



WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG

Lone Working Policy

Policy Reference	WLILP19
Category	Operational Policies — Health & Safety
Version	3.0 (check-in method confirmed by WLIL)
Status	APPROVED — by the Board of Directors on 9 October 2026
Supersedes	WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy - DRAFT v2.0; Lone Working Policy 2026 (separately produced redraft)
Policy Owner	Board of Directors, West Limerick Independent Living CLG
Applies To	All employees, Personal Assistants, Home Support Workers, Coordinators, Managers, agency staff, contractors, students, and volunteers of West Limerick Independent Living CLG ("WLIL")
Related Policies	WLILP7A - Data Protection Policy; WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy; WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy; WLILP23 - Risk Management Policy; WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy; WLILP57 - Digital Risk Assessment Policy
Review Cycle	Annually, or sooner following a serious incident or legislative change



1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance, safeguards, and procedures for employees, contractors, agency personnel, students, and volunteers who may be required to work alone while delivering services on behalf of West Limerick Independent Living CLG (WLIL).

WLIL recognises that lone working forms an essential part of delivering community-based Personal Assistant (PA) Services and Home Support Services to people with disabilities and other service users within their own homes and communities. The organisation is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, welfare, and wellbeing of all staff engaged in lone working activities.

This policy outlines:

- the responsibilities of staff and management,
- risk assessment arrangements,
- emergency procedures,
- communication systems,
- escalation pathways,
- and the control measures in place to reduce risks associated with lone working.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Personal Assistants (PAs)
- Home Support Workers
- Coordinators
- Managers
- Agency staff
- Contractors
- Students and volunteers
- Any person undertaking duties on behalf of WLIL in a lone working capacity



This policy applies where staff:

- work alone in service users' homes,
- travel between appointments,
- work in isolated or rural locations,
- attend appointments alone,
- work outside standard office hours,
- or undertake duties without direct supervision.

3. Legislative & Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and should be read in conjunction with:

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007
- HSA Guidance on Lone Working
- HSE Lone Worker Guidance
- HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy
- Children First Act 2015 (where applicable)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- WLIL Safety Statement
- WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy
- WLILP23 - Risk Management Policy; WLILP57 - Digital Risk Assessment Policy
- WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy

4. Definition of Lone Working



Lone working refers to any work activity carried out by an employee or representative of WLIL where they work alone without direct supervision or immediate assistance from colleagues.

Within WLIL, lone working commonly includes:

- Personal Assistants supporting service users within private homes,
- Home Support workers attending isolated or rural locations,
- Staff travelling alone between appointments,
- Staff accompanying service users to community activities, appointments, or social events,
- Out-of-hours work or emergency response situations.

5. Policy Statement

WLIL acknowledges that lone working presents additional risks due to the isolated nature of community-based work. The organisation is committed to identifying, assessing, managing, and reducing those risks through appropriate systems, training, supervision, communication procedures, and risk control measures.

WLIL recognises that:

- no employee should be placed at unreasonable risk,
- lone working may not be suitable in all situations,
- and staff safety takes priority where unsafe circumstances arise.

Lone working will be avoided where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is necessary, appropriate safeguards and support systems will be implemented.

6. Risk Assessment & Control Measures

6.1 Lone Working Risk Assessments

WLIL operates a structured electronic risk assessment system containing multiple risk assessment categories, including a dedicated lone working section.

Risk assessments are completed:

- prior to commencement of services,
- during care planning,



- following incidents,
- where circumstances change,
- and during periodic reviews.

Risk assessments may identify:

- environmental risks,
- manual handling risks,
- aggression or behavioural risks,
- safeguarding concerns,
- medical risks,
- travel risks,
- communication difficulties,
- isolated locations,
- or situations where additional staffing is required.

6.2 Dynamic Risk Assessment

All staff are expected to continuously assess situations dynamically during the course of their work.

Staff must remain alert to:

- unsafe environments,
- aggressive or threatening behaviour,
- intoxication,
- unsafe visitors,
- environmental hazards,
- changes in service user presentation,
- safeguarding concerns,
- or any situation presenting unacceptable risk.



Where concerns arise, staff must:

- prioritise their own safety,
- withdraw from unsafe situations where necessary,
- contact their designated coordinator or manager,
- and report concerns immediately.

6.3 Situations Where Lone Working May Not Be Appropriate

Risk assessments may determine that lone working is unsuitable in certain circumstances.

Examples may include:

- complex moving and handling requirements,
- use of hoists requiring two staff,
- known history of violence or aggression,
- significant behavioural concerns,
- environmental risks,
- significant medical complexity,
- safeguarding concerns,
- or high-risk community situations.

In such cases, additional control measures may include:

- two-person staffing,
- revised care arrangements,
- additional supervision,
- modified service delivery,
- or temporary suspension of services pending review.

7. Communication & Monitoring Arrangements



WLIL operates electronic care management and scheduling systems to support lone worker safety, including the Nourish Care Planner system (Nourish Empower). Staff log in and out of each service user's visit using the app, which records the location of that check-in; for certain clients, a one-time-password device is used instead. WLIL does not use landline check-in. The app is also used to support recording of travel expenses — see WLILP50 - Travel and Subsistence Policy. Because location data is genuinely collected as part of this process, WLILP7A - Data Protection Policy must reflect this specific processing activity explicitly, including its legal basis and how staff are notified of it, rather than being covered only by general references to WLIL's systems.

Staff are required to:

- log in and out of scheduled visits using the designated system,
- carry a charged mobile phone while working,
- remain contactable during working hours where reasonably practicable,
- maintain communication with coordinators where required,
- and follow agreed reporting procedures.

Coordinators and designated personnel monitor attendance and scheduling systems and may follow up where concerns arise regarding missed visits or failure to log out.

8. Emergency Procedures

8.1 Emergency Contacts

Staff must have access to:

- designated coordinator contact details,
- out-of-hours emergency contact arrangements,
- emergency services contact numbers,
- and any relevant service-user emergency information.

8.2 Escalation Procedures

Where a staff member experiences:

- aggression,
- threats,



- medical emergencies,
- fire,
- safeguarding concerns,
- serious accidents,
- or any situation placing themselves or others at risk,

they must:

1. Prioritise immediate safety,
2. Remove themselves from danger where possible,
3. Contact their designated coordinator or emergency contact,
4. Contact emergency services where required.

Where internal emergency contacts cannot be reached, staff are instructed to contact emergency services directly by dialling 999 or 112, including:

- Ambulance Service,
 - Gardaí,
 - or Fire Brigade,
- depending on the nature of the emergency.

9. Violence, Aggression & Unsafe Behaviour

WLIL operates a zero-tolerance approach to violence, threats, intimidation, harassment, or abuse toward staff.

Staff are not expected to remain in situations where they feel unsafe.

Incidents involving:

- verbal abuse,
- threatening behaviour,
- physical aggression,
- intoxication,
- unsafe visitors,



- weapons,
- or serious environmental concerns

must be reported immediately and reviewed through the organisation's risk management procedures.

Following review, WLIL may:

- revise risk assessments,
- introduce additional staffing,
- modify services,
- involve external agencies,
- or suspend services where safety cannot be reasonably assured.

10. Safeguarding

Where staff identify safeguarding concerns involving a service user, family member, visitor, or third party, they must follow WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy and reporting procedures.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported promptly to management in line with organisational procedures and HSE safeguarding guidance.

11. Travel & Community Working

Staff travelling for work purposes must:

- ensure vehicles are roadworthy,
- maintain valid insurance, tax, and NCT where applicable,
- drive safely and within legal requirements,
- allow adequate travel time,
- and exercise caution in isolated or unfamiliar areas.

Staff should take reasonable precautions during adverse weather conditions and when attending unfamiliar environments.

12. Confidentiality & Data Protection



All staff must ensure that confidential service user information is protected during lone working activities.

Staff must:

- comply with GDPR requirements,
- use approved systems only,
- secure records and devices appropriately,
- and avoid inappropriate disclosure of information in public or unsafe settings.

13. Incident Reporting

All incidents, accidents, near misses, aggressive incidents, safeguarding concerns, or lone worker safety concerns must be reported using the SBAR incident report form in WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy, Appendix 3, rather than a separate lone working incident form.

Incidents will be reviewed to:

- identify lessons learned,
- review risk assessments,
- implement corrective actions,
- and improve safety systems.

14. Training & Awareness

Staff engaged in lone working will receive appropriate instruction, information, and training relevant to their role.

Training may include:

- lone worker awareness,
- dynamic risk assessment,
- safeguarding,
- personal safety,
- conflict management,
- manual handling,
- emergency procedures,



- communication systems,
- and incident reporting procedures.

Refresher training may be provided periodically.

15. Staff Wellbeing & Support

WLIL recognises that lone working may place emotional and psychological pressures on staff.

Staff are encouraged to:

- raise concerns regarding personal safety,
- seek support following difficult incidents,
- participate in debriefing where appropriate,
- and report concerns relating to stress, fatigue, or wellbeing.

Management will provide reasonable support following serious incidents where required.

16. Roles & Responsibilities

Staff Responsibilities

Staff must:

- comply with this policy,
- follow risk assessments and procedures,
- maintain communication,
- use designated systems appropriately,
- report hazards and incidents,
- and prioritise personal safety.

Coordinators & Line Managers



Coordinators and managers are responsible for:

- ensuring risk assessments are completed,
- monitoring lone working arrangements,
- responding to emergencies and incidents,
- implementing control measures,
- reviewing incidents,
- and supporting staff.

Senior Management & Board

Senior management and the Board of Directors are responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate systems and resources are in place,
- maintaining effective safety governance,
- reviewing policy effectiveness,
- and supporting continuous improvement.

17. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually,
- following serious incidents,
- following legislative or operational changes,
- or where improvements are identified.

Feedback from staff, coordinators, service users, and incident reviews may inform future revisions.



Appendix B — previously a standalone Lone Working Incident Form — has been removed. Staff should instead use the SBAR incident report form in WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy, Appendix 3, so that lone working incidents are recorded in the same system as every other incident type, rather than in a second, separate form that risks drifting out of sync with WLIL's main incident process.

18. Records Retention

Lone working risk assessments, safety checklists, and related documentation generated under this policy are retained in accordance with WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy, which is the single authoritative source for WLIL's retention periods.



APPENDIX A LONE WORKING SAFETY CHECKLIST

This checklist is to be completed by staff before commencing lone working duties. It is designed to help you identify risks, ensure controls are in place and support your personal safety while working in the community.

Staff Name: _____ Time: _____
Service User: _____ Location: _____
Date: _____ Signature: _____

CHECKPOINT	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS / ACTIONS
 1. MOBILE PHONE My mobile phone is fully charged, switched on and with me.	☐	☐	☐	
 2. EMERGENCY CONTACTS I have the relevant emergency contact numbers available.	☐	☐	☐	
 3. LOGGED INTO SYSTEM I have logged in to the Nourish / Care Planner system for this visit.	☐	☐	☐	
 4. SERVICE USER INFORMATION I have reviewed the service user's care plan and risk assessment.	☐	☐	☐	
 5. LONE WORKING RISKS I have reviewed any lone working risks and control measures.	☐	☐	☐	
 6. TWO STAFF REQUIRED? Risk assessment confirms that one staff member is appropriate for this visit.	☐	☐	☐	
 7. ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY I am aware of any environmental risks (e.g. pets, hazards, access issues).	☐	☐	☐	
 8. TRANSPORT / VEHICLE My vehicle is roadworthy, insured and suitable for the journey (if applicable).	☐	☐	☐	
 9. EQUIPMENT / PPE I have any required equipment, PPE or medication for the visit (if applicable).	☐	☐	☐	
 10. COORDINATOR AWARE My coordinator is aware of my schedule and expected check-in / check-out times.	☐	☐	☐	
 11. PERSONAL SAFETY I feel safe to carry out this visit. I will leave if I feel unsafe.	☐	☐	☐	
 12. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES I am aware of the emergency escalation procedure and who to contact if needed.	☐	☐	☐	



IN AN EMERGENCY

If you cannot contact your coordinator or emergency contact, or if you are in immediate danger, contact emergency services.

CALL 999 or 112

Ambulance • Gardaí • Fire Brigade



Approval

Approved by the Board of West Limerick Independent Living CLG on 9 October 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Board, on its instruction, by the General Manager:

Margaret O'Brien O'Connor

Margaret O'Brien O'Connor, General Manager

Date signed: *09-10-2026*