

LONE WORKING POLICY & PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

All Town Council staff are at some point lone workers. Staff working at outside locations such as the Wilfrid Noyce Centre, Broadwater Park Community Centre, Pepperpot & Godalming Museum or the Cemeteries may be lone workers by virtue of their isolation. Staff based at the Town Council offices may find themselves the only member of staff in the office from time to time. Several hazards present themselves to staff working alone, ranging from personal accident or a transport breakdown to personal attack.

It is not possible to anticipate every eventuality. Therefore, this document is only intended as a guide for staff to help them devise safe systems of working for lone working.

It is recognised that often it is necessary for staff to work alone, and sometimes away from their normal place of work, carrying out site visits, inspections and the like.

The Council as a responsible employer is concerned to take steps to increase the support and protection of its staff whilst working alone and/or away from the office. These guidelines attempt to balance the Council's need to carry on its business whilst also ensuring safety of staff.

It is expected that through adoption of the following guidelines, the likelihood of incidents can be reduced. Regardless, arrangements for support for employees are to be made available should they be required.

LEGISLATION

The primary requirement of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 imposes a 'duty of care' on organisations for all its employees.

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone but sometimes the law requires that at least two people must be involved in some types of work and specifies the safe system of work to be followed.

The **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** requires employers to assess the risks to health and safety involved with activities at work.

DEFINING TERMS

The term *lone working* within the meaning of this policy, applies to a person operating singularly, as given by the following examples:-

- 1 Staff working alone in the Council offices both within and outside *normal working hours*.
- 2 Staff working alone in other Council buildings both within and outside *normal working hours*.
- 3 Staff travelling between the Town Council office and other Council (or Joint Burial Committee) premises.

This policy does not specifically pertain to staff working from home.

A POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING STAFF

Wherever possible, lone working should be avoided, however, where lone working is unavoidable reasonable steps should be taken to ensure lone workers are not placed at unacceptable risk.

Managers should ensure that staff working alone and operating out-of-doors are supplied with appropriate PPE and communication arrangements.

Lone workers should carry a mobile telephone at all times. The telephone need not be Council supplied but the contact number should be made available to the Support Services Executive as well as their line manager.

All employees are required to take all reasonable safety precautions when undertaking their work function and this requirement is especially important when operating alone.

Managers of staff who are required to regularly work alone or externally from the main council offices are to ensure periodic meetings are held to support the health and well-being of the employee. Such meetings are also required to monitor workload and performance.

Employees who operate in a lone worker capacity should inform their manager of any change in their personal circumstances, including health, which might have a bearing on their personal safe working arrangements.

Staff instructing contractors who may be required to work alone at council premises are to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to monitor lone contractors and that the lone contractor has a named point of contact within the council, including telephone contact details.

LONE WORKING PROCEDURES & GUIDANCE

GUIDELINES FOR EARLY AND LATE WORKERS:

Any member of staff working outside normal working hours is at greater risk when there is no help available. The best solution is to avoid such lone working, either by home-working or by planned activity involving two or more people.

If it is unavoidable, sensible precautions should be taken:

The Line Manager should be aware that such work is taking place and ensure that staff know of any special arrangements required on entering or leaving the premises and making it secure. When working alone, outside normal office hours, entrance doors should be locked. Entry to the council offices outside of normal opening hours should only be permitted by prior appointment.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF WORKING ALONE DURING OFFICE HOURS:

If working alone during office hours then on no account should the front door be opened to anyone without first ascertaining, who the visitor is.

Visitors into the offices should be met in the entrance hall (in this way the visitor will be unlikely to know that there is no-one else in the office). If any visitor makes you uncomfortable, and appears unwilling to leave, then you must either lock the foyer door to prevent entry into the office or if this is not possible leave the building including via the rear exit door if necessary and then contact any other staff member to accompany you back into the building.

Any incidence of an unauthorised person gaining access to the Town Council offices should be notified to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF MAKING SITE VISITS

Always tell someone where you are going and what time you expect to return.

If you expect to meet someone then leave details of who you expect to meet, when and where at the office. Electronic Diary should be kept up to date with details of any appointments and contact information of the person(s) being met.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF WORKING AT A BASE OTHER THAN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE

Always carry your mobile phone and make sure it is useable.

Note that the Town Council does **not** expect you to take any undue risks. While the security of the Town Council's premises is important it is not more important than your safety - if at any time you feel uncomfortable or at risk either leave or do not enter the premises. If possible call another member of staff and ask for assistance - if necessary call the police.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Employees and others must be given all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone. Staff will be required to follow the safe working procedures and have awareness of emergency procedures. All employees are required to co-operate with these efforts to ensure safe working and to report any concerns or training needs to their line manager.