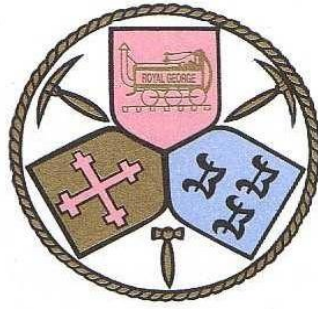




Shildon Town Council

Lone Working Policy

Adopted	11 November 2019	
Reviewed	20th April 2026	
Next Review	20th April 2029	

Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

Shildon Town Council recognises that its employees are required to work by themselves for periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff as far as it is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working. The Town Council will take every practicable step to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees, whenever they are required by the nature of their duties to work alone and without direct support and supervision.

The Town Council also recognises it has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees.

2. Definition of Lone Workers

Lone workers are those who work unaccompanied without close or direct supervision. For example, employees working alone in an office or other base or working outside normal hours.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aims of the policy are to:

- a) Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- b) Recognise and reduce risk by ensuring that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable
- c) Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone
- d) Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

4. Employers responsibilities

- The lone working arrangements of employees
- Determining the contents of this policy
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risks associated with lone working
- Ensuring compliance with the policy and providing resources for putting the policy into practice
- Ensuring that employees are aware of this policy
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to employees involved in any incident
- Making sure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly

5. Employees responsibilities

- It is your responsibility to keep yourself safe. Employees should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions
- Co-operating by following rules and procedures laid down by the Town Council
- Report all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and ask for guidance as appropriate. (Immediate Line Managers)
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of this policy
- Report any dangers they identify or any concerns they might have immediately to their Line manager
- Recognise and assess potentially high-risk activities in conjunction with the line manager before carrying out any work activity and put in place appropriate arrangements to carry out the identified task safely to mitigate risk associated with working alone
- Lone workers should report any new or unrecorded hazards or risks to their Line Manager at the first opportunity, to enable the initiation of appropriate safe working arrangements
- Employees who operate alone should inform their Line Manager of any change to their personal circumstances, including health, which might have a bearing on their safe working arrangements.
- Employees should inform their Line manager if they deviate from their expected route (e.g. if travelling to meeting or area of work) for any reason.

6. Procedures for employees working in fixed bases

- Appropriate steps should be taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible
- Appropriate and reasonable protocols & procedures should be in place to protect lone workers. (refer to added Appendix/ sectional procedures below)
- Alarm systems must be tested regularly
- Familiarise yourself with the Fire Safety procedures and identify escape routes
- *Do not answer the door to unexpected visitors - in the case of contractors, ask for identification and don't let them in until you have checked it out*
- Practice the locking up procedures
- Do not use lonely exit routes if there are safer alternatives
- If possible, avoid parking your car in badly lit areas, move it nearer to the place where you exit the building if possible
- Carry a torch and personal alarm if working late.
- Inform someone that you are working/ still at work if you go beyond your recognised working hours.
- Notify people at home when you intend to leave work and what time to expect you home
- Leave contact numbers at home so that the Town Council can be contacted if there are concerns for your safety
- Should you feel ill whilst working alone – seek help immediately
- Access to telephone and first aid equipment

7. Procedures for mobile workers working away from their fixed base

- All staff should leave details of their movements and give an idea of how long they are going to be away from base and when they are expected to be back (usually Line manager/ supervisor)
- If plans change the staff member must ring in to let their Line manager/ supervisor or main office-based staff know
- Details of venues being visited, and a contact number should always be provided
- If you work alone on a regular basis, assess any risks with your line manager and identify any measures needed to ensure your personal safety. (refer to sectional Risk Assessment)
- Avoid meetings in isolated locations,

Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

8. Prohibition of Lone Working

Certain situations require that employees cannot work alone, for example:

- Young persons under instructions and training on machines.
- Work experience. (safeguarding)
- Certain fumigation activities and other work with substances hazardous to health
- Entry into confined spaces
- Working at height.
- Scaffolding and using unsupported access equipment (e.g. portable towers or ladders)
- Locking up the Shildon Civic Hall at night
- Excavation work such as graves, drainage holes or trenches.
- Mobile Elevated Work platforms (MEWP) based work (Christmas lights, chainsaw/ tree pruning)

9. Incident Reporting

An incident is defined as 'an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage'.

In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to your line manager who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

An annual review will be carried out of identifying incidents and risk management measures undertaken and cascaded to employees.

Each section of the Council – Council Offices, Civic Hall and Direct Works will have a system to record incidents & occurrences specific to their area.

10. Contact the police

The Council is committed to protecting the staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out an assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process.

Appendix A **Council Offices Procedure/ Protocol**

- The door from reception area to main office automatically locks at all times after the fitting of new combination locking system.
- The new coded combination door to the Council Chamber to remain always closed/ locked, where reasonably practicable.
- Employees reserve the right to close the office to public if they feel uncomfortable or threatened. A notice will be placed on the front door informing the public that office is shut to the public.
- If a lone worker who has the building open and access for the public to reception and a situation occurs becomes volatile is to contact the police and other members of staff for immediate assistance, stating that you are a lone worker.
- Employees may retreat into another office, lock the door and phone appropriate authorities.
- All occurrences or situations to be recorded in the events book and a form completed which are located next to the first aid box.
- Events book to be reviewed on a regular basis by the line manager and action taken to resolve any issue if necessary.
- The use of CCTV is in operation within the entrances and reception areas.

Alarm Call-Out

- All staff attending an alarm call-out must inform a family member or another responsible person of the situation and their whereabouts. Staff must carry mobile phones with them at all times.
- If no one is present at the time, staff should make every effort to notify someone they know or a colleague of their situation and location.
- Under no circumstances should staff enter a building if there are signs of an intruder or forced entry. In such cases, contact **999** immediately.
- All alarm callouts must be recorded and logged appropriately.

Appendix B **Civic Hall Procedure/ Protocol**

A. Kitchen & Cleaning Staff (Early Starts)

- Kitchen & Cleaning Staff (Early Starts)
- Equipment Safety: When working solo kitchen staff must strictly follow manufacturer instructions for all machinery (ovens, slicers, etc.). No high-risk "short cuts" are permitted.
- Deliveries: Cleaners/Staff must re-secure all external doors immediately after a delivery is received.
- Internal Awareness: All internal fire doors should be kept closed (but not locked) to provide a physical barrier and fire protection.

B. Bar & Function Staff

- Funerals & Events: During funeral receptions or functions where staff levels are low, all back doors must remain shut.
- Internal Security: The thumb lock on the restaurant door must be engaged to prevent unauthorised access to staff-only areas.
- Internal Awareness: All internal fire doors should be kept closed (but not locked) to provide a physical barrier and fire protection.

Violence & Aggression Protocol

- Not physically intervene in disputes.
- Withdraw to a secure area if threatened.
- Contact 999 immediately if they feel at risk.
- Service must cease if a lone worker feels unsafe.
- Staff should never attempt to eject aggressive individuals alone.

D. Management & Admin (Civic Hall Manager & Deputies)

- The "Double-Lock" Protocol: When counting cash or performing consolidation, the office door must be locked in addition to the building's external doors.
- Visibility: All the Civic Hall room lights to be turned off, the blinds in the office should be closed to ensure cash is not visible from outside the room.
- Band/Performer Management: While waiting for bands to exit, Civic Hall Manager or Deputies must remain in a secure area or always maintain a personal mobile phone until the building is empty.

B. Alarm Callouts

- Visual Inspection: Before entering the building, the employee should drive/walk around the perimeter (if safe) to check for signs of forced entry.
- Police Assistance: If there are signs of a break-in, do not enter. Call 999 immediately.
- "Buddy" Notification: No employee should attend an alarm call-out without first notifying a "buddy" (family member) of their arrival and their expected time of exit.

General Responsibilities

- All lone workers must follow safety procedures and always maintain communication.
- Civic Hall Manager must ensure risk assessments are completed and reviewed annually.
- Lone workers must complete training on personal safety, emergency procedures, and risk assessment.
- Refresher training will be provided every 12 months.
- Lone workers must immediately report any incidents, near misses, or safety concerns.
- Emergency numbers must be always kept accessible.

Appendix C **Direct Works Procedure/ Protocol**

Alarm Call-Out

- All staff attending an alarm call-out must inform a family member or another responsible person of the situation and their whereabouts. Staff must carry mobile phones with them at all times.
- If no one is present at the time, staff should make every effort to notify someone they know or a colleague of their situation and location.
- Under no circumstances should staff enter a building if there are signs of an intruder or forced entry. In such cases, contact **999** immediately.
- All alarm callouts must be recorded and logged appropriately.
- It is recommended that an up-to-date CCTV system with remote access be installed and accessible via a work phone. This can help staff assess the situation before arriving on site.
- Alarm monitoring company to follow predetermined call out sequence.

Incident Logging

- Record:
 - Time of alarm
 - Who was contacted
 - Response times
 - Outcome (false alarm, real incident, fault)

Management and Staff Welfare

- To monitor work activities and working conditions to ensure all staff operate safely and in accordance with procedures.
- To support staff welfare, the use of a vehicle tracking system may be implemented. This system would identify the location of the vehicle assigned to a specific task; however, it would not necessarily track the exact location of individual staff members. Any concerns raised by staff regarding the use of vehicle tracking systems will be taken into consideration.
- All staff were required to sign an official agreement confirming that they must be contactable and answer their personal phones during working hours. The re-introduction of work-issued mobile phones may also be considered to support communication and compliance.

Typical Lone Working Activities

Grass cutting (ride-on or pedestrian mowers), Strimming and brush cutting, Hedge trimming, Leaf blowing, Litter picking in isolated areas, Landscaping tasks to name a few.

Key Risks for Ground Maintenance Lone Workers

Contact with moving blades (mowers, hedge cutters), Flying debris causing injury, Manual handling injuries, Slips, trips, uneven ground, Noise and vibration exposure, Weather exposure (heat, cold, rain), Aggression from members of the public, Delayed response in case of injury, Machinery breakdown in remote areas

Responsibilities

Supervisors / Team Leaders, Plan work to minimise lone working, Complete and review risk assessments, ensure operatives are trained and competent, Issue communication devices and PPE, implement monitoring/check-in systems, always follow safe systems of work, Carry communication equipment.

Before lone working commences

If possible, eliminate the need to lone working in high-risk or secluded areas.
Staff to inform Manager/ Supervisor of planned route or possible deviation, if applicable.
Ensure that all communication devices are fully charged. Expected completion time. Staff are aware of the phone app what3words.
Assess weather & ground conditions.
Dynamic risk assessment must be ongoing throughout the task in relation to lone working.

During Lone working operations in Parks, Cemeteries & Open Spaces.

Do not engage in confrontation with members of the public but withdraw and report any aggressive behaviour to Manager or supervisor. Regular check-ins with manager/ supervisor or other staff are advised.
If vehicle breaks down contact manager supervisor and use the what3words app to pinpoint location and relay information to Manager/ supervisor.
If lone working staff come under any sort of missile attack, then they must withdraw from the area and return to the depot and inform manager/ supervisor.
Always be aware of surroundings regarding public and monitor weather and ground conditions.

After lone working commences

All staff to return to depot at end of the working day.

Opening & Closing Park/ Cemetery gates on weekends and evenings

All staff are on a Rota and are aware of who is responsible for that evening or weekend.
Any staff change to the Rota for any reason the manager/ supervisor must be informed.
Staff adhere to the opening and closing times that are advertised.
Staff on duty to inform appropriate persons that they are opening & locking gates and what actions to take if not back at a certain time.
All staff to have mobile phones with them.
Staff to withdraw if a situation becomes volatile and leave gates open if necessary and report to the relevant authority.
Staff are to inform their manager/ supervisor of any incidents or occurrences at the earliest opportunity.
All opening & closing times to be recorded by the individual on their weekly timesheets.

In case of emergency

Stop working immediately and move to a safe location if possible. Contact emergency services (999) **and** inform manager/ supervisor as soon as possible

High-Risk Activities – NOT PERMITTED ALONE

The following tasks require at least two operatives:
Chainsaw use (especially tree felling)
Working near water (ponds, lakes, rivers)
Working on steep slopes or embankments
Maintenance or clearing of blocked machinery
Working in confined or poorly accessible areas
Grave excavation.

Training Requirements

All ground maintenance lone workers where reasonably practical will receive:
Machinery operation certification, Lone working awareness training, dynamic risk assessment training
Manual handling training & Conflict management (for public interaction)

Monitoring & Review

Supervisors to carry out spot checks
Incidents and near misses reviewed
Policy reviewed annually or after incidents