PORINGLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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Lone Working Policy

Policy Reference	PPC 18
Version Number	2
Associated Documents	PPC 17 Health and Safety PPC 8 Code of Conduct – Staff Staff Handbook
Last Review Date	March 2023
Frequency of Review	Three Years
Approved by	Full Council
Date for Next Review	March 2026

This is a non-contractual policy that does not require approval from employees before changes are made. Staff will remain bound by amended non-contractual policies.

Lone Working Policy

For the purposes of this Policy, the term 'employees' is used generically and includes those employed in paid work with the Council; volunteers; and councillors.

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act) and the Management of Health & Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1999, the Parish Council has a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees. These responsibilities apply equally to all employees that, for whatever reason, work alone. Lone workers should not be more at risk than other employees. This may require the Council to deploy extra risk control measures which take account of normal work and other foreseeable emergencies e.g. accident, illness, violence etc.

The principle of this policy is that the Parish Council will assess lone working practices and take steps to prevent or control risk where necessary. Where it is possible, systems will be adopted to avoid employees working alone. In cases where this is not possible the Council will provide an appropriate level of guidance and support to employees so that they are aware of, and comply with, best practice in relation to lone working.

It is the responsibility of the Parish Council to record risk assessments for all lone working. Assessments shall be carried out for and/or by all employees whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes employees that are site based but work in isolation as well as mobile employees whose work takes them out into the community.

Under no circumstances, should staff compromise their safety. If they feel unsafe at any point, while in a lone working situation, they should remove themselves from the situation immediately.

Employees of the Council have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work, and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations. Any material changes in circumstances or working methods which could increase risk to lone workers should be reported to the Parish Clerk or the Chairman of the Council, and the relevant risk assessment reviewed with new practices put in place where appropriate.

Lone Working/Lone Worker Definition

These are people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision:

a) At a fixed base (office or other):
    i. Only one person working on the premises;
    ii. Working separately from others;
    iii. Working outside of normal hours.
b) Away from their fixed base:
    i. Required to work at another location / building on behalf of the Council;
    ii. Required to travel alone to and from a fixed base for any work purpose;
    iii. Required to attend meetings potentially on a one-to-one basis.

Potential Risks to Lone Workers

- Open access and unlocked doors, accessible to the public, contractors etc;
- Being taken ill whilst at work;
- Lack of training regarding Health & Safety procedures;
- Hazards in the workplace;
- Remote areas;
- Parking arrangements (poorly lit and isolated areas).

Assessing the Risk

Before drawing up and recording the risk assessment, it must be established whether the work can be done by a lone worker; and what arrangements will be in place to ensure an individual is not exposed to unnecessary and unacceptable risk.

When recording a risk assessment, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Environment – location, security, access/egress;
- Context – nature of the task;
- History – have there been any accidents/incidents in the past?

All available information should be considered and updated as and when necessary. If there is reason for doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, then consideration should be given for making other arrangements to complete the task.

Safety Guidelines for Staff

a) Working in a fixed base:
   i. Familiarise yourself with the layout of the building including fire exits and escape routes;
   ii. Where practical, keep external doors of the building where you are working locked;
   iii. Keep the office door closed on electronic lock at all times;
   iv. Do not open the door to unexpected visitors, but assess the caller on CCTV and through the window before satisfying yourself that it is safe to open the door;
   v. In the case of contractors arriving without an appointment, ask for identification. If unsure, check with the contractor's employer or head office;
   vi. Have contact numbers to hand to be able to contact relevant person(s) immediately (should you feel ill, suspect and intruder in the building etc);
   vii. Ensure you are wearing the personal alarm whilst in the building;
   viii. Ensure you have messaged the clerk/Estate Manager when you have locked and then leave the building;
   ix. Park as near as you can to the building;
   x. Carry a mobile telephone while working in the building;
   xi. Set car park lighting to remain on for the time that you expect to work in the building;
   xii. Ensure that a risk assessment has been carried out where appropriate.

b) Working away from their fixed base:
    i. Inform another member of staff or a Councillor of your movements including the time you estimate you will be away from base, when you expect to return, along with relevant information regarding where and at what time visits will be made and to whom;
    ii. Ensure you, and the office, have a radio on and on the same channel;
    iii. Leave details of venues including contact numbers;
    iv. Take a mobile phone with you;
    v. Avoid meetings in isolated places, and if this cannot be avoided ask someone to accompany you, or notify someone of arrival and departure;
    vi. If you become held up, contact a colleague to update them on your estimated return time.

Responsibility

a) Employees are responsible for personal and other safety including:
    i. Taking reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who might be affected by acts or omissions at work;
    ii. Maintaining a line of communication on a regular basis with other members of staff / councillors to identify and minimise risk;
    iii. Informing someone when they leave the fixed base to perform Council tasks and informing a colleague when returning to a fixed base after the relevant task is completed;
    iv. Reporting an accident/incident that may occur to the Chairman or relevant person to allow for a full investigation to take place and complete an accident report.
b) Employers are responsible for:
    i. Taking reasonable care for the health and safety of staff by identifying and assessing potential risks to ensure that staff are safe at all times;
    ii. Maintaining a line of communication on a regular basis with staff to identify and minimise risk;
    iii. Ensuring staff receive all relevant training and information available;
    iv. Ensuring staff have a means of maintaining contact and agreeing a system of reporting at regular times when away from the normal place of work.

Exemptions

Employees and/or volunteers are exempt from working alone in certain situations:

- Young persons and vulnerable adults under instruction in a fixed base (example work experience, helping with Council tasks etc);
- Where activities and work with substances / machinery could be hazardous to health.