



ATTACH-Manchester

Lone Working and Risk Assessment Policy

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

As an employer, ATTACH-Manchester has the same duty of care to all staff. Because of the nature of the services it provides, which may involve lone working, there are additional duties on ATTACH-Manchester to manage any health and safety risks before people can work alone. This applies to anyone contracted to work for ATTACH-Manchester, including self-employed people.

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. There will always be greater risks for lone workers without direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To clarify the legal duties of ATTACH-Manchester.
- To detail the processes ATTACH-Manchester has in place to meet its obligations.
- To clarify the duties of all ATTACH-Manchester staff.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up to meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, based on guidance published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (see hse.gov.uk).

Health and safety principles

- A risk assessment of all activities should be undertaken before the activity takes place, identifying hazards, who is at risk, the likelihood of the hazard causing harm to them and the degree of harm likely to be caused in that case.
- If the hazard can be removed entirely, it should be removed.
- Specific processes should be identified to reduce or minimise the likelihood of the hazard causing harm.
- The greater the degree of harm and the greater the number of people likely to be harmed, the greater the obligation to take action to reduce the risk.
- The greater the vulnerability of those who would be harmed, such as a child, an elderly person or a disabled person, the greater the obligation to take action to reduce the risk.
- Workers should be provided with the appropriate information, training, supervision and support to fulfil their roles safely.
- Processes should be in place to record, monitor and review health and safety, and to report concerns.
- Staff should be consulted on health and safety measures.

Risk assessment

A supervising manager will undertake a risk assessment during the initial discussion about the service with the family and, where appropriate, the young person. This will identify hazards associated with the individual young person's mental health (e.g. anxiety), behaviour (e.g. aggression, violence, absconding, climbing), and any social and communication difficulties; as well as likely risks associated with working in the home and in the community, and periods when the risks might be greater.

The risk assessment will identify helpful strategies that are familiar to the young person, as well as areas where advice should be sought from professionals in the network. A risk assessment grid will be used as part of the risk assessment to show where most attention is required for risk mitigation (see Appendix). The grid will document the risk mitigation measures and their effect on the level of risk.

The risk assessment should consider the risks to various parties as necessary. These may include:

- The child or young person.
- Other children or young people.
- Family members and parents/carers.
- The worker themselves.

- Other ATTACH-Manchester staff.
- Members of the public.

The risk assessment will also allow ATTACH-Manchester to determine:

- Whether lone working is appropriate, at the start of the relationship or at all.
- What type of activities should and should not take place (this can be reviewed as the relationship develops).
- What qualities and experience are needed from a worker.
- Which person might be best equipped to work with this particular young person.
- What training and supervision need to be put in place.
- Timescales for monitoring and reviewing these measures.

Managing risks of lone working

ATTACH-Manchester is responsible for managing the risk to lone workers. This means that we must train, supervise and monitor them; and keep in touch with them and respond to any incident. ATTACH-Manchester will provide each staff member with a copy of the HSE leaflet about employers' obligations at the start of their employment.

Risks that particularly affect lone workers include:

- violence in the workplace
- stress and mental health or wellbeing issues
- a person's medical suitability to work alone
- the workplace itself, for example in a young person's home, in an uncontained open space or in changing venues

If a lone worker will be at someone else's workplace, such as a school, ATTACH-Manchester will ask the employer about any risks and control measures to ensure they are protected. Where the worker is likely to work in a family home, ATTACH-Manchester will take steps to put appropriate measures in place in consultation with the family as part of a detailed risk assessment.

Violence

Lone working does not always mean a higher risk of violence, but it does make workers more vulnerable. The lack of nearby support makes it harder for them to prevent an incident.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines violence as ‘any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work’. This includes verbal threats. In ATTACH-Manchester’s work, identified risks of violence may include:

- Working with young people who struggle with self-regulation and/or who have neurodevelopmental or mental health issues or are disabled.
- Working in the community among members of the public.
- Working in private homes.

Support and training

The impact of violence can lead to physical injury and work-related stress, which may have serious and long-term effects on workers' physical and mental health. Witnessing violence to others or experiencing the threat of violence and feeling impotent can also have impact on mental health. Violence can also lead to high staff turnover, low productivity and damage to business reputation.

ATTACH-Manchester will put measures in place to remove or minimise the risk of violence and support any worker who experiences or witnesses it. Workers can play their part by identifying and reporting incidents, including verbal aggression and threats, which may be precursors to physical violence.

Training in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and Practice, as well as training related to de-escalation, personal safety or violence prevention will help workers:

- Anticipate triggers likely to cause dysregulation in the young person.
- Recognise situations where they feel at risk.
- Understand when they need to contact their supervising manager in a particular moment.
- Understand when they need to discuss extra training or support.
- Use de-escalation, co-regulation, sensory, distraction or conflict resolution techniques or leave the workplace.

Additional training and support needs will be considered during supervision.

Monitoring and keeping in touch

Lone working, in itself, can cause work-related stress and affect people’s mental health. Being away from managers and colleagues could make it difficult to get proper support. ATTACH-Manchester will put procedures in place that enable direct contact with the lone worker so their supervising manager can recognise signs of stress as early as possible.

If contact is poor, workers may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned. This can affect their performance and potentially their stress levels and mental health. ATTACH-Manchester will

monitor lone workers and keep in touch with them. We will undertake to ensure the monitoring system and procedures are clear and understood by both parties. These include:

- when supervisors should visit and observe lone workers
- knowing where lone workers are, with pre-agreed intervals of regular contact, using phones, email, etc.
- a reliable system to ensure a lone worker has returned to their base once they have completed their task, for instance a two-way phone call

ATTACH-Manchester will regularly test these systems and all emergency procedures to ensure lone workers can be contacted if a problem or emergency is identified. Supervision will be used as an opportunity to check with workers that the systems are working.

Emergency procedures should include guidance on how and when lone workers should contact ATTACH-Manchester, including details of alternative contact where their supervising manager is not available.

ATTACH-Manchester will monitor the impact of lone working on workers' health and mental health.

Working alone with a medical condition

If ATTACH-Manchester is unsure whether a worker's health condition means they are safe to work alone, we will seek medical advice. We will consider both routine work and possible emergencies that may put additional physical and mental burdens on the lone worker.

When workers' first language is not English

Lone workers from outside the UK may come across unfamiliar risks, in a workplace culture very different from that in their own country and/or with language barriers. ATTACH-Manchester will ensure they have received and understood the information, instruction and training they need to work safely.

Workers' obligations

Workers have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be harmed by their actions at work. They must cooperate with ATTACH-Manchester and other workers to help everyone meet their duties under the law.

Recording and reviewing

The law states that if an employer employs five or more people, significant findings must be recorded. Although ATTACH-Manchester currently employs fewer than five people, we consider that the nature of our work means that we have greater responsibilities to children and young

people and their families, as well as to our staff. It is therefore expected that supervision sessions will regularly consider risk management issues.

As part of this process, the worker and supervising manager will review the controls put in place to make sure both that the worker is applying them correctly and that they are working. We will also review them if:

- they may no longer be effective
- there are changes that could lead to new risks such as changes to:
 - ❖ activities
 - ❖ venues
 - ❖ the people present
 - ❖ the level of anxiety or other aspects of the young person's presentation

ATTACH-Manchester will also consider a review if the worker has spotted any problems or there have been any accidents or near misses.

The risk assessment record will be updated with any changes made.

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Appendix: Risk assessment grid

Risk matrix

	Consequence				
Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Almost Certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Possible	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	High	High

Principles of risk assessment and legal obligations

- 1 Where the risk is anything above low, there is a duty to put in place risk mitigation to bring it down as low as possible.
- 2 The more severe the potential consequences (e.g. injury or death) should the risk occur, the greater the duty.
- 3 Where the people at risk are vulnerable – children, the elderly, the disabled – the duty is greater.
- 4 The first question to ask in a risk assessment is: Can we remove the hazard altogether, thus removing the risk. If so, this should be done.

Risk assessment

Hazard	Risk	Risk Level L M H E	People at risk	Risk mitigation measures	Mitigated risk level
1					
2					

3					
4					