

**SILVA CARE**

**LONE WORKING POLICY**

**Policy Statement**

Silva Care believes that lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees.

The organization understands lone workers to be those who work without close or direct supervision. This includes most domiciliary care staff in community outreach and within client’s homes. It also includes managers and office staff home working and attending external meetings.

In this context the organization understands its duty as an employer under:

* the Health and safety at Work etc Act 1974;
* the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Silva care will assess in consultation with its employees any risks to lone workers, take steps to avoid or control those risks where necessary. The organization recognizes that staff working alone in potentially isolated conditions have no immediate backup or support and so are at a greater risk of injury through aggression or violence directed towards them from service users, relatives, carers or the general public. The organization also recognizes that staff working alone need to rely on their own judgment and initiative and may be at a greater risk of making mistakes or errors.

Silva Care believes that training is particularly important for lone workers and research shows that adequate training is the single most critical factor in avoiding panic reactions in unusual situations. In particular lone workers need to be deemed competent to work alone, to be sufficiently experienced (not to include young workers), of good health and to understand the risks and precautions needed fully. Competency includes to understand knowledge and skill limitations and not to work outside of them. The organisation understands its duty as an employer to ensure employees are competent to deal not only with the day-to-day facets of their work but with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of their training.

**Lone Worker Supervision and Monitoring**

Silva Care believes that supervision helps to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

**Lone Worker Security arrangements**

When a member of staff visits a service user in their own home he or she may be at risk through health and safety hazards in and around service users’ homes and of physical or verbal assaults and hostility from service users, relatives and the general public. Recent evidence suggests that such incidents may be on the increase and home visiting protocols should take this into account, particularly in high risk areas such as high crime rate areas.

In this organization:

* the assessment of all new referrals will include if deemed necessary a risk assessment which includes threats from health and safety hazards and from aggression and violence and other threats to lone working
* Silva care work inline and use the ‘Health and safety guidance on the risks of lone working’ as produced by the HSE. All managers have a copy and consult when assessing, monitoring and reviewing all lone working.
* lone workers must carry mobile phones so that they can summon help quickly. All phones should be adequately charged and hold the emergency number for their area. Some environments will require the use of panic alarms as deemed in risk assessment as additional control measures.
* lone workers should call in at regular intervals to report that they are safe, including at the end of a shift. Arrangements can vary with the base or manager contacting the employee at regular intervals, but staff must be made aware of who is responsible.
* each managed area where lone working occurs will have log and keep details of all home visits as well as having access to the names, addresses and telephone numbers of service users
* administration staff will have specific risk assessments in regards to Lone working in their area, including if lone working is permitted or not.
* where there are real dangers to lone workers a safe system of work or positive behavioural plan/protocol must be in place.
* in a situation where a lone worker feels under immediate threat to their physical or emotional safety and wellbeing, they should if appropriate (not to include ill health) contact the police directly or inform the duty manager/senior who should contact the police for them; the administrator should be careful to take all appropriate information from the lone worker, such as location and telephone number, and to pass this on to the police, after the incident the lone worker should fill in an incident form.

It is strongly advised that if staff use their own cars they carry the absolute minimum amount of valuables and that they always park their car in a well-lit, public place if at all possible. Thefts from cars are a major area of concern and muggings of care staff are a real threat, especially in high crime areas. If on foot then care staff should avoid dark, unlit, isolated routes to work.

**Training**

All staff should read this policy and be trained in lone working. Lone working training will be included in the induction training for all new staff and in-house training sessions on keeping yourself safe should be conducted at least annually and all relevant staff should attend. As part of the induction process supervisors must satisfy themselves that each member of staff is competent and safe to work alone and that they are clear about how to act in ways that will maximise their own safety and about what to do in an emergency situation.

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| Date Reviewed: | Signature | Next Renewal Date |
| 06/08/2014 | Sharon Moore | 06/08/2015 |
| 06/08/2015 | Sharon Moore | 06/08/2016 |
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