



## **ALDERHOLT PARISH COUNCIL LONE WORKING POLICY**

### **Purpose of this Policy and Procedure**

The Council recognises that some of our 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 or temporary workers. It forms an integral part of Alderholt Parish Council's Health and Safety Policy. The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of our staff.

### **Policy**

We 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 and to make sure appropriate support is available.

### **Definition**

Lone working is defined by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as "work carried out by people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision".

This therefore includes:

- Office workers who work alone in the premises, and,
- Homeworkers.

### **Responsibilities**

The Council has a responsibility for the health and safety of staff. The key responsibilities are as follows:

## Council

- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone
- Ensure that all lone working activities must be formally risk assessed. This should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures
- Arrangements for lone working must be made clear to staff and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained
- Lone workers must be informed of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment
- Must raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated
- Maintain a list of emergency contacts for each employee
- Must ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.
- Manage the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording of incidents
- A review of the policy shall be undertaken each year (or as appropriate) and necessary amendments will be undertaken by the Clerk and reported to the full Council for approval.

## Staff

- Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work
- To follow any rules and procedures designed for safe working
- Raise any concerns they have in relation to lone working
- Knowing what to do if threatened verbally or physically
- Ensure a record is made of the date, time and location of any incident (see Reporting Incidents below)
- Inform the Council at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone
- Know where the first aid box is located
- To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.
- Call their line manager or councillor if their plans change because they feel unwell or if they have a domestic emergency when working alone
- If arranging to meet members of the public or contractors outside of the office, a work colleague or Councillor must be informed.
- When working, ensure all external doors (including stage doors) are locked to prevent any uninvited visitors/intruders (this includes locking office door when using hall facilities).
- When locking up office and car park after an evening meeting ensure two people are present.

## **Risk Assessments**

Risk Assessments must be carried out in all areas of work where working alone poses an actual or potential risk to staff. The risk assessment will involve identifying all potential dangers and the risks associated with specific work tasks or activities.

The Council must complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity and updated as appropriate. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors. If a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, other arrangements must be put in place.

Factors to consider when completing the risk assessment should include the following:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker
- Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person
- Is the lone worker medically fit and able to work alone
- Identify any training needs to ensure the lone worker is competent to carry out the work task/activity
- Is there a risk of abuse from members of the public
- What do to in the event of the lone worker becoming ill or having an accident

## **Health and Wellbeing**

In order to ensure their personal safety, it is important that staff share any details of any aspects of their health that could lead to increased risk with their line manager or specific councillors. This includes pregnancy. It will then be possible to jointly plan to mitigate any potential risks caused by their circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with staff 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 staff 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 enable the risk assessment process to be adequately reviewed and see if any additional measures are needed.

If staff feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured call the emergency services if immediate assistance is needed. If possible, staff to call their line manager or councillor to let them know (or ask someone to do so on their behalf).

Adopted: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025 (Min:171/25) replaces previous policy adopted in 2015