



# **DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **LONEWORKING POLICY**

Policy Date:	November 2005
Policy:	Lone Working Policy
Reviewed:	September 2015
Next Review Date:	September 2017

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## LONEWORKING POLICY

<b>Date reviewed:</b>	September 2015
<b>Policy dated:</b>	November 2005
<b>Formal Review Date:</b>	September 2017
<b>Policy Type:</b>	County Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy
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<b>Sponsors:</b>	Dr Phil Norrey, Chief Executive John Smith, Head of Services to Communities
<b>Associated policies and guidance:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Devon County Council's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy</li><li>• DCC HS0031 Loneworking Guidance Note</li><li>• DCC HS0041 Personal Safety Guidance Note</li><li>• All work and operational related activities policies</li></ul>

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## LONEWORKING POLICY

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The Council will, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that:
- Employees who are required to work alone or unsupervised are protected from risks to their health and safety
  - The risk to employees' health and safety are identified by suitable and sufficient risk assessments and, where appropriate, by the introduction of control measures to eliminate the risks or reduce the risks to an acceptable level or within statutory requirements
  - Employees who believe themselves to be in serious or imminent danger and, for reason of their own or another person's safety, remove themselves to a place of safety, will be supported by the Council
  - Employees must be suitably trained before being expected to work alone
- 1.2 This policy must be read in conjunction with HS0031 Loneworking and HS0041 Personal Safety guidance notes. These documents detail the arrangements that must be followed.
- 1.3 The aim of this policy is to reduce the risks towards Devon County Council staff when working alone. The associated guidance documents are designed to be as comprehensive as possible but, inevitably, they cannot cater for every situation that may occur within a working environment. With this in mind, they should be used as a basis from which local procedures and systems to protect Lone Workers are developed, revised or enhanced – but which, in addition, reflects the local needs of staff and environments within which they have to work.

## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### Legislative Framework

- 2.1 Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR), places a duty on the Council to make an assessment of the risks involved with all work activities. This policy forms part of the Devon County Council's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and is intended to complement and support local and service lone working policies or procedures.
- 2.2 In some cases the law requires that at least two people must be involved in certain working circumstances and specifies the safe systems to be followed, e.g., working in confined spaces, working on live electrical systems, working at heights and some moving and handling tasks etc. The risk assessment carried out on all lone working tasks may also identify the need for two workers to ensure a safe system of work. The law may also stipulate supervision to be provided e.g.: for young people, trainees and new staff.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY AND SCOPE

#### Defined Working Limits

- 3.1 Managers and supervisors, with input from frontline staff and lone workers, are to establish clear procedures to set limits of what can and cannot be done whilst working alone. Clearly this is impossible to define in specific terms but the general precautions principle of, “if in doubt, ask your manager or supervisor”, is advocated.

#### Application

- 3.2 This policy applies to all staff working for Devon County Council including those on temporary or honorary contracts, those working mainly for other organisations but on Council premises and visitors on the Council’s behalf.

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 **Senior Management** of the business unit, school, home or service are responsible for ensuring that more specific procedures for lone working are developed where appropriate, that the necessary training is available and attended, and that required safety measures are resourced. When this cannot occur, measures such as ‘doubling up’ of staff, or delaying visits or tasks, will need to be considered.
- 4.2 They are to monitor the effectiveness of measures implemented as a result of the risk assessment process to find out how successful they have been. This will allow managers to identify those control measures and strategies that are not working, or which have unforeseen consequences, and modify them where appropriate. This can be achieved by:
- Managers checking that systems and procedures are working, without waiting until something goes wrong
  - Managers investigating all incidents and near misses so that everyone involved can learn from the experience. However, managers will not be able to investigate unless there is an effective reporting and recording system, which is understood and supported by all
- 4.3 **Line Managers are** responsible for ensuring that:
- Suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out to consider the potential hazards and risks to which the Lone Worker may be exposed. This assessment will include the task involved, the working conditions, the environment, equipment, any substances being used, the time and any members of the public that the employee may encounter or is visiting

- Assessing the physical capability of the staff member to carry out lone working in respect of experience, training, physical state (i.e. being pregnant or suffering from any medical condition that could place themselves or others at risk)
- The person concerned has received sufficient information and training and is provided with all of the necessary tools and protective equipment and clothing, e.g. disposable gloves, head/eye protection, fluorescent and/or waterproof clothing and gloves
- Emergency arrangements are in place and known to all relevant staff

#### 4.4 **Employees who work alone need to:**

- Ensure that someone knows their location or itinerary, including the vehicle being used, and their expected time of return
- Ensure they use the signing in/out arrangements at their place of work
- Inform appropriately of unexpected changes of plans
- Comply with signing in/out arrangements at all sites visited
- Always report any incidents or potential hazards. Report any breakages or damage to protective equipment
- Comply with safe working practices/procedures, giving input to updating risk assessments especially if changes are made which increase the risk

### **Partnership Working**

- 4.5 Staff working in partnership organisation premises must have the full back-up and protection of their lone working procedures, in consultation with the Council, to a sufficient standard for there to be emergency contact if the employee requests or requires it or goes missing. If the DCC lone working procedures are of a higher standard than the partnership organisations, the Council's procedures are to be followed.

## **5. AUDIT, MONITOR AND REVIEW**

- 5.1 All Services within Devon County Council must be able to demonstrate compliance with this policy in accordance with Devon County Council health and safety auditing procedures.
- 5.2 Devon Health & Safety Service is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of arrangements within services.
- 5.3 Incidents will be reported to the relevant Health and Safety Adviser and annually to the Devon Health, Safety and Well-being Board. Effectiveness of this policy can be measured by continuous low prevalence or increasingly lower prevalence over time, of incidents involving lone workers.

5.4 The review of policies, procedures and systems has been emphasised but, finally, the protection of Lone Workers is reliant upon managers, staff, colleagues and Lone Workers knowing, understanding and complying with local guidance that has been issued.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

6.1 This policy applies to all services within Devon County Council. Services must ensure that those with responsibilities under this policy:

- Are trained to an appropriate level
- Have access to competent advice and support
- Have access to the resources necessary to meet the issues identified
- Have sufficient time allocated to carry out the necessary tasks associated with this policy

## **7. EQUALITY STATEMENT**

7.1 'The Council will only commit to policies and practices which will eradicate discrimination and promote equality for all, regardless of age, gender, disability, religion and belief, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation'.

7.2 This policy and related guidance has been subject of an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment. This assessment will be integral to all future policy and guidance reviews.

## **8. REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

8.1 The Devon Health, Safety and Well-being Board will review this Policy every two years or sooner if changes are made to current legislation.

## POLICY HISTORY

Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
September 2008	Re-formatted	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	October 2008	
July 2009	Reviewed – guidance element transferred	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	July 2009	July 2011
September 2011	Reviewed and minor textual changes to reflect DCC structural change	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2011	September 2013
September 2013	Reviewed and minor textual changes	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2013	September 2015
September 2015	Minor textual changes, John Smith Head of HR; wording amendments to bring in line with DCC H&S policy	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2015	September 2017
April 2016	References to the Wellbeing@Work Service removed	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2015	September 2017