Easebourne Parish Council

Lone Working Policy

1. Introduction

Staff working alone are often at increased risk of harm from the normal hazards associated with their work. They are also at an increased risk should they suffer an injury, particularly if they become incapacitated or otherwise unable to summon assistance themselves.

Parish Council staff are sometimes required to work alone for significant periods of time such as staff working at Parish Council locations, traveling or in their own homes.

This policy applies to employees and councillors carrying out work for the Parish Council, and for the purposes of this policy, lone working is defined as anyone who works in isolation for any period without close or direct contact with another individual or supervisor.

There is no specific law dealing with lone working, but the Parish Council has a general duty to its staff and Councillors under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and a specific duty to carry out risk assessments under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

2. Responsibilities

All parish council individuals have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows:

The Clerk shall:

- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone.
- Make clear to the worker arrangements for lone working and explain the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone.
- Inform lone workers of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place
- Maintain a list of emergency contacts;
- Raise the alarm if the lone worker cannot be contacted or does not return as anticipated, ensure that all are aware of this lone working policy and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

All staff and Councillors shall:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work;
- Follow any instruction given by management or the parish council;
- Raise with the Clerk any concerns they have in relation to lone working;
- Inform the Clerk at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone, be aware of colleagues working on their own and remain alert to unexpected changes of routine, for example unanticipated periods where there is no communication.

3. Risks

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.

4. Risk Reduction

Workers are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety when working alone.

Below are strategies that can be implemented to reduce risk to lone workers:

- 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 always saved) with you at all times.
- 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.

5. Health and Wellbeing

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 the Clerk 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.

6. Reporting Incidents

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. 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 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.
- If you feel unsafe, unwell or become injured, call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call the Clerk or a councillor to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

This policy was approved and adopted by Easebourne Parish Council on 13th November 2024 and the next review will take place in September 2028.

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