

## **BISHOP'S CASTLE LONE WORKER POLICY**

### **Policy Statement**

Where the conditions of service delivery or its associated tasks require staff to work alone, both the individual staff member and their Line Manager have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

### **Purpose**

This policy is designed to alert Town Councillors and 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. It is not intended to raise anxiety unnecessarily, but to give staff a framework for managing potentially risky situations.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all Staff and Councillors who may be working alone, at any time, in any of the situations described in the definition below.

### **Definition**

Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where Councillors or Staff in the course of their duties work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

### **Mandatory Building Procedures**

#### **Security of buildings**

Councillors and their employees must ensure that:-

1. All appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building and that emergency exits are accessible
2. Alarm systems are tested regularly – both fire and intruder
3. When working alone they are familiar with exits and alarms.
4. There is access to a telephone and first aid kit
5. If there is any indication that the building has been broken into, they call for assistance before entering
6. External doors are locked when the building is not in use to avoid unwanted visitors if working alone

#### **Personal safety**

1. Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
2. Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
3. An assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Council.
4. Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the Council. Issues to take into account include:
  - The identified risks
  - Measures in place to reduce those risks

- Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.
5. Councillors and Staff working away from the Town Hall should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times.

### **Assessment of risk**

In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access.
- The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations.
- Any other special circumstances.
- All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation other arrangements should be made in order to complete the task.

### **Planning**

Communication and fallback arrangements must be in place. Staff should ensure someone is always aware of their movements and expected hours of work.

### **Practice Guidance – Personal Safety**

‘Reasonable precautions’ might include:

- ✓ checking directions for the destination
- ✓ ensuring your car, if used, is road-worthy and has break-down cover
- ✓ ensuring someone knows where you are and when are expected home
- ✓ avoiding where possible poorly lit or deserted areas
- ✓ taking care when entering or leaving empty buildings, especially at night
- ✓ ensuring that items such as laptops or mobile phones are carried discreetly

### **Reporting**

Should an incident occur, the reporting and de-briefing should be undertaken by the staff member’s line manager or identified person.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Any member of staff or a councillor with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with the whole Council.