



## **FRAMLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

### **LONE WORKER POLICY**

#### **1. Overview**

By necessity, all the Town Council staff and Councillors are lone workers on occasion. It is worth noting that Staff and Councillors always have been lone working and there are no records of any acts of harm.

Legislation in particular, good practise in general and a changing demographic requires the Town Council to create a 'Lone Working Risk Assessment' and 'Lone Working Policy'.

The legislation is under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.

A lone working policy is not designed to stop lone working, but to ensure that when working alone all steps are taken to protect yourself.

The policy should be applied with reference to other policies created by the Town Council – in particular Health and Safety.

#### **2. The Basic Principles of the lone working policy**

- a) Always conduct a 'dynamic risk assessment' when working alone, and take what measures are necessary.
- b) Do not put yourself in danger, and actively keep yourself out of danger
- c) From your risk assessment, have a plan of what to do
- d) Be aware of any escalation, and deal with this appropriately
- e) Use others to help protect yourself.

#### **2a. The Dynamic Risk Assessment.**

This is the fundamental tool to keep yourself safe. It is derived from 'a doorstep risk assessment' and used when knocking on someone's door for a lone visit. If you were to do this whilst hearing shouting and banging from inside there is clearly violence ahead. A quick look at the house and listening to any activity gives you the basic information you need to decide whether to ring the bell or turn back. A proforma Dynamic Risk Assessment is at the end of the Lone Working Risk Assessment.

This principle applies to anywhere one happens to find oneself working alone – in the office, around the town or during visits to people.

**The procedure is to simply assess the risks of where you are, where you are going, what you are going to do and who you will see. If any of these factors change or lead you to conclude the risk is increasing – take steps to keep safe.**

## **2b. Do not put yourself in danger and actively keep yourself out of danger.**

Following the dynamic risk assessment, you need to decide what to do. **If the assessment gives you any concerns; do not work alone until you have mitigated the risk.** If the risk assessment raises no concerns then complete what task you had to do alone.

**Actively thinking about the risks will naturally lead to a decision, or a feeling, about a course of action. It is important to follow that decision or act upon that feeling and not recklessly carry on.**

## **2c. From your risk assessment have a plan of what to do**

A few 'What if' questions need to be answered from your risk assessment. For example

- What if this person I am talking to gets even more angry?
- What if I fall down the stairs in the office at night?
- What if I break down on the way back from Ipswich at night?

The answer to these "what if" questions will be your plan of what to do. In most cases the answer is to make sure someone else knows what you are doing or you have an escape route, or an action to take which will get you out of trouble.

A golden rule is when meeting someone alone and you have assessed there may be a risk of this person getting angry or even violent is that you either don't see them alone, see them where you can be seen by others (or can shout for help) or at worst meet them but make sure you arrange for them to be behind a table or other obstruction and you have an easy route out of a door to escape.

## **2d. Beware of escalation.**

Confrontational and difficult meetings with people is part of local government life. Almost all end up resolved but there could be times when someone is getting increasingly agitated. There are techniques which can be employed to try and ease the situation. Cllrs and staff should be trained in these techniques.

**If escalation occurs to the point of fear of violence do not wait for the violence to start but get out of the same space as the angry person quickly and be prepared to shut doors and shout for help.**

## **2e. Use others to help protect yourself.**

When you are going somewhere on your own, make sure someone else knows where you are going, at what time and when you are expected to be back. What works best is when that person calls you if you are late, and then if they fail to get through a second time, they can alert others with the knowledge of at least where and when you had planned to be.

If you were going to meet someone alone - let someone else know. If you have any concerns ask that person to call you at a precise time while you are meeting the person you have concerns about. Explain to the person you are meeting that you will need to take a call from someone in the office and apologise in advance. The person asked to call you will need to know what questions to ask and what to do if you raise an alarm. A colour coded system works very well. If the person lone working says – ‘Oh that is in the Red file’, then the person at the other end of the telephone knows immediately to call the police. Orange file means please call back in two minutes and green is everything OK. This will convey your situation without having to say directly - which could escalate a situation.

### **3. Further guidance**

The best source of lone working advice is from the Suzy Lamplugh trust:  
<https://www.suzylamplugh.org/FAQs/lone-working>

The Health and Safety Executive also offer guidance:  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm>