

SOP HS 02 Lone Working and Personal Safety

Procedure Number	SOP HS 02
Purpose of Document	To ensure that all workers and community based staff employed by Acacium Group are aware of the precautions they should take to ensure their own personal safety.
Target Audience	All Nurses, Healthcare Professionals & appropriately trained carers
Version	V3.0
Author	Karen Matthews-Shard
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Review Frequency	Two yearly or when clinical or operational guidelines change.
Next Review Date	September 2025
About Acacium Group	Details of all Acacium Group trading companies that this policy applies to are detailed within Appendix A

Document History			
Version	Date	Changes made/comments	By whom
V1	Dec 2016	Implementation of document history page.	KNF/SJ
V1	Aug 2017	2 yearly review.	KNF/VM
V2	Aug 2019	2 yearly review	Clinical Advisory Group
V2.1	Feb 2020	Update to new Template	CCR/CC
V2.2	Nov 2020	Rebrand	CC
V2.3	Jan 2021	Rebrand 2	CC
V2.4	May 2021	Adding CHS brand	CC
V2.5	Aug 2021	Review	AP & AM
V3.0	Sep 2023	Reviewed and updated	Clinical Advisory Group

Acacium Group Standard Operating Procedure

1. Introduction

The dangers of lone working cannot always be seen and avoided. This SOP has been developed to provide a framework to include the risks associated with health and safety and lone working, with a view to how this can best be managed. Full risk assessments of clients' homes, venues used for delivery of our community services, public storage facilities personal care tasks, and potential for violent and aggressive behaviour, are performed prior to service delivery commencing, except in emergency circumstances, where a risk assessment will be performed within 48 hours of commencement of service delivery.

All staff will receive training on health and safety, risk and incident reporting. Managing violence and aggression training is provided where appropriate. This training is carried out on induction and on an annual basis thereafter.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 1998 defines lone working as: **“those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”**.

For Community Services:

TCS, PNAH & Ellea Nursing are using Digital Nurse Logs via the Total Mobile system, Associate Workers arrive on shift and have 30 minutes to start their shift. If, they do not start the shift within this time, within the Optimise system the shift will turn red. The Clinical and operations team will then call the associate worker to ascertain why they are.

Short Term Reablement Service (STRS) uses Carelink and Optimise to track where community staff are. The Associate worker starts each visit, this is feedback back to optimise and allows the Clinical and Operational team know where associate workers are at all times.

2. Legal background

There is no overall legal prohibition on staff working alone but the general legal duties of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA), which apply throughout Great Britain require safe arrangements to be made for such work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) contain requirements relating to assessing and controlling risks to employees, including risks arising from lone work.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Responsibilities of Acacium Group

As an employer, Acacium Group has responsibility to its staff who are working alone. Overall, responsibility for implementing this SOP is allocated to the manager of each office who employs the lone workers. They are specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring all care workers have received training in health and safety, personal safety, and managing violent, aggressive, or abusive behaviour.

- Ensuring a full risk assessment is made of any health and safety issues which may affect care workers, and clients, in accordance with the Risk Assessment SOP
- Ensuring that adequate communications are in place with the lone workers.
- Ensuring that the response to an emergency is planned and effective.
- Ensuring that all care workers are fully debriefed and supported following an incident.
- Ensuring that appropriate information on the history of violence, or potential violence of clients, is obtained and shared, where appropriate.
- Ensuring that incident reporting procedures are followed, and accurate records are kept and maintained. Reports are made to the appropriate authority e.g. the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Scottish Care Inspectorate (SCI) Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Regulation and Quality improvement authority (RQIA), the polic/garda or the Health and Safety Executive, Commissioners and HSE.
- Holding regular meetings with healthcare professionals to discuss concerns or incidents, and to evaluate current working practices.
- Arrangements should be in place to ensure that if colleague(s), with whom details have been left, leave for some reason they will pass the details on to another colleague who will check that the lone worker arrives back at their office / base, or has safely completed their duties. Procedures should also be in place to ensure that the lone worker is in regular contact with their manager or a relevant colleague, particularly if they are delayed or have to cancel the appointment.
- Maintaining accurate logs of all home visits undertaken by healthcare professionals and full details of the client's name, telephone number, and address.
- To communicate this document to all healthcare professionals.
- Where there is a genuine concern, as a result of a lone worker failing to attend a visit, or an arranged meeting, within an agreed time, the manager should utilise the information provided in the log to help track the lone worker and ascertain whether they turned up for previous appointments that day. Depending on the circumstance, and whether contact through normal means (mobile phones etc.) can or cannot be made, the manager, or colleague, should involve security or the police, if necessary. It is important that matters are dealt with quickly where it is thought that the lone worker may be at risk.

There are several practical steps that can be followed, to help lone workers minimise the risk of an incident occurring. It is essential that where technology fails, appropriate backup procedures are always in place to ensure the safety of the lone worker, please see Operational Policy. Under no circumstances should staff compromise their safety.

If they feel unsafe at any point, while in a lone working situation, they should remove themselves from the situation immediately.

3.2 Responsibilities of the individual workers

Each employee has a responsibility to:

- Familiarise themselves with the contents of the Worker Handbook and/or the Lone working Policy and associated risk assessments.
- Report any health and safety concerns to their line manager.
- Participate in any training, meetings and supervision organised by Acacium Group.
- Carry out work practices in accordance with Acacium Group policies, procedures and instructions.
- Carry a mobile phone and / or panic alarm at all times during working hours.
- Report any accidents, near misses and incidents of actual and potential violence / aggression, or abuse. All Acacium Group workers should be prepared to cooperate in any investigative process.

4. Travelling to visit clients in their own homes, Community Venues or Public storage facilities

4.1 On foot or public transport

	Action	Rationale
1.	Ensure you have full information regarding the client and any other persons who are likely to be present, as well as the environment in which you will be working, both internally and externally	To allow you to be prepared for any incident that may occur.
2.	Work out your route before you leave your home / office and identify potential parking areas if travelling by car.	To allow you to foresee potential problems.
3.	Ensure that you carry your fully charged mobile phone and that the office has this number on file in case of an emergency.	To allow you to raise the alarm if required. To allow the office to contact you if any problems arise.
5.	If you are unfamiliar with an area do not use short cuts.	This makes you vulnerable as it shows that you are unsure of your surroundings.
6.	Keep to roads that are busy and well-lit. Always walk facing oncoming traffic	To maintain personal security.
7.	If a vehicle pulls up alongside you turn and walk in the opposite direction – a person on foot can change direction faster than a car.	To assist you in removing yourself from a potentially dangerous situation.
8.	Avoid isolated bus stops and empty tube or train carriages	To maintain personal security.
9.	If you feel you are being followed cross over to the other side of the street.	To maintain personal security.

10.	Be prepared to give up personal / business belongings if you are challenged. Your own personal safety is of paramount importance. Do not risk personal injury. You should not carry handbags whilst on visits.	To maintain personal security.
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4.2 Travelling by car

	Action	Rationale
1.	Keep doors locked and your windows closed whilst driving and when leaving your car parked.	To maintain personal security and the security of your car.
2.	Ensure that your car is well maintained and in good working order.	To prevent breaking-down in areas of risk.
3.	Always make sure you have enough fuel/charge.	To prevent running out in areas of risk.
4.	Always park in well-lit areas and obvious surroundings with a quick escape route e.g. park facing out of a cul-de-sac.	To maintain personal security.
5.	Always have your keys ready and check the back seat before you get back into the car.	To ensure that you can enter your car quickly if required and that there are no intruders in your car.
6.	If you are waved down do not stop.	To maintain personal security.
7.	Never leave anything in the car so that it is visible to passers-by.	To prevent your car being broken into.

5. On arrival at a client's home or Community Venue

	Action	Rationale
1.	If you do not have direct access and expect to have the door answered for you, always follow the person into their home/venue from behind.	To ensure that an escape route is maintained.
2.	Ask the client not to lock the door – unless the door automatically locks on closure. In this case, ask them not to remove the key from the lock.	To ensure that an escape route is maintained.
3.	Make sure you are aware of the environment and know your way out	To ensure that you know where you can escape the property from
4.	If there are other persons present, ask to be introduced and that they wait in another room if possible	

5.	If you feel at all uncomfortable leave the premises – an explanation and apology can be made later.	Contact the office when you leave so that Acacium Group are aware of your safety.
6.	Keep yourself between the client and the door, where possible.	To ensure that an escape route is maintained.
7.	If there are dogs present ask for them to be shut away, particularly if you have to touch the dog's owner to perform care tasks.	To maintain personal security.
8.	If anyone is under the influence of drugs, alcohol or appears to be agitated, politely leave the environment.	To maintain personal security.
9.	If you are asked to perform a task that is not within the remit of the care plan you must check with your Line Manager	
10.	At a community venue, make sure you are aware of any additional security measures and relevant codes e.g. alarms, locks and gates	To allow you to exit the premises quickly and safely
11.	If it is a manned premises or community venue, upon arrival let the relevant personnel know where you'll be situated and what time you will be leaving, Additionally, make sure you have their contact details.	To maintain personal security.

6. Incident reporting

All staff must report every incident of violence or abuse as soon as possible after it occurs.

All risks involving a client must be documented factually in the care plan or Risk Assessment.

All incidents must be reported as soon as possible, in line with the Acacium Group Incident Reporting Policy and the following details should be reported:

- All persons involved
- Cause of the incident including date, time and location
- Any injuries involved
- The action taken to prevent the incident occurring again.

In some circumstances, it may be necessary to report the incident under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) and this will be undertaken by the Quality and Compliance Manager. There may also be a need for the Regulating body or HSE or the police/garda to be informed, and this will be undertaken by the registered manager.

7. Related documents

SOP Risk 01 Risk Assessment
SOP HS 03 Violence and Aggression

8. References

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA).
<https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/hse-policy-on-lone-working.pdf>

Appendix A: About Acacium Group

Acacium Group consists of a number of trading companies, each providing services within core niche areas of the health and social care industries. Therefore, as this document is a Group Policy, the Policy herein applies to all trading companies detailed below:

Pathology Group

With experience of filling niche vacancies within Pathology, our clients' services have been allowed to return to full capacity and ensure candidates are placed into the right role.



General Medicine Group

With the largest network of medicine doctors in the UK, we are able to offer our candidates the most up to date vacancies and a steady stream of the high calibre Doctors to the NHS.



Surgical People

Dedicated to the supply of high quality Doctors to the NHS and private healthcare providers across several Surgery sub-specialties.



A&E Agency

A&E Agency is a leading recruitment agency for placing specialist doctors in temporary and permanent roles throughout the UK. We supply highly experienced doctors across a range of acute and general medical specialties, including but not limited to, A&E, anaesthetics, obs & gynae, paediatrics, radiology and surgery.



GP World

As a leading provider of locum and permanent General Practitioners & primary care clinicians including nurses to the NHS and private sector, we play an important role as a staffing and career partner to our clients.



Pulse Staffing Limited (Pulse)

Pulse recruits health and social care professionals for temporary and permanent jobs in the UK, and abroad. Pulse is the UK's leading independent provider of staff bank management services and provides specialist care packages to individuals in their own home or community setting.



As an approved supplier to the NHS, Pulse holds contracts with NHS trusts, private organisations and local authorities nationwide. Pulse also works with hospitals globally, specifically within Australia, New Zealand, North America, the Middle East and across Europe.

Pulse places candidates - medical, scientific and nursing staff, allied healthcare professionals, social workers, support workers and carers - in posts appropriate for their training and experience.

Pulse Staffing consists of a number of Pulse brands delivering staffing solutions and health and social care services globally, with a UK branch network and overseas offices, key brands include;

- **Pulse Nursing at Home** – management of packages of care to support/ enable individuals to live independently
- **Pulse Nursing & Care, Pulse Critical Care, Pulse Specialist Nursing, Pulse Theatres** – provision of all categories and grade of nursing & midwifery staff
- **Pulse Doctors** – provision of all specialty and grade of doctor including Psychiatry, Acute and GP
- **Pulse Allied Health & Health Science Services** – provision of all categories and grade of AHP & HSS staff (including Physiotherapy, Radiography, Speech and Language Therapy and Pharmacy)
- **Pulse Staffing Partners** – incorporating end-to-end management of complete staff banks
- **Pulse Social Care** – provision of all categories of unqualified social care staff
- **Pulse Social Work** – provision of all specialty of qualified social work staff.

Frontline Staffing (FL)

FL is a dedicated division of Pulse, committed to managing short-notice and hard-to-fill vacancies on both a temporary, and permanent, basis across the spectrum of health and social care categories of staff.



Thornbury Nursing Services (TNS)

Established in 1983, TNS is one of the UK's leading independent nursing agencies, providing skilled nurses on a temporary or permanent basis to NHS trusts, and private sector clients, throughout England and Wales.



The TNS mission is simple: “To provide the best professional solution to meet the requirements of each of our clients whilst recognising and rewarding the exceptional skills and efforts of our nurses.”

TNS delivers an exceptional service to both patients and clients by ensuring every nurse represented meets the most rigorous professional standards.

TNS' team of specially trained recruiters (themselves qualified nurses) personally interview and select nurses across the country using a strict method of competence-based assessment, ensuring that every nurse meets the highest expectations – in terms of professional accreditation, competency, attitude and personality.

Scottish Nursing Guild (SNG)

Established in 1995, SNG, as part of Acacium Group, is one of Scotland's leading independent nursing agencies, providing skilled nurses on a temporary basis to major NHS trusts, and private sector clients, throughout Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.



Part of Acacium Group

SNG's ability to respond promptly to staffing needs makes the service an invaluable resource in maintaining effective nursing coverage, with unparalleled commitment to providing nurses who meet the highest professional standards.

SNG provides appropriately skilled healthcare assistants, operating department practitioners and qualified nursing staff to cover staffing shortages – both short-term and ongoing. SNG provides temporary nursing staff to both NHS trusts and private sector clients throughout Scotland. SNG's procedures and standards fully conform to, or exceed, the regulatory requirements in each territory.

Thornbury Community Services (TCS)

At Thornbury Community Services (TCS), high quality care is our number one priority. With a team of exceptional and conscientious nurses and care staff, we're able to deliver the best complex care at home or in the community, 24/7 or whenever you need it. With compassion, integrity and dedication, we help empower individuals to achieve personal aspirations, as well as providing care tailored to their needs. Making a positive difference to our client's lives is our passion and it's this that sets us apart.



Part of Acacium Group

Hobson Prior

Hobson Prior International is an award winning provider of staffing services for the medical device, drug discovery and clinical development community in Europe. Since 2002, we have been working exclusively within the life sciences industry, supporting organisations seeking to engage with exceptional professionals within the functional disciplines of clinical operations, medical affairs, pharmacovigilance, quality assurance and regulatory affairs. All our consultants specialise in a specific life sciences discipline and combine in-depth industry knowledge with an ethical and proactive sourcing approach to deliver the right solution for each client.



Part of Acacium Group

Maxxima

Maxxima is an established recruitment agency operating under two successful brand names; Labmed Recruitment and Swim Recruitment. Maxxima operates predominantly within the healthcare and social services sectors.



Part of Acacium Group

As well as offering traditional recruitment solutions to their clients, Maxxima runs a number of successful master vendor contracts. It provides the NHS with a robust vendor managed solution,

capable of making large scale cost savings whilst still retaining the expert knowledge and attention to detail associated with more specialist agencies in the market.

Xyla Health and Wellbeing

Xyla Health and Wellbeing is one of a few organisations in the UK offering a fully integrated health and wellbeing service that can be tailored to suit the needs of individuals and local communities.



We have extensive experience of providing large-scale health improvement services for public and private sector organisations. By creating an approach that incorporates innovative technology, strong operational management and effective engagement, we use our expertise and wide range of skills, to provide a high quality and efficient solution for commissioners and long-term health benefits for individuals.

Commissioners can choose to work with us across all, or a selection of, our four core elements:

1. Health and wellbeing hub and interventions
2. Community outreach
3. Training
4. Social marketing campaigns

Liquid Personnel

Liquid Personnel provide temporary and permanent jobs to qualified social work professionals in a wide range of local authorities, NHS Trusts, fostering agencies, charities and other private sector organisations throughout the UK. We are trusted by over 150 organisations in England, Scotland and Wales to provide exceptional agency staff.



Xyla Health and Social Services

Xyla Health and Social Services is one of the largest commissioned providers of managed social work services in the UK. We work in partnership with local authorities and health trusts, and have 200 qualified staff delivering assessment and review.



Our high-quality statutory services within adults and children's services covers DoLS, Care Reviews and CIN, CP & LAC cases across 30+ organisations.

Xyla Diagnostics

Xyla Diagnostics is a leading specialist in the provision of echocardiography and cardiac rhythm analysis services. Every aspect of our pioneering clinical support service is designed to increase capacity, efficiency and quality across the cardiac diagnostics industry. Our partnerships with healthcare technology providers



enable us to provide our customers with access to our specialist clinical network through a range of innovative onsite and remote diagnostic services.

Xyla Digital Therapies

Xyla Digital Therapies is a pioneering new service improving the accessibility, affordability and effectiveness of psychological therapies within IAPT. Through our extensive network of qualified therapists, we provide a broad range of digitally-enabled brief therapies at both step 2 and step 3 that can be accessed securely from a computer, tablet or smartphone anywhere, at any time of the day.



Xyla Elective Care

Xyla Elective Care provides best in class waiting list management solutions to NHS Trusts. Our elective care services are aimed at helping trusts to recover their RTT position so that they can improve aggregate and specialty level performance. In addition to RTT recovery solutions, we also provide ongoing elective and diagnostic capacity as well as 2-week suspected cancer outpatient capacity.



ProClinical

ProClinical has one aim: to support life science companies in the many challenges they face while combating unmet medical need worldwide. ProClinical's mission is to support their work by connecting life science companies with the highly skilled professionals they need to continue innovating. Whatever the hiring need, ProClinical will provide a bespoke staffing



CHS Healthcare

We partner with the NHS and social care systems to deliver innovative patient flow, pathway solutions, and continuing healthcare services. As patient flow experts, we deliver innovative processes and systems which mean that we are able to support the NHS reset and recovery across the entire health and care pathway. Our purpose is to help everyone to live their lives as fully as possible.

