



DRAFT 1.2

HSP XXX
Lone Working Policy
(incorporating the Preventing Violence Policy)

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POLICY

1. Introduction

The City of London Corporation provides a wide range of services. Some staff are required to work alone from time to time and, for some staff, working alone is common practice. Working alone is not necessarily unsafe but there are circumstances where lone working/working out of hours can increase the risk to personal safety and the potential for harm. The City Corporation recognises and acknowledges that there may be increased risks to staff that work alone.

Risks from violence and abuse can be an occupational concern for lone workers because their work may involve direct contact with a wide range of people in circumstances that could become difficult. The City Corporation is committed to tackling the issues of violence and aggression to all staff (whether they work alone or otherwise), recognising its duty of care and legal responsibilities under the law. It is essential that staff *are safe and feel safe*, so that they can undertake and perform their duties free from fear and in the full knowledge that there are strong management procedures in place to ensure that effective action can be taken, should they find themselves in a threatening environment and need help.

2. Policy statement

The City Corporation takes extremely seriously the health, safety and welfare of all staff. It recognises that violence towards staff is unacceptable and that staff have the right to be able to perform their duties without fear of abuse or violent acts. No member of staff should consider the receipt of violence or abuse to be an acceptable part of their job.

The City Corporation recognises that some staff may have the requirement to work by themselves for periods of time without close or direct supervision, in isolated work areas and out of normal working hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks that are associated with lone working, violence and aggression.

3. Policy aims

This Policy aims to:

- Increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone / remote working;
- Protect lone workers, who are defined as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision;
- Protect front line staff who, as part of their job role, visit service users/and clients in their homes and elsewhere both within the City of London and outside of the City;
- Reduce risks associated with lone working / violence and aggression to a practicable and manageable level;
- Manage and provide a safe system of works for lone workers and those who may be at potentially at risk of violence and aggression from the public, service users and clients etc.;
- Provide an emergency system for dealing with incidents where staff feel at risk, vulnerable or become injured or incapacitated;
- Ensure that appropriate action is taken where possible, against those people who harass, abuse or assault our staff;

4. Scope

The City of London Corporation takes extremely seriously the health, safety and welfare of all staff. It recognises that violence towards staff is unacceptable and that staff have the right to be able to perform their duties without fear of abuse or violent acts. No member of staff should consider the receipt of violence or abuse to be an acceptable part of their job.

This Policy also covers the prevention and management of violent and aggressive behaviour, both physical and verbal, towards employees of the City Corporation. Violence and aggression between City Corporation staff members will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

5. Definitions, terminologies and legal responsibilities

5.1 Lone Working:

Within this Policy, '*lone working*' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This situation may arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

This particularly refers to situations when staff members may find themselves working alone with clients, service users and members of public when no other staff members are present.

5.2 Work-related violence:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related violence as:

'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work'

In the context of work at the City Corporation this includes:

- Offensive behaviour
- Harassment
- Threatening behaviour and/or aggression
- Physical assault (including sexual)
- Abusive behaviour
- Damage to City Corporation property and/or personal property

5.3 The law

The City Corporation has a statutory duty under the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)** to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. The Act also places a general duty on the employee to co-operate with his/her employer to enable that duty to be complied with. The City Corporation will support and promote policies and practices which uphold this statutory duty and any statutory requirements made under the Act including the duty to undertake risk assessment (under the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**).

Employers also have a common law general duty of care towards their staff, which extends to the risk of violence at work.

While the law allows people to exercise '**reasonable force**' to defend themselves, what actually constitutes '**reasonable**' is very much open to interpretation. It will be dependent on the particular circumstances of each situation. It is the intention of this Policy and subsequent arrangements that, the emphasis for the management and resolution of any conflict should be based upon recognition of warning and danger signs, the use of verbal and non-verbal skills, customer care and diffusion or withdrawal where this is possible (**Appendix 1**).

The **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)**. Employers must notify their enforcing authority (Health and Safety Executive (HSE)) in the event of a physical assault on an employee resulting in death, specified injury, or incapacity for normal work for seven or more days. The **Human Rights Act 1998** sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law.

The **General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR)** are regulations on data protection and privacy within the European Union (European Union), and the European Economic Area. The GDPR aims primarily to give control to citizens and residents over their personal data, and to simplify the regulatory environment for international business within the EU.

6. Interactions with other policies and guidance

This Policy supports and is aligned with other City Corporation policies and guidance which offer further guidance in relation to health and safety, including but not limited to:

- Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- City Corporation Data Subjects' Rights Policy and associated Corporate GDPR Procedures and Guidance
- Disciplinary procedure
- Grievance procedure
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Security Policy
- [Risk assessment guidance](#)
- [Lone working guidance](#)
- [Personal safety in City Corporation buildings](#)
- [Managing telephone verbal abuse](#)
- [Post-incident response to violence – debriefing and supporting staff](#)
- [Accident / Incident Reporting Procedure](#)

This Lone Working and Preventing Violence Policy should be read in conjunction with other key City Corporation documents including the above.

6.1 Attention is drawn to:

This policy and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Policy and Guidance.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has previously published guidance on how to ensure that the use of so-called "*violent warning markers*" comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. Whilst no such guidance has yet been published in relation to GDPR 2018, the same underpinning principles including fairness and lawfulness still apply.

There are potential issues with data protection around holding information about an individual that you may not have disclosed. There is case law related to local authorities being prosecuted for holding information which labelled a person as potentially violent, which they subsequently discovered. There is also case law where a local authority has been prosecuted after a member of staff was assaulted because an issue was known in another department which was not shared.

Personal information should only be disclosed to third parties with the consent of the subject of that information. Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before the information is shared. This must be consistent with the duties of confidentiality, data protection, human rights and any other relevant legislation or code of practice.

Information shared should only be relevant to those who need to be aware of that information. Where a professional judgement indicates that consent cannot be obtained, a decision may be made to inform the client / service user that information will be shared, without consent. The passing of such information must be legally justifiable.

7. Personal Safety Visiting Tool (PSVT)

The PSVT is managed by the corporate Health Safety and Wellbeing team and aims to provide departments' access to a corporate register of issues they and other visiting officers have encountered at various properties. It provides a robust and clear system (with appropriate checks and balances) to enable the protection of front-line staff by appropriately sharing risk information across the City Corporation.

Access to the PSVT is restricted to officers with relevant roles who have been authorised access by their departments and granted on the condition that they comply with the Security Operating Procedure.

The information on the PSVT is for the purpose of risk planning and management when visiting a property. It does not replace a full risk assessment and attention should be paid to the (local) lone working instructions / safe system of work, and the departmental risk assessment procedure when visiting a property.

Importantly, the PSVT does not record the name(s) of individuals associated with a property or residence i.e. personal data is not recorded. The PSVT is a SharePoint enabled register of properties / residences where the Corporation has credible risk information, enabling departments to appropriately share their risk information. The PSVT is not used to record / flag matters of 'hearsay' against a property.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Town Clerk and Chief Executive

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive has overall responsibility for health and safety at the City of London Corporation and specifically under this policy must ensure:

- promotion and support for the aims of this policy;
- there are robust arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risks associated with lone working and for preventing violence;
- there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and violence and aggression, and that the Chief Officers and Summit Groups periodically review the effectiveness of these arrangements.

Day to day responsibility for lone working and preventing violence in line with this policy has been delegated, via the Town Clerk to Chief Officers/Headteachers.

8.2 Chief Officers/Headteachers

Chief Officers/Headteachers have overall strategic responsibility for ensuring that robust health and safety arrangements (including resources) for lone working and preventing violence are in place within their departments, services and operations. Where the provision of service is via a third party or partnership, they must ensure that similarly robust arrangements are in place, and that through appropriate client monitoring these are maintained.

Directors/Assistant Directors, Bursars and other Senior Officers (“Senior Officers”)

8.3 Senior Officers are responsible for:

- the operational management of health and safety in their services/localities including robust arrangements for managing lone working and preventing/controlling the risk of violence;
- promoting and supporting aims and objectives of this policy;
- ensuring that all information about clients/services users referred from other departments or agencies is appropriately shared, where there is a known risk or previous history of violence or aggression;
- ensure that there are suitable nominated persons with the service/teams to access the PSVT where necessary;
- ensuring mechanisms are in place to account for, and trace, the whereabouts of lone workers and that these systems are regularly checked;
- ensuring that robust system(s) of risk assessment and control measures are in place to protect lone workers including from violence and aggression

8.5 Managers / Line managers are responsible for:

- ensuring a safe working environment for staff working in lone /remote situations so far as reasonably practicable;
- identifying teams and individuals who could be involved in work that might put them at risk of violence or threat of violence (including but not exclusively lone working). They must make sure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out;
- ensuring that suitable controls are put into place in order to maximise the personal safety of their staff including emergency procedures to be implemented if lone / remote worker cannot be accounted for or contacted and that all systems are regularly tested;
- ensuring that all relevant staff are familiar with the contents of the policy for the management of violent or potentially violent service users, the findings of any specific violence/lone worker risk assessments and any associated local procedures within their respective department;
- ensuring appropriate supervision and monitoring is in place;
- providing employees with training and information in relation to identifying and advising on hazards, working alone and associated good practice;
- managers must offer 1:2:1 support to staff who, despite the control measures in place, have been the victims of physical assault or verbal abuse. Managers must offer the support of the employee assistance programme etc., as well as, where appropriate, supporting staff in reporting to the police
- ensuring that staff with a health condition are not at a significantly greater risk from lone working or frontline work than those without the condition.

8.6 Staff are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions;
- familiarising themselves with relevant health and safety policies and procedures, and co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working;

- reporting all incidents, difficulties or risks arising from lone working or violence, however minor they may be, to their line manager, even if they do not wish any further action to be taken. **Failure to report an incident may put others at risk;**
- ensuring that all information about service users/clients referred from departments or agencies is appropriately handled. Particularly if there is a known risk or previous history of violence or aggression;
- attending all training designed to meet the requirements of the policy and subsequent guidance;
- reporting any issues or they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone, preventing violence or the safe working arrangements;
- maintaining, as a minimum, an up to date diary of their appointments, that is accessible to others whilst they are out working alone;
- Not attempting to perform work outside the scope of agreed tasks but instead seek advice from their line manager.
- Use and maintain any equipment that has provided in accordance with any training or instruction received
- Inform their managers of any health condition, such as diabetes, that might create a greater risk for a person working alone than it would for someone working with colleagues

8.7 Health Safety and Wellbeing Team are responsible for:

- providing guidance on risk assessment;
- advising on training needs and corporate training standards;
- conducting audits and inspections;
- reviewing accidents / incidents, and assisting departments with investigations where necessary;
- ensuring the Health Safety and Wellbeing (consultative) Committee is kept advised on lone / remote working, and matters relating to preventing violence as necessary

8.8 Occupational Health are responsible for:

- providing advice around fitness to work (for example, where staff have a medical condition), and around reasonable adjustments.
- providing guidance in relation to psychological support for employees including advice in relation to talking therapies as necessary;
- Developing and implementing a post trauma support process for those involved / witnessing potential traumatic events;
- providing advice in relation to return to work following injury or ill-health;
- conducting statutory health surveillance and advising on statutory requirements in relation to risk assessments;

8.9 Comptrollers and City Solicitors are responsible for:

- providing all legal services required by the City Corporation. This includes providing legal advice in relation to potential criminal and civil litigation, as well as data protection and information management.

9. Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is a process of identifying what hazards exist in the workplace and how likely it is that they will cause harm to staff and others. It is the first step in deciding what prevention or control measures need to be taken to protect staff from harm.

Staff working alone face the same hazards in their daily work as other workers however, for lone workers, the risk of harm is often greater. Hazards facing lone workers include:

- violence and personal safety hazards – may be directly proportional to the proximity of other staff;
- manual handling – lifting and handling tasks may pose more risks to an individual member of staff;
- risk of emotional, physical or sexual harm;
- fire – it may be more difficult for an isolated worker to vacate a building when the fire alarm is activated;
- Shift / night workers

Violent or aggressive behaviour is generally more likely to occur where the work involves contact with members of the public, involves cash transactions or involves providing a front-line service. At the City Corporation this could include social workers, housing officers, security personnel, forest keepers and environmental health officers.

A risk assessment for lone working should therefore examine all the significant risks that may exist, including:

- Violence
- The member of staff falling ill and not being able to summon help
- The member of staff employee having an accident or injury (for example, manual handling) and not being able to summon help
- Fire
- High risk activities, such as working at height or working with harmful substances or in harmful environments.

Part of the risk assessment should also consider what kind of accidents and emergencies are foreseeable and what precautions, such as first aid equipment and training are necessary.

Risk assessment controls should help decide the correct level of supervision/checking.

Appendix 2 provides an example *Protecting our staff "Respect" poster*

Where it is not possible to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that a person can work alone in safety, then the work/activity is not permitted, and alternative arrangements must be implemented.

Managers are responsible for implementing/establishing risk assessments controls; including devising and implementing safe systems of work to ensure that the risks identified via the assessment procedure are eliminated, or at least adequately controlled.

There are certain activities / tasks such as working in confined spaces, work at height and use of specialist equipment such as chainsaws which must never be undertaken by lone workers.

10. Training

Managers must ensure that all “lone worker” training needs are assessed, and that staff receive the appropriate training. The most important factors to be covered in the training are:

- the risks to which the lone worker will potentially be exposed;
- what to do if something goes wrong;
- local lone working arrangements including procedures for checking in with the office/security and reporting accidents and incidents
- where relevant operating lone worker and GPS devices
- instruction on how to carry out a dynamic risk assessment;
- the emergency procedures in place and how they will operate;
- how to obtain first aid.

Where necessary, line managers are to arrange for relevant refresher training to take place at appropriate intervals.

Any training provided that relates to lone working should seek to ensure that staff are able to:

- identify specific areas of risk to their own personal safety;
- put risks into perspective;
- know how to deal with difficult, challenging and aggressive situations;
- demonstrate the necessary communication skills;
- demonstrate awareness of current safe working practices;
- understand and be able to comply with relevant policies and procedure

Training in the prevention and management of violence/aggression can provide staff with appropriate skills to reduce or diffuse potential incidents. The right level will be identified through the risk assessment process. Basic training in the principles of managing challenging behaviour should include:

- causes of violence;
- recognition of warning signs;
- relevant interpersonal skills, i.e. verbal and non-verbal communication skills;
- de-escalation techniques;
- details of local working practices and control measures; and,
- incident reporting procedures.

All staff who have the potential to be involved in an aggressive incident should receive the basic level of training. However, you must ensure the level of training provided to staff reflects the specific needs of the work activities, for example:

- staff working with persons who present a low risk of aggressive behaviour may only require basic training.
- staff working with persons/public that present a serious risk of physical aggression may also need training in physical intervention techniques, as well as basic training.

Confidence and capability are important when dealing with a potentially aggressive or violent incident. Staff will need refresher training from time to time to update their skills. The City Corporation has a specialist training provider for lone working and bespoke conflict management training which is aligned to National Occupational Training Standards.

It is the intention of this Policy and subsequent arrangements that, the emphasis for the management and resolution of any conflict should be based upon recognition of warning and danger signs, the use of verbal and non-verbal skills, customer care and diffusion or withdrawal where possible. As such it is the City Corporation's position that, where physical intervention is necessary, "break-away techniques" (when defending oneself or another) are employed whenever possible, rather than "restraint techniques" (when physically restricting a person's movement). This is a highly specialised area and requires specific training and a confirmation of competency to minimise injury or other harm.

11. Monitoring & Review

The Health Safety and Wellbeing team has lead responsibility for reviewing this policy and reporting to the Corporate Health Safety and Wellbeing and other committees as required.

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Revisions

Version	Page/ Para No	Description of change	Date Approved
00 - 01		New Policy	TBC

Appendix 1: Conflict management and reasonable force.

There may be rare occasions where actual physical assault situations are faced by staff. In these circumstances, staff may have to act to defend themselves from an assailant, which may include using what is termed as “*reasonable force*”.

It is the intention of this Policy and subsequent arrangements that, the emphasis for the management and resolution of any conflict should be based upon recognition of warning and danger signs, the use of verbal and non-verbal skills, customer care and diffusion or withdrawal where possible. As such it is the City Corporation’s position that, where physical intervention is necessary, “break-away techniques” (when defending oneself or another) are employed whenever possible, rather than “restraint techniques” (when physically restricting a person’s movement). This is a highly specialised area and requires specific training and a confirmation of competency to minimise injury or other harm.

While the law allows people to exercise “reasonable force” to defend themselves, what actually constitutes reasonable is very much open to interpretation and is dependent on the particular circumstances of each situation.

[Guidance](#) from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) notes that self-defence is governed by civil law and that a person “may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purposes of self-defence”.

The decision as to whether a member of staff has used reasonable force when defending themselves would rest with prosecutors, based upon any police investigation into the incident.

It is worth noting that the CPS guidance notes that prosecutors must exercise special care when reviewing cases involving those, other than police officers, who may have a duty to preserve order and prevent crime.

It states that “the existence of duties that require people, during the course of their employment, to engage in confrontational situations from time to time needs to be considered, along with the usual principles of reasonable force”.

The CPS guidance also refers to the ability of an individual to retreat rather than to defend themselves. It notes that “failure to retreat when attacked and when it is possible and safe to do so, is not conclusive evidence that a person was not acting in self-defence”.

Those personnel recognised as an established constabulary (e.g. Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest in Open Spaces) have some powers under Statute and byelaws. The use of these powers will be contained within local procedures and guidance.

Staff may have to account for any use of force in the courts. They will need to know the legal authority for their actions and be able to explain why these were necessary, reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. Staff training should therefore focus on the principle of using the least forceful intervention practicable in achieving the desired objective.

Appendix 2: Protecting our staff poster

Respect

Our staff are here to help you

We will treat our customers and service users with respect and dignity

We ask that our staff are treated with the same consideration

We will not tolerate verbal abuse or violent behaviour towards our staff

If you do have a concern let us know and we will do our best to put it right

Respect poster version 1.2 (November 2018)