

HARVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Home and Lone Working Policy

Purpose of this policy

Harvington Parish Council recognises that some of our staff work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:

- Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working;
- Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone;
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk;
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers, and;
- Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

Policy scope

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers. It does not apply to councillors.

Staff will be protected from the risks of home and lone working as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the council's policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

Definition

A 'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours, including homeworkers.

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own.

Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows:

The Council:

- Will try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone and/or at home;
- Ensure that lone working activities are formally risk assessed and control measures are in place to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures (see Appendice A);
- Make clear to staff the arrangements for lone working and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained;

- Must inform lone workers of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- Be aware of staff working on their own, and must raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated;
- Ensure the home accommodation is suitable, and health and safety regulations are met, and that there is appropriate fireproof storage for documents. The council should meet the cost of ensuring these conditions are met;
- Reimburse the clerk for all expenses incurred in the discharge of the office of the clerk, and approved by council, eg stationery, consumables, telephone, etc. The council should pay an agreed sum to take into account the use of space, lighting, heating and electricity, due to working from private premises;
- Shall provide a dedicated computer and all necessary computer software or upgrades required to enable the clerk to fulfill the duties required by the council;
- Should indemnify the clerk for both employers and public liability insurance for working from their own premises.
- Must ensure that all staff are aware of this home and lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

Home and Lone workers:

- Must take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work;
- Should follow any instruction given by management or the council;
- Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working;
- Should not work alone where there is inadequate information for a risk assessment;
- Must inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression, whilst working alone;
- Must make themselves available to meet the public during specified hours. If this is at the Clerk's home, they may be expected to invite strangers in, or to arrange a mutually convenient location.

Risk Assessments

Managers must complete (or ensure the completion of) a Home/Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to lone working activity and updated as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness
- Faulty equipment
- Travelling alone
- Remote locations
- Abuse from members of the public
- Animal attacks

Reducing lone working risks

Every lone working environment and situation is different, and therefore it is not possible to implement a 'one size fits all' approach. Where there is regular or anticipated lone working, the council will implement a plan, proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. This should be written down and communicated to all relevant staff and where appropriate, councillors.

Buddy scheme

If a buddy scheme is implemented, the following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker and their buddy/manager and next of kin:

- Name and contact details of the lone worker
- Name, relationship and contact details of the buddy
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's manager
- Any 'code word' that would indicate that the lone worker needs assistance
- Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation

If you change your contact details, you must let your buddy/manager know.

In circumstances where a buddy system is appropriate as a way of reducing the risks identified in the risk assessment, the buddy must have relevant details about your lone working, that may include;

- where you are going (address or area if there is no address);
- details of the purpose (i.e. preparing the hall, meeting);
- contact details of anyone you intend to meet (any additional contact details for the location you are visiting);
- your mode of transport;
- when you are expected to return.

Your buddy must know what to do if you do not return or make contact at the anticipated/agreed time.

Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with your manager or specific councillors. This includes pregnancy. You can then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality of the utmost importance.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. The report should include:

- 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. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence, and;
- In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances you think 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 would then support us to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager/buddy or councillor to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf). Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Notes

The Health and Safety Executive have extensive advice and guidance on homeworking, lone working, including guidance on the risks of lone working.

Homeworking: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/home-working/worker/index.htm>

Lone working: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/>

Risks of lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

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Appendice A - Harvington Parish Council - Home & Lone Working Risk Assessment

(dated May 2026)

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Priority H/M/L	What are you already doing?	Who will put these measures into action?
Lone working	Clerk Risk of attack from contractors/members of the public, animals.	M	Clerk recommended not to meet contractors/members of the public alone, and where they do, to do so in a public space. Clerk to also inform Manager/Councillor the details of any meetings off site and/or with members of the public Clerk to take reasonable care of themselves and notify manager of any concerns or incidents, including incidents of abuse.	Clerk Manager
Sudden illness	Clerk Unable to complete duties, unsafe to work alone	M	Clerk to call appropriate emergency services, if required, and to notify Manager/Councillor of illness, where possible Manager to hold laptop details/passwords in the event of emergencies/period of prolonged/unexpected absence.	Clerk Manager
Health and safety concerns relating to unsuitable office set-up	Clerk Back pain/RSI from home working conditions, trips over trailing wires, screen fatigue, etc	M	Ensure suitable desk and chair, adequate lighting, ensure wires are tidy/secured Ensure regular eye breaks taken from screen and eye test offered/paid for, if required. Regular rest breaks from desk recommended. Little to no manual handling required. Clerk to inform manager of any health conditions that may affect ability to work from home/necessitate additional equipment.	Manager Clerk