



# Scouts

## 1<sup>st</sup> Cowplain

# Lone Working Policy

Ref number:	V12025	Revision number:	001	Prepared by:	Laura Osbaldesto n GLV
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# Lone Working Policy

## 1. Purpose & Scope

1. To ensure the safety and welfare of volunteers and young people when undertaking Scouting related tasks without others immediately present.
2. To define when and how lone working is permissible within 1st Cowplain, under what controls, and what procedures must be followed.
3. This policy applies to all adult volunteers when acting in their Scouting capacity and undertaking tasks alone or separated from the rest of a team.

*“Lone working” is not restricted to being physically alone — it includes situations in which a person is working apart from their usual team, or with people unknown to them, such that immediate help may not be available. [scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk)*

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## 2. Definition of Lone Working in Scouting Context

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Opening or locking the scout hut before/after a meeting
- Maintenance or repair work at the hut (e.g. electrical, plumbing, painting)
- Going on a planning/recce visit for a hike, campsite, or overnight trip by oneself
- Running a session, meeting, or event in a remote location separated from the rest of the adult team
- Meeting with external persons (e.g. suppliers, contractors, parents) when no other volunteer is present
- Any other Scouting task where the person is physically or operationally separated from colleagues

Even tasks that seem low risk can carry hazards if done without immediate support.

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## 3. Policy Statement & Key Principles

- Lone working is a higher risk activity and should only occur when it is reasonably unavoidable, and only under strict controls ([scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk)).
- Any proposed lone working must be approved by the relevant lead volunteer (for example, the Group Lead Volunteer, Trustee member, Team Leader) ([scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk)).
- A risk assessment must be carried out in every case of lone working (or as part of a broader activity risk assessment) ([scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk)).
- A robust InTouch / communication plan must be in place so the lone worker can check in, confirm safety, and raise an alarm if needed ([scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk)).
- The volunteer must carry appropriate means of communication (e.g. a mobile phone), emergency contacts, and be familiar with the agreed check-in procedures.

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- The volunteer has the right to refuse or abandon lone working if they feel unsafe, or if circumstances change such that risks increase beyond what was agreed.
- All incidents, near-misses or safety concerns during or arising from lone working must be reported immediately to the line manager or lead volunteer, and reviewed.
- The lone working process should be regularly reviewed and refined with input from those who undertake it.

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## 4. Approval Process

1. Request / Proposal: The volunteer wishing to lone work shares a plan to the designated approving person (e.g. GLV) including:
  - Description of the task, location, timings, duration
  - Who (if anyone) they may be meeting, and when
  - Travel route and estimated movements
  - Communication plan / check-in schedule
  - Known hazards or risk factors
  - Mitigations and control measures
2. Review & Decision: The approving officer reviews:
  - Whether the task needs to be done alone, or whether it could wait or be done with others
  - The adequacy of the risk assessment and proposed controls
  - The volunteer's competence, experience, and fitness to do the task
  - Whether further safeguards (e.g. buddy system, supervisory checks) are needed
3. Document Approval: Once approved, the plan is documented (for example, logged in the lone-working register) and shared with relevant parties.
4. Ongoing Oversight: The approving officer should monitor compliance and review any feedback or concerns from the volunteer.

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## 5. Risk Assessment & Control Measures

When performing risk assessments for lone working, consider:

- Environment / location risks: remoteness, isolation, lighting, access/egress, security of premises
- Activity risks: working at height, heavy equipment, electrical work, hazardous materials
- Personal risks: health, disability, fatigue, adverse weather, personal competence
- Other special circumstances: meeting strangers, low mobile signal, offsite travel

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Possible control measures include:

- Scheduling the lone working at safer times (daylight, not late at night)
- Ensuring the volunteer is trained/competent for the task
- Carrying a fully charged mobile phone and backup battery
- Using apps or check-in tools (with consent)
- Having regular check-ins (e.g. every 30 or 60 mins)
- Sharing detailed itineraries with the approving officer or a designated contact
- Making sure that doors / gates / access ways can be exited safely in an emergency
- Preferring public meeting places when meeting unfamiliar people
- Using a “buddy” or supervision when possible even if not physically present
- Ensuring first aid kit access, torch, whistle, any relevant rescue or safety equipment
- Locking the premises as needed but not impairing emergency exit

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## 6. InTouch / Communication System

This is critical: the lone worker should never be without a reliable way to communicate and a process to raise alarms if needed (scouts.org.uk).

Elements include:

1. Designated Contact(s): a nominated person (e.g. line manager, Trustee member, "buddy") who knows the plan and is expecting check-ins.
2. Check-in Schedule: e.g. call or message every 30 / 60 minutes, or at agreed milestones.
3. Start / End Notifications: The lone worker must notify the contact when starting and on safe completion.
4. Escalation Trigger: If contact does not receive a check-in when expected:
  - Attempt to contact the lone worker directly
  - If no response, contact next emergency contacts, or send someone to check the site
  - If appropriate, alert emergency services
5. Contingency Plan Changes: If the volunteer’s plan changes mid-task (delay, diversion, unexpected meeting), they must immediately inform the designated contact.
6. Emergency Protocols: The volunteer should have clear instructions for how to respond to emergencies (injury, fire, break in, loss of mobile signal etc.).

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## 7. Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers undertaking lone working must:

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- Follow the approved plan and agreed controls
- Be familiar with the risk assessment and mitigation steps
- Keep their mobile phone switched on and available (with sufficient battery / credit)
- Carry emergency contact details (e.g. ICE—In Case of Emergency)
- Be alert to changing conditions; if they judge a situation has become unsafe, they should withdraw or cease the task and inform the contact
- Report any incident, near-miss or concern immediately, even if minor
- Participate in debrief or review of the process to improve future practice

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## 8. Reporting, Review & Learning

- All lone working incidents, near misses or safety concerns must be logged in the group's incident / accident register and reported to the approving officer and (where required) to Scouts' central reporting systems.
- After any event involving lone working, conduct a prompt review: what went well, what didn't, what could be improved.
- Adjust policies, risk assessments, check-in frequency, controls as necessary based on feedback.
- Annually (or more frequently), review this Lone Working Policy within the Trustees and volunteer team, updating it as the group's circumstances (hut, geography, membership) change.

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## 9. Roles & Responsibilities

- Group Lead Volunteer / Trustees: ensure this policy is adopted, communicated, and enforced; appoint approving officers; oversee training and resources.
- Approving Officers / Line Managers: assess lone working proposals; approve or reject; monitor compliance; follow up on reports.
- Volunteers / Lone Workers: comply with the policy; plan carefully; communicate; report incidents; contribute to review.

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## 10. Training & Awareness

- All volunteers should receive induction briefing about this policy, particularly those likely to undertake lone working (maintenance, planning, external contact tasks).
- Training should include: risk assessment, lone working communication tools, emergency procedures, and how to use the InTouch / check-in system.
- Volunteers should be encouraged to raise concerns and suggest improvements to the process.

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