

# COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

- ✉ **Postal Address:** Highfield Park Visitor Centre, Hill End Lane AL4 0RA  
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## Lone Working Policy

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Lone Working Policy is to describe the measures that Colney Heath Parish Council considers necessary to manage, reduce or eliminate the risk present when employees are required to work alone.

### 2. Definition

Lone working includes both members of staff alone in a building and those whose duties involve working outside where there is no close, frequent or regular contact with other persons or colleagues. Employees who work by themselves, either on a regular, permanent or occasional basis can be at greater risk from assaults and accidents than other workers.

Lone workers are therefore those people who work by themselves, without close or direct supervision which can occur in locations where one person works in an area separate from others or works outside of the normal office hours.

Employees will generally know when they are working alone, but there are situations where even when an office is normally crowded, people can be working in isolation e.g. in a meeting or interview room.

### 3. Policy

The Parish Council will, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that:-

- employees required to work alone are protected from risks to their health, safety and welfare;
- any risks are identified in discussion with the Clerk and any actions required to mitigate high risks are taken before lone working is undertaken;
- employees take responsibility for their own safety and understand that they must remove themselves immediately from any such situation;
- where concerns must be reported immediately to the Clerk.

### 4. Legal responsibilities

Section 2(1) of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty on every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. In addition, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a statutory duty of care on the employer to consider all reasonably foreseeable

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hazards and to take the appropriate action to reduce the possible risk of injury to the lowest level that is practicable to achieve.

## 5. Who is at risk and assessing the risk

All employees who, as part of their contracted duties, are required to work alone and without direct supervision are potentially at risk. This Policy cannot set out to identify all the situations where employees may be at risk from working alone but concentrates on describing the arrangements that must be in place to eliminate or manage the associated risks.

## 6. Specific guidance

Any person who is recruited for a job likely to involve lone working should be reasonably physically fit and must declare if they have any medical disability that may put them at risk whilst working alone e.g. hearing impairment so that any reasonable adjustments can be considered.

A first aid kit should be readily available at all times in order to render first aid for minor injuries should they be sustained.

All lone workers will be provided with a mobile telephone, hand held radio and/or emergency alarm device connected to an external control centre which must be switched on so that they may be contacted and/or to summon help should the need arise. Panic alarms should be provided to lone working staff which can also be used to summon assistance in the event of an attack and will disorientate potential attackers.

For all high-risk activities, e.g. where activity is remote from other people, it is imperative that the employee gives clear guidance to the Clerk as to their location(s) during the day and lone workers must contact a nominated person in the Council Office before they finish work for the day if they intend to go directly home and not return to the office.

If planning to work out of standard hours this must be agreed in advance with the Clerk as appropriate.

## 7. Management duties

In order to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, the Council therefore places specific duties on the Clerk to ensure:-

- all lone working activities are formally identified and appropriate risk assessments undertaken, which identify the risk to lone workers and the

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control measures necessary to minimise those risks, as far as reasonably practicable;

- arrangements for lone working are communicated effectively and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone is explicit;
- the lone worker is made aware of the hazards and understands all the necessary control measures that need to be put in place;
- reasonable enquiries are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit to undertake work alone;
- adequate supervision, instruction and training are in place and that the lone worker is competent (the extent of the supervision is a management decision, which should be established through the risk assessment process);
- monitoring of lone working practices is in place to ensure that control measures identified in the lone working risk assessment are observed.

## 8. Employee duties

All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own safety and to co-operate with Council procedures. Employees should not knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk by working alone. If a person finds that they are placed in a situation, which may be considered to be that of a 'lone worker', then they should ensure that the Clerk is made aware of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity and then assist in the process of identifying the steps needed to either prevent the lone worker situation from arising, or, if this is not possible, assist in developing the precautions necessary to ensure their own safety.

Lone workers have a responsibility to inform the Clerk if they have any concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of the agreed lone working arrangements and also if there are any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or to continue to work alone in safety.

## 9. Risk assessment

The need to assess the risks associated with any work activity applies to the employees who work alone. The risk assessment process is the responsibility of the Clerk and this will ensure that the hazards and level of risks are identified, and, if necessary, action taken to avoid and/or control the risks. The Clerk is responsible for identifying and assessing the risks of lone working within the Parish Council in consultation with the employees involved both in terms of the likelihood of causing harm and also the severity of the injury.

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The following factors should be considered when evaluating the risk:-

- the degree of isolation
- the type of work activity
- the level of supervision and support
- contact or proximity with members of the public.

Consideration will be given in particular to whether the activity is one that can be safely accomplished by one person or whether the presence of another member of staff would be advisable. If a risk cannot be eliminated completely, action must be taken to reduce the risk to the lowest level practicably achievable.

Lone working itself is not necessarily high risk but the activity that is performed may well be. It is important that the relevant employees are consulted as part of the lone working risk assessment, made aware of the outcome of the risk assessment, informed of all necessary control measures and required to participate in the necessary control actions.

The risk assessment process will be undertaken as a collaborative exercise by both the lone worker and the Clerk and that the agreed safe working procedures are recorded and communicated to all persons who may be required to work alone and any other employees who have a role in ensuring their safety.

The following outlines the steps that must be taken for a lone working risk assessment:-

- (a) the hazards to which the person may be exposed should be identified (the hazards are likely to be the same for a particular activity whether lone working or not);
- (b) the risks to which a lone worker may be exposed must be assessed and take into account normal and foreseeable scenarios.

The hazards may be such that the risk cannot be controlled sufficiently and therefore lone working is prohibited for example high risk activities where at least one other person will need to be present include:-

- working on or near water
- power tools and machinery
- working at height
- chemicals which are corrosive, toxic, explosive, flammable or asphyxiant products or reactions.

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Existing controls should be assessed to see if they are adequate, and if not, consider what additional/alternative control measure(s) can be put in place which could include the provision of suitable training and communication strategies. Control measures may include issuing safe working instructions, training, supervision, issuing personal protective equipment, appropriate communication processes and equipment and work re-organisation.

The Clerk should ensure that control measures are implemented and the risk assessment should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is always kept up to date when and if situations change. Consideration must be given to an individual's ability to carry out their activities safely on their own. Some individuals may be at greater risk than others for example, new and expectant mothers and young persons 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.

The risk assessment findings for any significant risks identified should be recorded and the lone worker made aware of the findings of the risk assessment and participate in implementing the control actions and the guidance set out in **Appendix "A"** issued to all employees.

## 10. Monitoring and Review

Arrangements which are implemented to ensure the safety of lone workers need to be subject to a monitoring regime which is commensurate with the risk, by the Clerk. Risk assessments are to be reviewed if any significant changes take place, following an accident/incident or following any concerns being raised. Any review should make sure existing control measures are adequate and check if any additional controls are needed. Any comments or questions about this Policy or its' use may be addressed to the Clerk.

This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Council, as appropriate, to assess its effectiveness

or as required by legislation and any appropriate changes will be made in consultation with employees.

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## Appendix “A”

### LONE WORKER ADVICE

#### 1. General

It is impossible to identify all of the hazards that a lone worker may face, many may be transient in nature. It is important to protect staff against all known risks and to equip them with adequate training and information to assist them in dealing with any risky situations that they may encounter ranging from dealing with aggressive clients to entering an unsafe building. Specific safe working arrangements should be implemented and developed.

#### 2. Lone working in premises

- Ensure that you know relevant emergency procedures and can act appropriately when an alarm is raised
- Be aware of any other procedures intended for your safety and use them.
- If dealing with clients/the public find out if there have been problems that may affect your safety and use them - if in doubt, have another member of staff available.
- Know where and how to obtain help if needed, e.g. first aid assistance.
- Know the security measures for your workplace and use them correctly.

#### 3. Lone working in the community

- Ensure that your line manager knows your intended movements and inform them if they change.
- Ensure that any communication device, such as a telephone, or alarm, works and that it is checked regularly.
- Plan your route to avoid quiet streets, dark areas and possible dangerous areas.
- Use well frequented streets on your route.
- When travelling at night stay in well-lit areas.
- If travelling by car, park as close to the site you are visiting as possible.
- Do not leave items within clear sight in a vehicle.
- If you feel threatened in any way, do not continue to your destination.

#### 4. Visiting other people and unknown premises

- Ensure that the Clerk or a colleague is aware of your intended visit and inform them if there is any problem or changes.
- Follow the procedures for maintaining contact with the Clerk.

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- If you have doubts about potential risks, from the place or person you are planning to visit, check if it is safe to visit alone.
- Try not to visit alone for the first time, and especially not after dark.
- Do not allow any doors to be locked behind you.
- Always follow other people into a room and make sure your exit is clear.
- Be aware of dogs, other animals or other people at the site.
- Suggest that dogs and other animals be kept in a separate room if possible.
- If you are in any doubt about your safety, do not enter the premises.
- Be aware of your surroundings and look out for unstable or slippery surfaces.
- Do not under any circumstances enter confined spaces or dangerous structures.
- Report incidents or hazardous conditions.

## 5. Manual handling

- Avoid manual handling, if at all possible, by using mechanical aids,
- Always assess the situation, and if there is any doubt about the safety of carrying out a manual handling task, do not do it.
- Follow good practice handling technique as you have been advised in your training and safe working instructions.
- If the task requires more than one person, do not do it until assistance is provided.

## 6. Working at home

- Develop a routine as this will help to avoid stress.
- Communicate regularly with the Clerk.
- Be aware of any hazards around and inside the house.
- Know what to do in an emergency situation.
- Check that equipment is safe to use.
- Follow the good practice as advised in your safe working instructions.

## 7. Other risks

- It is not always possible to be prepared for every eventuality but you need to be aware and judge the risks and take appropriate action. If you are unsure of what to do, talk to the Clerk.
- Above all do not put yourself at risk, if there is any danger stop work or leave the location.

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## 8. What to do if an incident occurs

- Try to remain calm.
- In a potentially violent situation, talk quietly and whenever possible, remove yourself from the scene as soon as possible.
- Do not attack a potential assailant - run away, if possible, towards a friendly group or busy and well populated area.
- If you witness an incident, try to remember as much as you can to help in any investigation.
- Report the incident immediately to the Clerk.
- Complete an incident report form and follow your reporting procedures.
- Report the incident to the police, if necessary.

## 9. Review

This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Council, as appropriate, to assess its effectiveness or as required by legislation and any appropriate changes will be made in consultation with employees.

This policy was adopted 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 for a period of 4 years or until legislation changes.