



Epic Partners Lone Working Policy

Introduction

EPIC Partners are committed to ensuring a safe system of work for employees required to work alone. This is a relatively rare occurrence and this document aims to give clear instructions and guidance to staff, in order to minimise risks, if this should occur. Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are made aware of the guidelines (Appendix I to this document) and control measures are in place if lone working is carried out. Where control measures are implemented but the risk remains at an unacceptable level, it may be necessary to ensure that staff work in pairs. If this is not possible, activities may need to be cancelled. Emergency procedures must be established in accordance with foreseeable events as identified in the risk assessment; all staff should be aware of these. Epic staff have recourse to personal mobile phones to ensure that they can communicate with colleagues in potentially hazardous situations.

Key definitions

Lone Worker:

Workers who work by themselves without close or direct supervision and include the following:

- When only one person is present on the premises at a given time
- Employees who work outside normal office hours
- Mobile workers working away from their fixed base
- Project Workers, for example: Community Delivery Workers, Outreach and Community Support Workers

Roles and Responsibilities

Managers:

- Take responsibility for ensuring a suitable and sufficient assessment of risk is made for all staff who may be engaged in lone working.

Employees:

- Take responsibility for their own safety, as well as that of the people they are working with
- Co-operate with the organisation in meeting its legal obligations.

Legal Requirements/Risks

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone. However, the broad duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, the Organisation has a duty to assess the risks to lone workers and to take necessary steps to avoid or control the risk.

Cross References

- EPIC Partners Health and Safety Policy and procedures
- EPIC Partners Safeguarding Policy
- Existing Risk Assessments and/or other information

Risk Assessments

Managers have responsibility for ensuring suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out and that adequate control measures are in place before lone working is carried out.

Where controls measures are implemented but the risk remains at an unacceptable level, it may be necessary to implement further measures or find an alternative solution, which may include cancelling an activity.

When carrying out risk assessments the following questions should be considered. This list is not exhaustive; other questions may also need to be raised and answered when evaluating the risk(s).

- Does the workplace present a special risk to lone workers?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone? Consider both routine work and emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens.
- Is training required to ensure competency in safety matters?
- What arrangements are in place for ensuring the security and safety of lone workers who are required to work out of hours?

Precautionary and emergency measures

Every effort must be made to avoid staff working alone. However, in the event of this happening, the following emergency procedures have been put in place. These measures must be discussed and agreed by all staff members.

All staff working alone should contact their Team Manager or an agreed contact to discuss the situation before the activity begins. They should also text after the activity ends, to confirm that there have been no problems. In the event of an emergency, or if a staff member feels themselves to be at risk, an emergency code word, agreed by all staff, should be sent to the contact, as above.

This policy is reviewed and updated by Trustees every three years.

Appendix I:

Guidance for EPIC staff– your personal safety

- Take responsibility for your own safety
- If working alone in the office, ensure the office is secure and that a colleague or other person is aware of your whereabouts.
- If working alone in the office, either at the beginning or end of the day, this should be entered into your calendar, which is shared with colleagues.
- If you identify a potentially dangerous situation, assess possible ways in which you can remove yourself and contact a designated staff member, as indicated in the policy
- If in a person's home or enclosed space, always remain near an exit door
- Avoid confrontation. Do all you can to defuse a potentially violent situation
- When out of the office, be aware of the precautionary and emergency measures in this policy and inform a colleague or others of your whereabouts. If your plans change, make sure others are aware.
- Know where you are going and assess the safest way to get there
- Be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards
- Avoid wearing a personal stereo or CD player, which may reduce awareness of your surroundings
- Walk facing the traffic
- If you think you are being followed, cross the road. If they continue to follow you, walk quickly to the nearest place with people. Follow the emergency procedures from this policy and call the police if necessary

Guidance for EPIC staff – working safely in a client's home

- Staff should only work in a family home with the explicit agreement of the Team Manager and for a specific work-related purpose
- Expectations should be set prior to the visit, including time boundaries and anticipated outcomes
- Ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been undertaken and that adequate control measures are in place
- Make sure at least one colleague knows your whereabouts
- Always keep the focus of the visit in mind and behave respectfully

- Do not enter the home at all if the appropriate person is not present. In some circumstances, you should not enter the home if other people are present
- Study your surroundings; make sure you know where the exits are
- If you feel uncomfortable, request that dogs or other animals be put into another room
- Be alert before you sit down – look for anything hazardous, for example hypodermic needles, knives and or other sharp objects, etc
- If at any time you feel threatened or at risk, leave immediately and follow the emergency procedures outlined in this policy
- Refer any incident, however minor it may seem, to your Line Manager.

NEVER PUT YOURSELF AT RISK