Wortwell Parish Council
Lone Worker Policy

Adopted: 27.2.18
Review date: 27.2.19

There are circumstances where the Clerk, Parish Councillors and volunteers are asked to, or have to work alone. While most of these circumstances will not present a risk to the person, it is important that all steps are taken to minimise risk and ensure an individual's safety.

The guidelines contained within this document set out ways of managing safe lone working, and gives recommendations for precautions to take in many common circumstances, i.e. Illness, violence

Definitions:

Lone Worker - Any person who is allowed to work alone at any time, day or night, in or out of doors for significant periods of time.

*Violence at Work - An incident or behaviour that abuses, threatens or assaults a member of employees in circumstances arising out of the course of their employment or activity, and results in physical, mental or emotional damage.

Violence - includes:

- Physical attack - whether or not actual injury and/or pain occurs.
- Sexual attack.
- Other aggressive behaviour directed towards a member of employees causing fear or concern e.g. verbal abuse, threats and intimidating behaviour.
- Damage to personal property.

Clerk, Parish Councillors and volunteers may be faced with intimidation or threatening behaviour resulting in emotional distress which is equally as frightening and harmful as physical assault.

General Advice

The following guidelines are designed to offer general advice on planning for safe lone working, procedures if a lone worker becomes ill whilst working alone, how to avoid violence and how to deal with potentially difficult situations.

It is recognised that it is not possible to cover every eventuality as the situations in which illness and/or violence may occur are too diverse. All personnel must follow these guidelines and safe systems of work that may be introduced following any risk assessment.

In any occupation where there is lone working and dealing with members of the public or clients, illness and/or difficult situations can arise.

The Parish Council is committed to training and developing all employees and councillors in dealing with lone working situations.

Avoid Risk

- Avoid working whilst unwell or in confrontational situations.
- Never interview a person alone if they have a history of violent or aggressive behaviour.
- Trust your intuition, if you feel scared or uneasy, don't ignore the warning, act on it.
- Learn to recognise body language.
- When going out from the workplace, have arrangements in place to leave written details of your movements and when you expect to be back. (eg. diary)
- Always report any incident, no matter how trivial it may seem. Not doing so could put others at risk.

Reducing the Risk

When working in the parish, especially outside normal working hours, the Parish Council must ensure that there are, in place, procedures for lone workers, so they do so in relative safety. The following points are guidance for reducing risk.

Employees:

- Security arrangements will be of a high standard. For example, all doors must be locked at all times when premises closed.

- All employees must be aware when they are a lone worker and are encouraged to lock themselves in when working alone.

- Only people known to that employee should be permitted entrance after normal working hours.

- It should not be obvious from the outside of the building that people may be working alone inside. Additionally, radios or CD players give the impression that the office is occupied

Employees, Parish Councillors and Volunteers:

- Telephone numbers of the emergency services and appropriate personnel should be displayed clearly, within easy access of all telephones.
- Large sums of money should not be left on site and valuable equipment should not be visible from the outside.
- On leaving the building exit routes should be well lit.

Communication Systems and Raising the Alarm

The availability and use of mobile phones is increasing, but the range and coverage is still variable. However, where possible and practical, it is suggested that workers consider using a mobile phone.

Employees working alone are responsible for making sure that information is left available with a responsible member of employees, giving the following information:

- Nature of work involved
- Location of the work
- Mode of travel
- Departure time/estimated time of return
- Mobile phone number (if one is available)

Reporting

It is important that all incidents of problems, including violence towards employees are monitored and that appropriate action is taken. The reports will be monitored by the Council Chairman, who is the nominated Health and Safety Officer (HSO), alongside accident information, and any appropriate recommendations for changes to working practice will be made.

Reporting Procedure*:*

1. Any member of employees, Parish Councillors or volunteer who suffers any problems associated with working alone should ensure that it is reported immediately to the Parish Clerk.

2. The Clerk should make a preliminary investigation of the circumstances and instigate a written report and copies of all reports should be forwarded to the HSO.

3. If any serious issues arise, the incident should then be investigated further by the Council, if any form of violence was involved, this should be reported to the police.

4. Any recommendations should be shared with the immediate people affected, to ensure improved practice within the Parish Council.

Whilst all incidents need to be reported and treated seriously, a distinction needs to be drawn between serious incidents which may give rise to a legal action and less serious incidents which may only need to be monitored.

Review of Incidents

All incidents, including violent behaviour towards employees, Parish Councillors and Volunteers is unacceptable. The Clerk should review each incident and where appropriate make recommendations to the HSO as to the action which should be taken to minimise the risk of subsequent incidents. A debriefing for all members of employees should take place. Recommendations might include

• Amendments to this policy
• Further management controls of employees/volunteers working alone.
• If violence involved, criminal proceedings or some form of civil action being taken, with the assistance of the Parish Council's solicitor.
• An increase in the level of supervision
• Training being provided for the employees affected by the incident
• Altering the working environment

Summary

All lone working carried out by Wortwell Parish Council employees, councillors and/or volunteers shall be conducted under the Lone Worker Policy. Any suggestions to amend or make changes to this policy can be made via the Parish Clerk

General

Complaints: Complaints made under this policy should be referred to the Clerk as identified under the Council's Complaints Policy.

Lone Worker Incident Report

Name of Worker:
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Date: ……
Nature of Incident:
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Reported to:
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Action taken:
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Signed: …… Parish Clerk
Date: ……

Signed: ……...Chairman/HSO
Date: ……..……