



LONE WORKER POLICY

The following policy has been agreed by the Steering Group, the Representatives and volunteers of the Four Rivers Dementia Alliance (4RDA) and will need to be reviewed in January 2026.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the 4RDA lone worker risk assessment.

Lone workers are defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as employees.

“Who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.”

Lone workers do NOT have the benefit of a colleague to spot potential hazards or assist in the event of an incident. People who work alone face the same hazards in their daily work as other workers, however, for lone workers the risk of harm is often higher if there is no-one there to help if something goes wrong or if the person suffers a sudden illness. A lone worker needs to be more aware and alert to recognise and avoid danger and know how to get help quickly.

4RDA – Lone Worker Policy

4RDA recognises the risk of lone working and has developed this policy to ensure the safety of all staff and volunteers when working alone in the community. The aim of this policy is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of 4RDA and its staff and volunteers, to fulfil its legal obligations and to take action to minimise the risks of lone working. The policy also aims to increase staff/volunteer awareness of safety issues related to lone working and to ensure that all lone working is assessed in a systematic and consistent manner.

This guidance document outlines some of the potential hazards associated with lone working, defines roles and responsibilities, and describes the practical steps that can be taken to minimise any risks and to comply with legislation.

It is not intended to stop or place rigid restrictions on lone working but rather to provide guidance to enable it to happen safely.

Statement of Policy.

4RDA recognises that staff and volunteers are required to work by themselves in the community without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated areas or during out of office hours. The organisation acknowledges that these workers are potentially at risk and is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its staff and volunteers and will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff and volunteers who work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety.

Lone working procedures have been developed and set out within this policy, and these should be always followed and adhered to, prior to or when working alone. It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the definition of a Lone Worker

The HSE states that:

“As an employer, you must manage any health and safety risks before people can work alone. This applies to anyone contracted to work for you, including self-employed people.”

Lone working can expose staff and volunteers to certain hazards. It is the intention of 4RDA to remove the risks from these hazards where it is reasonably practicable to do so or, where complete elimination is not possible, to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Some of the hazards which lone workers may face include:

- Violence and assault: Lone workers are less able to call for assistance. It is essential that lone workers remain alert throughout the work that they are undertaking and ensure that they are aware of entrances/exits in the event of an emergency. Lone workers should be prepared and fully briefed having concluded any necessary risk assessments ahead of the work to be conducted.
- A dynamic risk assessment should be undertaken on arrival at an appointment by the staff member/volunteer and constantly throughout the work conducted whereby the environment and situation are checked and mentally monitored to ensure that the original risk assessment remains valid. If the risk increases during this process and the belief is the change makes the risk unmanageable then the lone worker should remove themselves from the situation ensuring the matter is appropriately escalated and reported once a place of safety has been reached.

- On entering the premises for where the work will be carried out, lone workers should familiarise themselves with access/egress points and door locks, in case they need to make an emergency exit, and ensure they have a means of contacting their buddy in the event of an issue – e.g. keep mobile phone on and check the signal.
- Lone workers should not position themselves in a corner or location where it may be difficult to escape.
- Fire (Lone workers are less likely to be aware of a fire until they themselves see or smell it, unable to call for assistance if they get into trouble). Under Fire Regulations employers must:
 - Assess the risks from fire.
 - Check that workers know what to do if there is a fire.
 - In addition, lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit for treating minor injuries.
- Driving: Some lone workers could spend periods driving alone. To reduce the risk of a break-down in an isolated area and the obvious associated dangers it is vital that any vehicles used for work purposes are properly maintained.

Also:

- Lone workers should ensure the vehicle has adequate fuel for the journey and ensure their vehicle is in good condition, maintained and unlikely to break down.
- They should plan sufficient time for the journey to avoid taking unnecessary risks.
- Secure the vehicle on leaving it and ensure belongings are not on show.
- Lone workers should always hold vehicle keys in their hand when leaving premises to aid quick entry into the vehicle.
- Park where possible in well-lit areas.
- When driving alone, after dark, do not stop to help anyone who may appear to be in distress. Stop in a safe place and contact the emergency services. If followed or in doubt, drive to the nearest police station or well lit, populated building such as a petrol station to request assistance.
- In case of breakdown, lone workers should contact their 'buddy' immediately. If using a mobile phone and the signal is poor, or there is no signal at all, they should put their hazard lights on. If they need to leave the vehicle to raise assistance, the vehicle should be locked and they should remain visible to passing traffic.
- Remember to charge and take their mobile phone with them.
- Ensure that they have the correct address for the organisation that they intend to visit.
- Report to their buddy after the appointment.
- Accidents or emergencies arising out of their work and lack of immediate access to first aid equipment or assistance.

- Sudden illness.
- Inadequate provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities.
- People who work alone could have a potential problem with isolation. To reduce this risk arrangements should be made for these workers to stay connected and up to date through such events as regular meetings, etc.

What Legislation Applies to Lone Workers?

There is no specific law for lone workers in the UK but general health and safety legislation applies to anyone working alone, in any environment. The HSE states that: “It will often be safe to work alone. However, the law requires you to think about and deal with any health and safety risks before people are allowed to do so.”

In the UK, the main pieces of health and safety legislation to consider are:

1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA 1974)

This is the foundation for workplace health and safety in the UK. It establishes the general duty of care for employers to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all employees, including those who work alone. This extends to contractors and self-employed people doing work for a business/organisation. It requires employers to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety but does not give specific requirements.

2. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR 1999)

This legislation supports the HSWA 1974 by providing more specific requirements for managing health and safety in the workplace. **Employers have a legal duty to conduct risk assessments** to identify hazards, implement control measures to reduce risks, and provide adequate information, instruction, and training to employees, particularly lone workers, to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Businesses with more than five employees have a legal obligation to formally document their risk assessments and steps taken to mitigate the risks identified.

3. The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 (CMCHA 2007)

This legislation holds organisations accountable for a worker’s death due to health and safety failings. If a lone worker fatality occurs due to a **serious** failure to manage health and safety for lone workers, the organisation can be found guilty of corporate manslaughter.

4. The Health & Safety Offences Act 2008 (HSOA 2008)

This legislation does not change the requirements for lone workers but strengthens the consequences for employers who fail to comply with existing health and safety legislation. This includes increasing the financial penalties on organisations failing to

fulfil their duty of care and introducing imprisonment as a penalty for company directors and managers.

4RDA Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of 4RDA to ensure:

- The Lone Worker Policy is brought to the attention of new members of staff/volunteers and reiterated to them when needed.
- That risk assessments for lone working are conducted to mitigate the risks associated with lone working and to review them regularly. When assessing levels of risk, it is important to consult all those who may be involved in the activity/task when undertaking a risk assessment. Perception of risk may vary from individual to individual.
- To implement any controls, procedures or safe systems of work are put in place to ensure staff who work alone are safe.
- To identify and record assessment and safety measures.
- To have a reporting of accidents, incidents and near misses associated with lone working system in place.
- Investigate regarding any incident involving a lone worker and make recommendations to prevent a reoccurrence.
- Provide facilities for first aid under Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations.
- Provide Welfare provisions under the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations.
- To report certain accidents suffered by staff/volunteers, including violent incidents, under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations – RIDDOR.

Individuals' Responsibilities:

All lone workers have a responsibility to:

- Read and comply with the Lone Worker Policy and follow safe working procedures as set out in the policy and lone worker risk assessment.
- Avoid situations with significant risk, as far as is possible and take care of their own and other people's safety.
- Report any incidents or accidents that occur because of lone working as soon as possible in line with 4RDA's incident reporting procedures.
- Report any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone to the 4RDA chair.

Buddying

If the lone worker is returning home after appointments and not to a designated office base, a family member or friend may be nominated as their buddy-a person for them to contact before and after the lone working visit- advise their buddy of the appointment/visit/event they are attending and what time they would expect to return home. Notification could take the form of a brief phone call or mobile phone text to confirm that they have returned from their visit.

If no contact has been made after a few hours of the end of the visit and contact cannot be made with the individual, the buddy would be responsible for raising the alarm.