



EmpowerEd Lone Working Policy

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Safeguarding Statement

At EmpowerEd, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students and staff members. We strive to create a safe, caring, and supportive environment where students can learn and thrive. Ensuring the safety of the EmpowerEd community is paramount, and we recognise the responsibility to protect all children and vulnerable individuals from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect, and any other harm.

Students must never be left unsupervised or in vulnerable situations, and all our policies—including the Lone Working Policy—are designed to ensure that both students and staff are kept safe and secure.

Introduction

EmpowerEd has a duty of care to provide a safe working environment for all its employees. In an education setting, where staff members may work alone before or after hours, during home visits, or in isolated areas of the premises, the risk to staff health and safety is increased. While lone working is sometimes unavoidable, it is essential that such situations are handled with great care. This policy outlines the procedures and precautions that must be followed to ensure the safety of staff when working alone.

EmpowerEd has a responsibility to assess the risks associated with lone working and to take steps to mitigate or eliminate these risks. Staff members also have a duty to care for their own safety and that of others in lone working situations.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to:

1. Define lone working in the context of EmpowerEd's educational settings.
 2. Outline the risks associated with lone working.
 3. Set out actions that reduce or mitigate risks for lone workers.
 4. Provide clear guidance and procedures to ensure staff and students' safety during lone working.
 5. Emphasise the importance of safeguarding, ensuring that students are never left unsupervised.
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Scope

This policy applies to all EmpowerEd staff, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and casual workers. It also applies to contractors or visitors who may find themselves working alone on the premises. The policy must be read in conjunction with other relevant policies.

Definition of Lone Working

The **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** defines lone working as "working by yourself without close or direct supervision." In an educational context, lone working includes:

- Staff members working alone in a building before or after operating hours.
- Staff working in isolated parts of the premises
- Staff members undertaking home visits, working remotely, or travelling between different tuition centres/sessions.
- Staff working in one-to-one situations with students or parents in a secluded or private area, even if others are on-site.

It is important to recognise that lone working does not solely refer to physical isolation—it can also occur in busy environments if the worker does not have direct support or supervision.

Risks and Potential Hazards of Lone Working in an Education Setting

Lone workers in an educational setting may face unique risks, including:

- **Emergencies such as accidents, sudden illness, or injuries:** A lone worker may not be able to summon help promptly.
- **The risk of violence or threatening behaviour:** Lone workers dealing with difficult parents, students, or visitors may be more vulnerable to aggression, especially during home visits or one-to-one meetings.
- **Safeguarding concerns:** Students must never be left unsupervised, and staff should avoid situations that could result in allegations of inappropriate behaviour or neglect.
- **Working in isolated areas:** Staff may be at risk of slips, trips, falls, or becoming trapped in less-frequented areas.
- **Tasks unsuitable for one person:** Some tasks, such as heavy lifting or using certain equipment, should not be carried out by lone workers.
- **Fire and security hazards:** A lone worker may not have immediate access to help in the event of a fire or a security breach, such as encountering an intruder.

- **Panic or medical conditions:** Staff with medical conditions or high levels of stress may face added risks when working alone.

The perception of these hazards may vary depending on the individual. For example, staff may underestimate the risks involved, or workers with health concerns may be at a higher risk when alone.

Measures to Reduce the Risk of Lone Working

1. Risk Assessments:

- EmpowerEd's Management Team (SLT) will conduct regular risk assessments of lone working situations. Any potential hazards will be identified, and appropriate control measures will be implemented.
- Line managers must assess each lone worker's role to determine if they are suited for lone working and consider any additional factors (e.g., medical conditions).

2. Supervision and Support:

- Line managers must ensure that all lone workers understand the risks and are trained in how to manage these risks effectively. For high-risk situations, increased supervision may be necessary, especially for new staff members or those unfamiliar with certain tasks.
- Regular check-ins with the lone worker, via phone, text, or a central tracking system, should be established.
- The use of a virtual diary or notice boards to indicate whereabouts and expected return times can assist in tracking lone workers' safety.

3. Communication and Check-In Systems:

- All lone workers are required to establish a check-in system with a colleague or their line manager. Staff working alone after hours [such as maintenance staff or cleaners] should notify a designated contact when they arrive and when they leave the premises.

4. Emergency Procedures:

- Lone workers must be fully aware of EmpowerEd's emergency procedures, including fire safety, first aid, and security. In high-risk situations, staff may need to carry personal alarms or ensure they have access to first aid equipment.
- Staff with medical conditions that could lead to sudden incapacitation should not work alone without prior assessment and support plans in place.

5. Home Visits:

- Home visits should not be conducted alone if there is any foreseeable risk. Where possible, visits should be made in pairs or scheduled in a public or neutral location.

- Staff should always carry a mobile phone during home visits and have an agreed-upon check-in process. Risk assessments should be conducted prior to any home visit.
- 6. Handling Intruders:**
- Lone workers must not enter the premises if there are signs of forced entry. The first action should always be to contact the police and report the situation. Staff should wait in a safe area until help arrives.
- 7. Preventing Violence and Aggression:**
- Lone workers must be trained in conflict resolution techniques and taught how to recognise the warning signs of aggression. Staff must feel empowered to end a meeting or visit if they sense any immediate danger. Any incidents of violence or aggression must be reported to the line manager and logged as part of EmpowerEd's incident reporting system.
- 8. Tasks Not Suitable for Lone Working:**
- Certain high-risk tasks should never be conducted by a lone worker. For example, heavy manual lifting or engaging in tasks involving specialised equipment should only be performed with the help of a colleague.
 - All tasks must be assessed, and if a risk is identified, the work must either be delayed until a colleague is available or reassigned to other staff.
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Responsibilities

- 1. Management Responsibilities:**
- EmpowerEd's management is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed and that all necessary risk assessments are conducted. They must provide staff with the necessary resources to work safely in lone working situations.
 - Managers should also regularly review and update risk assessments to ensure they remain relevant and effective.
- 2. Staff Responsibilities:**
- Staff members must take reasonable care of themselves and others during lone working situations. This includes following all safety guidelines, using the check-in systems, and reporting any concerns or hazards.
 - Lone workers must ensure that they are aware of the risks associated with their tasks and request assistance when needed.
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Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed regularly by the SLT to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
 - Incident reports, feedback from staff, and updates to health and safety regulations will be used to inform changes to this policy.
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Conclusion

The safety of both students and staff is paramount at EmpowerEd. Lone working can present increased risks, but through careful risk assessments, supervision, and communication, these risks can be effectively managed. All staff members have a role to play in ensuring safe working practices and in supporting colleagues working alone. EmpowerEd will continue to foster a culture of safety, accountability, and proactive risk management.