



**H&S: 028 – Lone Workers**

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Policy Manager: Head of Health and Safety	Other Key Stakeholders: Chief Executive, Director of Human Resources
This document replaces: H&S 028 V4	Consultation & Approval: Health and Safety Committee, Policy Review Group, National Partnership Forum, Staff Governance Committee.
Notification of Policy Release: Intranet/Internet	Equality Impact Assessment: No Issues Identified
Date of Issue: June 2015	Date of next review: June 2018
Version: V5	

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Contents

Description	Page
Introduction and Scope	3
Organisational Objectives	4
Responsibilities – Director of HR & OD	4
Responsibilities – Senior and Line Managers	4/5
Responsibilities – all Staff	5
Lone Working Procedure – Risk Assessment – SAS Duties	6
Lone Working Procedure – Risk Assessment – Staff Duties	6
Lone Working Procedure – Risk Assessment – Control Measures	6/7/8
Lone Working Procedure – Risk Assessment – Monitoring Arrangements	8

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## **Introduction**

The Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) takes the health, safety and welfare of all staff extremely seriously.

SAS defines a lone worker as “any individual who in the process of undertaking their duties may find themselves working alone or in an area isolated from colleagues”.

SAS recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves without close or direct supervision for significant periods of time. The dangers of working alone cannot always be foreseen or avoided. This policy is aimed at protecting staff so far as is reasonably practicable from lone working risks.

Due to the nature of SAS activities it is not possible to provide a policy which covers all aspects of our work, this document is therefore been written to be as wide ranging as possible to support staff and managers.

Generally speaking lone working should not present any greater danger / hazard to staff working alone. However SAS recognises that there are certain risks inherent to our operation which may expose lone workers to higher risk. In such circumstances additional control measures will be identified and implemented.

## **Scope**

This Policy applies to all SAS staff, who, as individuals, in the process of carrying out their duties on behalf of the SAS, may find themselves working alone or in an area isolated from colleagues. It does include staff who work from home regularly.

Additionally, staff who may work alone in an office environment have a responsibility for their own safety and should discuss their working arrangements with their line manager, highlighting any concerns that they may have.

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### **Organisational Objectives:**

- To protect staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks associated with lone working
- To reduce lone working where operationally feasible
- To require that risk assessments are undertaken on a generic basis and an individual basis where additional risks are identified
- That risk assessments lead to safe systems of work for staff
- That suitable means of communication and systems of monitoring are in place
- To raise staff awareness of lone working
- To ensure staff have appropriate training and or experience to conduct suitable dynamic risk assessments (DRA)
- To encourage reporting of all incidents related to lone working
- To comply with all relevant legislation

### **Responsibilities**

The **Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development** is responsible for:

- making sure that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- providing resources for putting the policy into practice; and
- making sure that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Board regularly reviews the effectiveness of the policy.

**Senior and line managers** are responsible for:

- making sure that all staff are aware of the policy;
- making sure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly;
- putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- making sure that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updates and refresher training as necessary;

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- making sure that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident; and
- managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

**All staff are responsible for;**

- taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions;
- co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working;
- reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; and
- reporting any dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

**Lone Working Procedure**

**Risk assessment**

SAS is required to identify, assess and manage risks to lone workers. It will undertake generic risk assessments of all lone working activities and will implement all reasonable control measures to provide for the health safety and welfare of staff.

SAS duties include:

- Identification of hazards associated with lone working in the workplace, working environment, and in working practices, which have the potential to put staff at risk.
- Identify and assess the risk and who/how many staff will be affected in each case
- Evaluate the risk from each hazard and decide whether existing controls are adequate. Where adequate controls are not suitable or sufficient, the risk assessment will identify any necessary additional controls that are necessary to minimise the risk in each case
- Record all significant findings from the risk assessment, informing staff of the results.
- To ensure that any training needs identified are addressed

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- Review the risk periodically and whenever the working environment introduces a significant hazard, or if there is a reason to believe that the assessment is no longer valid
- To work collaboratively with the Police following situations where police cover has not been timely or appropriate.

### Staff Duties

- Individual members of staff working alone must undertake a dynamic risk assessment on approach or at the scene of a situation to ensure that they work safely. Staff should be aware that personal safety is a shared responsibility between SAS and staff. Staff have a responsibility to help themselves to be safer. Staff will not be penalised if it is deemed unsafe to attend an incident and have the full support of the Service in such cases.
- If the lone worker has reservations about attending the incident these should be taken into account. They should be deployed to a location close to the scene (Rendezvous Point – RVP) and undertake a dynamic risk assessment from a place of safety. The lone worker should provide a report which may for example request police assistance. The member of staff must book on scene when they arrive at that point.
- If staff have concerns regarding the issue of lone working they should discuss these with their line manager. It is the line manager's responsibility to take appropriate action in these circumstances.
- Reporting all incidents where issues have arisen around lone working through the DATIX system

### Control Measures

Staff required to work alone will be provided with suitable portable means of summoning immediate assistance should it be required. Such equipment might include a mobile telephone, portable radio and panic alarm. Failure to provide this equipment will result in the vehicle being declared Vehicle off Road (VOR) until rectified.

Clearly defined "Safe Systems of Work" will be developed for all lone working posts (See Appendices).

Staff required to undertake lone working will be provided with such information, instruction and training as is necessary to enable them to undertake their work safely.

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SAS will provide Conflict Management Training.

Staff required to work alone will only be tasked to do so if assessed by a manager as being competent to undertake such tasks.

**Note:**

Regulation 13 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 states :

*‘Every employer shall, in entrusting tasks to his employees, take into account their capabilities as regards health and safety’.*

The Approved Code of Practice further states

*‘when allocating work to employees, employers should ensure that the demands of the job do not exceed the employees ability to carry out work without risk to themselves or others’.*

No member of staff will be knowingly sent alone to an incident where there is or could be a potential threat of violence. Any member of staff who feels that a situation is unsafe may withdraw until the situation can be confirmed to be safe or assistance has arrived.

Where staff are dispatched alone the policy of “call back” will be followed by the ACC to check on staff welfare. The first welfare check will be no longer than 10 minutes after the lone worker has arrived on scene. If contact is attempted and no response is gained from the lone worker consideration should be taken to inform the police and/or mobilise the nearest available resource/officer by the Control Manager to the location to ensure the safety of the lone worker.

Staff working alone will have access to suitable and sufficient first aid equipment to enable them to provide emergency treatment to themselves should they become injured.

Lone workers should be informed that they should contact their Line Manager during normal working hours if they experience difficulties. For operational ambulance staff this will be the Duty Manager within Control.

The Service’s Employer’s liability Insurance covers lone workers irrespective of their base, providing they are on official business.

Lone workers must take into account any instructions relating to the area, site or location, visited.

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All employees are expected to carry an identity card, which they should be able to produce on request.

SAS requires Line Managers within administrative buildings to be aware that late working is taking place and that employees know of any special arrangements that need to be made for leaving the building and making it secure. It is the responsibility of the lone worker to inform the line manager/control they will be working in an area and alone and to arrange with their line manager/control the frequency of welfare checks and also to inform the relevant person/s when leaving the building.

Details of the confidential counselling service are available at each location. Line Managers should advise staff on the availability of these services.

### **Monitoring Arrangements.**

We will monitor and review this policy in partnership to make sure that we are achieving the aims of the policy. We will do this through the Service Health Safety and Welfare Committee.

The review processes will include:

- Collecting and monitoring all reported incidents (via DATIX)
- Reporting to local and National Health and Safety Committees and local and National Partnership Forum: incident statistics and safety improvement measures which have been introduced.
- Reporting to the Board via the Staff Governance Committee on progress in reducing risk and incidents and making recommendations for the forthcoming year.

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## Appendix 1

### Types of incidents where a lone worker MAY not be appropriate

In committing any lone worker to an incident, the safety of our staff must be paramount. A risk assessment must be undertaken by the Dispatcher/Control Manager (CM) based on the information available from the caller and any other information that may be available regarding that location e.g. Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Features.

Such information **MUST** be passed to the attending ambulance staff.

Lone workers must not be despatched to any incident coded as : **AMPDs code 27\*\*\*\***, or to an incident coded as **AMPDS code 04\*\*\*\* at a domestic premise**. In such cases lone workers can be tasked to a RVP.

The risk assessment process should be conducted in line with the flowcharts in Appendix C which cover the following types of incidents:

- Alcohol and Drugs
- Assaults
- Psychological /Emotional

This risk assessment **must** be conducted prior to committing a lone worker to scene. It is however important that the member of operational staff responds to the emergency immediately. The ACC staff will be undertaking the risk assessment during this time. Following the completion of this and if the situation is assessed as safe they will authorise the lone worker to commit to scene.

The risk assessment conducted by ACC does not take away the importance of staff conducting a dynamic risk assessment on arrival at scene.

The following incidents, whilst not exclusive, are given as examples where it may be inappropriate to mobilise a lone worker:

- Assaults where the assailant is still at the scene
- Domestic violence where both parties remain at the scene
- Public Disorder e.g. pub fights etc. (not including Major Incidents)
- Any address, scene or individual where there is a warning flag recording a history of violence.

If police or other emergency services are confirmed as being physically in attendance at any of these incidents then the lone worker can be sent to the scene, but ACC must notify them of the type of incident.

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## **Appendix 2.**

### **Systems of Work for Lone Worker Posts**

#### **Accident and Emergency Front Line Staff**

Within Accident and Emergency the following staff could respond as a lone worker:

- First Responder
- Service Responder
- Community Responder
- Qualified officer in a lease vehicle
- PRU staff

Before responding to an emergency response the lone worker should be informed of the nature of the call in as much detail as the ACC Staff have available to them.

The following incidents which are deemed unsuitable for front line Accident and Emergency staff are detailed in Appendix 1.

#### **Patient Transport Service Staff**

Staff must ensure that they are always aware of the potential risks when lone working as they may be placed in danger or be left open to abuse or complaint. Staff must therefore be vigilant to the possibility and if necessary withdraw immediately. The situation should be reported to the ACC immediately. Patient Transport Service Staff should not be sent on their own to patients who are likely to give rise to problems for an individual member of staff i.e. mental health and known abusive patients.

Patient Transport Service Staff working alone must make constant and proper use of either their hand portable radio or mobile phone to keep the ACC aware of their circumstances at all times.

#### **Workshop Staff**

Workshop staff may be required to work on their own as part of their duties. Fleet should ensure that adequate control measures are in place to protect these staff.

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### **Protocol for Other Staff**

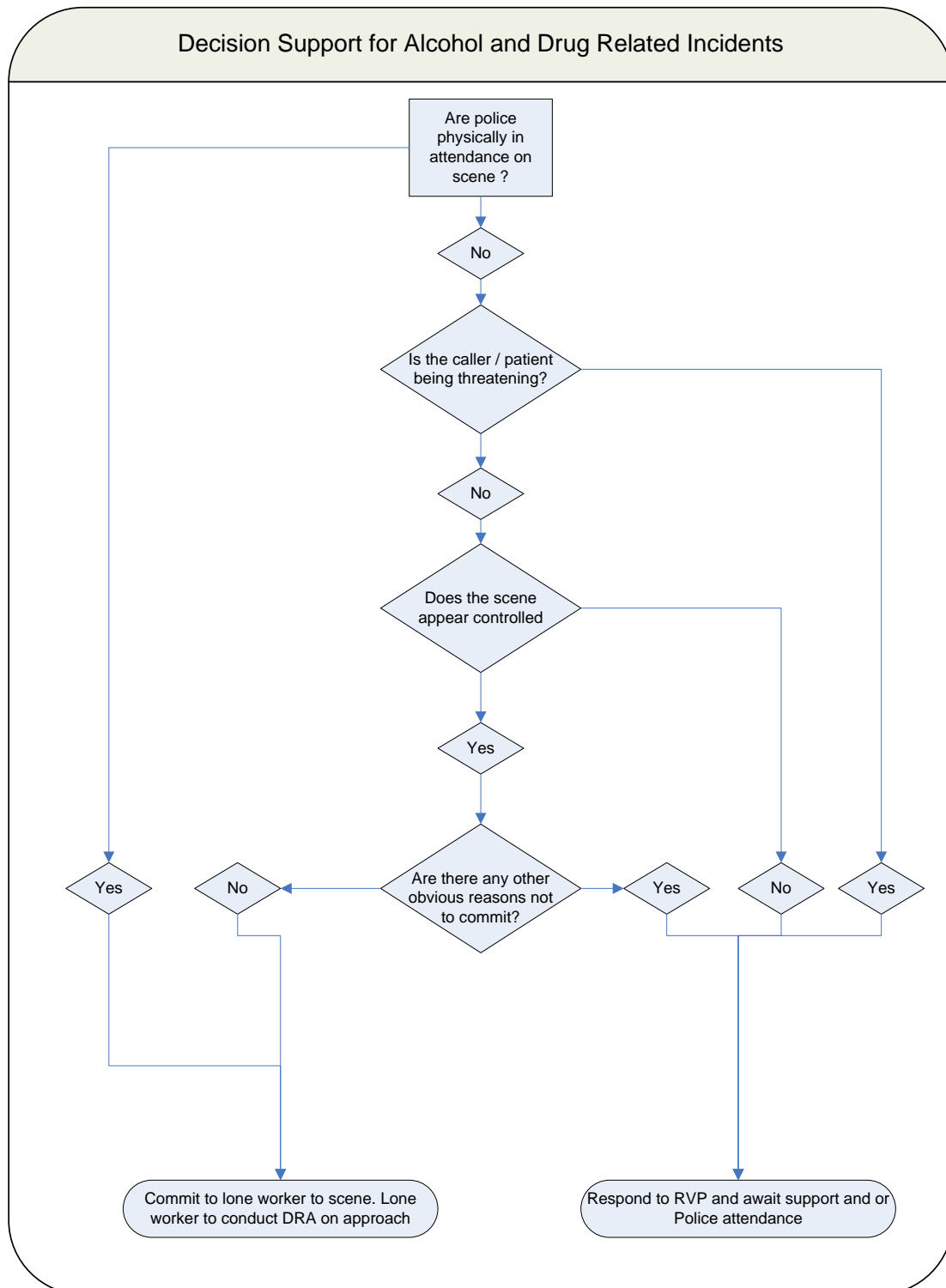
Other staff may from time to time be required to attend meetings and/or work on their own. When travelling on their own staff should take extra precautions to ensure their own safety. When staying away from home on Service business they should not do anything that puts themselves in danger.

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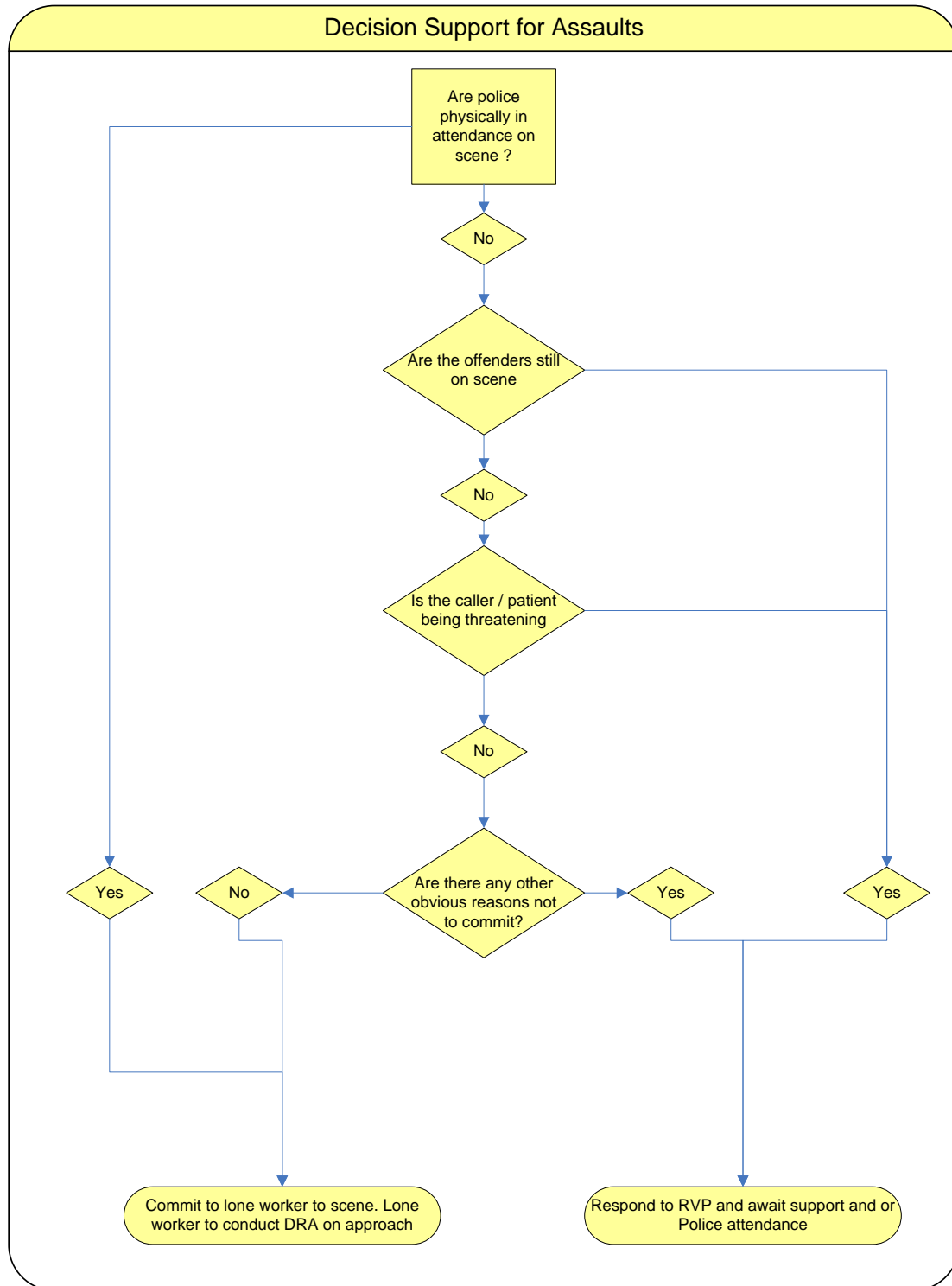


Appendix 3.

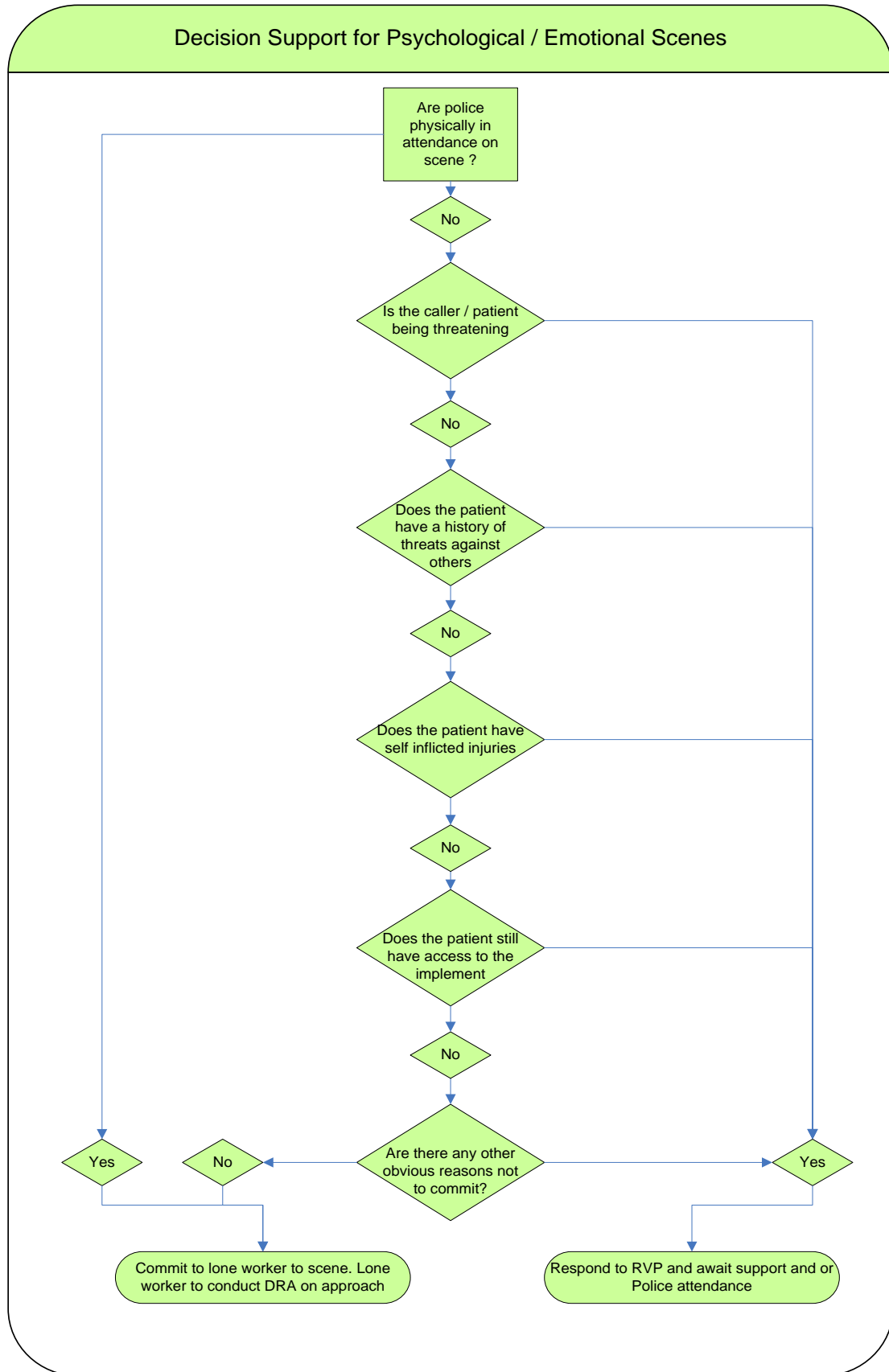
Decision Support Flowcharts.



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**Scottish Ambulance Service - Directorate of Human Resources and Organisational Development  
Management of Health and Safety  
H&S: 028 – Lone Workers**

Review History

Issue No	Reason for review and brief description of changes made	Effective Date
1	Initial Issue – replacement of previous document	28/02/05
2	Addition of restrictions to despatch to code 27 and code 04 incidents at domestic premises	Jan 09
3	Change in directorate name, manager shall investigate. Addition of compliance audit tool	Jan 11
4	Complete re write	TBC
5	Complete re write	June 15

<b>Owner:</b> T.Wigram	<b>Version No:</b> 5	<b>Doc &amp; page:</b> Lone worker	<b>Review arrangements:</b> 3 yearly
<b>Date of Release:</b> Jun 15	<b>Date Intranet Posting:</b> Jun 15	<b>Implementation:</b> Jun 15	<b>Approved by:</b> National Partnership
<b>PFPI Checklist (available from W Mason):</b> Assessed as meeting the National Standards for Community Engagement checklist (Communities Scotland)			
<b>Risk and Equality &amp; Diversity Impact Assessment (available from A Tobin and Risk Manager):</b> No adverse impact has been detected - but under continuous review.			
<b>Please support the Service's Environmental Programme by not printing this document unnecessarily</b>			
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