



Lone Worker Policy

Introduction

Denholme Town Council is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and acknowledges its responsibility to take active steps to protect employees from risk as per its obligations under:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Equality Act 2010

Scope

The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Council's employees, volunteers and contractors. Whilst lone working is not in itself unsafe, lone workers face unique risks arising from the fact that they are required to work on their own for some or all of the time and thus are especially vulnerable to risk.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy a lone worker is, as defined by the Health and Safety Executive, anyone who is required to work in isolation without close or direct supervision and without the presence of, or interaction with, colleagues.

Aims of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the risks of lone working as far as is reasonably possible and practicable. The policy aims to:

- Increase councillor and staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working
- Ensure lone working risk assessments are carried out in a systematic and ongoing way
- Ensure safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce risk as far as is reasonably practicable
- Ensure appropriate training is in place for lone workers that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on working alone, including encouragement of incident reports
- Ensure that appropriate support is available to those who have to work alone

Identified lone worker occupations

Denholme Town Council has one employee who is the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer. Although the Clerk attends meetings and is in regular contact with Councillors throughout the day, administrative work is carried out alone.

On occasion lone contractors may be employed.

Town Councillors also work in isolation at times, e.g. to provide cover when the Clerk is away.

The Town Council is also responsible for the volunteers in Denholme Community Library, who should not as a rule work on their own but occasionally this may happen.

Responsibilities

The Town Council is responsible for the lone working arrangements of its employees and for the contents of this policy.

The Clerk is responsible for:

- implementing the policy by identifying, evaluating and managing the risks associated with lone working
- raising any concerns with the Council and for making recommendations for consideration and resolution
- Ensuring there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy
- Ensuring all lone workers are aware of this policy
- Ensuring risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work in to practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to lone workers involved in any incident
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents

Lone workers are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves and of other people affected by their actions
- following the rules and procedures outlined in this policy
- for reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate
- reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessment will be carried out for and by all those whose working practices make them vulnerable as lone workers.

Recommendations will be made to eliminate or to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

A lone workers' checklist will be completed (Appendix 1). This will be used as a tool to compile a comprehensive risk assessment form which will calculate risk, note mitigating controls and recommend additional actions that may be considered necessary. The risk assessment will be retained on file in the Town Council Office.

Risk assessments for lone workers will include:

- safe access and exit
- risk of violence
- safety of equipment for individual use
- channels of communication in an emergency
- site security
- security arrangements ie alarm systems
- reporting and recording arrangements
- communication and traceability, and personal safety/security

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*”.

An incident report log will be issued to all lone workers who should report all incidents to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any required action. All incidents where lone workers feel threatened or unsafe or verbally abused (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) should be reported.

Contacting/involving the police

The Council is committed to protecting staff and volunteers from violence and 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, volunteers and contractors should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately and the Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police.

Support for staff

Employees, volunteers and contractors 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 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. If an incident occurs out of hours the Council Chair 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.

Lone working for the Clerk

Where the items above relate directly to the Clerk as a staff member the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Town Council.