Hatfield Broad Oak
PARISH COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

Version	Date Approved:	Review Date:
1.0	19th November 2024	November 2026

Purpose of this policy and procedure

The council recognises that some of our staff work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:

- 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.
- Will be reviewed in line with updates to Government Legislation and following the internal review after a reported incident.

The scope of this policy

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers. It does not apply to Councillors.

Policy

We will protect staff from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. 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.

Definition

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

- A caretaker who opens and closes a hall either early in the morning or late at night
- A groundsman tending to green space
- Office workers who work alone in the premises, and,
- Homeworkers.

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

Responsibilities

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

Parish Clerk and The Council

Responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating, and managing risk associated with lone working.
- Providing resources for putting the 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.

Line Managers **[Not currently applicable to HBOPC]**

Responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the 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.

Lone workers/Employees

Responsible for:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work and to make full use of any PPE provided for use whilst working.
- To follow any instruction given by the Clerk or the Council.
- Raise with the Clerk or a Councillor any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- To not to work alone where there is inadequate 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, see section on Reporting Incidents

Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with your manager or specific councillors. 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.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessments will be carried out for and on behalf of all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff that are site based but work in isolation as well as any mobile staff whose work takes them out into the community. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

The Lone Working Risk Assessment must be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the Clerk and the Council, in any case this should be on a minimum of an annual basis. The risk assessment should be available and have been read by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks.

However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness.
- Faulty equipment.
- Travelling alone.
- Remote locations.
- Abuse from members of the public.
- Animal attacks

Guidance

Lone workers whether employed by Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council or not should take reasonable care not to put themselves at undue risk by evaluating each situation and taking appropriate steps, for example.

- Confrontation should be avoided whenever possibly including withdrawing from the situation.
- A phone should be carried at all times.
- A Portable First Aid Kit is kept in an appropriate location.
- Lone workers should be aware of safe spaces where they are able to retreat to remove themselves from danger.

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 and near misses be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

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, staff should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

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 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,
- If the emergency services were called and any outcome.
- 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.

Review of Policy

The Parish Council will monitor the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis and review it every two years to ensure that it remains up to date and relevant.

APPENDIX 1 – LONE WORKERS INCIDENT REPORT

When did incident occur?

Date: _____ Time: _____

What happened? (Who, What, When, How, Why?)

Where there any witnesses? (Any contact details)

Were the emergency services called, If so, which service? _____

Time called and by whom: _____

Any contributing factors?

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Form completed by: _____ Date: _____