



Lone Worker Policy (Including Violence at Work)

Document prepared by: Siobhan Rumsby, Parish Clerk October 2019

Adopted by: Full Council at a meeting dated

Chairman

Signature.....

Clerk Signature.....

Next Review Date: May 2021

Barton under Needwood Parish Council recognises that staff are often required to work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW). Barton under Needwood Parish Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves.

Definitions

Lone workers are employees who, at any time during their working day, work by themselves for example in the office, burial ground, parks and open spaces or at other locations managed by the Council in isolation from their colleagues and without close or direct supervision.

Scope

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of Barton under Needwood Parish Council and to all employees permanent, temporary or voluntary.

Lone working includes:

- 1) Those working at their main place of work where
 - a. Only one person is working on the premises
 - b. People work separately from each other in different locations
 - c. People working outside normal office hours.

- 2) Those working away from their fixed base where:
 - a. One worker is visiting another agency's premises or meeting venue
 - b. One worker is making a home visit to an individual
 - c. One worker is working from their own home or office.

Personal Responsibility

Section 7 of the HSW Act requires employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

Employees should:

- Follow guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
- Report all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and ask for guidance as appropriate from the Clerk or in the Clerk's case a member of the HR Committee;
- Take part in training designed to meet the requirements of this policy;
- Utilise all safety-wear and protective equipment as provided by the Council
- Report any hazards, dangers, or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone to the Clerk or in the Clerk's case a member of the HR Committee.

An incident can be defined as an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill-health or damage.

If an employee has a medical condition which would make them unsuitable for working alone they have a duty to inform the Clerk or in the Clerk's case a member of the HR Committee. Where a medical condition is known, a risk assessment must be conducted to enable consideration to be given to routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional or specific risks.

Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff who work alone are not exposed to Health & Safety risks and to outline the steps which reduce and improve personal safety to staff who work alone:

- To increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment should be carried out for and by all employees who are going to be working alone. Consideration should be given to:

- Violence and Aggression
- Isolated Areas
- Difficult Terrain
- Sudden illness
- Building Conditions
- Substances Hazardous to Health Animals
- Vehicle Breakdowns
- Weather hazards

The list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

Responsibilities

The Council and Clerk are responsible for -

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed;
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice;
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the policy;
- Take all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees;
- Identify situations where people work alone and decide whether a system can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own;
- Ensuring that 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 this 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;
- Provide personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable, and access to First Aid equipment;
- Ensure communication systems are in place (e.g. mobile phones) to enable contact to be made with staff who have failed to make contact or return at the expected time;

Good Practice for Lone Workers

- During working hours, all staff leaving the workplace should advise the Clerk (or in the Clerk's case a member of the HR Committee) of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back;
- If working after normal hours, all staff should advise the Clerk of the estimated time of finish and contact the Clerk once they have left the workplace;
- An "out of normal working hours" phone number for the Clerk will be issued to any member of staff working alone during such a period;
- If, in the course of working away from the workplace, plans change significantly this should be communicated back to the Clerk;
- If a job is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made with the Clerk to check that a lone worker has returned;
- Telephone contact between a lone worker and the Clerk may also be advisable;
- Lone workers should have access to first aid kits suitable for treating minor injuries;
- Lone workers should be provided with personal safety equipment where this is necessary;
- Occasionally a risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid;
- Before making a site visit lone workers must have full knowledge of the hazards, and risk to which they may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks;

- Office based staff must keep the office door locked and confirm identity before allowing visitors access;
- Council has agreed that the the Clerk will be available to the public and councillors during the office opening hours as advertised on a 'drop in basis' to carry out Council business. During this period the Clerk shall have access to the means of summoning emergency assistance by phone.

Violence at Work

There are five main pieces of Health & Safety legislation which are relevant to violence at work:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSW Act);
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR);
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

The Health & Safety Executive defines work-related violence as any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

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 workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any 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.

Contacting/Involving the Police - The Council is committed to protecting its 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 the process. Except in the cases of emergency, staff 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.

Support for 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.

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.

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 Chairman of the Parish Council.