



## **LONE WORKING POLICY AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **1. Introduction**

Helsby Parish Council recognises that our staff are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for staff when they work by themselves.

### **2. Scope of the Policy and Definitions**

This policy applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary. It does not apply to councillors. A worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces, is not permitted to work on their own.

'Lone worker' refers to people who work alone without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. This policy specifically covers the Clerk, who is required to carry out duties for all or part of their working day in isolation.

### **3. Responsibilities**

The Clerk, 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 risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly; and
- ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working.

Councillors are responsible for:

- ensuring that staff are aware of the policy and accompanying risk assessment;
- ensuring that staff are competent to work alone;
- ensuring that all lone working activities are formally risk assessed (including defining the risk, identifying control measures necessary to minimise those risks and setting emergency procedures);
- providing resources for putting the policy and risk assessment into practice (including any personal safety equipment, where relevant);

- putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- ensuring that lone workers are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updating and refreshing this training as necessary;
- managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents; and
- ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.

Employees (i.e. the Clerk) are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves;
- following guidance and procedures designed for safe lone working;
- reporting all accidents and incidents of violence or aggression whilst working alone and completing accident forms, where relevant;
- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy;
- reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone; and
- maintaining good communication to minimise risk.

#### **4. Risk Assessment**

Risk assessments should be completed for all lone working activities. These should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant councillors. A lone working risk assessment has been prepared and is presented in Appendix 1. This is used as a tool to identify if the council's existing control measures are adequate and if not, what modifications or additional actions might be necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working.

#### **5. Hazards of Lone Working**

People who work alone face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks in an environment with more than one person. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness;
- Faulty equipment;
- Travelling alone;
- Meeting in remote locations; and
- Abuse from members of the public.

In order to ensure the personal safety of staff, it is important that they share with the council the details of any aspects of their health that could lead to an increased risk.

This includes pregnancy. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with staff confidentiality of the utmost importance.

## **6. 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 chair or vice chair 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.

Each report should contain a brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved. For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should be captured, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. Reports should also include any circumstances that might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances. This information can then be used to review the risk assessment process to assess if any additional measures are needed.

## **7. 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 chair and/or vice chair of any incident immediately, who will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

## **8. Immediate Support following a Violent Incident**

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the chair and/or vice chair will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. The chair and/or vice chair will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The chair and/or vice chair will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

## APPENDIX 1

### LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT

This risk assessment will be carried out for and on behalf of all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff that are site based but work in isolation as well as any mobile staff whose work takes them out into the community. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. It will be used as a tool to identify if the existing control measures are adequate and if not, what modifications or additional actions can be considered necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working.

IDENTIFIED RISK	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCE OF RISK	ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT (H/M/L)	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK OCCURRING (H/M/L)	CONTROLS TO MANAGE RISK AND FURTHER ACTION NEEDED IF NECESSARY
Risk of violence from members of the public entering the parish office	Staff at risk of verbal or physical assault	H	M	<p>Wherever possible, staff should not enter the building alone unless a member of Helsby Community Sports Club is present on the premises. If a member of staff is alone in the building, a councillor should be made aware of this.</p> <p>The office door should be kept locked at all times and the glass part of the door should not be covered. A doorbell is affixed to the outside of the office. A notice outside the parish office is displayed with office hours and to say that any appointments must be made in advance.</p> <p>Staff should avoid being left on their own with any new contacts – if possible, arrange for a councillor to be present.</p>

				<p>Staff should know channels of communication in an emergency.</p> <p>If staff have concerns about security or suspect there is an intruder in the building, they must contact the premises manager or other suitable person (e.g. parish councillor). They should not confront the intruder, keep the door to the parish office locked and await the arrival of support.</p> <p>Provide staff with conflict resolution training.</p> <p>Staff to report and record all adverse incidents.</p> <p>Opportunity for home working if staff member is feeling vulnerable.</p> <p>Clerk to explore the option of installing a video doorbell system with audio communication in the parish office.</p>
Manual handling	Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects.	H	L	<p>High shelves for light objects only.</p> <p>Staff member to leave any heavy deliveries in a safe place and wait for assistance wherever necessary.</p> <p>Staff to attend a manual handling course.</p>

Slips, trips and falls and other accidents	Staff may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages.	H	L	<p>General good housekeeping.</p> <p>Use of a fall detector.</p> <p>Keep all areas well-lit and clear from trip hazards (e.g. no trailing leads or cables).</p> <p>Offices cleaned regularly.</p> <p>Regular testing of any electrical equipment.</p> <p>Ensure there is access to first aid equipment.</p> <p>Know local arrangements on how to respond in event of fire or other emergency.</p> <p>Do not work with any hazardous substances.</p>
Working at height – filing on top shelves, putting up decorations etc.	Falls from any height can cause bruising and fractures.	H	L	<p>No working at height is to be carried out whilst lone working.</p> <p>Ladders only to be used if strictly necessary and someone else is present.</p> <p>Sports club staff/contractors only to change lightbulbs, clean internal windows, etc.</p>

Risk of violence from members of the public when out in the community (e.g. when undertaking burial clerk duties, meeting contractors, etc)	Staff at risk of verbal or physical assault	H	M	<p>Staff to inform chair or vice chair where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back. If plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the chair or vice chair.</p> <p>If visit is deemed to be high risk, delay the visit until staff can be accompanied.</p> <p>Carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.</p> <p>Provide a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment (e.g.panic alarm), where this is deemed to be necessary.</p> <p>Before making home visits, the lone worker must have full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which they may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks. If possible, staff should be accompanied by a councillor.</p>
Unsuitability of staff member to work alone	Have staff any medical conditions and/or disability which would make it unsuitable and/or unsafe for working alone?	H	L	<p>Chair or vice chair to monitor suitability of staff for lone working.</p> <p>Staff to ensure that any medical conditions which might be relevant to their working alone are fully disclosed to chair or vice chair.</p> <p>Individuals with temporarily impaired mobility must not work alone.</p>

## DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version number	1.0
Responsible Committee	Policy and Procedures Committee
Approval by	Full Council
Date of approval/adoption	14th April 2025
Maximum review period	Every 4 years
Date for next review	March 2029

### Change History

Last version to 1.0	First adopted by Full Council on 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2022. Latest version based on NALC's model version dated August 2024. Amendments recommended by the P&P Committee on 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 (PP08/25).
---------------------	--