

LONE WORKING PROCEDURE

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HEALTH AND SAFETY Lone Working Procedure

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to identify what lone working is; define responsibilities in respect of lone working; and provide staff with guidance to reduce risks and to ensure their personal health and safety.

2 SCOPE AND COMMENCEMENT

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all areas of operation within the University, with effect from May 2025. It applies across all of the University's campuses.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This procedure explains how to keep lone workers healthy and safe. Lone workers face the same hazards at work as anyone else, but there is a greater risk of these hazards causing harm as they may not have anyone to help or support them if things go wrong.

4 DEFINITIONS

Lone Worker	A lone worker is 'someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision'.
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5 KEY LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- Lone working arrangements are covered by the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2000.
- These set out the University's duty of care to ensure employees' health, safety and welfare whilst they are at work and requires the University to undertake suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks involved at work.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

Please refer to the main Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy on the University's website for further details on roles and levels of responsibility using the link:

https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/125647/Health-Safety-and-Wellbeing-Policy.pdf

Managers

- 6.1 Managers are responsible for ensuring that all requirements for Lone Working have been assessed and controlled as laid out in this procedure.

6.2 Managers must ensure that:

- the staff in their school/department are aware of this procedure and their responsibilities;
- they minimise lone working of staff wherever practicable;
- an appropriate risk assessment is completed by a suitably trained and competent person following UU Risk Assessment Procedure and communicated to appropriate persons;
- the level of supervision needed is a management decision, which should be based on the findings of a risk assessment – the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required;
- control measures from any lone working risk assessments are implemented;
- they review any relevant lone working risk assessment annually or when significant changes occur;
- they are aware of any lone working activities planned by their staff;
- they agree communication with any lone workers, including working from home, as appropriate. You must put clear procedures in place because effective means of communication are essential. Lone working does not automatically imply a higher risk of violence, but it does make workers more vulnerable. If contact is poor, employees may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned, which can affect their performance and potentially their stress levels or mental health;
- if a lone worker's first language is not English, suitable arrangements are in place to provide clear communications, especially in an emergency.

6.3 All employees

All employees have a duty to protect themselves from risk, to comply with all procedures and to notify their line manager of any potential hazards of which they become aware.

All employees should:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work;
- familiarise themselves with the lone working risk assessment pertinent to their role;
- comply with the University's health and safety procedures, including the controls identified in the lone working risk assessment;
- advise their line manager of any medical conditions or health concerns which should be considered within the lone working risk assessment for their area;
- follow communication arrangements agreed with their line manager.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

Overview

The University is responsible for the health and safety of lone workers. This includes employees who work from home (see the Hybrid and Flexible Working Framework and the associated Checklist available [here](#)).

Risk assessment should help you decide on the right level of supervision for lone workers:

[Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures - Ulster University](#)

See Office based Risk Assessment: [Health and Safety Forms - Ulster University](#)

There are some high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present. Examples include (but are not limited to) working:

- in a confined space, where a supervisor may need to be present, along with someone dedicated to the rescue role;
- near exposed live electricity conductors;
- on diving operations.

You should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Emergency procedures should be established, and employees must be trained in them.

Your risk assessment may indicate that some lone workers should carry first aid equipment and/or may need first aid training (including how to administer first aid to themselves). They should also have access to adequate first aid facilities.

You should consider how to control the risks by thinking about who will be involved, where the work will happen and what triggers might be more of an impact for lone workers.

You should also consider the activity being carried out by a lone worker and how it might trigger an incident:

- Is the work a security role, having authority over students in residences and enforcing rules?

- Does the work involve handling cash, asking for payment or removing goods or property?
- Providing work equipment such as devices designed to raise the alarm in an emergency e.g. SAFEZONE APP, Man down alarms*

(* Man is a technical term does not refer to specific gender)

Manager Responsibility

Managers have a duty to include risks to lone workers in the general risk assessment and take steps to avoid or control risks where identified. This must include:

- involving workers when considering potential lone working risks and measures to control them;
- taking steps to ensure lone working risks are removed where possible, or putting in place control measures;
- instruction, training and supervision; Has the worker received a copy of the risk assessment and lone working training?
- reviewing the risk assessment periodically and updating it after any significant changes, such as new staff, processes or equipment;
- when the lone worker is working at another employer's workplace, consulting with that employer to identify any risks and required control measures;
- consideration of worker experience, in their role generally and in working alone;
- consideration as to the risk level associated with the individual workers involved, for example: are they a vulnerable worker; have they disclosed a medical, physical, mental or health condition; or are they pregnant or a young worker.

Dynamic risk assessments

Some employers use dynamic risk assessments for lone working situations. This is where workers make operational decisions based on risks which cannot necessarily be foreseen. This is not a substitute for a comprehensive risk assessment.

When a risk assessment identifies circumstances where a lone worker may have to undertake a dynamic risk assessment, they must:

- receive training on how to make that assessment;
- consider the range of possible control measures and what action to take;
- get support for their decisions.

8. RESOURCES

- Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
- Protecting lone workers How to manage the risks of working alone INDG73 HSE - [Working alone - Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/indg73/)
- [Lone working | Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland \(hseni.gov.uk\)](https://www.hseni.gov.uk/lone-working/)