

Children's Services

Additional Guidance for Lone Working

1. Purpose

Dorset Council Children's Services aims always to keep its employees safe. This guidance:

- i) Reminds employees and managers of Dorset Council guidance in relation to lone working
- ii) Sets out how employees should notify others when they are lone working
- iii) Describes how the safety of lone workers will be monitored
- iv) Sets out the steps for escalating matters of concern

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all Children's Services employees who undertake lone working.

3. Context

Dorset Council provides extensive guidance to employees and managers on keeping safe when lone working. All employees should be familiar with the following Dorset Council guidance:

[Dorset Council Statement of General Policy for Health, Safety and Wellbeing at Work](#)

[Dorset Council Lone Working Policy](#)

[Dorset Council Lone Working Guidance](#)

[Dorset Council Personal Safety at Work](#)

The last of these documents requires employees who are lone working to 'Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back.' This additional guidance sets out how employees should do this, and how their safety will be monitored.

4. Notifying lone working

Lone working should usually take place within normal office hours. Lone working outside of normal office hours is permitted where the visit presents a low risk, and the practitioner has their manager's prior approval. There are also exceptions for Dorset Direct and Children's Advice and Duty (ChAD) Team employees, and these are set out in sections 8 and 9.

- 4.1 Employees should use their Outlook calendar for recording all work engagements, including those that require lone working.

4.2 When arranging a lone visit to a child or family member with whom Children's Services are working, employees should add to the calendar entry for the visit the child's Mosaic number, and the postcode of the address to be visited. If the visit is a home visit, this should be clearly stated on the calendar entry.

4.3 When meeting another health or social care professional, the employee should add that person's name and the address of the meeting venue to their Outlook calendar entry.

5. Monitoring lone working arrangements where there is increased risk

5.1 Visits should be risk assessed as set out in Dorset Council Lone Working Guidance S2.

5.2 Where there is an increased risk associated with a visit, employees should arrange to visit with a colleague or another suitable professional (where this will sufficiently reduce the risk), and notify their Team Manager in advance of the meeting of the arrangements they have made

5.3 It is the responsibility of Team Managers to identify and communicate the risk threshold that requires the measures set out at 5.2 to be implemented.

5.4 Once the employee has ended the visit safely and left the venue, they should contact their Team Manager to advise them of this (this can be by Teams call, text or email).

5.5 If the visit is taking longer than planned, the lone worker should if possible notify their Team Manager of the revised end time via text or other means.

5.6 Visits in circumstances of increased risk may not proceed unless the monitoring arrangements set out in this section are confirmed in advance.

6. In an emergency

6.1 Should an employee be in a situation where they feel endangered, threatened, or are not allowed to leave, they should call 999 for emergency services.

7. Escalating concerns about lone working in normal office hours

7.1 If the Team Manager has not had confirmation of safe ending of the visit from the lone worker within 30 minutes of the planned visit end time, they should phone the lone worker to check that they are safe. If there is no reply they should leave a message requesting urgent contact.

7.2 If, after a further 10 minutes (40 minutes after scheduled visit end) the lone worker has still not made contact, the Team Manager should make a further attempt to contact the lone worker. If this is not successful, the Team Manager should notify their line manager.

- 7.3 The Team Manager and line manager should decide whether one or both of them should attempt to find the lone worker at the visit venue, or whether to call emergency services immediately.
- 7.4 If emergency services are contacted, the line manager should notify the Head of Service (if different). The Head of Service should commence a Need to Know Report, following the Need to Know Procedure.
- 8. Lone working outside of normal office hours for Dorset Direct and ChAD/OOHS Team members only**
- 8.1 Outside of normal office hours, oversight of lone working is provided by the Dorset Direct Outside of Office Hours team (DD OOHS).
- 8.2 Once a Children's Social Worker knows that they have a lone working appointment outside of normal office hours, they should email DD OOHS on outofhoursdorsetdirect@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk advising them of the following:
- The date of the appointment
 - Full details of where they are going (include name of person / family they are visiting and any identified risks)
 - An estimated time of arrival at their location
 - Details of any persons that they are going to be meeting (e.g., if going to a hospital which ward with police, which police officers?)
 - Confirmation of their mobile phone and car registration numbers
 - Confirmation of their next of kin and other key personal details, including relevant medical conditions
- 8.3 Once the employee arrives at their destination, they will call the DD OOHS Operational Duty Supervisor on 01305 221007 to advise that they have arrived at their destination safely and an estimated time that the visit will finish. (If the employee is required to park their car and then walk some distance alone to get to their destination, they will also advise the DD worker of how long it is expected to take them to walk to their destination and they will then text to say that they have arrived safely.)
- 8.4 Once CSW has finished their visit they will call the DD OOHS Operational Duty Supervisor on 01305 221007 to advise them that they are finished and provide an estimated time of arrival home. (As above, if the CSW is required to walk back to their parked car alone, they will text to say they are finished at the visit and that it should take them 'x' number of minutes to walk back to their car, they will then text again when back at their car and give an estimated time of arrival home.)
- 8.5 Once home, the CSW will immediately call DD OOHS to confirm that they are home and are safe and well.
- 9. Escalating concerns regarding out of office hours working**

- 9.1 If the employee does not send confirmation of their safety at any of the stages set out in section 8, Dorset Direct will take the following steps:
- 9.2 Call the employee 15 minutes after their expected contact time
- 9.3 If there is no answer, DD will call the employee again 10 minutes later
- 9.4 If DD are still unable to contact the employee, they will alert the on-call senior manager
- 9.5 DD will agree with the on-call senior manager which of them should contact the employee's next of kin, and then contact them.
- 9.6 If the employee is still uncontactable and their next of kin is either uncontactable or is unaware of the employee's whereabouts, the on-call service manager will make the decision as to whether police need to be contacted and if so, will discuss with DD who is best placed to do this.