



# **Lone Working Policy**

**May 2021**

## **Introduction**

Spire View Housing Association (SVHA) aims to limit lone working where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is necessary, we will take all reasonable steps, in accordance with our duty of care towards you to make sure you are safe while you work for us.

In line with our duty of care, you should not be put at any greater risk if you are lone working compared to someone who is not. We have a duty to assess lone working risks and take any reasonable, practical measures to reduce and, eliminate these as much as we can. This will be done via our risk assessment process. You are expected to co-operate and follow these measures, this will assist in keeping you safe.

## **Scope of Policy**

This policy and the procedures it contains applies to all employees, managers, governing body members, contractors, volunteers and workers.

## **Legislation**

Although there is no single piece of legislation that explicitly applies to lone workers, the following apply indirectly, these are:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- The Management of Health at Work Regulations 1999,
- Protection from Harassment 1997

## **Definition of a Lone Worker**

There are many definitions of a lone worker for our own purposes, we will use the HSE definition, describing a lone worker as someone who:

“works by themselves without close or direct supervision”.

Within Spire View Housing Association, a lone worker is likely to include:

- Working outside normal office hours, even on a one-off basis.
- Working with the public/service users on your own or away from colleagues (out of sight or earshot).
- Working on your own, in an office, at home or some other location.
- Working in other’s homes or premises.
- If you travel alone as part of your job (this does not include commuting).
- Working in the reception area alone, and isolated from the rest of the organisation.
- Working in the office (or community hub) but, away from colleagues.
- Any other situation identified through the risk assessment process.

The above list is not exhaustive

## **Employer Responsibilities**

As your employer, we have a responsibility to make sure you are safe while you work for us and this includes any time you are lone working.

To do this, we will:

- 1) Make sure risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly or as and when required.
- 2) Provide procedures for working safely based on the risks identified in the risk assessment.
- 3) Make sure you are provided with appropriate and relevant training to understand our procedures.
- 4) Have reporting systems in place to record, investigate and review any near misses and incidents.
- 5) Report near misses/incidents on behalf of you if you are unable to do this.
- 6) Review near misses/incidents, this will include a review of the risk assessment and working procedures.
- 7) Inform HSE using RIDDOR procedures (if required).
- 8) Make sure you have appropriate supervision.
- 9) Provide you with appropriate aftercare and support (in the event of any incident).
- 10) Make sure you are issued with a copy of this policy.
- 11) Review this policy and update it as is appropriate
- 12) Involve you when considering potential risks and control measures.

## **Employee Responsibilities**

You also have responsibilities, which we expect you to fulfil. These are as follows:

- 1) Act responsibly in your work with us at all times.
- 2) Not intentionally provoke or inflame a potentially aggressive situation.
- 3) Not knowingly put yourself at risk.
- 4) Remove yourself from any situation you do not feel comfortable and/or safe in.
- 5) Report all incidents and near misses, by following our reporting procedures.
- 6) Complete the near miss/incident report form, (if you are able to do so).
- 7) Attend training when this is provided.
- 8) Take part in the formal risk assessment process.
- 9) Carry out an informal/dynamic risk assessment as and when necessary.
- 10) Know, understand and follow this policy and the procedures.
- 11) Abide by our lone working procedures and speak to your line manager if you are unsure of anything.
- 12) Ensure your emergency contact person is provided with your line managers' contact details in line with organisation procedure.

## **Training**

All staff will be trained in line with our lone working procedures to make sure they are aware of the potential risks and our own procedures to reduce and eliminate these

## **Managing Risks**

The purpose of risk management is to identify, eliminate, reduce, and control risks.

It is recognised that lone working can present increased risks to staff. It is therefore the responsibility of both of us to manage these.

In practice this means that we will carry out lone working risk assessments which will identify any potential risks. We will also consider the following during the exercise:

- 1) the remoteness of the workplace;
- 2) potential communication problems;
- 3) the likelihood of a criminal attack;
- 4) potential for verbal and physical abuse;
- 5) consideration of lone workers' potential feelings of isolation, stress and depression;
- 6) whether or not all equipment, materials, etc can be handled safely by one person;
- 7) whether or not the person is medically fit and suitable to work alone;
- 8) how the lone worker will be supervised;
- 9) how the lone worker will obtain help in an emergency such as an assault, vehicle breakdown, accident or fire;
- 10) whether or not there is adequate first-aid cover.

### **In conducting the lone working risk assessment we will:**

- 11) give consideration to the additional risks to expectant mothers and young persons;
- 12) where practical have the person that owns the risk conduct the risk assessment, where this is not possible or practical they will as a minimum be involved in the process and in the development of safe working methods;
- 13) maintain a file of all lone working assessments;
- 14) Make sure those working alone are provided with adequate information, instruction, and training to understand the hazards and risks and the safe working procedures associated with working alone.

A formal risk assessment will take place prior to all known lone working situations however, it is important that you are aware and are comfortable to undertake a dynamic risk assessment in any lone worker situation you may find yourself in. If you feel you require guidance on this, please speak to your line manager.

## **Near Miss and Incident Reporting**

It is vital that you report any near miss situations or actual incidents as soon as it has occurred to your line manager. If it is not possible to report immediately, it must be reported within 12 hours of occurring. Your line manager will make sure the appropriate steps are taken to share this information with the organisation and any governing bodies, if required, and that the risk assessment is updated if appropriate.

All near miss and incident information must be reported to the Health and Safety Administrator, along with a near miss and an incident form completed. The form is available from the Health and Safety administrator or hard copies can be located beside the accident report book in the Association's 'Stationery Area'.

Once you have reported the incident to your line manager the following will happen:

- Your line manager will have an informal, private discussion with you and discuss any support where appropriate.
- Your submitted near miss/incident form will be reviewed by your line manager. If it is not possible for you to complete this, your line manager will complete this with input from you.
- Your line manager will share any appropriate information with the organisation and any governing bodies, if required, and inform you if the risk assessment should be reviewed.
- A review of the control measures will take place.
- Any updated information will be issued to you.

## **Lone Working Procedure**

Where lone working is necessary you will:

- follow our safe working arrangements which are as follows:
  - make reasonable steps to ensure your own safety;
  - remove yourself from any situation you feel unsafe or uncomfortable and move to a place you feel safe and report to your line manager;
  - Inform your line manager/assessor of any near misses, incidents or safety concerns;
  - Make sure your line manager or a colleague is aware of where you are and how long you plan to be.
  - Check in with the office regularly to provide an update.
  - make sure you know, have read and understood the lone working risk assessments and all the control measures in place;
  - make sure arrangements are in place so that someone else is aware of your whereabouts at all times.

## **General Data Protection Regulations**

Spire View Housing Association will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our Privacy Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Spire View Housing Associations Employee Privacy Notice.

## **Review of Policy**

This policy and the procedures it contains will be reviewed at least every 3 years.