

Item: 15

Policy and Resources Committee: 27 November 2018.

Lone Working Policy and Guidance.

Report by Executive Director of Corporate Services.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider a revised Lone Working Policy and Guidance.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That the current Lone Working Policy and Guidance was approved by Council in October 2009.

2.2.

That the Lone Working Policy and Guidance has been amended to support the overall Health and Safety Policy by providing guidance and clarification to staff and line management on responsibilities associated with lone working and to reflect structural changes within the Council since the previous revision in October 2009.

It is recommended:

2.3.

That the Lone Working Policy and Guidance, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

3. Lone Working Policy

3.1.

The Council's Lone Working Policy and Guidance was last revised in October 2009 and is due for revision.

3.2.

The Lone Working Policy and Guidance has been reviewed to support the overall Health and Safety Policy by providing guidance and clarification to staff and line management on responsibilities associated with lone working.

3.3.

The revised policy and guidance, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, has been updated to incorporate the structural changes within the Council over the last decade including updated job titles and service / section names.

4. Equalities Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with its duties as an employer and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7. Legal Aspects

There is no overall legal prohibition on working alone. However, employers have a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of employees etc including, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision and maintenance of a safe working environment, safe access and egress, safe systems of work and provision of suitable information, instruction, training and supervision.

8. Contact Officers

Gillian Morrison, Executive Director of Corporate Services, extension 2103, Email gillian.morrison@orkney.gov.uk.

Hayley Green, Head of IT and Facilities, extension 2309, Email hayley.green@orkney.gov.uk.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Lone Working Policy and Guidance.

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment.



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Lone Working Policy and Guidance

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Document Control Sheet.

Review / approval history.

Date.	Name.	Position.	Version Approved.
	General Meeting of the Council.	n/a.	Version 1.0.

Change Record Table.

Date.	Author.	Version.	Status.	Reason.
October 2018.	Malcolm Russell.	1.0.	Final.	Reviewed and updated earlier version.

1. Policy Statement

Orkney Islands Council shall take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all those affected by its work activities, including employees who may be required to work alone.

Lone working employees must take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their work and co-operate with the Council in meeting its obligations.

Suitable arrangements must be in place to ensure 'lone workers' receive adequate information, instruction, training and supervision as required. Such arrangements shall focus on the management of risk and shall be appropriate for the Service work area.

This policy applies equally to all Council employees regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment status, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership or pregnancy or maternity status. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to ensure that no groups are adversely affected in implementing this policy.

2. Introduction

Whilst carrying out 'lone work' does not necessarily imply any higher degree of risk, certain occupations and circumstances do increase the vulnerability of workers. As well as those who work alone for the majority of their working day, a growing number of staff work alone for part of the time, encouraged by increased mobility, flexible working arrangements and the development of communication technology.

Issues faced by the lone worker can change suddenly, with hazards assessed as 'not significant' during the day possibly rising to 'significant' when working alone at night. Similarly, consequences may vary in severity from relatively mild surprise to serious personal injury.

The following approach shall be followed to ensure staff safety. Service management shall carefully assess each element of the lone worker role. Staff must then be trained to understand any control measures being introduced to ensure their safety.

3. Aim

To establish a process that ensures persons who carry out 'lone working' are covered by a specific risk assessment to identify circumstances which may lead to accidents/incidents. The process is aimed at preventing such incidents, and in the final analysis, provide adequate means for obtaining aid.

4. Definition

Lone workers can be defined as: 'Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. Alternatively: 'A worker whose activities involve a large percentage of their working time operating in situations without the benefit of interaction with other workers or without supervision'. However, a small group of persons working together at a remote site can be just as 'alone' when it comes to calling for help in an emergency.

Examples of Council jobs that involve lone working (the list is not exhaustive):

- Cleaners.
- Janitors.
- Vehicle drivers.
- Teachers.
- Council Officers.
- Social workers.
- Clerk of Works.
- Home Care staff.
- Tradespersons.
- On call staff.
- Housing Officers.
- Development Officers.
- Planning Officers.
- Environmental Health Staff.
- Trading Standards Officers.
- Building Inspectors.
- Building Standards Officers.
- Librarians.
- Custodians.
- Marine Officers.

5. Application

This document applies to all lone working carried out by Orkney Islands Council's employees.

The task or role undertaken shall:

- Be safe and without risk to health.
- Have proper facilities and arrangements for welfare and first aid.
- Follow safe systems of work to preserve the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by their activities.

To ensure the above, appropriate planning, organising and reviewing of work activities must be carried out, with hazards fully addressed through the risk assessment process.

The hazards lone workers can encounter are numerous and varied but would typically include, for example, the following non-exhaustive list:

- Lone travelling on work related business.
- Working with substances hazardous to health.
- Working at height or in confined spaces.

- Electrical work.
- Aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Sudden illness.
- Adverse weather.
- Remote locations.
- Unsupervised working.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The health and safety roles and responsibilities of management and employees can be found within the Council's Health and Safety Policy.

Additional responsibilities specific to lone working are detailed below.

Line Managers should:

- Identify all staff who are lone workers.
- Inform staff of their responsibilities under the lone working policy.
- Make the policy readily available to all staff members on induction and ensuring local procedures are in place.
- Ensure that risk assessments regarding the personal safety of staff, including those working alone, are undertaken by competent persons.
- Ensure that lone workers have no medical condition that may make them unsuitable for working alone.
- Assist in the development and implementation of safe systems of work to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff.
- Review lone working risk assessments on a regular basis, taking into consideration information provided by staff members regarding hazards relating to activities, environments and individuals.
- Ensure that staff members have access to appropriate training opportunities regarding challenging behaviour.

7. Supervision

Risk assessments should identify the correct level of supervision or backup required for lone working. The extent of supervision will depend on the risk and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

Employees new to a job may need to be accompanied until competencies are achieved.

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced to fully understand the risks and precautions required. Managers / supervisors should set limits of what may and may not be done whilst working alone.

There should be regular contact by telephone or mobile phone. The supervisor / line manager / buddy should check that the lone worker has returned to base, or home, on completion of the work.

8. Legislation

There is no overall legal prohibition on working alone. However, employers have a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees etc, including, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision and maintenance of a safe working environment, safe access and egress, safe systems of work and provision of suitable information, instruction, training and supervision.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess the risks to the health and safety of employees etc to which they are exposed whilst they are at work, including lone working risks, for the purpose of identifying the measures that require to be taken to comply with the relevant statutory provisions. The significant findings of the risk assessment must be recorded and brought to the attention of all relevant employees.

9. Risk Assessment

The general principles of risk assessment must be followed.

Assessments should be carried out by suitably trained and competent employees, as identified in service health and safety policies, and supported by the Council's Safety and Contingencies section.

The staff member undertaking the lone working duty should be involved in the risk assessment process.

The risks to lone workers should be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable. Safe systems of work must be adopted departmentally to reflect the specific circumstances of the job, geography and availability of help. Specific guidance, and results of assessment, must be issued and communicated to all relevant employees – and employees must adhere to the same.

There are many factors to be considered when carrying out a risk assessment of lone working. These should include:

- Does the work present a specific risk to the lone worker?
- Is it possible for one person to undertake the tasks necessary?
- Can risks be adequately controlled to ensure the safety of a lone worker?
- What training has the lone worker had to ensure competency in safety issues?
- Has the lone worker received the training which is necessary to allow them to work alone?
- Is the lone worker physically fit and able to work alone?
- What supervision measures are in place?
- Is there a threat of violence to staff?
- Are staff expected to work alone?
- Is there a specific threat due to race, gender or creed?

- Are young or inexperienced workers especially at risk?
- Are there systems in place to take account of emergencies that may arise?
- Does the lone worker have a safe way in and out of the workplace?
- Are there systems in place for contacting and tracing those who work alone?
- Are there systems in place for those who work alone to contact a base or other staff member?
- Is the lone worker likely to encounter a service user who has been “marked” under the Policy on Unacceptable Actions and Challenging Behaviour by Service Users and Complainants.

Lone workers should not be exposed to avoidable risks. A risk assessment may show that a safe system of work cannot be established for a lone worker. If this is the case, unless suitable additional risk control measures are put in place, the particular lone working operation should cease with immediate effect.

Lone working risk control measures may include the following:

- The access to and use of checking and monitoring systems.
- Regular contact between the lone worker and supervision, including “out of hours” provision.
- Improvements to security arrangements.
- Adequate or improved lighting in appropriate areas.
- Communication systems for sharing risk information with colleagues and employees of other disciplines and agencies.
- The provision and use of personal protective clothing and equipment, mobile phones, personal attack alarms.
- Instruction, training and supervision.
- Ill health/accident etc emergency procedures.

10. Training

Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that their employees receive all relevant health and safety training as deemed necessary for them to carry out their work duties in a safe manner. Specific training and information must be provided to lone workers to enable them identify hazards and minimize risk.

11. Reporting of Incidents

Heads of Service must ensure that all accidents/incidents occurring in relation to their service’s work activities must be recorded in accordance with the procedures specified in the Council’s Health and Safety Policy and investigated as appropriate. This includes all accidents and incidents which may have occurred as a result of, or in relation to, lone working.

12. Monitoring and Review

To ensure lone workers are safe, working procedures should be monitored. This may involve regular visits by a supervisor, or a system whereby workers are required to check in at regular intervals. Where personal checks are used the duration between these checks should be based on the estimated hazard of the job. Periodic telephone contact may be adequate for low-risk working alone situations.

Whatever system is adopted, it must be possible to contact the worker at certain points throughout the working period. It must also be possible for the employee to contact their Service at certain points throughout the working period.

This policy and any documentation produced under it will be added to or modified as required and will be reviewed annually.



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated, or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Lone Working Policy and Guidance.
Service / service area responsible.	Corporate Services - Safety and Contingences.
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Malcolm Russell, Safety and Contingencies Manager, extension 2255. Email malcolm.russell@orkney.gov.uk .
Date of assessment.	15 October 2018.
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	A revision of the existing policy.

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	To ensure that all line managers in charge of lone working staff carry out the necessary risk assessments and put appropriate controls for safe working in place.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	No.
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	The policy covers all services of the Council and places responsibilities on the Chief Executive, and Executive Directors, Heads of Service and Managers to ensure that all necessary risk to the health and safety of employees who undertake

	lone working is assessed, and appropriate controls put in place.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	The draft policy will be presented to the Council's Safety Committee on 2 November 2018 and to the Council's Senior Management Team on 7 November 2018.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).	None known that is specifically for a health and safety policy.
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	No.
Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?	(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No. There is no differential impact.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No. There is no differential impact. The lone working risk assessment process should pick up any specific workplace requirements or adjustments for female or male employees who undertake lone working that would be required for them to work without risk to their health.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No. There is no differential impact.

4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No. There is no differential impact.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No. Pregnant women and new mothers are required by the legislation to be specifically considered when completing risk assessments.
6. Age: people of different ages.	No. There is no differential impact.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No. There is no differential impact.
8. Caring responsibilities.	No. There is no differential impact.
9. Care experienced.	No. There is no differential impact.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No. There is no differential impact.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	No. There is no differential impact. The lone working risk assessment process should pick up any specific workplace requirements or adjustments for employees with a disability that would be required for them to work without risk to their health.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	No. There is no differential impact

3. Impact Assessment

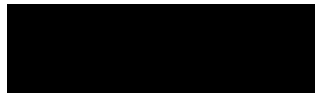
Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	No.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	Not applicable.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes.

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	No.
What action is to be taken?	Executive Directors must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare at work of employees and of others who

	may be affected by Council works. This is done in part through the production of risk assessments.
Who will undertake it?	Executive Directors, Heads of Services and Managers.
When will it be done?	The process of identifying and managing risk and taking steps to ensure the health and safety of people is continuous.
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	Through the Corporate Performance and Risk Management System; by exception reports to the Senior Management Team; by Internal Audit's on request; by inspections of Council Premises by the Safety and Contingencies Officer; Annual reports to the Council's Safety Committee.

Signature:



Date: 15 October 2018

Name: MALCOLM RUSSELL

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk