

Llandrindod Wells Town Council

Lone Working Policy

Lone Working

Offices are generally seen as relatively safe working environments. However, out-of-office activities present many hazards that need to be considered. Lone workers may be exposed to a higher degree of risk than other staff in Llandrindod Wells Town Council.

Legal Requirements

Employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and the health and safety of those affected by their work. These responsibilities cannot be transferred to employees who work alone or without close supervision. Employers are legally required to ensure that they have appropriate arrangements in place to help lone workers identify, avoid or control the risks. Employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in the discharge of their legal obligations. In determining arrangements necessary to ensure a safe workplace, it is likely that lone workers will have additional needs, which must be addressed.

Under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA), employers have the responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees. Section 3 further extends this duty towards persons, other than employees, who might be affected by their work activities. Under section 7, employees have duties to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and for that of anyone else that may be affected by their actions.

Key Points

The Lone Worker

- Staff who intend to work alone in a Town Council property must inform their Manager prior to commencing work
- Staff must take personal responsibility for sharing information regarding their whereabouts
- The lone worker has authority to suspend work when necessary and must report this decision to their Manager as soon as possible

Managers **must**:

- Identify any staff who may be classed as a lone worker
- Check that lone workers have no medical condition that would make it unsuitable for them to work alone
- Undertake with the lone worker a lone worker risk assessment and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary
- Ensure that staff are trained in any agreed procedures and safe systems of work
- Review the lone working arrangements regularly
- Have a system of checking that staff have returned to their base or home on completion of their task
- Make arrangements for keeping in contact by telephone

What is lone working?

The following definition of a lone worker applies to this policy:

'Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. They can be found in a number of situations including those working in fixed locations or can be mobile workers working away from their fixed base'.

Who does it cover?

Employees of Llandrindod Wells Town Council have a wide range of working patterns. For the purpose of this policy lone workers have been categorised as listed below, but it is for line managers and individuals to consider whether they meet the definition of lone working.

- Those who work in fixed locations where they are the only person located there, e.g. homeworkers.
- Those who work separately from others.
- Those who find themselves working alone in a Town Council property – predominantly at the start and close of the working day;
- Those people working outside normal hours e.g. at meetings or on site.
- Mobile workers working away from their fixed base.

All references to lone workers in this policy include those workers with peripatetic patterns of work. Employees who are not designated lone workers but occasionally find themselves working alone or travelling for business reasons may wish to refer to this policy as a best practice guide.

Office based staff when travelling

The policy and advice on lone working will be of interest and relevance to other staff on occasions and therefore includes staff who are normally office based when they:

Travel to meetings or between meetings;

Stay away overnight through the normal course of business.

Contractors

Work undertaken by a contractor is usually covered by a contract. It is essential for health and safety requirements to be written into such a contract. However, health and safety responsibilities are defined by the criminal law and cannot be passed on from one party to another by a contract.

In any client/contractor relationship, both parties will have duties under health and safety law. Similarly, if the contractor employs sub-contractors to carry out some or all of the work, all parties will have some health and safety responsibilities. The extent of the responsibilities of each party will depend on the circumstances. Managers will need to identify all aspects of work that they want the contractor to do, including an assessment of all foreseeable health and safety risks. Managers need to see, and verify, that third party liability insurances are in place for the duration of the contract.

Managers need to ensure that contractors know and understand what performance is expected, and Llandrindod Wells Town Council's health and safety arrangements. Contractors should be required to act in accordance with Llandrindod Wells Town Council's health and safety policy and arrangements.

Visitors/Observers

Occasionally lone workers are required to host visitors or observers. The lone worker must ensure that a risk assessment is made prior to such events taking place. There may be additional hazards to visitors/observers especially if they are not familiar with the working environment.

Before a visit can take place the visitor/observer should receive instruction and information on health and safety and participate in a risk assessment of the visit. Account should be taken of the visitor's/observer's physical condition and whether there are any factors that would make it impractical for the visit to take place.

The lone worker's senior manager should be kept fully informed and take final decisions about whether such a visit can take place.

Responsibilities

The Lone/Peripatetic Worker

Each employee has a responsibility to take reasonable care of him or herself, and other people affected by their work, and to co-operate with their managers in meeting Llandrindod Wells Town Council's legal obligations.

- The individual should ensure they are familiar with and adhere to this policy and any supporting procedure/guidance supplied by their Division.
- The individual must not knowingly place themselves and others in situations which expose them to additional risks by working alone.
- The security of computer laptops and other items must be considered.
- Staff who intend to work alone in a Town Council property must inform their line manager prior to commencing work.
- Staff working alone must ensure they are familiar with exits and alarms.
- Staff **must** take personal responsibility for sharing information regarding their whereabouts. They must always ensure somebody else knows where they are going, who they are meeting and when they are expected to return.
- It is a lone worker's responsibility to report accidents and near misses and to register with line managers any concerns they have about health and safety.

The lone worker has the authority to suspend work when necessary and must report this decision to their line manager as soon as possible. The line manager must, as a matter of priority, review the risk assessment with the lone worker before work can re-commence.

Managers

Line Managers have a responsibility to identify any staff who may be classed as a lone worker and have an obligation to ensure their health and safety as far as is reasonably practical. They must:

- Check that lone workers have no medical condition that would make it unsuitable for them to work alone, seeking medical advice from the Occupational Health team if necessary
- Discuss with those individuals the generic lone worker risk assessment, note what should be in place and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary. This obligation also extends to any person who may be affected by the lone workers' work.

- Ensure that staff are given a copy of the findings of the risk assessments and adhere to the control measures identified and that all supporting documentation confirming that the risk assessment has taken place is retained.
- Ensure that staff are familiar with this policy and any supporting procedure and/or guidelines and understand the requirements
- Ensure that staff are trained in any agreed procedures and safe systems of work
- Make arrangements to review the lone workers' working environment regularly, including visiting work sites and to review the control measures produced from the risk assessment process.
- Provide instruction on the procedures for communication in emergency situations
- Make arrangements for keeping in contact by telephone
- Review lone working arrangements where appropriate
- Have a system of checking that staff have returned to their base or home on completion of their task
- Make sure that all those who drive are familiar with, and adhere to, Llandrindod Wells Town Council's Driving for Work policy

Health and Safety Team

Llandrindod Wells Town Council has a designated Health and Safety team responsible for monitoring and evaluating its policies, including those relating to lone workers. The Health and Safety team can provide advice and guidance to individual lone workers and to their line managers.

Supervision

Although lone workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is still an employer's duty to ensure their health and safety at work. Supervision can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. The level of supervision required is a management decision and should be based on the findings of the risk assessment. The higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required. It should not be left to the individual to decide whether they require assistance.

Training

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision.

All lone workers should be provided with training, instruction and information prior to undertaking the work to ensure they understand the hazards and the residual risk associated with the work.

All staff taking up employment with Llandrindod Wells Town Council will receive formal instruction on Llandrindod Wells Town Council's Health and Safety policy as part of their induction training. Lone Workers will receive additional induction arranged by the divisional Health and Safety co-ordinator including a copy of this policy.

If, as a result of a risk assessment of their work, additional training needs are identified these will be included in the risk assessment report and the individual's personal development plan. Training needs will be prioritised based on the risk assessment and some training may need to take place before the lone worker commences their duties.

Responsibility for ensuring training is delivered and any subsequent costs will fall to the Town Council

Risk Assessments

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk-control measures which take into account the questions all criteria. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies e.g. fire, illness and accidents.

Control measures may include instruction, training, supervision, protective equipment, etc. Managers should take steps to check that control measures are used and review the risk assessment from time to time to ensure it is still adequate.

When the risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back-up should be put in place.

Out of sight does not mean out of mind, particularly where health and safety is concerned. Procedures will need to be put in place to monitor lone workers to ensure they remain safe. These may include:

- Managers periodically visiting and observing people working alone
- Regular contact between the lone worker and manager by telephone
- Methods to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency
- Procedures in place so that the line manager knows where employees are at any time.
- Checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task
- Use of the “buddy” system where team members partner up to let each other know when they have arrived at appointments and when they are leaving. The buddy takes responsibility for contacting the other if they have not signed in or out when expected and raising the alarm if the need arises.
- Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. A risk assessment should identify foreseeable events. Emergency procedures should be established and employees trained in them. Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. Occasionally risk assessments may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid

Tracking Staff on Visits

It will be for Line Managers to decide on an appropriate system for them after undertaking the risk assessment.

Once you have put together your tracking system, test its effectiveness by answering the true or false questions below - this will help you to highlight gaps in the system. If you can answer true to these statements, you're on the way to an effective system:

- Colleagues will know where to start looking should a member of staff not return to base on time
- There is a system for staff to raise the alarm in case of emergency while working alone
- There is a clear procedure to follow in case someone does not return at the expected time
- An appropriate person will pick up the phone if a member of staff calls in an emergency
- If a member of staff decides to change their plans during the day someone would be aware of this
- When staff are lone working out of office hours, there is a system to monitor their safety

- There is information available so that the manager could contact the member of staff's partner, family or next of kin (to ensure their safety) should they fail to return from an appointment
- The member of staff, partner, family or next of kin would have contact details of a colleague should the member of staff fail to return from work, even if this should happen after office hours
- If a member of staff does not follow the team's agreed tracking system, the possible outcomes are made clear for the information of all staff.

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