



## **Lone Working Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Lone Working refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples include:

- A caretaker who opens and closes a hall either early in the morning or late at night;
- A groundsperson tending to green space;
- Office workers who work alone in the premises; and,
- Homeworkers.

They will be physically isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance.

1.2 This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks.

### **2. Legislation**

2.1 Employers have a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees etc, including, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision and maintenance of a safe working environment, safe access and egress, safe systems of work and provision of suitable information, instruction, training and supervision.

2.2 There is nothing specific in general legislation that prohibits a person from working alone. Section 19 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires the employer to undertake a risk assessment, and so this shall determine whether or not an employee may work alone. Therefore, in general, an employer must assess whether an employee is at significantly higher risk when working alone.

2.3 However, employers must be aware of any specific legislation on lone working, which may be applicable to an Officer's specific area of work.

### **3. Safe Working Conditions**

3.1 There are some high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present if the risks of the job cannot be adequately controlled by one person. Where this is the case the employer will establish:

- Whether the lone worker will be at risk.
- Whether there is a safe way in and out for one person.
- Whether temporary access equipment such as portable ladders or trestle can be safely handled by one person.
- Whether all logistics involved can be handled safely by one person e.g. handling of heavy items.
- Whether there is a risk of violence e.g. young workers and women working alone.
- Whether the lone worker is medically fit and suitable to work alone.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

4.1 The Town Clerk should:

- Identify all staff who undertake lone working.
- Inform staff of their responsibilities under the lone working policy.
- Make the policy readily available to all staff members on induction, ensuring local procedures are in place.
- Ensure that risk assessments regarding the personal safety of staff, including those working alone, are undertaken by competent persons.
- Ensure that lone workers have no medical condition that may make them unsuitable for working alone.
- Assist in the development and implementation of safe systems of work to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff.
- Review lone working risk assessments annually, or in the case of a change of circumstances. Taking into consideration information provided by staff regarding hazards relating to activities, environments and individuals.
- Ensure that staff have access to appropriate training opportunities regarding challenging behaviour.
- Take all reasonable steps to minimise risks identified and report any substantial risks to the Personnel Committee.

4.2 Lone workers should:

- Take reasonable care to look after their own safety and health.
- Safeguard the safety and health of other people affected by their work.
- Co-operate with the Council's health and safety procedures.

- To follow any instruction given by management or the Council
- Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working.
- Use tools and other equipment properly, in accordance with any relevant safety instructions and training they have been given.
- Not misuse equipment provided for their safety and health.
- Report all accidents, injuries, near-misses and other dangerous occurrences.

#### 4.3 Staff should:

- be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.

### 5. **Mandatory Procedures**

- 5.1 Staff working alone indoors must ensure they are familiar with all exits and alarms.
- 5.2 There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working alone.
- 5.3 In situations where staff may be working with people in relative isolation, there should be an agreed system in place to alert colleagues in an emergency.

### 6. **Personal Safety**

- 6.1 Staff must **not** assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
- 6.2 Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances this includes:
  - Locking doors where possible.
  - Letting another member of staff know where they are.
  - Ensure that all the necessary safety measures and safe work practices are adopted when using machinery.
  - Routinely check visitors' ID passes.
  - As much as possible try not to be alone with strangers, but in that event be aware of, and close to, the nearest exit or means of making contact with others.
  - Stay alert.
  - Avoid aggression.
  - Avoid poorly lit areas.
  - Have keys ready.
  - Not carry large amounts of cash.
  - Ensure valuables are not on display.

- 6.3 Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Town Clerk.
- 6.4 Staff must inform their Line Manager when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following a visit rather than returning to their normal place of work.
- 6.5 If a member of staff does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate.
- 6.6 Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.
- 6.7 Any incidents which occur whilst lone working must be reported to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.

## **7. Staff Working at Home**

- 7.1 An employer has the same responsibility for the health and safety of employees who work from home as for any other employees. This covers the provision of supervision, education and training and the implementation of sufficient control measures to protect the homeworker.
- 7.2 There should be regular contact with their Line Manager, or other designated person, if working at home for extended periods.
- 7.3 Staff working from home on Display Screen Equipment (DSE) must undertake a self-assessment of their home workspace and provide a copy to the Town Clerk. A template form will be provided for this purpose.
- 7.4 Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.

## **8. Risk Assessment**

- 8.1 The general principles of risk assessment must be followed for lone working. Assessments should be carried out by suitably trained and competent employees. The staff member undertaking the lone working duty should be involved in the risk assessment process. The risks to lone workers should be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.
- 8.2 In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, 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 or any other special circumstances.

8.3 All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary.

8.4 Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

8.5 While resource implications cannot be ignored, safety must be the prime concern.

## **9. Support and Training**

9.1 Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced to understand the risks and precautions fully. The Town Clerk will set limits on what can and cannot be done when working alone.

9.2 Any person who has concerns about the continuance of a lone activity being carried out should feel confident that they have the Town Clerk's support to terminate the task at any time. Where such incidents arise, they must be reported to the Town Clerk. Employees should ask for a debrief with the Town Clerk if they feel any issues need to be addressed following a lone working activity. The risk assessment may need to be modified and used as part of the planning process for subsequent activities.

9.3 The Council shall provide any training necessary.

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