

## Lone Worker Policy

Author:	Health & Safety
Status:	Approved
Date Approved:	November 2019
Next Review Date:	October 2022

Version	Purpose / Change	Author	Date
1	Version 1 of the policy - approved by Board of Trustees	Harry Downie	February 2011
2	Review of policy and general update post review	Chrissie Cornford	October 2012
3	Review of policy and general update post review	Chrissie Cornford	May 2015
4	Review of policy and update post review	Lorna Boyd-Bell	March 2016
5	Review of policy and general update	Mark Hanna	January 2018
6	Review of policy and general update	Mark Hanna	March 2018
7	Review of policy and general update	Mark Hanna	September 2019

## Contents

1. Purpose .....	3
2. Scope.....	3
3. Definition of Lone Workers.....	3
4. Policy Statement .....	4
5. Responsibilities .....	4
5.1 Senior Management .....	4
5.2 Line Managers.....	4
5.3 Individuals' Responsibilities:.....	5
5.4 HR Department Responsibilities:.....	5
6. Lone Working Procedures.....	5
6.1 Risk Assessments .....	6
6.2 When a risk is identified.....	7
6.3 Monitoring staff movements .....	9
6.4 Buddying .....	9
6.5 Volunteer interviews .....	10
7. Office Based Lone Working .....	10
8. Incident Reporting.....	11
9. Training.....	11
10. Guidance for Lone Workers .....	11
Appendix 1 - Lone Working Flow Chart .....	13
Appendix 2 - Service User Visit Risk Assessment Checklist.....	14
Appendix 3 – Risk Assessment form .....	16

## Lone Worker Policy

### 1. Purpose

Age UK Hertfordshire recognises the risk of lone working and has developed this policy to ensure the safety of all staff, workers, volunteers and trustees when working alone in the community or within its offices. The aim of this policy is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Age UK Hertfordshire and its staff, workers and volunteers, in order to fulfil its legal obligations and to take action to minimise the risks of lone working. The policy also aims to increase staff awareness of safety issues related to lone working and to ensure that all lone working is assessed in a systematic and consistent manner.

### 2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all members of staff, workers, volunteers and trustees who are based in the community and/or in the office and should be read in conjunction with Age UK Hertfordshire's Health and Safety Policy. **Any reference to 'lone workers', 'member of staff' or 'employees' hereafter includes employees, workers, volunteers and trustees.**

### 3. Definition of Lone Workers

For the purpose of this policy Lone Workers are defined as anyone who works alone, whether they are within an Age UK Hertfordshire site or delivering a service out in the community and as set out below:

Those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is, at a given time, working on the premises
- People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations
- People are working outside normal office hours (with prior permission from line manager) e.g., working in the evening, during weekends and bank holidays.

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- One employee is visiting another agency's premises or meeting venue
- One employee is making a home visit to an individual
- One employee is attending an external meeting

## **4. Policy Statement**

Age UK Hertfordshire recognises that some members of staff are required to work by themselves in the community without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or during out of office hours. The organisation acknowledges that these workers and volunteers are potentially at risk and that these risks must be minimised as far as reasonably practicable.

Age UK Hertfordshire has a duty of care to advise and assess the risk for all workers under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. As such standard procedures have been developed and set out within this policy, and these should be followed and adhered to at all times, prior to or when working alone.

It is important that all staff are aware of the definition of a Lone Worker (see Section 3 above) as they may find themselves, or those under their direct supervision, falling within the definition of a Lone Worker irregularly or infrequently and need to be able to recognise this situation and act appropriately to mitigate the risks.

## **5. Responsibilities**

### 5.1 Senior Management

The Trustees and Senior Management team have overall responsibility for Health and Safety for all employees, workers, volunteers and trustees and for ensuring mechanisms are in place for the overall implementation, monitoring and revision of the policy.

The Management also have a responsibility to ensure that all employees are able to implement the aims and objectives of the policy and that certain arrangements exist for the provision of safety systems and procedures.

The Management are also responsible for reviewing and updating the policy and procedures following recommendations from line managers and for obtaining approval for an updated Lone Worker Policy from the Board of Trustees.

### 5.2 Line Managers

It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure:

- The Lone Worker Policy is brought to the attention of all new members of staff in their inductions and reiterated to staff under their supervision through team meetings and 1:1s;
- That their staff attend training events on health and safety, lone working and risk management as appropriate;
- That staff are aware of their own responsibilities with regards to lone working;

- A risk assessment (Appendix 3) is undertaken by each community-working employee before they attend an off-site visit Systems are put in place to ensure staff who work alone are safe;
- All lone work activities are identified and recorded on public folders or other local arrangements where applicable;
- All assessment and safety measures identified are recorded;
- All incidents relating to lone working are reported and recorded in line with Age UK Hertfordshire's Incident Reporting Procedures;
- An investigation is carried out regarding any incident involving a lone worker and recommendations made to prevent a reoccurrence; and
- If a risk cannot be made safe two workers must carry out the task, or if not practical to do so the service should be withdrawn

### 5.3 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;
- Attend any relevant training at the request of their line manager;
- Follow procedures introduced for Lone Workers including notifications to their Line Manager or 'Buddy' (see section 6.3);
- Ensure they inform their line manager of each off-site visit and record full address and postcode details of the location of these on the public folders, together with a client's or contact's telephone number or other local arrangement where applicable;
- Undertake telephone or site based risk assessments prior to making any off-site visits and be involved in the process of identifying safety measures;
- Avoid situations with significant risk, as far as is possible and take care of their own and other people's safety;
- Report any incidents as soon as possible in line with Age UK Hertfordshire's incident reporting procedures; and
- Ensure their line manager approves any hours worked outside of their standard working hours or the core business hours of the organisation before they are worked.

### 5.4 HR Department Responsibilities:

The HR Department are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that appropriate training, once identified, is arranged at the request of the line manager;
- Recording and updating the training records for each member of staff; and
- Ensuring that Lone Working Policy and Procedures are covered in Induction and included in the Welcome Pack information for new members of staff.

## **6. Lone Working Procedures**

While many of the same health and safety risks affect both Lone Workers and other employees, there are other potential risks which are more likely to affect lone workers. These risks should be taken into consideration by all staff (line managers, employees and volunteers) prior to lone working taking place and the following procedures and guidelines have been developed to ensure that systems are put in place to assess and minimise any potential risks. Please see the flowchart at Appendix 1, which outlines the sequence of actions to be followed when lone working occurs.

## 6.1 Risk Assessments

The crucial element in ensuring the safety of lone workers is the risk assessment. The main aims of the risk assessment are to find out:

1. Whether the work can be done safely by a lone worker
2. That the lone worker is not put at any greater risk than those who would do the job with another person
3. If any jobs are too difficult or dangerous for a lone worker to carry out.

Risk assessments assist line managers and lone workers to establish the right level of supervision and control measures required when lone working occurs. For example, some activities may be deemed high-risk and, if appropriate, may require at least two people present. Other activities may need to be referred on to an appropriate external service or agency.

### Procedure

There are two stages to the risk assessment process:

**Stage 1:** Identifying risks

**Stage 2:** Assessing any risk/s identified

The risk assessment procedure involves firstly identifying any potential risks by using the Risk Assessment Checklist, usually done by telephone (Appendix 2) and this must be undertaken prior to any community or home-based visit throughout all operational schemes, to ensure all associated risks have been identified as far as reasonably practicable.

These telephone risk assessments must be undertaken prior to community or home-based visits throughout all operational schemes, including repeat visits, to ensure all associated risks have been considered and mitigated as far as reasonably practicable. If a risk is identified a risk assessment should be completed in these circumstances using the Risk Assessment form (Appendix 3).

For paid employees and workers, it is the individual's responsibility to ensure that the Risk Assessment Checklist has been undertaken. Line Managers and

Coordinators who are responsible for volunteers should ensure that a Risk Assessment Checklist is completed before their volunteers attend community or home-based visits.

The Risk Assessment Checklist will take into account potential scenarios and hazards, and is a review of the **current** situation. Here are some of the questions that will need to be asked:

- Who is the referrer –name, agency and contact information?
- Does the individual have any issues highlighted as part of referral process e.g. a known mental health problem or a history of violent or aggressive behaviour known addiction?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Is there known substance or alcohol use both historical and current?
- Full address details of the location and contact details
- Useful information regarding the accommodation and locality
- Will the individual be alone or will anyone else be present, and if so whom?
- Does anyone else live or have use of the property and if so whom?
- Details of animals / pets in the house (normally and during the visit itself)
- Smoker / Non Smoker

The assessment form also prompts the employee to document the date and time.

### 6.2 When a risk is identified

Where a risk is identified, the individual should report this directly to their line manager or Age UK Hertfordshire contact and the following control measures should be discussed and implemented if deemed necessary. It is important to be clear about the basic ideas underpinning the notion of risk.

Risk relates to a negative event (i.e. violence, self-harm/suicide or self-neglect) and covers a number of aspects:

- What exactly is the risk – or risks – to be prevented?
- How severe will the outcome be if it does occur?
- How likely is it that the event will occur?

When a risk/s is identified it is important to get as much information as possible about the risk/s so a more detailed risk assessment can be carried out using the Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 3). Collecting more information from the referrer, service users and/or carer/s about the risks identified should be the first step. If this provides additional and relevant information, it should then be discussed directly with the relevant line manager or Age UK Hertfordshire contact to review and agree on next steps with the following control measures to be discussed and implemented if deemed necessary:

- Visit takes place with at least one other individual (for home risk assessments or one off visits)

- Risk assessment information shared with all persons who may also be at risk
- Visit postponed until further risks are assessed
- Visit postponed / cancelled and referred on to an external agency or statutory body

Risk Assessments should be carried out wherever possible over the phone. However, in cases where the risk/s identified are unpredictable, variable or unclear such as when a service user has a mental health problem which may produce violent or aggressive behaviours, a telephone risk assessment may not be appropriate and it may be necessary to carry out a home visit to obtain a more detailed assessment of the risk/s identified and how any control measures can be effectively applied. In these cases, the risk assessment process involves working with the service user to help characterise and estimate each aspect of the risk/s highlighted. Information about the service user's history of violence, self-harm or self-neglect, their relationships and any recent losses or problems, employment and any recent difficulties, housing issues, their family and the support that's available and more general social contacts could all be relevant. It is also relevant to assess how a service user is feeling, thinking and perceiving others not just how they are behaving. Efforts should be made to ascertain the service user's own views about their trigger factors, early warning signs of disturbed/violent behaviour and other vulnerabilities, and the management of these.

Any **risk assessment that requires a home visit** must be authorised by a member of the senior management team and involve at least one other individual to be present at all times during the visit. The outcome of the risk assessment must be discussed with a member of the senior management team before any service is put in place.

Any referrer should be made aware that any referrals received where a risk/s is identified would be subject to the Age UK Hertfordshire risk assessment process and any provision of service would be subject to satisfactory completion of this process.

Internally Age UK Hertfordshire's Charity Log or any equivalent databases (subsequently referred to as 'the databases') **must** be updated to reflect that a risk assessment has been highlighted. Currently the databases are the main control points for highlighting risks to other service areas and internal staff. Details should be added onto the databases on the risk tabs associated with each client and should include information relating to the date, the member of staff's name and details of the risks highlighted. If there is insufficient space staff should make reference in this tab to the location of a scanned electronic copy of the actual risk assessment (or paper copy if no electronic copy is available).

Risk assessment information on the databases should be reviewed prior to community or home-based visits throughout all operational schemes. This is also

necessary for repeat visits to ensure that any additional information that has been added since the member of staff last visited is reviewed.

It is imperative that the employee documents the date and time of the visit and updates their public folder or equivalent to ensure that they are easily contactable and their line manager knows where they are (see 6.3 below re monitoring staff movements).

If at any point a member of staff feels uncomfortable about undertaking a visit or if any potential risks are identified individuals should discuss this with their line manager or Age UK Hertfordshire contact.

### 6.3 Monitoring staff movements

To ensure that the organisation is always aware of staff, workers and volunteer's whereabouts, local reporting systems should be put in place for each individual attending an off-site appointment. All employees are required to update their calendars and/or public folders where applicable with all off-site appointments ensuring the records also state the location and date/time of any visits or events they will be attending away from their standard place of work. Full addresses, postcodes and contact telephone numbers **must** also be recorded for each off-site visit. For employees and volunteers who work out of office hours, either in the evenings or weekends, there must be an agreed local protocol in place for informing line managers of their whereabouts which is specific to the service/line manager/Age UK Hertfordshire contact.

### 6.4 Buddying

Where possible, employees should be teamed with a nominated person (or 'buddy') within their team/at their office or work location for them to contact before and after the lone working visit. This will ensure, for example, if an employee is attending an off-site visit they are able to advise their buddy of the appointment/visit/event they are attending and what time they would expect to return to their work location/office/home. The employee would then let their buddy know when they have returned safely. 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. Within office hours (Monday to Friday 9-4:30) the alarm can be raised to the Age UK Hertfordshire Office applicable to the individual or Head Office. Outside of office hours the alarm should be raised to the local police.

In some circumstances such as where the lone worker is returning home rather than to their office base, a family member or friend may be nominated as their buddy under this policy.

## 6.5 Volunteer interviews

As with staff interviews and meetings with external agencies, initial volunteer interviews should take place in a neutral and public location, such as one of Age UK Hertfordshire's offices, rather than the volunteers' home. Further visits to the same volunteer (if required) can take place in the volunteer's home if necessary, providing the appropriate risk assessment has been completed. An alternative would be to ask a colleague to also be in attendance at the interview.

## **7. Office Based Lone Working**

Staff based in offices can also work alone from time to time and should therefore also be aware of lone worker procedures. It should be encouraged, where possible, to standardise working hours and patterns to try and avoid one person either opening up or locking the office alone. Where this is not possible, the following steps should be taken:

- You should inform and seek approval from your line manager if you are likely to be staying late or make it known to the last person to leave the office before you;
- If you are one of only a few people in the office at the end of the working day you should advise remaining staff when you leave, this is especially important if not all working areas are visible to staff from all desk locations;
- Do not turn lights off in central areas if there is someone else in another part of the office as this is a Health and Safety risk;
- Do not let anyone into the building whilst you are lone working, unless you are satisfied that they do not pose any risk. In buildings where AUKH staff are working and have no control over who enters the building staff should use any security measures which are in place, i.e. key pads which limit access to offices;
- Ensure that no one else can enter the building (making sure that this does not compromise evacuation in the event of an emergency);
- You should contact a family member or colleague when you are leaving the building so that someone is aware you are on their way home;
- Whilst travelling to and from work areas and across car parks, you should remain alert and observant; and
- You should familiarise yourself with the location and general office instructions to ensure that you are aware of any office closing procedures if you are the last person in the office.

## 8. Incident Reporting

All incidents in relation to lone working should be reported through the Age UK Hertfordshire Incident Reporting procedure (contained within the Health and Safety Policy) and to an individual's line manager or Age UK Hertfordshire contact. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe are reported through this system and should advise volunteers of this procedure as part of their induction.

## 9. Training

Age UK Hertfordshire has various training courses available for employees and volunteers including mandatory health and safety training. During induction and 1:1s staff training needs should be identified with their line manager and appropriate action taken.

## 10. Guidance for Lone Workers

The following constitutes general guidance to familiarise yourself with in the event that you are lone working.

- Ensure you have read the lone working policy and procedure
- Keep to your schedule of work, if you are delayed for any reason let the office know
- Make sure you have all of the emergency phone numbers you need on your phone preferably on 'speed dial'
- Make sure you attend any training sessions the organisation provides to keep you safe when working alone

Driving to an off-site appointment

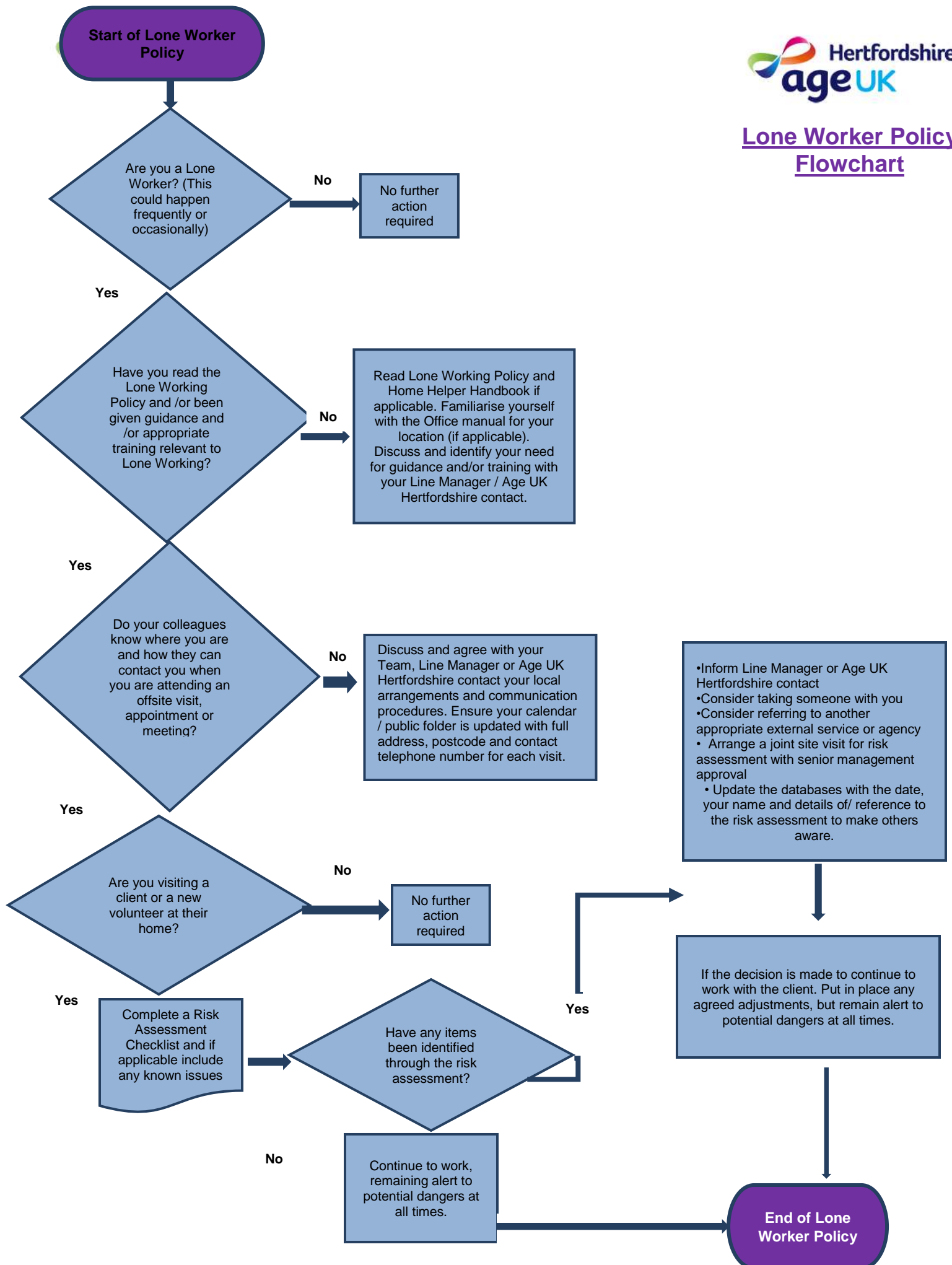
- Avoid parking in a deserted place or where there is poor lighting;
- Secure the vehicle when you leave it and ensure that you do not leave belongings on show in the vehicle;
- Remember to charge and take your mobile phone with you, if you have one; and
- Ensure you fill your car up with fuel before your journey, if you are running low.
- Keep all valuables in your car out of sight

During a lone working visit

- Ensure that you have the correct address for the person/organisation that you intend to visit;
- Report into your local office or to your buddy after the visit;
- Ensure that you are wearing your ID/name badge (if applicable) and that your telephone or communication equipment is within easy reach;

- If you reach the site/location and feel at risk or uncertain then do not enter the premises. Tell the client that you have received a phone call requesting that you return to the office/home immediately and that you will call to reschedule the appointment as soon as possible. Apologise for any inconvenience and leave;
- Always follow the person you are visiting into the house/building rather than leading the way yourself;
- Be aware of all exit routes in case you need to leave in a hurry; and
- If there is an animal/pet at the site request that it is put into another room, or secured for the duration of the visit. The animal/pet may have to be moved a number of times if you are visiting more than one room at the site.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when this has been provided for you

## Lone Worker Policy Flowchart



## Appendix 2 - Service User Visit Risk Assessment Checklist

<b>Date of Verbal Assessment:</b>			
<b>Referrer details:</b>			
<b>Client's full name:</b>			
<b>Date of Birth:</b>			
<b>Full Address:</b>			
<b>Telephone number of Service User:</b>			
<b>Telephone number of Next of Kin if app.</b>			
<b>Sex:</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
<b>Type of Accommodation:</b>			
<b>Any issues with entry to property/parking issues/phone entry system:</b>			
<b>Any known issues from referrer?</b>			
<b>Environment</b>			
<b>Do they live alone?</b>			
<b>If not, who else lives in the property?</b>			
<b>If so, will they be present during the visit?</b>			
<b>Smoker/Non Smoker:</b>			
<b>If so, have they agreed to refrain from smoking before and during visit?</b>			

<b>Pets</b>	
<b>Any animals in house:</b>	
<b>If so, has the client agreed to lock animal away in secure room during visit?</b>	
<b>Behaviours</b>	
<b>Does the client, or anyone else who lives in the property have a known mental health problem?</b>	
<b>Does the client, or anyone else who lives in the property have a history of violent or aggressive behaviour?</b>	
<b>Is there a risk of violent behaviour?</b>	
<b>Is there known substance or alcohol use both historical and current?</b>	
<b>If yes to any of the above please refer to line manager</b>	

### Appendix 3 –Risk Assessment form

#### Risk Assessment Form

<b>ESTABLISHMENT/WORKPLACE:</b>	
<b>WORK ACTIVITY: Home Visiting/Lone Working</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:</b>	<b>PEOPLE AT RISK:</b>
<p>Visiting clients in their own homes to undertake assessments, to check on a person's health, to provide befriending support, to provide Help in the Home support etc.</p>	<p>Volunteers Carers Staff Visitors Clients</p>
<b>SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS:</b>	<b>ADVERSE EFFECTS:</b>
<p>Intimidation or abuse (both verbal and physical to staff by carer, client or client/carers' family members/friends. Specific threats to staff/volunteers Holding against will History of reported accidents Emotional over involvement Driving Lone working Environment of clients' homes Unpredictable behaviour Clients' disabilities Clients' pets</p>	<p>Physical injury Emotional stress Anxiety Intimidation Vulnerability Sickness absence Legal action Road traffic accidents Slips/trips/falls Bites, scratches, infection Communicable diseases</p>
<b>EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES:</b>	
<p>Movement diaries Joint working, if in doubt or where higher risk is identified Appropriate referrals and referral information on risk Staff training, supervision and support H&amp;S Policy and Lone Working Policy Transport policy</p>	
<b>RISK FACTOR =</b>	
<b>ACTION AND TIMESCALE(S) :</b>	
<b>Note: Undertake a further Risk Assessment following the introduction of additional control measures</b>	
<b>Residual Risk=</b>	

Identified Risk	Likelihood of risk occurring	Severity of risk Occurring	Risk level (likelihood X severity)	Counter measures	Residual risk

**Key:**

**Low (infrequent likelihood, minimal/no severity of harm) = 1**

**Medium (occasional likelihood, some severity of harm) = 2**

**High (frequent likelihood, major severity of harm) =3**

**Risk Factor Action Table**

Risk factor	Action required
<b>7-9</b>	<b>Unacceptable risk – immediate action required</b>
<b>4-6</b>	<b>Risk reduction required – high priority</b>
<b>1-3</b>	<b>Low risk – no further action required</b>

A further risk assessment should always be completed following the introduction of any additional control measures. If no further control measures are needed, any risk assessment should be reviewed annually or sooner if there are any significant changes in terms of the activity originally assessed.