Delabole Parish Council

Lone Worker Policy

Delabole Parish Council recognises that employees, councillors, and volunteers may on occasions be required to work alone.

Under Section 2(1) of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Council has a duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control those risks where necessary.

Lone working must not be viewed in isolation, it should be considered alongside the Council's Health & Safety Policy, risk assessment arrangements, and any relevant policy or procedures.

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to minimise risks for employees, councillors and volunteers working alone and to set out the arrangements that help keep people safe. Wherever possible, the Council will avoid the need for lone working. Where lone working cannot be avoided, personal safety will be the first priority.

Definition of Lone Working

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

For Delabole Parish Council this includes:

- employees working in premises on their own.
- employees working outside normal office hours.
- mobile workers travelling to and from meetings, site visits, or other locations.
- employees working from home where work duties require it.

Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that those who work alone are not exposed to risks and to outline the steps which reduce and improve personal safety to employees who work alone.

- To increase everyone's awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.

- To ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all employees that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
- To encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.
- To reduce the number of incidents and injuries related to lone working.

Potential Risks

Some of the main risks include:

- access by members of the public, contractors, or other visitors.
- locked or unlocked access points.
- poorly lit entrances, exits, or car parks.
- working late or early in the day.
- being alone if taken ill.
- lack of knowledge of procedures.
- violence, aggression, stress, or isolation.
- mobile phone signal and communication failure.

Assessing the Risk

A risk assessment will be undertaken by the relevant line manager who will liaise with employees to ensure the agreed working practices are recorded and communicated to all persons who may be required to work alone or have a role in ensuring their lone workers safety.

The HSE advises that risks that particularly affect lone workers include:
• violence in the workplace
• stress and mental health or wellbeing
• a person's medical suitability to work alone
• the workplace itself, for example if it's in a rural or isolated area.

The following steps must be taken for a lone working risk assessment:
a) Identify the hazard to which the person may be exposed.
b) The hazards are likely to be the same for a particular activity whether lone working or not.
c) The assessment of the risks to which a lone worker may be exposed must take into account normal and foreseeable scenarios.
d) The hazards may be such that the risk cannot be controlled sufficiently and therefore

lone working is prohibited.
e) Identify all persons who may be required to work alone. Consideration must be given to all individual's ability to carry out their activities safely on their own. Some individuals may be at greater risk than others (for example, expectant mothers or those who are new to a role). It may be necessary to make reasonable enquiries to ensure that lone workers are medically fit to undertake the work alone.

Where a task cannot be made safe for a lone worker, the task must not be undertaken alone, and this decision should be recorded.

Prohibition of Lone Working
Certain situations must not be undertaken alone, including:

- young persons under instruction
- those being trained on machines.
- certain activities and other work with substances hazardous to health.
- working at height.
- any task that cannot be made safe by risk assessment and suitable control measures.

Responsibility and Personal Safety
Individuals

Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

Individuals should:

- Follow guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
  Report all incidents or near misses that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and ask for guidance as appropriate from their Line Manager or the Clerk;
- Take part in training deemed necessary to meet the requirements of this policy;
  Report any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone to their Line Manager or the Clerk.
- Where a mobile phone is issued, it must be kept charged and available for use.
- If an individual has a medical condition which would make them unsuitable for working alone, they have a duty to inform the Clerk.

- Individuals must also follow the agreed contact procedure and report immediately if they are delayed, feel unsafe, or cannot complete a scheduled check-in.

Employer

The Clerk, who discharges health & safety matters on behalf of the Council, is responsible for:
• Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
• Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed;
• Providing resources for putting the policy into practice;
• Ensuring all employees are aware of the policy;
• Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees;
• Identifying situations where people work alone and deciding whether a system can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own;
• 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 employees identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction and refresher training at appropriate intervals;
• Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents;
• Ensuring that appropriate support is given to employees involved in any incident;
• Providing personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable, and access to First Aid equipment;
• Ensuring communication systems are in place to enable contact to be made with employees who have failed to make contact or return at the expected time, with a clear escalation process where contact cannot be established.

Procedures for Employees Working in Fixed Bases
Employees working alone in fixed premises should:

- avoid unnecessary out-of-hours working where possible.
- know the building layout and escape routes.
- lock doors that give direct access to the area being worked in.
- check identity before admitting unexpected visitors.

- practise alarm and lock-up procedures.
- avoid unsafe exit routes where safer alternatives exist.
- park in well-lit areas where possible.
- notify someone at home or at work of expected return time.
- seek help immediately if feeling unwell.

Procedures for Mobile Workers Away from Their Fixed Base

Employees working away from base should:

- leave details of their movements and expected return time.
- provide venue details and contact numbers.
- let the office know if plans change.
- where possible, meet unfamiliar people in public areas.
- avoid isolated locations where practicable.
- avoid walking alone at night.
- notify office-based employees when they arrive and when they leave.

Communication

Managers must consider whether communication arrangements are adequate, including:

- the level of supervision.
- whether the worker has a mobile phone, radio, or lone working device.
- whether CCTV is available and monitored.

The Council should maintain a clear process for re-establishing contact where a lone worker fails to check in as expected.

Violence at Work

There are five main pieces of Health & Safety legislation which are relevant to violence at work. These are:

• The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSW Act);
• The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
• The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977; and
  • The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996.

Lone working does not always mean a higher risk of violence, but it does make workers more vulnerable. The lack of nearby support makes it harder for them to prevent an incident.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define violence as “any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work” – this includes verbal threats.

Some of the key workplace violence risks include:
• late evening or early morning work, when fewer workers are around
• lone workers, such as security employees, who have authority over customers and are enforcing rules
• people affected by alcohol or drugs
• carrying money or valuable equipment.

The Council will treat verbal abuse, threats, harassment, and any incident where a member of employees feels unsafe as reportable incidents.

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.” In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents 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. Near misses and all verbal threats should also be recorded.

Contacting/Involving the Police
The Council is committed to protecting its staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. 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.

Where appropriate, and particularly in cases of assault, threats, harassment or other criminal behaviour, staff should report the incident to the police. Except in an emergency, the Clerk should be informed immediately and will then take responsibility for contacting the police and recording the details of the incident.

Support for Staff
Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff

should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers' training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

Where necessary, the Clerk will also consider welfare checks, time off, and any further support that may be appropriate after an incident.

Adopted at a council meeting on October 13, 2026.