

SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN PARISH COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

1. Introduction

The Council recognises that its employees are/maybe required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working. The Council also recognises it has an obligation under the Health & Safety and welfare at work of its employees.

2. Scope of the Policy.

The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Council's employees.

3. Definition of Lone Workers

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone worker as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". This covers all Council's employees who are required to carry out their duties for all or part of their working day working in isolation.

4. Aims of Policy.

The aim of the policy is to:

- (a) Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- (b) Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe system and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as reasonably practicable;
- (c) Ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas and that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- (d) Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone;
- (e) Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

5. Responsibilities.

5.1 Clerk to the Council

The Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- providing resources for putting the policy into practice;
- ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and the effectiveness of this policy is reviewed.

5.2 Councillors and the Clerk are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy;
- Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees;
- Identifying situations where people who work alone decide whether a system can be adopted to avoid working or carrying out tasks on their own;
- Ensuring risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- Ensuring that staff identified as being at risk are given appropriate information; instruction and training, including training at induction, updating and refreshing the training as necessary;
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents;
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident; and
- Providing a mobile phone (if staff do not have their own) and other personal safety equipment, if and where this is felt to be desirable.

5.3 Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others, asking for guidance as appropriate and completing an accident form;
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; and,
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone and
- Always maintain good communication to minimise risk

6. Guidance of Risk Assessment for Lone Working

- Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessment will be carried out for and on behalf of all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable.
This includes sites based in isolation as well as work in the community. Recommendations will be made to eliminate or to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. A lone worker's checklist will be completed (See Appendix 1). This will be used as a tool to identify if the existing control measures are adequate and if not, what modifications or additional actions can be considered necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working. Once the checklist has been completed a risk assessment will be carried out and documented in a risk assessment form

Risk assessments for site based lone worker will include;

1. Is the person fit and suitable to work alone;
2. Safe access and exit;
3. Risk of violence;
4. Are women especially at risk if they work alone;
5. Safety of equipment for individual use;
6. Channels of communication in an emergency;
7. site security;
8. Security arrangements i.e. alarm systems and response to personal alarms, and, level and adequacy of on/off site supervision

Risk assessments for mobile lone worker will, additionally, include;

1. Travelling between sites
2. Reporting and recording arrangements
3. Communication and traceability; and personal safety/security.

Following completion of the Risk Assessment, consideration will be given to any appropriate action that is required.

7. Incident Reporting

An incident is defined as “an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage”. In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone worker it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify immediate action. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or ‘unsafe’ (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

8. Contacting/Involving the Police.

The Council is committed to protecting staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout this process. Except in cases of emergency, employees should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

9. Support Staff

Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk, or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

10. Immediate Support Following a Violent incident.

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours the Chairman should be contacted. The clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

11. Lone working for the Clerk

Where the items above relate directly to the Clerk as a staff member the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Council or, in an emergency, the Chair of the Council.