

Purpose of this policy and procedure

The council recognises that employees often work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:

- Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working,
- Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone,
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk,
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers, and,
- Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce future risks

The scope of this policy

It applies to all employees.

Policy

We will protect employees from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the council's policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

Definition

'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples include:

- An Officer who opens and closes an office either early in the morning or late at night
- Office workers who work alone in the premises or from home
- An Officer that is out on site working on behalf of the Parish Council

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own.

Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows:

Managers:

- Will try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone;
- Ensure that all lone working activities must be formally risk assessed. A spreadsheet needs to be completed. This should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures;
- Arrangements for lone working must be made clear to employees and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone;
- Lone workers must be informed of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- Must raise the alarm to the Chair/Vice Chair of Council if employee cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated
- Must ensure that all employee are aware of this lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

Lone workers

- To wear the Solo Protect Alarm when in the office alone and out on site at all times
- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work
- To follow any instruction given by management and the council
- Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- Not to work alone without an adequate risk assessment
- Inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone

All Employees

- To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.
- Employees must ensure they maintain and share up to date contact details

Risk Assessments

Managers must complete a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and updated as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant employees or councillors.

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness
- Faulty equipment
- Travelling alone
- Remote locations
- Abuse from members of the public

- Accident or injury
- Animal attacks

Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced

Every lone working environment and situation is different, and therefore it is not possible to implement a 'one size fits all' approach. Where there is regular or anticipated lone working, the council will carry out a risk assessment.

Below are the strategies that are implemented could be implemented (on their own or combined):

- Electronic diaries to be kept up to date with meeting/visit/lone working details
- Agreed times and method of contact
- Carry lone working personal alarm ID Badge
- Door entry system
- Stable door used for visitors to the office
- Use of Zoom during office hours when working from home

Lone Worker Scheme

The following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker **and** their line manager:-

- Name and contact details of the lone worker
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's manager
- Any 'code word' that would indicate that the lone worker needs assistance
- Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation

If you change your contact details, you must let your manager and employees know.

In circumstances the manager must have relevant details about your lone working in your electronic diary, that may include;

- where you are going (address or area if there is no address)
- details of the purpose (i.e. preparing the hall, grass cutting, meeting)
- contact details of anyone you intend to meet (any additional contact details for the location you are visiting)
- your mode of transport
- when you are expected to return

Your manager must know what to do if you do not return or make contact at the anticipated/agreed time.

Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your physical or mental health that could lead to increased risk with your manager. You can then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated confidentiality.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. The report should include:

- A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved,
- For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should be captured, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence, and,
- In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances. This information would then support us to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.
- A record of all accidents, incidents and near misses will be kept on file in the Office in the accident

If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured whilst lone working, call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager, a councillor or colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

You must contact your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

In the case of a pandemic appropriate additional risk assessments and review will be carried out to cover working from home and site visits.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Derek Wilson
Executive Clerk
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