



Burton upon Stather Parish Council

Lone Working Policy

1. Purpose of this Policy and Procedure

Burton upon Stather Parish Council recognises that some of its staff work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:

- Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working
- Identifies the need to assess the potential risks to an individual working alone
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers, and,
- Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve lone working arrangements for the future.

2. The scope of this policy

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers. It applies to Councillors when conducting work for the council in the community.

3. Policy

We will protect staff/Councillors from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the Council has a responsibility to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

The aim of this policy is to:

- increase 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 reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
- ensure that appropriate support is available to those who must work alone.
- encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

4. Definition

'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples of Burton upon Stather Parish Council employees/councillors who are Lone Workers, either on a regular basis or from time to time include:

- The Parish Clerk who works alone in the office and around the parish
- The GMO who works alone outdoors around the parish
- Councillors doing activities requested by the Council

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Councillors and the Clerk are responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff/councillors are aware of the policy;
- taking 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 and shared with all staff
- where reasonable and practicable put procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- ensuring that staff/councillors identified as lone workers are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updating and refreshing this training as necessary;
- ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff/councillors involved in any incident; and
- providing a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment, as required and identified in a risk assessment.

5.2 Employees/Councillors 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 and complete an accident form;
- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy;
- immediately reporting to the Clerk/ Chair/Vice Chair any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone; and
- always maintain good communication to minimise risk.

6. Risk Assessment

The Clerk shall complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment and update it as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such

as:

- sudden illness
- using substances hazardous to health
- faulty equipment
- travelling alone
- remote locations
- abuse from members of the public
- animal attacks.

7. Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced

Below are some example strategies that can be implemented:

- keeping the office door locked when working alone;
- ensuring a colleague or councillor accompanies you whilst locking up at the end of an evening meeting;
- keeping a mobile phone (with an emergency contact saved) on you at all times;
- keeping office diaries up to date with meeting, visits, training courses and lone working details;
- letting family members and/or relevant colleagues know where you are going, your method of travel, when you are expected to return and who family members and/or relevant colleagues should contact in the event you do not return as expected; and
- agreeing a code word with an emergency contact, which can be used if the lone worker needs assistance.
- if a visit is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made for staff to be accompanied.
- telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague/councillor may also be advisable.
- lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries – to be reported if used.
- lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- staff should never transport a child on their own and should assess any risk before transporting a vulnerable adult alone. ("A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.")
- no staff or Councillors should make home visits alone. Before making home visits an assessment of possible hazards and risks should be made

8. Health and Wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with your line manager or, where appropriate, necessary councillors (e.g. pregnancy). You can

then jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality of the utmost importance.

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 /Chair/Vice Chair will ensure that all lone workers' training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

Employees and volunteers are exempt from working alone in certain situations:

- Young persons under instruction in a fixed base (eg work experience, helping with Council tasks, etc).
- Where activities and work with substances/machinery could be hazardous to health.

9. Reporting Incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. They are to be reported to the Clerk/Chair/Vice Chair 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 also includes incidents of verbal abuse.

The report should include:

- a brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved;
- for any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence; and
- in either instance, details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances.

This information would then support the Council to review its risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

If you feel unsafe, unwell or become injured, call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager, buddy or councillor or colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

The Council is committed to protecting its staff and councillors 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 the cases of

emergency, staff should inform the Clerk/Chair/Vice Chair of any incident immediately. The Clerk /Chair/Vice Chair will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

10. Notes

The Health and Safety Executive have extensive advice and guidance on homeworking, lone working, including guidance on the risks of lone working.

Homeworking: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm

Lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm

Risks of lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf