



PENRYN TOWN COUNCIL

Lone Working Policy

1. Policy statement

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, all employees of the Town Council have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

2. Purpose

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks.

3. Context

Within the Town Council's policy relating to health and safety, support for lone workers is an essential part, and the same principles apply, particularly:

- the provision and maintenance of a working environment that is safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for welfare;
- the maintenance of workplaces in a condition that is safe and without risks to health, and the provision and maintenance of means of access and egress that are safe and without risk; and
- the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of employees and Councillors.

4. Definition

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties may be the only staff member present in the office. They will be physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance.

5. Mandatory Procedures

5.1 Security of buildings

- 5.1.1 Appropriate steps should be taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible.
- 5.1.2 Alarm systems must be tested regularly.
- 5.1.3 Staff working alone must ensure they are familiar with the exits and alarms.
- 5.1.4 There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working alone.
- 5.1.5 If there is any indication that a building has been broken into a staff member must wait for assistance and not enter alone.

5.2 Personal Safety (Appendix 1)

- 5.2.1 Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
- 5.2.2 Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety.
- 5.2.3 Before working alone an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Town Clerk.
- 5.2.4 Staff must inform the Town Clerk or another appropriate member of staff when they will be working alone, giving details of their location and following an agreed plan.
- 5.2.5 If a member of staff does not report in as expected an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate.
- 5.2.6 Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues to consider include:
 - Staffing levels and availability
 - The identified risks
 - Measures in place to reduce those risks
- 5.2.7 Where staff work alone for extended periods the Town Clerk must make provisions for regular contact, to monitor and to counter the effects of working in isolation

5.3 Assessment of Risk

- 5.3.1 In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered:
 - The environment – location, security, access
 - The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances
 - History – any previous incidents in similar situations
 - Any other special circumstances

- 5.3.2 All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary.
- 5.3.3 Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second person or making other arrangements.
- 5.3.4 While resource implications cannot be ignored, safety must be the prime concern.

5.4 Planning

- 5.4.1 Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.
- 5.4.2 Communication, checking-in and fallback arrangements must be in place.
- 5.4.3 The Town Clerk is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the team.

5.5 Reporting

- 5.5.1 Should an incident occur a report and de-brief should follow.
- 5.5.2 The identified person should be debriefed in the first instance and the Town Clerk informed as soon as practicable.

5.6 Monitoring and Review

- 5.6.1 The ongoing implementation of the Lone Working Policy will be monitored by the Town Clerk.
- 5.6.2 Any member of staff with a concern regarding these issues should ensure that it is discussed with the Clerk.
- 5.6.3 The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of reviews, unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.

Appendix 1 Personal Safety

It is not wise to rely on alarm systems or breakaway techniques to get you out of trouble. There are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The employer has a responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves. This is not about raising anxiety levels but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk.

Be aware of the environment

- Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
- Make sure that your mobile phone is in good working order.
- If a potentially violent situation occurs be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you and of possible escape routes.
- Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in the building

Be aware of yourself

- Think about your body language. What message are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words.
- Be aware of your own triggers and the things that make you angry and upset.

Be aware of other people

- Take note of their non-verbal signals.
- Be aware of their triggers.
- Don't crowd people, allow them space.
- Listen to them and show them you are listening

Appendix 2 Assessment of Risk

The Environment

- It is the responsibility of the manager to assess the risks presented by the building (including access, lay-out, furnishings and lighting) and to take appropriate action.
- The alarm systems must be accessible and regularly tested.
- All staff must be familiar with the alarms and have clear instructions on how to respond to them.

Sharing Information

- Information should be shared that can help to minimise risk but with regard to issues of confidentiality and data protection.

Planning

- Ensure there are agreed contacts in case of an emergency.
- Take into consideration the situation and previous events which have caused problems.