



Lone Working / Home Visit Guidance for Schools

Document Control

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Document Reference:	Lone Working/Home Visit Guidance	
Version	02	
Status	Final	
Updated:	September 2019	
Related Policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection SEND Supervision	
Review Date	As required – Bi Annually	
Approved/Ratified by	Trust Board	Date: 14/10/2019



Legislation

This Guidance is written in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999). Employers should explain to employees the relevance of this legislation.

A lone worker (LW) is an employee who performs an activity that is carried out in isolation from other workers without close or direct supervision. Such staff may be exposed to risk because there is no-one to assist them and so a risk assessment may be required. This includes staff undertaking home visits, and those working in an isolated environment.

Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone. The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership (the ATLP) is responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. The ATLP is also responsible for the health and safety of those affected by work activities, for example any self-employed people they engage and visitors such as contractors.

The ATLP cannot transfer these responsibilities including to those people who work alone. It is the duty of the ATLP to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary.

The ATLP employees are required to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work activities and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

Lone working guidance is reflected in the ATLP home visiting guidelines and should be used in conjunction with any other pertinent procedures within the organisation.

Deciding on staff suitability for lone working

The ATLP will undertake a full risk assessment on each employee that may undertake lone working in any form.

This takes into account the following points:

- The ATLP must discuss with employees the legislation surrounding lone working/home visiting, within the organisation's lone working procedures.
- The ATLP must ensure it is made aware of illnesses that may impact on the ability of members of staff to undertake work alone. The ATLP will ensure a risk assessment is undertaken with regard to how the illness will be managed effectively particularly when the member of staff in question is working alone.
- The ATLP will ensure the safety and well-being of staff working in isolation within the building, or, when visiting other locations such as family homes.



- The ATLP will ensure procedures are in place to be aware of the whereabouts of all staff working alone, and will have a robust system/form in place for recording things such as:
 - Name of staff member
 - Location they will be working from
 - Ensuring mobile phone number is recorded
 - Ensuring mode of transport is known and any car registration is recorded
 - Ensuring it is recorded that a risk assessment re any family being visited has been undertaken.

Risk Assessment for Lone Working / Home visiting

This information should be completed for each lone working visit being undertaken off site:

- Information gathering should be undertaken re the family being visited, this can include asking if there are any known risks such as domestic violence, alcohol misuse, any pets etc. This could be collected from other colleagues or other professionals.
- It is recommended that a first initial visit to a household should always be made by two members of staff. If during this visit a simple written risk assessment identifies no obvious risk, subsequent visits may be carried out by a single member of staff. If the assessment identifies possible future risk, two members of staff must always make the visit. All risk assessment must be kept for future reference and made available to other staff if requested. It is recommended that these are stored centrally and electronically.
- Members of staff should ensure any vehicle being used is in roadworthy condition and has sufficient fuel for the whole journey. Members of staff should ensure their phone is fully charged prior to the visit. Staff should also carry the minimum number of essentials with them and avoid taking obvious personal possessions such as handbags - keys and a phone can be kept close in a pocket.
- The ATLP will provide, if requested, a personal pocket alarm and school mobile which should be carried when making a visit.
- Any member of staff with a known illness that may require emergency intervention, such as asthma or diabetes, should ensure appropriate medication is carried with them at all times.



- Employees will be offered training to enable them to understand what action to take, if they visit a home and someone is displaying aggression or is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The ATLP will ensure that this training is available.
- If at any time during a visit an employee feels at risk, they should leave immediately. They should then make contact with their base to explain that they are on their way back. Employees need not be mindful of appearing rude or of giving a reason. They must exit the situation immediately. If they feel unsure in any way, they should not proceed with the visit.
- Employees should be trained on points to consider when visiting a family home, in terms of knowing where the exits are, consideration should be given as to whether or not it is wise to accept a drink or snack (bearing in mind in some communities' refusal can cause offence). Staff should feel confident to request the TV volume be turned down if necessary, or requesting cigarettes are not smoked during the visit, and if worried about pets such as large dogs, they should be able to request in advance or at the time of the visit the animal is removed to a different room.
- Staff should at all times be vigilant regarding their own safety in terms of the environment they are in, and whilst they may be aware of their immediate surroundings, this should also extend to looking at any hazards above the eye line, such as the possibility of objects being thrown from windows above.
- The ATLP will ensure there is a process in place for ensuring staff have arrived at the visit, and for contacting staff who have not returned to base at the allotted time. There will also be a process in place for ensuring staff who have been lone working out of normal office hours are able to alert someone when they have finished working (this is particularly important for staff working in an evening who may go straight home afterwards) – some staff live alone, where there is no one to raise the alarm if they do not return.
- For staff working in a building at any point during the day/evening, they should follow the guidance from the establishment in terms of keeping themselves safe. Particular care should be taken when opening or closing a building at the beginning and end of the day. Consideration should be given to the possibility that an irate service user or parent could return to the building when someone is working alone.



Dress Code

Employees should consider what they wear and be culturally sensitive to the area in which they may be visiting. Clothing that allows for freedom of movement in the event of having to make a swift exit from premises is essential.

Staff must carry photographic ID at all times.

Support for staff following an incident

The ATLP will ensure there is a support mechanism for staff that have undertaken a lone visit and encountered problems such as aggressive/abusive behaviour by the client. Support will include time to discuss what happened and any strategies that could help in future to prevent the member of staff from being subject to abuse by a client.

Seeing the child

Although not a requirement of the lone working legislation, it is a requirement within local procedures that anyone undertaking a home visit to a family should try to ascertain the child's/ children's wellbeing. Detailed observation on how the child/children presented should be recorded. Careful consideration should be given to the language and terminology used with objective factual information recorded in the student(s) file upon return.

This may not be possible for the individual who has undertaken the visit, but thorough rigorous agency working, it may be possible for another professional to allay fears about children.

Where it has not been possible to see the child/children, information must be passed to the Attendance Officer and the procedures detailed in 'Children Missing from Education' should be followed. On occasions the police may be requested to do a 'safe and well check' if there are growing concerns for a child(s) safety. There may be other professionals (social worker, family support worker, health visitor, midwife), who may also have access to the family and may be able to assist.



HOME VISIT – RISK ASSESSMENT

Date of first visit	
Address:	
Student(s) name(s) and reason for visit	
Staff Member(s)	

	Risk / hazards identified	Safe / Unsafe	Action / Recommendations
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House

Lighting			
Obstructions			
Clear escape route			
Fire safety			
Other adults in the home – relationship			



External lighting			
Vehicle safety			
Other			

Animals in the house

Type / kept secured			
Other			

Individuals

Verbal / non verbal			
Details of anyone who should not be present in the home / have contact with the child(ren)			