

For: Heads of all Establishments/Settings
OCC Managers
Governors/Management Committees
Trade Union Safety Representatives
Employee Noticeboards
Intranet

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RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR LONE WORKING SUPPORT WORKERS

Background

A North-East based registered charity has been fined £30,000 with costs of £20,000 after one of their employees was attacked and killed by a service user.

The charity were in breach of Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 for failing to do all that was reasonably practicable to ensure their employees safety.

The charity had exposed the support worker to certain obvious risks, particularly in the context of her dealings with the individual service user whose mental health was known to be deteriorating and the charity failed to respond to a number of warning signs. The charity also failed to afford the support worker the level of protection that the nature of her job warranted.

General Information

Lone working is not in itself against the law, and it will be often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to think about and deal with any health and safety risks before people should be allowed to work alone.



What should a manager do?

Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees. Managers should:

- Ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken by a competent person for employees who visit individuals in their own homes;
- Ensure the employee is made aware of the assessment, its significant findings and the actions to be carried out;
- Ensure the control measures identified on the action plan are implemented;
- Ensure risk assessments are reviewed when changes occur, findings are communicated and control measures are implemented.

Issued by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, Shared Services, Unipart House, Garsington Road, OXFORD, OX4 2GQ

For Further Information and Advice:

	Email and web addresses	
Specialist:		
Health & Safety Executive (HSE)	www.HSE.gov.uk For more information about lone working: http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf 	01256 404000
Occupational Health	occupational.health@oxfordshire.gov.uk	01865 815421
Staff Care Services	staffsupport@oxfordshire.gov.uk .	01865 256661
H&S Training Learning & Development	LandD.sharedservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk	01865 797123
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Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team	healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk web address: http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/healthandsafety	01865 797222