

Bradwell Parish Council

Lone working policy

Statement of lone working

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers have a legal obligation to look after the health, safety and welfare of their employees and contractors.

Bradwell Parish Council recognises that some members of staff may need to work alone from time to time and for some others lone working is the norm.

This policy sets out the approach that the council has adopted to protect, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and well-being of those employees.

Working alone is not necessarily unsafe; however it can bring with it the following risks:

1. Accidents
2. Sudden illness or incapacity
3. Violence from others
4. General emergencies.

Whilst it is impossible to legislate against every risk that an individual may face, sensible implementation of this policy and procedures should help to reduce these risks.

Although the primary purpose of this policy and set of procedures is to cover employees of Bradwell Parish Council, much of the content applies to Councillors and also contractors when engaged on council business.

Definition of a lone worker

The Health and Safety Executive defines a lone worker as someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision.

The Council has broadened this definition to include members of staff who:

- work from a fixed base
- work separately from others
- travel or walk alone during the course of their employment carrying out their duties
- work outside of standard business hours (on or off-site), e.g. attending evening meetings/cleaning/closing buildings.

Specific responsibilities

The Council will

- a) Meet its moral and legal responsibilities.
- b) Ensure a budget exists to enable the policy to be put into place and to provide employees with the support that is needed to lone work safely, for example providing appropriate safety equipment.
- c) Ensure legally compliant risk assessments are carried out.

- d) Ensure employees are consulted about the equipment they need to keep them safe in their jobs.
- e) Ensure staff are trained in the safe and proper use of equipment.
- f) Provide resources required for safe working practice to be in place.
- g) Provide first aid and emergency training for relevant members of staff.
- h) Where possible staff are not asked to work alone unnecessarily.
- i) Review the lone working policy annually and ensure its implementation.
- j) Provide staff lone worker training, where appropriate.

The Clerk will

- a) Set an example to others by visibly working within the policy and procedure.
- b) Develop sensible and practical procedures for lone workers.
- c) In consultation with employees, assess what jobs must not be carried out in a lone working situation.
- d) Ensure that risk assessments are carried out in line with policy.
- e) Ensure that the right safety equipment is purchased; that it is in good working order and that it is being used.
- f) In the event of being notified that a lone worker is overdue, taking immediate steps to investigate the situation.
- g) Ensure that new and existing members of staff are aware of the lone working policy and procedures.
- h) Reviewing the policy and procedure to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

All employees will

- a) Have a duty of care to ensure that they do not place themselves in situations that are potentially dangerous.
- b) Work within this policy and procedure.
- c) Co-operate with colleagues in the implementation of this policy.
- d) Communicate hazards to the Clerk and to colleagues/other workers.
- e) Be aware of their working environment.
- f) Take reasonable steps to ensure their personal safety.
- g) Not create unnecessary risks.
- h) Use any equipment in an inappropriate manner.
- i) Be prepared to walk away from a situation that they believe may cause them danger.
- j) Undertake any training/briefings associated with lone working.

Procedures for Staff at Parish Office

Whilst it may be necessary for a member of staff to work alone in the office during the day, whenever possible more than one person should be in the office.

If working in a lone working capacity, employees need to be aware that they are alone in the building and take any precautions that they believe to be sensible in that situation. It is expected that members of staff who are out of the office (or a nominated person) will contact the lone worker at routine intervals during the day to ensure that there are no issues.

Evening/Weekend Lone Working

Where possible, there should be a minimum of two council representatives (e.g. employees or members) on site.

If a visitor calls the door must remain locked unless the person is somebody that the employee recognises, and is comfortable enough to open the door to.

There is no compulsion on an employee to open the door and if the member of public complains, the employees' right to not open the door must be upheld.

In a situation where a member of staff is lone working and has reason to believe that they are unsafe they should contact the Police as soon as they suspect a problem.

Office Staff Lone Working Out and About

Staff must tell a nominated person before they leave the offices where they are going, who they will be with (if appropriate) and how long they anticipate being away for.

A mobile telephone is supplied so that the individual can be contacted. Should the lone worker exceed the period of time that they have stated, then an initial call will be made to assess what (if any) action is required.

For external visits that happen at the end of the working day, the employee must make a "finishing work" text to a nominated person.