



## **Lone Working Policy**

Adopted by Swanmore Parish Council 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Reviewed and updated:

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following policy has been written in order to minimise risk for Council officers and volunteers working alone for Swanmore Parish Council.
- 1.2 Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 it is the employer's duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risk where necessary. Council officers have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.
- 1.3 The Council will regularly review the Policy to ensure its implementation and to ensure that it is relevant to working practice.

## 2 Policy

- 2.1 To enable the Council to comply with its statutory duties with regard to lone working, the Council will, through procedures adopted at all levels, avoid the need for lone working but acknowledges that lone working will happen and is sometimes necessary, particularly for the Parish Community Safety Officers and the Parish Maintenance Officer.
- 2.2 Where officers have to undertake lone working, personal safety will be of paramount importance.
- 2.3 Lone working must not be viewed in isolation; other relevant policies and practices already adopted will also apply, which will identify the protective and preventative measures necessary for Council officers to undertake lone working activities.
- 2.4 The following details, although mostly common sense, are provided to reinforce the need for everyone to take lone working and their safety seriously at all times.

## 3 Definition of Lone Working/Lone Workers

- 3.1 Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. For example:
  - A Council officer working alone in an office or other base.
  - A Council officer working outside normal hours, e.g. Council officers working late.
  - A Council officer, Councillor or volunteer who is required to travel alone to and from a fixed base to another place of work or to meetings.
  - A Community Safety Officer working at different locations within, and travelling around, the Parish.

## 4 Potential Risks

- 4.1 Some of the main risks have been highlighted below, however, this list is not meant to be exhaustive.
- 4.2 Risks associated with lone working at the office:
  - Members of the public being able to access the office
  - Poorly lit entrance/exits
  - Isolated and poorly lit car parking facilities
  - Being taken ill whilst working alone.
  - Fire in a building

- Lack of knowledge regarding Health & Safety procedures, e.g. lifting incorrectly.

#### 4.3 Risks associated with lone working around the Parish:

- Walking in isolated and poorly lit areas
- Weather
- Verbal and physical abuse/ assault
- Being taken ill whilst working alone.
- Lack of knowledge regarding Health & Safety procedures, e.g. lifting incorrectly.
- Animals

## 5 Assessing the Risk

5.1 A risk assessment must be carried out by the Council officer's line manager where essential lone working is required. The purpose of the assessment is to establish two main facts:

- Whether the work can be done safely by a lone worker.
- What arrangements will ensure that the lone worker is not exposed to unnecessary and unacceptable risk.

5.2 In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- the environment – location, security, access;
- the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances; the individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk;
- history – any previous incidents in similar situations;
- any other special circumstances.

5.3 All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary.

5.4 The Council's Maintenance Officer will carry out a risk assessment for each new task. This will include checking they have all necessary equipment including PPE and any safety equipment and assessing whether the task can be done safely by one person or requires two people.

## 6 Prohibition of Lone Working

6.1 Certain situations require that Council officers cannot work alone, these include:

- Young persons under 18.
- Anyone operating large-scale machinery
- Any situation where officers have to climb anything, or use anything which is not stable.

## 7 Guidance and procedures- Lone Working Around the Parish

7.1 Council officers should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.

7.2 Keeping track of individual movements is sometimes difficult but it is the responsibility of the Council officer and their line manager to maintain regular communication.

7.3 Council officers must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.

7.4 Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the line manager, as set out in paragraph 5 above.

7.5 Council officers must inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location, how long they expect to be away from the office and an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a Council officer expects to go home following a visit rather than returning to the office/ base.

7.6 If a Council officer does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate.

7.7 Where Council officers work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working alone.

7.8 Details of venues being visited and a contact number should always be provided.

7.9 Officers should try to meet unfamiliar people in public areas and avoid meetings in isolated locations. If an officer feels unsafe and/or at risk during a meeting, they should make their excuses and leave the meeting.

7.10 Officers should avoid parking and/ or walking in poorly lit or isolated areas. If this is not possible, officers should carry a torch and a personal alarm.

7.11 Planning. Council officers should prepare for visits beforehand by researching new locations/ venues/ people where possible.

7.12 Should officers feel ill whilst working alone they should seek help immediately and dial 999 if necessary.

7.13 Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

7.14 Officers should be familiar with the Council's lone working risk assessment and undertake a new risk assessment for lone working if the proposed activity is not covered. Officers should report any concerns, hazards or potential risks to their line manager immediately.

## **8 Guidance and procedures- Lone Working at the office**

8.1 Council officers should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.

8.2 Council officers should adhere to the following guidelines in order to minimise risks when working alone at the office/ any fixed base.

- Avoid unnecessary 'out of normal office hours' working where possible.
- Familiarise yourself with the layout of the building/floor. Ensure you have keys. Lock all doors that allow direct access to the building and/or office you are working in.
- Familiarise yourself with the Fire Safety Procedures and identify escape routes.
- Do not answer the door to unexpected visitors, e.g. in the case of contractors, ask for identification and don't let them in if you are at all unsure about their identity.
- Practice setting the alarm system.

- Practice the locking up procedures.
- Do not use lonely exit routes if there are safer alternatives.
- If possible, avoid parking in badly lit areas, and park near to the place you exit the building.
- Carry a torch and a personal alarm ready to use if working late.
- Notify people at home when you intend leaving work and what time to expect you home.
- Leave contact numbers at home so that the Council can be contacted if there are concerns for your safety.
- Should you feel ill whilst working alone – seek help immediately – dial 999 if necessary.
- Ensure you are familiar with the Council’s lone working risk assessment and undertake a risk assessment for lone working if your activity is not covered. Report any concerns, hazards or potential risks to your line manager immediately.

## 9 Communication

The Council officer’s line manager must consider whether communication is adequate, and in particular:

- What level of supervision is required and how is it to be carried out?
- Has the lone worker got a system of maintaining contact, e.g. mobile telephone or radio?
- Is a CCTV system available and will it be monitored?

## 10 Reporting an incident

It is important that Council officers report any incident that takes place, whether it is aggression, violence, a transport breakdown or a personal accident, to their line manager. In this way, a full investigation can be made to assess any further potential risks and identify any additional safety procedures needed in order to prevent a similar incident happening in the future.