



LONE WORKING POLICY

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1. Purpose and Scope

Small Steps shall prevent avoidable harm to staff and children when an employee works without immediate colleague support. Lone working includes home visits, isolated rooms, opening or closing a site, after hours work and travel between assignments. Being alone with a child is not automatically prohibited, but requires approved safeguarding and safety controls. Lone working must never be used where the assessed task needs two or more competent staff.

2. Approval and Risk Assessment

The line manager must approve lone working before it starts and record the task, location, time, named worker, risk assessment, control measures and monitoring contact. Assess the environment, child's needs, behaviour or medical risks, other persons present, travel, communication coverage, emergency access and the worker's competence and health needs. Reassess when circumstances change and at least annually.

Do not approve a task with uncontrolled risk of violence, a foreseeable need for two person physical support, hazardous manual handling or an emergency that one worker cannot safely manage. A parent or untrained adult is not a substitute for a second competent employee where the risk assessment requires one. Staff may stop, leave or decline an unsafe assignment without retaliation and must notify the manager as soon as safe.

3. Home Visits and One to One Sessions

- Confirm the appointment, address, authorised caregiver and contact details in advance. For home sessions, require a responsible adult to remain on the premises and be reachable throughout. If this condition is not met, do not start or continue the visit without a safe arrangement approved by the manager.
- Identify exits and assess conditions on arrival. Leave if behaviour, animals, intoxication, unsafe surroundings or another concern makes the visit unsafe. Do not enter a location that differs materially from the approved plan without reassessment.
- Use an appropriate therapy space. Avoid bedrooms and private areas unless essential to an approved care plan with specific safeguards. Do not lock yourself in with a child. Protect privacy while maintaining visibility, accessibility or agreed checks appropriate to the activity.
- Keep professional boundaries. Do not provide unauthorised intimate care, restraint, transport or treatment. Intimate care and physical intervention require separate plans, training and safeguarding controls; lone working approval is not permission for them.

4. Preparation and Communication

Carry a charged phone, emergency numbers, identification and any required safety equipment. Operations must have the itinerary and a named monitoring contact with a backup. Agree check in times before starting; on arrival, at departure and at least every 60 minutes for extended lone work, or more frequently if risk requires. For short visits, arrival and departure checks are mandatory. The monitor must remain available for the assignment and actively track checks.

Lone Working Escalation and Emergency Response

5. Missed check in procedure

If a check is more than ten minutes overdue, the monitoring contact shall call the worker immediately. If there is no response, try the agreed alternative contact and notify the line manager or backup without delay. By 15 minutes overdue, if safety remains unconfirmed, the manager shall escalate using the documented plan, including contacting site security or an appropriate caregiver where safe and necessary, and emergency services if the worker may be at risk.

Do not wait for these time thresholds where there is a distress message, threat, medical concern or other sign of immediate danger: call emergency services at once. No worker shall be sent alone to investigate a potentially dangerous situation. Record attempts, decisions and outcomes. A missed check must be closed only after the worker's safety is confirmed.

6. Emergencies and Changes

In immediate danger, move to safety if possible and call Police 999. For a medical emergency call Ambulance 998. Provide the exact address and known access details, then notify the manager when safe. Staff must not place themselves at further risk to protect equipment or finish a session.

When a child is present, use the child's emergency plan and arrange a safe handover to an authorised responsible adult or emergency responders. Do not leave a child alone; if an immediate threat prevents safe handover, tell emergency services and the manager promptly so protection can be arranged.

Notify the monitor of delays, changes of location, loss of phone signal or early termination. Where reliable communication or monitoring fails, stop lone work and move to an approved safe arrangement. Use the approved phone and records only while safely parked during travel. Fatigue, illness or road conditions that affect safe travel must be escalated.

7. Site Opening Closing and Follow Up

Opening and closing staff shall follow the site security checklist, confirm emergency access and avoid admitting unverified persons. Out of hours child sessions require specific approval and safeguarding cover. Working in an isolated room at a school requires access to an identified colleague, reception or security contact; staff must not assume help will be available.

Report accidents, near misses, threatening behaviour and safeguarding concerns immediately reported to the DSL / DDSL. Make a factual record before the end of the working day where practicable. Operations shall review the incident, support the employee and revise controls before further lone work. Safeguarding concerns go to the DDSL; work injuries must also follow statutory reporting arrangements.

Managers shall train staff and monitors before authorising lone work, review the active visit log daily and check a sample of risk assessments at least once per term. Failure to follow approved controls may lead to a fair investigation and lawful disciplinary action. Safety takes priority over completing an assignment.

Applicable Framework and Official Reference

This is a Company safety procedure supporting employer and employee duties under Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021, as amended, and applicable MOHRE health and safety requirements. The check in and escalation times above are Small Steps operational requirements, not statutory time limits. Read with the Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Home Visit and Incident Reporting procedures.

UAE Government workplace health and safety guidance
<https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/jobs/health-and-safety-at-workplace>

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