

Lone working policy

Buckden Parish Council takes the health, safety and welfare of our staff and volunteers extremely seriously. We recognise at times some employees and volunteers are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community or in isolated work areas. This policy will help us to protect our staff and volunteers, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the potential risks of lone working.

We are committed to ensuring the safety of staff & volunteers who may be exposed to risks arising from lone working activities both within and away from a recognised workplace or base.

There are a number of specific factors that need to be considered to effectively support lone workers, including:

- remoteness or isolation of the workplaces;
- level of security risk in that location
- availability of working communication channels;
- the possibility of interference, such as violence or criminal activity from other persons;
- contact with animals which could result in attacks or allergic reaction;
- contact with challenging/volatile members of the public;
- the need for de-escalation and intervention techniques;
- the potential nature of injury or damage to health and anticipated 'worst case' scenario;
- the impact of adverse weather conditions;
- the confidence and experience of the individual to dynamically recognise potential lone working risks and ability to implement strategies to respond
- implications for those people who have mobility or sensory impairments or health conditions which may affect their ability to work alone.

Buckden Parish Council recognises our duty of care to ensure the health and safety of all staff and volunteers, so far as is reasonably practicable. Associated arrangements require that risk assessments of activities (including lone working) are completed and that we introduce proactive measures to control identified risks.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy, which provides direction for staff and volunteers in relation to risk assessment and safe working practices.

Definitions

Lone Working is defined¹ as: 'Any situation or location in which someone works without a colleague nearby; or when someone is working out of sight or earshot of another colleague.'

¹ NHS Protect

Lone workers are defined² as: 'Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.'

² Health and Safety Executive

Purpose and aims

This policy sets out our commitment to:

- meet our responsibilities for the health and safety of all lone workers;
- complete systematic assessment of risks from lone working and promote safe systems of work, to reduce risks so far as reasonably practicable;
- increasing awareness of the risks relating to lone working
- support staff and volunteers to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- provide appropriate support & guidance to people who lone work on behalf of BPC;
- effective reporting and management of all incidents relating to lone working;
- comply with external legislation and regulation;
- secure the health and safety of staff and volunteers; and
- protect the reputation and finances of BPC and its residents

This policy applies to all those associated with the work of the Council. It forms an integral part of our Health and Safety Policy and complements specific management procedures and local guidance and processes aimed at supporting lone workers.

The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the council by staff and volunteers

Standards

This policy confirms our primary lone working standards:

- All working arrangements should be properly risk assessed, including lone working.
- If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, other arrangements must be made.
- Risk assessments should take account of both normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as adverse weather, fire, illness and accidents.
- Where lone working cannot be avoided, the Clerk and the Chairman of the Village Maintenance Advisory Group must ensure that staff and volunteers dealing with village maintenance on behalf of BPC are given appropriate lone working and personal safety instruction and/or training. This should be proportionate based on the outcomes of relevant risk assessment and include monitoring and re-assessment where necessary.

Responsibilities

The Council is accountable for the governance of health and safety within Buckden Parish Council. They set and approve the overall safety policy for the organisation, including the protection of lone workers.

The Village Maintenance Advisory Group is the policy owner and is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, as well as the health and safety management systems that support its implementation.

The Parish Clerk is the policy lead and is responsible for:

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Reviewed and approved by VMAG July 2025 Minute No. 14

Review date May 2026

- ensuring that safety management systems include policies and procedures for the safety of lone workers which are fit for purpose;
- advising the Village Maintenance Advisory Group on systems, processes and procedures to improve personal safety of lone workers;
- advising on appropriate and proportionate physical security, technology and support systems that improve personal safety of lone workers. Ensuring that this is appropriate, proportionate and meets the needs of the organisation and lone worker;
- ensuring the provision of competent health and safety advice in assisting managers identifying hazards, assessment and management of risks.
- advising on the proper security provisions needed to mitigate the risks and protect lone workers.

The Clerk with the Chairman of Village Maintenance Advisory Group are responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy;
- making sure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly;
- putting procedures and where necessary, safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with lone working;
- making sure that any of our staff or volunteers identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, as well as updates and refresher training as necessary;
- ensuring that learning from any post incident investigation is shared across the organisation to identify any shortcomings and to ensure that appropriate measures are recommended to negate or mitigate future failings;
- making sure that appropriate support is given to any persons involved in any incident;
- managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

Everyone is individually responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- following the policy and procedures which have been designed for safe lone working;
- utilising continual dynamic risk assessment during periods of lone working;
- ensuring good communication with colleagues and line managers;
- reporting via the BPC incident reporting system all accidents, incidents and near misses, that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others, and seeking support as appropriate;
- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy;
- reporting any dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of lone working to their line manager.

Arrangements for communication with lone workers

- The planned location of work, plus anticipated start and finish times must be agreed in advance between the lone worker and the Clerk.
 - This will usually be achieved by the weekly communication systems & processes setting out the work priorities and schedule for the following working week.
 - Where deadlines are set for these communications and processes they must be adhered to.
- Other than in exceptional circumstances, any proposed changes to these parameters must be requested and agreed by the Clerk at least one (1) full working day before the change is made. All requests and confirmation will, wherever possible, be in writing (usually email) to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of systems for lone working.
- In exceptional circumstances any necessary proposed change will be requested of the Clerk by a phone call; if the Clerk is unable to take the call then a text or email must be sent to the Clerk's work phone BEFORE the lone worker leaves the previously-agreed work location.
- The effectiveness of these arrangements for communication will be reviewed by the Village Maintenance Advisory Group at least once every 3 months.

Monitoring and compliance

Compliance with this policy will be monitored through internal audits, management checks and data analysis of the incident management system.

Training and support

The primary induction training includes lone working and personal safety training. Additional service specific training will be determined by risk assessment and provided accordingly.

Managers and those in positions of responsibility will offer support to lone workers through regular communication and discussion of any lone working concerns.

If an incident occurs, line managers will carry out a debrief and engage support of the Village Maintenance Advisory Group as necessary.

Appendices – see page 5

Appendices

1. List of related BPC policies & procedures:

- Health and Safety policy
- Incident reporting procedure
- Risk Assessment procedures
- Safeguarding policy & procedure

2. Version control

Version	Version Date	Author	Reason for amendment
V1	02 November 2020	CAG: Cllr CU & the Clerk	New Policy
V2	15 November 2023	VMAG Cllr SA & the Clerk	Reviewed & Updated policy with arrangements for communication from and with staff about day to day lone working arrangements added
V2.1	17 April 2024	Clerk and Village Maintenance AG	Clarification of communication by lone worker needing to amend arrangements in an emergency.

3. Laws and Regulations

- *Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974*
Sections 2 and 3 of the Act place a duty on employers for the Health and Safety of all their employees and others that might be affected by their work activities.
- *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*
These Regulations require employers to assess risks to employees and non-employees and make arrangements for effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of health and safety risks. Where appropriate, employers must assess the risks of violence to employees and, if necessary, put in place control measures to protect them.
- *Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (b)*
Employers must inform and consult with employees in good time on matters relating to their health and safety.
- *Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007*
This legislation creates a new offence under which an organisation (rather than any individual) can be prosecuted and face an unlimited fine, particularly if an organisation is in gross breach of health and safety standards and the duty of care owed to the deceased.