

LONE WORKING POLICY

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1. Aims, Objectives and Scope

- 1.1 Lancing Parish Council recognises that some employees are required to work alone as part of their duties. The Council is committed to ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of all lone workers.
- 1.2 This policy aims to:
- Raise awareness of the risks associated with lone working
 - Ensure that all lone working activities are properly assessed and managed
 - Provide clear procedures and control measures to minimise risk
 - Ensure appropriate support, supervision and communication arrangements are in place
 - Promote a culture of reporting incidents and near misses
 - Ensure continuous improvement of lone working arrangements

2. The Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Council, including those who are employed on a full-time, part-time, temporary or casual basis, as well as volunteers acting on behalf of the Council.
- 2.2 This policy primarily applies to employees and volunteers; however, its principles also apply to Councillors when undertaking Council-related duties alone, including attending meetings, site visits, or community engagement.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 Working alone is not in itself unlawful; however, the Council recognises that lone working may expose individuals to additional risks when compared to working with others. The Council will therefore take all reasonable steps to identify hazards associated with lone working activities and to implement appropriate control measures.
- 3.2 This will include undertaking suitable and sufficient risk assessments, providing training and guidance, ensuring that effective communication systems are in place, and making available appropriate equipment where required. The Council will also ensure that there are clear procedures for responding to emergencies and situations where a lone worker cannot be contacted.
- 3.3 This policy is developed in accordance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act of 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Council recognises its duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees who may be affected by its activities, including those working alone.

4. Definition of Lone Working

- 4.1 A lone worker is any individual who works by themselves without close or direct supervision. This may occur during normal working hours or outside of them.
- 4.2 Examples of lone working include:
- Employees opening or closing the building
 - Grounds maintenance in isolated areas
 - Working alone in Council offices
 - Community- based or outreach work
 - Travelling between locations for work purposes
 - Leaving meetings late at night

- 4.3 Certain activities are not considered suitable for lone working. These include work involving hazardous machinery, work within confined spaces, or any task that has been identified through risk assessment as presenting a significant level of risk. In addition, individuals under the age of eighteen must not undertake lone working activities.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 Managers have overall responsibility for ensuring that lone working is carried out safely. This includes ensuring that all relevant activities are subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and that all staff are competent, appropriately trained and fully aware of the procedures they are required to follow. Managers must also ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented, that suitable communication systems are in place, and that any necessary equipment is provided and maintained. Where a lone worker cannot be contacted or fails to return as expected, managers are responsible for initiating appropriate follow-up action.
- 5.2 Lone workers themselves are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and for following the procedures and control measures put in place by the Council. They must maintain regular communication with their manager or designated contact, ensure that any equipment provided to them is used correctly, and report any concerns, incidents or near misses at the earliest opportunity. Lone workers must not undertake work where a risk assessment has not been completed or where they feel that the risks are not adequately controlled.
- 5.3 All other staff have a responsibility to remain aware of colleagues who may be working alone and to support monitoring arrangements where required. They should report any concerns about a lone worker's safety or wellbeing without delay.

6. Risk Assessments

- 6.1 All lone working activities must be subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. These assessments must take into account the specific circumstances in which the work is being carried out, including the location, the time of day, the nature of the task, and any interaction with members of the public. Consideration must also be given to environmental factors such as weather conditions and terrain, as well as any history or previous incidents.
- 6.2 Risk assessments must consider factors such as the risk of violence, environmental hazards, isolation, access to assistance, and the individual's experience and health. Risks should be evaluated and categorised (E.g. low, medium, high), with lone working prohibited where risks cannot be adequately controlled.
- 6.3 Where lone working forms a regular part of a role, the Council will develop role-specific risk assessments to reflect the different working environments and risks faced by staff, such as those working in caretaking, grounds maintenance, office-based roles, or community settings. Each risk assessment must clearly identify the hazards involved, the control measures required, the arrangements for communication and emergency response, and any equipment that must be used.

7. Lone Working Control Measures

- 7.1 Appropriate control measures must be implemented to reduce the risks associated with lone working. These will vary depending on the nature of the work but must always include effective communication and monitoring arrangements.
- 7.2 Lone workers are required to inform a manager or designated contact of their location, the work they are undertaking, and the expected duration of that work. They must also agree suitable times at which contact will be made. In many cases, a buddy system will be used to ensure that regular check-ins take place and that any failure to make contact is identified promptly.
- 7.3 A clear check-in procedure must be agreed before lone working begins. As a minimum, this must include a start-of-task notification and an end-of-task confirmation. For higher-risk activities, periodic check-ins should be agreed (for example, hourly). Failure to make a scheduled check-in will trigger the escalation procedure.
- 7.4 Mobile devices must be fully charged and operational before lone working begins. Where personal devices are used, they must be suitable for maintaining reliable contact. Consideration should be given to the use of lone worker devices or applications where appropriate.
- 7.5 Where a lone worker cannot be contacted, the following escalation procedure must be followed:
- Attempt to contact the individual by phone and other available means
 - Repeat contact attempts after reasonable interval (e.g. 10-15 minutes)
 - Contact the designated manager or emergency contact
 - Consider attending the individuals last known location if safe to do so
 - If there are serious concerns for the individual's safety, contact the emergency services without delay.
- All actions taken must be recorded
- 7.6 The Council will provide appropriate equipment where required to support lone working arrangements. This may include mobile phones, personal safety alarms, and other technology designed to enable communication or raise an alert in an emergency. Staff are required to ensure that such equipment is carried at all times when working alone and is maintained in a usable condition.
- 7.7 Particular consideration must be given to staff attending evening meetings or working outside normal hours. The Council will take reasonable steps to support safe travel arrangements, including encouraging the use of well-lit routes and considering additional measures such as escort arrangements where appropriate. This is especially important during the winter months or in conditions of reduced visibility.
- 7.8 Lone working must not take place where the risks are considered too high or cannot be adequately controlled. This includes situations where there is a foreseeable risk of violence or aggression, where hazardous tasks are involved, or where communication systems are not reliable.
- 7.9 Where there is a foreseeable risk of violence or aggression, lone working must be avoided. Staff must not attend known high-risk situations alone. All staff have the rights to withdraw from any situation where they feel unsafe. Incidents involving threatening or abusive behaviour must be reported and reviewed.

8. Ways In Which Lone Working Risks Can Be Reduced

- 8.1 The risks associated with lone working can be reduced through careful planning, effective risk assessment, and the implementation of appropriate control measures. This includes ensuring that staff are properly trained, that communication systems are reliable, and that work is organised in a way that avoids unnecessary exposure to risk.
- 8.2 Wherever possible, high-risk activities should be avoided or carried out with additional support.
- 8.3 Staff should take practical steps to enhance their personal safety when working alone, including informing others of their whereabouts, avoiding poorly lit or isolated areas where possible, and trusting their instincts if a situation feels unsafe.

9. Health and Wellbeing

- 9.1 The Council recognises that lone working can have an impact on both physical safety and mental wellbeing. Staff are encouraged to inform their manager of any health conditions or personal circumstances that may increase their level of risk when working alone. This includes situations such as pregnancy or medical conditions that may affect their ability to respond in an emergency.
- 9.2 Any information disclosed will be treated in confidence and only shared when absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of the individual. Staff are also encouraged to raise any concerns about isolation, stress or wellbeing so that appropriate support can be provided.
- 9.3 If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured, call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager or a colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do it on your behalf).

10. Incident Reporting

- 10.1 All incidents, including near misses and situations where a lone worker feels unsafe, must be reported as soon as possible. Reports should provide a clear account of what happened, when it occurred, and who was involved. Where incidents involve aggression or threatening behaviour, as much detail as possible should be recorded, including descriptions of individuals and the circumstances in which the incident took place.
- 10.2 Following any incident, the relevant manager must review the circumstances and consider whether the existing risk assessment and control measures remain adequate. When necessary, additional measures must be introduced. Serious incidents must be subject to a formal review to ensure that lessons are learned and improvements are made.
- 10.3 Records of risk assessments, incidents, and any follow-up actions must be retained in accordance with the Council's record-keeping procedures. These records will be used to inform future risk assessments and policy reviews.

11. Training

- 11.1 The Council will ensure that all staff who are required to work alone are provided with appropriate training. This will include guidance on lone working procedures, personal safety awareness, the use of any equipment provided, and the actions to be taken in the event of an emergency. Training will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains effective and up to date.

12. Monitoring and Review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains effective and reflects current working practices. It will also be reviewed following any significant incident or change in circumstances.
- 12.2 The policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Council policies and supported by role-specific risk assessments and operational procedures.