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Lone Working Policy

Applies to:

All employees, elected members, volunteers, temporary staff and contractors.

Effective date: 2 February 2015

Approved by: Full Council

Statement

Stantonbury Parish Council recognises that some members of staff may need to work alone from time to time and for some others lone working is the norm.

This policy sets out the approach that the Council has adopted to protect, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and well-being of those employees.

Working alone is not necessarily unsafe; however it can bring with it the following risks.

- 1 Accidents
- 2 Sudden illness or incapacity
- 3 Violence from others (verbal and aggressive)
- 4 General emergencies

Whilst it is impossible to legislate against every risk that an individual may face, sensible implementation of this policy and procedures should help to reduce these risks.

Although the primary purpose of this policy and set of procedures is to cover employees of SPC, much of the content applies to Councillors and also contractors when engaged on Council business.

Definition of a Lone Worker

The Health and Safety Executive defines a lone worker as someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision.

The Council has broadened this definition to include members of staff who:

- 1 Work from a fixed base, eg Parish Council Offices
- 2 Work separately from others eg Outreach Staff
- 3 Travel or walk alone during the course of their employment/carrying out of their duties
- 4 Meet people externally in their homes or businesses
- 5 Work outside of standard business hours (on or off-site), eg attending evening meetings/cleaning/closing buildings

Specific Responsibilities

Council:

Under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, The Council is made responsible for providing a safe environment, safe equipment and safe systems or work for its employees and those working on its premises.

The Council takes these responsibilities seriously and will ensure that:

- 1 Stantonbury Parish Council meets its moral and legal responsibilities.
- 2 A budget exists to enable the policy to be put into place and to provide employees with the support that is needed to lone work safely, for example providing appropriate safety equipment.
- 3 Legally compliant risk assessments are carried out.
- 4 Employees are consulted about the equipment they need to keep them safe in their jobs.
- 5 Staff are trained in the safe and proper use of equipment.
- 6 Provisions or resources needed for safe working practice are in place.
- 7 First Aid and emergency training is carried out for relevant members of staff.
- 8 Staff are not asked to work alone unnecessarily.
- 9 The Lone Working Policy is implemented and reviewed annually.
- 10 Staff receive lone worker training (eg Police training).

Parish Clerk:

The Parish Clerk has a key role to play in ensuring that risks to lone workers are minimised.

Specifically this responsibility includes:

- 1 Setting an example to others by visibly working within the policy and procedure.
- 2 Developing sensible and practical procedures for lone workers.
- 3 In consultation with employees, assessing what jobs must not be carried out in a lone working situation.
- 4 Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out in line with policy.

- 5 Ensuring that the right safety equipment is purchased; that it is in good working order and that it is being used.
- 6 In the event of being notified that a lone worker is overdue, taking immediate steps to investigate the situation.
- 7 Ensuring that new and existing members of staff are aware of the Lone Working Policy and procedures.
- 8 Reviewing the policy and procedure to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

Assessments of the risks of working alone carried out under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations will confirm whether the work can actually be done safely by one unaccompanied person.

Employee Responsibilities:

Employees have a duty of care to ensure that they do not place themselves in situations that are potentially dangerous.

Specific employee responsibilities include:

- 1 Working within this policy and procedure.
- 2 Co-operating with colleagues in the implementation of this policy.
- 3 Communicating hazards to The Parish Clerk and to colleagues/other workers.
- 4 Being aware of their working environment.
- 5 Taking reasonable steps to ensure their personal safety.
- 6 Not creating unnecessary risks (eg in the way that the public are spoken to).
- 7 Using any equipment that has been supplied in the proper manner.
- 8 Being prepared to walk away from a situation that they believe may cause them danger.
- 9 Undertaking any training/briefings associated with lone working.

Training/Support

Appropriate support and/or training will be made available, including:

- 1 Lone worker briefings.
- 2 First Aid.
- 3 Risk Assessments.
- 4 Violence at Work.
- 5 Health and Safety training including COSHH.

Procedures for Staff at Parish Office

First person to arrive ...

The first person into the building should be alert to any potential issues. If an overnight break-in is suspected the lone worker must not enter the building but

must wait outside, a safe distance away from the building, until emergency support arrives.

At no time must employees attempt to protect property from damage or theft. If damage or theft is taking place, then employees have a responsibility only to themselves and to ensure, as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the public.

When lone working the “Remote Panic Alarm” should be worn around the neck. Visitors can then be admitted. The front door is fitted with an Electronic Door Entry Intercom System so that the lone worker can converse with visitors before deciding whether to allow them access or ask that they call back when other staff members are present.

There is no requirement for staff to open the office door to visitors out of official opening hours, and any complaints made by members of the public about this action will not be upheld.

If a member of staff feels threatened by a visitor there is a panic button located under the counter in the Parish Office, or the “Remote Panic Alarm” can be worn around the neck when working alone in the building. These will sound an audible alarm and MK Keyholding Services will respond and carry out a site visit.

Day-Time Lone Working

Whilst it may be necessary for a member of staff to work alone in the office during the day, whenever possible more than one person should be in the office.

If working in a lone working capacity, employees need to be aware that they are alone in the building and take any precautions that they believe to be sensible in that situation. Any lone working employee must wear the “Remote Panic Alarm” around their neck. The door is an Electronic Door Entry Intercom System and should only be opened in the case of an emergency or to allow entry to visitors that they feel comfortable with.

It is expected that members of staff who are out of the office (or a nominated person) will contact the lone worker at routine intervals during the day to ensure that there are no issues.

Evening/Week-end Lone Working

Where possible, there should be a minimum of two Council representatives (eg employees or Elected Members) on site.

Any member of staff who believes that they will be working in the offices after the close of working hours should be given time to move their car as close as possible during the working day. This is particularly important in the winter time because of the early dark nights.

Any lone working employee must wear the “Remote Panic Alarm” and the front door must remain locked and only opened in the case of an emergency.

If a visitor calls the door must remain locked unless the person is somebody that the employee recognises, and is comfortable enough to open the door to.

There is no compulsion on an employee to open the door and if the member of public complains, the employees’ right to not open the door must be upheld.

In a situation where a member of staff is lone working and has reason to believe that they are unsafe they should contact the Police as soon as they suspect a problem.

When they have finished work the lone worker must ring the nominated person to let them know that they are leaving the building.

Office Staff Lone Working Out and About

Staff must tell a nominated person before they leave the offices where they are going, who they will be with (if appropriate) and how long they anticipate being away for.

A mobile telephone is supplied so that the individual can be contacted. Should the lone worker exceed the period of time that they have stated, then an initial call will be made to assess what (if any) action is required.

For external visits that happen at the end of the working day, the employee must make a “finishing work” text to a nominated person.

Procedures for Staff attending Wylie Drop In

They must inform the Parish Clerk or Administrator that they are commuting to Wylie Drop In, for what purpose and how long they will be there.

The first person to arrive ...

The first person into the building should be alert to any potential issues. If an overnight break-in is suspected the lone worker must not enter the building but must wait outside, a safe distance away from the building, until emergency support arrives.

At no time must employees attempt to protect property from damage or theft. If damage or theft is taking place, then employees have a responsibility only to themselves and to ensure, as is reasonably practicable, the safety of the public. When lone working, the front door to the offices must be locked until colleagues arrive, visitors can be admitted. The front door should be kept locked and the keys retained in the lock so that a speedy exit can be had in the event of an emergency. The front door is fitted with an intercom system so that the lone

worker can converse with visitors before deciding whether to allow them access or ask that they call back when other staff members are present.

There is no requirement for staff to open the office door to visitors out of official opening hours, and any complaints made by members of the public about this action will not be upheld.

If a member of staff feels threatened by a visitor there is a panic button located under the counter in the Parish Office, this will sound the alarm and MK Keyholding Services will respond and carry out a site visit.

Before vacating and securing the building the Lone Worker should call the Parish Office or nominated officer and let them know that they are ready to secure the building and will be returning to the Main Parish Office shortly.

Outreach Staff

The Council appreciates that the nature of this role means that Outreach Staff may work alone for a significant part of the working week and also when on duty at week-ends and on Public Holidays.

Therefore, in addition to the above general provisions the following procedures will apply.

- 1 Staff on duties outside of the office must conclude their activities to enable a return to the Parish Office by 4.00 pm.
- 2 During the day the administration staff will telephone staff who are working alone to confirm that all is well if there has not been any contact with them for a period of one hour.

Signed:

Dated: