



RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

Adopted	9 th November 2022 at Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting Reviewed and Amended: 27th May 2026
Review	Annually or as required

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ramsgate Town Council recognises that some employees, councillors, and others working on behalf of the Council may be required to work alone for periods of time, both within Council premises and when working away from the office or outside normal working hours.
- 1.2 Ramsgate Town Council recognises that it has an obligation under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act) and the Management of Health & Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1999, for the health, safety and welfare at work of its Employees to minimise this risk.
- 1.3 Ramsgate Town Council also recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, and to ensure that employees, councillors, volunteers and others are protected from inappropriate behaviour when working alone or in contact with members of the public.

2. Policy Purpose

- 2.1 This policy outlines the measures that are required to manage the risk present when employees and councillors are required to work alone. It also outlines the arrangements in place for managing incidents, including those involving violence, abuse, or harassment, and the procedures for reporting and responding to such incidents.

3. Scope of Policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees, councillors, volunteers, and contractors working on behalf of Ramsgate Town Council where lone working may occur. It covers all situations where individuals work alone without close or direct supervision, including work undertaken within Council premises, away from Council premises, outside normal working hours, or in contact with members of the public.

4. Who is at Risk?

- 4.1 All employees, councillors, volunteers and contractors who, as part of their contracted duties, are required to work alone and without direct supervision. This includes individuals working outside normal working hours, in isolated locations, or in situations involving direct interaction with members of the public.

- 4.2 This policy does not set out to identify all the situations where employees and members may be at risk from working alone but concentrates on describing the arrangements that must be in place to eliminate or manage the associated risks.
- 4.3 It is important that these individuals are made aware of the outcome of the risk assessment and informed of all necessary control measures.

5. Assessing the risk

- 5.1 The Town Clerk and Technician Manager (HR and Health & Safety) are responsible for identifying and assessing the risks of lone working in terms of the likelihood of causing harm to a member of staff.
- 5.2 Consideration will be given to whether the activity is one that can be safely accomplished by one person or whether the presence of another member of staff would be advisable.
- 5.3 If a risk cannot be eliminated completely, action must be taken to reduce the risk to the lowest level practicably achievable.
- 5.4 In assessing risks, consideration will also be given to the potential for violence, aggression, abuse, or harassment, including sexual harassment, particularly where lone workers may encounter members of the public or others during the course of their duties.

6. Specific Guidance

- 6.1 The Town Clerk & Technician Manager (HR and Health & Safety) should take account of the following factors when evaluating the risk:
- a) the degree of isolation
 - b) the type of work activity
 - c) the level of supervision and support
 - d) contact or proximity with members of the public
 - e) the potential for violence, aggression, abuse, or sexual harassment
- 6.2 Where a role involves lone working, appropriate consideration will be given to the individual's ability to carry out the work safely. Any relevant health or personal factors will be managed sensitively through the risk assessment process and in line with equality and data protection requirements.
- 6.3 A first aid kit should be available at all times in order to render first aid for minor injuries should they be sustained.
- 6.4 All lone workers should have access to a mobile telephone or hand-held radio which must be switched on so that they may be contacted or to summon help should the need arise. For all high-risk activities, e.g. where activity is remote from other people, it is imperative that the employee gives clear guidance to another team member as to their location(s) during the day.

Clear procedures must also be in place to respond to situations where a lone worker fails to make contact as expected, including escalation to management and, where necessary, emergency services.

- 6.5 Panic alarms will be offered to lone working staff if they would like one, but it is not compulsory to carry one. These can be used to summon assistance in the event of an attack and will disorientate potential attackers.
- 6.6 Lone workers must contact a nominated person in the office before they finish work for the day if they intend to go directly home. If planning to work out of standard hours this must be agreed in advance with the Town Clerk.
- 6.7 Lone workers may be at increased risk of violence, aggression, abuse, or sexual harassment due to the nature of working alone. Such behaviour is not acceptable under any circumstances.

Any individual who feels at risk should, where it is safe to do so, remove themselves from the situation immediately and seek assistance. All incidents must be reported to the Town Clerk as soon as reasonably practicable.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Dignity at Work, Anti-Harassment, and related policies, which set out how such matters will be addressed and managed.

7. Duties of Ramsgate Town Council

- 7.1 In order to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, the Council places specific duties on all managers to ensure:
 - a) All lone working activities are formally identified and appropriate risk assessments undertaken, which identify the risk to lone workers and the control measures necessary to minimise those risks, as far as reasonably practicable.
 - b) Arrangements for lone working are communicated effectively and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone is explicit.
 - c) The lone worker is made aware of the hazards and understands all the necessary control measures that need to be put in place.
 - d) Reasonable enquiries are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit to undertake work alone.
 - e) Adequate supervision, instruction and training are in place and that the lone worker is competent. The extent of the supervision is a management decision, which should be established through a risk assessment process.
 - f) Monitoring of lone working practices is in place to ensure that control measures identified in the lone working risk assessment are being adhered to.

The Council will also ensure that appropriate systems are in place for the reporting, recording, and investigation of incidents involving lone workers, including those

involving violence, abuse, or harassment, and that suitable support is provided to affected individuals.

8. Duties of an Employee

- 8.1 All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own safety and to co-operate with Council procedures.
- 8.2 Employees should not knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk by working alone.
- 8.3 If a person finds that they are placed in a situation, which may be considered to be that of a 'lone worker', then they should ensure that the Town Clerk is made aware of the circumstances at the earliest opportunity and then assist in the process of identifying the steps needed to either prevent the lone worker situation from arising, or, if this is not possible, assist in developing the precautions necessary to ensure their own safety.
- 8.4 Lone workers have a responsibility to inform the Town Clerk if they have any concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of the agreed arrangements and also if there are any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or to continue to work alone in safety.
- 8.5 Employees must report all incidents, near misses, or concerns arising from lone working as soon as reasonably practicable, including any situations involving violence, threats, abuse, or harassment.

9. Risk Assessment

- 9.1 The risk assessment process will be undertaken as a collaborative exercise by both the lone worker and the Town Clerk, or a person appointed by the Town Clerk and that the agreed safe working procedures are recorded and communicated to all persons who may be required to work alone and any other employees who have a role in ensuring their safety.
- 9.2 The following outlines the steps that must be taken for a lone working risk assessment:
 - a) Identify the hazards to which the person may be exposed, including those arising from lone working such as isolation, delays in obtaining assistance, and exposure to violence, aggression, abuse, or harassment. The assessment of the risks must take into account normal and reasonably foreseeable scenarios.
 - b) The hazards may be such that the risk cannot be controlled sufficiently and therefore lone working is prohibited.
 - c) Identify all persons who may be required to work alone. Consideration must be given to an individual's ability to carry out their activities safely on their own. Some individuals may be at greater risk than others for example, new and expectant mothers and young persons or those who are new to a role. It may be necessary to make reasonable enquiries to ensure that lone workers are medically fit to undertake the work alone.
 - d) Assess whether current controls are adequate, and if not, consider what additional/alternative control measure(s) can be put in place. Examples of

control measures include the provision of suitable training and communication strategies.

- e) Record the risk assessment findings for any significant risks identified. Ensure that the lone worker is made aware of the findings of the risk assessment.
- f) Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for communication, monitoring, and emergency response, including procedures for escalating concerns if a lone worker cannot be contacted.

10. Communication and Monitoring

- 10.1 Lone workers must maintain appropriate contact with a nominated person while undertaking their duties. The frequency and method of contact will be determined by the risk assessment.
- 10.2 Procedures must be in place to respond to missed check-ins or loss of contact, including escalation to management and, where necessary, contacting emergency services.
- 10.3 Lone workers must ensure that any communication devices provided are operational and used in accordance with Council procedures.

11. Incident Reporting

- 11.1 All incidents, near misses, and concerns relating to lone working must be reported as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 11.2 Incidents may include, but are not limited to, accidents, injuries, fire, violence, threats, abuse, or sexual harassment.
- 11.3 All reports will be recorded and reviewed to ensure that appropriate action is taken and that risk assessments and control measures are updated where necessary.

12. Review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Town Clerk at the end of each Civic Year, or sooner where incidents, changes in working arrangements, or changes in legislation indicate that a review is necessary. Any changes will be reported at a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Appendix A – Lone Working Method Statement

This appendix must be read in conjunction with the Lone Working Policy.

This method statement provides practical guidance for employees, councillors, and volunteers undertaking lone working activities. It must be read in conjunction with the Lone Working Policy and any task-specific risk assessments and RAMS.

Method statement: Lone working

Staff employed in these tasks on behalf of the local council need to apply their training, manufacturer's instructions, and the outcome of any risk assessment before undertaking work. This method statement provides general guidance and must be read in conjunction with the Council's Lone Working Policy and any task-specific risk assessments and RAMS.

Carry out a dynamic (on-site) risk assessment before and during the task.

Read the appropriate RAMS for the job.

Definition

The Health and Safety Executive define lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. For example:

- People working separately from others in a building;
- People who work outside 'normal' hours;
- People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues;
- People who work at home other than in low risk, office-type work;

The definition covers staff and volunteers in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures.

Potential Hazards of Working Alone

People who work or volunteer alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available;
- Fire;
- Violence or the threat of violence, aggression, abuse, or sexual harassment;
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building for example, danger of being accidentally locked in;
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone.

Measures to reduce the risk of lone working

To reduce the risk for people working alone we carry out a risk assessment of the following issues, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access;
- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances;
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk;
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations;
- Any other special circumstances.

All available information should be considered, and risk assessments should be updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in each

situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

In any situation where an employee or volunteer is operating alone and feels unsafe, they must stop work and remove themselves from the situation immediately, where it is safe to do so, and report the incident to their line manager or the Town Clerk.

In any situation where an employee or volunteer is operating alone and an incident occurs, this must be reported to their line manager or the Town Clerk as soon as reasonably practicable, in accordance with Council procedures. An incident is any situation where the health and safety of the employee or volunteer is compromised and may include an accident, injury, fire, violence, threats, abuse, or sexual harassment.

Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. We ensure that you understand the risks associated with your work and the relevant safety precautions:

- Employees or volunteers will receive appropriate training, including lone working awareness where relevant, as part of induction and ongoing development.
- Employees or volunteers new to a role where they may be lone working may need to be accompanied initially.
- Regular contact by phone may be appropriate and we ensure that employees or volunteers carrying out duties alone always have a mobile phone available to enable them to contact the office in the event of an emergency.
- Suitable arrangements must be in place to ensure that lone workers can be contacted and that appropriate action is taken if contact is not made as expected, including escalation where necessary.

Lone workers must ensure that any communication devices provided are operational and used appropriately at all times.

Conclusion

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other staff or volunteers, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors.

The Council will ensure that appropriate measures are in place to reduce risk and that expectations have been clearly communicated to employees and volunteers undertaking lone working activities, supported by appropriate training.

All staff and volunteers, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and should take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with carrying out their normal duties.