

Lone Working (both in the library and generally) & Library Staffing

Day	Currently Single/ double staffed	Current opening hours	Total hours open	Comments
Monday	CLOSED	CLOSED	0	CLOSED
Tuesday	SINGLE	10am – 2pm	4 hrs	Rhyme Time: 11am-12noon
Wednesday	DOUBLE	11am – 4pm	5hrs	Knit & Natter: 1.30pm–3pm TickTock visit: 1.30pm-2pm
Thursday	DOUBLE	2pm – 5pm	3hrs	Children’s Craft Club alternate Thursdays 3pm–4.30pm
Friday	SINGLE	9am – 12noon	3hrs	Adult Board Games Club 10am–12noon
Saturday	SINGLE	10am – 1pm	3hrs	Lego Club 10.30am–12.30pm
Sunday	CLOSED	CLOSED	0	CLOSED
Total Hours	Single staffed 10 hrs Double staffed 8 hrs		18 hrs	

Lone Working: HSE Guidance: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/employer/index.htm>

Employer’s Duty of Care: Under UK workplace health and safety laws, employers have a general duty of care to provide and ensure safe workplaces, safe systems and ways of working (policies and procedures), and the health and safety of all employees. Breach of government regulations can lead to workers’ compensation claims, fines, etc.

Lone Working isn’t inherently unsafe, it increases someone’s vulnerability. Anyone who is lone working is more vulnerable, and lack of any nearby support makes it difficult to prevent an incident. In addition, there is increased vulnerability for anyone working late evening/ early morning when fewer people are around the local vicinity, anyone who enforces rules & anyone who has access to money/ valuable equipment.

Examples of increased vulnerability for WPC staff include:

- Library staff regulate who uses the public access pc
- Office staff explain why things have or have not/ can or cannot happen
- Office staff take cash for photocopying & allotment rents
- Office staff hold keys to office safe
- Library staff take money for fines, tickets for library events & sales from the display cabinet
- Grounds team staff work with very valuable equipment & vehicles
- Grounds Team start work at 7am when less people are around
- Office staff start from 8am onwards and may work until 6pm
- Office staff lone work after evening meetings and may lock up the building
- Library staff work until 5pm one evening a week.

There's an increased risk to workers who may be injured whilst lone working. Anyone who lone works should be given first aid training including administering first aid to themselves – this is particularly important for the Grounds Team who regularly operate machinery whilst on their own.

Who is a lone worker? Anyone who works alone, or in an isolated environment where other colleagues cannot see or hear them, is a lone worker. This means that even if there are other people in the community centre, it is our view that both library staff and WPC officers would still be classed as lone working if they were the only staff in the library or office, as they are too far removed from anyone else in the building, for anyone else to see or hear if an incident is taking place. It is likely that others would not be able to intervene until the incident was over and/ or it was too late.

WPC Office

- Currently staff are unable to stop anyone from entering the office.
- The office is not secure even when it's locked.
- The 'counter flap' can be opened by anyone, even when down.
- The 'counter flap' is extremely heavy, requires 2 hands, and is not appropriate, it does not make the office secure or the staff safe.
- There is no way for office staff to lock down to keep themselves (or anyone else) safe, as even when the internal shutter is down, you can still unlock the half door and crawl in under the counter.
- Staff have no sight of who is or is not coming into the ECC. The ECC is full of 'hidey holes' and it is easy for someone to come in and hide when the front doors are open.
- A number of ECC user groups have keys to the building and let themselves in/ out. User groups do not check that the building is empty or whether there are any WPC officers or Library staff (lone) working in the ECC before they leave. When there is no ECC staff member on site, many user groups simply walk out and leave the centre wide open.
- Often there is no ECC staff member on site, even if there is a large booking and/ or the hirer does not have keys.
- The WPC office should be secure to minimise the risks to staff, both in the event of an emergency even when the office is fully staffed, and also if staff are lone working.

Recommendation:

1. **The Clerk & Deputy Clerk obtain estimates to reconfigure the office entrance/ exit to include a lockable door (eg: stable door with a counter top attached to the lower half, where both halves can be locked independently and bolted together) so that office staff are safe in the event of an emergency, and the office can be left secure when staff lock up for the night.**

Library Staff

Currently there are 2 part time library staff, who staff the library on their own for 10 out of the 18 hours the library is open to the public. They cannot lock themselves in the building as the library must be open to members of the public. When they lone work, they are also on their own whilst setting up/ down for 15 minutes at the start/ end of each day.

Volunteers cannot be used to ensure staff are kept safe. Volunteers are not staff. They have no contract of employment and no compulsory commitment; they give their time freely. They do not have the responsibility of a member of staff and that responsibility should not be put on them, including in an emergency if the staff member is rendered incapable.

We could arrange for a 2nd member of staff in one of the following ways:

- Recruit more zero hours library staff (staff expenditure would increase by £13.97 per hour +12.07% on hours worked for zero hours enhanced holiday pay x 10 of the single staffed hours per week)
- Relocate the Admin Officer or Projects Officer to carry out their work in the library on Tuesdays or Fridays so that the library has 2 members of staff. Whilst this may appear to be a cheap option, it is not.
- All WPC officers have covered the library, which can be extremely busy with a throughput of 70-80 people. It is likely that WPC officers would be unable to get much (if any) of their own work done and would spend most of

their time supporting library users. We have considered screens etc, but staff would be sat down, whilst library users are stood up, and users would therefore see over any screens. There is an expectation that if someone is sat at the front of the library, they are there to help library users.

- Relocating WPC officers would not be an effective or efficient use of staff time. Office staff are already struggling to carry out their existing workload, and whilst devolution from SBC has resulted in WPC taking on additional Grounds Team staff, the office have had to absorb any additional responsibilities, together with the additional workload involved in becoming the sole trustee of the ECC.

Cost of an additional role for 10 hours per week to increase doubled up working for all library hours would equate to Est an additional £8,143.20 per annum plus NI contributions.

Recommendations:

We recommend:

- 2. that the library is always staffed with 2 members of staff by employing additional zero hours contractors in the short term only.**
- 3. employing a 3rd permanent member of library staff to cover Tuesdays, Fridays and every Saturday.**
- 4. using the 3rd member of library staff to cover annual leave and sickness of library staff wherever possible, to avoid using WPC officers.**
- 5. Please also note the separate agenda item to regarding the library supervisor role**
- 6. Arrange First Aid training for any staff who have not received it, and refresher training for anyone who needs it.**
- 7. Review whether there are any other relevant training needs.**
- 8. Review the WPC Lone Working Policy** (which is within the Staff Handbook) and include:
 - Risks not currently identified, eg:
 - ❖ when users of the ECC leave early or leave when there is no member of ECC staff on site so the protocols ensure that the user group notifies the WPC office staff member that they are leaving and that they have checked the building.
 - ❖ The current lone working policy suggests that if a member of staff feels unsafe, they should ring the Grounds Team Manager for assistance. If the Grounds Team Manager is using noisy equipment, they do not hear their phone ring, and even if they did, this is not a fast-enough response to an emergency situation. In addition, they could be in Wichelstowe. Anywhere out of earshot is too far away in an emergency.
 - A clear acknowledgement that lone working can occur for both office & library staff when there are other people in the building but they are working on their own in either the office or the library.
 - Incorporate the library staff into WPC's Lone Working Policy – see details above.
 - Ensure WPC's lone Working Policy dovetails with the ECC's Lone Working Policy, particularly with regard to user group protocols when no ECC staff member is on site.
 - Specific reporting details for hazards, incidents & near misses and when/ how to implement corrective/ preventative actions.
 - How to call for help in an emergency & who should respond, including emergency contact details – review whether ringing the Chair is sufficient to keep staff safe.
 - Review protocols for lone workers leaving work/ the building
 - Review whether the Grounds Team should be able to use machinery other than a strimmer when lone working, and what could be done to minimise risks to a safe level.
 - How lone workers should complete their own dynamic risk assessments to make informed decisions about their own safety.
 - How managers ensure that staff are following the correct procedures – eg: 'TED' talks? etc