

Lone Working Policy

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Document History

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Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers in order to reduce the risks of lone working as far as is reasonably possible and practicable.

Definitions

2.1 Lone Worker

A lone worker is anyone who works in isolation from their colleagues without close or direct supervision.

2.2 People in fixed establishments

- People working alone in premises, e.g. in small workshops, offices, kiosks or shops
- People who work from home
- People working separately from others, e.g. in some research and training establishments or community centres
- People working outside normal hours, e.g. cleaners, detached workers, project workers
- Maintenance or repair staff

2.3 Mobile workers working away from their fixed base

- Workers involved in construction, maintenance and cleaning work, electrical repairs or painting and decorating
- Agricultural and forestry or outdoor workers
- Service workers, support workers or befrienders

Scope

3.1 Own Employees

This Policy applies to all employees permanent or temporary or voluntary of Gainsborough Town Council and includes any agency, or visiting professionals employed to provide services.

3.2 Contractors

This Policy also applies to participating Independent Contractors and their employed staff.

Legal Requirements

4.1 Applicable Laws

Gainsborough Town Council has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of their employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 places a duty on employers, to identify significant risks within the organisation and implement suitable risk treatments, to reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

4.2 Places of Work

Where workers are on premises where someone other than their employer has control, their safety is the responsibility of the main occupier of those premises provided that the occupier is also an employer or conducting an undertaking there. (S.3 (2) of the Act).

Where an employer does not exercise control over the premises it is more difficult to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Regulation 10 of MHSWR requires employers (including self-employed i.e. Independent Contractors) to provide comprehensible information on health and safety for others who are working on or visiting their premises.

4.3 Personal responsibility

Section 7 of the act requires employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

This policy and supporting training [note: training is not dealt with in this policy and will require separate thought] should ensure that such persons do not take short cuts or employ dangerous practices but that they are instructed to consider and identify potential hazards and to implement a form of risk assessment to ensure the safety of themselves and any of other persons they may be working with.

4.4 Working outside normal hours

Where a person is required or requests to work after normal working hours and alone, it is necessary to identify the degree of risk in assessing whether or not this is a safe practice. Reg 3 of MHSWR states that employers must make a “suitable and sufficient” assessment of any risks to the health and safety of their employees. Any such risks identified are likely to be greater for lone workers. These findings must be recorded on the risk assessment documents.

Policy Aims

5.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff who work alone are not exposed to risks to their Health and Safety and to outline the steps to reduce and improve personal safety to staff who work alone.

Objectives

6.1 The objectives of this policy are to ensure:

1. Lone workers are identified.
2. That risks inherent in lone worker situations are assessed and suitable precautionary measures taken
3. There is a local safe system of work which:
 - records the whereabouts of lone workers
 - tracks the movement of lone workers
 - follows an agreed system for locating staff who deviate from their expected movement pattern
 - identifies when lone working is no longer appropriate

6.2 Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is the overall process of performing a systematic written risk analysis and risk evaluation in order to identify methods to control the severity of the risk.

Risks to be assessed during the process include:

- Violence and Aggression.
- Isolated areas/ difficult terrain.
- Sudden illness
- Building condition
- Substances Hazardous to Health
- Animals
- Vehicle breakdowns
- Weather hazards

This list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

6.3 Safe System of Work

A method of working which addresses risks that cannot be controlled in any other way. Safe systems of work are dynamic systems, which means they should be constantly monitored to identify weakness and improve methods of controlling the risk. Localised protocols such as a “buddy system” for safe working should be considered and encouraged.

Systems of work should be designed to reduce the need for lone working where possible. If this is not possible, safe work practices should be implemented, in line with the findings of a general risk assessment, to avoid or minimise the possibility of abuse. Radios, personnel attack alarms, mobile phones and physical barriers should only be used in conjunction with safe practice.

Organisational responsibilities

Responsibilities for the health and safety of lone workers are allocated as follows:

7.1 Senior Management

Gainsborough Town Council

1. Ensure the management of Lone Working within the Organisation is adhered to under the Health and Safety Policy.
2. Maintain a log of the locations of employees considered to be lone workers
3. Maintain contact with staff that work alone, both internally and externally.
4. Implement systems to identify those staff who do not report or return at the expected time.
5. Ensure systems are in place to take action to contact / locate staff that have failed to make contact or return at the expected time.
6. Raise the appropriate level of alert / alarm and inform the manager on call if staff cannot be contacted / located within 1 hour after the expected time of contact or return.
7. If staff cannot be located, then contacting the police.

8. Monitoring feedback from the organisation on lone worker risk and seeking to improve processes.
9. Monitor and update this policy as appropriate.

7.2 Other Managers

Town Clerk and Operations Manager.

1. To identify all staff likely to work regularly in isolation from their colleagues.
2. To assess the risks that such lone working presents.
3. Having assessed the risks, to decide whether lone working is reasonable or not in these situations.
4. To report to the line Manager any situation where the risks cannot be controlled.
5. If lone working is considered reasonable, then the manager must ensure that suitable precautions are in place, such as:
 - Mobile telephones/radios
 - Team working
 - Giving information on known risks
 - Reporting in procedures
 - Recording identified risks on the local risk register.
6. To ensure all staff that work alone are made aware of this policy.
7. To support staff who are victims of violence and aggression through the staff counselling service and in line with the organisational policy.

7.3 Employees

1. Identify any activity carried out by them which will involve them working alone for more than one hour.
2. Comply with any precautionary measures including guidelines laid down by managers such as a “buddy system”.
3. Provide any of the following information that may be needed to set up a safe system of work:
 - Working alone at the beginning and end of the normal working hours
 - Daily out of base work place
 - Detail of the make, model, colour and registration number of the vehicle being used.
 - Notifying any changes to the daily out of base work plan (i.e. ad-hoc or “spur of the moment” visits).

- Informing key person (“buddy”) on return to base.
4. Report to their managers any unsafe or potentially unsafe situations, and to report incidents in which violence or aggression or threats using the incident reporting procedure.
 5. Take reasonable care for their own safety and not expose themselves to unnecessary risk.
 6. To attend any training provided.

Financial implications

8.1 Costs associated with the Lone Worker Policy and it’s implementation are the responsibility of Gainsborough Town Council. This includes:

- Cost of monitoring and alerting systems
- Mobile phone costs
- Training
- Risk assessment
- Doubling-up on staff where needed for appointments

8.2 Costs that Gainsborough Town Council does not meet include:

- Parking fines

Neither list is intended to be exhaustive. If in doubt, seek advice from the Town Clerk.