

Introduction

Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires The Write Time to consider and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people that will be working alone.

The Law states employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all their workers. They also have responsibility for the health and safety of any contractors or self-employed people doing work for them.

These responsibilities cannot be transferred to any other person, including those people who work alone.

Employees and Contractors also have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work activities and to cooperate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

To meet these legal requirements The Write Time recognises the increased risks to lone workers and will extend existing risk assessments to cover lone workers and implement control measures as appropriate to reduce the risks to any employee that will have to work alone. This includes psychosocial risks such as stress, fatigue, and mental wellbeing, which are often exacerbated in lone working contexts. This is in line with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which require employers to assess and manage all risks to health—including mental health. Employees will be informed of any additional risks they may face as lone workers.

The Write Time recognises the fact that there are risks to employees in the provision of its services but expects that employees generally should be able to go about their duties without fear of being harmed by their work or work environment or facing violence or aggressive intimidation from the people they are working with or providing a service for.

Authority / Related legislation:

Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974

Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Purpose and Scope

'Lone Worker' is used to describe a wide variety of staff who works, either regularly or occasionally, on their own, and without access to immediate support from managers or other colleagues. It is essential that all staff feel safe and secure so that they can undertake 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 situation and need help.

Lone working can take place when: (NB. List is not exhaustive):

- a) In a fixed base.
- b) In an isolated location (e.g., gardens/grounds, basements, confined spaces).
- c) In the community.
- d) Out-of-hours working (e.g., beyond 'normal' working hours)
- e) In other premises (e.g., home working, working from a satellite base such as a partner organisation).

Assessment and Management of Risks to Lone Workers

The HSE's 2025 guidance emphasises that employers must ensure lone workers are:

- Medically fit to work alone
- Trained to handle emergencies
- Monitored through appropriate supervision and communication systems

- Consulted on the risks and control measures affecting them.

Risk assessment in the context of lone working is a careful examination of what could cause harm to employees working alone to assess whether enough sufficient precautions have been taken and whether more should be done to prevent harm. To anticipate staff at potential risk from lone working, assessments of risks to safety and health must be carried out. It is a legal requirement that where significant risks are identified, the risk assessment must be in writing.

The Write Time will continue to develop procedures and guidelines for assessment, both general and specific, based on the following

Process:

a) Identify the hazard and decide who might be harmed, and how.

This may include, for example, but not exclusively the following

Staff groups:

- Staff working in organisations where clients have known behavioural problems
- Staff working in community settings
- Staff working in reception areas
- Staff working in isolated situations / lone workers
- Staff responsible for cash handling
- Staff working "out of office hours"

Important Points to Note

At no point should any member of staff knowingly enter a situation where they are outside of the TWT premises, not supported by a colleague, along with a young person in a non-public setting? Examples of this could include a home visit to a young person. If an employee finds themselves in such a situation, they must immediately remove themselves from the situation if there is no immediate danger (for either party) related to such an action. Such situations must be reported to management immediately. If home visits are to be made, a dedicated Risk Assessment must happen before the visit takes place.

In some circumstances, it may be required for a TWT employee to escort either a pre- or post-16 learner to an appointment or meeting in the employee's business-insured car. In this situation, the following three steps/authorisations must be followed/ received:

1. Gain verbal consent from the learner that they are happy to travel with you in your business-insured car.
2. Gain verbal consent (over the telephone if necessary) from the learner's named parent/ carer/ responsible adult (if they have one [about post-16 learners only]) that they are happy for you to transport the learner in your business-insured car.
3. Gain verbal or written confirmation from your line manager that they are happy for you to proceed.

If any of points 1, 2, or 3 are not met, YOU MUST NOT PROCEED WITH THE PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION.

What to do:

Before any work is undertaken, a risk assessment must be carried out ('Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999'). This requirement does not differ for activities involving working alone. The assessment should:

- Identify any hazards (including mental health and wellbeing).
- Assess the nature and severity of the risks.

- Enable control measures to be sought and implemented to remove the risks, or
- Minimise risks so they are adequately controlled.
- This includes ensuring lone workers have access to emergency communication systems (e.g. mobile phones, lone worker devices, or check-in protocols).

When planning to introduce lone working to a role, affected employees must be consulted. This is a requirement of the 'Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996', and the 'Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977'.

What should the risk assessment address?

- Different working environments/tasks / Services will present different hazards, ranging
- This will range from High to Moderate to Low; each situation may require different levels of control measures.

Risk assessments must be specific to the lone working activity and not rely solely on generic templates (for further details regarding this, please see the company Risk Assessment Policy). They should include:

- Environmental hazards (e.g. remote or poorly lit areas)
- Task-specific risks (e.g. handling cash, working with vulnerable individuals)
- Personal factors (e.g. medical conditions, experience level)
- Communication and supervision arrangements

Communication and Monitoring

Employers must ensure lone workers can summon help in an emergency. This may include:

- Scheduled check-ins via phone or video
- Lone worker safety apps or GPS-enabled devices
- Panic alarms or man-down alerts
- Supervisor visits or remote monitoring The level of supervision should be proportionate to the risk level of the task

Training and Support

Where appropriate, lone workers should receive training on:

- Risk awareness and emergency procedures
- Conflict de-escalation and personal safety
- Mental health awareness and support resources training should be refreshed regularly and tailored to the specific risks of the role.

What to do when meeting a young person off-site

It is the nature of our business that mentors and other professionals within the company may at times need to meet young people out in the community. This may be due to a wide spectrum of circumstances including client childcare, work or domestic obligations, etc. When a TWT employee is to meet a young person off-site, the following safeguards must be put in place by the organiser of the meeting:

1. Check with your line manager that they will be on-site and available during your proposed meeting.
2. Email a calendar invite to your line manager with the following information: a) the start and end times of your meeting; b) the full name of the young person that you will be meeting; c) the exact location of your scheduled meeting.

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3. If any of point 2's details are to change, an updated calendar invite must be sent to your line manager.

Please note that if your line manager becomes unavailable during the agreed calendar times that you have sent them, it is the line manager's responsibility to pass over responsibility to either a) another TWT manager; or b) their line manager. The employee must inform their line manager upon completion of the meeting or advise if the meeting is due to overrunning.