



ARK Lone Working Policy-September 2026

1. Policy Statement

ARK AEP is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all staff who may work alone or without close or direct supervision. Lone working is not prohibited in itself, but it can increase the likelihood and impact of harm because immediate support may not be available if something goes wrong. Staff must always be aware of the risks that lone working brings and must actively aim to reduce those risks through planning, communication, safe working practices and timely reporting of concerns.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how ARK AEP will identify, assess and manage risks associated with lone working. It explains the responsibilities of managers and staff, the procedures staff must follow before, during and after lone working, and the actions to take in an emergency.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all ARK AEP employees, agency staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors who may work alone on ARK AEP premises, off site, while travelling for

work, during home visits, outside normal working hours, or in any situation where they do not have immediate access to another person for assistance.

4. Definition of Lone Working

A lone worker is someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision. This may include staff working alone in a classroom, office or site area; staff opening or locking up premises; staff travelling between sites; staff conducting visits away from the main site; staff working outside normal hours; or staff who are temporarily separated from colleagues during the working day.

5. Legal and Government Guidance

ARK AEP will follow relevant UK health and safety law and Health and Safety Executive guidance. Employers must manage health and safety risks before people work alone, including risks linked to violence, stress, mental health and wellbeing, medical suitability, isolated workplaces, and the need for training, supervision and monitoring. Staff also have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the safety of others affected by their actions, and to cooperate with ARK AEP procedures.

This policy is informed by Health and Safety Executive lone working guidance, including the principles that lone workers should be trained, supervised and monitored; that employers should keep in touch with lone workers and respond to incidents; and that immediate help should be available if a lone worker becomes ill, injured or faces a serious risk.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 ARK AEP Senior Leadership

- Ensure suitable lone working arrangements are in place and communicated to staff.
- Provide appropriate resources, training and supervision to manage lone working risks.
- Ensure lone working risk assessments are completed, reviewed and acted upon.
- Monitor compliance with this policy and investigate incidents or near misses.

6.2 Managers and Line Managers

- Identify roles, tasks and circumstances where lone working may occur.
- Complete and review risk assessments before lone working is approved.

- Agree safe systems of work, communication arrangements and emergency procedures with staff.
- Check that staff are competent, trained and medically suitable where relevant.
- Ensure staff know when lone working is not permitted and when additional support is required.

6.3 Staff

- Always remain aware of the risks associated with lone working and take reasonable steps to reduce those risks.
- Follow agreed lone working procedures, including signing in and out and maintaining contact.
- Inform their manager of their location, expected movements, expected finish time and any changes to plans.
- Use agreed communication equipment and report faults immediately.
- Stop work and seek advice if they feel unsafe, unwell, threatened or unable to manage a situation safely.
- Report incidents, near misses, hazards and concerns as soon as possible.

7. Risk Assessment

A lone working risk assessment must be completed before lone working takes place where there is a foreseeable risk. The assessment should consider the task, location, time of day, travel arrangements, communication methods, access to help, likelihood of violence or aggression, medical needs, stress and wellbeing, environmental hazards, safeguarding considerations and whether the work is suitable to be completed alone.

Where a risk assessment identifies that the risk cannot be adequately controlled, lone working must not take place. Additional controls may include arranging paired working, increasing supervision, changing the timing or location of the task, using a check-in system, providing personal safety equipment, or postponing the activity.

8. Lone Working Procedures

8.1 Before Lone Working

- Confirm that lone working has been authorised where required.
- Review the relevant risk assessment and follow all control measures.
- Tell a manager or nominated contact where you will be, what you will be doing, who you may be meeting, how you can be contacted and when you expect to finish.
- Check that your phone or communication device is charged and working.

- Confirm the agreed check-in times and emergency escalation process.
- Consider whether the task can be completed more safely at another time, in another location or with another member of staff present.

8.2 During Lone Working

- Follow the agreed safe system of work at all times.
- Keep in contact at the agreed intervals and respond promptly to check-ins.
- Remain alert to changes in risk, including behaviour, environment, travel conditions, fatigue or personal wellbeing.
- Do not enter or remain in a situation that feels unsafe.
- Do not carry out high-risk tasks alone unless the risk assessment confirms it is safe and authorised.
- Leave the area and contact a manager or emergency services if there is immediate danger.

8.3 After Lone Working

- Confirm that the lone working activity has ended and that you are safe.
- Sign out or update the agreed record where applicable.
- Report any incident, near miss, concern, change in risk or failure of communication equipment.
- Discuss any wellbeing concerns or support needs with a manager as soon as possible.

9. Communication and Monitoring

ARK AEP will use proportionate monitoring arrangements based on the level of risk. These may include a signing-in and signing-out process, agreed check-in calls or messages, manager visits, shared diaries, location details, nominated contacts, panic alarms or other communication systems where appropriate. Staff must understand and follow the monitoring arrangements that apply to their role.

If a staff member fails to check in or cannot be contacted, the nominated contact or manager must follow the agreed escalation procedure. This may include attempting further contact, contacting another nominated person, checking the planned location, notifying senior leadership and contacting emergency services if there is concern for the person's safety.

10. Violence, Aggression and Safeguarding

Where lone working may involve contact with pupils, parents, carers, visitors, members of the public or unfamiliar environments, the risk assessment must consider violence, aggression, challenging behaviour and safeguarding concerns.

Staff must not place themselves at unnecessary risk and should seek support if a situation becomes difficult, unpredictable or unsafe.

Staff should avoid isolated meetings where risk is known or suspected, use agreed meeting rooms or public areas where appropriate, keep exits accessible, avoid escalating conflict, and end the interaction if they feel unsafe. Any safeguarding concern must be reported in line with ARK AEP safeguarding procedures.

11. Stress, Wellbeing and Medical Factors

Lone working can affect stress, mental health and wellbeing. Managers should consider workload, isolation, fatigue, personal circumstances and any known health factors when assessing whether lone working is appropriate. Staff should inform their manager if they have a health condition, wellbeing concern or temporary circumstance that may affect their ability to work alone safely.

12. Training and Competence

Staff who may work alone must receive information, instruction and training appropriate to their role and level of risk. Training may include lone working procedures, dynamic risk assessment, de-escalation, safeguarding, emergency response, use of communication equipment, reporting procedures and when to stop work or seek support. New staff and staff undertaking higher-risk activities should receive additional supervision until they are competent and confident.

13. Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, staff should remove themselves from danger where it is safe to do so and call 999 if there is an immediate risk to life, serious injury, violence, fire, crime in progress or another urgent emergency. Staff should then contact their manager or nominated contact as soon as it is safe. Managers must ensure that escalation arrangements are clear, tested and understood by all relevant staff.

14. Reporting and Review

All lone working incidents, near misses, hazards, failures to check in, communication failures and concerns must be reported promptly. Reports will be reviewed to identify lessons learned and to improve control measures. This policy and associated risk assessments will be reviewed at least annually, after any significant incident, when legislation or guidance changes, or when there are changes to roles, premises, working patterns or operational arrangements.

15. Quick Staff Checklist

- Have I checked whether lone working is authorised and safe?
- Have I reviewed the risk assessment and control measures?
- Does someone know where I am, what I am doing and when I should finish?
- Is my phone or communication device charged and working?
- Do I know when and how to check in?
- Do I know what to do if I feel unsafe or cannot complete the task safely?
- Have I reported any concerns, incidents or near misses?

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