

Lone Working Policy

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Written by:	Operations Manager (Liverpool)
Reviewed/amended by:	n/a
Approved by:	Principal (Manchester)
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Policy Owner:	Health and Safety Officer
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Date:	n/a

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. New College Group (NCG) acknowledges that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of its employees and third parties when working alone and is committed to making adequate provisions for the health and safety of lone workers.
- 1.2. The key requirement is to **carry out risk assessments to identify risks to lone workers** and to **ensure that control measures are implemented** to minimise the risks wherever practicable. These requirements are applicable to all work situations/activities and in particular where staff, contractors and visiting workers are working alone or outside normal working hours.
- 1.3. This policy gives information about lone working risks, sets out the responsibilities of NCG and others for the managing the safety of lone workers and gives guidance on the lone working risk assessment process.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to the management of the risks associated with lone working on or off NCG premises and all departments are required to have in place local arrangements that comply with this policy.
- 2.2. The policy applies to all NCG staff, including temporary and contract workers or those who are provided by an agency. Some policy areas are also applicable to contractors.
- 2.3. The policy is not intended to apply to staff who are the sole occupiers of an office during normal working hours unless for some reason their work presents lone working hazards, nor is it intended to apply to students staying with host families or in student residences.

3. Purpose

3.1. The purpose of this policy is to:

- 3.1.1. Reduce the risks presented by lone working;
- 3.1.2. Define specific responsibilities;
- 3.1.3. Adopt a consistent approach to the safety of lone workers;
- 3.1.4. Comply with relevant legislation.

4. Definitions

4.1. **Lone Workers:** The HSE defines lone workers as “Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, either employees who work separately from others in an establishment, or mobile workers who work away from a fixed base”. In this policy the term ‘lone workers’ means any person meeting the HSE’s definition who are working on behalf of NCG, whether they are working on or off the premises. Examples of employees who may be classed as lone workers include:

- 4.1.1. Staff with responsibility for opening up and closing buildings;
- 4.1.2. Staff working outside normal working hours;
- 4.1.3. Staff working during holiday periods;
- 4.1.4. Staff working away from NCG premises.
(This list is by no means exhaustive)

4.2. **Staff:** The term ‘staff’ is used throughout this document to refer to all NCG employees, whether paid or unpaid.

4.3. **Managers and Supervisors:** These terms are used to describe all those with a responsibility for the line management of staff, in whatever category.

4.4. **Normal working hours and out-of-hours:** Normal working hours are considered to be between 08:00 hours to 18:30 hours on weekdays (does not include bank holidays, minimum service days or weekends). Therefore ‘out-of-hours’ is anytime outside of these normal working hours.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. New College Group will:

- 5.1.1. Seek to ensure that the risks to employees associated with lone working are identified, evaluated and controlled, so far as it is reasonably practicable;
- 5.1.2. Cooperate with third parties to ensure that the risks of lone working are controlled, so far as it is reasonably practicable;

- 5.1.3. Allocate sufficient resources to ensure lone working risks can be identified and effectively controlled.

5.2. **Line Managers** and **Supervisors** must:

- 5.2.1. Seek to ensure that a risk assessment of lone working is carried out, control measures are introduced and that appropriate records are maintained for their areas of responsibility;
- 5.2.2. Seek to ensure that measures are implemented and maintained to reduce the risk of lone working to its lowest reasonably practicable level within their areas of responsibility;
- 5.2.3. Seek to ensure that all staff, students and visitors to departments are aware of the arrangements and any additional local arrangements for lone working through appropriate information, instruction and training;
- 5.2.4. Seek to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to control and manage lone working arrangements with respect to health and safety within their departments;
- 5.2.5. Ensure that their department has measures in place to know who is working out-of-hours;

5.3. The appointed **Health and Safety Officer** will:

- 5.3.1. Provide advice and guidance on the implementation of this policy;
- 5.3.2. Provide training to support the implementation of this policy;
- 5.3.3. Ensure that the effectiveness of the policy is monitored;
- 5.3.4. Ensure that the policy is reviewed and revised at least once a year.

5.4. **Staff** and **visiting workers** who intend to work alone must:

- 5.4.1. Ensure the risk assessment for the task to be undertaken permits lone working;
- 5.4.2. Ensure they are aware of and understand the control measures to be taken;
- 5.4.3. Follow the safe system of work and other control measures;
- 5.4.4. Report any incidents occurring whilst working alone.

5.5. **Contractors** must:

- 5.5.1. Ensure the risk assessment and method statement for the work to be undertaken addresses the risk of lone working;
- 5.5.2. Inform the person managing the contract of the lone working risk controls in place for the task.

6. Risk Assessments

6.1. Line Managers and Supervisors should use existing risk assessment arrangements to:

- 6.1.1. Identify and assess the risks to lone workers;
- 6.1.2. Implement measures to reduce the risks to lone workers, including appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision to minimise these risks
- 6.1.3. Evaluate the control measures and ensure that risks to lone workers are appropriately managed.

6.2. A suitable and sufficient risk assessment for lone working should consider the following factors, together with any specific risks associated with the work being undertaken:

- 6.2.1. Who is going to be working alone?
- 6.2.2. Where will they be working?
- 6.2.3. Are they competent to carry out the work?
- 6.2.4. Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker in addition to risks associated with the work itself?
- 6.2.5. Is there a safe means of ingress and egress from the work location?
- 6.2.6. Can all materials involved in the work be safely handled by one person? (Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large or awkward for one person).
- 6.2.7. Are some individuals more at risk than others when working alone?
- 6.2.8. Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- 6.2.9. Are the fire precautions for the building fully operational and understood by the lone worker?
- 6.2.10. Are all fire precautions available if the work takes place out-of-hours?
- 6.2.11. Is the lone worker fully familiar with how to respond in an emergency? E.g. do they know how to activate the fire alarm, phone numbers to call, who to contact?
- 6.2.12. Are there effective communication links in the area they will be working at the time they are working?
- 6.2.13. Is the level of supervision at other times sufficient to ensure that any problems are identified and dealt with?
- 6.2.14. Is there a risk of accidental release of material which could cause acute injury or require extensive decontamination? e.g. gas release, explosion, spillage (Work such as this should not take place unaccompanied)

6.2.15. Are any other precautions necessary?

7. Lone Working off NCG Premises

7.1. Certain NCG staff are required to work alone outside the college's premises, for example when carrying out homestay inspections or visiting agencies. The specific controls necessary must be proportionate to the risk and will be informed by the risk assessment process but could include:

- 7.1.1. Details of location and anticipated time of return left with a manager or colleague;
- 7.1.2. Details of mode of transport used by lone workers left with a manager or colleague;
- 7.1.3. Regular contact with a manager or relevant colleague, particularly if they are delayed or have to cancel an appointment;
- 7.1.4. Mobile phone solutions with text, panic, GPS, 'man down' and smartphone solutions.

7.2. Where there is genuine concern, for example, as a result of a lone worker failing to attend a visit or an arranged meeting within an agreed time, or to make contact as agreed, the manager or colleague should, depending on the circumstances and whether contact through normal means (mobile phone) can be made, involve the Principal or Managing Director.

7.3. If it is thought that the lone worker may be at risk, it is important that matters be dealt with quickly, after considering all the available facts. Police involvement may be necessary, and the Police will need full access to information held and personnel who may hold it, if that information might help trace the lone worker and provide a fuller assessment of any risks they may be facing.

7.4. It is important that contact arrangements, once in place, are adhered to. Many such procedures fail simply because staff forget to make the necessary call when they finish their shift. The result is unnecessary escalation and expense, which undermines the integrity of the process.

8. The Buddy System

8.1. It is essential that lone workers keep in contact with colleagues and ensure that they make another colleague aware of their movements. This can be done by implementing management procedures such as a 'buddy system'.

8.2. To operate the buddy system, managers must ensure that a lone worker nominates a buddy. This is a person who is their nominated contact for the period in which they will be working alone. The nominated buddy will:

- 8.2.1. Be fully aware of the movements of the lone worker;
- 8.2.2. Have all necessary contact details for the lone worker;
- 8.2.3. Attempt to contact the lone worker if they do not contact the buddy as agreed

- 8.2.4. Follow the agreed local escalation procedures for alerting their line manager if the lone worker cannot be contacted or if they fail to contact their buddy within agreed and reasonable timescales.
- 8.3. The buddy must understand their role and what the procedures and requirements are. Contingency arrangements should be in place for someone else to take over the role of the buddy in case the nominated person is unavailable, for example if the lone working situation extends past the end of the nominated person's normal working day or shift, if the shift varies, or if the nominated person is away on annual leave or off sick.

9. Implementation and Review

- 9.1. This policy comes into effect after official approval by the Principal (Manchester), who will also establish the date of implementation. As part of the implementation process, this policy will be made known to all relevant staff members by e-mail or any other means deemed suitable. An electronic copy of this policy will be stored in the company's shared drive.
- 9.2. This policy will be reviewed regularly either:
 - 9.2.1. In light of changes in legislation or any other significant regulations;
 - 9.2.2. In light of changes in the technology used;
 - 9.2.3. In any case, once a year from the date of implementation.