

Policy

Lone Working Policy

This Procedure is a document that sets out the organization’s approved and agreed practices. Any deviation must be discussed with the originating author.

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1. DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Purpose of document:	This document sets out the Billingham Parish Councils approach to lone working.
Dissemination:	This policy will be disseminated to all staff and council members and be made available on the parish website
Implementation:	This document will be accessible via the parish council website and is applicable to all staff and council members.
Review:	This document will be reviewed in 2027 at Annual Meeting unless there are significant changes in legislation or practice in which case it will be reviewed earlier.
Documents replaced or superseded by this document:	
This document supports (enter Standards and Legislation:	Lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm Risks of lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf
Key related documents:	
Financial Implications:	This document has no financial implications for the Billingham Parish Council.
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3. Introduction

a. Billingham Parish Council (hereafter referred to as 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:

- i. Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working.
- ii. Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone.
- iii. Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk.
- iv. Provides appropriate support to lone workers.
- v. 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.

b. This policy applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers. It does not apply to councillors.

c. The Council 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.

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

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

4. Responsibilities

a. All staff have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues.

- b. Managers must ensure that:
 - i. They will try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable.
 - ii. Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. Arrangements for lone working must be made clear to staff and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained.
 - v. 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.
 - vi. The alarm is raised if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated.
 - vii. All staff are aware of this lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.
- c. Staff required to undertake lone working must ensure that they:
 - i. Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work.
 - ii. Follow any instruction given by management or the council.
 - iii. Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working.
 - iv. Inform their manager or HR Committee Chairman of any aspects of health that could lead to increased risk through lone working. This includes pregnancy.
 - v. Do not work alone where there is inadequate information to undertake a risk assessment.
 - vi. Inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone.
- d. Staff are to ensure that they are aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine and unanticipated periods where there is no communication.

e. Buddies should ensure they maintain and share up to date contact details (see below)

5. Risk Assessments

a. The Line Manager must complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and that these are updated as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

b. 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:

- i. Sudden illness.
- ii. Faulty equipment.
- iii. Travelling alone.
- iv. Remote locations.
- v. Abuse from members of the public.
- vi. Animal attacks.

6. Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced

a. Every lone working environment and situation is different, and therefore it is not possible to implement a 'one size fits all' approach. Where there is regular or anticipated lone working, the council will devise and implement a lone working plan that meets the needs and risks of their particular circumstances. The plan should be proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. The plan for a groundsman lone working with machinery will be more detailed than an administrator working late in the office. This should be written down and communicated to all relevant staff and where appropriate, councillors.

b. Below are some example strategies that could be implemented (on their own or combined):

- i. Signing-in and Out book
- ii. Electronic (or hard copy) diaries to be kept up to date with meeting / visit / lone working details
- iii. Agreed times and method of contact
- iv. Buddy scheme.

7. Buddy scheme

a. The following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker and their buddy, next of kin and manager (see the Lone Working Buddy Form):

- i. Name and contact details of the lone worker.
- ii. Name, relationship and contact details of the buddy.
- iii. Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin.
- iv. Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's manager.
- v. Any 'code word' that would indicate that the lone worker needs assistance.
- vi. Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation.

b. If you change your contact details, you must let your buddy and manager know.

c. In circumstances where a buddy system is appropriate as a way of reducing the risks identified in the risk assessment, the buddy must have relevant details about your lone working, that may include;

- i. where you are going (address or area if there is no address);
- ii. details of the purpose (i.e. preparing the hall, grass cutting, meeting);
- iii. contact details of anyone you intend to meet (any additional contact details for the location you are visiting);
- iv. your mode of transport;
- v. when you are expected to return;

d. Your buddy must know what to do if you do not return or make contact at the anticipated / agreed time.

8. Health and wellbeing

a. 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.

9. Reporting incidents

a. Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed, and acted upon. The report should include:

- i. A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved.
- ii. 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.

iii. In either instance, this might also include 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. This information would then support the Council to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

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

c. Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.