PATCHWAY TOWN COUNCIL

Lone Working and Staff Safeguarding Policy

The Town Council is committed to an approach that offers its staff a sound framework for the Management of Health and Safety within which they undertake their daily work. It is recognized that the staff have jobs that daily require them to work alone. The risks associated with working alone can be considerable, and it is not possible to offer a single blueprint to the approach taken.

The following policy statement acknowledges that the Council has the final responsibility for ensuring that staff are covered by a policy and procedures that meet the specific requirements of the jobs carried out.

POLICY

Definition of Lone Working:

People who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. The Council recognizes that this affects two categories of staff, i.e., those who:

1, Regularly work alone

2, Occasionally work alone.

It is of paramount importance that issues of safety are always considered.

The following parameter should always be followed to ensure that safety and protection of everyone.

General

1. Never leave keys in the door, to avoid being locked in
2. Use all safety locks provided on the premises -to prevent unwanted visitors entering.
3. Read all safety procedures for the building.

Implementation of the Policy.

Within the Council, the Town Clerk/Line Manager will implement this policy by:

1, Ensuring that written policies and procedures are available at all time.

2 Ensuring staff are aware of the arrangements they must make for themselves to fit the circumstances that arise.

3.Ensuring that all staff are properly trained in the Health and Safety requirements about working alone or in isolated situations as they relate to their particular job.

4. Reminding individual staff of their personal responsibility under Health and Safety Legislation.

MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE FOR STAFF WHO WORK ALONE

The following notes are intended to provide practical guidance for a Line Manager who has members of staff who work alone or in an isolated situation in undertaking risk assessments and preparing local Procedural Guidelines.

1. **Activities that Carry Risks**

1.1 The following are examples of some of the activities carried out by lone workers which could expose them to risk.

- Staff working alone in the office or machinery shed
- Staff handline or carrying cash
- Staff working alone in open spaces
- Meetings terminating late in the evening
- Travelling on foot particularly after dark
- Parking restrictions which prevent parking close to intended destination

This is not an exhaustive list.

2 Risk Assessments

2.1 The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999 places a duty on the employers to make suitable and sufficient assessment of the health and safety risks to which their employees (and others in their employment) may be subjected.

2.2 The Line Manager is required to follow up any hazards identified through risk assessments with arrangements to ensure that risks are either eliminated or adequately controlled. When it is not possible to devise arrangements to ensure that risks are either eliminated or adequately controlled. When it is not possible to devise arrangements for the work to be done safely by one-person, alternative arrangements providing help or back-up have to be devised.

2.3. Risk assessments can be summarized in the following 5 steps:

- Look for potential hazards
- Evaluate the risk, the severity of a possible outcome, the likelihood of the hazard causing harm
- Search for preventative measures, deciding whether existing precautions are adequate
- Create local codes of practice and put them into effect.
- Check that the measures work -review and if necessary and revise.

2.4. Staff who work alone should also assess their ways of working. Many people do their jobs the way they have always done them without thinking about whether they are putting themselves at unnecessary risks. Some things to consider when examining possible risks to staff.

- Does anyone know where they are?
- If they change their plans, have they informed the Line Manager?
- Can they be contacted?
- Do they think about where they park-is it safe?
- Is it safe for them to use a item of equipment or machinery alone?
- Are they sufficiently competent to use the equipment alone?
- Are they currently medically fit to work alone?

2. Staff working arrangements

2.1 Existing safe working arrangements for lone workers is no different from organizing the safety of other employees. The Council needs to recognize the existing law and standards that apply to their work, and then assess if the requirements can be met safely by people working alone. If not appropriate arrangements must be made.

2.2 Lone workers face problems and some issues which need to be addressed when planning safe working environments are identified in the following paragraphs.

2.3 Lone workers should not be exposed to significantly more risks than employees who work together. Precautions should take into account of normal working conditions and foreseeable emergency situations e.g. Fire, Equipment failure, illness, violent incidents and accidents. Questions that should be asked where staff work alone are:

- Does the workplace or activity present a special life risk to the Lone worker?
- Is there safe access and exit for staff?
- Are staff aware of the emergency procedures?
- Can one person safely handle all the circumstances which are likely to arise?
- Can all the equipment, substances and processes involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
- Will the work involve heavy lifting of objects?
- Will cash be handled?
- Will there be a risk of violence?
- How will the person be supervised?

2.4 Although Lone workers cannot be subjected to constant supervision, it is still the Line Manger's duty to provide appropriate control at work. Supervision complements information, instruction and training.

helps to ensure that staff members understand the risks associated with their work, and the necessary safety precautions are carried out.

2.5 Lone workers should also be capable of responding correctly in emergency situations wherever they arise, by using outside telephone lines or mobile phones and emergency exits. Emergency procedures should be established where necessary, and staff members trained to implement them. Lone workers should have adequate first aid facilities.

2.6 Suitable systems should be devised to monitor Lone workers, and include checks at the end of the working period to confirm that all is well.

3. Handling Money and Valuables

3.1 Any staff members carrying or dealing with money or valuables are clearly at risk and must be protected.

3.2 The Line Manager needs to assess the risks affecting the safety of staff and devise measures which will eliminate them to an acceptable level. This process should be carried out with the participation and co-operation of the staff members concerned.

3.3 It is important for both the Council and the Line Manager to be aware that under the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993, employees can refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger. They can advise others to do the same without being dismissed as a result.

4. Violence to Staff

4.1 Serious acts of violence towards employees who work alone are relatively infrequent. Nevertheless, indicators do point to a rise in violence and aggressive incidents in the course of work. Men as well as women are at risk and violence occurs in any community.

4.2 What is interpreted as violent behaviour by one person may not be seen in the same way by another. For example you may find swearing offensive, but your colleague may not. For this reason, the definition used is as follows:

"**Violent behaviour is that which produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or Emotionally in other people"**

4.3 Reporting violent or potentially violent incidents

All violent incidents should be reported immediately to the Clerk of the Town Council

6 Reducing the likelihood of violence

6.1 The following notes give further information on how to reduce the likelihood of encountering aggressive incidents and what to do if violence occurs.

6.2 External information

6.3 When meeting someone for the first time, staff should ascertain whether it is suitable or possible to arrange a meeting in the office. If this is not possible, then a telephone number should be asked for, and arrangements made to either telephone them back, or to meet at another time.

6.4 Wherever possible appropriate phone calls should be made to gain as much information as possible.

Before the meeting

7.1. Suitable clothing should be worn, that will not hinder movement if there is a need to run.

7. 2 Valuable jewellery, and other expensive items should not be worn.

8 Time of meeting

8.1. Meetings should be arranged in during daylight hours whenever possible.

8. 2 Avoid walking in poorly lit areas after dark.

9 Recording movements

9.1 It is imperative that and adequate record is kept of the whereabouts of all staff. Good practice dictates the office has these details, to pass on if an emergency occurs.

10. Safety in the establishment

10.1 Wear and ID badge at all times and have a mobile phone to hand.

10. 2 Be aware of anyone following you into the building. Make sure that they are known to you, or have an appointment with you.

10.3 If you are working on your own late at night, it is advisable to let a colleague or a member of your family know where you are.

11 Mobile phones

11.1 Always carry your mobile phone and make sure that it is switched on

12 Training

12.1 It is essential that the Council ensures that training in personal safety and awareness in the dealing with money and valuables, coping with violence and developing risk assessments is given top priority.

12.2 The Clerk must ensure that staff receive personal training as part of the induction procedure.

12.3 All staff that require training should be directed to suitable courses.

12.4 The Clerk is to make sure that all staff take full advantage of the training opportunities available.

13 Monitor and Review

Implementation of this policy and its procedures should be regularly monitored by the Council. Following any incident, a Risk Assessment should be carried out and its findings used to inform change to the procedure and working practices.