

Herne and Broomfield Parish Council



Lone Working Policy

July 2024

Purpose of this policy and procedure

Herne and Broomfield Parish 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.

The scope of this policy

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time, casual, volunteers and 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:

Clerk and the Council, and Amenities Manager

- 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 have not contacted the Duty on Call Manager at the end of their shift 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 Amenities Manager, Duty on Call Manager, Clerk and the council.
- Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working.
- Not to work alone where there is inadequate information to undertake a dynamic risk assessment (if required), and to contact their line manager immediately if this is the case.
- Inform their line manager / Duty on Call Manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone or when they believe that there is a risk one could imminently occur. (They may use the agreed code word if the worker fears retribution for making contact with their line manager or Duty on Call Manager).
- Call the Police or other emergency service if they see fit; in any case if a crime is about to be committed or one has occurred; or if someone is unwell through injury or illness, or indeed if there is a fire. In this instance the contact to the emergency service takes priority and then they must inform the Duty on Call Manager at the earliest given opportunity.

Staff

- To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication, or no communication at the end of their expected working hours.
- Should ensure they share up to date contact details as per the Lone Working Plan and have the correct details of Duty on Call Manager. (See below)

Duty On Call Manager

- Lone workers, working outside normal office hours, will be aware before the start of their shift who the Duty on Call Manager is and their contact details, as well as the ability to contact them through a reliable phone. (Whether this be their personal mobile or through the office telephone).
- The monthly shift list published by the Amenities Manager will include if the staff is lone working and who the Duty on Call Manager is. The Amenities Manager will electronically send a copy to the Amenities Assistant and Clerk, so they are aware of covering Duty on Call Manager responsibilities.
- The Duty on Call Manager will usually be the Amenities Manager; if they are unavailable, it will be Amenities Assistant, then onto the Clerk in the final instance.
- The Duty on Call Manager will be aware of which staff are lone working and when. They will remain contactable by phone for the duration of the lone workers shift.
- The Duty on Call Manager will ensure that they have received contact from the lone worker at the end of their shift, if they have not, they will follow the Lone Working Plan as detailed later in this policy.
- The Duty on Call Manager will have access to either an electronic copy of all the Lone Workers Forms or the hard copy kept locked in the Amenities Managers Office. Access to this will only be required when next of kin details are required if the lone worker has been taken ill, injured, or cannot be located and subject to Data Protection Legislation.

Risk Assessments

The Lone Working Risk Assessment must be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the Clerk and the Amenities Manager, 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.

Lone Working Plan

For each lone worker a Lone Workers Form will be completed. This will be recorded by the Amenities Manager, and a copy kept by the lone worker and their next of kin. An electronic copy will be kept on the Parish Councils computer system and be subject to Data Protection legislation. A hard copy will remain locked in the lockable cabinet in the Amenities Managers Office which is only accessible by the Duty on Call Manager and/or the Amenities Manager.

The Lone Workers Form will include: -

- Name and contact details of the lone worker.
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin.

If you change your contact details, you must let your line manager know.

All lone workers will contact the Duty on Call Manager (or Clerk in the case of the Admin Assistant) at the end of their shift. This can be done either by phone call or text message to acknowledge that they are safe, and they have finished work. The Duty on Call Manager will acknowledge the worker so both parties are aware that successful contact has been made.

If the lone worker does not contact the Duty on Call Manager (or Clerk) at the agreed end of shift time, the process will be as follows:

1. The Duty on Call Manager will initially try to contact the lone worker through the telephone number they have recorded.
2. In the case of Herne Centre workers, if no contact is able to be established, the Duty on Call Manager will;
 - i) View the CCTV via remote access to see if they can locate the lone worker, or to see if the Herne Centre is secure.
 - ii) Review the CCTV to see when the lone worker was last seen on camera and if they were still inside the building.
 - iii) If centre appears to be closed and secure then the Duty on Call Manager will review the CCTV to check when the lone worker left the Herne Centre, and that all appeared well.
 - iv) If the centre is left open and lone worker cannot be seen, then the Duty on Call Manager will attend and check on the welfare of the lone worker. If the centre is found to be secure and no one present, then the Duty on Call Manager will cease attempting contact until the following morning. If lone worker is located and found to be unwell or otherwise the Duty on Call Manager will escalate how they see fit.
 - v) If the lone worker is seen on CCTV and seen to leave the building safely then no further action will be taken until the following morning, just a reminder to the worker of the policy and to check on their welfare.
3. In the case of a lone worker outside of the Herne Centre, then the Duty on Call Manager will attend the last known location of the member of staff. It is then up to the Duty on Call Manager's or line manager's discretion to escalate depending on the situation they are faced with.

A "Code Word" will be in place for any lone worker and will be generic for all staff. This word shall be "BUBBLY." This enables the staff member to contact the Duty on Call Manager without the chance of suspicion being raised by a bystander.

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.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. In any case the lone worker must tell the Duty on Call Manager as soon as reasonably practical after the incident and certainly before the end of their duty shift. Any incidents should be recorded by the lone worker as soon as practicably possible and before the lone worker retires from duty. Forms will be kept available in the Amenities Managers Office for completion.

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,
- 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.

All incidents involving staff will be reviewed by the member of staff's line manager to identify learning outcomes or if any additional training needs are required, also to update risk assessments and to support changes in ways of working that may be required.

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

Call the Duty on Call Manager, Amenities Manager or Clerk 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 every two years.

Lone Workers Form

Name: _____

Mobile telephone number: _____

Home telephone number: _____

Address:

Next Of Kin

Please provide contact details of who we would need to contact in an emergency.

Name: _____

Mobile telephone number: _____

Home telephone number: _____

Address:

I will update the Amenities Manager immediately if any of these contact details change. I have read the Lone Workers Policy and Risk Assessment, and I am aware of my responsibilities as a lone worker.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Lone Workers Incident Report

When did incident occur?

Date: _____

Time: _____

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

Where there any witnesses? (Any contact details)

Where the emergency service called? If so which service? _____

Time called and by whom: _____

Any contributing factors?

Form completed by: _____ Date: _____

