



Lone working policy

This Policy applies to all paid staff and volunteers.

Definition of lone working

Lone Working means operating in situations without the benefit of interaction with other workers or without supervision. It is therefore a broader definition than simply being physically alone.

The need for this policy

Possible hazards of lone working include:

- Accidents that may leave the worker incapacitated and/or unable to access emergency treatment
- Violence, aggression or assault displayed by the person/people that individual is working with or other members of the public
- Risk of allegation e. g. sexual inappropriateness, verbal inappropriateness

Employer's responsibility

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone. However, Burton Latimer Town Council has a legal duty to assess all risks to health and safety, including the risk of lone working. If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, then other arrangements must be put in place.

The Council is responsible for:

- ensuring risk assessment has been carried out for all employees who are required or might be required to work alone
- ensuring lone workers have no specific medical conditions, which might affect their ability to work alone
- putting in place appropriate monitoring procedures to ensure lone workers who may be exposed to violence remain safe, including procedures for taking action if employees fail to make scheduled contact
- ensuring lone workers have received appropriate training
- ensuring lone workers have an opportunity to feed back as part of regular supervision

Training

Training should cover as a bare minimum:

- information on the causes of violent and aggressive behaviour
- techniques for dealing with fear and anxiety for both staff and clients
- recognition of risk scenarios
- verbal and non verbal communication skills
- avoidance of behaviour which might trigger aggression or violence
- defusing and calming strategies
- breakaway techniques

Employee / Volunteer responsibility

The employee or volunteer is responsible for:

- complying with relevant parts of this Code of Practice
- reporting to the Council any circumstances which they consider may require additional controls to be introduced to reduce the risk
- reporting to the Council any incidents which occur whether or not personal injury has occurred

Part 2: Code of practice for staff and volunteers

It is always good practice to maintain professional boundaries. Be clear about the nature and limitations of your role. If in doubt, check with your line manager.

If you go beyond the boundaries of your role in befriending a client, for example, you may be misleading your clients and creating false expectations, thereby making yourself more vulnerable to expressions of disappointment or anger.

In the course of your work, always use your professional judgement and assess the potential for risk when considering giving a lift to a client or member of the public.

Making visits

In order to minimise risk to yourself when making visits you should:

- Make plans in advance (where possible), making others aware of appointment times and expected time of return to the office, by using the whiteboard in the office. You must agree with a colleague to phone them on arrival and departure from an appointment, [particularly if finishing work for the day without returning to the office]

- Ensure that as much information as possible about clients has been gained before appointment, for example: any risk factors, family dynamics (who will be around), triggers for individuals
- Carry out a risk assessment for each visit (see below)
- Devise an exit strategy
- Familiarise yourself with the locality in which you are working
- Have a means of transport in which to escape quickly where necessary
- Carry a working mobile phone which should be on during the appointment
- Keep the carrying of valuables to a minimum
- Be aware of risks when exiting and entering a building. If in doubt, do not proceed
- Always try to position yourself between the person you are visiting and the exit
- If the person that you are visiting starts to become agitated or aggressive, don't pursue the issue. You can tell them that you will check out the facts and get back to them, or make an excuse and leave
- Ring the office to inform colleagues if your return is delayed

Make a timely record of the appointment itself, including: anything significant that was said or happened; inappropriate communication; another person unexpectedly present

- Reflect upon appointments in supervision so that significant events can be fully considered and practice adjusted where necessary

Risk assessment

Each visit (or other lone working situation) requires a risk assessment, which should be reviewed every six months. The assessment must consider:

- whether the work can be done safely by one person
- what arrangements are required to ensure the lone worker is at no more risk than employees working together
- who else may be at risk

If you feel concerned about risk when visiting someone, take a colleague along. If no one is available, cancel the visit and re-arrange. If you are uneasy about a client or the location of their accommodation, arrange to meet in a public place that you feel comfortable with.

Working on BLTC premises

Intruders

If you encounter an intruder on the premises, you should:

- Make a judgement based on the time of day and circumstances. IF YOU FEEL SAFE TO DO SO, investigate the situation, remembering to take a cautious approach and to keep a safe distance from the intruder. If in doubt, try to get someone else to assist you when escorting someone off the premises
- If you feel that the intruder may be dangerous, or if you feel threatened in any way, DO NOT attempt to remonstrate or compromise your personal safety. Back away from the intruder and phone the Police, explaining the seriousness of the situation
- If possible, use the telephone to contact the Chair of the Council, as they may arrive sooner than the police
- Await the arrival of the Police, in a safe place