Issue details		
Title:	**Lone Worker policy**	
Version number	**Version three**	
Officer responsible:	**Health and Safety Adviser**	
Approved by:	**Service Lead**	**Signature**
Authorisation by:	**Full Council/SMT**	
Authorisation date:	**October 2006**	
Review date:	**August 2019**	

Reviewed

March 2011 and August 2016

Policy Approval

Executive Board July 2006, went to Full Council in October 2006.

Reasons for introducing the Policy

The Policy is required to meet legal H&S requirements. Employers must manage the risk to their employees, particularly if they are vulnerable. It brings together some existing arrangements including the use of the Home Safeguard Lone worker monitoring system.

Policy Statement

The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonable, that employees and self employed contractors who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety.

Solitary working exposes employees and others to certain hazards. The Council's intention is to help employees to remove the risks from these hazards or, where this is not possible, to reduce them to an acceptable level.

The Policy recognises that Lone workers are a vulnerable group of employees. Therefore risk assessments, safe systems and monitoring procedures must be produced to minimise the risk to them.

Terms Explained

Lone Worker - Any person who works by themselves without close or direct supervision. Lone workers can be classified into two groups:

❑ Employees in fixed establishments – only one person working on the premises.

❑ Mobile employees – working away from their fixed base.

P.P.E. - Personal Protective equipment, e.g. hard hat, gloves, goggles, etc.

Home Safeguard (HSG) - This is the Council's 24 hour Community Alarm Service, and includes the lone worker monitoring service.

How will we go about it?

We will:

❑ Provide managers with guidance notes for the safety of lone workers, including a list of who may be classified as a lone worker (Appendix 1).

- ❑ Provide a list of possible hazards (Appendix 2).
- ❑ Produce a checklist for the risk assessment of lone workers (Appendix 3).
- ❑ Give guidance on the monitoring of lone workers (Appendix 4).
- ❑ Promote the use of the Home Safeguard's lone worker monitoring system.
- ❑ Request Service Managers to confirm that procedures to monitor lone workers in their service are provided (by completing a written Appendix 5).

Specific Policy Areas

Arrangements for securing the Health and Safety of workers

The Health and Safety at Work Act places a general duty of care on employers for their employees and contractors.

Assessments of risks must be carried out under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These will identify those employees considered to be lone workers **(see Appendix 1)**. The assessment will also confirm whether the work can actually be done safely by one unaccompanied person. This will include the task, machinery, substances, environment, etc, the probability of the hazard **(see Appendix 2)** causing harm and the severity of that harm.

Particular consideration should be given to:
- ❑ The remoteness or isolation of workplaces – adequate access to first aid, that transport arrangements to site are appropriate, etc.
- ❑ Any problems with communication – has a mobile phone been issued, does the phone signal cover the work area, etc.
- ❑ The possibility of interference, such as violence or criminal activity from another person – do they know or have information on the person they are visiting.
- ❑ The nature of injury to health and anticipated "worst case" scenario – have emergency procedures been agreed. **(Assessment of Risk, Appendix 3)**
- ❑ The vulnerability of the employee.
- ❑ The likelihood of other members of the police being present to assist.

Information and Training

Employees and others will be given necessary information, instruction, training and supervision. This will help them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks of working alone. Employees will be required to follow the safe working procedures, which will include, keeping in contact, the provision of first aid, not putting themselves at risk and awareness of emergency procedures. All employees must co-operate with these procedures to ensure their safety.

Employees should report any concerns or hazards to their Line manager. There should be an agreement as to the circumstances in which it is correct to stop work and seek advice.

Control Measures and Safe Systems of Work

(Procedures for monitoring the safety of Lone workers, Appendix 4)

It is not practical to produce a procedure which will cover every service or task and therefore each service must produce their own procedures taking into account their working patterns and practices. Some activities,(e.g. in confined spaces) are particularly hazardous and require special precautions,(e.g. no lone working).

Some guidance is given at **Appendix 1** but as a minimum, the following are to be included in the procedure:

- ❑ A requirement to maintain a log of those who are working alone. This may take the form of a board, book or other suitable means. Information to be recorded should include:

- ❑ Name

- ❑ Working location/address or Itinerary

- ❑ Contact arrangements

- ❑ Time of departure and expected time of return

- ❑ (See - Home Safeguard Lone worker monitoring system)

- ❑ A method of teams monitoring the log at appropriate points through the working day and the action to be taken for those still out working at the end of the day.

- ❑ A contingency plan for staff not returning at the due time or requesting assistance, i.e. emergency telephone numbers of line manager/supervisor (more than one officer).

- ❑ The procedure for those working from home and also outside normal hours and at weekends and public holiday

- ❑ Guidance on making appointments and visits and any follow up action that may be required (e.g. as a result of problems with the interviewee).

In Addition

Further rules and instructions should be developed, in writing, to cover the following, where applicable:

- ❑ Ability of employees, e.g.: training, experience, medical fitness

- ❑ Suitability of equipment, e.g.: quality of hand tools, use of portable appliances, P.P.E

- ❑ Means of communication, e.g.: mobile phones – signal "black spots", visits by a supervisor

- ❑ Provision of treatment of injuries, e.g.: portable first aid kit, availability of First Aider

- ❑ Emergency and accident procedures, e.g. means of summoning help, rescue plans

- ❑ Training, e.g. for safe use of specialised equipment and processes, is manual handling task suitable for a single person.

- ❑ Supervision for, trainees, young people or new recruits, may be relaxed to the level of occasional visits after it has been confirmed they are competent to work alone.

Home Safeguard Lone worker monitoring system

Home Safeguard operators a 24/7 365 day service and has an automated Lone Worker facility available to EDDC employees.

Each lone worker will have a unique pin number which is allocated when they have completed the LW data record and training. The LW system works using their mobile phone. The employee will be prompted as they log on and off the system. The key point being a very clear message is recorded as to their location.

If they fail to check in after the predefined check in time the LW system will contact them automatically, this is a system message, if they fail to response then a voice message is left. The LW system will retry 90 seconds after and if again no response another voice message is left. On the third attempt a call is made but also an Alert to HSG. The Operator will then follow up the failed contact as outline in each department procedure.

Summary

Working alone may be acceptable, but it can bring additional risks to a work activity. The Council has developed an approach to control the risks and protect employees, and employees should know and follow them. Employees must be sure they are capable of doing the job on their own, the three most important things to be certain of are that:

❑ The lone worker has full knowledge of the hazards to which he/she is being exposed.

❑ the lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong

❑ Someone else knows the whereabouts of a lone worker and what he/she is doing.

Each Service/section will use a booking out and in system to a minimum standard and devise and record a contingency action plan. This will also help checking of personnel in an emergency evacuation. Managers must ensure that active monitoring of the policy and procedures takes place and is recorded.

Management Guidance Notes for the Safety of Lone Workers

Introduction

1. Lone working is common in many Council activities. The Council recognises that lone workers face particular problems and they will not require employees to work in circumstances where the risks are unacceptable.

2. Management must have a system to assess the risks that a lone worker may face and take action where possible to remove or reduce the risks to an acceptable level.

Definition

3. A lone worker can be defined as

   ❑   Any person who is allowed to work by themselves without close or direct supervision

Persons Who May Be Classified As Lone Workers

(This list is not exhaustive)

❑ Civil Enforcement Officers (Car Parks/Street parking)

❑ Caretakers

❑ Cleaners

❑ Countryside staff

❑ Dog Wardens

❑ Grounds Maintenance staff

❑ Cleaning employees

❑ Home Safeguard Operators

❑ Scheme Managers (Sheltered Hsg)

❑ Mobile Support Officers (Sheltered Hsg)

❑ Housing Rental officers

❑ Housing Needs officers

❑ Housing officers dealing with property management

❑ Reception Staff

❑ Street Cleaners

❑ Tourist Information Centre staff

❑ Planning Officers

❑ Building Control Officers

❑ Environmental Health Officers/Technicians/Pest Control officer

❑ Building trades employees

❑ Staff visiting Council premises

❑ Staff visiting domestic/commercial premises as part of their job

❑ Staff working outside normal hours at office locations

Possible Hazards

(Not exhaustive)

- Animal attack
- Drowning
- Electrocution
- Fire/explosions
- Getting lost
- Hazardous substances
- Highway working
- Hypothermia
- Infection
- Manual Handling
- Noise
- Physical attack
- Poisoning
- Restricted access/egress
- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Sudden illness
- Tools and Machinery
- Vehicle operation (including accidents)
- Verbal abuse
- Vibration
- Weather
- Road Traffic Accident

Checklist to Assist with the Assessment of Risk

When assessing risk, the following questions should be addressed:

1. Does the work location present a risk to the lone worker?

2. Are there satisfactory procedures for dealing with illness, accidents and emergencies involving the lone worker?

   Note: Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly in emergency situations. Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained to implement them. Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities. Travelling workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

3. Is there safe access and exit for one person? Can one person safely handle any temporary access equipment which is necessary such as portable ladders?

4. Can all plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person? Does the work involve lifting objects to large/heavy for one person etc? (Reference should be made to relevant manual handling assessments)

5. Can the safe systems of work be managed by one person?

6. Is there risk of violence?

7. Is the person physically fit and suitable to work alone?

   Note: Employees should tell their Line manager of any medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone, e.g. pregnant workers.

8. Has the lone worker received sufficient information, instruction and training to enable them to understand the risks involved in work, the precautions necessary and when to stop work and seek help and advice?

9. What arrangements exist for supervising the lone worker? The extent of the supervision will depend on the risks involved and the proficiency and experience of the employee to identify and handle safety issues.

   New employees undergoing training or dealing with special risks or new situations may need to be accompanied at first. Management must decide on the extent of supervision, not the employee.

   In the case of employees engaged in manual duties, safety supervision can generally be carried out when visits are made to check the progress and quality of the work. A routine check should be made on each member of staff at least once a day.

10. Is it likely that other members of the public will be on hand to give assistance.

Guidelines for Procedures to Monitor the Safety of Lone Workers

The following guidelines should be used when producing a procedure or safe system of work for lone workers.

Monitoring

Managers must produce a method of monitoring lone workers, both during and outside normal working hours.

Normal Working Hours

A log is to be maintained of persons who are working alone. This may take the form of a book, whiteboard or other suitable means. Information to be recorded will include:

- ❑ Name
- ❑ Working Location or Itinerary
- ❑ Contact arrangements
- ❑ Time of Departure
- ❑ Expected time of Return
- ❑ Vehicle details (may be held with the emergency plan)

Employees may use the Home Safeguard (HSG) monitoring system in place of the arrangements below.

- ❑ An appointed person, either the Line manager or an office based member of staff, should check the record at appropriate times, both during and at the end of the day to ensure that return and check in times are monitored.
- ❑ If employees are to be away for longer than the estimated time or there is a change in their itinerary, i.e. unannounced visits, they should telephone the appointed person with the amended details.
- ❑ The appointed person must know what to do, if a lone worker fails to return from a visit or does not call in as scheduled. This may require telephoning the employee or contacting their last known location. The procedure should also state when the manager is to be informed and the emergency plan implemented.
- ❑ Procedures to be used at the end of the working day should be included, e.g. it may be considered appropriate for the employee to log on to the Home Safeguard Lone worker monitoring system after normal office hours. The employee would then inform HSG when he/she finishes for the day.

Staff Working From Home

- ❑ A procedure should be in place, when employees are working from home. It may be considered suitable to use a spouse, partner or other adult to monitor their lone working. This person must be told to notify the employee's line manager, if there are any problems, in order that the emergency plan can be activated. They must be given emergency telephone numbers for this. The arrangement may also apply to those working outside normal working hours e.g. weekends and bank holidays.

Outside Normal Hours

Working outside normal hours brings its own problems and the procedure to be followed may include the requirement to log on to the Home safeguard Lone worker monitoring system and leave the required recorded message. The procedure will also include "out of hours" contacts and advice on when to contact the Police.

Visits

Visits to members to the public bring their own risks and procedures must be developed to reduce or remove them. Some suggestions are included below:

Arranging a visit

❑ Employees should try to arrange the initial meeting with new clients in the office or a public place, (e.g. a local town hall). When this is not reasonable they should obtain a telephone number and ring back to confirm the appointment. They should obtain as much information about the client as is possible. The Employee Safety database should be checked. Employees can request access to this via the Health and Safety Adviser or Corporate Safety officer. All trips outside the office should be recorded as previously detailed.

❑ Managers should complete a risk assessment or written monitoring procedure for employees making visits outside normal working hours and appropriate arrangements should be put in place. This might involve being accompanied by a colleague.

Making a visit

❑ Before leaving the office to make a visit, employees must enter details in the log, i.e. whiteboard, book, etc, held in their section. (Outside normal working hours they should have other arrangements or use Home Safeguard).

❑ If employees have anxieties about a particular visit they should talk to their supervisor or manager and possibly arrange for a colleague to accompany them.

❑ When visiting commercial premises the employee should make sure that the person in charge of the premises is aware of their presence and co-operate fully with booking in and out procedures. All health and safety measures of the Council or the premises being visited are to be complied with, whichever is the higher standard.

❑ The officer must carry identity cards and authorisation with them when making visits.

❑ The officer should assess the risk before entering unattended sites or property unless they are accompanied. They should also take a mobile phone.

❑ If difficulties arise with members of the public, employees should stay calm and attempt to calm the situation. If the threat increases they may need to raise the alarm or summon Police assistance. Employees will not be criticised for this action.

Action following a visit

❑ On completion of a visit and/or return to the office, the employee must notify the appointed person of his/her return. This is to be noted in the log or their monitoring system.

❑ If the employee has any serious concerns about the person visited they should ensure this is recorded on a Violent Incident form and passed to the Health and Safety Adviser or Corporate Safety officer. The report will be reviewed and may be placed on the Employee Safety database, so that other employees are made aware of this situation or the individual/s.

❑ If the officer goes straight home after an appointment they must telephone the appointed person and confirm that they have completed their visit.

Section Emergency Procedure

The emergency procedure should include arrangements for:

❑ The notification to the Manager

❑ Making enquiries to last known location

❑ Visit(s) to check last know location(s) if necessary

❑ Checks to home address

- ❏ A search system
- ❏ Notification to their Strategic Lead.
- ❏ Notification to Health and Safety Adviser or Corporate Safety officer.
- ❏ Notification to Police

Finally, we must remember that statistically East Devon is one of the safest places in the country to live and work. However, managers must have procedures in place to protect their Lone workers.

If advice is required on risk assessments and producing these safe systems of work please contact the Health and Safety Adviser or Corporate Safety officer

To be completed by Heads of Service

Procedures that are in place in the sections of my service which monitor the safety of Lone Workers.

Please either give brief details below of how Lone Workers are monitored in each section or attach a copy of the agreed written procedure.

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I confirm that Lone Working employees in my service have been made aware of these arrangements and their compliance will be monitored.

Name: …………………………………………   Service: ……………………………………

Outcomes

The Council will comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act, by providing safe places of work and safe system of work for its' employees. Managers will produce risk assessments and provide systems to monitor lone workers. The potential harm to lone workers will be minimised.

Who is responsible for delivery?

- The Chief Executive, the Strategic Management Team, Strategic lead and Service lead are responsible for upholding this policy within the services.
- Managers must monitor lone workers in their teams.
- The commitment of all Council employees is essential to make the policy work
- Home Safeguard can monitor lone workers who log into their system. This automated system will initiate the emergency procedure if necessary.

Performance Monitoring

This will be ongoing. Managers will ensure that active monitoring of the policy and procedures takes place and is recorded. An written Appendix 5 will be sent to all Service Leads after their managers have completed them. This will require a description of the monitoring procedures put in place for every team within their service. The Health and Safety Adviser or Corporate safety officer will monitor usage of the Home Safeguard system and review all Violent Incident report forms.

Policy Consultation

The policy has been reviewed at various stages. The following groups were consulted and this final version reflects their feedback.

- Central Joint Safety Panel.
- Strategic Management Team.
- News and Views Forum

Policy Review

The Health and Safety Adviser or Corporate Safety officer will review the Policy in August 2019

Related Policies, procedures and guidance.es

- Violence at Work Policy
- Violent Incident reporting procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Accident reporting procedure