

Draft Lone Working Policy

Author: Louise Harrison, Town Clerk, Ferndown Town Council, 12 January 2021.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There is no general legal requirement saying that an employee should not work alone. Lone working is a common work situation in local government. Ferndown Town Council (Council) recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves in the community without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or out of office hours.
- 1.2 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1996 Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. Employees also have a duty of care for their own safety, the safety of fellow workers, and of any person affected by Council's services, work and activities.
- 1.3 Council is responsible for employee health, safety and welfare whilst at work, wherever this work is being undertaken. This Policy forms an assessment of the risks involved when employees are lone working and take sensible steps, which are reasonably practicable, to control any identified risks there is nothing to prevent you working alone.

2. Policy scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to any situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties of Council.
- 2.2 Lone Workers are those who work by themselves without direct contact or supervision and there are no other workers present for any period of time. It includes a person working at home or unsociable hours.

3. Aims of the policy

- 3.1 To increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone working and protect employees who are required to work alone or unsupervised are protected from risks to their health and safety.
- 3.2 The risks to employee's health and safety are identified by suitable and sufficient risk assessments of the work activities, and where appropriate, introduce control measures to reduce the risk to an acceptable level or within statutory requirements.
- 3.3 Give employees information, instruction and/or training if appropriate before being expected to work alone. The degree of information etc. will be dependent on the risk assessment.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 Council and the Town Clerk are responsible for ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working. Council and the Town Clerk will also investigate any potential hazards faced by lone workers and assess the risks involved both to the lone worker and to any person who may be affected by their work and then ensure that measures are in place to control or avoid such risk.
- 4.2 Council and the Town Clerk will involve staff when undertaking the required risk assessment process, take steps to check control measures are in place and review risk assessments annually or when there has been a significant change in working practice.
- 4.3 When carrying out risk assessments particular consideration should be given to:
- the remoteness or isolation of the workplace; any problems of communication; adverse weather,
 - knowledge of the location and/or person; the nature of potential injury or damage to health,
 - previous incidents/accidents in relation to lone workers and their work activities,
 - the level of experience and knowledge of individuals and availability of first aid facilities,

In relation to First Aid, the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 place a general responsibility on employers to provide first aid facilities. Lone workers first-aid kits are available at all Council managed/owned buildings and the Lengthsmans vehicle.

Lone workers are also reminded of their own responsibility and to be aware of where they can obtain medical assistance from.

- 4.4 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 and asking for guidance as appropriate;
 - 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.

5. Guidance for risk assessments of lone working

- Is the person fit and suitable to work alone?
- Are there adequate channels of communications in an emergency?
- Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Is any known risk attached to a client(s)?

- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?
- Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?

6. Good practice for lone workers

- 6.1 During their working hours, all staff leaving the workplace (or home) should leave details (via email or verbal communication) of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back to their line manager.
- 6.2 If, in the course of a trip away from the office, plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to their line manager.
- 6.3 If the visit is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made with their line manager to check that a lone worker has returned to their base on completion of the visit.
- 6.4 Regular lone workers (cleaners, grounds staff, Lengthsman) are provided with a mobile phone (with an ICE number – remember to check reception first) and personal safety alarm which they must have with them when on duty.
- 6.5 If staff have any concerns that they face unacceptable risks after following this Policy, they must raise them with their manager.

7. Advice and guidance for 'lone workers'

- 7.1 Employees should carry out their own 'Personal Assessment' before undertaking any activity which involves working alone.
- 7.2 Before starting work employees should be advised that, if they have a feeling that something is wrong, that they should rely on their senses/professional judgement. They must not commence the task, but report to their mine manager to seek clarification or advice.
- 7.3 Office staff that are work late in the evenings to facilitates Council meetings are advised to lock and leave the building in the company of another (e.g. a councillor).
- 7.4 When possible, staff are encouraged to use a buddy system and/or work in pairs.
- 7.5 Staff are advised not to carry valuables.
- 7.6 Staff should park in well-lit places.
- 7.7 Staff should not meet people they don't know in remote places (choose a public place).
- 7.8 Staff must familiarise themselves with health and safety procedures.
- 7.9 Staff are encouraged to tell their manager of any medical history and/or level of fitness that make it inappropriate for staff to work alone.
- 7.10 Staff are to use the 999-emergency system if they feel threatened or in danger.
- 7.11 Staff are to wear personal protective equipment if required.

7.12 Staff must report problems and incidents that occur while working alone to their line manager.