

LONE WORKING POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy describes how ARK Housing Association Ltd (ARK) will fulfil its responsibilities, as an employer, under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, with regard to lone working.
- 1.2 ARK has a responsibility to maintain safe working arrangements for its employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act and to carry out risk assessments of the hazards to which employees are exposed, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different than organising safety for other employees. It will often be safe to work alone, however the law requires employers to think about and deal with any health and safety risks before people are allowed to do so.

- 1.3 This policy has the following sections:

Part One – Policy

Part Two – Guidance note for staff

Part Three – Lone worker risk assessments – sample & form

Part One – Policy

- Section 1 - Introduction
- Section 2 - Definition
- Section 3 - Legal requirements
- Section 4 - Safe working arrangements for lone workers
- Section 5 - Roles, responsibilities and duties
- Section 6 - Implementation and review

- 1.4 This policy complies with the Scottish Housing Regulator Standards of Governance and Financial Management 5.3 and 5.4

2.0 DEFINITION – What is a Lone Worker

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define workers as “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”. Most employees will work on their own at some point, even if it is being the first or last person in the office.

2.2 In producing this policy reference has been made to guidance from Employers in Housing, the Lone Working Risk Assessment, the HSE Five Steps to Risk Assessment and the HSE website - Industry Guidance on Lone Working (indg73) as well as to current legislation.

3.0 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 There is no general legal prohibition on working alone, and the broad duties of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply. These regulations require ARK to identify hazards at work, assess the risks involved and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

3.2 ARK has a commitment to communicate and consult with our employees and their representatives to ensure that all relevant hazards have been identified and appropriate controls implemented.

4.0 SAFE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR LONE WORKERS

4.1 ARK recognises that establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees. Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. However, this may require extra risk-control measures.

4.2 Risk Assessments

A risk assessment should be carried out to assess the level of risk involved with lone working and to any person who may be affected by their work, i.e. the need for a second person to assist with a task or in a rescue role.

When carrying out the risk assessment, two main questions should be considered:

i) Can the work be done safely by a single person?

The Manager should be able to demonstrate that a lone worker is not exposed to extra risk compared to a group of employees doing the same job.

ii) What arrangements are required to ensure the lone worker is at no more risk than employees working together?

Various areas need to be considered to answer this question:

Assessment of	Considerations
Working in a remote location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often or when should the worker report in by telephone. ▪ How long should the work take. ▪ Is there a history of violence and aggression at the work location. ▪ Is there adequate rest, hygiene, refreshment, welfare and first aid facilities. ▪ How long would it take for assistance to get to them in an emergency.
Condition of the work place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there adequate lighting, heating, ventilation. ▪ Are there fire precautions in place. ▪ Is there a safe means of entry and exit to the workplace.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there a means of two-way communication, e.g. telephone, mobile phone. ▪ Does the worker have a personal alarm or can they be located accurately if assistance is required.
Preventing Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there a risk of violence and aggression from third parties. ▪ Is a personal alarm required. ▪ Have Managers assessed employees' individual circumstances for keeping safe (i.e. women, pregnant workers, young people, disabled, older employees etc.). Extra Duty of Care assessments to be completed. .
Medical suitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the job impose any demands on the lone worker's physical or mental stamina. ▪ Does the lone worker suffer from any illness that might increase the risks of the job.
Information, training and supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has there been sufficient training and information provided to the lone worker to enable them to identify hazards and take appropriate action to avoid them. ▪ Are employees competent to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, e.g. when to stop work and seek advice from a Manager and how to handle aggression. ▪ How will the lone worker be supervised.
Manual Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can all equipment/substances/workload involved be safely handled by one person.
Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Response to Fire, Equipment Failure, illness and accidents.

To assess workplace risks, the Health & Safety Executive's 5 step rule should always be followed.

- Step 1 Look for the hazards
- Step 2 Decide who might be harmed and how
- Step 3 Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done.
- Step 4 Record your findings
- Step 5 Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

For further information see Part 3 of this policy.

5.0 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

5.1 Directors & Senior Managers

Directors and Senior Managers should ensure that:

- there is a procedure for identifying and risk assessing all work tasks which involve lone working;

- where lone working cannot be prevented, there is a procedure for the introduction and continual use of suitable precautions, which should be sufficient to reduce employee exposure to the risks involved;
- there are suitable arrangements for providing information and training on the hazards and risks from lone working to all relevant employees, including refresher training at suitable intervals;
- there are suitable procedures for routine checks to ensure that workplace precautions are being applied, particularly those relying on direct action by individual employees.

5.2 ARK Managers

ARK Managers are responsible for the implementation and operation of this policy in respect of all premises within their remit. ARK Managers should ensure that:

- all employees they line manage are informed of the detail of this section of the Health and Safety manual;
- the requirements of this section of the Health and Safety manual are complied with by employees;
- any breaches of these requirements are handled in accordance with HR policies;
- all risk assessments are completed and available for employees to view;
- any procedures developed to implement this policy are followed;
- risk assessments are reviewed at least annually or following a significant change in the workplace or the service users' needs.

5.3 Employees

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they are complying with the health and safety procedures and requirements appropriate to their job. To achieve this, with relation to lone working, employees should:

- avoid unnecessary lone working, where possible;
- ensure they comply with all procedures relating to lone working;
- attend any Health and Safety training arranged for them and follow all procedures they have been trained in;
- consult their ARK Manager with any queries or concerns they may have about their work tasks.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

6.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this policy, and the procedures that support it, are followed by all employees and Board Members.

6.2 The Chief Executive will ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every three years, and that any amendments required are submitted to the Board of Management for approval.

Approved by Senior Leadership Team: February 2017

Approved by the ARK Board of Management: March 2017

Next review due by: February 2020

Complies with the Scottish Housing Regulator Standards of Governance and Financial Management 5.3 and 5.4