

Working Alone in Safety

February 2001

1. Introduction

The Trust has a legal and moral duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations (1999) to ensure the health and safety of its employees so far as is reasonably practicable, where ever they may be employed.

This policy seeks to ensure their safety through the introduction of systems of work that provide for those employees whose duties entail them working alone or in isolation either through the physical location or the time at which tasks are undertaken.

2. Scope

The Haringey Healthcare NHS Trust values its staff as its most valuable asset, many of whom now work in isolation. This policy is to provide a framework of safe systems of working to protect these workers.

No employee should be placed in a dangerous situation, or feel guilty or pressurised into undertaking any task that puts themselves or others at risk.

3. Definition

Lone workers are those *“who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, without the means of obtaining immediate support, assistance or advice”*.

Working in isolation is working in an area remote from support, assistance or advice (e.g. confined space, consulting room or in the community)

3. Responsibilities:

i) Trust.

The Chief Executive of the Trust has overall responsibility for health and safety within the Trust, these responsibilities are delegated to managers and employees in relation to their managerial responsibilities.

ii) Managerial.

All Departmental Managers and Supervisors are responsible for the health and safety of the staff they supervise.

To ensure the health and safety of their staff they should ensure that the following has been undertaken:

- Local and Trust policies must require that the safety of 'lone workers' to be considered,

- ❑ Induction of all new staff to include security measures and guidelines on working alone in safety together with details of any risk assessment results that may be relevant.
- ❑ Ensure that a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment is completed on all members of staff and their activities, appropriate to the level of risk.
- ❑ Ensure that all risk assessments are completed relevant to the time and place of the task to be undertaken.
- ❑ Develop and ensure protocols are in place for the safe referral and reception of patients/clients to or from other agents i.e. inclusion of any risk issues (personal, associates or location).
- ❑ Systems should be implemented to ensure that the whereabouts and safety of the staff can be demonstrated at **all times** either through the establishment of shadow diaries, or a pre planned work schedule for staff working over various locations.
- ❑ Issue personal attack alarms and/or a means of summoning assistance or advice, for all staff who work in isolation either through location or time. (PPE is to be considered a last resort and should not replace safe systems of working).
- ❑ Where staff undertake visits in the community to any client group, then the provision of a suitable means of two-way communication for those staff **must** be provided.
- ❑ Where staff undertake visits in the community to any client group using their own vehicles then a register of vehicle details and driver photograph will be kept together with vehicle insurance details.
- ❑ Ensure that all incidents including **near misses** are reported and recorded and where relevant notified to allied disciplines.
- ❑ Establish relevant training required for identified risks and ensure that regular updates are available and records of attendance and course content are held by the responsible manager

iii) Staff

Each member of staff is responsible for taking all steps that ensure their own safety when working alone. Specific responsibilities include:

- ❑ Each Employee has a legal *duty of care* to take reasonable steps to ensure their own Health, Safety and Welfare whilst at work as well as that of their colleagues, patients, visitors and others.
- ❑ Each Employee has a responsibility to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of their own day to day working practices (tasks/activities), taking into account any conditions (time/location) which may effect their ability to perform the tasks at hand.
- ❑ Not to undertake any activity for which they have not received appropriate training or they consider may prove injurious to themselves
- ❑ To ensure that any equipment issued for personal safety (PPE) is fully operational at all times.
- ❑ To participate and complete any training as identified by your supervisor and/or manager.
- ❑ To request information regarding risks if requested to work in a new area or with a new client.
- ❑ To report **any** incidents or near misses.
- ❑ To notify their manager/supervisor of any changes to agreed work plan or schedule.
- ❑ To abide by this policy together with local working arrangements.
- ❑ Ensure that they are in receipt of the Safety Guide for Lone Workers and that it is regularly referred to.

4. Risk Assessments:

- ❑ Suitable and Sufficient risk assessments need to be undertaken by the managers or supervisors to identify the risks of those undertaking duties working on their own. The groups of people at risk range from community visiting staff to early morning cleaning staff via Doctors undertaking 'one on one' consultations. The possible risks will range from attending a patients address and being attacked, to an injury whilst working late in an office, or becoming locked in through a faulty lock.
- ❑ Identified risks must be communicated to those to whom the risks apply.
- ❑ Safe Systems of work identified during assessments are to be documented and held by each local manager available for inspection on request.
- ❑ Trust managers will ensure that systems are in place to see that all activities that include working in isolation have been identified
- ❑ The referral of clients between different disciplines should be thoroughly monitored to ensure that all relevant risk assessment data is received.
- ❑ Local Manager and Supervisors will form contacts within allied services to assist in the preparation of risk assessments e.g. Police, Probation service, housing and social workers departments.

5. Accountability

Managers and supervisors are responsible and accountable for the introduction of safe systems of work as identified through risk assessments. All systems of work should be written down and issued and discussed with the relevant staff.

Where such systems require a monitoring of people's activities then those systems must be established to allow for extended working and sickness and holiday absence.

6. Training

- ❑ Each manager will arrange to provide sufficient, suitable and relevant training.
- ❑ Specific training will be provided where tasks require special skills and those duties should only be undertaken by those appropriately trained
- ❑ Each Manager will receive sufficient training suitable to their needs as may from time to time be determined by the Trust.
- ❑ Details of training course content and records of attendance must be maintained and a copy held by each local manager. Original documents are to be sent to the Directorate of Human Resources Management.

7. Equipment (Personal Protective Equipment)

- ❑ Each manager will arrange to have suitable equipment (Personal attack alarms, Radios, Mobile phones etc) provided to enable employees and others to comply with the Trust and local safe systems of work.
- ❑ Local managers must put in place suitable systems to ensure that any equipment, issued for personal protection, is fully functional
- ❑ All equipment will be maintained and operated in accordance with Trust and manufacturers instructions and recommendations.]
- ❑ Staff are required to use any equipment issued for safety must be used in accordance with the manufacturers

8. REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed March 2003

This policy will remain subject to review in the light of new legislation and evidence gained from Incident Data Processing and risk assessment.

Appendices

1. Lone Working Guide
2. Procedures Guide
3. List of established liaison contacts
4. List of Trust and external personal training suppliers.

Signed by
For HHCT