



LONE WORKING POLICY

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the organisation's approach to safeguarding employees, volunteers, and contractors who undertake work without direct supervision or in isolated circumstances. It reflects the organisation's duty of care and aligns with good practice across Somerset local authorities. The aim is to ensure lone working is properly assessed, managed, and undertaken safely.

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Elected members undertaking council-related duties
- Volunteers acting on behalf of the organisation
- Contractors engaged in work where lone working may occur

It covers both planned and unplanned lone working, whether on council premises, in the community, or in private homes.

2. Definition of Lone Working

A lone worker is any person who carries out duties without direct supervision or without another competent person present who could assist in an emergency. This includes:

- Staff working alone in offices or buildings outside normal hours
- Officers conducting site visits, inspections, or community engagement
- Staff visiting private residences
- Workers in remote or rural locations
- Individuals working in separate parts of a building

3. Legislation

Wells City Council owes a "Duty of Care" to our staff, visitors and the public, anyone else who is employed by the authority.

This policy is informed by:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Relevant HSE guidance on lone working
- The organisation has a legal duty to assess risks and implement reasonable measures to protect lone workers.

The legislation requires employees to take care of themselves and others and to co-operate with the Council's safety arrangements.

4. Responsibilities

The Responsible office and staff will:

- Identify lone working activities and assess associated risks
- Implement control measures to reduce risks to an acceptable level
- Provide appropriate training, equipment, and support
- Maintain procedures for incident reporting and review
- Ensure this policy is reviewed regularly

Managers and supervisors will:

- Ensure risk assessments are completed and kept up to date
- Confirm staff are competent and trained for lone working
- Put in place monitoring and communication arrangements
- Ensure staff understand emergency procedures
- Review incidents and near misses

Employees and Volunteers will:

- Follow lone working procedures and risk assessments
- Use communication devices or check-in systems as required
- Report hazards, incidents, or concerns promptly
- Not undertake tasks that present unacceptable risk when alone

Staff Members will:

- Ensure contact details are up to date and relevant.
- Inform line manager as soon as possible if unable to attend the offices when rota identifies attendance is necessary.
- Exercise the utmost caution if attending site and wear appropriate clothing and footwear

If an accident does occur, the policy and procedures regarding lone working must be followed and an accident/incident form must be completed then sent to the following:

- The Responsible Officer
- Relevant Manager

5. Risk Assessment

All lone working activities must be risk assessed. Assessments should consider:

- Nature of the task
- Location and environment
- Time of day

- Access and egress
- Potential for violence or aggression
- Medical or personal vulnerabilities
- Weather and travel conditions

Risk assessments must be recorded, reviewed annually, and updated following incidents or significant changes.

7. Control Measures

Appropriate measures may include:

- Pre-visit checks or appointment systems
- Use of mobile phones, radios, or lone-worker devices
- Regular check-in/check-out procedures
- Avoiding high-risk visits outside daylight hours
- Working in pairs where risk cannot be reduced sufficiently
- Ensuring staff have access to up-to-date information on service users or locations

8. Lone Working Devices

The organisation recognises that technology plays an important role in supporting staff who lone work regularly. To enhance safety and ensure rapid response in the event of an incident, the following applies:

8.1 Issuing of Devices

- Lone working devices will be issued to staff whose roles require regular lone working or where risk assessments identify an elevated level of risk.
- Devices may include GPS-enabled alarms, mobile safety apps, man-down sensors, or dedicated lone-worker units.
- Staff must utilise the device assigned to them whilst conducting business on behalf of the Council. They must acknowledge their responsibilities for its use and care.

8.2 Use of Devices

- Devices must be carried, switched on, and operational during all lone working activities.
- Staff must ensure devices are charged and tested before use.
- Any activation of an alarm, whether accidental or intentional, must be reported to a manager as soon as practicable.
- Devices must not be shared unless authorised by a manager.

8.3 Monitoring and Response

- The organisation will ensure that an appropriate monitoring system is in place, whether internal or via an external provider.

- Escalation procedures will be clearly defined and communicated to staff during training.
- Managers must ensure that emergency contact details and response protocols remain up to date.

8.4 Loss, Damage, or Faults

- Any loss, malfunction, or damage to a device must be reported immediately.
- Replacement or repair will be arranged promptly to avoid disruption to safe working practices.
- Staff must not undertake lone working without an operational device where one is required by risk assessment.

9. Home Visits and Community Work

In the unlikely event of requirement for staff to visit a private home or community setting, additional precautions apply:

- Obtain background information where available
- Record visit details via the lone working device, utilising the voicemail functionality or via another agreed scheme.
- Maintain regular contact with a designated colleague
- Withdraw immediately if a situation feels unsafe
- Report any concerns or incidents without delay

10. Out-of-Hours Working

Staff working alone in council buildings outside normal hours must:

- Follow the Council's Out of Hours policies and procedures outlined in the handbook.
- Ensure someone is aware of their presence
- Keep external doors locked, where possible without impeding emergency exit.
- Avoid undertaking high-risk tasks (e.g., working at height, manual handling)

11. Training

The organisation will provide training appropriate to the role, which may include:

- Lone working awareness
- Conflict resolution and de-escalation
- Personal safety
- Use of lone-worker devices or communication systems
- Emergency procedures

12. Incident Reporting

All incidents, near misses, or concerns relating to lone working must be reported through the organisation's reporting system. Managers will investigate and implement corrective actions where required.

13. Emergency Procedures

Lone workers must be aware of:

- How to summon assistance
- What to do in the event of illness, injury, or threat
- Evacuation procedures
- Contact details for managers or emergency services

Where appropriate, lone workers will be issued with lone working devices and manager contact details.

14. Review and Audit

This policy will be reviewed annually or following:

- Legislative changes
- Significant incidents

15. Signatories

This policy has been agreed and implemented and is supported by



Signature:

Position: Town Clerk

Date: February 2026