

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to minimise, as far as practicable, the risks associated with working alone and to meet statutory and legal obligations in respect of personal safety at work.

The Voluntary Board of Directors of Mohill Family Support Centre CLG in partnership with the Coordinator has a duty of care under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act to provide all employees with the best possible work systems to enable them to safely carry out their duties. The policy also aims to raise awareness of the issues of working alone and to ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding personal safety at work and how to meet those responsibilities. Working alone, in itself, is not hazardous but it can be when other circumstances come into play.

Whether a situation is high or low risk will depend on a number of factors—for example, the location or type of work or interaction with the public or consequences of an emergency and/ or accident, injury and so on.

A number of procedures, including procedures for dealing with possible emergencies, have been adopted and implemented by Mohill Family Support Centre CLG. A risk assessment of work practices within the Centre has been conducted to determine whether the work can be done by a person working alone. If an assessment shows an increased level of risk for an employee working alone then protective measures must be put in place to safeguard against that risk. In any particular situation, if the risk(s) associated with working alone are regarded as unacceptable then lone working will not be initiated, or will be terminated as appropriate.

2. Scope of the Policy

The procedures in this policy apply to all employees who work alone either full-time or on an intermittent basis. These procedures also apply to all work locations.

2.1 Definition of a 'Lone Worker' / 'Working Alone'

A person is alone at work when they are on their own; when they cannot be seen or heard by another person; and when they cannot expect a visit from another worker.

This definition covers any situation in which someone works without a colleague nearby whether it is on the premises of the Centre, or at a location away from the Centre.

2.2 Risks associated with working alone

The risks associated with working alone include (see Appendix 1 at the end of this Policy):

- The threat of violence or actual violence;
- Verbal abuse;
- Breakdown when travelling through an isolated area;
- Increased risk of allegations against employees / volunteers of the Centre;
- Increased stress / anxiety caused by working alone.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Voluntary Board of Directors

Mohill Family Support Centre CLG has a responsibility to provide a safe working environment for its employees, in keeping with the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and 2010. It is the employer's duty to identify potential hazards, assess the risks involved and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

Questions that may be useful in assessing the risks involved include:

1. Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
2. Is the lone work absolutely necessary?
3. Can all the materials involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
4. Is there a risk of violence?
5. Are women or young workers especially at risk if they work alone?
6. Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
7. What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?
8. How will the person be supervised?
9. Are there agreed limits in place as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone and (where appropriate) when to stop work and seek advice?
10. What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an