

Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

The Parish Council has the same health and safety responsibilities for a lone worker as in a workplace. The council will seek to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers.

2. Purpose of this Policy and Procedure

Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working;

- Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone;
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk;
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers;
- And, encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

3. The Scope of this policy:

It applies to all staff, whether full-time, part-time or temporary workers. It does not apply to councillors.

Weston Parish Council employs one part time member of staff – the Parish Clerk.

4. Definition

Lone worker' refers to a person who works by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours.

5. Responsibilities

The parish council has a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows:

- ensure that the worker is competent to work alone;
- ensure that all lone working activities are formally risk assessed (this should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; (and emergency procedures);
- make clear arrangements for lone working and explain the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone;
- inform lone workers of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and allow them the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- maintain a list of emergency contacts for each employee;

- raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated;
- and ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

When attending outside meetings, Clerk's immediate family is informed. The lone working schedule will be completed with details of time, location, reason for meeting, who Clerk is meeting with, and time expected back in the office.

6. Staff

All staff shall:

- take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work;
- follow any instruction given by the council;
- raise with the parish council chair any concerns they have in relation to lone working;
- inform the parish council chair at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone;
- and be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, for example unanticipated periods where there is no communication.

7. Risk Assessment

The Clerk shall complete, where necessary, (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and update it as appropriate.

Completion of the schedule should also be done.

The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

8. Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced:

Below are some example strategies that can be implemented:

- keeping the office door locked when working alone;
- ensuring a colleague or councillor accompanies you whilst locking up at the end of an evening meeting;
- keeping a mobile phone (with an emergency contact saved) on you at all times;
- keeping office diaries up to date with meeting, visits, training courses and lone working details;
- letting family members and/or relevant colleagues know where you are going, your method of travel, when you are expected to return and who family members and/or relevant colleagues should contact in the event you do not return as expected.

For all Parish Council meetings, the Clerk will arrive 15 minutes before to set up. At least one other Councillor is to be on site at the same time. One Councillor to also lock up with the Clerk.

Lone working schedule to be completed before any lone meetings, Councillors will be invited to site meetings, and where relevant and/or possible one Cllr to attend.

9. Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with the parish council chair or, where

appropriate, necessary councillors (e.g. pregnancy). You can then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality of the utmost importance.

10. Reporting Incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon.

The report should include:

- a brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved;
- for any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence;
- and in either instance, details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances.

This information would then support the council to review its risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed. If you feel unsafe, unwell or become injured, call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance.

If possible, call your parish council chair, buddy or councillor or colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

Call the parish council chair if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

11. Notes

The Health and Safety Executive have extensive advice and guidance on homeworking, lone working, including guidance on the risks of lone working.