

Lone working policy

POLICY REVIEW	
Signed	<i>(having been approved by the council)</i>
Minute reference	15/21/22 APR
Date ratified	19 th April 2021
Date of next review	19 th April 2022

1 Purpose of this policy and procedure

- 1.1 The council recognises that some of its staff work alone and, where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:
- a raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working
 - b identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone
 - c explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk
 - d provides appropriate support to lone workers and
 - e encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

2 The scope of this policy

- 2.1 It applies to all staff, whether full-time, part-time or temporary workers. It does not apply to councillors.

3 Definition

- 3.1 'Lone worker' refers to a person who works by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples include:
- a a caretaker who opens and closes the Peter Gooch Room or John Cumber Hall
 - b cleaners and
 - c employees who work alone on the premises or away from the premises on council business (e.g. travelling to a training course).

4 Responsibilities

- 4.1 All staff have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows.

4.2 The Clerk shall:

- a try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable
- b ensure that the worker is competent to work alone
- c ensure that all lone working activities are formally risk assessed (this should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures)
- d make clear to staff arrangements for lone working and explain the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone
- e inform lone workers of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and allow them the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment
- f maintain a list of emergency contacts for each employee
- g raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated and
- h ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

4.3 All staff shall:

- a take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work
- b follow any instruction given by management or the council
- c raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- d inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone and
- e be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, for example unanticipated periods where there is no communication.

5 Risk assessment

5.1 The Clerk shall complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and update it as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

5.2 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:

- a sudden illness
- b using substances hazardous to health
- c faulty equipment
- d travelling alone
- e remote locations
- f abuse from members of the public
- g animal attacks.

6 Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced

6.1 Below are some example strategies that can be implemented:

- a keeping the office door locked when working alone
- b ensuring a colleague or councillor accompanies you whilst locking up at the end of an evening meeting
- c keeping a mobile phone (with an emergency contact saved) on you at all times
- d keeping office diaries up to date with meeting, visits, training courses and lone working details
- e letting family members and/or relevant colleagues know where you are going, your method of travel, when you are expected to return and who family members and/or relevant colleagues should contact in the event you do not return as expected and
- f agreeing a code word with an emergency contact, which can be used if the lone worker needs assistance.

7 Health and wellbeing

7.1 In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with your line manager or, where appropriate, necessary councillors (eg pregnancy). You can then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality of the utmost importance.

8 Reporting incidents

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

- a a brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved
- b for any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator, 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
- c in either instance, 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.

8.2 This information would then support the council to review its risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

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

8.4 Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

9 Notes

- 9.1 The Health and Safety Executive have extensive advice and guidance on homeworking, lone working, including guidance on the risks of lone working.

Homeworking: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm

Lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm

Risks of lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf