

The Lone Working Policy

The Lone Working Policy was adopted by Full Council at its Meeting held on 1 February 2022

Hazlemere Parish Council recognises that staff are often required to work by themselves.

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

Definition

Lone workers are employees who, at any time during their working day, work by themselves for example in the office, 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 Hazlemere Parish Council and to all employees, permanent, temporary or voluntary.

Lone working includes:

1. Those working at Hazlemere Parish Council Cedar Barn offices where only one person is working on site, where people work separately from each other in different locations or where people are working outside normal office hours.
2. Those working away from Hazlemere Parish Council Cedar Barn offices where one worker is on official business at another location or where one worker is working from their own home location.

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 for staff who work alone:

- To increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- To identify, provide and install any appropriate equipment to support staff safety and mitigate risks.
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that enables 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.

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 appropriate 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;
- 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 that communication systems are in place (e.g. staff should ensure they have access to a mobile phone) to enable contact to be made with staff who have failed to make contact or return at the expected time.

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 are responsible for

- • Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
- Reporting 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 Staff Committee;
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of this policy;
- Utilising any safety-wear and protective equipment as provided by the Council;
- Reporting 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 Staff 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 Staff 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.

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:

- Is the person fit and capable of working alone?
- Are there adequate methods of communication eg mobile phones ?
- Does the place of work or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there risk of violence?

Good Practice for Lone Workers

- If working outside of normal hours, the Clerk or member of the council must be informed in advance;
- If, in the course of working away from the workplace, plans change significantly this should be communicated back to the Clerk or other nominated individual.
- 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;
- 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;
- Be aware of their working environment and communicate any hazards to the Clerk;
- Be prepared to walk away from a situation that they believe may cause them danger.

Procedure for employees working alone at Parish Office –

- Ensure the front door is locked;
- Should have access to either a mobile phone or a land phone line for use in an emergency;
- Only admit a person if you recognise them and/or feel comfortable admitting them; • If possible, have pre-arranged appointments;
- Ensure that the automatic car park light is working when leaving after dark; •

When leaving a late meeting ensure a councillor/staff member remains with you, until all doors and the car park barrier are locked;

- Work from home during hours of darkness if possible. If this is not possible, arrangements to be made with the Clerk or nominated person to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place.

Procedure for employees working alone outside the office/home office –

- Leave details of where you are going and who you are meeting with a colleague
- Should have access to a mobile phone for an emergency;
- If possible, arrange for a councillor to be present on site meetings;
- Tell a colleague when you will be returning to the office or if finishing work and going straight home, text the colleague;
- Site visits should not be conducted after dark

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. In cases of emergency, staff should first dial 999 and then inform the Clerk of any incident immediately.

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 appropriate Council members eg: Chairman of the Parish Council or Staff Committee.

Last reviewed February 2022

To be reviewed in February 2024