

Health and Safety OPAL Lone Working Policy

Table of contents:

1. Policy Statement.....	2
2. Purpose of this Policy.....	2
3. Aims of this Policy.....	2
4. Definitions.....	2
5. Responsibilities under this Policy.....	2
5.1 Responsibilities of OPAL.....	2
5.2 Responsibilities of Staff.....	3
5.3 Responsibilities of Volunteers.....	4
5.4 Responsibilities of OPAL Manager.....	3
5.5 Responsibilities of service organisers.....	3
6. Procedures.....	4
6.1 Planning ahead.....	4
6.2 Communication.....	4
6.3 Monitoring & Review.....	4
7. Monitoring and Review.....	5
8. Associated documents.....	5

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Who this document applies to:	All staff and all volunteers.

1. Policy Statement

OPAL has the responsibility for the safety of all employees (permanent or temporary) and volunteers when they are lone working. Equally, all staff and volunteers have a responsibility to abide by OPAL's lone working procedures and guidance.

Where OPAL Services and its associated activities (office based and in the community,) require people to work alone, both their Line Manager and the individual staff member have a responsibility to assess and reduce the risks of lone working.

2. Purpose of this Policy

This policy is designed to make sure staff and volunteers are made aware of the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities everyone has in this context and to follow the procedures and guidance which will minimise the associated risks to an acceptable level.

3. Aims of this Policy

This policy aims to provide a safer environment for staff and volunteers when they are in situations where they are working/helping on their own, away from other colleagues/ volunteers.

This policy aims to reduce the need for lone working as much as possible, but without affecting the nature and quality of OPAL services.

This policy aims to put lone workers at no more risk than others in OPAL.

4. Definitions

Within this policy, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff and volunteers work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues/volunteers and without access to immediate assistance in the course of their duties.

Working outside of usual hours may result in lone working.

Lone working does not include regular journeys to and from your usual place of work, traveling under other circumstances or overnight stays.

5. Responsibilities under this Policy

5.1. Responsibilities of OPAL:

- To ensure procedures for lone working are in place and up to date.
- To monitor the effectiveness of those procedures through the Accident and Incident reporting system.
- To provide staff and volunteers who lone work with guidance and training.



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5.2. Responsibilities of OPAL Manager:

- To provide copies of OPAL's Information Sheet on Lone Working and to download the guidance leaflets from the Susie Lamplugh Trust.
- Make sure the individual is aware of the do's and don'ts when lone working.
- To ensure staff and volunteers complete the Emergency Contact Information Sheet, keep it up to date and distributed accordingly.

5.3. Responsibilities of all staff:

- To adhere to OPAL Policies and Procedures for lone working.
- To tell someone if they are going somewhere outside of their normal work place, or are going to their normal workplace and know that there will be no-one else there. This may be as simple as leaving their partner a message on the kitchen table of the address and telephone number of where they are going, the purpose of their visit, time of leaving and expected return.
- To undertake their own informal risk assessment of a premises where they expect to be working alone, every time they visit, referring to the documented risk assessment document for the venue as necessary.
- Not to enter a premises where they will be lone working without a means of communication (mobile phone) or a pre-prepared excuse if they feel uncomfortable and feel the need to leave.
- To make themselves aware of and apply the dos and don'ts as explained in OPAL's Information Sheet on Lone Working and in the leaflets of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- To take responsibility for their own personal safety.
- To complete their Emergency Contact Information Sheet about Staff and keep it up to date.

5.4. Additional Responsibilities of Service Organisers:

- To undertake and document a risk assessment of all venues where volunteers may be lone working (e.g. the service user's homes). To share those risk assessments with the relevant volunteer(s).
- The risk assessment to be reviewed by the Organiser when conducting reviews with the service user, ideally completed annually.
- To share with each volunteer, who may be required to volunteer on their own, the do's and don'ts advocated in OPAL's Information Sheet on Lone Working and in the Suzy Lamplugh Trust leaflets.
- To monitor and take action about lone working issues that are reported by a volunteer on an Accident and Incident Report Form.
- To promptly discuss with volunteers any known changes, however insignificant, to the risk associated with a premises/situation where the volunteer is asked to volunteer.



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- To listen and respond to any concerns expressed by volunteers about their safety while lone working, to act on those concerns and document the actions taken on the Accident and Incident Report Form.

5.5. Responsibilities of volunteers:

- To adhere to OPAL Policies and Procedures for lone working
- To make themselves aware of and apply the dos and don'ts as explained in OPAL's Information Sheet on Lone Working and in the leaflets of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.
- To undertake their own informal risk assessment of any premises where they expect to be working alone, every time they visit.
- Not to enter a premises where they will be lone working without a means of communication (mobile phone) or a pre-prepared excuse if they feel uncomfortable and feel the need to leave.
- To promptly communicate any concerns to their Organiser and document those concerns as appropriate on an Accident and Incident Report Form.
- To take responsibility for their own personal safety.

6. Procedures

The principles of the policy will follow a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle:

6.1. Planning ahead

- Assessing and documenting the risks, introducing adequate control measures and safe systems of work, recording of activities - *Plan*.

Things to consider:

- The environment – location, security, access, exits.
- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk. e.g. risk of infection, unfriendly pets.
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations. e.g. violence,
- Any other contributing or special circumstances.
- All available information should be considered and checked, including ensuring the initial referral information contains any required information for assessing the risk of a home visit / lone working or updated as necessary. Where there is any significant and/or reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to making alternative arrangements to complete the activity.

6.2. Communication

- Keeping in touch if your plans change, telling people where you are going before you go. – *Do*.

6.3. Monitoring and review



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- Having procedures and systems in place to monitor and evaluate activities and continual improve processes through the Accident and Incident reporting system. – *Check and Act*

7. Monitoring and Review

Systems and guidance will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Health and Safety Officer to ensure continuous improvement to lone working and ensuring the safety of our staff and volunteers.

8. Associated Documents

Emergency Contact Information Sheet about Staff and volunteers?

Lone Working - Information Sheet

Suzie Lamplugh Trust. Personal Safety at work – lone working.

H&S Accident and Incident Report Form

H&S Accidents and Incidents – Actions for Key Volunteers

H&S Accidents and Incidents – Actions for Staff

H&S Risk Assessment Venue Checklist

Health and Safety Risk Assessment for Carer Services