

Lone Working Policy

Policy Document BTC/011/LW

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Town Council as an employer is responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and of those affected by the work. It is the employer's duty to organise and manage lone workers. However, employees have responsibility for taking reasonable care of themselves and of other people affected by their work and for co-operating with the employer in the discharge of their legal obligations.
- 1.2. The following policy and procedure has been written in order to minimise risks for staff working alone in their fixed base and working away from their fixed base. Under the Health & Safety Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 it is the duty of Bewdley Town Council to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risk where necessary. Employees of the Council have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.
- 1.3 The Council has entrusted this day to day responsibility to the Town Clerk. Areas of concern are to be taken to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

2. Lone Working

- 2.1 Lone working is a common work situation in local government and while many hazards at work are relatively straightforward to identify and control, other aspects of work place health such as the risks posed to 'Lone Workers' are less easy to define.
- 2.2 The broad duties of Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 include considering lone working in the assessment of the risks associated with service activities as part of the Council's responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of their staff.
- 2.3 The Council must therefore have a systematic approach to assess the risks that a lone worker may face and take such action where possible to remove or reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
- 2.4 Employees also have a duty of care for their own safety, the safety of fellow workers, and of any person affected by the Town Council's work activities.

3. Definition of a Lone worker

- 3.1 Lone workers are employees who, at any time, work by themselves in the office or at other locations either owned by the Council or not. This could include working at and/or opening and closing sites and public facilities, working late in the office, visiting sites outside of office hours and carrying out Council activities in the public realm.
- 3.2 These are people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision:

At a fixed base (office or other):

- Only one person working on the premises
- Working separately from others
- Working outside of normal hours

Away from their fixed base:

- Staff member who is required to travel alone to and from a fixed base to another base (e.g. to attend meetings etc) or carry out Council duties alone in the public realm during unsociable hours.

4. Requirements of Lone Workers

- 4.1 It is important that lone workers are considered for known medical conditions which may make them unsuitable for working alone. Any employee who could be considered as a lone worker has a duty to advise the Council of any medical conditions which may affect them working alone.
- 4.2 Where a medical condition is known, an assessment will be conducted through an appropriate external adviser if necessary. The Council will take into consideration routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional and/or specific risks.

5. Potential Risks to Lone Workers

- Open access and unlocked doors – accessible to the public, contractors etc
- Being taken ill whilst at work
- Lack of training regarding Health & Safety procedures
- Hazards in the workplace
- Remote areas
- Parking arrangements – poorly lit and isolated areas

6. Risk Assessments

- 6.1 A risk assessment should be carried out **for and by all employees** who are going to be working alone.
- 6.2 Before drawing up and recording the assessment of risk, it must be established:
- a) Whether the work can be done by a lone worker
 - b) What arrangements will be in place to ensure an individual is not exposed to unnecessary and unacceptable risk?

When recording an assessment of risk, the following should be taking into consideration:

- a) Environment – location, security, access/egress
- b) Context – nature of the task
- c) History – have there been any accidents/incidents in the past etc

All available information should be taken into account and updated as and when necessary. If there is reason for doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation then consideration should be given for making other arrangements to complete the task.

7. Safety Guidelines

7.1 For staff working in a fixed base:

- Familiarise the layout of the building including fire exits and escape routes
- Keep doors locked that allow direct access to the building/office you are working in
- Do not open the door to unexpected visitors. In the case of contractors ask for identification. If still unsure check with the contractor's employer/head office
- When a member of staff is working on their own in the office all doors which give access to the office **MUST** remain locked.
- Have contact numbers at hand to be able to contact relevant person(s) immediately – should you feel ill, intruder in the building etc and raise the personal panic alarm which should be carried with you when undertaking duties. If you feel threatened in any way you must contact the police immediately.
- It is the responsibility of the lone worker to make sure that they are satisfied that there is no risk before allowing a visitor to enter the secured area.
- If possible you should always advise a relative when you are going out to undertake your duties and give them an idea of the time you should be expected home. In the event that you are not back within 15 minutes of the time you have specified they should contact the Police or the Town Clerk.
- Where possible, when locking premises, any internal areas to be checked should be done when there is more than one person in the building.
- A risk assessment to be put in place to assess potential risks.

7.2 For staff working away from their fixed base:

- Staff should inform relevant person(s) from the Council of their movements including how long they are going to be away from their base and when they will return, along with any relevant information regarding where and at what time visits will be made and by whom. Telephone numbers should also be kept on their person and a mobile phone carried at all times.
- Leave details of venues including contact numbers
- Take office mobile with you (if applicable)
- Avoid meetings in isolated places. If this cannot be avoided then either ask someone to go with you or make sure you always notify the Town Clerk when you arrive and when you leave

8. Responsibility

8.1 Employees Responsibility & Personal Safety:

- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts of omissions at work

- Always maintain a line of communication on a regular basis with members of the Council to identify and minimise risk(s)
- Always inform a colleague as to when you are leaving the fixed base to perform Council tasks including whether you are returning to your fixed base.
- Always report an accident/incident to the Clerk. This will allow for a full investigation to take place to assess any further potential risks and identify any additional safety procedures that should be implemented.

8.2 Employers Responsibility:

To take reasonable care for the health & safety of staff by identifying and assessing potential risks to ensure that staff are safe at all times. Always maintain a line of communication on a regular basis with staff to identify and minimise risk(s).

- Ensure a signing in and out system is put in place
- Ensure staff receive all relevant training and information available
- Equip staff with a mobile phone or establish the use of a personal mobile phone to ensure a system of maintaining contact.