CoomberSewell Enterprises Lone Worker Policy

1. Policy Statement

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual associate and CoomberSewell Enterprises have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

1. Purpose

This policy is designed to alert the individual to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks.

1. Scope: This policy applies to all who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.
2. Context: Lone workers face the same risks as anyone else, as well as those directly related to their work. Within CoomberSewell Enterprises, support for lone workers is essential part, and these principles apply:
   * a commitment to supporting lone worker both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
   * recognising and reducing risk
   * a commitment to the provision of appropriate support for the individual in a clear understanding of responsibilities
   * the priority placed on the safety of the individual over property

* a commitment to providing appropriate training for staff
* Associates are not employees of CoomberSewell Enterprises and are expected to carry their own mobile phones and any other safety equipment they deem appropriate.

1. Definitions: A lone worker is a person who performs an activity that is carried out in isolation from other workers without close or direct supervision. Such the individual may be exposed to risk because there is no-one to assist them and so a risk assessment may be required.
2. Mandatory Procedures: Personal Safety
   * The individual must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
   * The individual should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
   * Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with CoomberSewell Enterprises. This can take the form of a short email or messenger message, but must be recorded.
   * Lone workers must inform one of the CoomberSewell Enterprises partners when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes indicating whether going on to another meeting or returning to base/home.
   * If a lone worker does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate.

* Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the the individual. Issues to take into account include:
* staffing levels and availability
* the identified risks
* measures in place to reduce those risks
* Where people work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, the other partner must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.
* People working in the community should ensure they have their mobile phones with them; they are responsible for checking that it is charged and in working.

Assessment of risk

* In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:
* the environment – location, security, access
* the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances
* the individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk history – any previous incidents in similar situations
* any other special circumstances
* All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary
* Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending an accompanying worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.
* While resource implications cannot be ignored, safety must be the prime concern.

Planning

* All people involved should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.
* Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place.
* All people involved are together responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting them.

Reporting

* Should an incident occur, the reporting and de-briefing should be made to the CoomberSewell Enterprises the individual immediately, with written records and an action plan made, including whether charges should be pressed.
* One of the CoomberSewell Enterprises Partners should debrief in the first instance.

Lone worker devices

* Employees are responsible for keeping their devices in good working order, reporting any problems with devices and for ensuring that device batteries are fully charged before working alone.

1. Known Risks and Procedures:

Dealing with Animals:

* If there is a known problem with animals at a particular address or location, the occupants should be contacted and requested to remove or secure the animals before arrival.
* If a lone worker is confronted by an aggressive animal on a first visit to a service user’s address, they should not put themselves at risk. If necessary, they should abandon the visit and report the incident at the earliest opportunity.
* If a lone worker feels uneasy with animals being present, they should politely request that they be removed. However, a request of this nature may provoke a negative reaction. All possible efforts should be made to ensure that the situation is managed, should hostility become evident. If this is not possible then alternative arrangements should be made to carry out the visit; such as rescheduling so that the lone worker can be accompanied or asking a colleague, more at ease with animals, to assist them.

1. Monitoring and Review

* The ongoing implementation of the Lone Working Policy will be monitored through the the individualhip process.
* Lone working and risk assessment will be regularly monitored through the the individualhip process.
* The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of reviews, unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.

Support – Internal and External

* + Suzy Lamplugh Trust. A leading charitable authority on personal safety. The Trust are a registered charity, and a leading authority on personal safety: <http://suzylamplugh.org>
  + Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The HSE has published a range of guidance and support materials to help employers manage the risk of work-related violence to staff. This includes a set of case studies demonstrating good practice in managing the risks to Lone workers. These are all available on the HSE website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence>