



Portishead Town Council Lone Working Policy

Introduction

Portishead Town Council recognises that its employees(s) are required to work by themselves for periods of time without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or out of office hours.

Under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Town Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employee(s) have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

The Town Council will take practicable steps 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.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of Portishead Town Council staff and Councillors.

Lone workers include:

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

- b) Those working away from their place of work and:
 - Visiting another organisations premises or meeting venue;
 - Making a home visit to an individual;
 - Working from their own home.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- Ensure that the 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 minimise the risk so far as reasonably practicable;
- 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;
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who must work alone
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone

Working.

Definition

The Health & Safety Executive defines lone workers as “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision”. This covers Portishead Town Councils staff, who are required to carry out their duties for all or part of their working day working in isolation.

There are a number of situations where staff may be expected to work alone. These may include but are not restricted to: -

- Working alone at home
- Meeting members of the public at their home, in the community or Council land.
- Meeting members of partner organisations on site
- Driving on behalf of the Council
- Working in the office after office hours

Responsibilities

The Council and the Town Clerk are responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice;
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed.

The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Service area Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy;
- Taking 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, 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;
- Providing personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable.

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;
- Always maintain good communication to minimise risk;
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they

might have in respect of working alone;

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)?
- Has an alternative to a home visit been considered?
- Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged?
- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?
- Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?

Good Practice for Lone Workers

- During their working hours, all staff leaving the workplace (or home) should provide written details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back to another member of staff.
- If, in the course of a trip away from the office, plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the office.
- If the visit is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made with a colleague to check that a lone worker has returned to their base of home on completion of the visit. If possible delay the visit until two members of staff can attend.
- Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague, may also be advisable.
- Staff should avoid being left on their own with someone in their workplace or leaving a colleague alone, unless absolutely necessary.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.
- Lone workers should have access to a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- Staff should never transport a child on their own and should always ensure any transported passengers are carried in the rear of their vehicle only.
- Before making home visits. The lone worker must have full knowledge of the hazards, and risks to which he or she may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks.
- Having collected all the relevant information you can plan your contact:
 - Trust your intuition and always think of your personal safety;
 - What is the best time of day to visit; assess the situation, are you familiar with the property locations? Consider the weather/visibility; seasons – will you be driving in the dark?;
 - Where is the most appropriate place to see this person?;
 - Do I need to / can I take a colleague with me?;
 - If another agency is involved can we undertake a joint visit?;
 - Ensure that someone knows where you are at all times; do not make last minute/unplanned visits;
 - Do you have a personal panic attack alarm or mobile; check it is charged;

- Know where you are travelling to, check your route to avoid stopping and asking strangers for directions;
- Park near street lighting or lit areas whenever possible;
- Reverse into parking spaces to ensure a quick getaway;
- Keep all doors locked whilst driving and keep valuables out of sight;
- It is not good practice to visit service users because 'you're passing' or your 'on your way home';
- If you do not intend to return to the office at the end of the day. Let someone know.

Lone working in the Council Offices, Halls or similar

The following points should be considered when lone working at the Council Offices:

- Lone working should be arranged with agreement by the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk or Service area Manager only;
- For staff safety, if a member of staff must work alone in the office, they may lock the front door if they wish to. A sign is on display to direct people to use the office intercom if the door is locked in office hours;
- If working outside of office hours the main doors must be locked shut.

Further Guidance is available at HSE Guide INDG 73 'Protecting Lone Workers – How to manage the risks of working alone' - www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/indg73.pdf

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