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**SOUTHBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

**LONE WORKER POLICY**

**ADOPTED February 2024**

**LONE WORKER POLICY**

**Purpose of this policy and procedure**

Southbourne Parish Council recognises that some staff work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers.

This document

* Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working,
* Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone,
* Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk,
* Provides appropriate support to lone workers, and,
* Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

**The scope of this policy**

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time, temporary or contractual. It does not apply to councillors.

**Policy**

Southbourne Parish Council will protect staff from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the council’s policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

**Definition**

‘Lone Worker’ refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples include:

* A caretaker who opens and closes a hall either early in the morning or late at night
* A groundsman tending to green space
* Cemetery Co-ordinator when visiting the cemetery
* Office workers who work alone in the premises,
* Homeworkers.

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own.

**Responsibilities**

All staff have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues.

Employees will be required to follow the safe working procedures devised including:

* When working alone e.g., in an isolated area, wherever possible take a chaperone and ensure someone is aware of your presence
* or a building secure entrances, ensure someone is aware of your presence
* Check that work being done has been subject to a risk assessment and check the assessment yourself
* If possible and arranged beforehand keep in regular contact with someone else. Use a mobile phone to call into the office every couple of hours indicating your movements
* Do not put yourself at risk. If you feel unsafe and any stage leave the site and discuss the situation with your line manager
* Report all accidents, injuries, near-misses and dangerous occurrences to your line manager

Staff

* To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.
* maintain and share up to date contact details (see below)

**Risk Assessments**

Lone Working Risk Assessments to be completed prior to every lone working activity where relevant and updated as appropriate. In the case of the Cemetery Coordinator a lone worker plan will be put in place and reviewed regularly. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

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
* Faulty equipment
* Travelling alone
* Remote locations
* Abuse from members of the public
* Animal attacks

**Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced**

Where there is regular or anticipated loan working, the Council will devise and implement a lone working plan that meets the needs and risks of their particular circumstances. (i.e. Cemetery Coordinator). The plan should be proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. This should be communicated to all relevant staff and where appropriate, councillors.

Relevant details about your lone working, may include;

* where you are going (address or area if there is no address)
* details of the purpose (i.e., preparing the hall, grass cutting, meeting)
* contact details of anyone you intend to meet (any additional contact details for the location you are visiting)
* your mode of transport
* when you are expected to return

**Health and wellbeing**

In order 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 your line manager or specific councillors. This includes 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.

**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 of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should be captured, 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, this might also include recording 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. This information would then support us to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager or councillor or colleague to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.