

BRACEBRIDGE HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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Lone working procedure

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 Bracebridge Heath Parish Council recognises that its employees are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of office hours.

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Bracebridge Heath Parish Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances.

The purpose of this procedure is to set the responsibilities for assessing and mitigating the risks involved with working alone.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Council's employees, volunteers and members.
- 2.2 Bracebridge Heath Parish Council operates a no lone working policy for library volunteers working with Council. This policy therefore does not apply to volunteers for the library.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". This covers all of the Council's employees and/or Councillors who are required to carry out their duties for all or part of their working day working in isolation.

4 Aims

- 4.1 The aim of the policy is to:
- increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
 - ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable;
 - ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
 - ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone;
 - encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 Employees are responsible for:
- taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
 - co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working;

- reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate;
- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; and,
- reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

5.2 The Clerk, on behalf of Bracebridge Heath Parish Council as an employer, is responsible for:

- ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- providing resources for putting the policy into practice; ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy;
- ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed as appropriate;
- putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- ensuring that staff are given appropriate information, instruction and training;
- ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident; and;
- managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

6 Assessing the risk

6.1 Risk assessment is essential to good risk management.

6.2 Assessment will be carried out for and by all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff that are site based but work in isolation as well as mobile staff whose work takes them out into the community. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

6.3 A lone workers' checklist will be completed (See Appendix 1). This 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.

7 Incident reporting

7.1 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".

7.2 In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk 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.

8 Contacting/involving the police

8.1 The Council is committed to protecting 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.

- 8.2 Except in cases of emergency, employees should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident. Any incidents involving the Clerk should be reported to the Chairman of the Council.

9 Support for staff

- 9.1 Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk, or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

10 Immediate support following an incident

- 10.1 In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. Any incidents involving the Clerk should be reported to the Chairman of the Council.
- 10.2 The Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

11 Good practice for lone workers

- During their working hours, all staff leaving the workplace should leave written details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back.
- If, in the course of a trip away from the office, plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the office.
- If the visit is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made with a colleague or councillor to check that a lone worker has returned to their base on completion of the visit. If possible, delay the visit until staff can be accompanied.
- Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague/councillor may also be advisable. Staff should avoid being left on their own with a client in their workplace, or leaving a colleague/councillor in this situation.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries – to be reported if used.
- Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- Staff should never transport a child on their own and should assess any risk before transporting a vulnerable adult alone.

- Meetings should take place at a public meeting space. If home visits are required the lone worker must have full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks.
- Having collected all the relevant information, you then need to plan your contact:
 - Trust your intuition and always think of your personal safety;
 - What is the best time of the day to visit? Assess the situation. Are you familiar with the property locations? Consider the weather/visibility/seasons. Will you be driving in the dark?
 - Where is the most appropriate place to see this person?
 - Do you need to take a colleague or councillor with you?
 - If another company is involved, can a joint visit be arranged?
 - Ensure that someone knows where you are at all times and do not make last minute/unplanned visits.
 - Check your mobile is charged.
 - Know where you are travelling to. Check your route to avoid stopping and asking strangers for directions.
 - Park near street lighting or lit areas whenever possible.
 - Reverse into parking spaces to ensure a quick getaway.
 - Keep all doors locked whilst driving and keep valuables out of sight.
 - If you do not intend to return to the office after your visit let someone know.

12 Review

12.1 The Personnel committee is responsible for the review of this procedure on a biennial basis or in response to changes in relevant legislation or guidance.

13 Version control and amendment history

| Date approved | Version Number | Revision / amendments made | Review Date |
|-----------------|----------------|---|--------------|
| 15 October 2018 | 1.0 | New policy and procedure | October 2020 |
| October 2021 | 1.1 | New document header | October 2023 |
| August 2024 | 1.2 | New document header. References to Finance and Policy committee replaced with Personnel committee | August 2026 |

14 Appendices

Appendix A – Lone Working Checklist

Checklist completed by:

Date completed:

Location (building or mobile):

Main issues of concern

- Do staff work alone?
- Do staff work outside normal office hours?
- Do staff meet with members of the public in an isolated location?
- Is there enough security provision?
- Is there safe access to the building?
- Do staff activities involve working in confined spaces?
- Do staff activities involve handling dangerous substances?
- Do staff carry out work in high-risk locations (i.e. areas with high crime rates)?
- Do staff carry out work in isolated areas?

Control Measures for Consideration

- Do you provide joint working for high-risk activities (i.e. in confined spaces and with dangerous substances)?
- Do you carry out regular supervisor or colleague checks during activities?
- Do you use entrance security systems (i.e. digital locks or swipe cards)?
- Is there security lighting around access points and parking areas?
- Do staff have information and training on basic personal safety?
- Are staff trained in strategies for preventing and managing violence?
- Do staff have access to forms for reporting incidents or near misses and appreciate the need for this procedure?
- Do you provide accompanied visits when there are concerns about safety?
- Do you share risk information with other agencies?
- Are there systems for monitoring staff whereabouts and movements for regularly reporting to base?
- Have you issued mobile phones?
- Are the existing control measures adequate? Yes / No

If “No”, what modifications or additional actions are necessary