

**SOP - 3**  
**Lone research work in private settings**

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Definitions/Abbreviations	
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure

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CRF	Case Report Form
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**1. PURPOSE:**

This document provides the step-by-step instruction to all researchers undertaking lone research sessions in private settings (e.g., participant's homes).

**2. REFERENCES:**

None

**3. PERSONNEL REQUIRED AND LEVEL OF EXPERTISE:**

Tobacco and Alcohol Research Group team members trained in lone worker procedures and use of the Lone Working Scheduled Visit Plan (Appendix B).

**4. MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:**

- Mobile phones
- Risk assessment for conducting research in private settings (Appendix A)
- Lone Working Scheduled Visit plan (Appendix B)
- Non-contact and emergency response plan (Appendix C)

**5. PROCEDURE:**

**5.1 When to use:**

When a researcher is working alone on field research visits and collecting data or visiting a research participant in a private setting (e.g. participant's home).

**5.2 How to use:**

The researcher who is going to conduct research visit in a private setting should follow the procedure below to ensure an appropriate communication plan is in place:

Prior to the visit

- The researcher will have read and understood the SOP for Lone research work in private settings and will have completed the Risk Assessment.(Appendix A).
- Times and dates of visits will be confirmed in writing (letter or email) with participants to avoid confusion.
- The researcher will have emergency services contact numbers and the contact details of research support team programmed into a **fully charged** mobile telephone which will always be switched on.
- For each visit, the researcher will identify a designated University of Bristol (or other study staff) contact who is fully briefed on the purpose of the visit and lone worker procedures. The researcher should ensure the designated contact has access to the site file so they can quickly find the address of the visit using the participant number if necessary.
- The designated contact will complete a Lone Working Scheduled Visit Plan (Appendix B) listing the date and time of the visit and the participant number (so they can access the address information if required). A copy of this will be stored electronically in the study folder and held in paper format by the designated contact.

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- A non-contact emergency response plan will be kept in the site file and in individual lone worker home research visit folders held by each of the nominated contacts. This will provide step-by-step guidance for designated supporting individuals if they are unable to make contact with the visiting researcher.

Safety procedure during the visit

- The researcher will send a text message to the designated contact before and after each pre-arranged visit.
- The contact will respond to the text message to acknowledge receipt of texts and update the Lone Working Scheduled Visit Plan.
- The researcher should be aware that on meeting a participant they can refuse to enter the home if they feel in any way uncomfortable.
- The designated contact will maintain telephone availability throughout the session, in case the researcher needs assistance during the session.
- Process to follow in the case of non-response from the researcher or when there was an indication the researcher may be in a difficult situation are provided in Appendix C.
- The agreed code phrase “please cancel my next appointment” or “canx next appt” via text will be used to flag concern in cases where requests for help may be seen or overheard. In response to this message the designated contact should contact the police if the visit is off the University site or the University of Bristol Security services if the visit is on the University site. The designated contact should provide as much detail as possible about the location and purpose of the visit and times and content of contact with the researcher.


Researcher responsibilities during the visit

- The researcher has responsibility for their own safety, and they should not knowingly place themselves in situations that expose them to risk.
- Researcher should be mindful of any conspicuous valuable items they have with them and where possible keep them out of sight.
- Researcher should dress in a professional and neutral manner.

**6. TROUBLE SHOOTING:**

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Any other problems	<b>TARG Laboratory phone:</b> 07957 334 265  <b>Prof Marcus Munafò</b> (0117) 954 6841 internal 46841 <a href="mailto:Marcus.Munafò@bristol.ac.uk">Marcus.Munafò@bristol.ac.uk</a>  <b>Dr Angela Attwood</b> (0117) 331 7450 internal 17450 <a href="mailto:Angela.Attwood@bristol.ac.uk">Angela.Attwood@bristol.ac.uk</a>

Appendix A: Risk assessment for Lone Working

	<b>University of Bristol</b> <b>Risk Assessment: Lone working in private settings</b>					
	<b>Department: School of Psychological Science</b> <b>Study name:</b>  Risk Assessment completed by: _____ Date: DD/MM/YYYY  Approved by: _____ Signature: _____ Date: DD/MM/YYYY  Update notes: Code phrases updated and in use from 03.10.18.					
Description and location of hazard	Who might be harmed?	Existing Control Measures	A. Likely severity of injury	B. Likely Occurrence	Risk Rating (A) x (B)	Comments/ Action
Risk of physical threat or abuse	Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An appropriate communication plan is in place:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The researcher will have emergency services contact numbers and the contact details of research support team programmed into a fully charged mobile telephone which will always be switched on.</li> <li>• For each visit, the researcher will identify a designated contact who is fully briefed on the purpose and procedures of the study.</li> <li>• The designated contact will complete a Lone Working Scheduled Visit Plan listing the date and time of the visit and the participant number (so they can easily access the address information if required). A copy of this will be stored electronically in the study folder and held in paper format by the designated contact.</li> <li>• The researcher will text the designated contact before and after each pre-arranged visit.</li> <li>• In addition, the designated supporting individual will maintain telephone availability throughout the study session, in case the researcher needs assistance during the session.</li> <li>• The agreed code phrase <i>"please cancel my next</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>				Please note special considerations apply (see form)

		<p><i>appointment</i>" or <i>"canx next appl"</i> via text will be used to flag concern in cases where requests for help may be seen or overheard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A work instruction for conducting research in private settings and a non-contact emergency response plan will be kept in the site file and in individual lone worker home research visit folders held by each of the nominated contacts. This will provide step-by-step guidance for designated supporting individuals if they are unable to make contact with the visiting researcher.</li> <li>• No appointments will be scheduled after 6pm</li> <li>• Researcher will keep valuable items hidden</li> <li>• The researcher is aware that on meeting a participant they can refuse to enter the home if they feel in any way uncomfortable</li> </ul>				
Risk of being in a compromising situation	Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The researcher will have read and understood the work instruction for conducting research in private settings and this Risk Assessment.</li> <li>• Times and dates of visits will be confirmed in writing with participants to avoid confusion.</li> <li>• Researcher will dress in an inconspicuous and unprovocative manner</li> <li>• No appointments will be scheduled after 6pm</li> </ul>				
Increased risk of everyday events, such as road accidents	Researcher or participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher is using own car for transport.</li> <li>• Travel covers the Bristol area which is well known to researcher.</li> </ul>				
Risk of causing psychological or physical harm to others	Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants have provided informed consent and are aware in advance of procedures involved in these visits. They have all consented to the procedures of the study and read the Study Information Sheet.</li> <li>• The researcher has completed DBS check</li> </ul>				
Score		3	2	1		
Column A: severity of injury:		Major injury or death	Injury requiring medical treatment	Minor or no injury		
Column B: Likely Occurrence:		Regular exposure of several employees to hazard	Occasional exposure of a few employees	Exposure to hazard very rare		

Appendix B: Lone Working Scheduled Visit Plan

Researcher details:

Researcher:	
Contact phone number:	
Expected duration of visit:	
Method of transportation:	
Brief description of off-site work activity and purpose:	

Designated contact details:

Designated phone contact/s:	
Contact phone number/s:	

Log of contact with researcher

Date	Appointment time	Participant ID number	Arrival text received <i>(initial when received and record time):</i>	Departure text received <i>(Initial when received and record time):</i>	Notes <i>(Record any action taken if text contact is delayed).</i>

Date	Appointment	Participant ID	Arrival text	Departure text	Notes
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time	number	received <i>(initial when received and record time):</i>	received <i>(initial when received and record time):</i>	<i>(Record any action taken if text contact is delayed).</i>

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Appendix C: Non-contact and Emergency Response Plan

