

### 1. Purpose

Berryfields Parish Council (BPC) recognises that some employees, councillors, and volunteers may be required to work alone as part of their duties.

This policy aims to ensure that lone working is properly managed and that the health, safety, and wellbeing of those who work alone are protected.

Lone working should be **avoided where reasonably practicable**. Where it cannot be avoided, BPC will take all reasonably practicable steps to reduce the risks associated with lone working.

### 2. Definition

Lone working refers to any work activity carried out without direct or close supervision, where the individual cannot be seen or heard by another person.

This may include (but is not limited to):

- Working in the office outside normal hours
- Attending site visits or inspections alone
- Travelling alone on council business
- Working from home
- Opening, closing, or cleaning council premises when no one else is present
- Working behind the bar

### 3. Legal Duties

BPC acknowledges its duties under the following legislation:

- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992** (where applicable)
- **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)**

The Council has a duty of care to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that employees and others who work alone are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

### 4. Managing Lone Working – The Four-Step Approach

#### Consider

- Evaluate whether lone working is necessary.
- Explore alternative arrangements such as pairing, remote support, or rescheduling.

#### Assess

- Conduct a lone working **risk assessment** with the employee before work begins.
- Identify foreseeable risks including environment, location, time of day, and the nature of the task.
- Discuss findings with the lone worker and record the assessment.

## **Prepare**

- Provide training, equipment, and information to enable safe working.
- Agree a **communication plan** (e.g. buddy system, check-in messages, or digital app).
- Ensure the lone worker is aware of emergency procedures, contact numbers, and exit routes.
- Ensure the lone worker locks external doors to the building if office based.
- Record all lone working authorisations and risk assessments securely.

## **Monitor**

- Maintain regular contact with lone workers.
- Confirm the individual's whereabouts and expected return time.
- Ensure that a designated person is aware of the lone worker's schedule and can raise the alarm if contact is lost.
- Review the lone working arrangements periodically or after any incident.

## **5. Risk Factors to Consider**

When assessing lone working, consider:

- The individual's experience, medical condition, or training
- Nature of the work and associated hazards
- Location (rural, isolated, public, or private property)
- Working hours (especially early morning, late night, or weekends)
- Accessibility and means of communication
- Potential for violence, aggression, or confrontation

## **6. Communication and Monitoring**

BPC uses a "WhatsApp group" for lone workers, supported by appropriate technology where possible. (CCTV in the bar and reception) and panic buttons.

The lone worker must ensure that:

- Their WhatsApp Group knows where they are working and for how long
- They confirm safe arrival and departure times
- They send a "Home Safe" or equivalent message when finished

If a lone worker fails to check in, another member of the group will attempt to make contact. If unsuccessful, they will escalate to the Clerk or another designated officer immediately.

## **7. Training and Support**

All employees and councillors engaged in lone working will:

- Receive induction training on this policy (lone working online training)
- Be briefed on the lone working risk assessment process
- Have access to first aid and emergency contact procedures
- Be supported following any incident or near miss

## **8. Incident Reporting**

All lone working incidents, near misses, or concerns must be reported to the Clerk as soon as possible.

An incident form should be completed, and the council will review risk assessments and procedures as necessary.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following:

- Any incident involving a lone worker
- Changes to legislation or working practices
- Recommendations from internal or external audits

Revised policies will be communicated to all staff and councillors.

## 10. Responsibilities

- **The Clerk** is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and reviewed.
- **Line managers** are responsible for risk assessments and monitoring lone working arrangements.
- **Employees and councillors** must follow procedures, report concerns, and take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others.

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### Document History

Approved and adopted

November 2025

(version 1)