

Dullingham Parish Council

Lone Working

Dullingham Parish Council is committed to supporting safe, sensible and proportionate lone working arrangements for everyone carrying out duties or activities on behalf of the Council. This policy is intended to help people plan their work confidently, understand the practical steps available to reduce risk, and know how to seek support if circumstances change.

This policy applies to all Dullingham Parish Council staff, councillors, contractors and volunteers who may work alone, whether regularly or occasionally, while carrying out duties or activities on behalf of the Council.

Definition of Lone Working

Lone working means working by yourself without close or direct supervision. This may include working alone in Council premises, travelling alone on Council business, attending site visits, carrying out inspections, meeting members of the public, or working from home where immediate support is not available.

The Need for this Policy

Possible hazards of lone working include:

- accidents, illness or injury that may leave the lone worker unable to summon help or access emergency treatment
- challenging, aggressive or abusive behaviour from members of the public or others encountered during Council work
- risk of allegations, misunderstandings or inappropriate communications arising where there are no witnesses present

Employer's Responsibility

Working alone is not prohibited by law. However, Dullingham Parish Council has a duty to assess and manage health and safety risks, including risks arising from lone working. Where a risk assessment shows that work cannot be carried out safely by one person, alternative arrangements must be put in place.

The Parish Council is responsible for:

- ensuring suitable risk assessments are carried out for work activities that may involve lone working
- considering whether any known health, medical or wellbeing factors may affect a person's suitability to work alone
- putting in place appropriate communication, monitoring and check-in arrangements, including action to be taken if a lone worker does not make expected contact
- ensuring lone workers have received appropriate training
- ensuring lone workers have an opportunity to raise concerns, report incidents and review lone working arrangements as necessary

Training

Training and guidance should be proportionate to the role and level of risk. As a minimum, it should cover:

- understanding behaviours or situations that may increase personal safety risks
- techniques for staying calm, confident and aware when working alone
- recognition of risk scenarios
- verbal and nonverbal communication skills
- ways to avoid unintentionally escalating a difficult or confrontational situation

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- defusing and calming strategies
- emergency procedures, including how to summon assistance and report incidents

Employee / Volunteer Responsibility

The employee or volunteer is responsible for:

- complying with this policy and any relevant risk assessments, procedures or safe working arrangements
- reporting to the Parish Council any circumstances that may require additional controls to reduce risk
- reporting to the Parish Council any incidents, near misses or concerns, whether or not personal injury has occurred

Part 2: Code of Practice for Staff and Volunteers

It is good practice to maintain professional boundaries at all times. Be clear about the nature and limits of your role. If in doubt, seek advice from the Parish Council. If the boundaries of your role become unclear, for example through overly informal contact with a resident or member of the public, this may create expectations that are difficult to manage and could increase the risk of misunderstanding.

When carrying out Council work, use professional judgement and assess any relevant risks before giving a lift to, meeting with, or visiting a resident, contractor or member of the public.

Making Visits

In order to minimise risk to yourself when making visits you should:

- plan visits in advance where possible, making others aware of appointment times, locations and expected return times. Agree check-in arrangements, such as calling or messaging on arrival and departure
- obtain relevant information before a visit, where available, including known risk factors, site conditions, access arrangements and any potential triggers for confrontation
- carry out a proportionate risk assessment for each visit or lone working activity
- Devise an exit strategy
- Familiarise yourself with the locality in which you are working
- consider transport arrangements and how you would leave quickly and safely if necessary
- carry a charged mobile phone and ensure it is switched on and accessible during the visit or activity
- Keep the carrying of valuables to a minimum
- Be aware of risks when exiting and entering a building. If in doubt, do not proceed
- Always try to position yourself between the person you are visiting and the exit
- if the person you are visiting becomes upset, agitated or challenging, pause the discussion. Explain that you will check the facts and respond later, or end the visit and leave safely if needed
- contact the agreed person if your return is delayed or your plans change
- Make a timely record of the appointment itself, including: anything significant that was said or happened; inappropriate communication; another person unexpectedly present
- Reflect upon appointments in supervision so that significant events can be fully considered and practice adjusted where necessary

Risk Assessment

Each lone working activity should be subject to a proportionate risk assessment and

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reviewed when circumstances change, after an incident or near miss, or at least annually. The assessment must consider:

- whether the work can be done safely by one person
- what arrangements are required to ensure the lone worker is not exposed to unnecessary or unacceptable risk
- who else may be affected by the activity and what emergency arrangements are needed

If you are concerned about the risks associated with a visit or lone working activity, do not proceed alone. Arrange for another person to attend, rearrange the visit, or meet in a suitable public place where appropriate.

Intruders

If you encounter someone who should not be on Parish Council premises, you should:

- make a judgement based on the time of day and circumstances. If you feel safe to do so, assess the situation cautiously and keep a safe distance
- if in doubt, seek assistance rather than dealing with the situation alone
- if you feel unsafe or believe there may be a risk to personal safety, do not confront the person or place yourself at risk. Move to a safe place and contact the police if appropriate, explaining the situation clearly
- if possible, contact the Clerk, Chair or another agreed Council contact, as appropriate
- wait for the police or other assistance in a safe place

Reporting Incidents and Concerns

Incidents, near misses, safety concerns or failures in agreed contact arrangements should be reported to the Parish Council as soon as practicable. Reports should be reviewed so that any lessons learned can be used to improve future lone working arrangements.

Formal Approval of this Lone Worker Policy

This is approved by:

Dullingham Parish Council

ADOPTED 5 November 2020

REVIEWED 3 July 2026