



South Swindon Parish Council

Lone Working Policy

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1. Purpose

South Swindon Parish Council (SSPC) is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees, including those who work alone. This policy sets out the Council's approach to identifying and managing the risks associated with lone working.

SSPC employs more than 60 members of staff across two service groups, Services and Community and Administration, covering a range of activities including but not limited to; grounds maintenance, parks and open spaces, street cleaning, libraries, youth services, community engagement, events, allotment management and administration. Many of these roles involve some element of lone working, and this policy applies equally across all service areas.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all SSPC employees, casual workers, volunteers and contractors who carry out work on behalf of the Council, where there is a foreseeable likelihood of working alone. It applies regardless of the location in which lone working occurs, including:

- SSPC offices and facilities, including the Parish Offices and Council Depot
- Council parks, open spaces, play areas and outdoor sites
- Public libraries managed by SSPC
- Youth clubs
- Allotment sites
- Event venues and temporary event sites
- Any other location visited in the course of Council duties

This policy does not apply to homeworking arrangements where the employee is working from a private domestic address, unless a specific risk has been identified that requires assessment.

This lone working policy is supported by the South Swindon Parish Council Lone Working Code of Practice.

3. Definition of Lone Working

For the purposes of this policy, a lone worker is any member of staff who works in a location where they cannot be seen or heard by a colleague or where immediate assistance is not readily available for any period of time.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Working alone in an office, library, youth or other council facility, whether during or outside normal opening hours
- Working alone on an outdoor site, including parks, open spaces, allotments or play areas
- Travelling alone to or between work locations in a council or private vehicle
- Conducting site visits or inspections without a colleague present
- Setting up or breaking down events without supervision or colleague support
- Working beyond normal hours when colleagues have left the building or site

There is no general legal prohibition on lone working. However, the Council is required to assess all foreseeable risks arising from lone working and to implement appropriate control measures to ensure lone workers are not exposed to a greater level of risk than other workers.

4. Legal Framework

This policy has been produced with reference to the following legislation and guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places a general duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees including those working alone.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments of all foreseeable risks to employees including risks arising from lone working.
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 sets requirements for the workplace environment that are relevant where employees work in council-owned or managed buildings.
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 establishes organisational liability where a gross breach of a duty of care causes a person's death.
- HSE guidance on lone working including published guidance on identifying and managing lone worker risks.

Employees also have duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work, and to cooperate with the Council in meeting its legal obligations.

5. Responsibilities

The table below summarises the responsibilities of each role in relation to lone working.

Role	Responsibility
The Council (employer)	Adopt and resource this policy. Ensure that adequate systems, equipment and personnel are in place to manage lone working risks.
Chief Executive Officer	Overall operational responsibility for policy implementation. Approve risk assessments and maintain overview of lone working arrangements across all service areas.
Deputy CEO and Services Manager	Day-to-day management of lone working controls within their respective service groups. Ensure staff are briefed, risk assessments are completed and monitoring arrangements are in place.
Line managers / supervisors	Identify lone working situations and hazards within their teams and ensure individual risk assessments and any relevant safe systems of work are completed before lone working begins. Implement and monitor agreed control measures; review arrangements following any incident.
Safety Officer	Provides support to line managers/supervisors to complete suitable and sufficient lone working risk assessments and relevant safe systems of work.
All employees	Follow this policy and any associated risk assessments. Report lone working arrangements in accordance with agreed protocols and raise concerns about lone working risks promptly with their line manager. Complete required training.

6. Risk Assessment

6.1 General requirements

Before any lone working activity takes place, a lone working risk assessment must be carried out. Risk assessments must consider:

- The nature of the tasks to be undertaken and whether they are suitable for lone working
- The location and environment in which the work will take place
- The time of day and duration of the lone working period
- The individual worker, including their experience, training, health and any personal factors that may affect their ability to lone work safely
- The availability and reliability of communication in the location
- The emergency response that could be mobilised if required

Line managers are responsible for applying the principles and control measures set out in this policy to all lone working within their areas of responsibility, and for raising any concerns with the CEO.

6.3 Suitability of lone working

Some tasks should not be carried out by a lone worker. Managers must exercise judgement and ensure that the following activities are not undertaken alone:

- Operation of machinery that presents a significant risk of serious injury, including some ride-on machinery, chainsaws or other powered cutting equipment
- Working at height where a fall would result in serious injury and where immediate assistance would not be available
- Entry into confined spaces
- Any task where the risk assessment concludes that lone working is not safe

Where there is any doubt about whether a task is suitable for lone working, the employee must consult their line manager before proceeding.

7. General Control Measures

The following general control measures apply to all lone working activity across SSPC, regardless of service area or location. Additional controls specific to particular activities or locations are identified in individual risk assessments.

7.1 Communication

- All lone workers must have a means of communication available to them at all times, typically a mobile phone charged and operational before starting lone working. A backup communication method should be considered where mobile signal is poor.
- Before lone working begins, the employee must inform their line manager or a nominated contact of their intended location, the nature of the work, and their expected finish time.
- Lone workers must check in with their line manager or nominated contact at agreed intervals during extended periods of lone working.
- At the end of the lone working period, the employee must confirm to their nominated contact that they have finished and left the site or premises safely.

7.2 Check-in and monitoring

- Where a lone worker does not make an expected check-in or does not confirm a safe departure within 15 minutes of the agreed time, the nominated contact must attempt to reach them by telephone.
- If contact cannot be made within a further 15 minutes, the nominated contact must escalate to the line manager or, if outside normal hours, to the CEO or Deputy CEO, and consider whether to contact the emergency services.
- A record of check-in and escalation arrangements must be agreed and documented before lone working begins, either as part of the risk assessment or via the monitoring log maintained by the relevant service area.

7.3 Lone worker devices and technology

- SSPC will consider the use of lone worker devices, applications or GPS-based monitoring tools where risk assessments identify a need, particularly for staff working on remote or isolated sites.
- The CEO, in consultation with the Services Manager and Deputy CEO, will review the need for dedicated lone worker technology as part of the risk assessment process. Any procurement of such technology will be subject to a separate decision.

7.4 Training and induction

- All employees who are likely to lone work will be briefed on this policy, lone working code of practice, lone working risk assessment and any relevant safe systems of work during their induction.
- Line managers are responsible for ensuring that any lone worker within their team understands the control measures that apply to their specific role and work location.

- Employees must complete any lone working training identified or required by a risk assessment.
- First aid training requirements will be considered as part of the relevant risk assessment, with particular attention to roles that involve working in isolated locations.

7.5 Personal safety

- Lone workers are not expected to put themselves at risk. Any employee who feels unsafe in a lone working situation must remove themselves from that situation and contact their line manager or emergency services as appropriate.
- Lone workers should trust their instincts. If a situation feels unsafe, it is.
- Incidents of threatening or aggressive behaviour toward lone workers must be reported immediately and recorded in line with SSPC's accident, incident or near miss reporting procedure.

8. Employee Wellbeing

SSPC recognises that lone working can affect employee wellbeing as well as physical safety. Isolation, stress and the experience of threatening or difficult situations without immediate colleague support can have a significant impact on mental health.

- Managers should regularly check in with employees who lone work frequently and create opportunities for them to raise any concerns about their lone working arrangements.
- Employees who experience a difficult or distressing incident while lone working should be offered the opportunity to debrief with their manager or, where appropriate, access to SSPC's Occupational Health provider.
- Any employee who raises a concern about lone working arrangements must have that concern taken seriously and addressed promptly.

9. Incident Reporting

All accidents, incidents or near misses and concerns arising from lone working must be reported in line with SSPC's Health and Safety accident, incident or near miss reporting procedure. This includes:

- Any injury sustained while lone working
- Any incident of violence, aggression or threatening behaviour
- Any occasion on which the check-in monitoring procedure identified that a lone worker could not be contacted
- Any near miss or situation that could have resulted in harm

Accident, incident or near miss reports will be reviewed by the CEO and the relevant line manager. Where a pattern of accidents, incidents or near misses are identified, the risk assessment and control measures will be reviewed accordingly.

10. Policy Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy, including failure to follow agreed monitoring and check-in procedures, may result in disciplinary action under SSPC's disciplinary procedure. Managers who fail to implement adequate lone working controls may face formal action.

Where an employee refuses to lone work in circumstances that they reasonably believe to be unsafe, this will not be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be investigated promptly.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- There is a significant change in the nature of lone working activity at SSPC
- An accident, incident or near miss occurs that highlights a gap in this policy or its associated controls

- There are relevant changes to legislation or HSE guidance
- The Lone Worker Risk Assessment is completed, and its findings indicate that amendments are required

Responsibility for coordinating the review rests with the CEO in consultation with the Deputy CEO and Services Manager.

Amendment Log

Date	Description of change	Author	Approved by
May 2025	Version 1.0 issued	CEO	Full Council
May 2026	Version 2.0: full review and rewrite. Expanded scope to all service areas. Updated responsibilities, risk assessment process, control measures, monitoring and emergency procedures. References to accompanying Lone Worker Risk Assessment added.	CEO	Full Council