Lone Working Policy

Date	Minute Reference
Adopted:	18th March 2024
Next Review:	March 2025

1. Introduction

The Council recognises that its employees are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working.

The Council also recognises it has an obligation under Health and Safety at Work (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, for health, safety and welfare at work of its employees.

2. Scope of Policy

The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection the duties and activities of the Council's employees.

3. Definition of Lone Workers

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". This covers all Council employees, 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. Aims of Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

A. Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.

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

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

D. Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who must work alone.

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

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Clerk

The Clerk on behalf of the Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working.
- Providing resources for putting policy into practice.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone.
- Ensuring that staff are given appropriate information, instruction and training.
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

5.2 Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working;
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate;
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy;
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identity or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

6. Risk Assessment

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 out into the community. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.
A lone workers' checklist will be completed (see Appendix 1). This will be used as a risk assessment for site based lone workers and will include:

• Safe access and exit;

• Risk of violence;

• Safety of equipment for individual use;

• Channels of communication in an emergency;

• Site security;

• Security arrangements i.e. alarm systems and mobile telephones;

• Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.

Risk assessments for mobile lone works will, additionally, include:

• Travelling between sites;

• Reporting and recording arrangements;

• Communication and traceability;

• Personal safety/security.

Following completion of the Risk Assessment, consideration will be given to any appropriate action that is required.

7. Mandatory Procedures

7.1 Security of Buildings

To ensure the security of buildings

• Appropriate steps should be taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible;

• Alarm systems must be tested regularly;

• Staff work alone must ensure they are familiar with the exits and alarms;

• There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working alone;

• If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, a staff member must not enter alone, but must wait for back up.

7.2 Personal Safety

To ensure personal safety

• Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a backup plan sufficient. The priority is to plan for a reduction of risk;

• Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety;

• Before working alone, assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the line manager;

• Staff must inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving details of their location and following an agreed plan;

• If a member of staff does not report as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on then situation and then to respond as appropriate;

• Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or a regular basis, mangers must make provision for regular contact, to monitor and to counter the effect of working in isolation.

8. Lone Worker guidance

8.1 Working alone in an Office

• Employees working alone in an office are instructed to close the main door and not to open doors out of normal hours

• At least one other person present when locking up the building/office after the meeting

• Employees are encouraged to tell someone where they are and their expected time of return

• If an employee suspects that a violent attack is imminent summon assistance immediately by calling 999

• Employees are encouraged to walk away from situations where conflict may put them in danger and to report the incident to the Clerk as soon as possible.

• Employees must tell their approved point of contact, where they are planning to operate and expected time of return. Contact to be maintained through appropriate channel.

8.2 Parks

• Always ensure that your Line Manager is aware of where you will be and record where you are going, when you are going and your expected time of return, if these are not already known

• Take a mobile phone with you and ensure that it is fully charged in case you need to use it
• Ensure that your Line Manager and colleagues have a record of your mobile telephone number

• Employees are encouraged to walk away from situations where conflict may put them in danger and to report the incident to the Clerk as soon as possible.

• Tell your Line Manager or colleagues your precise destination and expected time of return

• Maintain regular contact with colleagues

• If an employee suspects that a violent attack is imminent summon assistance immediately by calling 999.

8.3 Walking alone off site

• Anyone who is on foot should maintain a level of awareness to danger that is relevant to the circumstances.

• Avoid short cuts through dimly lit or enclosed areas at night

• After dark, keep away from bushes, doorways and alleyways

• Tell your Line Manager or colleagues your precise destination and expected time of return

• Walk confidently and purposefully, avoid sending out signals of fear and vulnerability

• Do not wear a personal stereo, it will reduce awareness of your surroundings

• Wear sensible footwear, do not wear footwear which may impede your actions if alarmed

• If you think you are being followed, cross the street. If this continues, move to the nearest place with people and call the Police using your mobile phone

• Keep your distance if asked for directions

8.5 Carrying money and valuables safely

• Don’t carry more cash than necessary

• Keep wallets/purses in inside pockets

• Make sure the fastenings on bags are secure

• If someone grabs your bag or wallet, let it go. Personal safety is paramount

• Be on guard with strangers

• Avoid crowds or groups which may appear threatening

• Be wary of stationary vehicles with engines running and people sitting in them

• If a car stops and you are threatened, move away quickly in the opposite direction and use your mobile phone to call for assistance

8.6 Driving

• Make sure your vehicle is regularly serviced and check oil and tyres etc. regularly this should be part of a weekly routine

• Ensure you have adequate fuel

• Plan your route

• Keep bags and other valuables out of sight

• Keep doors locked, windows closed as much as possible, especially in stop/go traffic

• If followed, drive to the nearest police station or concentration of people and call for assistance using your mobile phone

8.7 Leaving the vehicle

• Always lock your vehicle and put anything of value out of sight

• Be alert to situations – trust your instincts

• If dark or if it will be dark when returning to your vehicle, park in well-lit places, as near to your destination as possible.

• Have your keys ready when you return to your vehicle; check the interior for intruders before getting in

• If you break down pull off the road as far as you can and if necessary, switch on your hazard warning lights

• Summon assistance using your mobile phone and give precise details of your location If you feel threatened

• If the occupants of a car beside you e.g. at traffic lights or road junction try to attract your attention for any reason, simply ignore them.

9. Incident Reporting

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”. To maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. All staff are provided with the Clerk’s contact details. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threaten or “unsafe” are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

10. Contacting/Involving the Police

The Council is committed to protecting the staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process.

Except in the cases of emergency, employees should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contact the police to report the details of the incident.

11. Support for Staff

Employees working for the Council should know that 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 of even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive the appropriate training.

12. Immediate Support Following a Violent Incident

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee received any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours the Chairman of Council should be contacted by the Clerk. The Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to any legal or insurance matters. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

APPENDIX 1 - LONE WORKING CHECKLIST

Checklist completed by: ……

Date completed: ……

Location: Community Halls
Allotments
Recreation Grounds Around Southminster
(* circle as necessary)

Main Issues of Concern

Do staff work alone?	Yes	No
Do staff work outside normal office hours	Yes	No
Do staff meet with members of the public in an isolated location?	Yes	No
Is there enough security provision	Yes	No
Is there safe access to the building	Yes	No
Do staff activities involve handling dangerous substances?	Yes	No
Do staff carry out work in high-risk locations	Yes	No
Do staff carry out work in isolated areas	Yes	No

Control Measures for Consideration

Do you provide joint working for high risk activities	Yes	No
Do you carry out regular supervisor or colleague checks during activities?	Yes	No
Do you use entrance security systems (i.e. digital locks)	Yes	No
Do staff have information and training on basic personal safety?	Yes	No

Are staff trained in strategies for preventing and managing violence	Yes	No
Do staff have access to forms for reporting incidents or near misses and appreciate the need for this procedure	Yes	Yes
Do you provide accompanied visits when there are concerns for safety?	Yes	No
Do you share risk information with other agencies	Yes	No
Are there systems for monitoring staff whereabouts and movements for regularly reporting to base	Yes	No
Have you issued mobile phones	Yes	No
Have you issued personal attack alarms	Yes	No
Do staff carry forms for reporting incidents or near misses and appreciate the need for this procedure	Yes	No

Are the existing control measures adequate? Yes ☐ No ☐
If "no", what modifications or additional actions are necessary?

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