



## **Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council**

### **LONE WORKERS POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish 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 Parish Clerk, Parish Councillors, 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. This includes but is not confined to:

- One worker working from their own home
- Working alone in a workshop or open space
- Working outside of normal hours
- Travelling alone to attend another agency's premises or a meeting venue or on other business of the Parish Council
- Meeting with or making a home visit to an individual

#### **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

## **Responsibilities**

The Parish Council will, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that the Clerk, Councillors, volunteers or contractors who work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks.

When working alone the Clerk, Councillor, volunteer or contractor:

- Has a duty of care for his / her own safety and that of any other person affected by the Parish Council's activities
- Has a responsibility to follow safe working practices
- Needs to remain alert for their own safety
- Needs to ensure that they do not take any unnecessary risks

## **Guidance**

The Health and Safety Executive's guidance on the risks of lone working can be accessed at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indq73.htm>

Personal Safety Tips can be accessed on the Suzy Lamplugh Trust website – <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/FAQs/Category/personal-safety>

## **Safety Guidelines**

### **General:**

- When working alone always carry a mobile phone and ensure it is fully charged.

### **Working in a fixed base:**

- Familiarise the layout of the building including fire exits and escape routes
- Do not open the door to unexpected visitors. In the case of contractors ask for identification. If still unsure check with the contractor's employer/head office
- Have contact numbers at hand to be able to contact relevant person(s) immediately (should they feel ill, they suspect an intruder in the building etc.)
- Park as near as they can to the building if after dark
- A risk assessment to be put in place to assess potential risks

### **Working away from a fixed base:**

- Inform relevant person(s) from the Council of their movements including the time they estimate they will be away from their base and when they will return, along with relevant information regarding where and at what time, visits will be made and to whom
- Leave details of venues including contact numbers in the office diary
- Take mobile phone (or other communication device) and personal alarm
- Avoid meetings in isolated places. If this cannot be avoided, ask someone accompany you or make sure you notify someone when you arrive and leave

## **Travelling alone on Parish Council Business**

- Inform someone, for example a family member, of arrangements and of any changes to these arrangements
- Leave details of venue and contact details if possible
- Carry a torch if travelling on foot in the dark
- Carry a personal alarm and self defense spray if visiting isolated locations
- If travelling on foot, plan your route to avoid poorly lit and isolated areas if possible
- Take account of adverse weather conditions

## **Meeting with or making a home visit to an individual**

If required to meet with a member of the public, assess the situation and always consider your personal safety. Consider whether you may need to:

- Avoid meeting in isolated places
- If they are to visit your home ensure that there is someone else in the house at the same time
- Meet in a public place or get someone to accompany you
- Get someone to accompany you if a house visit is necessary

## **If faced with aggression or conflict from a member of public:**

- Seek to extricate yourself from the situation with the minimum of risk and get to a place of safety.
- Avoid getting into any kind of argument with anyone who is being aggressive or threatening, as this will only serve to inflame the situation

## **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”.
- All incidents where lone workers feel threatened or unsafe or verbally abused (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) should be reported to the Parish Clerk or Chair.

## **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.

## **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 and response to personal alarms
- Travelling between sites
- Reporting and recording arrangements
- Communication and traceability, and personal safety/security

### **Contacting / involving the police**

The Council is committed to protecting the Parish Clerk, Parish Councillors, volunteers and contractors from violence and assault. All are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process.

### **Support**

All individuals working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. They should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe and should be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response.

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 Parish Council Office.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Council to ensure that it is relevant to working practice.

## **Appendix A – Lone Working Checklist for Risk Assessment Form**

Main issues of concern

Do employees work alone?

Do employees work outside normal office hours?

Do employees meet with members of the public or with contractors in an isolated location?

Is there enough security provision?

Is there safe access to the Parish Council Office?

Do employee or contractor activities involve handling dangerous substances?

Do employees or contractors work in isolated areas?

Is there any fire risk?

Risk assessment form

The Clerk shall complete the risk assessment form under headings as follows:

- Hazard / identified risk
- People at risk
- Mitigating controls in place
- Likelihood of hazard
- Potential impact of hazard
- Risk category score (likelihood x impact)
- Additional controls required