

Lone Working Policy

Lone Working

Lone workers are those people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

In a dental setting, we work with professional guidelines from the General Dental Council (GDC) under the "Standards for the Dental Team."

Standards for the Dental Team Principle Six: Work with colleagues in a way that is in the patients' best interests.

GDC Standard 6.2: You must be appropriately supported when treating patients.

The purpose of this requirement is so someone is with you if there is a medical emergency. This is covered in standard 6.2.2 and 6.2.3. The only exceptions to this mandatory requirement are outlined in 6.2.2:

- *Treating patients in an out of hours emergency*
- *Providing treatment as part of a public health programme*
- *There are exceptional circumstances.*

Under normal circumstances there will be at least 2 team members working in the practice to ensure there is support in the unlikely event of a medical emergency/other incident. It may be necessary under exceptional circumstances for a clinician to work alone to see a patient. GDC outlines 'exceptional circumstances' as those which are unavoidable, not routine and could not have been foreseen. Absences due to annual leave or training are not exceptional circumstances. Standard 6.2.3 states that if there are exceptional circumstances which mean you cannot work with an appropriately trained member of the dental team when treating a patient in a dental setting, you must assess the possible risk to the patient of continuing treatment.

Many working procedures will need a risk assessment to be carried out to determine a safe protocol with respect to the lone working policy. We have carried out a risk assessment which is reviewed regularly. When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be carried out safely by a lone worker/someone working without chairside assistance, arrangements for help or backup should be implemented. The work must be carried out with the knowledge, and within a protocol agreed by Hassan Bhojani.

Hassan Bhojani will identify situations where there are lone workers and consider extra risk-control measures, particularly for:

- Young workers (work experience/students)
- New staff (limited experience/new techniques)
- Pregnant staff or staff with special health considerations e.g. Allergies

Lone workers should be:

- Aware of, and understand the risks associated with their work
- Recognise, and utilise, the relevant safety precautions
- Aware of the practice emergency and first aid facilities
- Aware of the nearest source of supervisory contact
- Aware of the relevant incident procedures

Members of staff working on their own must contact Hassan Bhojani when they begin lone working and when they leave the practice. They should also make regular (hourly) contact with a designated person during this time.

Lone workers must follow this procedure when at the practice:

- Lock all external doors and windows
- Lock security shutters
- Be aware of panic button location
- Do not handle hazardous materials
- Be aware of how you would obtain help in an emergency such as an accident or fire
- Call the Senior appointed team member for that day, when leaving the practice
- Follow the practice closing procedure

If a lone worker fails to call at the agreed time the practice manager will follow these steps:

- Call the mobile of the lone worker
- Telephone the practice
- Call the worker's home phone or known contact
- Telephone the Principal
- Call the police

Reporting Incidents

Any abuse or threat (actual or perceived) or injury that results from lone working must be reported immediately to the practice manager who will follow the correct procedure.

Further Guidance

[HSE: Health and Safety Guidance on the risks of Lone Working](#)

Document Control

Title:	Lone Working Policy
Author/s:	DCME Team

Owner:	DCME Team
Approver:	DCME Team
Date Approved:	27/07/22
Review Date:	27/02/23
Next Review Date:	27/08/23

Change History				
Version	Status	Date	Author / Editor	Details of Change (Brief detailed summary of all updates/changes)
0.1	Draft	27/02/22	PG	Original draft reviewed, GDC standards guidance added
0.2	Draft	13/12/22	HD	General Update

The latest approved version of this document supersedes all other versions, upon receipt of the latest approved version all other versions should be destroyed, unless specifically stated that previous version(s) are to remain extant. If in any doubt, please contact the document Author.

Approved By: Hassan Bhojani, Waleed Javed
Date Published: 19/09/2024