

ALSTON MOOR PARISH COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Alston Moor Parish Council recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves in the community without close or direct supervision, sometimes in isolated work areas or out of office hours.
- 1.2 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Alston Moor Parish Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.
- 1.3 Useful tips on personal safety are produced by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust which can be downloaded from www.suzylamplugh.org.uk

2. Scope of the policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of Alston Moor Parish Council staff.
- 2.2 Lone workers includes:
 - Those working at their main place of work where:
 - Only one person is working on the premises
 - People work separately from each other, eg in different locations
 - People working outside normal office hours.
 - Those working away from their fixed base where:
 - One worker is visiting another agency's premises or meeting venue
 - One worker is making a home visit to an individual
 - One worker is working from their own home.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working;
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Clerk is responsible for:

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- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice; and
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed.

Councillors and Clerk are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy
- Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees
- Identify situations where people work alone and decide whether a system can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone
- Ensuring that staff identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updating and refreshing this training as necessary
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident
- Providing a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable.

4.2 Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions
- Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

5. **Guidance for Risk Assessments of Lone Working**

- Is the person fit and suitable to work alone?
- Are there adequate channels of communications in an emergency?
- Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Is any known risk attached to a client(s)?
- Has an alternative to a home visit been considered?
- Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged?
- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?
- Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?

6. Incident Reporting

An incident is defined as “an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage”. In order to maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or “unsafe” (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

7. Contacting/Involving the Police

The Council is committed to protecting its staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process. Except in the cases of emergency, staff should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the police to report the details of the incident.

8. Support for Staff

Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers’ training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

9. Immediate Support following a Violent Incident

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours, the Council’s Chair should be contacted. The Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

10. Lone Working for the Clerk

Where the items above relate directly to the Clerk as a staff member the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Council or, in an emergency, the Chair of the Council.

11. Good practice for lone workers

- During their working hours, all staff leaving the workplace (or home) should leave written details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back.
- If, in the course of a trip away from the office, plans change significantly, this should be communicated to an appropriate person.
- If the visit is assessed to have a sufficient risk, arrangements should be made with a colleague to check that a lone worker has returned to their base of home on completion of the visit. If possible delay the visit until two people can attend.

- Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague, may also be advisable. Staff should avoid being left on their own with a client in their workplace, or leaving a colleague in this situation.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.
- Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.
- Staff should never transport a child on their own and should assess any risk before transporting a vulnerable adult alone.

Before making home visits.

The lone worker must have full knowledge of the hazards, and risks to which he or she may be exposed to and apply control measures to eliminate or reduce the potential risks.

Having collected all the relevant information you then need to plan your contact:

- Trust your intuition and always think of your personal safety
- What is the best time of day to visit; assess the situation, are you familiar with the property locations? Consider the weather/visibility; seasons – will you be driving in the dark?
- Where is the most appropriate place to see this person?
- Do I need to take a colleague with me?
- If another agency is involved can we undertake a joint visit?
- Ensure that someone knows where you are at all times; do not make last minute/unplanned visits.
- Do you have your personal panic attack alarm (if applicable) or mobile; check it is charged.
- Know where you are travelling to; check your route to avoid stopping and asking strangers for directions.
- Park near street lighting or lit areas whenever possible.
- Reverse into parking spaces to ensure a quick getaway.
- Keep all doors locked whilst driving and keep valuables out of sight.
- It is not good practice to visit service users because 'you are passing' or your 'on your way home'.
- If you do not intend to return to the office at the end of the day. Let someone know.