

Saint John of God Kerry Services

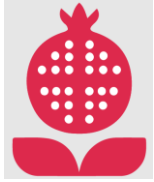
Hospitality - Compassion - Respect

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Lone Working Procedure

Saint John of God Kerry Services

Title:	Lone Working procedure
Document Reference:	Kerry
Revision Date:	February 2024
Revision Number:	03
Pages, incl. cover and signature:	12
Approved by:	PPP Group



Policy and Procedure

Introduction

In health and safety terms lone workers fall into the vulnerable group category. As lone workers are more at risk than other employees, extra risk control measures may be required to ensure the safety of the lone worker.

St John of God Kerry Services recognises this and endeavours to provide a safe working environment for all employees, including lone workers. These guidelines should be read in addition to existing controls and any necessary arrangements must be taken to enhance the safety of the lone workers' working environment.

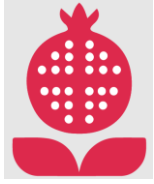
Policy Statement:

It is the objective of St John of God Kerry Services to effectively manage all risks to staff, service users and other persons, who may be affected by its activities.

St John of God Kerry Services acknowledges that some healthcare personnel are required to work alone. In all circumstances when healthcare personnel work alone St John of God Kerry Services will ensure, in accordance with its legal obligations, to subject the work to hazard identification and risk assessment(s) and ensure that agreed control measures are put in place to eliminate those hazards or reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable.

The aim of St John of God Kerry Services Procedure for Lone Working is to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to provide safe systems of work for those who work alone. In addition, it aims to bring about a reduction of any foreseeable risks and to provide detailed arrangements for staff who work alone and all those affected by our activities.

St John of God Kerry Services will continuously monitor and review current service arrangements for lone workers with a view to ensuring that appropriate resources are available for the implementation of safe work practices, the provision of appropriate training and the provision of relevant health and safety equipment.



Purpose

The principal purpose of this procedure is to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all lone workers employed by St John of God Kerry Services. In addition, St John of God Kerry Services will bring about the reduction so far as is reasonably practicable, of all reasonably foreseeable risks associated with lone working and to implement any necessary arrangements to achieve this reduction in line with legislative requirements.

Individual services / locations should develop local Standard Operating Procedures/ Guidelines to support the implementation of this Policy and the associated Guidelines in their area.

Objective

These guidelines are developed to assist St John of God Kerry Services to: -

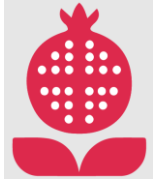
- To ensure the management of Safety, Health and Welfare is achieved in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Provided safe working practices for staff and assist in the implementation of same.

Relevant Legislation

The Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (2005 Act) requires all employers to provide among other things, safe places, and safe systems of work.

Section 19 of the 2005 Act requires every employer to identify the hazards in the place of work under his or her control and assess the risks presented by those hazards and to be in possession of a written assessment of the risks to the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees, including the safety, health and welfare of any single employee, group or groups of employees who may be exposed to any unusual or other risks under the relevant statutory provisions.

The General Safety and Health Provisions and the General Applications regulations 2007, require employers to take the necessary measures to ensure the Safety, Health, and Protection of Employees. These regulations require that employers must take account of changing circumstances and carry out risk assessments accordingly. Training on matters of Health and Safety should also be provided to ensure the Safety Health and Welfare of employees.



Definitions and Abbreviations

“Lone Workers” are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

Source: Health and Safety Authority

For the purpose of these guidelines a lone worker is anyone who works alone, without a colleague.

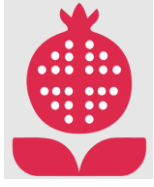
Lone workers include those who:

- work outside normal hours
- work away from their base
- work separately from others
- are the only person on the premises
- work outside in the community
- visit people in their homes

People who work alone without interaction with other workers or without direct supervision are known as lone workers.

“Reasonably practicable” in relation to the duties of an employer, means that an employer has exercised all due care by putting in place the necessary protective and preventive measures, having identified the hazards and assessed the risks to safety and health likely to result in accidents or injury to health at the place of work concerned and where the putting in place of any further measures is grossly disproportionate having regard to the unusual, unforeseeable and exceptional nature of any circumstance or occurrence that may result in an accident at work or injury to health at that place of work. Source: Section 2(6), Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005.

St John of God Kerry Services will ensure, in accordance with its legal obligations, a safe working environment and safe systems of work for lone workers, so far as is reasonably practicable. In the event of an incident the member of staff involved must report this to their immediate supervisor/local management without undue delay. All foreseeable hazards in relation to lone working must be identified and associated risks assessed and documented. To assist in the hazard identification and risk reduction process lone workers need to be consulted and receive appropriate training and information.



Responsibility

Employers

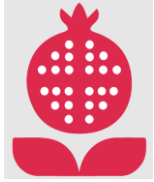
Under section 8 of the 2005 Act, every employer shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees. As lone workers are more vulnerable than other workers these duties take on an even greater significance.

Senior Managers e.g. Managers of Operations/Programme Managers/General Managers Responsibilities include:

- To promote and support the aims and objectives of the policy and guidelines
- To accord it equal status with all other relevant documents and management functions
- To ensure that adequate and appropriate procedures/arrangements are in place in order to implement and disseminate the policy and guidelines
- To ensure that arrangements exist for the reporting and investigation of any incident involving lone workers no matter how apparently trivial an incident may at first appear, and to make appropriate recommendations to prevent recurrence of such incidents.
- To ensure the resources are available to enable staff to implement the aims and objectives of the policy and guidelines.
- To ensure all staff receive appropriate training in accordance with the risks associated with their work activities.
- To ensure that the risks associated with Lone Working are identified and a risk assessment process has been completed.

Line Managers e.g. Clinical Nurse Managers/Supervisor Responsibilities include:

- To adequately risk assess in a written format any staff/areas that fall within the scope of these guidelines
- To be responsive to the concerns of staff in relation to lone working
- To be familiar with and understand the contents of these guidelines
- To promote and support the aims and objectives of these guidelines
- To integrate the guidelines into daily safe work practices
- To ensure the appropriate measures are in place in order to disseminate, implement and monitor the effectiveness of these guidelines
- To investigate and record in writing all incidents/accidents involving lone workers and make appropriate recommendations to prevent a recurrence



- To ensure the department/section has a robust “safe system of work” relative to lone workers. The use of site specific protocols may be implemented if necessary.
- To ensure that lone workers receive adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to perform their work safely
- To ensure that appropriate support is provided to staff involved in any incident in terms of both immediate and follow up support.

Employee responsibilities include:

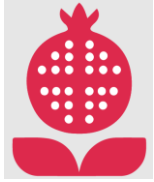
Employees also have responsibility under Section 13 of the 2005 Act, to take care of their own safety health and welfare and to co-operate with the employer (i.e. SJOG) in discharging its statutory duties.

Employee’s duties include:

- To take reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others when working alone.
- To co-operate with their employer to enable him/her comply with safety and health legislation
- To report any defect in the place of work, the systems of work without unreasonable delay
- To report any work being carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a manner which may endanger the safety, health or welfare at work of the employee or that of any other person,
- Having regard to his or her training and the instructions given by his or her employer, make correct use of any article or substance provided for use by the employee at work or for the protection of his or her safety.
- Under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, staff are obliged to cooperate with the Risk Assessment Process.

It is not always possible to identify all the hazards relating to lone working, especially where the workplace or area is outside of the employer’s immediate control. In such situations lone workers should continually assess the work location, taking account of hazards that cannot necessarily be detected in advance such as the influence of alcohol, drugs or the threat posed by animals or other hostile elements. It is vital that in such circumstances workers are empowered to make the decision as to whether or not it is safe to continue working, or whether to withdraw from the situation. In addition each member of staff must:

- Obtain as much background information as possible on the service user / families etc. before visiting/ meeting.



- Prioritise any concerns arising from the information before the visit / meeting takes place.
- Always report any incident, no matter how trivial it may seem.

Consultation

In order to identify the significant hazards relative to lone workers or hazards that may be unique to a specific group of lone workers, local management must establish and maintain an appropriate consultative mechanism. In addition this forum should be utilised to bring to the attention of the relevant personnel, additional policies, procedures and protocols as appropriate. This should be viewed as a support mechanism for the lone worker.

Training

Local management are responsible for ensuring that lone workers have received all appropriate training prior to engaging in lone working activities. Training should include at minimum induction training that may enhance the safety of the working environment for the lone worker or a particular group of lone workers.

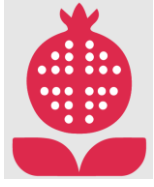
Risk Assessment

Each Department/Section Head is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are completed for all foreseeable situations faced by lone workers and are based on a hazard identification process which may include:

- Physical Hazards
- Chemical Hazards
- Biological Hazards
- Psychosocial Hazards

Initially managers should complete a range of occupational risk assessment using the following non exhaustive headings:-

- Violence and Aggression
- Transport
- Slips, trips and falls
- Psychosocial Hazards
- Manual Handling
- Lone Worker
- Fire Safety
- Electricity
- Biological Hazards
- Disposal of Hazardous Waste



- Visual Display Equipment

More specific risk assessments may be carried out for the following non exhaustive factors:

- People
- Environmental
- Geographical areas
- Weather conditions
- Times i.e. day or night

Suggested risk reduction controls/arrangements (individual/combined) if deemed appropriate through the risk assessment/consultative process:

- Detailed plan of staff whereabouts and movements
- Working in pairs
- The “Buddy System”
- Gardai presence/liaison system including availability of emergency contact numbers
- Removing identification from cars
- Technology i.e. mobile phones, pagers etc.

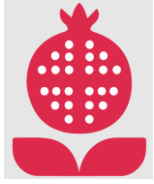
Information Sharing

In order to carry out their job safely and efficiently it is important that all lone workers have access to appropriate information. Good quality information in relation to contacts and locations can prove very helpful.

Each department/location head should ensure that there is an appropriate flow of information to and from other departments/locations, and that appropriate record sharing protocols, in accordance with SJOG policies and procedures, are followed. This is especially important where there is a higher risk of assault from a service user, relative or carer.

Lone workers should be made aware that if, at any stage during their working time they encounter aggression they should promptly reassess the situation and follow such site specific guidelines/protocols /risk assessments / reactive strategies if necessary. Lone workers should report this to their relevant line manager and complete the relevant incident report form.

Lone workers should never provide their personal telephone or pager numbers to service user's, relatives or carers.



Supervision

Given the unique working conditions of the lone worker supervision becomes even more significant as it offers a source of valuable support to the lone worker. This can be carried out when checking the progress of the work, it may take the form of periodic site visits combined with discussions in which health and safety issues are raised. The extent of the supervision is directly related to the risk assessment e.g. an employee new to a job or undergoing training may need to be accompanied at first.

Regular contact between the line manager and the lone worker should be encouraged and fostered which forms a key part in ensuring the safety of the lone worker.

Implementation of these guidelines

An implementation plan/protocol may be developed in consultation with both local management and staff as deemed necessary.

Awareness sessions for staff detailing the contents/provisions of these guidelines should be arranged i.e. through the forum of team meetings, PDR, Probationary Reviews, Supervision, etc.

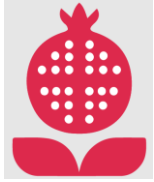
Effectiveness of these guidelines

The effectiveness of these guidelines will require the co-operation of both management and staff at all levels throughout SJOG Kerry Services and should encompass the following:

- Method of communication to be used for the escalation of unresolved issues
- Local implementation of these guidelines
- Review of accidents / near miss incidents in order to determine effectiveness of these guidelines (identify trends/patterns)
- Monitoring of staff practices in relation to compliance with these guidelines
- Meetings of management and staff to discuss the measures put in place should be organised.

Monitoring

To achieve success in terms of these guidelines implementation, it is important to recognise difficulties early on and to address them in a realistic and achievable manner. Difficulties encountered by staff should be promptly brought to the attention of the relevant line manager in order to achieve a swift and satisfactory outcome. If



the issue cannot be resolved at local level then it must be forwarded as an agenda item on the next scheduled meeting of the local management team or escalated to the next level through identified escalation process.

Employee Assistance Services

St John of God Kerry Services recognises the need for specific and specialised support to staff who may encounter, in the course of their work, situations which may have a potentially traumatic effect of their personal and professional life.

This support is offered through the Employee Assistance Service, by a group of specially trained personnel. It is confidential and addresses the person's issues in relation to the incident. Although this service follows an identifiable procedure it does not exclude the support which managers and colleagues can give to persons who may find themselves in such a situation.

If any issues arise as a result of the risk assessments the lone worker should raise the issue with their line manager.

Community Visits:-

- Is the service user / family, etc. unknown to you/others?
- Check all available or necessary records/reports on the person prior to your visit.
- Ensure somebody knows where you are going, who you are visiting and when you are expected to leave
- Inform the people you visit how much of their time you will require.
- Acknowledge that it is their home and allow them lead the way.
- If the person appears to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol or acting aggressively it would be prudent to immediately leave.
- On entry, check how the front door locks.
- Study your surroundings and try to sit nearest the door.
- Take only what you need into the house.
- Remain alert at all times. Watch for changes in moods, movements or expressions.

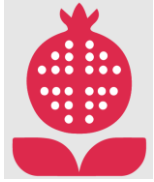
Personal Safety P.L.A.N. for it

Prepare Yourself

- Know exactly where you are going and how to get there

Look Confident

- Be alert, walk tall, keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings



Avoid Risk

- When going out of the normal work location leave details there of your movements and when you expect to be back
- Avoid taking potentially dangerous shortcuts particularly when on foot
- Assess the potential risk of a situation

Always aim to get away fast if confronted with violence or aggression

Never assume

- It wont happen to you
- Your fears are unfounded
- People are what they seem

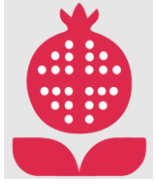
Remember always report any incident, however trivial it may seem. Not doing so could put others at risk.

References

Guideline for Lone Workers (Staff Health Safety and Welfare Department, Dr Steeven's Hospital, HSE HR Services

HSE Guidelines for lone workers, Document reference no. HSAG 2011/5. Revision no 2.0

Health and Safety and Welfare at Work Act (2005)



SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the attached Procedure:

Print Name	Signature	Area of Work	Date
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