



PR.14 14/15
Policy & Resources
4 September 2014

Subject: Lone Working Policy

Report by:

Chief Operating Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To present the Lone Working Policy

**RECOMMENDATION(S): 1) That Members of the Policy and Resources approve the Lone Working Policy; and
2.) That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Service for Public Protection to make minor house keeping amendments to the Policy in the future following consultation with the Chairmen of JSCC and P&R**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Compliance with The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, associated legislation

Financial: FIN/37/15

None.

Staffing:

None.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

Not applicable.

Risk Assessment:

Ensures that the authority is compliant with health and safety legislation and that employees and members, safety and welfare can be assured.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**Call in and Urgency:**

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

Key Decision:

Yes

No

1.0 Background

To ensure compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974, associated legislation and the safety and welfare of staff and members can be assured.

Consultation has been carried out with the Safety Champions Group.

Recommendation

- 1.) That Members of the Policy and Resources approve the Lone Working Policy; and the Lone Working Policy to the Policy and Resources Committee for formal adoption; and
- 2.) That delegated authority be granted to the head of service for public protection to make minor house keeping amendments to the Policy in the future in consultation with the Chairmen of JSCC and P&R

Lone Working Policy

1.0 Introduction

West Lindsey District Council are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees and members and recognises that lone working is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing risks to lone workers. We acknowledge that we should act to prevent or reduce risks that are reasonably foreseeable.

The policy will apply to everyone in the authority. Managers are responsible for implementation, and the Authority is responsible for providing the necessary resources. The council recognises that it's most important resource is its employees. This policy shows our determination to identify risks from lone working and eliminate or control these risks where possible.

Definition of a lone worker

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), defines a lone worker as someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision. They are found in a wide range of situations, such as:-

People in fixed establishments where:

- only one person works on the premises, for example, in small workshops/buildings and also homeworkers;
- people work separately from others, for example, in large buildings such as leisure or entertainment centres;
- people work outside normal hours, for example, cleaners, security, maintenance or repair staff.

Mobile workers working away from their fixed base:

- street cleansing operatives, housing, technicians, planning and environmental health officers, community officers and enforcement officers.

2.0 Policy Statement

To ensure that all employees and members working in this way are not under any greater risk than any other form of working.

To achieve a safe system of work it is the duty of team managers and/or supervisors to ensure that potentially high-risk lone working situations are identified and risk assessments carried out. These will be regularly reviewed

to ensure that appropriate control measures and/or contingencies are put in place and acted upon.

3.0 Equal Opportunities/Generic Equalities

West Lindsey is committed to equal opportunities. We will promote the equality of current employees and will ensure no one receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of race, gender, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex or sexual orientation, religion, marital status, age or disability or any grounds not relevant to the performance of the job or the service delivery.

4.0 Scope

All Council employees, volunteers, members and agency employees,

The policy is to provide advice and support to all employees and members who may be lone working. The policy shall be adhered to by all employees and members.

The policy should also be read in conjunction with other relevant policies , procedures, guidance and risk assessments

Adhering to the policy will ensure safety of employees and members whilst at work and on council business.

To ensure that a safe system of work is employed whenever individuals are working alone, for and on behalf of the council, and comply with legislation as detailed in the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974, and other associated legislation.

Any member of staff who disregards the policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

5.0 Legal Obligation

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974, (HASAWA) employers have duties to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and the health and safety of others that maybe affected by the employers undertaking.

Employees shall also cooperate with the employer by taking reasonable care for their own health and safety and of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSW) requires employers and self- employed people to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk to the health and safety of employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work and make appropriate arrangements for protecting these people's health and safety.

6.0 Responsibilities

6.1 Chief Executive

Will ensure that there is provision for adequate resources and support to enable:

- the services to comply with their duties and specific responsibilities
- the implementation of the policy
- the policy to be fully understood by all

6.2 Directors, Heads of Service and Managers

Will:

- fully understand the policy
- implement the policy fully
- adequately monitor the lone working
- make employees aware of the policy

6.3 Team Managers and Supervisors

Will ensure:

- information between services is shared
- lone working is not permitted where there is a known history of violence;
- lone working is not carried out outside of normal hours unless it is essential and control measures are in place;
- suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken prior to lone working activities being carried out, make sure adequate controls are in place and are they are regularly reviewed (Appendices A and B);
- sufficient monitoring and supervision is carried out;
- information to the lone worker is provided on the findings of the risk assessment
- employees and members who require training are identified and make provision for appropriate training available
- employees are encourage to report all incidents/accidents and near misses, including acts of verbal or physical violence towards them;
- all incidents/accidents and near misses are investigated with the assistance of the safety champions
- resources are available for suitable and sufficient equipment according to the level of risk identified in the risk assessment (personal alarms, mobile phones, radios, etc.);
- lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone (any information provided to the manager must be treated in the strictest confidence);

- check electronic systems before visiting and ensure employees know where to find this information;

6.4 Lone Workers

Will:

- Share information between services
- Following the appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety (Appendix C and D for members);
- use all equipment and systems provided for their safety properly;
- co-operate with their managers on all health and safety matters;
- inform their managers if they identify any shortfalls within the safety arrangements;
- report all incidents/accidents and near misses, including acts of verbal or physical violence towards them;
- inform their manager if they have any medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone.
- check electronic systems before visiting
- communicate with manager or colleague if there are changes in their work pattern.

6.5 Health and Safety Co-ordinator

Will:

- Review the policy annually or if there are any significant changes in legislation
- Consult with the safety champion group and Joint Staff Consultative Committee
- Horizon scan for future changes to legislation, assess and advise on the impact to the organisation

6.6 Safety Champions Group

Will:

- Be consulted on and assist in development of the policy and risk assessments
- Support managers and peers in the implementation of and adherence to this policy
- Assist managers in investigation of work related incidents

7.0 Provision of Information, Instruction and Training

Employees and others on behalf of the council are to be given all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone. Employees are required to follow any safe working practices, procedures or emergency measures put in place by the manager. Where new or altered hazards are

encountered the employee should make their own dynamic assessment of the risk. Should they feel that their health and safety is compromised they should report back to their team manager before continuing. The team manager must update risk assessments/procedures in light of the new information. All training and briefing records must be recorded.

8.0 Emergency Arrangements

Services should develop and introduce their own safe systems/procedures for lone workers. Managers should ensure that risk assessments have been undertaken, recorded and where necessary remedial action implemented for all employees who are required to work alone. The control measures put in place will depend on the results of the risk assessment.

9.0 Monitoring

Managers are to monitor the effectiveness of the control measures implemented as a result of the risk assessment process to find out how successful they have been. This will allow managers to identify those control measures and plans that are not working, or which have unforeseen consequences, and modify or replace them where appropriate. The lone working procedures will also be monitored through the safety champions group.

Related Policies and Procedures

Equal Opportunity in Employment
Disciplinary Procedure
Homeworking Policy
Difficult Customer Procedure

Policy Review Date: July 2015

Appendix A

The following checklist can be used by team managers to assist them in completing the risk assessment.

	In the workplace	Yes	No	N/A	Details and actions
1.	Does the workplace present any special hazards?				
2.	Is the access to, or exit from, the workplace safe?				
3.	Is lighting and ventilation sufficient?				
4.	Will other adjacent activities present a risk?				
5.	Is equipment required safe and regularly maintained?				
6.	Will the worker be exposed to risk in the event of equipment failure?				
7.	Can substances and goods be handled safely?				
8.	Does the worker have the appropriate PPE and are they trained in its use?				
9.	Has the worker been trained to do the task properly?				
10.	Has the worker demonstrated their ability to do the task satisfactorily?				
11.	Is the worker medically fit to undertake the task?				
12.	Has the worker sufficient information about the job, equipment and/or substances?				
13.	Is cash being handled, will the worker be at risk of violence?				
14.	Does the worker know to seek help when they reach the limit of their knowledge or experience?				
15.	Is there a specific level of supervision required for the task?				
16.	Will first aid provision be required?				
17.	Will communication be needed with the lone worker to ensure their well being?				

18.	Have all emergency arrangements been identified and communicated?				
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Home visits and meeting the public					
19.	Have lone workers been fully trained in strategies for the prevention of violence?				
20.	Have lone workers been briefed about the areas where they work, or will work?				
21.	Have lone workers been made aware of attitudes, traits or mannerisms that can annoy clients?				
22.	Have lone workers awareness about the client?				
23.	Is there a process of keeping in contact with the lone worker?				
24.	Does the lone worker have the means to contact the Council?				
25.	Is there a process in place where contact timings are not met?				
26.	Does the lone worker need the ability to arrange an accompanied visit,				

Appendix B

RISK ASSESSMENT

Name of Directorate / Team / Individual:	Date of assessment:
	Review Date

Assessors Name:

	Identify Hazards	Who may be harmed	Severity of Injury	Likelihood of Injury	Number Exposed	Risk Level	Control Measures	Action Required
1	Lone Working	Staff Councillors	4	2	0	Medium	Lone Working Procedure	Managers to carry out specific risk assessments for vulnerable staff.
2							General Preventative Guidance for Lone working staff guidance note. Appendix C	Managers ensure all staff are made aware of the guidance.
3							Awareness training.	Managers to assess staff training needs
4							Incident Reporting, Exercise Caution	

							(Essential Customer Information) on Minerva, sharing information on difficult customers	
5							Availability of mobile phones	
6							Safe systems of work in line with managers General Preventative Guidance for Lone working staff Appendix C	Managers to compile safe working procedures for staff.
7							Prohibited lone working? (e.g. work at height, home visits to people with known history of violence etc)	

							Arrangements are in place for new members of staff who will be lone working? (
							Arrangements are in place for tracking lone workers? (e.g. periodic visits to lone worker, calling in to base by the lone worker)	

Legend **Severity of Injury** – 1. Minor Injury 2. Injury requiring first aid 3. Injury requiring 7 or more days off work 4. Long term absence and/or hospitalisation 5. Death/permanent disability.

Likelihood of Occurrence – 1. Remote possibility 2. Possible: Might Happen 3. Probable 4. Highly probable 5. Almost certain to happen.

Number Exposed – 0. 1-2 people 1. 3-5 people 2. 6-20 people 3. 21-49 people 4. 50 + people

Risk Level is found by Multiplying severity of injury by likelihood of occurrence and adding number exposed= Risk Levels

Risk levels – 1-2 = Very low risk 3-5 = low risk 6-9 = Medium risk 10-15 = High risk 16-29 = Unacceptable risk

Name of assessor Team Manager –	Signature:	Date:
Manager must sign below to accept the assessment and ensure that remedial actions are implemented.		
Head of Service name:	Signature:	Date:

Appendix C

General Preventative Guidance for Lone Working Employees

Safety is a shared responsibility; the council has a duty, as your employer to protect you from foreseeable risk. However, for your part you can help to make sure that systems in place are followed and report all incidents. When visiting people at home or other none office based environment, employees must not compromise personal safety at any time; employees are advised to: -

1. Check systems and information before the visit to ensure you have prior knowledge of the client
2. Obtain information on the area to be visited and make sure you know and others within the team know where you are going
3. Park as close as possible to the address you are visiting, if that is the most appropriate area. In some cases, it may be better that your vehicle is not identifiable, for example, when investigating ASB or related issues
4. Always leave the car facing the exit route, for example in dead end streets. Don't park the car in the driveway of household or anywhere it could become blocked in.
5. If visiting whilst it is dark, park in a lighted area (it is anticipated that employees will not home visit whilst it is dark and this should be agreed on a case by case basis with your line manager).
6. Avoid (as far as possible) waste ground, isolated pathways and subways, particularly at night.
7. Visit known problem areas where possible, at times of the day where, for example, drunkenness and drug activity is likely to be minimised.
8. Risk assess the situation as you approach the property. **Rearrange visit if there is any risk to your safety.**
9. Stand clear of the doorway after ringing or knocking.
10. Do not enter the house if the person answering the door gives any cause for alarm. (Use a simple excuse to rearrange)
11. Always follow the occupants into a building.
12. Maintain an escape route and ensure door is not locked.
13. Always treat occupants courteously.
14. Do not enter the property if, at the time, it is occupied, solely, by someone aged under 16 years old.
15. Carry out a dynamic risk assessment for the duration of visits and lone working situations.

In the event of an incident occurring, employees must –

1. Put your own safety first and leave the situation.
2. Not be confrontational.
3. Use panic alarms **only** where there is a clear escape route and for surprise only to avoid escalating risk.
4. Call for assistance from the emergency services, manager, or colleague as appropriate.
5. Return to office base as soon as possible and meet with team manager for a debrief of the incident.

6. Allow time to recover and seek support from colleagues.
7. Share information with others who may visit and arrange a “exercise caution” on Minerva through the customer strategy services team manager.
8. Report the incident using the corporate incident reporting forms with the guidance of your team manager and/or safety champion.
9. Lone workers should not be more at risk than other employees.

Practical tools to enable safe and effective lone working include -

- **White board** – staff complete with addresses of where they are going and time they are expected back. This is visible to all team members and the team take an active role in contacting team members if they do not return at the expected time. Employees are to call in to a designated colleague if their visits over-run and the white board is to be updated. team managers or designated officer are to check their employees have left site safely before they leave for the day, or make sure someone staying later is aware to check at the end of the day.
- **Electronic diary** – All employees must use an electronic diary to record meetings and location of meetings. Employees must ensure that they complete this accurately at all times with site address and area and customer name and address. Access to each other’s electronic diaries should be granted to team members
- **Mobile Phone** – All staff members who lone work are provided with a mobile phone. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their mobile phones are fully charged and in working order. Employees are aware that in an emergency they must contact the emergency services prior to making contact with their team manager.
- **Vehicles / Travelling** – Employees must ensure that their vehicle has sufficient fuel in it and is well maintained.
- **Incident reporting / Debriefing** - Employees must report incidents using the corporate incident form on Minerva Keep me safe Keep me Well. Managers are responsible for debriefing staff and following up after an incident. The safety champion can assist the manager.
- **Risk Assessments** - will be undertaken. A standard risk assessment form and risk matrix (see Appendix B). Employees are to check “Exercise Caution” before visiting an unknown address. Employees are to consider using alternative venues for first meetings.
- **Communication** – This is crucial to promote the health and safety of lone workers. Employees must communicate with their colleagues and team manager in regards to whereabouts and changes to plans. Lone working issues will also be discussed within team meetings and one to ones.
- **Out Of Hours** - Employees are to arrange with their team manager (or any head of service in their absence) to make sure someone is available to call or text when they finish their visits.
- Not carrying out duties that may put themselves at further risk

All employees and members are to make themselves familiar with the West Lindsey District Council difficult customer procedure. This guidance is

available to all staff via Minerva. This procedure provides practical guidance on handling difficult customers.

Appendix D

Personal Safety: A Guide for WLDC. Members

The relationship between members and the communities they serve has always been at the heart of what being a West Lindsey District Council member is all about. Face to face contact, when members of the public can share problems and concerns, is vital to making that relationship work. In recognition of this vital role, we feel that it is essential that members are helped to carry out this role safely and effectively. This leaflet contains advice aimed at members but it should also be read and acted on by council officers.

Introduction

An important role for members is to keep in touch with their communities. This includes helping individuals with any problems they might have. Often this extends beyond just the delivery of council services. These contacts are usually rewarding and friendly. Members become experienced in calming down and treating with respect and sympathy angry and frustrated residents who often resort to their elected representative when they feel that they are getting nowhere in resolving their problems through other channels.

Circumstances will vary and members will take their own decisions about how to conduct their duties as members while remaining easily accessible to their residents.

The purpose of this guide is not to make members nervous but to set out what personal safety measures can be taken to prevent, and to deal with, those rare circumstances when they might find themselves in situations where they become anxious for their safety. In general terms, the guidance follows advice given to others who, by virtue of public duties or employment, meet many people that they do not know.

Ward Surgeries

The arrangements each member makes will vary accordingly to local circumstances. You will be fortunate to find premises for a surgery which meet every aspect of good practice and are also accessible to the community. These are suggestions about how to make a surgery safe and effective. Some apply wherever the surgery is held, while others are good practice to be followed if the opportunity arises. Most members will go through their entire service on the council without experiencing any serious problems, but a little time given to preparation and planning can reduce the already small risk further.

The basics:

- If possible do not hold surgeries alone in an otherwise empty building. Try to get someone to act as 'receptionist'. This not only makes you safer but makes it much easier to manage a busy surgery. If you are currently doing surgeries alone, arrange to discuss how this can be

overcome with fellow members, council officers or members of the local party.

- If you cannot avoid doing surgeries on your own, make sure you remember a few simple guidelines. The layout of the room should suit you - you should sit nearest to the door with the residents seated on the other side of the table. Seating is best set out at an angle of 45 degrees (seating directly opposite can be confrontational).
- If there is no separate waiting room, try to make sure that the waiting people are as far as possible away from those that you are talking to.
- Make sure there are no heavy items in the room that could be used as weapons.

If you are at the stage of looking for suitable premises in which to hold a surgery, try to get a space with as many as possible of the following features:

- public premises (for example libraries) during opening hours or other premises where there are many other people about
- premises where the names of any visitors for members are recorded
- premises where there is a comfortable waiting area
- the surgery room:
 - is in view of the reception or public area
 - is connected to the reception by an alarm and there is a procedure for dealing with a call for assistance
 - has a vision panel in the door
 - is decorated in calming (pastel) colours
 - has a swift means of escape and any visitors are not able to lock the door from the inside.

Dealing with Emotional Constituents

It is inevitable that some of the people you will meet will be angry or upset - if everything in the garden was rosy, they probably wouldn't be coming to see you. You need to be prepared to handle all types of emotion. For example, it is worth having some tissues on hand for the person that it is just too much for and who bursts into tears.

Members have to develop the quiet skill of being concerned about people's problems without being so involved that they become too emotional to be a help. Calmness in the face of whatever comes up will help you and the residents.

You may find that racist or other offensive remarks are made. If they are directed at you - do not respond - this will only make the situation worse. Instead bring the interview to an end as quickly as possible. If they are more general remarks, you should indicate that this is not acceptable and that you cannot continue the interview. Often this will elicit an apology. Otherwise ask the person to leave. However, you must use your own judgment and **if you**

are alone and in a vulnerable situation do not put yourself at risk no matter how angry the remarks make you.

Comprehensive training is available to help those who have to deal with aggressive and difficult people. A wide range of advice is included in such training (for example dressing sensibly-not wearing anything around your neck, (scarves and so on) that a person could get hold of). If you feel you would benefit ask the council to provide you with suitable training.

Home Visits

Members do sometimes visit residents in their homes especially those who are elderly or disabled or where they simply want to see for themselves conditions that are the subject of complaints.

It is for you to decide whether a particular visit should be made, especially if the person to be visited is unknown to you. Most of you will trust your own instincts as to whether to meet someone alone. Sometimes you might prefer to be accompanied by a ward colleague or get an initial report from Council officers or invite the person to a more public place. It is always advisable for you to keep a record of your whereabouts. If necessary, you can let the person that you are visiting know there is such a record or that you are expected at another place by a certain time or make a call on your mobile phone during the visit.

Personal Callers

Most members try to maintain a balance between their personal and public lives and do not want to encourage any callers at their private homes. Good publicity by the council on how to contact members and details of ward surgeries reduces the chances of unwanted callers.

Malicious and nuisance telephone calls

As members you occasionally get the odd nuisance or abusive call. Although infrequently, you can become the target of a persistent, anonymous caller who may have a grudge against the council. These calls need to be dealt with in accordance with police advice:

- keep the caller talking
- note any clues the caller may provide as to sex, age, accent and so on
- listen for any clues as to the motive and intention of the caller
- write down the details immediately to assist police at a later stage
- listen for background noise which may provide valuable information (for example railway sounds, industrial noises, machinery, music, animals)
- inform the police

Mail

As with telephone calls, on rare occasions you can become the target of a malicious letter/ email. Any such correspondence should be given immediately to the police.

Car Safety and Parking

You need to take the same precautions as most car owners do:

- consider whether an area will be dark and isolated when you return to your car
- park, where possible, under street lighting
- lock car doors as soon as you get into the car
- take boxes/bags to the car when other people are around.

Reporting Incidents

Any incidents of concern, even if fairly minor or 'nearly happened' should be reported to the council's monitoring officer or other nominated officer. This helps us to carry out the proper monitoring and decide if any action needs to be taken to prevent a similar incident reoccurring. You may also consider it advisable to warn your ward colleagues.

Training

We have responsibilities for the safety of members whilst on council business as we do for our officers.

As mentioned earlier training is available. Training may help members do their jobs with a minimum of personal risk. If you think you would benefit from this type of training please talk to member services and ask them to look at arranging training for members

Other Guidance Available

- General Preventative and Safety Guidance for Lone working staff (Appendix B)
- Difficult Customer Procedure