



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

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MELTON PARISH COUNCIL LONE WORKER POLICY

Appended below is a draft Lone Working Policy.

Councillors on FERM Committee are invited to consider this draft for adoption. Because of the way that staff at Melton Parish Council work, the issue is not one that easily lends itself to a standard approach, and the policy therefore focuses on principles, the need to risk assess and mitigations rather than a standard rule based approach.

William Grosvenor

Clerk and Executive Officer to the Council

14 April 2021

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MELTON PARISH COUNCIL LONE WORKING POLICY

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Purpose of this policy and procedure

The council recognises that all of our staff will work alone, for at least some of the time, and because 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, whether office based or outdoor workers. It does not apply to councillors.

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 do work alone.

Definition

'Lone Worker' refers to people who work by themselves without work colleagues either during or outside normal working hours. Examples which apply to Melton include:

- A Maintenance Officer carrying out maintenance tasks in green spaces or woodland
- Office workers who work alone in the council's premises, and
- Office staff who might sometimes work from home.

Any worker under the age of 18 years, or anyone working in confined spaces is not permitted to work on their own. That requirement currently does not apply in Melton.

Responsibilities

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations the Council is responsible for managing the risk to lone workers.

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

Managers

- Ensure that the worker is competent to work alone;
- Ensure that all outdoor 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;
- Ensure that all foreseeable risks from office based lone working activities must be formally risk assessed. This should identify the risk to lone workers; any mitigations necessary to minimise those risks; and emergency procedures;
- Arrangements for lone working must be made clear to staff and lone workers must understand the necessary control measures that need to be put in place and have the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment;
- 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;
- Must ensure that all appropriate steps are taken in respect of security to the council's buildings e.g. external access door to be locked outside core opening hours if working alone;
- Must ensure that there is access to a first aid kit on the premises.

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 in relation to a specific location or task;
- Not to work alone where there is inadequate information or it is not practicable 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, or unanticipated periods where there is no communication.

Risk Assessments

Managers must complete (or ensure the completion of) a generic Lone Working Risk Assessment for (1) outdoor workers (who are invariably working on their own, and (2) office based staff who will work alone for some of the time. These assessments should be approved by FERM Committee. It is recognised that it is not practical to undertake an assessment prior to every lone working activity. The risk assessment should be reviewed by the lone worker before undertaking the work and a copy provided to the employee as well as being retained in the office.

Lone workers 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. Because of regular or anticipated lone working, the risk assessment should form the basis of a work plan. The plan should be proportionate to any risks that are identified from the risk assessment. The plan for an outdoor worker working with equipment will be more detailed than for someone working late in the office. This should be written down and communicated to all relevant staff and copies provided where appropriate, to councillors as well.

It will be important to ensure agreed times for contact and reporting, and site visits in particular should be recorded in the office and advised to colleagues. Staff undertaking site visits to private dwellings with should ideally be accompanied unless (1) the party being visited is known to the council or (2) the meeting will be attended as well by a council contractor or other third party.

All council staff shall provide their contact details to the council, including the contact details of their next of kin which will be retained securely in line with data protection legislation.

Health and wellbeing

In order to ensure your personal safety, it is important that you share any details of any aspects of your health that could lead to increased risk in strict confidence with your manager or specific councillors. This includes pregnancy. You can then jointly plan to mitigate any

potential risks caused by your circumstances. This information will be treated on a strict 'need to know' basis with your confidentiality 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 were appropriate. This will be important for more serious incidents of work-related violence;
- In either instance, this might also include recording details of any circumstances you think might 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 us to review our risk assessment process and see if any additional measures are needed.

If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured call the emergency services if you need immediate assistance. If possible, call your manager, colleague or a councillor to let them know (or ask someone to do so on your behalf).

Call your manager if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

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

Date of policy:

Approving committee:

Date:

Policy version reference:

Policy effective from:

Date for next review: As required

— policy ends here —

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

Lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm

Risks of lone working: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf