WHITEHILL
TOWN COUNCIL
Serving Whitehill & Bordon

LONE WORKING POLICY

Date of Adoption: 06.08.2020 Date of Review: 22.01.2026 Next Review: January 2029

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Whitehill Town Council (WTC) recognises that some staff and councillors may be required to work alone in the community, at home, or in the Council Office outside normal hours.

Under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, WTC must assess and manage risks associated with lone working. Employees also have a duty to take reasonable care of their own safety and follow all procedures designed to protect them.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

` This policy applies to all staff and councillors undertaking lone working, including:

- Home working;
- Community visits and meetings;
- Driving for WTC business;
- Working alone in the office outside normal hours;
- Any situation where work is carried out without direct supervision.

3.0 DEFINITION

A lone worker is anyone who works without close or direct supervision. This includes staff working in isolation, ground staff and those working from home or in the office alone.

4.0 AIMS

This policy aims to:

- Increase awareness of lone working risks;
- Ensure risks are assessed and controlled;
- Provide appropriate training and support;
- Encourage reporting of incidents and near misses.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 WTC is responsible for:

- Ensuring staff understand this policy;
- Identifying lone working situations and reducing risks;
- Completing and reviewing risk assessments;
- Implementing safe systems of work;
- Providing training, information, and equipment;
- Recording and investigating incidents;
- Supporting staff involved in an incident.

5.2 Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others;
- Following lone working procedures;
- Reporting incidents, concerns and near misses;
- Maintaining communication with colleagues;
- Attending relevant training.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENTS OF LONE WORKING

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessments will be carried out for and on behalf of all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff that are site-based but work in isolation, as well as any other staff whose work takes them out into the community.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR SITE-BASED LONE WORKERS AND GROUND STAFF WILL INCLUDE:

- Is the person fit and suitable to work alone?
- Safe access and exit;
- Risk of violence;
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Safety of equipment for individual use;
- Channels of communication in an emergency;
- Site security;
- Security arrangements, i.e. alarm systems and response to personal alarms;
- Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.

8.0 INCIDENT REPORTING

All incidents, near misses, or situations where staff feel unsafe must be reported to the Town Clerk.

This includes verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, or any event that could have caused harm.

9.0 CONTACTING/INVOLVING THE POLICE

The Council is committed to protecting its staff and councillors from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault.

- In the first instance staff are to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by WTC throughout the process.
- Town Clerk/Deputy Clerk to be informed.
- Councillors to be informed if necessary.

10.0 SUPPORT FOR STAFF

Employees working for WTC 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. WTC will ensure that all lone workers' training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, WTC will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours, the Council's Chair should be contacted. WTC will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. WTC will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

11.0 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 return.
- 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 ground staff 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.
- 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 meet someone?
    - 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.
    - Do you have a personal panic alarm (if applicable) or mobile (if applicable)? Check it is charged if so.
    - Park near street lighting or well-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.

12.0 EXEMPTIONS

Employees and volunteers are exempt from working alone in certain situations:

- Where activities and work with substances/machinery could be hazardous to health.