HS G402 Guidance on Personal Safety & Lone Working

1.   Introduction

1.1   This guidance document provides information to Faculties and Professional Service Divisions to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities as described by the HS C407 Personal Safety and Lone Working safety code of practice.

1.2   This document specifically supports areas in:

- managing the risk of violent and/or aggressive behaviour at the university towards members of staff where this relates to their employment and,
- managing the significant and increased risks posed by lone working at the university.

1.3   This guidance applies to all members of staff undertaking lone working activities, e.g. working without close or direction supervision, on behalf of the university, on the Falmer Campus or at other locations in the UK.

2.   Personal safety

2.1   The Suzy Lamplugh Trust's definition of personal safety is 'an individual's ability to go about their everyday life free from threat or fear of psychological, emotional or physical harm from others'.

2.2   Personal safety can be compromised in a number of ways ranging from harassment, threats and actual violence. These can be psychological, emotional, sexual or physical and can occur amongst staff or a third party group such as students or members of the public. It is important to remember that individuals can react differently to threats to their personal safety.

2.3   The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related violence and aggression as 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.'

2.4   The university takes incidents relating to violence, aggression, dignity, respect, discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation very seriously. Such incidents can be reported via a number of routes, including the Report and Support tool. Information regarding Routes for Resolution can also be found on the HR pages.

3.   Lone working

3.1   The term 'lone working' is defined as work carried out by an individual without close or direct supervision. This includes work that is carried out without close or direct supervision for a short period of their working day (a particular task) and carrying out shift

work alone, on a temporary or ongoing basis. Lone working may occur on the University campus or at locations off campus.

3.2   Lone working examples include:
- Working alone at your usual place of work (e.g. in laboratories, on a reception desk).
- Working separately to your team (e.g. in an archive room).
- Working at a different base away from your team or colleagues (e.g. working in a different building, working in a plant room).
- Working outside of normal working hours, (e.g. outside of the general 9-5pm working pattern).
- Travelling on university business domestically (e.g. attending a conference).

4.   Why manage lone working?

4.1   The university, as an employer, has a legal, moral and financial duty to ensure the health and safety for its staff, students, contractors and visitors.

4.2   Staff who lone work are at greater risk as they have limited access to support if anything goes wrong. The legislation below sets the requirement on the university to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessment where lone working is taking place, including risks to personal safety.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

5.   Risk Assessment

5.1   Risk assessment should be undertaken where staff are lone working and where there may be risks to an individual's personal safety. Risk assessment should be undertaken in a pragmatic manner, considering the significant hazards associated with the staff activity.

5.2   As with many tasks it may be difficult to eliminate all risk to staff, however this must be recognised in the assessment and be acceptable to the individuals involved.

5.3   Depending on the level of risk presented or the work activity being assessed, it may be appropriate for managers to include lone working and personal safety hazards as part of a wider activity risk assessment. For example, personal safety and lone working hazards could be included in a risk assessment for home visits for Researchers, instead of carrying out an additional specific risk assessment.

5.4 Below is a list of potential hazards to consider as part of the risk assessment process (the list is not exhaustive):

Hazard	Detail
Workplace environment	Identify hazards specific to the environment, for example remote, unknown areas. Note that the time of day may impact the work environment, for example outside of non-working hours will introduce a higher risk.
Nature of the work being undertaken	For example, manual handling operations, working in laboratories and working at height introduce a higher level of risk and require a higher level of training/ supervision.
Contact with the public	For example, research, reception desks or away from the university campus.
Risk of violence and aggression	Use the risk assessment to identify potential violence and aggression. Review if there is any history of particular individuals or a general threat of violence and aggression. This generally is more likely where work will involve contact with members of the public or providing a service.
Travel	Consider hazards associated with the route or mode of transport to the location, specifically off campus.
Age and experience of workers	Young workers and students introduce a higher level of risk due to e.g. a lack of experience or maturity. Staff unfamiliar with the university will need a higher level of supervision due to lack of experience.
Routes of communication	Implement routes of communication to confirm the lone worker is safe, e.g. regular check-ins whilst they are lone working and when the worker has returned.
Emergency procedures	Consider procedures when someone is in danger, injured and how to raise the alarm. These should then be practiced at regular intervals to ensure they remain effective and that everyone involved remains aware of what to do.
Medical condition, pregnancy or disability	A medical condition, pregnancy or disability may introduce an additional risk where lone working is not appropriate. If a line manager is unsure, they should discuss this with the individual and seek support from their HR Business Partner if required.

5.5 Carrying out a risk assessment will determine the level of risk presented, and allow informed decisions to be made as to whether the activity can be appropriately managed, for example with suitable working procedures, equipment etc.

5.6 As a minimum the risk assessment should consider the following control measures:
- Procedures for checking in, including out of hours.

- Additional precautions for movement on site e.g. if on campus a Security escort because it is late at night.
- How will the individual raise the alarm if they fall ill or need help.
- Precautions for off campus travel, e.g. planned routes, contact with line manager, alarms.
- Room layout, where staff are meeting with third parties, such as students, on their own. This may include controls such as making sure the member of staff sits closest to the door to allow them to leave easily if necessary.

5.7   [HS F001 General Risk Assessment Template](#) can be used to record the risk assessment.

5.8   The risk assessment should be approved by the line manager, and depending on the level of risk presented, e.g. High risk, Executive Dean/ Executive Director of Professional Service Division approval should be requested.

5.9   The risk assessment should be shared with/ communicated to those involved in the lone working activity to ensure they understand and engage with the risk assessment control measures. The General Risk Assessment Template (HS F001) enables managers to record that staff have been informed of the risks and controls.

6.   Lone Working Activities examples

6.1   There are some tasks or environments where lone working is not permitted as the risk is too high. For example:
- Working in confined spaces
- Working near or on exposed electrical equipment at high voltages.

6.2   Workers can classify their working activity into high, medium and low risk categories:

6.3   **High risk activities – Category 1**
In addition to the prohibited activities in 6.1 above, no person should work alone where there is a significant risk, for example:

High risk activities – Category 1
Work with high power lasers.
The use of extremely hazardous chemicals where first aid following accidental exposure has to be administered immediately (e.g. where there is a risk of exposure to hydrogen cyanide, hydrogen fluoride).
The use of machine tools and equipment which are capable of inflicting serious injury (e.g. that present risks of entanglement, entrapment, crushing, impact or injury from cutting, shearing, stabbing or puncture).
One to one meetings in person with anyone who is believed to be at risk of presenting violent or aggressive behaviour.

6.4 A second person should remain within physical calling distance (by voice not phone call) whenever these hazards are present.

6.5 Undergraduate students would not normally be authorised to undertake Category 1 activities unless adequate and immediate supervision is detailed in the risk assessment and implemented, and it is approved by the Executive Dean.

6.6 Medium risk activities - Category 2
Lone working risks and control measures must be part of the routine risk assessments for the following activities:

Medium risk activities – Category 2
Work in laboratories involving hazardous substances.
Work at height using ladders, stepladders, etc
Work involving the movement of money or other valuables.
Work in the community or work in another employer's premises.
Work on a reception desk.

6.7 Low risk activities - Category 3
Low hazard activities such as reading, writing, use of rooms for reference purposes, computer work, do not require specific risk assessment to be carried out. However, the Faculty or Division responsible for the lone workers must have arrangements in place for knowing who is lone working out of-hours in their premises in case of emergencies. Lone workers in these situations must also be made aware of how to protect their safety:

- In the building.
- When walking to car parks/public transport.
- During emergencies.

7. Training
7.1 Staff who carry out lone working activities must be provided with training:
- To recognise risks associated with lone working and violence and aggression
- In any procedures they are required to follow, including on how to take action when there is limited supervision, how to raise the alarm if they get into difficulty and how to respond should a colleague get into difficulty.

7.2 Lone working E-Learning training is available for all staff on the university Learn Upon platform which will provide staff with general awareness of lone working hazards. Line managers should arrange specific lone working hazard training locally.

7.3 Personal Safety training (inclusive of Lone Working) is available through the University Health and Safety Team, bookable via Learn Upon. This course provides colleagues with the knowledge and skills to be able to identify when violence or aggression may be a

potential issue and, where safe to do so, diffuse a situation. Diffusion techniques can be found in Appendix 2. Further information can be found on the [Health & Safety Training webpages](#).

7.4   The Suzy Lamplugh Trust is a registered charity and is recognised by many to be the leading authority on personal safety in the UK. The Trust provides professional and bespoke training courses. The University Health and Safety Team Personal Safety Trainers have attended Train the Trainer training from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

7.5   Where line managers identify a need for Personal Safety training within their area, they can request a bespoke training course by emailing the Health and Safety inbox on healthsafety@sussex.ac.uk.

8.   Supervision

8.1   The level of supervision required during an activity should be determined within the risk assessment. For example, where a new level of risk is introduced, or where the individual has limited experience or is new to the role, a higher level of supervision may be required.

8.2   The line manager should consider supervision procedures as part of the risk assessment, for example:
- Regular contact with the lone worker (e.g. periodic monitoring checks, such as checking discreetly through a vision panel when lone workers are undertaking 1-2-1 meetings with students, research participants, members of the public etc, checking in via Microsoft Teams, telephone or radio periodically).
- Checks to ensure the lone worker has returned to the work base, or to home if they are off campus working such as texting when they have left a visit safely or returned home.
- Emergency procedures to be initiated when a lone worker either fails to make contact at the agreed time or cannot be contacted.

9.   Lone working equipment

9.1   Depending on the level of risk presented by the lone working activity undertaken and the outcome of the risk assessment, there may be equipment provided to trace staff and/ or to assist in an emergency. For high-risk activities this could be the provision of a panic alarm in a meeting room or a GPS lone working device for those who lone work in the community.

9.2   Where equipment is provided, line managers and users must ensure the device is available and in full working order as part of their pre-planning. The risk assessment or a standard operating procedure should detail any pre-use checks, maintenance and disposal programmes.

9.3   If colleagues think that there is a piece of lone working equipment that would support them whilst lone working they should speak with their line manager.

10.   Emergency procedures

10.1 As part of the risk assessment process line managers must consider foreseeable emergencies, for example violent or aggressive acts or being incapacitated whilst alone and unable to seek help. The foreseeable events must be documented in the risk assessment. It may be appropriate to have an emergency operating procedure which covers these foreseeable events, e.g. step by step action to follow. In this case the emergency operating procedure can be referred to in the risk assessment, e.g. by noting the document number and title and/ or linking to the document.

10.2 Once line managers have developed the emergency procedure it needs to be tested to ensure staff have the opportunity to practice following it and to ensure it works effectively. How a Faculty or Division tests their emergency procedure is determined locally but the test should occur on a regular basis, for example quarterly.

10.3 The emergency procedure testing should include as a minimum:
- Identifying the foreseeable event.
- Documenting the procedure.
- Agreeing the procedure with the involved staff.
- Informing staff that the procedure will be tested within a given period, for example anytime between 1st and 31st January. Not telling staff the exact time or date helps to provide a more realistic test.
- Testing the procedure periodically.
- Address any issues that are identified through these tests such as reviewing the procedure or providing additional training.

11.   First aid training

11.1 First aid training for lone workers should be based on the hazards and risk identified in the risk assessment process. Lone workers should follow local lone working procedures/ rules, and should not complete high risk activities whilst alone.

11.2 The lone working risk assessment should indicate how workers will seek first aid support and indicate whether lone workers should:

- Carry first aid equipment.
- Receive first aid training, including how to administer first aid on themselves.
- Have access to adequate first aid facilities.
- Have a personal alarm.
- Have a monitoring systems/ check ins (e.g. radio, mobile phone etc.).

11.3 Lone working procedures should include emergency procedures, such as check ins with line managers. If a check in is missed, the line manager should follow their set procedure which may involve trying to contact the member of staff, contacting a pre-arranged friend or family member, alerting Security to complete a welfare check or potentially contacting the police if the member of staff is missing.

11.4 Where employees travel a lot, work remotely or work alone, line managers should consider issuing personal first aid kits, depending on the level of risk evaluated in the risk assessment. First aid kits should be issued either to an individual or carried within a vehicle. Line managers should ensure that adequate first aid training has taken place, suitable to individual/ team needs.

12.   Accident, incident and near miss reporting

12.1 If there is immediate concern for safety, staff and students should contact the 24/7 University Security team on 01273 873333 for assistance, and to request emergency service attendance if required (e.g. Police). If an ambulance is required, individuals should call 999 themselves, and then immediately inform the Security Team that an ambulance is attending campus.

12.2 If a staff member has been involved in an incident where they felt threatened or were assaulted, or an incident occurred whilst lone working, an incident report must be made. The report should be completed via Sussex Direct – (Online Incident Reporting system) by the line manager or the person involved if they are able to do so.

12.3 Staff should inform their line manager as soon as possible so that they can investigate what happened and review existing risk assessments and procedures to prevent or reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

12.4 Once reported, and depending on the nature of the report, it may be assigned to a local Health and Safety Manager from the Faculty or Professional Service Division, or to a Health and Safety Coordinator for follow-up. The University Health and Safety Team may investigate further in order to identify opportunities to further build on control measures to make them more robust.

12.5 If violence and aggression has been experienced from a student, the Student Discipline Team should be contacted to ensure repeat incidences can be tracked and reoccurrence can be prevented. The Student Discipline Team's webpage is linked here for further information and contact details.

12.6 Appendix 1 of this document is a Flow chart for Staff responses to threats for line managers and staff guidance.

12.7 Staff may also consider reporting the incident to Brighton & Hove City Council's [Community Safety Team](#) if it involves anti-social behaviour or hate in the community.

12.8 If violence was involved it is likely that the Police would be called and take their own statements. Even if the Police are not involved, the victim should be given an opportunity to talk about their experience, including verbal abuse, which can be upsetting. The following should be considered (not all may be required, this depends on the severity of the incident):

- Debrief - speaking with the individual involved.
- Time off and/or access to counselling (See Section 14 Staff Counselling Service).
- Information and possible training for other members of staff so they know how to react in a similar situation. If the perpetrator is an individual who has, or could threaten other members of staff, any subsequent risk assessments and control measures introduced as a result should be communicated to all staff affected.

13. Staff support

13.1 Where staff have concerns regarding personal safety or lone working they should initially contact their line manager and/or local Health and Safety Coordinator (a full list of Coordinators is published on the [Health and Safety webpages](#)). If the issue cannot be resolved locally, the Health and Safety Coordinator can contact the University Health and Safety Team for support.

13.2 Staff should be encouraged to share with their line managers any medical conditions which may impact their ability to work safely alone to prevent them being put at unnecessary risk.

13.3 On the Staff Wellbeing Hub the [Guidance for Managers](#) is for line managers who may have staff affected by personal safety incidents.

13.4 Independent or continuous threats or abusive behaviour can have psychological impact on those involved, therefore it may be appropriate for line managers to carry out a stress risk assessment. Resources for stress can be found on the HR Webpages – [Guidance for Managers](#).

13.5 [EDI Champions](#) are situated across each Faculty or Professional Service Division who can be contacted to help to promote a culture where staff and students are treated fairly with dignity and respect.

13.6 The university has a '[Report & Support Tool](#)' for students and staff who have experienced behaviours such as bullying, harassment, a hate incident, sexual violence, domestic abuse or discrimination. All incidents will be acted on by the Tool Managers.

14.   Staff counselling service

14.1 The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available for colleagues who have been affected by personal safety incidents in the workplace. The support can be accessed 24/7, 365 days a year. More information can be found on the HR webpages for [Employee Assistance Programme](#).

14.2 Further support and information can be found for staff on the [Staff Wellbeing Hub](#).

15.   Off-site working and travel

15.1 Off- site working can be defined as any teaching, research or work activity carried out by university staff or Post-Graduate Researchers (PGR's) at places or premises which are not owned or managed by the University of Sussex. Further guidance on off-site travel is available on the [Health & Safety Webpages](#).

15.2 The P.L.A.N. model is a simple method for individuals to maintain their personal safety when travelling.

P	**P**repare. Individuals have many more opportunities to put measures in place before they travel, e.g. safe routes, check ins etc. When travelling or during an incident there is little to no opportunity to prevent the incident.
L	**L**ook confident
A	**A**ct to avoid risk.
N	**N**ever assume it won't happen to you.

15.3 Further information on this model is available on the [Suzy Lamplugh Trust webpages](#).

15.4 Refer to Appendix 3 of this document for tips for personal safety whilst travelling.

16.   Legislation and resources

16.1 There is no legal prohibition to lone working, but the process of competent risk assessment covered under the legislation below, will identify certain circumstances where the risks involved cannot be adequately controlled and where lone working is unacceptable.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

16.2 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has specific guidance regarding [Protecting Lone Workers](#).

16.3 [The Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) is a registered charity and is recognised by many to be the leading authority on personal safety. The Trusts states 'Our mission is to reduce the risk and prevalence of abuse, aggression, and violence - with a specific focus on stalking and harassment - through education, campaigning, and support.' Their website has lots of useful resources.
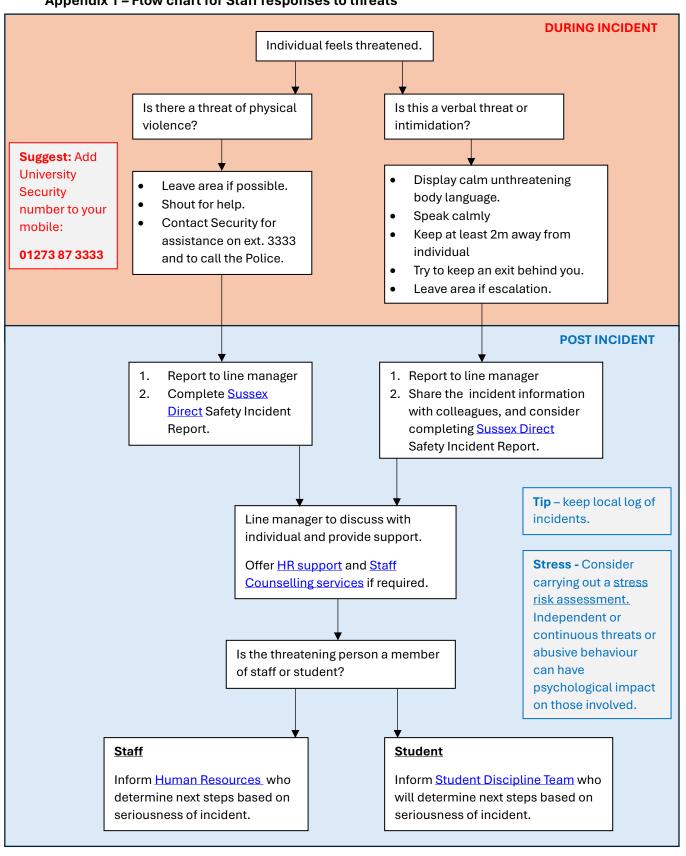
17.   Associated documents

- [HS C407 Personal Safety and Lone Working Safety Code of Practice](#)

18. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Flow chart for Staff responses to threats

DURING INCIDENT

Individual feels threatened.

Is there a threat of physical violence?

Is this a verbal threat or intimidation?

Suggest: Add University Security number to your mobile:

01273 87 3333

- Leave area if possible.
- Shout for help.
- Contact Security for assistance on ext. 3333 and to call the Police.

- Display calm unthreatening body language.
- Speak calmly
- Keep at least 2m away from individual
- Try to keep an exit behind you.
- Leave area if escalation.

POST INCIDENT

1. Report to line manager
2. Complete Sussex Direct Safety Incident Report.

1. Report to line manager
2. Share the incident information with colleagues, and consider completing Sussex Direct Safety Incident Report.

Tip – keep local log of incidents.

Line manager to discuss with individual and provide support.

Offer HR support and Staff Counselling services if required.

Stress - Consider carrying out a stress risk assessment. Independent or continuous threats or abusive behaviour can have psychological impact on those involved.

Is the threatening person a member of staff or student?

Staff

Inform Human Resources who determine next steps based on seriousness of incident.

Student

Inform Student Discipline Team who will determine next steps based on seriousness of incident.

Appendix 2 - Diffusion Techniques

1. The LEAPS framework below is a conflict resolution method which can help when confronted with aggressive behaviour. The method utilises real and active listening to help the other person to fully and safety express themselves without fear of judgement and interruption.

2. The acronym is detailed below:
   Listen – a key component of the communication is active listening.
   Empathise – be interested in the other persons situation and try not to pre-judge or disapprove because you may approach it differently.
   Ask – use questions to demonstrate you are concerned and interested in helping.
   Paraphrase – put the facts as you see them in your own words and repeat your understanding to confirm you have understood.
   Summarise – this condenses the facts to be brief and decisive, it might also assist in taking the necessary action.

3. Some examples of diffusion techniques are below; this is not an exhaustive list and it may be inappropriate for certain techniques to be used dependent on the situation.

   - Assess the situation and take control
   - Listen carefully to what is being said
   - Try to stay calm
   - Use positive body language, words and phrases
   - Question and acknowledge
   - Show concern
   - Avoid unrealistic promises
   - Manage expectations
   - Sit down
   - Distract from the situation, e.g. diverting to a colleague or offering a drink.
   - Leave the situation
   - Sign post to the appropriate service

4. To practice the diffusion techniques above we recommend attending the Personal Safety Training course delivered internally by the Health and Safety Team. More information above in Section 7 – Training.

Appendix 3 – Tips for Personal Safety whilst travelling

1. Walking
   - Remain alert and aware of surroundings.
   - Walk on pavement facing opposite direction to traffic.
   - Keep to well-lit routes, avoiding isolated short cuts.
   - Plan your route in advance.
   - Keep valuables out of sight.
   - Avoid wearing headphones or using mobile phones.
   - Consider carrying a personal alarm and have keys easily accessible.
   - Store ICE numbers on your mobile phone.
   - If walking at night, consider carrying a torch.
   - Trust your safety instinct as you travel.

2. Driving
   - Join a national breakdown organisation.
   - Plan your route (stick to main/well-lit roads if possible).
   - Have a map/satellite navigation aid.
   - Ensure that your car is maintained properly.
   - Make sure you have an emergency kit with you.
   - Let someone (buddy or line manager) know your route and when you expect to arrive/depart.
   - Consider if doors should be locked and windows closed.
   - Keep phone charged and any lone worker device accessible.
   - Avoid giving lifts to people unless you know them well.
   - If someone tries to flag you down for any reason, think carefully before stopping. It may be safer to drive on and phone the Police from a safe location.

3. Breakdowns
   - Pull off road on to hard shoulder.
   - Switch on hazard lights.
   - Stay well away from moving traffic. It's usually safest to get out of your car (using the doors facing away from passing traffic) and wait behind a barrier. If you're on a motorway, move up the bank if you can.
   - Leave animals in the car.
   - Call your breakdown organisation/police from motorway.
   - If waiting outside your car on the motorway, sit on the verge so that you can get back quickly if you need to, keeping the passenger door open.
   - Whilst waiting for help, other than on the motorway, sit in the passenger seat so that it appears as if someone has gone for help and you are not a lone driver.
   - When the breakdown vehicle arrives, wind down your window slightly, and ask for ID and check that they know your name.

4. Parking
   - Consider carefully where their cars are parked, taking into account lighting, isolation, passageways, crime "hot spots" and remote locations etc.

- Lock anything valuable in the boot or remove from the car.
- When you park in the daylight, consider what it will be like at night?
- Spot where the CCTV/staff/exits/entrances are in a car park.
- Reverse into parking spaces in car parks, choose your space carefully.
- When parking on street, park facing the exit for a quick exit.

5. Hotels
- Call in advance to ask for directions and if driving, where to park.
- Avoid sharing your name and room number in public areas.
- Ask for rooms that are not accessible from outside e.g. ground floor or you may prefer a room nearer reception.
- Use a door alarm if you have one.
- If you hear a disturbance stay in your room, and call reception.
- If you would rather not eat alone in the restaurant, order your meal in your room.

6. Private hire/ taxi
- Ensure you have taxi account details stored should you need them.
- Taxis must be clearly marked as a taxi.
- Taxis can be flagged down in the street or at a taxi rank, or pre-booked.
- Taxis must display a taxi licence on the vehicle.
- Private Hire Vehicles (Minicabs) must be pre-booked.
- Minicabs must be pre-booked.
- Minicabs cannot be flagged down in the street or approach you for hire.
- Minicabs must display a private hire vehicle licence on the vehicle.
- Share information about your journey and the vehicle you're using with someone that you trust.
- Ask the driver to show you their badge before you start your journey.
- Find out which licensed taxis and private hire vehicles operate in your area.
- Examine the taxi or minicab before you get in - is a licence displayed on the vehicle?
- Does the vehicle look road-worthy?
- Trust your instincts - if you feel worried or threatened, ask the driver to stop in a busy area so you can get out.
- You can report any concern about taxis or private hire vehicles to the Police and local licensing authority.

7. Public transport
- When waiting for public transport, wait in a well-lit busy area, in sight of security cameras.
- Know the time timetable/use the relevant phone app so you aren't waiting too long in a potentially isolated place.
- Sit near other people or the driver.
- Remain aware of your surroundings.
- Make sure you can locate your ticket easily.
- Don't be afraid to move to another carriage if you feel uneasy.
- British Transport Police non-emergency text number is 61016 for reporting any incidents.

- Stay alert and consider carrying a personal alarm.
- Hold your bag on the window side so it isn't accessible to someone walking down the isle.
- Keep mobiles/valuables in front pockets or inside your bag.
- Carry an alternative method of payment in case of emergency.

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