

Ludgershall Town Council



Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council will take every practicable step to protect the health, safety and welfare of its staff and Councillors¹ whenever they are required, by the nature of their duties, to work alone and without direct support and supervision. Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require individuals to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Line Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

1.2 Working alone is not in itself against the law, however, the Council recognizes its duty to assess and manage any risks arising from lone working activities.

1.3 No staff, Councillors, or volunteers under 18 years of age will be expected, or permitted to conduct lone working.

1.4 No confined spaces work will be undertaken alone, in accordance with the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997.

1.5 The following core UK legislation should be considered alongside this policy: Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013, Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR

2. Scope of Policy

2.1 This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations. This policy applies to all staff and Councillors who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in

¹ A councillor may be an elected member, or a co-opted member.

the definition below. Volunteers would not normally be expected to work alone and so should be outside the scope of this policy.

3. Context

3.1 Some staff and Councillors work outside office hours and/or alone due to flexible working patterns and/or to undertake their job role. The Council's principles for supporting lone workers include:

- 3.1.1 A commitment to supporting staff both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices.
- 3.1.2 Recognising and reducing risk.
- 3.1.3 A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff.
- 3.1.4 A clear understanding of responsibilities.
- 3.1.5 The priority placed on the safety of the individual over property.
- 3.1.6 A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff.
- 3.1.7 Where possible, reduce the need for lone working.

3.2 Prior to conducting lone working the Council, through Line Managers must ensure that the worker considering lone working is competent, they have the experience, training and confidence to work alone and have no health, or persona factors that may increase lone working risks.

4. Definition of Lone Workers

4.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as “***those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision***”. This covers all Council staff, all of whom are required to carry out their duties for all or part of their working day working in isolation. This may be within the office or outside the office.

4.2 Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone, or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building, but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

5. Aims of the Policy

5.1 The aim of the policy is to:

- 5.1.1 Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.

5.1.2 Recognising and reducing risk by ensuring that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as reasonably practicable.

5.1.3 Ensure that appropriate training is given to all staff in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.

5.1.4 Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone.

5.1.5 Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

5.1.6 Reduce the need for lone working where possible.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Town Clerk. The Town Clerk on behalf of Ludgershall Town Council is responsible for:

6.1.1 Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working.

6.1.2 Providing resources for putting the policy into practice.

6.1.3 Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy.

6.1.4 Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy.

6.1.5 Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.

6.1.6 Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone.

6.1.7 Ensuring that staff are given appropriate information, instruction and training.

6.1.8 Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.

6.1.9 Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

6.2 Staff and Councillors. Staff and Councillors are responsible for:

6.2.1 Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.

6.2.2 Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working.

6.2.3 Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate.

6.2.4 Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.

6.2.5 Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

7. Building Procedures

7.1 Line Managers and staff are responsible for ensuring that buildings are secure at all times when lone working is taking place. Appropriate measures must be in place to control access to the building, and emergency exits must remain accessible and unobstructed.

7.2 Alarm systems should be regularly tested to ensure they are fully operational, and staff working alone must be familiar with the location and operation of all alarms and exits.

7.3 When working alone, external doors must be kept locked to prevent access by unauthorised or unwanted visitors. Lone workers must have access to a telephone and suitable first aid equipment to enable them to respond to incidents or emergencies without delay.

7.4 Where key codes or similar access controls are in use, these should be changed periodically, and immediately when a member of staff or contractor who knows the code leaves the organisation. Key codes must also be changed as a precaution whenever a security breach is suspected.

7.5 If there is any indication that a building may have been broken into or tampered with, or where premises show signs of forced entry, staff must not enter the premises. In such circumstances, they should seek assistance and report the concern before attempting to gain access.

8. Personal Safety

8.1 The safety of our people takes priority over property, tasks or service delivery.

8.2 The safety of staff undertaking lone working is of paramount importance, and all reasonable steps must be taken to reduce risks wherever possible. Staff must not assume that the presence of a mobile phone or a contingency arrangement alone provides sufficient protection; effective lone working begins with careful planning to minimise risks before the activity takes place.

8.3 Staff members are expected to take reasonable precautions to safeguard their personal safety at all times. Prior to any lone working activity, the risks involved must be assessed in consultation with the relevant Line Manager, and appropriate control measures agreed and put in place.

8.4 Staff members must ensure their Line Manager, or another identified and agreed person, is informed whenever they are working alone. This notification must include accurate details of their location and the expected duration of the task, together with a clear, agreed process for reporting when the work has been completed. This requirement also applies where a staff member expects to go directly home following an external appointment rather than returning to their normal base. Where building sign-in and sign-out systems are in place, staff must ensure these are used correctly.

8.5 If a staff member does not report in as expected, the agreed escalation plan must be activated. This will initially involve checking on their welfare, and, if necessary, taking further action using emergency contact information in line with established procedures.

8.6 Where lone working is undertaken on a regular basis or for extended periods, Line Managers must ensure arrangements are in place for regular contact with the staff member. This is to monitor wellbeing, maintain communication, and reduce the potential risks associated with prolonged or isolated working.

8.7 The details captured through paragraph 8 reflect the principles of the NALC Buddy Scheme, the best practice approach for a lone worker to have a buddy, or check in system with a named contact, with expected and frequent check ins, clear escalation steps if a check in is missed, or there are concerns, and an optional code word for discreet help.

8.8 Where there are concerns for a lone worker the following should be considered for an escalation flow: Attempt to contact the lone worker by phone, messaging and email, Contact the lone workers buddy, or a Councillor who may be able to confirm if they have had contact, visit the Council Office, or location. Finally contact the emergency services if risk, including risk-to-life is suspected.

9. Risk Assessment

9.1 Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessment will be carried out for, and by all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff that are site based but work in isolation, as well as mobile staff whose work takes them out into the community.

9.2 Recommendations will be made to eliminate or to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

9.3 Risk assessment for site based lone workers will include:

9.3.1 Safe access and exit.

9.3.2 Risk of violence.

9.3.3 Safety of equipment for individual use.

9.3.4 Channels of communication in an emergency.

9.3.5 Site security.

9.3.6 Security arrangements i.e. alarm systems and mobile telephones.

9.3.7 Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.

9.4 Risk assessment for mobile lone workers will additionally include:

9.4.1 Travelling between sites.

9.4.2 Reporting and recording arrangements.

9.4.3 Communication and traceability.

9.4.4 Personal safety/security.

9.5 Following completion of the Risk Assessment, consideration will be given to any appropriate action that is required, Risk mitigation, and Risk Action Responses will be considered and implemented.

9.6 All available information should be considered and checked or updated, as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker, in each situation consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

9.7 Where there is a near miss, or an incident there must be a review of the risk assessment, and any additional mitigation implemented to reduce future risks.

10. Incident Reporting

10.1 An incident is defined as “an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage”.

10.2 To maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents, including near misses, be reported to the Town Clerk or Staffing Committee who should identify if any immediate action is required.

10.3 All staff are provided with the Town Clerk’s and Staffing Committee contact details. Staff must ensure all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

10.4 The following must be included in incident reporting;

10.4.1 **What Happened:** provide a summary of what took place

10.4.2 **When and Where:** provide the date and time, where the location is generic, for example in the Council Offices, try to specify which room, or where within any open space.

10.4.3 **Who Was Involved:** where possible provide any names of those involved, or as witnesses. If you cannot provide a name then a description of the parties involved, or witnesses would be helpful.

10.4.4 **Whether Police were Contacted:** Explain if the police were contacted, or attended, or if others, including any other professional bodies were called.

10.4.5 **Contributing Factors:** You may have additional details that provide context to how, or why the incident may have happened, such as environmental details, or behaviours signs, eg drinking, smoking, acts of aggression.

10.5 By providing as much detail as possible this supports learning lessons, conducting future risk assessments, or risk mitigation actions, and support auditing or reviewing insurance requirements.

11. Support for Staff

11.1 Staff working for the Council should know their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk, or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Town Clerk will ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive the appropriate training or support.

11.2 There are several things staff can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The Town Council has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, but staff also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves.

11.3 The following points may be helpful in recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk;

11.3.1 Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.

11.3.2 Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?

11.3.3 Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.

11.3.4 Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?

11.3.5 Be aware of your own triggers, and the things that make you angry or upset.

11.4 With regards to other people it would be useful for staff to be aware, or cautious of the following;

11.4.1 Take note of their non-verbal signals, are there early warning signs of aggression?

11.4.2 Be aware of their language and tone, are they behaving in an acceptable way?

11.4.3 Be aware of their triggers (if known, or identifiable).

11.4.4 Do not crowd people, allow them space.

11.4.5 Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.

11.4.6 Be aware of the context of your meeting, are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?

11.4.7 Listen to them and show them you are listening.

11.5 At any point a staff member feels unsafe they should extract themselves from the situation, by either withdrawing from the engagement, or stating they cannot continue in a discussion and seek to reschedule for another time. It is imperative that staff remove themselves from a situation they feel is unsafe or developing to be unsafe. LTC unequivocally gives staff permission to disengage from an unsafe situation.

12. Contacting, or Involving the Police

12.1 The Council is committed to protecting the staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault.

12.2 All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents, or near misses, to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process.

12.3 Except in the cases of emergency, staff should inform the Town Clerk or Staffing Committee of any incident without delay. The Town Clerk or Staffing Committee will thereafter take responsibility for contact with the police to report the details of the incident.

12.4 In emergent situations, especially where there is a risk of harm, or a risk to life the staff member should contact the police immediately, and extract themselves in whichever manner is possible, which may include locking themselves in an alternative room.

13. Immediate Support Following a Violent incident

13.1 In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Town Clerk will immediately ensure the staff received any necessary medical treatment and/or advice.

13.2 The Town Clerk will also consider whether the staff member needs specific information or assistance relating to any legal or insurance matters. The Town Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

13.3 Support may also include acting a support companion during any police discussions, or safeguarding any CCTV evidence from within the Council Offices, or if there is Council owned CCTV at a site where an incident has occurred.

END

Administration of the Lone Working Policy

A1. Review Date

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or when there are any legislative changes that may affect this policy.

A2. Version Control

Version	Approved	Date	Adopted	Date	Comments
V1*		30 Jul 20	FTC	Aug 20	Initial Copy
V2			Interim Feb 26	26 Feb 26	Redraft

*Previous Title: Lone & Isolated Working Policy for Ludgershall Town Council (Aug 20)

END