



Lone Working Policy

Staying safe when working alone

Assisting Parents with Children Affected by Mental Health
Registered Charity Number 1186256

Version	1.0
Adopted	March 2026
Approved by	The Board of Trustees, signed on its behalf by Lauren Ridley, Chair of Trustees
Policy owner	CEO
Next review	March 2027, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes
Applies to	All trustees, staff, volunteers, placement students and contractors

At a Glance

Your safety comes first: No one at APCAM should be put at unnecessary risk by working alone. Lone working is risk assessed, planned, logged and monitored, and anyone who feels unsafe should leave immediately.

Step	What to do
Before	Check the risk assessment, log your visit with your buddy, and carry a charged APCAM phone.
During	Trust your instincts. If you feel unsafe, leave. Use the code word if you need help.
After	Check out with your buddy by the agreed time.
Missed check-in	Buddy calls after 15 minutes, escalates to the CEO after 30 minutes, and calls the police after 60 minutes or sooner if worried.

Contents

1. Purpose and Scope
 2. Risk Assessment
 3. The Buddy System
 4. Escalation if a Worker Does Not Check Out
 5. The Code Word
 6. Personal Safety Guidance
 7. Lone Working in Buildings and Online
 8. Incidents and Support
 9. Monitoring and Review
 10. Related Policies and Legal Framework
- Appendix A: Lone Working Log
-

1. Purpose and Scope

Lone working is any work carried out without close or direct supervision, where a worker cannot easily get help from a colleague. At APCAM this includes:

- home visits to parents and families;
- accompanying parents to meetings at schools, housing offices or other agencies;
- running or closing sessions alone at community venues, particularly in the evening;
- one-to-one counselling sessions where no other colleague is in the building;
- travelling alone for work;
- working from home, including online sessions.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and placement students. Volunteers and placement students should not usually work alone with service users, and never without the agreement of the CEO.

2. Risk Assessment

APCAM will carry out a general lone working risk assessment, and specific risk assessments for individual families or situations where there may be a higher risk. Before a first home visit, staff will gather information about:

- any known risks, including violence, aggression, substance misuse, weapons or domestic abuse;
- who else lives at or may be present at the address;
- animals at the property;
- the location, parking, mobile signal and access;
- any information from referrers or other agencies.

Where risks are identified, controls may include a joint visit, meeting in a community setting instead, visiting at a different time, or not visiting at all.

First visits: First visits to a new family should take place in a community setting or as a joint visit, unless a risk assessment shows a lone home visit is safe.

3. The Buddy System

Every lone working activity must be logged with a named buddy, who is a colleague available during that time. The log includes:

- the worker's name and APCAM phone number;
- the address or location and the name of the family (using initials where possible);
- the start time and expected finish time;
- the worker's vehicle details where relevant.

The worker checks in when they arrive, if agreed, and must check out when they leave. Any change to plans must be communicated to the buddy.

4. Escalation if a Worker Does Not Check Out

Time after expected finish	Action by the buddy
15 minutes	Call the worker's APCAM phone, and send a text.
30 minutes	Call again, then inform the CEO. Try the family or venue if it is safe and appropriate to do so.
60 minutes, or sooner if there is any concern	The CEO or buddy calls the police on 999 or 101, giving all details from the log, then contacts the worker's emergency contact.

5. The Code Word

If a worker feels at risk but cannot speak freely, they can call their buddy or the office and use APCAM's agreed code phrase, for example asking for help with a named file. The code phrase is shared with staff at induction and is not written in this policy. The person receiving the call should ask simple yes or no questions to establish where the worker is and whether to call the police, and then call 999.

6. Personal Safety Guidance

- Carry a fully charged APCAM phone at all times.
- Park in a well-lit place, facing the way out, and keep keys to hand.
- Sit near the exit during visits, and do not go further into a property than necessary.
- Do not enter if the person you are visiting is not there, or if someone present makes you feel unsafe.
- Leave immediately if you feel threatened, if people are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or if there is aggression. Do not worry about appearing rude.
- Never be alone with a child in their home unless this is a planned part of agreed work.
- Keep valuables out of sight, and dress practically.
- Lock up venues safely and do not stay alone in a building after dark unless agreed.

7. Lone Working in Buildings and Online

- When running sessions in community venues, make sure someone knows you are there and when you will leave, and know the emergency exits.
- Counselling sessions where no other colleague is present must be logged with a buddy.
- When working from home, make sure online sessions are in a private space and that your home address and personal details are not visible.

8. Incidents and Support

Any incident, near miss, threat or concern while lone working must be reported to the CEO as soon as possible and recorded. Workers will be offered a debrief and support. Risk assessments

will be updated, and information shared with colleagues who may visit the same family. APCAM will provide lone working and personal safety training at induction for anyone who works alone.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees will monitor how this policy is working through regular reports from the CEO, feedback from staff, volunteers and service users, and learning from any incidents or complaints. This policy will be reviewed annually by the policy owner, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or APCAM's services change.

10. Related Policies and Legal Framework

10.1 Related APCAM policies

- Health and Safety Policy 2026
- Professional Boundaries Policy 2026
- Safeguarding Policy 2026 (including WeGame)
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2026
- Sexual Harassment Policy 2026
- Confidentiality Policy 2026

10.2 Legislation and guidance

- APCAM Constitution (Foundation model CIO constitution, last amended 20 September 2019)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Health and Safety Executive: Protecting lone workers (INDG73)
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust personal safety guidance

Approval

Approved by	The Board of Trustees, by resolution in line with clause 13 of the APCAM Constitution
Signed on behalf of the Board	Lauren Ridley, Chair of Trustees
Signature	
Date adopted	March 2026
Next review	March 2027
Registered address	APCAM, 1 The Green, Alvescot, Oxfordshire OX18 2QD. Registered Charity Number 1186256

Appendix A: Lone Working Log

Complete this log with your buddy before every lone working activity. Use initials for families.

Worker name and APCAM phone	
Buddy name and phone	
Date	
Location / address	
Family (initials)	
Start time	
Expected finish time	
Vehicle (make, colour, registration)	
Known risks / notes	
Checked in (time)	
Checked out (time)	