All lone workers have a responsibility to:

Read and comply with the Lone Worker Policy and follow safe working procedures as set out in the policy;

Attend any relevant training at the request of their Manager;

Follow procedures introduced for Lone Workers including notifications to the Manager or 'Buddy';

Ensure they inform their line manager of each off-site visit and record full address and postcode details of the location of these, together with a client's or contact's telephone number or other local arrangement where applicable;

Undertake telephone or site based risk assessments prior to making any off-site visits and be involved in the process of identifying safety measures;

Avoid situations with significant risk, as far as is possible and take care of their own and other people's safety;

Report any incidents as soon as possible in line with the SSS incident reporting procedures; and



Ensure their Managers approve any hours worked outside of their standard working hours or the core business hours of the organisation before they are worked.

6. Lone Working Procedures

While many of the same health and safety risks affect both Lone Workers and other employees, there are other potential risks which are more likely to affect lone workers. These risks should be taken into consideration by all staff (Managers, employees and volunteers) prior to lone working taking place and the following procedures and guidelines have been developed to ensure that systems are put in place to assess and minimise any potential risks.

6.1 Risk Assessments

The crucial element in ensuring the safety of lone workers is the risk assessment.

The main aims of the risk assessment are to find out:

1. Whether the work can be done safely by a lone worker.
2. That the lone worker is not put at any greater risk than those who would do the job with another person.
3. If any jobs are too difficult or dangerous for a lone worker to carry out.

Risk assessments assist the Managers and lone workers to establish the right level of supervision and control measures required when lone working occurs. For example, some activities may be deemed high-risk and, if appropriate, may require at least two people present.

Procedure

There are two stages to the risk assessment process:

Stage 1: Identifying risks

Stage 2: Assessing any risk/s identified

The risk assessment procedure involves firstly identifying any potential risks and this must be undertaken prior to any activity, to ensure all associated risks have been identified as far as reasonably practicable.

These risk assessments must be undertaken prior to any activity, to ensure all associated risks have been considered and mitigated as far as reasonably practicable. If a risk is identified a risk assessment should be completed in these circumstances using the Risk Assessment form.

For employees and volunteers, it is the individual's responsibility to ensure that the Risk Assessment has been undertaken. The Manager who is responsible for volunteers should ensure that a Risk Assessment is completed before their volunteers undertake any activity. Employees/volunteers are also encouraged to use dynamic risk assessments when and where required.

The Risk Assessment will take into account potential scenarios and hazards and is a review of the current situation. Here are some of the questions that will need to be asked:

Location and means of communications?

Previous history of noteworthy incidents?

Is there a risk of violence?

Full address details of the location and contact details

Useful information regarding the locality

Will the individual be alone or will anyone else be present, and if so whom?

The assessment form also prompts the employee to document the date and time.

6.2 When a risk is identified

Where a risk is identified, the individual should report this directly to their Manager and Health and Safety Assistant and the following control measures should be discussed and implemented if deemed necessary. It is important to be clear about the basic ideas underpinning the notion of risk.

Risk relates to a negative event (i.e. violence both physical and verbal) and covers a number of aspects:

What exactly is the risk – or risks – to be prevented?

How severe will the outcome be if it does occur?

How likely is it that the event will occur?

When a risk/s is identified it is important to get as much information as possible about the risk/s so a more detailed risk assessment can be carried out using the Risk Assessment Form. Collecting more information from the staff member about the risks identified should be the first step. If this provides additional and relevant information, it should then be discussed directly with the Manager or SSS contact to review and agree on next steps with the following control measures to be discussed and implemented if deemed necessary:

Risk assessment information shared with all persons who may also be at risk

Employees are encouraged to undertake dynamic assessments where appropriate. The outcome of the risk assessment must be discussed with their Manager before any controls are put in place.

6.3 Monitoring staff movements

To ensure that the organisation is always aware of staff, workers and volunteer's whereabouts, local reporting systems should be put in place for each individual attending locations. All employees are required to update their Manager where applicable with all movements ensuring the records also state the location and date/time of any visits or events they will be attending.

For employees and volunteers who work out of office hours, either in the evenings or weekends, there must be an agreed local protocol in place for informing their Manager of their whereabouts which is specific to the SSS contact.

6.4 Buddying

Where possible, employees should be teamed with a nominated person (or 'buddy') for them to contact before and after the lone working. This will ensure, for example, if an employee is attending a venue they are able to advise their buddy of the venue they are attending and what time they would expect to return to their home. The employee would then let their buddy know when they have returned safely. Notification could take the form of a brief phone call or mobile phone text to confirm that they have returned from their visit.

If no contact has been made after a few hours of the end of the visit and contact cannot be made with the individual, the buddy would be responsible for raising the alarm. Within office hours (Monday to Friday 09:00-17:00) the alarm can be raised to the Manager? Outside of office hours the alarm should be raised to the local police.

In some circumstances such as where the lone worker is returning home, a family member or friend may be nominated as their buddy under this policy.

7. Home Based Lone Working

Staff working from home can also work alone from time to time and should therefore also be aware of lone worker procedures. It should be encouraged, where possible, to standardise working hours and patterns.

8. Incident Reporting

All incidents in relation to lone working should be reported through the SSS Incident Reporting procedure (contained within the Health and Safety Policy) and to their Manager. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe are reported through this system and should advise volunteers of this procedure as part of their induction.

9. Training

SSS has various training courses available for employees and volunteers including mandatory health and safety training. During induction and 1:1s staff training needs should be identified with their line manager and appropriate action taken.

10. Guidance for Lone Workers

The following constitutes general guidance to familiarise yourself with in the event that you are lone working.

Ensure you have read the lone working policy and procedure

Keep to your schedule of work, if you are delayed for any reason let your Manager know

Make sure you have all of the emergency phone numbers you need on your phone preferably on 'speed dial'

Make sure you attend any training sessions the organisation provides to keep you safe when working alone

Driving to an appointment

Avoid parking in a deserted place or where there is poor lighting;

Secure the vehicle when you leave it and ensure that you do not leave belongings on show in the vehicle;

Remember to charge and take your mobile phone with you, if you have one; and

Ensure you fill your car up with fuel before your journey, if you are running low.

Keep all valuables in your car out of sight

Ensure that your telephone or communication equipment is within easy reach;

Be aware of all exit routes in case you need to leave in a hurry.