Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council

Lone Worker Policy

Introduction

The Council recognises that its employees are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of hours.

The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff in so far as is reasonable and practicable from the risks of lone working.

The Council also recognises it has an obligation under Health and Safety at Work (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees.

Scope of Policy

The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the Council's employees.

Definition of Lone Workers

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision".

This covers all the Council's employees, all of whom are required to carry out their duties for all or part of their working day working in isolation. This may be within the office or outside the office.

Aims of Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

a) Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;

b) Recognise and reduce risk by ensuring 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 in 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 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.

Responsibilities

The Town Clerk on behalf of the Town Council is 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 relating to lone working and that the Council regularly reviews the effectiveness of this policy;

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy;

- 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 are given appropriate information, instruction and training;

- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident;

- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;

- Co-operating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working (including by ensuring that doors are locked ("electric locked") for access to the Council Offices);

- 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;

- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identity or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

Risk Assessment

Assessments will be carried out for all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes staff that are site based but work in isolation as well as mobile staff whose work takes out into the community.

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

Risk assessments for site based 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 i.e. alarm systems and mobile telephones;
- Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.

Risk assessments for mobile lone works will, additionally, include:

- Travelling between sites;
- Reporting and recording arrangements;
- Communication and traceability;
- Personal safety/security.

Mandatory Procedures

To ensure the security of buildings:

- Appropriate steps should be taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible;

- Alarm systems must be tested regularly;

- Staff who work alone must ensure that they are familiar with the exits and alarms;

- There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working

alone;

To ensure personal safety:

- Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a backup plan are sufficient. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk;

- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety;

- Before working alone, assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Town Clerk;

- Staff must use the Lone Working App provided when working alone, giving details of their location, activity being carried out and a check in time (or length of time before checking in)

- If a member of staff does not report as expected, the Lone Working App will raise a 'panic alert' automatically and escalate the incident by contacting key staff including the Town Clerk in an agreed escalation process.

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".

The Lone Worker App captures all 'incidents' that arise and gives the user the opportunity to add further comments to lone working times without raising a 'panic alert'.

In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to their Line Manager who will liaise with the Town Clerk to identify any immediate action.

Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or "unsafe" are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

Contacting/Involving the Police

The Council is committed to protecting the 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 the 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.

<u>Support for Staff</u>

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 of even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive the appropriate training.

<u>Immediate Support Following a Violent Incident</u>

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee received any necessary medical treatment and/or advice.

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.

Review Body: General Management Committee
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Next Review: July 2026