



OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

Version	Author	Details	Dates created	Date approved and ref
1	Christine McIntyre	Draft and Approved		April 2018
2	Kerry Kennell	Draft and Approved	August 2023	August 2023 23/08/27
3	Kerry Kennell	Approved	April 2026	11/05/2026 C/26/05/26.2

1. Purpose of this Policy

Ottery St Mary Town Council recognises that from time to time employees may be required to work alone. The Council is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees who undertake lone working.

This policy:

- raises awareness of the hazards associated with lone working;
- sets out responsibilities for managing lone working safely;
- requires appropriate risk assessment and control measures;
- provides guidance on reducing risks associated with lone working; and
- encourages the reporting of incidents, near misses, and concerns.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Ottery St Mary Town Council, whether permanent, temporary, part-time or full-time. It does not apply to councillors,

although councillors may provide support or act as points of contact where appropriate.

3. Definition of Lone Working

A lone worker is someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision, either during or outside normal working hours. Lone working includes office work, grounds maintenance, off-site visits, homeworking and working outside normal hours.

The following activities must not be undertaken alone:

- work by persons under the age of 18;
- work in confined spaces;
- any activity assessed as unsafe for lone working.

4. Policy Statement

Working alone is not prohibited by law; however, it may increase risk. The Council will identify hazards, assess risks and implement reasonable control measures to ensure lone workers are not placed at greater risk than other employees.

5. Responsibilities

Council / Managers:

- Avoid lone working where reasonably practicable;
- Ensure suitable risk assessments are completed and reviewed;
- Ensure staff are competent, trained and supported;
- Establish communication and escalation arrangements;
- Act promptly if a lone worker cannot be contacted.

Lone Workers:

- Take reasonable care of their own safety;
- Follow procedures and instructions;
- Maintain agreed contact arrangements;
- Report incidents, near misses or concerns promptly.

Other Staff / Buddies:

- Maintain up to date contact details;
- Follow agreed escalation actions if contact is not made.

6. Risk Assessment

Lone Working Risk Assessments must be completed prior to lone working activities, reviewed periodically, after incidents, or when circumstances change. Risks may include illness, violence, isolation, travel, equipment use and environmental factors.

7. Reducing Lone Working Risks

Control measures may include adjusted working hours, safe systems of work, training, communication devices, buddy systems and limits on tasks undertaken alone.

8. Buddy System and Contact Arrangements

Where appropriate, a buddy system will be used. Details to be recorded securely include lone worker details, buddy and manager contacts, next-of-kin, work location, expected timings, escalation arrangements and an optional code word.

9. Off-Site Visits

Before undertaking off-site lone working, staff must consider risks including personal safety, access and exit, emergency access, itinerary planning and contact arrangements. Where risks cannot be controlled, lone working must not proceed.

10. Health and Wellbeing

Employees should inform their manager of any health condition, including pregnancy, that may affect lone working safety. Information will be treated confidentially on a need-to-know basis.

11. Reporting Incidents and Near Misses

All incidents, near misses or perceived risks must be reported promptly. Reports will be reviewed to identify improvements to risk management arrangements.

12. Emergencies

In an emergency, lone workers should contact emergency services first and then notify their manager or buddy as soon as practicable. Escalation procedures must be followed if contact is not made as expected.

13. Review and Status

This policy is non-contractual and will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by legislative change, incident or organisational change.

Supporting Guidance

Health and Safety Executive guidance is available at www.hse.gov.uk.