



LONE WORKING POLICY

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LONE WORKING POLICY

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1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and procedures that **Byram House** follows to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of employees who work alone, whether as a substantial part of their working life or on an occasional basis. The policy applies to all staff, agency workers, volunteers, and contractors working at Byram House, whether at 62 Deighton Road, 66 Deighton Road, or elsewhere, including when working from home or conducting external visits.

The Home is Byram House, which comprises the two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road. This policy applies equally across both residences and to waking night shifts.

IMS Care LTD has a legal responsibility under the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** and the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees while at work. The purpose of this policy is to assess the hazards and associated risks to lone workers and to implement and maintain such preventative measures as are necessary to eliminate (where reasonably practicable) or otherwise minimise the risks to personal safety.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Identify all situations where staff may be required to work alone (including waking night shifts, home visits, and working from home).
- Conduct suitable and sufficient risk assessments for lone working activities.
- Implement control measures to reduce risk, including communication protocols, supervision, personal safety equipment, and emergency procedures.
- Provide staff with clear guidance on their responsibilities and the support available.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, including the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**, the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)**, the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)**, the **Equality Act 2010** (duty to make reasonable adjustments), and the **Employment Rights Act 1996** (protection for whistleblowers).

2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This Lone Working and Waking Night Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It ensures the home meets its duties under the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** (sections 2 and 3), the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** (risk assessment and information/training requirements), and the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)** .
- **Staff Safety** – It identifies hazards specific to lone working (e.g., sudden illness, violence from children or family members, inability to lift heavy loads, driving risks) and sets out proportionate control measures.
- **Risk Reduction** – It requires documented lone working risk assessments for each role and task, taking into account the individual staff member's health, experience, and the environment. For waking night staff, it mandates regular checks of children and emergency protocols.
- **Clear Protocols** – It provides step-by-step guidance for home visits, emergencies, working from home, and the use of communication devices (mobile phones, buddy systems, on-call arrangements).
- **Training and Preparedness** – It ensures that staff who work alone receive appropriate training on personal safety, dynamic risk assessment, and de-escalation techniques.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The **Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) 2026** expects homes to demonstrate effective health and safety management, including lone worker protection. This policy provides clear evidence.
- **Support After Incidents** – It commits to providing debriefing, HR support, and access to counselling following any serious incident involving lone working.

3. Definitions & Legislation

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Home	Byram House, the children's home registered with Ofsted, comprising two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.
Company	IMS Care LTD, the registered provider and legal entity responsible for operating Byram House.
Byram House	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
Lone Worker	An employee who works by themselves without close or direct supervision (Health and Safety Executive definition). This includes staff working alone in the home during waking night shifts, staff conducting external visits (e.g., home visits, attending meetings), staff working from home, / staff travelling between locations.
Waking Night	A shift where a staff member remains awake throughout the night to supervise and support children, conduct safety checks, and respond to emergencies.
Reasonably Practicable	The standard under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974: balancing the degree of risk against the time, cost, and effort required to act.
Dynamic Risk Assessment	A continuous process of assessing risk in a changing environment, allowing the lone worker to adjust their actions or withdraw if safety is compromised.
Buddy System	An arrangement where two or more lone workers keep in contact with each other at agreed intervals, or where a designated contact person monitors the lone worker's safety.

On-Call Manager	A manager (from the home or IMS Care LTD) available 24/7 to provide advice, support, and authorisation for emergency actions.
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3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA)	Sections 2 and 3 – duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and others affected by work activities.	Byram House must take reasonable steps to protect lone workers from risks arising from their work.
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)	Employers must carry out risk assessments, implement control measures, provide information and training, and plan for emergencies.	Requires documented lone working risk assessments, regular reviews, and provision of emergency communication systems.
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)	Requires reporting of work-related deaths, specified injuries (including fractures other than to fingers or toes), injuries requiring hospital treatment for non-workers, and dangerous occurrences (near misses).	An incident where a lone worker is seriously injured or suffers a dangerous occurrence must be reported to the HSE.
Equality Act 2010	Requires employers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees,	Risk assessments must consider individual staff health conditions (e.g.,

	including those with medical conditions that may affect lone working.	epilepsy, diabetes, mental health) and adjustments made where needed.
Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and Employment Rights Act 2025)	Protects employees who raise genuine health and safety concerns (whistleblowing) from detriment or dismissal.	Staff who report unsafe lone working arrangements are protected.
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Published March 2026. Strengthens multi-agency accountability and safeguarding practice.	Lone workers who visit families or accompany children on external activities must follow safeguarding procedures and report concerns.
Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026	Effective 1 April 2026. Focuses on children's lived experience and whether staff feel safe and supported.	Inspectors will review whether the home has adequate lone worker protections and whether waking night staff are properly supported.
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline NG225 (2022, updated March 2026 chapter guidance)	Recommends dynamic risk assessment and safety planning for children at risk of self-harm.	Waking night staff must be aware of individual risk assessments for children who may be at risk of self-harm during the night.

4. The Policy

4.1 General Statement and Legal Framework

Byram House has a legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees while at work. This applies to all staff, including those who work alone (e.g., waking night staff, staff conducting home visits, staff working from home).

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Assess the hazards and associated risks to lone workers.
- Implement and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, such preventative measures as are necessary to eliminate (where reasonably practicable) or minimise risks to personal safety.

This policy is based on the principle that **lone working should be avoided where possible**, particularly for high-risk activities. Where lone working is unavoidable, suitable risk assessments and control measures must be in place.

4.2 Organisation and Management Responsibilities

Directors

- Ensure provision of arrangements in relation to lone working.
- Ensure the Company's policy is implemented for their respective services.
- Ensure adequate resources are available to control lone working risks.

Responsible Individual

- Advise on appropriate measures to meet legal and organisational requirements.

- Regularly monitor and review any incidents or accidents that involve lone working to ensure policy provisions were implemented.
- Escalate any systemic issues to the Directors.

Registered Manager

- **Avoid lone working where possible** – assess tasks to determine if a second person is required.
- Ensure risk assessments regarding lone working are written and regularly reviewed (at least annually or after any significant change/incident).
- Ensure safe systems of work are developed and implemented.
- Inform employees of their responsibilities under this policy.
- Ensure records of children are regularly updated so accurate information is available to staff at all times.
- Allocate staff to children in accordance with the perceived risk profile of the child and the assessed skill/experience of the staff member.
- Ensure all employees comply with relevant guidelines and policies.
- Provide relevant training to lone working staff where necessary.
- Ensure all accident/incident reports involving lone working are properly recorded, investigated and monitored.
- Ensure bank and agency staff have undergone appropriate induction before being assigned any lone working.
- Ensure appropriate support is given to staff following an incident (e.g., debriefing, Human Resources, counselling via Employee Assistance Programme).

Employees

- Understand and adhere to this policy and any associated guidelines.
- Undertake appropriate training related to lone working and health and safety.
- Report any concerns to their manager as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Take all reasonable steps to maintain their own personal health and safety and that of other work colleagues.
- Report all adverse incidents as soon as possible.

4.3 Risk Assessment for Lone Working

There is a legislative duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary.

The risk assessment process must:

- Involve workers when considering potential risks and measures to control them.
- Take steps to ensure risks are removed where possible, or put in place control measures (e.g., carefully selecting work equipment to ensure staff can perform tasks safely).
- Provide instruction, training and supervision.
- Review risk assessments periodically (at least annually) or when there has been a significant change in working practice (e.g., new child with challenging behaviour admitted, change of premises, new task).

The following must be considered in the risk assessment process:

- Individual child risk assessments (where applicable).
- Arrangements for external visits (e.g., home visits, accompanying a child to an appointment), including consideration of alternatives.
- Travelling between locations (e.g., between 62 and 66 Deighton Road, or to meetings).
- Reporting and recording arrangements.
- Communication (e.g., mobile telephones, two-way radios) and traceability (e.g., visit log at the home).
- Personal safety training in relation to lone working and as work content may require (e.g., Restrictive Physical Intervention – RPI training).
- Being aware that some tasks may be too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by an unaccompanied worker (e.g., physical interventions with a highly aggressive child).
- Where a lone worker is working at another employer's workplace (e.g., school, health clinic), informing that employer of the risks and the required control measures.
- When a risk assessment shows it is not possible for the work to be conducted safely by a lone worker, addressing that risk by making arrangements to provide support (e.g., second staff member, change of shift pattern).

Supervision levels: Risk assessment will help managers decide on the right level of supervision. There are some high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present, for example:

- Working with a child known to display unpredictable or violent behaviour.
- Conducting a home visit where there is known risk of violence.
- Lifting or moving heavy equipment that requires two people.

Where the conditions require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and the manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks.

4.4 Hazards Associated with Lone Working

People who work alone face the same risks as others doing similar tasks, but additionally may encounter:

- **Accident or sudden illness** – when there is no one to summon help or provide first aid.
- **Medical condition** – a condition (e.g., epilepsy, diabetes, severe allergy) that may cause a medical emergency when alone.
- **Violent behaviour** – from children, their families or friends, especially during home visits or in public places.
- **Attempting tasks that cannot safely be done by one person** – e.g., heavy lifting of awkward loads, physical restraint.
- **Fire** – delayed detection or inability to evacuate.
- **Driving** – long distances, fatigue, breakdown.
- **Electric shock or exposure to chemicals** – if working alone with equipment.
- **Faulty equipment** – no second person to notice or assist.
- **Poor or lack of training** – lone workers may be unsupervised and more likely to make errors.
- **Pregnant or young workers** – additional vulnerabilities.
- **Slips, trips or falls** – no one to call for help.
- **Poor lighting** – when working alone at night.

Individual perception: The perception of these hazards may differ. For example, an inexperienced staff member may underestimate risks. Some workers may feel particularly vulnerable to violence away from the workplace or after dark. A medical condition may make it unsafe for an individual to work alone. Managers must consider these factors when completing risk assessments.

4.5 Evaluating Risk and Deciding on Precautions

Supervisors and managers must discuss with the employees concerned the situations they face and decide on the level of risk posed and whether additional precautions are required, or even if the job/task can be completed safely by a single person.

Findings should be clearly recorded on the risk assessment and consider, as appropriate:

- The environment – location, security, access, lighting, presence of other people.
- Nature of the task – duration, physical demands, risk of violence.
- The individual concerned – health, experience, training, confidence.
- History – previous incidents, known triggers.
- Staffing levels and availability – can a second person be provided?
- Any other circumstances (e.g., time of day, weather).

Where there is reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration must be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

Staff resource implications cannot be ignored, but **safety must be the prime concern.**

Staff must remain vigilant and flexible because circumstances may change rapidly – a child's behaviour may escalate, a trigger factor may appear, or other factors specific to the situation might affect the assessment. Staff are expected to conduct **dynamic risk assessments** continuously and to withdraw or seek help if risk becomes unacceptable.

4.6 Planning and Communication Arrangements

- **Briefing** – Staff must be fully briefed in relation to the risks as well as the task itself.
- **Regular reviews** – Plans for responding to individual children who present a known risk must be regularly discussed with the staff team when reviewing individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans.
- **Check-in systems** – Communication, checking in and call-back arrangements must be in place. The system must ensure that the return of the worker (or a call from them) is actively expected and waited for, and that action is taken to contact them if they do not return or the call is not made.
- **On-call manager** – The manager or on-call manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the team.

For external visits (e.g., home visits, accompanying a child to an activity):

- Staff must provide an accurate plan of the day's activities and inform their line manager if they deviate from the plan.
- Before leaving, staff must have access to:
 - Any risk assessment of the destination (home, occupants, pets).
 - Up-to-date child's care plan and relevant information from previous visits.
 - Details of any incidents or crises that may affect lone working.
 - Emergency contact details, including the 24-hour on-call service.

For waking night shifts (see also section 4.13):

- Waking night staff must be familiar with each child's risk assessment, especially night-time risks (e.g., roaming, health needs, self-harm).
- Electrical monitoring equipment (e.g., baby monitors) must be checked for functionality at the start of the shift.
- Staff must position themselves within the home to enable a quick response to any incident.
- Children must be checked at least hourly (or more frequently if indicated by risk assessment), with times and outcomes recorded.

4.7 Measures to Reduce the Risk of Lone Working

Supervision

- Lone workers are not under constant supervision, but managers can ensure employees understand the risks and safety precautions.
- Arrangements for the individual to contact a supervisor if they need support.
- New employees or those undergoing training may need to be accompanied initially.
- Regular contact by phone may be appropriate.

Personal safety

- Staff must take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety.
- A mobile phone and backup plan are **not** sufficient safeguards by themselves. The first priority is to reduce risk through planning.
- Before working alone, a risk assessment must be done with the manager.
- Staff must inform their line manager or other identified person of when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location, and follow an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes tasks where a staff member expects to leave shift following a visit rather than returning to the home.
- The system must ensure that the return of the worker or a call from them is actively expected, and action taken if they do not make contact.
- If a person does not report in after finishing a visit or task, the designated person should instigate a contact procedure (e.g., mobile phone call). If still no contact, a manager should be informed and a decision made whether to go to the last known address or alert the police.

Buddy systems

- For staff driving long distances or working in remote areas, a buddy system (two workers checking on each other at agreed intervals) may be appropriate.

4.8 Specific Processes

Home Visits

Before undertaking a home visit and lone working, employees must have access to:

- Any risk assessment of the home, occupants, pets.
- Up-to-date child's support plans and relevant information from previous visits.
- Details of incidents or crises that may affect lone working.
- Emergency contact details, including the 24-hour on-call service.
- Appropriate information to support the needs of the child.

Emergencies

- If a situation arises where it is necessary to call for assistance or contact emergency services, the employee must have access to a mobile telephone with up-to-date emergency contact information.
- If personal safety is compromised, the employee should be made aware that they may **leave the home/location immediately** and find somewhere safe, preferably with other people.
- If the incident is serious, a Manager must be informed as soon as possible.

Staff Working from Home

- Staff working from their own home should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.
- There should be regular contact with their line manager or other designated person if working at home for extended periods.
- An appropriate reporting-in system should be used for those who work from home but also make visits, or for those who drive long distances – a buddy system for checking that each other are safe and well on a regular basis (e.g., at the end of each day).

4.9 Personal Safety – Reasonable Precautions

Staff should consider the following reasonable precautions:

- Ensure mobile phone is charged and working at the start of each shift.
- Be familiar with individual child risk assessments and behavioural support plans.
- Check if a child or family is known to present a risk and the agreed plan for working with them.
- Check directions to the destination before leaving.
- Ensure car is roadworthy, has breakdown cover, and suitable emergency equipment (e.g., torch, first aid kit).
- Keep car locked at all times when not in use.
- Carry laptops, mobile phones, and other valuables discreetly.
- Take care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night.
- Park in lit areas under a street light; avoid poorly lit or deserted areas.
- Avoid walking down dark alleyways; walk facing the traffic.
- Have an agreed plan for contact or emergency response – this may be standard for the team or specific to the situation. It should be recorded and readily accessible.
- Consider agreeing a **code word or phrase** to indicate that assistance is required (e.g., to use on a phone call to the manager without alerting an aggressor).

If personal safety is compromised:

- **Get out of the situation** – leave immediately.
- **Call for help** – emergency services (999) first, then manager.

4.10 Information, Training and Guidance

Line managers must identify which of their staff undertake lone working and ensure they have the appropriate level of training and information to enable them to carry out their duties as safely as is reasonably practicable.

Training content will include:

- The contents of this policy and the legal framework.
- How to conduct a dynamic risk assessment.
- De-escalation techniques and when to withdraw.
- Safe use of communication devices and reporting procedures.
- For waking night staff: specific guidance on hourly checks, use of monitoring equipment, and emergency response.

Reading through this policy with staff ensures all parties are well equipped and aware of possible hazards and safety precautions.

4.11 Monitoring and Review

- The ongoing implementation of this policy will be monitored through the **staff supervision process**.
- Lone working and risk assessment will be an agenda item for **team meetings** at least quarterly.
- Any member of staff with a concern regarding these issues should discuss it with their supervisor or manager, or with the team as appropriate.
- Risk assessments for lone working will be reviewed **annually** or earlier following an incident, significant change in role, change in child's behaviour, or change in working environment.

4.12 Lone Working Risk Assessment Flow Diagram (Text Summary)

The original diagram (not reproduced here) can be summarised as follows:

Step 1 – Identify the lone working activity (e.g., waking night shift, home visit, working from home, travelling).

Step 2 – Identify the hazards (violence, sudden illness, fire, driving, lifting, etc.).

Step 3 – Assess the risk level (likelihood × impact; impact is at least moderate as harm includes injury).

Step 4 – Decide on precautions (can the task be done safely alone? If not, arrange second person; else, put controls in place:

communication, training, PPE, emergency plan).

Step 5 – Record the assessment on the Lone Working Risk Assessment Form.

Step 6 – Review regularly or after any incident.

Managers must keep a register of lone working risk assessments for each staff role and each specific task.

4.13 Waking Night Risk Management Arrangements

Waking night staff play a critical role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children overnight. The following specific arrangements apply to all waking night shifts at Byram House (both 62 and 66 Deighton Road).

1. Pre-shift preparation

- At the start of the shift, the waking night staff member must read the home's **night-time log** from the previous night and any **incident reports** or **new risk assessments**.
- They must confirm (by a single log entry at the start of the shift) that they have read and understood this policy and the specific night-time arrangements.

2. Familiarity with child risk assessments

- Waking night staff must be familiar with the contents of each child's **risk assessment**, in particular any aspects concerning night-time risks, for example:
 - A child known to roam at night.
 - A child with health needs that present a night-time risk (e.g., epilepsy, asthma, diabetes).
 - A child at risk of self-harm or ligature use.
 - A child who requires medication at night.

3. Equipment checks

- Waking night staff must check that any electrical surveillance or safety equipment (e.g., baby monitors, door alarms, smoke detectors) identified in risk assessments are fully operational and in sound working order. Any faults must be reported to the manager immediately.

4. Positioning within the home

- Waking night staff must ensure they are appropriately located within the home to enable an effective and quick response to any risk-related matters or children's needs. This may vary depending on which children are in which residence (62 or 66 Deighton Road). Staff must move between the two residences as needed, ensuring they can be reached by telephone or radio.

5. Calling on sleep-in staff

- If the waking night staff member requires assistance (e.g., a child is in distress, requires physical intervention, or there is an emergency), they must **alert the sleep-in support staff** immediately. Responsibility for the situation remains with the waking night staff member until assistance arrives.

6. Hourly checks

- Unless otherwise stated in a child's risk assessment, waking night staff must ensure **all children are checked at least hourly intervals** throughout the night. The timing and results of checks must be recorded in the home's **daily log book** (or electronic equivalent). Checks should confirm the child is safe, breathing normally, and not in distress. For children at higher risk, more frequent checks (e.g., every 15 or 30 minutes) must be specified in their individual risk assessment.

7. New or emerging risks during the night

- If during a waking night shift a new or emerging risk is identified (e.g., a child wakes distressed, an item is found that could be used as a ligature, a child leaves the building), immediate interim risk management arrangements must be implemented and recorded in the form of an incident report.

- The incident must be brought to the attention of the **manager or on-call manager** at the earliest opportunity (within the shift, or immediately by phone if serious).
- If there is any doubt over how to manage a new or emerging risk, the **on-call manager** must be contacted for advice without delay.

8. End of shift handover

- At the end of the waking night shift, a full written and verbal handover must be given to the incoming day staff, including:
 - Any incidents or concerns during the night.
 - Results of hourly checks.
 - Any outstanding actions or follow-up required.
 - Any communication with on-call manager or external agencies.

5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff understand and can implement this Lone Working and Waking Night Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
Induction	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: definitions of lone working, legal framework (HSWA, Management Regulations), risk assessment process, hazards specific to lone working, communication and check-in systems, home visit protocols, personal safety precautions, emergency procedures, waking night arrangements (hourly checks, equipment, on-call escalation), and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
Annual refresher	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation (SCCIF 2026, Working Together 2026), case studies, incident debriefs, and refresher on dynamic risk assessment.
Dynamic risk assessment training	At induction and biennially	Practical training on assessing risk in real time, recognising escalation, using a code word system, and knowing when to withdraw or call for help.
Personal safety and de-escalation	Annually	Training on non-physical de-escalation techniques, avoiding confrontation, and safe exit strategies.
Waking night specific training	At induction and annually	Detailed training on the home's waking night protocols: hourly checks (how to conduct, what to record), use of baby monitors/door alarms,

		recognising signs of self-harm or medical emergency, contacting sleep-in staff, and on-call escalation.
RIDDOR and incident reporting	Annually	Training on reporting thresholds, internal reporting systems, and manager notification.
Record keeping and data protection	At induction and refresh	Training on logging checks, incident reports, and maintaining confidentiality.

Staff are required to:

- Read and sign this policy annually.
- Complete all mandatory training sessions, including waking night protocols where applicable.
- Know the on-call manager contact number and the location of emergency equipment (including ligature cutters, first aid).
- Immediately report any concerns about their own safety or the safety of children.

6. Related Policies and Guidance

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Lone Working Risk Assessment Forms (local)
- Accident and Incident Reporting Policy (including RIDDOR)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026
- HSE guidance: "Lone working – protecting those who work alone"

7. Policy Approval and Review Details



Policy Name	Lone Working Policy	
Home	Byram House	
Reviewed by	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
Approved by	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
Date	May 2026	