

NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

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Lone Working Policy 2019 / 20

Introduction:

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers have a legal obligation to look after the health, safety and welfare of their employees and contractors.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure health, safety and welfare of lone workers in order to reduce the risks of lone working as far as is reasonably possible and practicable.

Report:

Employees may be required to work by themselves from time to time. Lone workers are those employees who, at any time, work by themselves in the office, in clients' premises or other locations away from the office.

This may be in Town Council premises, outside on site or work related travel. Examples could include being based in a location away from other colleagues, working late in the office, visiting members of the public or outside contractors. Whilst working alone is not in itself unsafe there may be circumstances where lone working may present a risk to the employee. Typical risk factors include having an accident, being exposed to violence, drunken or threatening behaviour, indecent exposure or coming across attempted criminal activity, such as a burglary.

This policy applies to employees, councillors, contractors or self-employed people doing work for the Council and for the purposes of this policy, lone working is defined as anyone who works in isolation without close or direct supervision.

Employees include:

- Town Clerk / RFO
- Assistant Officer
- Councillors

- Contractors

Examples of lone working include:

- Office working
- Meeting with contractors
- Salem Chapel inspections
- Survey sessions

Consideration of a Policy:

It is recommended that Members introduce a policy on Lone Working in order to:

- Increase employee awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as reasonable practicable.
- It is important to ensure that appropriate training is available so that employees are able to recognise risk and to provide practical advice of safety when working alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of any incidents relating to lone working.

Employer Responsibilities:

The Council Members who comprise the legal entity of Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council have an overall responsibility for the lone working activities of their employees and others that are affected by their work and will take responsibility for:

- The lone working arrangements of employees, councillors and contractors
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that they regularly review the effectiveness of the policy
- Ensuring that all employees and contractors are aware of this policy
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly, putting procedures and safe systems into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone, especially in respect of new working practices
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents
- Reviewing and developing the lone working policy

The Town Clerk is responsible for:

- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out
- Reporting any incidents to Council
- training

All employees and councillors are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions
- Following rules and procedures designed for safe working
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves and/or others
- Taking part in any training designed to meet the requirements of the policy
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone
- Recognising potentially high risk activities and putting in place arrangements to mitigate the risk associated with working alone

Security of Buildings:

- Appropriate steps should be taken to control access to the building and that emergency exits are accessible.
- Alarm systems must be tested regularly.
- Staff working alone must ensure that they are familiar with the exits and alarms.
- There must be access to a telephone (including an up to date list of contact phone numbers) and first aid equipment for staff working alone. A first aid kit is located in the Town Council office.
- If there is any indication that a building has been broken into, a staff member must not enter alone but must wait for backup.

Personal Safety:

- 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
- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety as they would in any other circumstances
- Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved and measures to mitigate risk should be identified in conjunction with their line manager
- Staff must inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving details of their location and following an agreed plan

- 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
- Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues that should be taken into account:
 - Staffing levels and availability
 - Staff working regularly in the community
 - The identified risks
 - Measures in place to reduce those risks
 - Where members of staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact to monitor and to counter the effects of working in isolation.

Planning:

Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.

Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must in place. The Town Clerk should be responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the individual.

Risk Assessment:

The Town Clerk is responsible for identifying and assessing the risks of lone working both in terms of the likelihood of causing harm and also the severity of any possible injury. Consideration will be given to whether the activity is one that can safely be accomplished by one person or whether the presence of another appropriate person would be available. If a risk cannot be eliminated completely, action must then be taken to reduce the risk to the lowest level practically achievable. A risk assessment should be carried out for all employees who are going to be working alone. The lone worker must be considered reasonably physically fit and must declare if they have any medical issue that may put them at risk whilst working alone e.g. hearing impairment, diabetes. A first aid kit should be readily available at all times in order to render first aid for minor injuries. Risk assessments for workers working alone in a building or at a particular site would include:

- Whether the work can be done safely by a lone worker
- What arrangements will prevent an individual being exposed to unnecessary risk
- The environment – location, security, access
- The context – nature of the task, use of equipment etc
- The degree of isolation
- The type of work activity
- The level of supervision and support
- Contact or proximity with members of the public

- Safe access and exit points
- Risk of violence
- Safety equipment for individual use
- Channels of communication in case of emergency (e.g. mobile telephone or emergency contact details)
- Site security
- Security arrangements i.e. alarm systems
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations
- Any other applicable or appropriate circumstances

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

Incident reporting:

An incident can be defined as an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage. All incidents must be reported to the designated point of contact i.e. the Town Clerk. Employees should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe (even if this is not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse. It is a good idea to remind employees that they should dial 999 if they need emergency assistance.

Support for Staff:

Employees working for the Town Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel threatened or at risk or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Town Clerk will ensure that all lone workers training needs are assessed and that they receive the appropriate training.

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Town Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours, the Town Mayor should also be contacted by the Clerk. The Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to any legal or insurance matters. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

Should an incident occur, the identified person should be debriefed in the first instance. Members should be informed as soon as is practicable. A record of

incidents should be maintained by the Town Council. Any support following an incident should be available to all that may have been affected by the incident.

Contact /involvement of the Police:

Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council is committed to protecting the staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those responsible. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process.

Except in the case of emergency, employees should inform the Town Clerk of any incident immediately. The Town Clerk will thereafter take responsibility to contact the police to report the details of the incident.

Training:

To ensure that lone workers are made aware of dangers and follow safe working arrangements, the Town Council will ensure that adequate training (as part of training package) is provided to lone workers to ensure that they have a knowledge and understanding of:

- The hazards and risks associated with the activity
- The steps that have been taken to reduce the risks to the lowest practical level
- Any written procedure and safe working arrangements including any contingency arrangements for foreseeable problems and their own responsibilities
- The appropriate steps to take to minimise the risk of violence
- Emergency arrangements for illness or injury, including first aid provision
- They are aware of their own responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council by working safely.

Tracy Hughes
Town Clerk /RFO
Revised: December 2019

Adopted by Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council

Signed:

Councillor K Jones JP – Town Mayor / Chairman

Dated: 9th December 2019