



HEATHFIELD & WALDRON
PARISH COUNCIL

LONE WORKER
POLICY

May 2023

1 Introduction

Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the Parish Council has considered carefully the potential health and safety risks for people working alone, as part of its overall health and safety policy and procedures.

There are different risks for staff and councillors and each have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and co-operate with the Parish Council in meeting its legal obligations. For the purposes of this policy, both staff and councillors are termed “workers”

2 Controlling the risk

There are various measures the Parish Council have put in place to help control the risk of lone workers:

- Involving staff and councillors when considering risks and measures to control them
- Taking steps to remove risks where possible, or putting control measures in place
- Instruction, training and supervision
- Periodically reviewing risk particularly if there has been a significant change in working practice.
- Where staff are working from home for a long period of time regular staff meetings will be held to ensure that they are coping
- Staff are required to ensure that when working from home that files and laptops are not accessed by anyone else in their property
- Where staff are working in a different location, i.e. the Community Centre, to ensure regular staff liaisons to ensure they are coping.

The following must be considered:

- Some tasks may be too difficult or dangerous to be carried out by a lone worker
- Where a worker is at another workplace, putting in place the required control measures
- As an employer with five or more employees, the significant findings of all risk assessments must be recorded
- Whether staff’s mental illness is being affected by lone-working especially when working from home or another place of work for a long time and that they are aware of where confidential support can be obtained.

3 Impact of lone working - staff

Lone workers should not be put at more risk than other employees and the Council’s risk assessment process should identify and control the issues relevant to its circumstances.

In the case of staff, the following situations need to be assessed:

Q Does the workplace present a specific risk to the lone worker?

A Yes, in terms of the office, Theobalds Green and the Community Centre being open to the general public

Control Measures

The member of staff on reception is not normally left alone in the office, unless agreed with them. The alterations to the reception area have provided screening and a door between the reception desk and the reception area with a coded lock on the door. A wireless panic/assistance button has been installed on the reception desk which links to the 2 offices upstairs.

A member of staff may leave the building from the side entrance in an emergency or where they feel threatened by a member of the public.

Members of staff may be alone in the office once it is closed to the general public and the front door is locked.

There should not be any instances in which a lone worker is required to lift heavy objects or reach items which are beyond head-height.

There are considered to be no items of equipment which are unsafe for use by a lone worker.

When the Community Centre isn't being used by others the front door should be locked when the caretaker is in the building

Q Are members of staff required to work in the office or return to the office during hours of darkness?

A Yes, members of staff may work beyond the hours of darkness during their normal working week and may return to the building in the evening to attend meetings or other occasional visits or as part of the caretaking contract

Control Measures

Sufficient outside lighting to be provided to enable staff to park at the rear of the building and unlock the office/unset the alarm. Time delay lighting switch to be added to the control in the building which lights the car park.

Staff to look through the side window to ensure that there is no-one by the side door before exiting from there. If there is they can set the alarm and go out through the front door.

After an evening meeting at the office staff members not to be left alone to lock up. If it is a Committee meeting the Chair of the Committee, and where this is a chairwoman also a male member of the committee, should stay behind until the

staff member has left the building. If the staff member is uncomfortable with this person they should approach another person to stay with them.

CCTV has now been installed which covers the side door and the car park.

Q Are members of staff required to unlock and lockup the Community Centre in the evening and set up meeting rooms?

A Yes, meetings of full Council, some Committees and other occasional evening meetings are held at the Centre. If there is any reason to suggest there is a safety issue the staff member should not enter the building and should contact another staff member, or if required the police. The caretaker would be there for external hirers.

Control Measures

The car park at the Community Centre is well lit (controlled by the NHS).

Members of staff should unlock the Centre and turn the key in the main door so that persons cannot access the Centre until Councillors or the hirers are also present.

For Council meetings, when locking up again, the Chairman of the Council or relevant Committee should ensure that the member of staff is not left alone to lock up. This policy has been agreed by all relevant Chairmen.

The caretaker should lock the door when the hirers have left the building in the evening so that no-one else can get into the building whilst they are there.

Q Are members of staff required to attend meetings in other locations?

A Yes, both during the day and occasionally in the evening.

Control Measures

Attendance at external meetings should be noted in office diaries, together with name of organiser and contact number.

Members of staff attending such meetings should ensure they have the name of the organiser and contact number, together with the Clerk's mobile number or other emergency contact.

Members of staff should familiarise themselves with parking arrangements etc, so that any risks are reduced.

Q Are members of staff working from home for long periods of time?

A Yes, if there is a lockdown and the office has to be shut

Control Measures

Weekly staff meetings held to ensure that staff are coping and that they can raise any issues or concerns with other staff members

Staff to ensure that others in their home do not access files and their laptop

Staff aware of mental health contact details

Council to provide staff with equipment and technology to be able to work from home.

4 Impact of lone working – councillors

The safety of Members must also be considered.

Q Will there be occasions when councillors have to attend external meetings, both during the day and in the evening?

A Yes. Councillors should make sure they have the contact details of the relevant organiser in case of any query and should make sure they are aware of suitable parking arrangements and arrival time of other attendees, beforehand.

Q Will there be occasions when councillors have to access the office building, out of normal working hours?

A Very unlikely. Arrangements to be made through the Clerk.

Q Will Councillors attend evening meetings of the Council without a member of staff being present?

A Very unlikely. Arrangements to be made through the Clerk.

5 Revision of Policy

This is a working document and should be updated when required. A formal review should be undertaken every year

H Johnson/F Hensher
May 2023