

Lone Worker Policy 8 (1)

1. Purpose

Infinity Dogs CIC is committed to protecting the health, safety, wellbeing, and welfare of all Trainers and volunteers, who may work alone as part of their role.

This policy sets out the arrangements for identifying, assessing, and managing risks associated with lone working activities carried out on behalf of Infinity Dogs CIC.

As an organisation supporting disabled and neurodivergent individuals through force-free assistance dog training and accessible dog-related services, we recognise that lone working can present additional risks including environmental, behavioural, emotional, and communication-related risks.

This policy aims to:

- Protect trainers/volunteers from foreseeable harm
 - Ensure safe systems of work
 - Reduce isolation-related risks
 - Establish clear communication and emergency procedures
 - Promote safeguarding for both clients and workers
 - Support the welfare of dogs and handlers during all training activities
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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Freelance trainers and contractors
- Volunteers
- Trustees carrying out operational activities
- Any person acting on behalf of Infinity Dogs CIC

The policy applies whenever work is undertaken without direct supervision or immediate support from colleagues.

This may include:

- Home visits
 - One-to-one dog training sessions
 - Public access training
 - Travel between venues
 - Venue setup or pack down
 - Remote administrative work
 - Online sessions conducted alone
 - Behavioural assessments
 - Community outreach events
 - Working from private venues or outdoor spaces
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3. Definition of Lone Working

A lone worker is any person who works by themselves without close or direct supervision.

A worker may still be considered a lone worker even if other members of the public are present.

Examples within Infinity Dogs CIC may include:

- A trainer conducting a home visit alone
 - A volunteer travelling independently to support an event
 - A staff member conducting public access training with a handler in the community
 - Administrative staff working remotely from home
 - A worker opening or closing a venue alone
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4. Legal Responsibilities

Infinity Dogs CIC recognises its responsibilities under:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding legislation and guidance
- Working Time Regulations
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

Infinity Dogs CIC will take all reasonably practicable steps to protect lone workers from harm.

Workers also have a responsibility to:

- Follow this policy
 - Take reasonable care of themselves and others
 - Report concerns, incidents, hazards, or near misses
 - Participate in risk assessments and safety procedures
 - Use agreed communication systems
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5. Risk Assessment

All lone working activities must be risk assessed.

Risk assessments should consider:

Environmental Risks

- Remote or isolated locations
- Poor lighting
- Unsafe parking or travel routes
- Weather conditions
- Aggressive animals or uncontrolled dogs
- Unsafe home environments

Client and Public Risks

- Challenging behaviour
- Emotional distress or crisis situations
- Discrimination or harassment
- Safeguarding concerns
- Violence or aggression
- Presence of drugs, alcohol, or unsafe individuals

Worker-Specific Risks

- Disability or health conditions
- Neurodivergent communication needs
- Fatigue or burnout
- Experience and training level
- Pregnancy or medical needs

Dog-Related Risks

- Dog reactivity
- Bites or scratches
- Escaping dogs
- Handling injuries
- Stress or welfare concerns

Control measures must be documented and reviewed regularly.

6. Safe Working Procedures

6.1 Planning and Scheduling

Where possible:

- Appointments should be scheduled during reasonable hours
- Workers should avoid isolated locations after dark unless necessary
- Workers should have access to venue details and client information beforehand
- Workers must inform an identified contact of their schedule

6.2 Check-In Procedures

Workers undertaking lone working must:

- Notify a designated contact when starting and finishing sessions
- Share locations where appropriate
- Use agreed check-in methods such as text, phone, or messaging apps
- Escalate if plans change significantly

If a worker fails to check in:

1. Attempts should be made to contact them
2. Emergency contacts may be used if necessary
3. Emergency services may be contacted where welfare concerns exist

6.3 Home Visits

A home visit would only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and must be agreed in advance by the Director or Manager of the organization.

Prior to home visits:

- Basic client information should be recorded
- Any known risks should be documented

- Workers may decline or rearrange visits if safety concerns exist
- Inform the manager/director of when they arrive and leave the venue.

During visits:

- Workers should maintain professional boundaries
- Workers should position themselves with access to exits where possible
- Workers may leave immediately if they feel unsafe

6.4 Public Training Sessions

When working in public locations:

- Workers should select safe and accessible environments
- Workers should avoid confrontation with members of the public
- Incidents involving harassment or discrimination should be reported as soon as able to do so
- Workers should monitor both handler and dog welfare continuously

6.5 Remote Working

Workers carrying out lone remote work should:

- Maintain regular contact with another member of our organization where appropriate
 - Take regular breaks
 - Ensure workstation safety
 - Protect confidential information and client records
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7. Emergency Procedures

All lone workers must know how to obtain emergency assistance.

In an emergency:

- Call 999 where immediate danger exists
- Move to a safe location where possible
- Inform Infinity Dogs CIC management as soon as practicable
- Complete an incident report after the event

Examples of emergencies include:

- Medical emergencies
- Threats or violence
- Dog attacks

- Missing persons
- Safeguarding concerns
- Serious accidents

Workers are not expected to place themselves at risk in order to continue providing services.

8. Safeguarding

Infinity Dogs CIC recognises that lone workers may encounter safeguarding concerns involving adults, children, or vulnerable individuals.

All workers must:

- Follow the organisation's safeguarding policies
- Report concerns promptly
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Avoid situations that could place themselves or clients at unnecessary risk

Any immediate safeguarding danger must be reported to emergency services.

9. Training and Support

Infinity Dogs CIC will provide appropriate support and information for lone workers.

This may include:

- Lone worker induction
- Safeguarding training
- Conflict management training
- Dog handling and welfare training
- Risk assessment guidance
- Neurodiversity-informed communication support
- Mental health and wellbeing support

Workers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about lone working with the Director/Manager without fear of judgement.

10. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Infinity Dogs CIC acknowledges that lone working can contribute to:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Burnout
- Isolation
- Emotional fatigue

The organisation will:

- Encourage regular communication
- Promote supportive supervision
- Respect access needs and reasonable adjustments
- Encourage breaks and healthy working boundaries
- Respond appropriately to wellbeing concerns
- Assess if lone working is a suitable option or if there is an alternative

Workers are encouraged to raise concerns early.

11. Incident Reporting

All incidents, accidents, near misses, or safety concerns related to lone working must be reported as soon as possible.

Reports should include:

- Date and time
- Location
- Persons involved
- Description of incident
- Actions taken
- Recommendations for future prevention

Infinity Dogs CIC will review incidents to improve safety procedures.

12. Refusal to Work

Workers have the right to withdraw from or refuse a lone working activity if they reasonably believe there is a serious risk to health, safety, or welfare.

No worker will be penalised for prioritising safety.

Lone working is **not** a required task for any worker.

13. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Lone workers must ensure confidential information is stored and handled securely.

This includes:

- Secure storage of client records
 - Password protection on devices
 - Avoiding confidential discussions in public spaces
 - Compliance with UK GDPR and organisational privacy procedures
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14. Equality, Accessibility, and Inclusion

Infinity Dogs CIC is committed to inclusive and accessible working practices.

Risk assessments and lone working procedures should consider:

- Disability-related needs
- Neurodivergent communication differences
- Sensory needs
- Mental health needs
- Cultural and identity-related safety concerns

Reasonable adjustments will be considered wherever practicable.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following serious incidents
- Following legal or operational changes
- When new services or risks emerge

Feedback from staff, volunteers, and service users will be considered as part of the review process.

16. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
 - Risk Assessment Procedures
 - Complaints Policy
 - Data Protection and Privacy Policy
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - Volunteer Guideline
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17. Policy Approval

This policy has been approved by Infinity Dogs CIC management and will be communicated to all relevant workers and volunteers.

18. Policy Review and Associated Documents

- **Policy 8 (Version 1)**
- **Effective Date:** June 2026
- **Next Review Date:** June 2027 (or sooner if legislative changes occur).