Lone Working Policy (HS_P4)

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Signed:	
Print name:	Mike Master
Position:	Chair
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Amendments:	Full review and update. Change to procedures.

Policy and procedure

1. **Introduction**

   This policy sets out the approach that the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (the "Trust") will undertake in managing Lone Working. The Trust has a legal duty to look after the health, safety and welfare of its employees, volunteers and others affected by our activities. This includes a duty of care to reduce, as far as reasonably practicable the risks associated with lone working within the wider workplace which includes our extensive estate of nature reserves and the wider countryside.

2. **Our commitment**

   The Trust is committed to the provision of a safe place of work for all employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors and those affected by or involved in our activities. We will ensure that lone workers are not exposed to additional or greater risk than any other workers. More specifically we will ensure that lone workers are identified, hazards and risk are assessed and appropriate action is taken to reduce these risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

   The Trust actively supports staff and volunteers who lone work to proactively raise any concerns they have via their line manager or primary contact. All concerns will be promptly investigated and appropriate action taken. The Trust also has a Whistleblowing policy.

3. **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for or on behalf of the Trust within offices, homeworking, nature reserves or the wider countryside.

4. **Aims**

This Policy aims to:
- Increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone / remote working
- Reduce risks associated with lone working to a practicable and manageable level
- Ensure the development of safe system of works for lone workers including foreseeable accidents and emergencies
- Comply with legislation and where relevant, good practice guidance
- Be consistent with and support the principles of our Safeguarding policies

5. **Definition of Lone Working**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines **lone workers** as *those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision*.

This can be spilt into two main groups
- People who work in fixed establishments e.g. office-based including those located on non-Trust premises
- Remote Workers working away from fixed base e.g. Reserves Officers, Wildlife and Conservation Officers

There is no specific legislation for lone working and working alone is not in itself against the law, but it is recognised that lone working can create additional risks. Legislation which applies to employees who work alone includes the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These require employers to appropriately assess and manage any health and safety risks for people working alone. If the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, then other arrangements need to be put in place.

Classifications of lone workers

To assist in determining the level of risk, lone workers have been categorised into two groups:

Category 1 – Low/Medium
- Office based staff and volunteers, home working, staff who occasionally work remotely

Category 2 – Higher Risk

- Staff who are primarily field based and peripatetic, outdoor volunteer roles where the individual is alone including engagement staff

Focus will be given to higher profile lone working activities but not at the expense of those which are judged to be of a lower risk profile.

Buddy System
A cooperative arrangement whereby two individuals accept responsibility for one another's safety by agreeing to support each other to implement the Lone Working Procedure and instigate the emergency procedure if necessary.

Lone Working Device
A piece of equipment which allows for communication with a monitoring centre which will escalate calls or concerns for a lone worker's welfare

Control Measures
The protective precautions put into place to protect individuals from the risks and hazards that exist within the workplace. They include buddy systems and lone working devices. Other common control measures can include mobile phones, radios, documented lone working procedures etc.

6. **Prohibition of Lone Working**
There are certain tasks and activities, due to their higher-risk profile and consequences should they go wrong, that the Trust has prohibited from undertaking alone:
- Work with chainsaws
- Use of any winches
- Bonfires
- Working on or near water where waders or chest waders are required or where there is fast flowing water or steep banks / drops or it is awkward to access safely
- Work at height including on ladders, mobile elevated platforms, abseiling and roof work
- Investigating incidents or situations where confrontation/danger can reasonably be expected
- Situations involving potentially aggressive people and/or animals
- Work on or adjacent to public roads, railways, powerlines, gas pipes or similar infrastructure
- potentially unstable geology or structures
- Work on cliff or quarry faces or where risk of falling rocks
- Work on delict buildings or dilapidated structures
- Work in excavations

Lone working should not occur on any task or activity where the risk assessment indicates that it should be prohibited. Where lone working is considered acceptable, the Lone Working Procedure must be followed.

The Trust actively supports staff and volunteers who lone work to proactively raise any concerns they have via their line manager or primary contact. The Trust also has a Whistleblowing policy.

7. **Risk Assessment**

Line managers must conduct general risk assessments of lone working activities using the Trust's risk assessment procedures. In practice lone working hazards will normally be considered through the Trusts systems of task-based risk assessments and procedures etc. The process should involve consultation with the lone workers to consider any potential risks. As well as hazards from normal work, hazards that lone workers may be exposed to that need to be considered within the risk assessment include:

- Accident and emergencies arising out of the work including sudden illness
- Animal attacks
- Availability of first aid equipment
- Driving and vehicle breakdowns and accidents
- Exposure to hazardous materials
- Fire / explosion / electrocution / flooding
- Manual handling
- Poor illumination
- Provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities
- Risk of violence and / or aggression from members of the public
- Social isolation and stress
- Specific risk from the workplace e.g. temporary access equipment, working near the highway, working near water
- Trespass and intruders
- Effects of severe weather - heat stroke, sunburn, dehydration, frost bite

The appropriate application of this procedure will support managers to effectively assess and manage risk. Consideration must be given to activities to determine if lone working is fundamentally appropriate. They include:

- Emergency out of hours response activities, especially in adverse weather conditions
- Dealing with unpredictable behaviour and situations
- Severe weather conditions
- Unknown workplace or area
- Use of tools and machinery

It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that all identified control measures are in place and that the employees are confident in their application and use prior to commencing lone working. When an appropriate risk assessment has been completed, a lone working system and procedure should be implemented. Managers are also responsible for

regularly checking that their team members understand the procedure and are following it.

It may be necessary for the lone worker to conduct an "on the job" dynamic risk assessment. It is in addition to, and not a substitute for, a comprehensive formal risk assessment. In some cases, it is not always possible to identify all hazards relating to a role where the working environment is outside of the Trust's control, as situations that have not been covered by the formal risk assessment may develop.

The Trust will not normally conduct individual risk assessments for lone workers except in exceptional circumstance, for example, where a medical or similar significant issue may make it unsafe for the individual. Reasonable adjustments will be made. Where its unsure if someone's health condition means they are safe to work alone, suitable medical advice will be sought.

8. **Support**
The support of line managers is essential. If staff or volunteers feel in serious or imminent danger when working alone, their manager or primary contact should support any decision they make to withdraw from the situation to a place of safety. Managers should also provide staff and volunteers with support following an incident or near miss, allowing the member of staff sufficient time to attend counselling if required and follow up and act on incident reports.

The Trust will be mindful when more general concerns are highlighted in the wider public discourse (e.g. media reports of a traumatic incident or issue), and will ensure an organisation approach to any necessary action is adopted consistent with need and good practice.

9. **Responsibilities**
The **Chief Executive** has overall responsibility for health and safety at the Trust. Their role is to champion and support the aims of this policy.

Day to day responsibility for lone working in line with this policy has been delegated, via the Chief Executive to Senior Officers and Managers.

Senior Officers and Managers are responsible for:
* the operational management of health and safety in their areas of control including robust arrangements for managing, supporting and monitoring lone working
* promoting and supporting aims and objectives of this policy
* ensuring mechanisms are in place to account for, and trace, the whereabouts of lone workers and that these systems are regularly checked

The **Line Manager** or **Primary Contact for Volunteers** is responsible for ensuring:

- the work / task is essential
- there is no reasonably practicable alternative to lone working
- the member of staff/volunteer's itinerary is known and where necessary they will be reporting back to an identified buddy
- risk assessments are carried out and a safe system developed where necessary
- suitable training is provided. For example, on sensitive areas such as in the case of potential violence and aggression and safeguarding
- Where a buddy system is used that this is suitable and robust for the situation.

The **Health and Safety Manager** is responsible for:

- the development of health and safety policy and guidance including for lone and remote working
- providing advice and training where necessary on lone / remote working
- developing the framework such as a buddying system as part of the Trusts overall safe system of work for lone and remote working

Staff members and volunteers are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves (and others), and not putting themselves at undue risks. For example, not deviating from the agreed safe working procedures
- immediately reporting any issues or concerns in relation to lone working or any other health and safety matter to either their line manager / senior or their Primary (volunteer) Contact
- Staff members must ensure their outlook calendars are kept up-to-date (duration and location) and that they have a means of contact e.g. mobile phone

Policy end

Note: Procedure has been removed and separated out from the policy