



Ixion Group Policy & Procedure

Lone Working and Personal Safety



Policy Statement

The Ixion Group (Ixion) is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our employees at all times.

Occasionally some staff will be required to work on their own to carry out their duties, which can increase the risk to their personal safety. Ixion will take all practical and appropriate measures to effectively manage the risks associated with lone working in order to ensure the safety of our employees.

It is the nature of our business that staff may also work with customers identified as 'higher risk' by the agency referring them to Ixion for support. This includes some groups of offenders and other customers who have previously demonstrated violent or abusive behaviour. Although incidents are thankfully rare, Ixion recognise the importance of stringent lone working protocols when dealing with such groups.

The safety of staff is of paramount importance and Ixion will ensure that:

- staff are involved in risk assessment processes;
- control measures are in place (including instruction, training and supervision);
- risk assessments are reviewed annually or when there is a significant change in working practice;
- when a risk assessment shows it is not possible for the work to be conducted safely by a lone worker, alternative arrangements are put in place;
- the level of supervision available is commensurate with the risk assessment, including high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present;
- where a lone worker is working at another employer's workplace, they are informed of any risks and the required control measures.

While Ixion is committed to ensuring compliance with our legal obligations to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff; employees also have an obligation to ensure their own safety and that of others affected by their actions. We therefore expect all employees to be active participants in managing their own safety, to not put themselves or others in danger and manage risk in line with this policy.

The policy aims to highlight the preventive measures Ixion will put in place to identify and manage risks and the measures and ownership employees must take when working alone.

Communication

This policy will be highlighted to all staff as part of their induction in relation to their personal safety, in so far as this applies to all staff.

Any member of staff who may potentially be involved in lone working will receive training as part of the risk assessment process to ensure they understand this policy, understand potential hazards facing lone workers and how to respond to such hazards, along with the management and reporting arrangements.



The policy will be held on the Ixion Cloud shared drive enabling all staff to access this at any time.

Where staff are working on partner premises with the potential for lone working situations to occur, they should establish the local lone working arrangements, and take these into consideration while complying with this policy.

Associated Policies

This Policy and associated procedures should be read in conjunction with the following Policies:

- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding
- Sickness
- Safe Driving

Definitions

Lone Working: employees working by themselves without immediate access to assistance or support from managers or other colleagues. They may be working away from their fixed base, within a different Ixion site, on partner premises, or in the community delivering outreach services. In some cases they may be working in a site with other staff but in an isolated area.

Home Working: employees using their home as their primary place of work as part of flexible working arrangements or as a base from which they travel to Ixion or partners premises. Occasional incidental work undertaken outside of normal working hours e.g. checking email or reading a report, is not classed as home working. Home workers are also considered to be lone working, although the risks are less dynamic than those where an employee is working with the public or in the community.

Managing Personal Safety

Risk Assessments

Before any member of staff undertake lone working an assessment of the risks involved will be made in conjunction with the line manager as per the Health & Safety Policy. This will include looking at:

- whether the place of work presents a special risk to a lone worker
- safe exit routes
- first aid arrangements
- means of communication or summoning assistance
- competence of the employee
- supervision arrangements e.g. periodic visits, use of local security staff, signing in/out, open diaries
- contingency plans for if an alarm is raised



As a result of the risk assessment control measures will be agreed and the member of staff trained in their implementation where necessary. Control measures may include:

- personal safety training
- prearranged contact times / reporting in
- buddy systems
- increased supervision e.g. drop in supervision visits, CCTV
- restriction on where meetings with customers take place
- physical changes to premises e.g. increased lighting at entrances or car parks
- emergency code words to alert colleagues of danger
- personal alarms

'SAFER' Dynamic Risk Assessment

All staff need to be adaptable to changing circumstances, vigilant for the safety of themselves and others and able to recognise their own abilities and limitations. Irrespective of the control measures in place for locations or lone working activities, staff must be able to identify and respond to changing environments. The SAFER model is a recognised approach to assessing situations, which all staff should be aware of, but in particular lone workers.

Step Back: Do not rush into situations, stop, look and listen and think about what is happening at a given time.

Assess the Threat (POP): assess the **P**eople, their behaviour, emotional state, prior knowledge about them; **O**bjects that could be used as a weapon; **P**lace for immediate hazards or danger.

Find Help: identify the options for help e.g. calling colleagues, other people in a building, customers.

Evaluate Options: decide what the options are to ensure personal safety e.g. how the situation can be handled, options to exit the location or situation, whether help or support is likely to arrive in the near future.

Respond: initiate the chosen response to the situation, continuing to reassess options as the situation develops.

Minimum Staff Cover

It is Ixion's aim that no employee will work alone in any Ixion premises and we aim to ensure that a minimum of two staff are present at delivery sites at all times. In these circumstances staff must ensure they are aware of each other's whereabouts and actions, and check in with each other at regular intervals.

Line managers with responsibility for employees at more than one location, should be in regular daily communication with each delivery site, especially where there are minimal employees based there.



General Rules

Employees must:

- ensure their appointment calendar is updated on a daily basis so their whereabouts can be tracked if they become un-contactable – appointment records should include exact times and locations.
- not change work/meeting locations without informing a line manager or designated colleague.
- not carry any items of value on their person whilst working alone (with the exception of a mobile phone or IT equipment required for the purpose of carrying out their role).
- activate the answer service on company issued mobile telephones (and any other mobile phones whose number has been given to Ixion to use in an emergency) to enable messages to be left.
- ensure their mobile phone is fully charged and operational before entering lone working situations, and have this on their person throughout any meetings/interventions.
- reply to telephone and email messages as soon as possible during their working hours to avoid unnecessary emergency procedures being instigated if they are out of contact for an unexpected duration.
- follow agreed checking in procedures with line managers or team.
- not work alone with customers who are intoxicated or whose behaviour poses an immediate risk to themselves or another person.
- remove themselves from a situation as soon as they feel their safety is at risk.
- Never use their own personal vehicle to transport customers.
- undertake basic checks on their vehicle before a journey to ensure it is roadworthy, and plan their route, including car parking to ensure this is in a safe location.
- report all incidents, however minor, in line with the Health & Safety Policy.

Dealing with 'Higher Risk' Customers

Employees may come into contact with customers who have been highlighted by their referring agency as presenting an increased risk level to the personal safety of staff, in particular lone workers. Typical examples of these customer groups are:

- Multi- Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) managed offenders
- Potentially Violent indicator set on referral by Jobcentre Plus
- Jobcentre Plus customers with Special Customer Record (SCR) status

It must not be assumed that all customers in these groups present a direct risk to staff. For example, SCR status is awarded where unrestricted access to data poses a demonstrable risk to the individual's safety e.g. transsexuals, witnesses in criminal cases. Sex offenders are MAPPA managed for their entire registration period – this does not mean they pose a direct threat to Ixion staff. However, in all cases, where a customer is highlighted as being 'higher risk', an individual risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure that all staff dealing with the customer are aware of any additional actions required to ensure their own safety.

Each delivery site will have a nominated manager who deals with SCR and MAPPA cases referred from Jobcentre Plus and who deal with the security of data for these customers (see DWP Provider Guidance for details). The nominated manager will initiate a risk assessment relating to 'higher risk' customers referred from Jobcentre Plus to identify safer working practices that must be applied



above and beyond the standard practice. Note that Jobcentre Plus will not provide details of offences or the reason why SCR status has been awarded to the customer, just details of the restrictions placed upon the MAPPA offender and extra information if they feel the individual may pose a risk of serious harm.

For contracts dealing primarily with offenders, the overall contract risk assessment will identify safer working practices that staff must adhere to.

The results of individual risk assessments will be communicated to all staff that may encounter the customer, with particular regard to lone workers.

The nature of Ixion's business means that staff will also come into contact with people who have mental health disorders, sometimes undiagnosed, and those handling difficult personal situations and who are highly stressed. In these cases, a formalised risk assessment may not be appropriate if possible, so it is important that staff practice the SAFER model and follow the general rules to protect their personal safety.

Additional working practices with higher risk customers include:

- No lone working to be undertaken with the individual.
- Customer to be met only on Probation/CRC premises.
- At least two members of staff to be in a room at all times when the individual is present.
- Panic alarm to be carried when meeting the individual.
- Individual to only be dealt with by a male (or female) member of staff.
- Lone worker to send coded text message every half hour while with the customer, and to telephone immediately a meeting/intervention ends to confirm their safety.

Home Workers

A business case for home working must be formally approved by a senior manager .

Individual employees are responsible for ensuring suitable arrangements in the home to support effective home working e.g. space, adequate lighting, suitable furniture, privacy, secure storage etc. Employees must have access to a telephone by which they can be contacted, and should remain contactable at all times during their normal working hours.

Home workers should observe and adhere to the Sickness Policy, notifying their line manager of any sickness that means they are unable to work to ensure that no unnecessary concerns are raised in the event they cannot be contacted or are not available as expected.

Any work related incidents and accidents should be reported to the line manager or a responsible First Aider as soon as practicably possible, whether an injury occurs or not.

Under no circumstances should employees:

- give details of their home address as an Ixion business address
- invite customers to their home in order to conduct Ixion business
- hold meetings or other business activities involving third parties in their home



Should any employee feel that their home address has been revealed to a customer and that their personal safety or that of their family is compromised, they must immediately inform their line manager who will raise an incident report and take action as per the Health & Safety Policy.

Responsibilities

All staff within Ixion have a responsibility to adhere to all aspects of this policy and take proactive steps to ensure the safety of themselves and other people affected by their actions. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

- Chief Executive Officer – responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all employees and ultimate responsibility for ensuring the company adheres to all legislative requirements.
- Group Finance & Corporate Services Director – responsible for ensuring risk assessments are conducted and regularly reviewed, ensuring staff receive appropriate training in personal safety and lone working, monitoring incidents and ensuring safety measures are continually updated and improved.
- Line Managers – responsible for ensuring staff understand and adhere to this policy, providing appropriate supervision and support to lone workers, reviewing lone worker risk assessments on an annual basis as a minimum, ensure all incidents/near misses are reported in line with the Health & Safety Policy.

Monitoring & Review

The Group Finance & Corporate Services Manager will monitor the performance of this policy through consultation with line managers and lone workers at least annually to review how effectively risk assessments and control measures are effectively implemented, and how safe staff feel, particularly those who regularly undertake lone working. Incident records will be reviewed with the Health & Safety Management Team, who will make recommendations on the Implementation and improvement of risk management and safe working practices.

The Group Finance & Corporate Services Manager will report back to the Board annually on the performance of the policy with recommendations for improvement to ensure that it continues to meet legislative requirements, adopts emerging best practice, and continues to be effective and relevant to the business.