



Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

Horsforth Town Council will take every practicable step to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees and Councillors whenever they are required by the nature of their duties to work alone and without direct support and supervision.

The Council's employees are expected to work alone and for some staff lone working is the norm. Whilst working alone is not in itself unsafe there may be circumstances where working alone can increase risks. The Council recognises that there may be increased risks to staff who are required to work alone. The implementation of this policy should help to reduce these risks.

2. Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to employees and Councillors and for the purposes of this policy lone working is defined as any activity or function performed on behalf of Horsforth Town Council without any close supervision or with other employees.

3. Definition of Lone Workers

The Health & Safety Executive defines lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". This covers both of the Council's staff who are required to carry out their duties for all or part of their working day and evening 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 risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- c. Ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on a 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 The Council

The Council is responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working.
- b. Providing resources for putting the policy into practice.
- c. Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy.
- d. Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy.
- e. Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.
- f. Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone.
- g. Ensuring that staff are given appropriate information, instruction and training.
- h. Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident and
- i. Managing the effectiveness and preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigation and recording incidents.

5.2 Employees

- a. Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- b. Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working.
- c. Reporting all incidents that may affect the health & safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- d. Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy and
- e. Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

6. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management.

Assessments will be carried out for and by all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff who are site based but work in isolation or whose work may take them to other areas to work alone. 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 or not, and 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 (see appendix 2).

Risk assessments for site based lone workers will include:

- Safe access and exit
- Risk of violence
- Safety of equipment and individual use
- Channels of communication in an emergency
- Site security
- Security arrangements, i.e. alarm systems and response to fire alarms
- Making other organisations sharing the building aware that a lone worker in isolation is present in the building and that an adequate procedure is in place to account for this in case of an emergency
- Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision

Risk assessments for mobile (vehicle or on foot) lone workers will additionally include:

- Travelling between sites
- Reporting and recording arrangements
- 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 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.

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 the 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 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 worker 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 at the office, the member of staff should contact 999 and then the Clerk, Chairman, another Councillor 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 Worker Guidance

- a) Lone workers must carry their mobile telephone.
- b) Lone workers at the office must lock all external doors and ensure the ring doorbell is working.
- c) Employees and Councillors must take reasonable care not to put themselves at undue risk. If they feel that they would be at particular risk unless additional precautions are taken, then they should discuss this with the Chairman.
- d) Plan the visit – let someone know time of leaving, where going and estimated time of return.
- e) Try to avoid confrontation. If a situation does become heated, try to stay calm. If violence is threatened it is best to withdraw.
- f) In the event that an officer suspects that a violent attack is imminent it may be possible to use a mobile telephone or phone 999. Heated arguments can suddenly escalate to the point at which violence is used and in practice there may be little time to call for help.
- g) Ensure that you are properly trained and have the skills and knowledge to do your job safely and without risks to health. If you feel that you need extra training then discuss this with the Chairman.
- h) Try to avoid entering unattended sites or premises.
- i) The Clerk must be available to members of the public during agreed hours (by appointment) at the designated address or alternatively at other accessible premise designated by the Council. One Councillor of choice to be present where possible.

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