



LONE WORKING AND PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY

Originator:	Policy and Strategy Team
Approval date:	5 th July 2022
Review date:	July 2023

1	Introduction
1.1	Pine Court Housing Association (PCHA) is committed to providing the highest standards of health and safety for all staff undertaking the association’s work. PCHA recognises that on occasion, staff may be required to work alone, unsupervised and without direct contact with colleagues whilst carrying out their duties.
1.2	The scope of this policy outlines the reasonable and practical steps that PCHA will provide to ensure safe working practices for staff and how its employees can apply them to mitigate the added risks that lone working presents.
1.3	This Policy applies to employees who work alone away from normal office locations / sites or outside the normal working hours, travel alone between jobs, incorporating all staff who work in an agile way or from home.
1.4	This Policy does not cover employees on study days or courses. In these situations it is the responsibility of the individual employee to arrange their own safety measures.
1.5	Although, there is no legal prohibition to lone working, PCHA does have obligations to meet the legal requirements in regard to workers health and safety. The relevant legislation includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 • The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999
1.6	The main provisions within each piece of legislation are set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – Section 2 impose a duty of care on employers to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health and safety and welfare of their employees whilst at work

- **The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999** –Regulation 3 states that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees to which they are exposed to whilst at work

1.7 The application of this policy ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England adopted by Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) as outlined below:

1.8 Registered providers shall ensure effective governance arrangements that deliver their aims, objectives and intended outcomes for tenants and potential tenants in an effective, transparent and accountable manner. Governance arrangements shall ensure they:

- Adhere to all relevant legislation
- Comply with their governing documents and all regulatory requirements
- Are accountable to tenants, the regulator and relevant stakeholders
- Safeguard taxpayers’ interests and the reputation of the sector
- Have an effective risk management and internal controls assurance framework

1.9 **Access and Communication**

1.9.1 PCHA is committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to everyone. We will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for PCHA or use its services.

1.10 **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

1.10.1 PCHA is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out its duty with positive regard for the following core strands of equality; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Gender Identity /Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation, Religion and / or Belief, Civil Partnership and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity.

1.10.2 PCHA also recognise that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstances, employment status, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

1.10.3 PCHA will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within context of current Human Rights legislation. Staff and others with whom we work, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).

1.11 This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The PCHA Health and Safety Policy
- The PCHA Lone Working and Personal Safety Procedure
- The PCHA Anti-Social Behaviour, Domestic Violence and Harassment Policy
- The PCHA Data Protection Policy
- Guidance issued to staff in connection with agile working

2	Statement of intent
2.1	PCHA will comply with all relevant legislation, regulations and contractual obligations in all areas of work in regard to employees' health and safety including specific arrangements for lone working.
2.2	Through the recruitment and selection process, induction programme and ongoing training, PCHA will make all employees aware of safe working practices and their responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
2.3	PCHA will carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment regime of all lone working activities and will put in place all reasonable control measures to prevent harm or distress occurring to ensure 'duty of care requirements' are met as required by the Health and Safety at Work Regulations Act, 1974.
2.4	Based on the risk assessments, if required, PCHA will provide all employees with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to mitigate the risks of lone working including access to mobile phones, radios and personal safety alarms.
2.5	PCHA will ensure that the Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy and supporting procedures are available to all staff in the most current form via the internal document control system or upon request.
2.6	PCHA will provide training to all staff whose roles involve lone working on a regular basis including dealing with abusive / violent behaviour and knowledge of safeguarding adults and children issues.
2.7	PCHA will record and monitor any incidents or near misses where staff feel their safety or wellbeing has been compromised as a result of lone working and will use the information to update the policy, procedures or control measures, accordingly.
2.8	PCHA will take a zero tolerance approach to anyone found to be responsible for causing undue stress or being aggressive to staff members during the conduct of their duties, including informing external agencies and taking legal action. Where incidents of this nature occur PCHA will ensure there are appropriate support mechanisms in place for staff members.
3	Policy
3.1	<p>For the purposes of this policy, PCHA defines lone working as being any activity where an employee is required to work by themselves without close or direct supervision including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff working away from the normal working space base/ agilely ● Staff working outside of normal office hours ● Staff working in office locations alone e.g. Chung Hok House ● Staff working in agile way
3.2	In order to ensure PCHA provide safe working practices to staff and comply with the relevant legislation, managers and employees have the following responsibilities specific to lone working and personal safety:

3.2.1

Senior Housing Officer

It is the responsibility of the Senior Housing Officer is to:

- Promote and support the aims and objectives of this Policy
- Ensure that this Policy is disseminated, implemented and monitored
- Undertake risk assessments for all lone worker situations faced by staff
- Ensure the team has a robust 'safe system of work' regarding lone workers
- Ensure that employees receive information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to perform their work safely
- Ensure that employees receive, and are trained to use, any safety devices or systems deemed necessary

3.2.2

Employees

Have a responsibility to:

- Cooperate with PCHA in discharging its statutory duty to comply with the relevant Health & Safety legislation
- Take reasonable care of themselves and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions
- Ensure they do not interfere with, or misuse anything provided for their safety
- Inform their manager of any unsafe working practices that may increase risks to themselves or their colleagues, and of any defect in safety devices supplied
- Inform their manager of any accidents, incidents or near misses arising from working alone and complete the relevant documentation
- Apply/implement the agreed controls which have been put in place for lone working

3.3

Arrangements

3.3.1

PCHA will encourage good working practices for all staff in relation to health and safety, and lone working. This will include:

- Consistent and disciplined use of electronic diaries and informing colleagues of appointments off-site or in situations when lone working may be required
- Provision of the means of reporting start / finish times for off-site working or emergencies including out of normal office hours
- Clear procedures for office staff to follow when workers do not report-in at expected times, including escalating actions to include request for emergency services
- System to warn staff conducting home visits of any known or potential dangers to personal safety
- Provision of mobile phones or radios for CCTV staff
- Provision of personal safety alarms when requested by the individual staff member or when necessary following risk assessment deemed
- An option to contact PCHA on telephone number, 0151 709 6878, if they believe the situation is potentially dangerous

3.3.2

Risk Assessment

3.3.2.1

PCHA will carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments for all 'lone worker' situations faced by its employees.

3.3.2.2	<p>PCHA Senior Housing Officer will be expected to complete a general risk assessment for the following main hazards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical or sexual assault ● Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour ● Theft/criminal damage ● Road traffic accidents/breakdowns/punctures ● Slips/trips/falls
3.3.2.3	<p>In addition to the generic hazards outlined above, where necessary, PCHA will carry out risk assessments on 'lone working' activities based on information it holds about geographical areas, people and weather conditions.</p>
3.3.2.4	<p>Where risks are identified or known, PCHA will consider taking additional precautions to ensure health and safety of its employees, which may consist one or a combination of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None attendance to property ● Working in pairs ● Asking for Police presence ● Emergency monitoring i.e. logging in/out facility ● Arranging appointments to be carried out in office locations
3.3.2.5	<p>All staff conducting risk assessments will be trained to an appropriate level of competency and risk assessments will be reviewed annually or following an incident, significant change in the task, individual circumstances or working environment. It is the responsibility of individual team managers to keep risk assessment records in document management system or to all other interested parties on request.</p>
3.3.3	<p>Information sharing</p>
3.3.3.1	<p>PCHA is committed to ensuring that its employees have access to up-to-date information regarding customers and locations so that they can do their job efficiently and safely. All staff are required to report and/or record customer profile information (including vulnerabilities i.e. mental health problems and convictions, if known) in the customer management system and direct to the PCHA Team Leader or Health and Safety Team, if required.</p>
3.3.3.2	<p>All PCHA staff involved in lone working activities, where appropriate, are responsible for checking warning markers associated with customers and/or properties in the customer management system i.e. contact considerations and property specific information.</p>
3.3.3.3	<p>Where appropriate, PCHA works in partnership with various stakeholders in the region to share information, for example Health Centre and/or GPs, Liverpool and Wirral Local Authorities, the Police and/or Probation Officers, Fire & Rescue Service, and other voluntary and statutory agencies as detailed in the Sovini Data Protection Policy.</p>
3.3.3.4	<p>It is the responsibility of every employee, if at any stage during a visit/while working on site they feel unsafe, to report to the Senior Housing Officer who should carry out a thorough investigation and update the information in the system, as necessary. For more information please refer to the PCHA Anti-social Behaviour, Domestic Violence and Harassment Policy and PCHA Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.</p>

3.3.3.5	PCHA discourages its employees to give out personal contact details including their home telephone, mobile phone number or any other personal information to customers.	
4	Implementation	
4.1	It is the responsibility of all PCHA staff to comply with the Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy, associated procedures and the recommendations from risk assessments. PCHA expect contractors working on its behalf to carry out their own risk assessments for lone working in line with general health and safety requirements.	
4.2	PCHA will at any time have an adequate number of competent persons to carry out risk assessment reviews. Any significant findings of the risk assessments will be recorded and passed to line managers or the Health and Safety Team for further review and implementation.	
4.3	Based on the nature of recommendations received, the Health and Safety Committee will take a view on a case by case basis if there are amendments required to the policy before the annual review date.	
5	Performance	
5.1	Performance will be monitored against the following Key Performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of incidents reported by lone workers where they felt unsafe • Number of emergency alarms sent to CCTV Team 	
6	Consultation	
6.1	All PCHA staff were consulted in the development of this Policy. The PCHA Empowerment Panel was also consulted about this Policy on 20 th May 2022.	
7	Review	
7.1	The policy will be reviewed annually (from the date of approval) by the Operations Director to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness or as required by the introduction of new legislation or regulation that impacts on the lone working obligations of PCHA, changes to PCHA business practices or in the light of management system audits.	
8	Equality Impact Assessment	
8.1	Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?	Yes
8.2	When was EIA conducted and by who?	The initial EIA conducted by the Policy Officer and Policy and Strategy Manager in April 2021 is still valid for this Policy.

8.3	Results of EIA	The EIA is seen to have a positive impact across all equality strands in that it reduces risks of lone working for all staff members.	
9	Scheme of delegation		
9.1	Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the Policy and any amendments to it	DMT- PCHA	
9.2	Responsible officer for formulating Policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation	Operations Director- PCHA	
9.3	Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures	Operations Director- PCHA	
10	Amendment log		
Date of revision:	Reason for revision:	Consultation record:	Record of amendments:
25 th April 2019	In line with the review schedule	See section 6	There are no significant changes to this Policy in this review.
23 rd April 2020	In line with the review schedule	See section 6	There are no significant changes to this Policy in this review.
11 th May 2021	In line with the review schedule	See section 6	A change at 3.1- Reworded to include agile working methods.
5 th July 2022	In line with the review schedule	See section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy has been updated throughout to include provisions for agile working • EIA updated to reflect agile working