

# Operational Policy



<b>Title:</b>	<b>Lone Worker Policy</b>
<b>Originator:</b>	<b>Joanne Francom, AD Human Resources and OD</b>
<b>Approval body:</b>	<b>ELT Board : 24<sup>TH</sup> April 2019</b>
<b>Date for review:</b>	<b>April 2022</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Magenta Living (ML) recognises that there are legal duties placed on the company to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health safety and welfare of its employees, partners, residents and others who may be affected by its undertakings.

It is the company's policy to manage and reduce risk to an acceptable level. Within the context of this Lone Worker policy, risk is defined as any incident in which an employee is subject to abuse, threat or assault by a third party, where an environment in itself may pose a risk or where there is an identified risk from others.

This will include: -

- Physical attack – whether visible injury occurs or not and includes sexual, hate motivated or racial attack.
- Verbal abuse and/or intimidation.
- Animal attack – where an animal is threatening, is used as a threat or as a means of attack.
- Attack or threat of attack against the property of an employee.
- Threats against the family or relatives of an employee.
- Carrying out work where potential risks have been identified, e.g. Do Not Visit Alone (DNVA) properties.
- Risks created to a lone worker within an environment, eg layout of a building (no signal for communications), hot spot areas, specialist supported housing schemes

## Legal Responsibility

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAW) places duties on an employer to provide safe systems of work and safe places of work (Sec. 2).

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSAW) (Reg. 3) requires that an employer undertake suitable and sufficient assessment of risk.

Both HASAW (Sec. 7) and MHSAW (Reg. 14) place a duty on employees to cooperate with and to follow instructions given in relation to health, safety and welfare given by their employer

## **2. STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The intention of this policy is to ensure ML meets its legal, statutory and regulatory obligations in how it develops, delivers and monitors its services and that good practice is incorporated within these processes.

ML will ensure, so far as is reasonable, that employees are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety.

ML recognises that solitary working exposes employees and others to certain hazards. The company's intention is to help employees to remove the risks from these hazards or, where this is not possible, to reduce them to an acceptable level.

ML recognises that lone workers are potentially a vulnerable group of employees. Therefore, risk assessments, safe systems and monitoring procedures will be in place to minimise the risk to employees.

The intention of this policy is to set out how ML aims to meet its obligations in protecting staff, as far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks associated with lone working.

Employees also have a duty and responsibility to take reasonable care of their own and others' health & safety and to co-operate with their employer by following the procedures and safe systems in place.

ML services are varied and diverse involving a number of different situations when staff may be required to work alone. This policy has been written to be as wide-ranging as possible, but ultimately to provide a framework within which managers and staff are able to consider and respond to the issues relevant to lone working roles within their area or service.

The aims of this policy are to:

- raise staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working
- ensure that the relevant risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing manner, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to minimise risks to staff working alone
- provide practical advice on safety when working alone
- Ensure staff understand and utilise ML Lone Worker System
- Ensure appropriate support is available for staff who work alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all accidents, incidents and 'near misses' relating to lone working
- Reinforce ML's intentions to take appropriate action against people who harass, abuse or assault ML employees.
- To ensure systems are utilised to communicate potential lone worker risks

- (e.g. Do not visit alone flags)
- To ensure staff take responsibility for checking systems before lone working

## Scope

This policy applies to all permanent, temporary and part-time staff, agency workers and others in the employment of ML including volunteers. Contractors and sub-contractors employed by ML will be expected to have similar policies or guidelines in place for lone workers.

This Policy should be considered in conjunction with ML Health & Safety Policy and ML Lone Worker System.

## 3. POLICY

### 3.1 Lone Worker: Definition

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) describes a lone worker as:

*“Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”*

Typical examples of lone workers and lone working activities given by the HSE are:

People working in fixed establishments where:

- Only one person works on the premises
- People work separately from others
- People work outside normal hours
- Employees working away from their fixed base.

Within ML groups of staff who are or might be involved in lone working include but are not restricted to:

- Building Services staff required to work in resident’s homes or surrounding areas.
- Housing/Support staff visiting residents’ homes or carrying out tenancy enforcement or support planning and assessment
- Allocations staff carrying out viewings with applicants
- Cleaning or security staff working within ML buildings or the surrounding area/neighborhood
- Staff carrying out office based private interviews in various ML locations and other neutral locations e.g. hotels.
- Staff based with offices based on site, e.g. sheltered schemes, specialist supported housing, community houses
- “Front Desk” staff where colleagues are absent.
- Staff expected to work outside normal office of hours
- Staff included on the ML Emergency Out of Hours (OOH) rota.
- The duty Red Emergency Lead Officer (RELO), but usually accompanied by

OOH staff.

- Response staff expected to respond to a situation as required.
- Any staff who journey alone in the course of their work by car/other forms of private transport, public transport or on foot

### **3.2 Managing Risk**

Risk to lone worker roles will continuously change, but particular attention should be given to re-assessment of risk in the following circumstances:-

- in the creation of any new roles or restructuring
- following any relevant incident or near-miss
- on a change in legislation or best practice guidance issued by the HSE
- at the specific request of staff in lone worker roles, or their representatives, based upon self-assessment of risk.
- in the development of new services, schemes or buildings (in which staff will be required to work).

Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the *Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)* and the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)* still apply. These require risk assessment and safe systems of work to be in place.

### **3.3 Staff Guidelines**

Staff Guidelines are available on Yeti and all lone workers are expected to familiarise themselves with the contents and to follow the advice provided for their own safety. The Guidelines cover areas for consideration for the employer, employee and line manager in assessing and minimising risk relating to lone working. The day to day routine activities of employees will be covered by other more service/task specific risk assessments.

### **3.4 Accountability**

As the employer, ML are accountable for providing and ensuring use of a Lone Worker system available for compulsory use by all employees identified as lone workers.

The Lone Worker line manager – is accountable for identifying lone worker roles within their service area through job descriptions. In conjunction with the Human Resources team, the line manager will ensure staff have relevant and timely training. The Line Manager should further ensure that staff understand their responsibilities within this policy and the procedures, guidance and systems that underpin the policy. The Line Manager is also accountable for monitoring the effective use of the Lone Worker system and for taking necessary actions regarding non-compliance of the policy.

Where relevant, the line manager will be accountable for reviewing the role risk assessment which will take account of various aspects including

personal or professional experience, feedback from individual staff, team meetings, data shared by third parties, e.g. police, social services etc.

Lone Worker Staff are accountable for their own safety by following the framework of this policy. Individuals who choose to leave a work situation due to a perceived risk will always be supported by the Company and any threat to staff managed within the terms of the tenancy and may be reported to the Police.

Where there are concerns that residents may be particularly vulnerable or they, their relatives or others may act in a way that offers a real or perceived risk to lone workers then joint visits will be necessary. In some circumstances where risk is perceived as extreme to either staff or the customer's wellbeing, the lone worker may require the presences of advocates, specialists or statutory services during visits. In circumstances where risk cannot be adequately managed, the service may be withdrawn or provided in an alternative way such as through a meeting in a ML office or public place rather than the resident's home.

### **3.5 Control measures and Monitoring**

ML will adopt the following control measures to mitigate potential risks to lone workers: -

- Lone worker role risk assessments
- Implementation and monitoring of safe systems (ie Alertcom system) to ensure that the whereabouts of staff are known, and that staff have access to an emergency alert system.
- Installation and monitoring of 'tracker' devices in all company vehicles. (as per ML Transport and Driving Policy)
- Joint working with other agencies for high-risk activities eg Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) etc.
- Improvements to security arrangements in buildings, particularly where staff work out of hours or shifts eg lighting in car parks, CCTV etc
- Communication systems for sharing information on risk with colleagues in other disciplines and agencies such as 'flagging procedures' and information sharing protocols.
- Training to increase staff awareness of risk and guidelines identifying the precautions to be taken and risks to consider.
- Supervision and auditing of working practices.
- Use of additional personal protective equipment such as mobile phones or personal alarms.
- All incidents involving lone workers will be recorded and reported to the relevant team for action.
- Protective clothing and personal surveillance/recording devices eg body vests and Alertcom
- Additional equipment as required, e.g torches, Hi-visual vests, body-cameras, dash-cameras (for identified vehicles)

Other measures will always be considered commensurate with the risk identified by the Company and its employees. The above should not therefore be considered as an exhaustive list of measures as the policy is flexible to reflect the diversity of risks.

### **3.6 GDPR**

The data that ML collects to monitor performance is necessary to ensure the health and safety of its employees. ML will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the data held is securely stored and that records and logs are retained and deleted after 12 months.

Individuals have the right to request a copy of clearly identifiable data where relevant, eg relating to their place of residence if picked up through the Lone Worker system. For requests that are valid and permissible, the individual may submit a Subject Access Request to Human Resources (see GDPR/Data Protection Policy on Yeti)

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION**

This reviewed policy will be effective from 1<sup>ST</sup> May 2019. Staff are made aware of Lone Working at priority training, Team briefings and the policy document is available on YETI. Staff will also be made aware of this key safety policy through induction training, e-learning and mandatory awareness training provided by the Company.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

Consultation with SLT Lite was concluded on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and the Policy was presented to the Health & Safety Committee for comment on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and approved by ELT Board on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Comments were incorporated within the body of the policy.

Consultation took place with the Unions relating to the original policy. As the principles behind the updated policy remain the same, further consultation is not deemed necessary.

## **6. Equality Analysis (EA)**

As an internal policy, there is no requirement to carry out an EA.

## **7. MONITORING PERFORMANCE**

The effectiveness of and compliance with this policy will be monitored by line managers through :

- Training and usage of the Lone Worker system
- review and amendments as necessary to role risk assessments
- monitoring of actions, outcomes and learning points as a result of incidents or concerns.

- Ensuring required performance reports are submitted to the Health & Safety Committee for consideration or decisions to be taken.

## 8. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The responsible authority for approving this policy is ELT Board.

The responsible officer for formulating this policy and ensuring its effective implementation is the AD for Human Resources and Organisational Development.

The Responsible officer for reviewing and monitoring the implementation and performance against this policy is the Health & Safety Manager. All managers will be accountable for ensuring their staff follow the requirements of this policy.

## 9. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if deemed necessary through the performance monitoring process or as legislative change dictates.

## 10. Amendment Log

Date of revision:	Record of amendments:	Reason for revision:
2016	<i>Assessment Check List – added responsibilities of the employer, employee and line manager</i>	<i>To clarify responsibility in line with health and safety legislation</i>
February 2019	<i>P1 – Review date replaced with ‘Date of review’</i>	<i>Recommendation by ISOQAR auditors Feb. 2019</i>
March 2019	<i>P.5 –7 Assessment Checklist and Flow Charts moved to procedures/guidance documents</i>	<i>To provide a reference document for staff offering guidance with procedures</i>
March 2019	<i>Point 3.4 Accountabiliy section included</i>	<i>To reinforce existing accountability of ML, lone workers and line managers</i>
March 2019	<i>Point 5 – No further consultation required with unions.</i>	<i>No significant changes made to document but will be shared with Unions</i>
March 2019	<i>Point 7 – Change to Chair of H&amp;S Committee and removal of names</i>	<i>Job titles to be used instead of named persons</i>
April 2019	<i>3.6 Inclusion of GDPR</i>	<i>To align to GDPR/Data Protection Policy</i>