



## **CRESSWELL PARISH COUNCIL STATEMENTS OF GUIDANCE AND POLICY**

### **LONE WORKING POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Purpose of this policy and procedure**

The council recognises that some of our staff ,and elected councillors ,work alone, and where this is the case, seeks to ensure the health and safety of all lone workers. This document:

- Raises awareness of the safety issues relating to lone working,
- Identifies and assesses potential risks to an individual working alone,
- Explains the importance of reasonable and practicable precautions to minimise potential risk,
- Provides appropriate support to lone workers, and,
- Encourages reporting of all incidents associated with lone working so that they can be adequately managed and used to help reduce risks and improve working arrangements for the future.

#### **The scope of this policy**

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers. The council also recognises that at times currently elected councillors attend situations alone in the course of their duties and it is intended that this policy applies to them.

#### **Policy**

We will protect staff from the risks of lone working, as far as is reasonably practicable. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it is often safe to do so. However, the council's policy is to consider carefully and deal with any health and safety risks for those who work alone.

## **Definition**

'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Specifically in Cresswell this relates to the cleaner of the public toilets, the clerk to the council, and currently elected councillors. Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own.

## **Responsibilities**

All staff ,and currently elected councillors, have a responsibility for the health and safety of work colleagues. The key responsibilities are as follows:

A nominated manager on behalf of the council ( in this case usually the chair or the vice chair.)

- Will try to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone;
- Ensure that all lone working activities must be formally risk assessed. This should identify the risk to lone workers; any control measures necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures;
- Arrangements for lone working must be made clear to staff and the details of what can or cannot be done while working alone explained;
- Lone workers must be informed of the hazards and understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- Must raise the alarm if staff cannot be contacted or do not return as anticipated
- Must ensure that all staff are aware of this lone working policy and procedure and provide appropriate levels of training and guidance on lone working.

## Lone workers

Take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their work

To follow any instruction given by management or the council

Raise with their line manager any concerns they have in relation to lone working

Not to work alone where there is adequate information to undertake a risk assessment.

Inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity in the event of an accident, incident of violence or aggression whilst working alone

## Staff

To be aware of colleagues working on their own and alert to unexpected changes of routine, unanticipated periods where there is no communication.

Buddies should ensure they maintain and share up to date contact details (see below)

### **Risk Assessments**

Whenever possible the nominated manager must complete (or ensure the completion of) a Lone Working Risk Assessment prior to every lone working activity. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and communicated to all relevant staff or councillors.

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as those doing similar roles/tasks. However, they may additionally encounter hazards such as:

- Sudden illness
- Faulty equipment
- Travelling alone
- Remote locations
- Abuse from members of the public
- Animal attacks

### **Ways in which lone working risks can be reduced**

Every lone working environment and situation is different, and therefore it is not possible to implement a 'one size fits all' approach. Where there is regular or anticipated lone working, the council will devise and implement a lone working plan that meets the needs and risks of their particular circumstances. The plan should be proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. The plan for a groundsman who is working alone with machinery will be more detailed than an administrator working late in the office. This should be written down and communicated to all relevant staff and where appropriate, councillors.

Below are some example strategies that could be implemented (on their own or combined):

- Signing-in and Out book
- Electronic (or hard copy) diaries to be kept up to date with meeting/visit/lone working details
- Agreed times and method of contact
- Buddy scheme
- Opting into, as well as out of , proposed meetings.

### **Buddy scheme**

The following information should be written down and kept by the lone worker and their buddy, next of kin and manager (see the Lone Working Buddy Form):-

- Name and contact details of the lone worker

- Name, relationship and contact details of the buddy
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's next of kin
- Name, relationship and contact details of the lone worker's manager
- Any 'code word' that would indicate that the lone worker needs assistance
- Note: All these details must be kept securely in line with data protection legislation

If contact details change the buddy and manager must be informed.

In circumstances where a buddy system is appropriate as a way of reducing the risks identified in the risk assessment, the buddy must have relevant details about the lone working, that may include;

- Site of the activity (address or area if there is no address);
- details of the purpose (i.e. preparing the hall, grass cutting, meeting);
- contact details of anyone who they may meet (any additional contact details for the location being visited);
- mode of transport;
- expected time of return;

The buddy must know what to do if the lone worker does not return or make contact at the anticipated/agreed time.

### **Health and wellbeing**

In order to ensure personal safety, it is important that details are shared any of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk with the nominated manager. This includes pregnancy. A plan can then be developed to mitigate any potential risks caused by the particular circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with confidentiality being of the utmost importance.

### **Reporting incidents**

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed and acted upon. The report should include:

- A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved,
- For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all of the details of the incident and of the perpetrator should be captured, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence, and,
- In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances which may have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances. This information would then support any review

of the risk assessment process to understand if any additional measures are needed.

If a lone worker feels unsafe, unwell, or becomes injured the emergency services should be called for immediate assistance. If possible, the manager and buddy should be contacted (or ask someone be nominated to do so).

The manager should be informed if any work plans change because of ill health or if there is a domestic emergency when working alone.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

### **Notes**

The Health and Safety Executive have extensive advice and guidance on homeworking, lone working, including guidance on the risks of lone working.

Homeworking: [www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm)

Lone working: [www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm)

Risks of lone working: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf)

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