



Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

Lone working is a common work situation in Local Government and while many risks at work are relatively straightforward to identify and control, other the risks posed to 'Lone Workers' are less easy to define.

This policy has been written to minimise risks for Goring-on-Thames Parish Council (the Council) staff working alone in their fixed base and working away from their fixed base.

Employees of the Council 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 employer's legal obligations.

The Council is responsible for the health, safety, and welfare at work of its employees and of those affected by the work and under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The broad duties of Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 include considering lone working in the assessment of the risks associated with service activities as part of the Council's responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of their staff.

The Council must therefore have a systematic approach to assess the risks that a lone worker may face and take such action where possible to remove or reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

The Council has entrusted this day-to-day responsibility to the Clerk. Areas of concern are to be taken to the Staffing Committee for consideration.

The Health and Safety Executive have extensive advice and guidance on homeworking and lone working, including guidance on the risks of lone working.

Homeworking: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm

Lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm

Risks of lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

2. Definition of a Lone worker

Lone workers are employees who, at any time, work by themselves in the office or at other locations owned/managed by the Council. This could include working at and/or opening and closing sites and public facilities, working late in the office, visiting Council-owned properties and outside contractors and employees who work alone outside normal working hours.

These are people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision: At a fixed base (office or other):

- Only one person working on the premises
- Working separately from others
- Working outside of normal hours, away from their fixed base
- Staff member who is required to travel alone, to and from, a fixed base to another base or to attend meetings etc.

3. Medical conditions

Any employee who could be considered as a lone worker has a duty to advise the Staffing Committee of any medical conditions which may affect them working alone.

Where a medical condition is known, an assessment will be conducted through an appropriate external adviser. The Council will take into consideration routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional and/or specific risks.

4. Potential Risks to Lone Workers

- Open access and unlocked doors – accessible to the public, contractors etc
- Being taken ill whilst at work
- Lack of training regarding Health & Safety procedures
- Hazards in the workplace
- Remote areas
- Parking arrangements – poorly lit and isolated areas

5. Risk Assessments

A risk assessment should be carried out for and by all employees who are going to be working alone. Before drawing up and recording the assessment of risk, it must be established:

- a) Whether the work can be done by a lone worker
- b) What arrangements will be in place to ensure an individual is not exposed to unnecessary and unacceptable risk?

When recording an assessment of risk, the following should be taking into consideration:

- a) Environment – location, security, access/egress
- b) Context – nature of the task
- c) History – have there been any accidents/incidents in the past etc

All available information should be considered and updated as and when necessary. If there is reason for doubt about the safety of a lone worker in each situation then consideration should be given for making other arrangements to complete the task.

6. Safety Guidelines

For staff working in a fixed base:

- Familiarise the layout of the building including fire exits and escape routes.
- Do not open the door to unidentified visitors. In the case of contractors ask for identification. If still unsure check with the contractor's employer/head office
- It is the responsibility of the lone worker to make sure that they are satisfied that there is no risk before allowing a visitor to enter the secured area.
- When a member of staff is working on their own in the office all doors which give access to the office should be remain closed.
- Have contact numbers at hand to be able to contact relevant person(s) immediately – should you feel ill, intruder in the building etc. If you feel threatened in any way you must contact the police immediately.
- Where possible, when locking premises, any internal areas to be checked should be done when there is more than one person in the building.
- Take work mobile with you (if applicable) and ensure it is charged.
- The supplied mobile phone given to you by the Council should always be charged, this mobile phone is supplied with a lone working app which detects falls and can request a check in to ensure the lone worker is safe. If no response or check in within 15 minutes of it being requested, then the location of the person will be shared with the Staffing Committee or another member of the Clerk Team so they can go and check the lone worker is safe.

For staff working away from their fixed base:

- Staff should inform relevant person(s) of their movements including how long they are going to be away from their base and when they will return, along with any relevant information regarding where and at what time, visits will be made and to whom. Telephone numbers should also be stated
- Leave details of venues including contact numbers
- Avoid meetings in isolated places. If this cannot be avoided, then either ask someone to go with you or make sure you always notify the Staffing Committee or another member of the Clerk Team when you arrive and when you leave

7. Responsibilities

Employees:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts of omissions at work.
- Maintain a line of communication on a regular basis with the Staffing Committee or another member of the Clerk Team to identify and minimise risk(s.)
- Inform someone as to when you are leaving the fixed base to perform Council tasks including when you are not returning to your fixed base after relevant task completed.
- Report an accident/incident that occurs to you to the Staffing Committee. This will allow for a full investigation to take place to assess any further potential risks and identify any additional safety procedures.

Employers

- Always maintain a line of communication on a regular basis with staff to identify and minimise risk(s)
- Ensure a signing in and out system is put in place.
- Ensure staff receive all relevant training and information available.
- Equip staff with a mobile phone (if applicable) to ensure a system of maintaining contact.

8. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 12 February 2024, it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per Council term, or when legislation dictates.

Signed:

A Smith, Chair

Dated: 12 February 2024