HS 028 Lone Worker Policy
Version 6

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1 Policy Statement

1.1 The Scottish Ambulance Service (The Service) recognises its duty to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HSWA) 1974 and all subordinate regulations, such as The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Service is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and will do all that is reasonably practicable to protect staff and patients within its care from the risks of lone working

2 Scope

2.1 This Policy applies to all staff, who, as individuals, in the process of carrying out their duties on behalf of the Service, 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.

3 Aim

3.1 The aim of this policy is to set out the arrangements for the identification, assessment and management of the hazards and risk to staff and patients (within its care and control) and visitors to the Service from the risks associated with lone working and to provide and maintain a safe working environment.

3.2 The objectives are to ensure that the Service has clear and defined arrangements for:

- The Identification of additional risks associated with lone working
- The carrying out of suitable and sufficient risk assessments on lone working
- Reduce lone working where possible
- Ensuring communication with lone workers
- The regular review of these risk assessments
- The management and control of the risks from lone working.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Chief Executive

4.1.1 The Chief Executive has, on behalf of the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) Board, overall responsibility for health and safety matters including those related to lone working within the Service.

4.2 Executive Directors

4.2.1 Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development has designated authority for the implementation of all Health and Safety policies within the organisation including lone working.

Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all Health and Safety issues are appropriately considered for all Board decisions.
- Ensuring that Health and Safety is appropriately resourced.
- Ensuring that competent Health and Safety advice is available.
- Ensuring the Health and Safety system is effective and audited annually.

4.2.2 Regional and National Operational Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is effectively implemented. In addition they shall ensure that staff safety is considered at all times particularly with regard to lone working.

4.2.3 All other Executive Directors have responsibilities to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place for the Service

4.3 Heads of Service or Department, Operational and Non Operational Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their staff are aware of the policy;
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out as necessary, 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;

- Ensure 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;
- Ensuring 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.

4.4 Head of Health and Safety will:

- Ensure that adequate and suitable generic risk assessments have been carried out and that safe systems of work are implemented so as to reduce the risks to health and safety so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure a suitable reporting system is in place for the reporting of any incidents (e.g. DATIX).

4.5 Regional Health and Safety Officers will

- Ensure that adequate and suitable risk assessments have been carried out by the local management team, and that safe systems of work are implemented for all identified lone working activities

4.6 General Manager – ACC will

- Ensure that ACC dispatchers and managers are aware of and comply with the contents of this policy
- Ensure that all operational lone workers receive the safety checks as outlined

4.7 General Manager – Fleet Services will

- Ensure that all Fleet Staff identified as lone workers are provided with safe systems of work including where necessary appropriate monitoring mechanisms
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out as necessary, and reviewed regularly;
- Ensuring 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.
- Develop and maintain a fleet services lone working procedure

4.8 All Staff will

- Ensure you take reasonable care of yourself and others who may be

affected by your activity

- Ensure you read and understand the Safe system of work and any information or instruction given in relation to Lone working.
- Ensure you attend any training deemed necessary for your role
- Ensure you report any problems, defects, concerns or potential hazards you encounter with any lone working activity to your line manager as soon as possible
- Ensure all incidents are reported using the Service reporting system DATIX
- Ensure you carry out a dynamic risk assessment at all times

5 Definitions

HSE defines a lone worker as:

Someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision Lone workers include those who:

- work from a fixed base, such as one person working alone on a premises (e.g., shops, petrol stations etc);
- work separately from others on the same premises (e.g. security staff) or work outside normal hours;
- work away from a fixed base (e.g., maintenance workers, health care workers, environment inspectors);
- work at home (homeworkers); and
- mobile workers (e.g., taxi drivers).

6 Review

6.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there are any relevant changes to legislation or best practice.

7 Implementation

7.1 The policy will be implemented and communicated to managers and staff within the Service via @SAS. Emails will also be sent to senior managers asking them to bring the existence of the policy to their teams.

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Lone Working Procedure

Risk assessment

The Service 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.

Service 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
- 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 include:

- 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 the service 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 send text or voicemail to advice they are at the RVP.

- 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.

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 employee's 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 25 minutes after the lone worker has arrived on scene or at the RVP. 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.

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

The Service 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 Group.

The review processes will include:

- Collecting and monitoring all reported incidents (via DATIX)
- Reporting to local and National Health and Safety Groups and 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.

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/ ACC Manager 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.

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

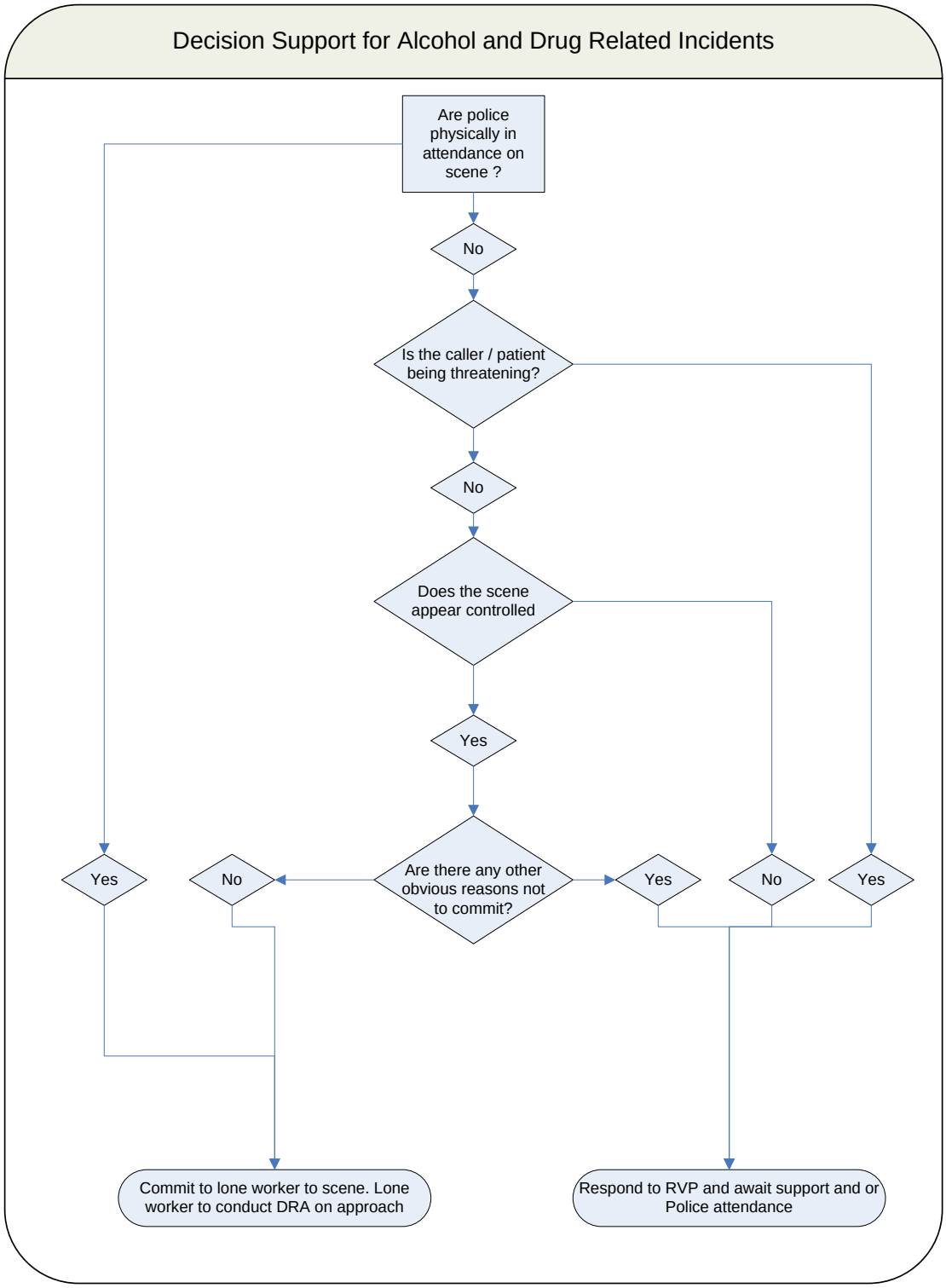
Workshop staff may be required to work on their own as part of their duties. Fleet should ensure that adequate control measures are in place to protect these staff.

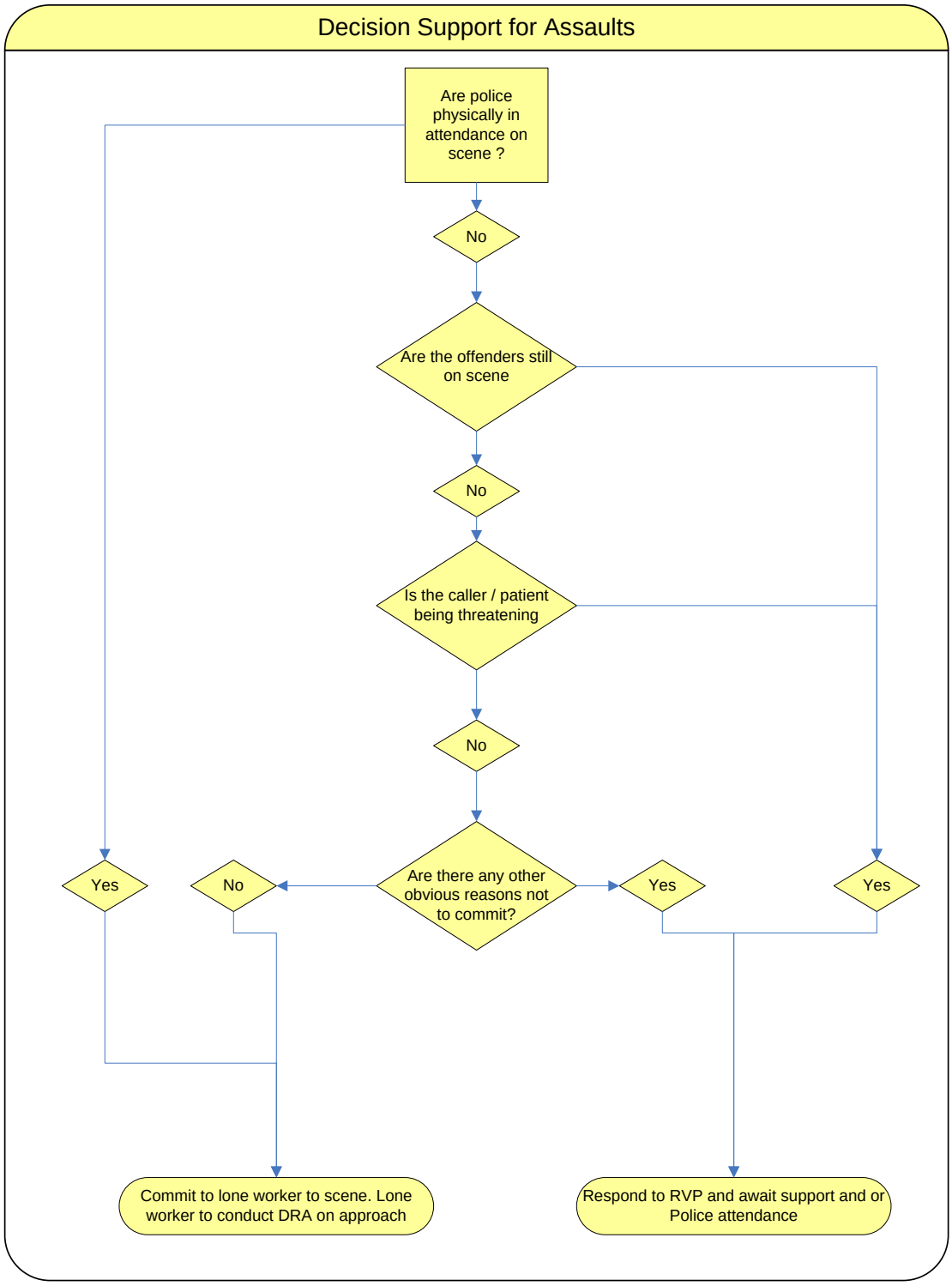
Protocol for Other Staff

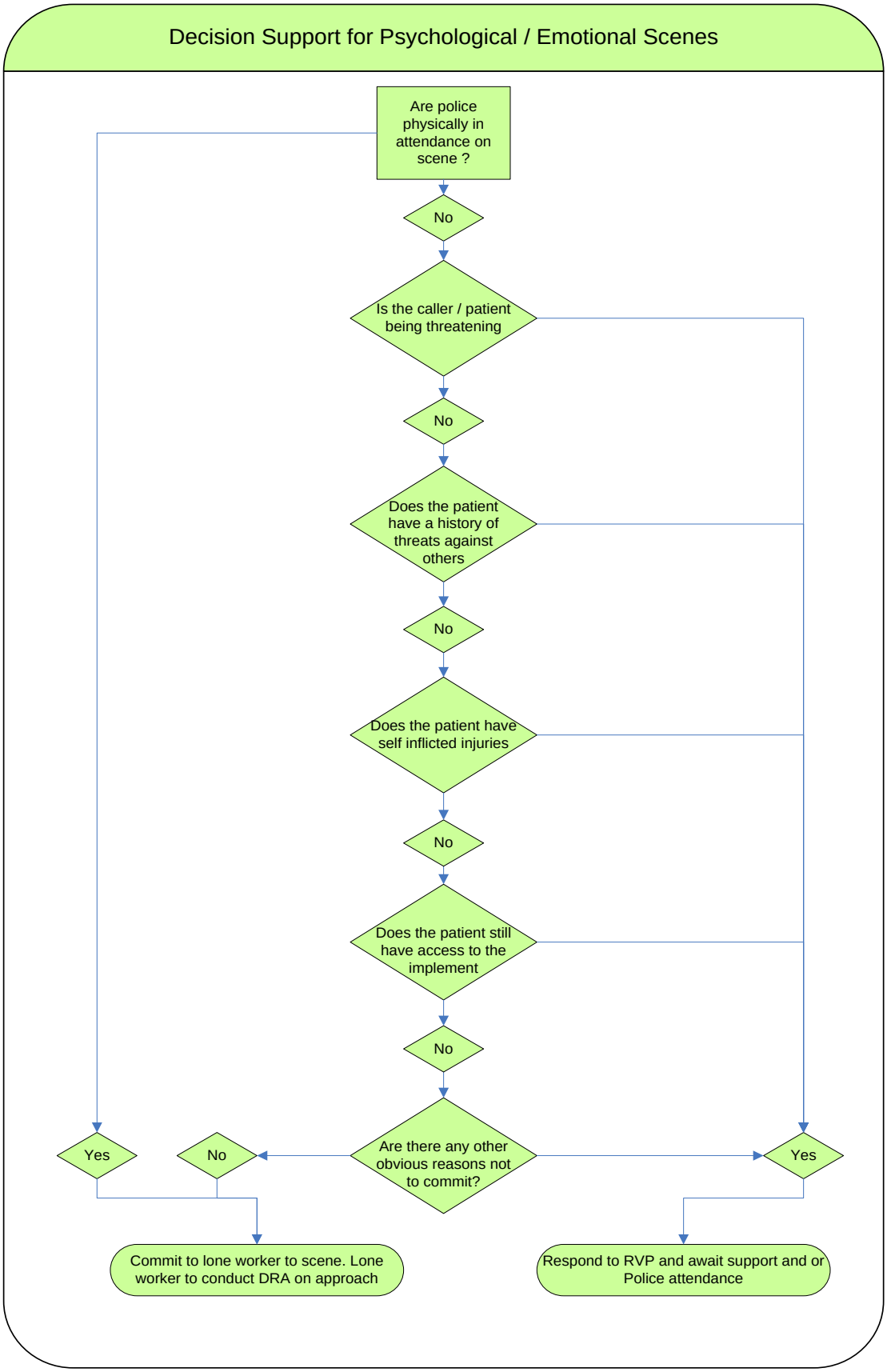
Other staff may from time to time be required to attend meetings and/or work on their own. When travelling on their own staff should take extra precautions to ensure their own safety. When staying away from home on Service business they should not do anything that puts themselves in danger.

Appendix 3.

Decision Support Flowcharts.




Decision Support for Assaults
Are police physically in attendance on scene ?
No
Are the offenders still on scene
No
Is the caller / patient being threatening
No
Are there any other obvious reasons not to commit?
Yes
No
Yes
Yes
Commit to lone worker to scene. Lone worker to conduct DRA on approach
Respond to RVP and await support and or Police attendance


Decision Support for Psychological / Emotional Scenes
Are police physically in attendance on scene ?
No
Is the caller / patient being threatening
No
Does the patient have a history of threats against others
No
Does the patient have self inflicted injuries
No
Does the patient still have access to the implement
No
Are there any other obvious reasons not to commit?
Yes
No
Yes
Commit to lone worker to scene. Lone worker to conduct DRA on approach
Respond to RVP and await support and or Police attendance