



LONE WORKING POLICY

Purpose of this policy and procedure

This Lone Working Policy is designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all employees, volunteers, and council members who may work alone or in isolation while carrying out their duties on behalf of Wendover Parish Council

This policy:

- 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 risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

The scope of this policy

Wendover Parish Council acknowledges its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and any other relevant legislation. These laws require the Parish Council to assess and manage the risks to its employees and others affected by its activities, including those working alone.

Policy statement

The Parish Council recognises its duty of care and is committed to reducing the risks associated with lone working.

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.

Guidance to the policy

Definition

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

- An estates and ground person tending to green space
- An office worker who is at work alone in the clock tower, and,
- Homeworking.

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

Risk Assessments

Identification of Hazards

- The Parish Council will carry out risk assessments to identify hazards related to lone working.
- Risk assessments will consider factors such as location, time of day, the nature of the work, access to assistance, and any known risks specific to the individual or the work environment.

Control Measures

- Based on the findings of the risk assessments, appropriate control measures will be implemented to reduce risks to an acceptable level.
- Measures may include providing personal protective equipment (PPE), communication devices, or adjusting work patterns.

Review of Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and updated if there are any significant changes in working conditions or if an incident occurs.

Responsibilities

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

The Parish Council – through staffing

- Ensure that appropriate policies, procedures, and resources are in place to manage the risks associated with lone working.
- Provide training and information to employees, contractors, and volunteers about the risks and how to manage them.

Clerk

- 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. 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 staff and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained;

- Lone workers must be informed of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- Must raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated
- Must ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

Lone workers

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work
- To follow any instruction given by the Clerk or the council
- Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- Not to work alone where there is adequate information to undertake a risk assessment.
- Inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone

Staff and buddies

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

How Wendover Parish Council reduces lone working risks

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 has the following lone working guidance that meets the needs and risks of their particular circumstances. The plan should be proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. The plan for a groundsman lone working with machinery will be more detailed than an administrator working late in the office. This should be written down and communicated to all relevant staff and where appropriate, councillors. Listed below are the strategies WPC will employ:

Work Schedule

The work schedule will be prepared in advance to ensure that the jobs being undertaken under lone working are suitable and do not pose additional risks. Anyone undertaking lone working will have a mobile phone on them at all times. There is an office mobile phone available if required.

Buddy scheme

Each member of staff will have a nominated "buddy". That buddy can be another member of staff or family member/next of kin. The following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker and their buddy on a laminated card that can be kept discretely to protect the personal information, such as in a purse or wallet. Should the "buddy" be worried about the lone worker then they can contact the Clerk, or if unavailable the Estates and Events Manager, or if unavailable the Chair of Staffing Committee. The card will contain the following information:-

- Name and contact details of the lone worker
- Name, relationship and contact details of the buddy
- The phone number of the Clerk, Estates and Events Manager, Chair of Staffing

Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation

If any of the details of the “buddy card” change it is the responsibility of the party who’s information changes to update the buddy card and re-issue with the new information on.

When lone working the buddy will need the following information before you start your shift:

- 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;

Vehicle tracking

To support the Lone Working policy any vehicles that are used during a lone working shift will be fitted with a tracker. The tracking data will be reviewed at key points of the day such as start of shift and end of shift if the lone working is during standard office hours. Outside of these hours the tracking can be used should an SOS call be received from the lone worker or buddy.

CCTV

The Council should consider CCTV at remote work locations. A home security doorbell that can be remotely monitored should be fitted to the Clock Tower and also a camera covering the internal entrance door which is where the highest risk of aggression from members of the public is about to take place.

Health and wellbeing

To ensure personal safety, lone workers must share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with the Clerk or Chair of staffing. This includes 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.

Procedures for Lone Workers

Pre-Work Checks

- Employees and volunteers should assess the risks before commencing work alone, including checking the environment, ensuring communication devices are functional, and informing a designated contact person of their plans (see buddy scheme).

Communication

- Lone workers must maintain regular contact with a designated contact person (buddy) at agreed intervals.
- Emergency contact procedures must be in place and understood by all parties.

Access to Assistance

- Lone workers should know how to access help in an emergency, whether through mobile phones, panic alarms, or other devices.

- Employees and volunteers should have access to a first aid kit and know the nearest location of emergency facilities.

Out-of-Hours Working

- If lone working outside of normal hours, the worker must inform a designated contact person of their expected time of return and ensure that they have a reliable means of communication.

Incident Reporting

- All incidents or near misses involving lone workers must be reported and recorded in accordance with the Parish Council's incident reporting procedures.
- Incidents will be investigated to identify causes and implement any necessary changes to prevent recurrence.

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.

General advice

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

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

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

Monitoring and Review

- The effectiveness of this Lone Working Policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis.
- The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, best practices, or as a result of an incident.

Document History

Original policy contained within H&S handbook

Separate policy Drafted by Clerk	18/08/2024	(version 1)
Reviewed by H&S specialist	20/08/2024	(version 1.1)
Approved by Staffing Cttee	29/08/2024	(version 1.1)