



LEEK TOWN COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

Approved 21st May 2024

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Leek Town Council will, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that:

- employees required to work alone are protected from risks to their health, safety and welfare,
- take action if the Town Clerk (following discussion with relevant employees) identifies any æ risks (before lone working is undertaken),
- employees know that they must take responsibility for their own safety and understand that they must remove themselves immediately from any such situation.

1.2 Lone working is understood to include:

- members of staff working alone in a building and
- staff working outside where there is no close, frequent or regular contact with other colleagues.

1.3 Leek Town Council recognises its responsibility as an employer for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and of those affected by its work activities eg service-users, visitors, contractors and self-employed people carrying out work on its behalf.

1.4 This policy does not identify all the situations where employees may be at risk from working alone but concentrates on describing the arrangements that must be in place to eliminate or manage the associated risks. Lone working itself is not necessarily high risk but the activity that is performed may be. It is important that these individuals are made aware of the outcome of the risk assessment and informed of all necessary control measures.

2 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The aim of this policy is to

- ensure that staff are not unnecessarily exposed to risks associated with lone working as part of their work
- ensure that the Town Council meets its statutory duties.
- describe the measures that Leek Town Council considers necessary to manage the risk present when employees are required to work alone.

The policy covers all employees who, as part of their contracted duties, are required to work alone and without direct supervision.

3 ASSESSING THE RISK

Officers are responsible for identifying and assessing the risks of lone working in terms of the likelihood of harm and its perceived severity. Consideration will be given to whether the activity is one that can be safely accomplished by one person or whether the presence or assistance of another member of staff would be necessary. If a risk cannot be eliminated completely, action must be taken to reduce the risk to the lowest level practicably achievable.

4 SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

Officers should take account of the following factors when evaluating the risk:

- the degree of isolation.
- the type of work activity.
- the level of supervision and support.
- contact or proximity with members of the public.

Staff who are expected to work alone should:

- be reasonably physically fit and have declared if they have any medical disability that may put them at risk whilst working alone, eg hearing impairment, diabetes.
- have ready access to a first aid kit at all times
- have access to a mobile and, if in-doors, a land line telephone

- be given clear notice, in advance, to the Town Clerk as to their location(s) during the day if they are to be lone-working
- have access to panic alarms (which should be offered to any member of staff) These can be used to summon assistance in the event of an attack and will disorientate potential attackers.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TOWN CLERK AND OTHER MANAGERS

To fulfil its statutory responsibilities, the Council requires senior officers to ensure that:

- All lone working activities are formally identified, and appropriate risk assessments undertaken, identifying the risk to lone workers and the control measures necessary to minimise those risks,
- Arrangements for lone working are communicated effectively, making explicit what can or cannot be done while working alone,
- The lone worker is made aware of the hazards and understands all the necessary control measures that need to be put in place.
- Reasonable enquiries are made to ensure that the lone worker is medically fit to undertake work alone.
- Adequate supervision, instruction and training are in place and the lone worker is competent - the extent of the supervision is a management decision, established through a risk assessment process.
- Monitoring of lone working practices is in place to ensure control.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES of EMPLOYEES

All employees have a responsibility to

- take care of their own safety and to comply with Council procedures.
- ensure that they never knowingly place themselves in situations which expose them to additional risk by working alone.
- carry or have access to a working mobile phone when off site.
- inform the Town Clerk if they have any concerns over the effectiveness and efficiency of the agreed arrangements
- inform the Town Clerk of any reasons why they would not be able to work alone or to continue to work alone in safety.

7 RISK ASSESSMENT

The risk assessment process outlined below will be undertaken as a collaborative exercise by both the lone worker and the Town Clerk

7.1 identify the hazards to which the person may be exposed. The hazards are likely to be the same for a particular activity whether lone working or not. The assessment of the risks to which a lone worker may be exposed must take into account normal and foreseeable scenarios. If the hazards such that the risk cannot be controlled sufficiently (eg working at height, or at night, or working close to traffic) then two or more colleagues must be allocated to the task.

7.2 Identify all persons who may be required to work alone. Consideration must be given to an individual's ability to carry out their activities safely on their own. Some individuals may be at greater risk than others for example, new and expectant mothers and young persons or those who are new to a role. It may be necessary to make reasonable enquiries to ensure that lone workers are medically fit to undertake the work alone.

7.3 Assess whether current controls are adequate, and if not, consider what additional/alternative control measure(s) can be put in place. Examples of control measures include the provision of suitable training and communication strategies.

8 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Risk assessments are to be reviewed annually and whenever appropriate following an accident or incident or following any concerns being raised). Any review should make sure existing control measures are adequate and should identify any additional controls that may be needed.

Relevant legislation:

Section 2(1) of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty on every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. In addition, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty on the employer to consider all reasonably foreseeable hazards and to take the appropriate action to reduce the possible risk of injury to the lowest level that is practicable to achieve.