

Health & Safety Policy Statement

Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974

This is the Health & Safety Policy Statement of

BRAMSHAW PARISH COUNCIL

The Council's general policy is:

- To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities;
- To consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- To provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- To ensure safe handling and use of substances;
- To provide information, instruction and supervision for employees.
- To ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training;
- To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions;
- To review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Signed:

(On behalf of Bramshaw Parish Council)

Dated:

Review Date:

Health & Safety – Use of Display Screen Equipment

Health & Safety legislation applies wherever anyone is employed or where premises are made available as a place of work or as a place where plant or substances may be used by non employees.

Employers have a duty to provide information, instruction, training and supervision and, so far as is reasonably practicable, a work environment that is safe and without risk to health. In particular, display screen equipment Regulations require other measures as regards employees who "habitually use equipment as a significant part of their normal work".

It is recognised that many local authority employees work at home as a significant part of their normal work. However, the situation as regards very small Parish Councils is different in so far as:-

- The employee works part time for a small number of hours, sometimes on a flexible basis.
- The employee is engaged on the basis that he/she will work at home as there is, in practise, no other place of work.
- The amount of work with VDU equipment is small and limited e.g. writing up Minutes and accounts and occasional letters.
- The work is carried out on an ad hoc basis to suit the employee i.e. no set work times
- The equipment is usually owned by the employee and often used for a multitude of other personal or domestic purposes.
- The equipment may comprise a laptop computer, perhaps wireless, so that there is no "work station".

The issue is where does this leave the employer and the employee as regards compliance, bearing in mind the "reasonably practicable" and "habitual use as a significant part of work" elements of the legislation.

Recommendation

The following forms the basis of a **draft** recommendation for very small Parish Councils. It is recognised that they have other Health & Safety duties as regards e.g. manual handling, accident reporting and that there may be security and tax issues.

Bramshaw Parish Council Policy on the use of DSE by Employees Working at Home

The Parish Council will ascertain at interview and provide, as required, any training, instruction, information and supervision to ensure that the employee has sufficient knowledge to operate the necessary equipment and software and has suitable support should problems occur.

The Parish Council will ensure that any equipment used by the employee/s is suitable for the purpose and has a suitable and adequate power supply. (e.g. very small hand held equipment, old, slow equipment and software may not be suitable).

Where there is any expectation or deadline such that display screen equipment will be used for a total of two hours per day or for more than one hour continuously, there will be a requirement for a full risk assessment of the work equipment and work station.

Any equipment owned by the Parish Council will be checked and maintained as necessary to keep it in a condition that does not cause harm.

The Parish Council draws attention to the employee's legal responsibility to look after their own health & safety and in this respect, would expect the employee to ensure that any equipment used for work purposes is properly and safely used.

In particular, work areas should be located and adjusted so that equipment is comfortable to use to prevent tiredness and pain in the hands, wrists, arms, neck, shoulders or back. Screens should be sited to prevent reflections of glare. Electrical equipment should be checked for damage or defects and there should be no trailing or loose wires.

Any muscular injury, stress or eye problem must be reported immediately to the Parish Council.

Any variations to working arrangements must be reported to the employee and/or to the Council.

The working arrangements must be reviewed every twelve months and amended as necessary.

This policy may be referred to in any employment contract.

Other Associated Issues

Other VDU work may be carried out by the employee on a self-employed basis or for a/n other employer/s. Whilst individually the amounts may not be significant, collectively they could be significant and enquiries should be made at interview or review.

Where, perhaps, in the case of larger Councils, working at home is or becomes a significant issue, there should be a risk assessment of the work station etc. It is recommended that in addition, consideration is taken of the home environment to assess its suitability e.g. is there sufficient room for a work station; is the electrical system safe?.