



## **Policy**

### Social Media

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Social media is the term commonly given to web-based and mobile technology tools which allow interaction and engagement between individuals, organisations and communities, by sharing opinions, knowledge, content or interests.
- 1.2 Lyme Regis Town Council will use social media to communicate effectively with the public and stakeholders.

#### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
  - 2.1.1 Respond to public use of social media as a way to communicate
  - 2.1.2 Establish a corporate approach, standards and guidance on the use of social media
  - 2.1.3 Further the council's aims and objectives, as detailed in the Corporate Plan, including promotion of key campaigns, projects and events
  - 2.1.4 Oversee how the council communicates messages to the public, while maintaining its public duties
  - 2.1.5 Uphold the reputation of the council and enhance the image of Lyme Regis
  - 2.1.6 Provide an appropriate level of awareness, knowledge and skill to properly manage the use of social media and minimise the risks to the council
  - 2.1.7 Help employees to distinguish between the use of social media in their work and personal lives.
  - 2.1.8 Provide clarity to employees in understanding the behaviour expected for functioning in an electronic world are no different from those expected of employees on a daily basis in other methods of communication.

#### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy applies to employees of the council who are authorised to access the council's social media platforms.
- 3.2 This policy is designed to cover the council's use of social media where the content, information, or services are being provided by, or on behalf of, the council.
- 3.3 This policy is designed to cover the council's use of Facebook and Twitter.
- 3.4 Contributions covered by this policy include, but are not limited to, text, photographs and video.
- 3.5 As social media evolves over time, this procedure will be adapted to reflect modifications.

#### **4. Legal and statutory considerations**

- 4.1 The council will abide by any relevant or applicable laws, terms, and conditions to ensure the organisation is not exposed to risks. This includes, but is not exclusively limited to, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation.
- 4.2 Council use of social media must be undertaken in accordance with the council's policies and procedures. This includes, but is not exclusively limited to, the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure, Equality and Diversity Policy, Communications/PR Policy and Procedure, Complaints Policy and Procedure, Health and Safety Policy, and Information Policy.
- 4.3 Use of social media sites will at all times be consistent with the council's duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults, in accordance with relevant statutory requirements.
- 4.4 Employees using social media sites for business purposes must maintain political neutrality and not indicate individual political opinions.
- 4.5 In the six-week run up to a local, general or European election – also known as the pre-election period – the council must not do or say anything that could be seen in any way to support any political party or candidate. The council will continue to publish important service announcements using social media but may have to remove responses if they are overtly party political.
- 4.6 A statement will be published on all council social media to set out the policy on acceptable use of these platforms by the public.

## **5. Professional use of social media**

- 5.1 The reputation and/or business of the council, service users, partners or others connected with the council must not be brought into disrepute through use of social media sites.
- 5.2 The council will accept no liability for an individuals' participation on social media sites. Participants are personally accountable for any contributions they make.
- 5.3 When participating in social networking or while using social media, common sense and good judgment must be used when posting or sharing material. If not, consequences can include, among other issues, negative publicity, regulatory attention and confidentiality or copyright concerns.
- 5.4 If material posted by an employee breaches council policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **6. Posting on social media**

- 6.1 Employees should feel able to respond to comments on social media sites where they feel knowledgeable and confident to do so, particularly where someone is looking for help, or having a problem with a service the council provides.
- 6.2 Where employees are unable to respond to such postings they should raise the matter with either their line manager or inform the relevant member of staff.
- 6.3 Where an issue is potentially damaging to the reputation of the council the management team should also be alerted.
- 6.4 Where a mistake is made in a posting, it should be publicly corrected at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.5 Any retweets, follows, or likes are not an endorsement of a service, individual or organisation. The council does not take responsibility for any content on pages or profiles it has shared.

6.6 Unless otherwise stated, the views or comments given on any of the council's social media sites may not necessarily reflect the views of the town council.

## **7. Monitoring and responding**

7.1 The council's social media accounts are monitored Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays and public holidays) from 9am to 5pm.

7.2 The council will respond to comments, replies and direct messages as soon as possible. Sometimes it will be necessary to find out information before a reply can be given.

7.3 The council reserves the right to block an account if a user is promoting a product or service, if the user has infringed the rules of the social media space, or if the user's interactions are offensive.

7.3 The council will rely on the measures of protection and intervention which the social networking site already has in place, e.g. against illegal, harmful or offensive comment, for example by reporting posts to the site operator.

7.4 The council reserves the right to delete any posts that breach the rules of the community or the council's own terms of use. This includes:

7.4.1 Posts that are unlawful, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive

7.4.2 Swearing

7.4.3 Content copied from elsewhere, for which the poster does not own the copyright

7.4.4 The same or similar messages posted more than once. It will be considered 'spam'

7.4.5 Publicising personal information, such as contact details

7.4.6 Advertisements for products or services

7.4.7 A user impersonating someone else

7.4.8 Political comments

7.4.9 Libellous statements

7.4.10 Controversial, irrelevant and off topic messages, otherwise known as 'trolling'

7.5 Social media is not the appropriate avenue for raising an official complaint, serious issues or urgent requests. Complaints should be made in accordance with the council's Complaints Policy and Procedure. Serious issues or urgent requests should be referred directly to the council office, councillor or relevant staff member.

## **8. Personal use of social media**

8.1 As the use and popularity of social media grows, the lines between what is public and private, personal and professional have blurred. The council respects employees' and councillors' right to personal use of social media.

8.2 Councillors and employees must not bring the reputation of the council or colleagues into disrepute. Actions which adversely affect the council's reputation may become a matter for the council.

- 8.3 If councillors and employees already use social networks or blogs for personal use, any comments or images should not reflect on the council in a negative manner.
- 8.4 When using social media for personal purposes, councillors and employees must not imply they are speaking for the council. The use of the council email address, council logos or other council identification should be avoided and it should be made clear that what is said is not representative of the views and opinions of the council.
- 8.5 A clear distinction should be made between profiles/postings as an individual or those as a councillor or member of staff. Profiles/postings in relation to council business should be transparent and respectful.
- 8.6 Councillors and employees should comply with other council policies when using social media. For example, do not breach council confidentiality, or the code of conduct. If in doubt, don't post it.
- 8.7 Councillors and employees should be mindful of their privacy settings.

## **9. Review**

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed in February 2025 or sooner if there are changes in legislation or best practice.

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide avenues for employees and others that the council deal with to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken. For the purposes of this policy and accompanying procedure, 'employees' is taken to include others that the council deals with.
- 1.2 To allow employees to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the council's response to their concerns.
- 1.3 To reassure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation.

### **2. Policy**

- 2.1 There are procedures in place to enable staff to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment. This policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of the grievance procedure. Therefore, any serious concern that a member of staff has about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of officers or members of the council or others acting on behalf of the council can and should be reported under this policy.
- 2.2 This concern may be about something that is:
  - 2.2.1 Unlawful
  - 2.2.2 Against the council's standing orders, financial regulations
  - 2.2.3 Rules and policies
  - 2.2.4 Against established standards of practice
  - 2.2.5 Improper conduct
  - 2.2.6 Amounts to malpractice
  - 2.2.7 Posing a danger to the health and safety of individuals
  - 2.2.8 Likely to cause damage to the environment
  - 2.2.9 Other conduct that gives cause for concern
- 2.4 This is not a comprehensive list but is intended to illustrate the range of issues which might be raised under this code.

### **3. Safeguards**

#### **3.1 Harassment or victimisation**

The council recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisals from those who may be guilty of malpractice or from the council as a whole. The council will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation, including informal pressures, and will take appropriate action in order to protect a person who raises a concern in good faith even if they were mistaken. In addition, employees have statutory protection against reprisals under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and can refer their case to an employment tribunal.

#### **3.2 Confidentiality**

As far as possible, the council will protect the identity of any employee who raises a concern and does not want his/her/their name to be disclosed but this confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. It must be appreciated that any investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the person reporting the concern may be required as part of the evidence. Where an employee has requested that their identity should not be revealed, the council will discuss the

matter with them before embarking on any course of action whereby their identity will need to be disclosed.

### 3.3 Anonymity

Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the council but it is difficult to investigate concerns expressed this way. Hopefully, the guarantees in this policy will provide reassurance to staff to enable them to raise concerns in person. In exercising this discretion, the factors taken into account include:

- 3.3.1 The likelihood of obtaining the necessary information
- 3.3.2 The seriousness of the issues raised
- 3.3.3 The specific nature of the complaint
- 3.3.4 The duty to the public

### 3.4 False and malicious allegations

If an employee is found to have made a false and malicious accusation, disciplinary action will be taken. If a concern which is genuinely believed proves to be unfounded, the council will endeavour to ensure that the impact on those affected is minimised.

## Whistleblowing Procedure

### 1. How to Raise a Concern

- 1.1 As a first step, an employee should normally raise concerns with their immediate manager. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice. If an employee prefers, for whatever reason, or if an employee believes that management is involved, they could approach the town clerk, the chairman of the Human Resources Committee, or the Mayor.
- 1.2 Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Employees are invited to set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why the employee is particularly concerned about the situation.
- 1.3 The earlier an employee expresses the concern, the easier it is to take action; they should not wait until they have proof. Although an employee is not expected to prove the truth of the allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person they contact that there are sufficient grounds for their concern.
- 1.4 If an employee has any personal interest in the matter this should be disclosed at the outset.
- 1.5 Alternatively, an employee may wish to get confidential advice from their trade union or professional association. They can also contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work ([020 7404 6609](tel:02074046609)), ([020 3117 2520](tel:02031172520)), [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk) [www.protect-advice.org.uk](http://www.protect-advice.org.uk), who have lawyers who can give independent advice on how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.
- 1.6 An employee may also invite their trade union or professional association to raise a matter on their behalf.

### 2. How the Council Will Respond

- 2.1 The action taken by the council will depend on the nature of the concern. Where appropriate, the matters raised may:
  - 2.1.1 Be investigated by a manager, the chairman of the Human Resources Committee, the Mayor, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process
  - 2.1.2 Be referred to the police
  - 2.1.3 Form the subject of an independent inquiry
- 2.2 To protect the individual and the council, an initial investigation will be carried out to decide whether a full investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
- 2.3 It should be noted that some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this should be taken before any investigation is completed.
- 2.4 Normally Within 10 working days of a concern being raised, the ~~town clerk~~ person investigating will write to the person raising the concern;
  - 2.4.1 Acknowledging that the concern; has been received,
  - 2.4.2 Indicating how ~~he/she~~ they proposes to deal with the matter; and
  - 2.4.3 Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response.
- 2.5 If it is impossible for the initial inquiries to be completed within 10 working days, this will be explained in writing. Where a decision is made that no investigation will take place, the reasons for this will be provided in writing.

- 2.6 Where any meeting is arranged, employees have the right, ~~if they so wish~~, to be accompanied by a trade union or professional association representative or a ~~friend~~ colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.
- 2.7 The council will take appropriate steps to minimise any difficulties which an employee may experience as a result of raising a concern. For example, if employees are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the council will need to inform them and consider what steps are required to provide them with support.
- 2.8 Subject to legal constraints, the person raising the concern will receive as much information as possible about the outcomes of any investigation.

### **3. How the Matter Can be Taken Further**

- 3.1 If an employee remains dissatisfied and they feel it is right to take the matter outside the council, they may wish to take advice from their trade union, local Citizens' Advice Bureau, or a solicitor.
- 3.2 An employee may also wish to rely on their rights under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This Act gives employees protection from victimisation if they make certain disclosures of information in the public interest. The provisions are quite complex and include a list of prescribed persons outside of the council who can be contacted in certain circumstances.
- 3.3 If an employee does take the matter outside the council, they need to ensure they do not disclose information where they owe a duty of confidentiality to persons other than the council, i.e. service users, or where they would commit an offence by making such disclosures. This is something that an employee would need to check.

### **4. Responsibility for Implementing**

- 4.1 The responsibility for ensuring the council adheres to this policy rests with the town clerk.

## Equality and Diversity Policy

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To ensure equal opportunities and fairness among staff, members, customers, clients, service users and organisations considering contracting with the council.

### **2. Policy**

- 2.1 Lyme Regis Town Council recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the council, its employees, members, citizens, service users and visitors to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the council to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The council aims that its workforce is representative of all sections of society and each employee and member feels respected and able to give of their best.
- 2.3 The council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and to all its members.
- 2.4 All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, and members will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and members will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council.
- 2.5 Council employees or members will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customer or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation in the provision of council services. These are known as protected characteristics
- 2.6 This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any government departments, and any other statutory bodies.

### **3. The council's commitment**

- 3.1 To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all its employees and members are recognised and valued.
- 3.2 Every employee and member is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- 3.3 Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all employees and members.
- 3.4 To promote equality in the workplace which the council believes is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

- 3.5 The council will review all its employment practices and procedures and member procedures to ensure fairness.
- 3.6 Breaches of the equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings or in the case of members, a possible breach of the code of conduct.
- 3.7 This policy is fully supported by members and the town clerk and has been discussed with employees.
- 3.8 The policy will be monitored and reviewed every three years.

#### **4. Responsibilities of Management**

- 4.1 Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the members and the town clerk who will ensure that they and employees operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Managers will ensure that:
  - 4.1.1 All their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
  - 4.1.2 Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
  - 4.1.3 Proper records are maintained.
- 4.2 The town clerk is responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants.

#### **5. Responsibilities of Employees and Members**

- 5.1 Responsibility for ensuring there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all employees and members and the attitudes of employees and members are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all employees and members should:
  - 5.1.1 Comply with the policy and arrangements;
  - 5.1.2 Not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
  - 5.1.3 Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff, members or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
  - 5.1.4 Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
  - 5.1.5 Inform their manager or the Mayor if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

#### **6. Third Parties**

- 6.1 Third-party harassment occurs where a council employee or member is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. The council will not tolerate such actions against its staff or members, and the employee or member concerned should inform their manager / supervisor or the Mayor at once that this has occurred. The council will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

## **7. Related Policies and Arrangements**

7.1 All employment and member policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The council's policies will be reviewed regularly, normally every three years, and any discriminatory elements removed.

## **8. Rights of Disabled People**

8.1 The council attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

8.2 Under the terms of this policy, the council will:

8.2.1 Make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee or member who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);

8.2.2 Include disabled people in training/development programmes;

8.2.3 Give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

## **9. Equality Training**

9.1 Briefing sessions will be held for members and employees on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information will also be included in the induction programme.

## **10. Monitoring**

10.1 The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees and members by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion/ beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff or members who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.

10.2 There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.

10.3 The council will maintain information on staff or members who have been involved in certain key policies: disciplinary, grievance and bullying and harassment.

10.4 Where appropriate equality impact assessments will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the council's policies and its services may have on those who experience them.

10.5 The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential.

10.6 If monitoring shows that the council, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the council, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, the council's policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal 'positive action'.

## **11. Grievance/Discipline**

- 11.1 Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the council's grievance policy and procedure, and bullying and harassment policy and procedure. Members have the right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation with West Dorset District Council's (WDDC) monitoring officer.
- 11.2 Discrimination and victimisation by employees will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary policy and procedure. Discrimination and victimisation by members will be referred to WDDC's monitoring officer.

## Lone Working Policy and Procedure

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The following policy and procedure has been written to minimise risks to staff working alone. Under the Health & Safety Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, it is the duty of the council to assess risks to lone workers/volunteers and to take steps to avoid or control risks, where necessary. Employees of the council have a responsibility 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.

### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities of each person when working alone, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff who work alone, at any time and in any of the situations described in the definition below.

### **4. Context**

- 4.1 Within the overall policy relating to safer working practices, support for lone workers is an essential part, and the same principles apply, particularly:
- 4.1.1 A commitment to supporting staff and managers both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
  - 4.1.2 Recognising and reducing risk
  - 4.1.3 A commitment to the provision of appropriate support for staff
  - 4.1.4 A clear understanding of responsibilities
  - 4.1.5 The priority placed on the safety of the individual over property
  - 4.1.6 A commitment to providing appropriate training for staff
  - 4.1.7 Equipment such as mobile phones will be made available as appropriate.

### **5. Definition**

- 5.1 Within this document, 'lone working' refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties may be the only staff member present in their working environment. They will be physically isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance.

### **6. Hazards**

- 6.1 Hazards which lone workers can encounter are:
- 6.1.1 Accidents or emergencies arising out of the work
  - 6.1.2 Sudden illnesses
  - 6.1.3 Inadequate provision of rest, hygiene and welfare facilities
  - 6.1.4 Violence from members of the public

### **7. Mandatory Procedures**

- 7.1. Security of buildings

- 7.1.1 Appropriate steps should be taken to control access to the building, and to ensure emergency exits are accessible
- 7.1.2 Alarm systems must be operational, serviced and tested regularly
- 7.1.3 Staff working alone must ensure they are familiar with the exits and alarm systems
- 7.1.4 There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working alone
- 7.1.5 If there is any indication a building has been broken into, a staff member must not enter the building alone and must wait for back-up.

## 7.2. Personal safety

- 7.2.1 Staff must not assume 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.
- 7.2.2 Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances, see appendix 1.
- 7.2.3 Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the line manager
- 7.2.4 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.
- 7.2.6 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.
- 7.2.7 Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues to take into account include:
  - 7.2.7.1 staffing levels and availability
  - 7.2.7.2 the identified risks
  - 7.2.7.3 measures in place to reduce those risks
- 7.2.8 Where 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.

## 7.3 Assessment of risk

- 7.3.1 In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk, the following issues should be considered:
  - 7.3.1.1 the environment – location, security, access
  - 7.3.1.2 the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances
  - 7.3.1.3 history – any previous incidents in similar situations
  - 7.3.1.4 any other special circumstances
- 7.3.2 All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary.
- 7.3.3 Where there is any reasonable concern about the safety of a lone worker, consideration should be given to sending a second person or making other arrangements.
- 7.3.4 While resource implications cannot be ignored, safety must be the prime concern. For further guidance see appendix 2, and the risk assessment at appendix 3.

## 7.4 Planning

- 7.4.1 Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.
- 7.4.2 Communication, checking-in and fallback arrangements must be in place.
- 7.4.3 The team manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the team.

## 7.5 Reporting

- 6.5.1 Should an incident occur, a report and de-briefing should follow.
- 6.5.2 The identified person should be de-briefed in the first instance; if this is not the staff member's line manager, that manager should be informed as soon as practicable.

7.6 Support following an incident

- 7.6.1 Support should be available to anyone affected by the incident.

8. **Monitoring**

- 8.1 The implementation of the Lone Working Policy and Procedure will be monitored.
- 8.2 Any member of staff with a concern about lone working should ensure it is discussed with their manager or with the whole team, as appropriate.

**Supporting Documents**

This policy and procedure is supported by additional guidance appendices 1, 2 and 3.

## **Lone Working Policy and Procedure - Appendix 1**

### **1. Personal Safety**

- 1.1 It is not wise to rely on breakaway techniques to get you out of trouble – there are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The employer has a responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves.
- 1.2 This is not about raising anxiety levels, but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk for yourself and for service users in your care.

### **2. Be aware of the environment**

- 2.1 Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
- 2.2 Make sure your mobile phone is in good working order.
- 2.3 If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.
- 2.4 Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in the building.

### **3. Be aware of yourself**

- 3.1 Think about your body language and any messages you are giving out.
- 3.2 Think about your tone of voice and choice of words.
- 3.3 ~~Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable? What signals does it send out?~~
- 3.4 Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

### **4. Be aware of other people**

- 4.1 Take note of their non-verbal signals.
- 4.2 Be aware of their triggers.
- 4.3 Don't crowd people – allow them space.
- 4.4 Listen to them, and show them you are listening.
- 4.5 Avoid and defuse conflict

## **Lone Working Policy and Procedure - Appendix 2 - Assessment of risk**

### **1. The environment**

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of the manager to assess the risks presented by the buildings and environment – access, lay-out, furnishings, people, hazardous waste and lighting – and to take appropriate action.
- 1.2 Alarm systems must be accessible, and tested regularly.
- 1.3 All staff must be familiar with the alarms, and have clear instructions on how to respond to them.

### **2. Sharing Information**

- 2.1 Information should be shared with regard to issues of confidentiality and data protection.

### **3. Planning**

- 3.1 Ensure there are agreed contacts in case of an emergency.
- 3.2 Take into consideration the situation and previous events which have caused problems

**-Risk Assessment Form**

**Activity: Lone Working** **Assessment Date:** **Review Date:**

Activity	Hazards and Risks	Optional Controls	Our Controls	Our Future Controls	Risk Level	Target date & by whom
<p><b>Working in office/ premise alone</b></p>	<p>Fire: Burns Smoke inhalation Trapped in building</p>	<p>Fire detection system Fire alarm call points Fire action Fire doors kept shut Training for staff Fire exits kept clear Planned inspection Hazard reporting and correction Adequate cleaning/ waste removal Electrical safety inc PAT testing.</p>	<p>Fire detection system Fire alarm call points Fire action Fire doors kept shut Training for staff Fire exits kept clear Planned inspection Hazard reporting and correction Adequate cleaning/ waste removal Electrical safety inc PAT testing.</p>	<p>Fire warden training Fire risk assessment training</p>		

<b>Working with public</b>	Intruder: Attack Verbal abuse Theft Arson	Controlled access to building On-site security Challenging unknown visitors where safe or reporting/ requesting assistance Access to phone Keep valuables locked up Fire precautions Post incident support Panic alarm CCTV	Controlled access to building On-site security Challenging unknown visitors where safe or reporting/ requesting assistance Access to phone Keep valuables locked up Fire precautions Post incident support Panic alarm Town Radio system provided	Personal cameras for enforcement Conflict awareness training		
<b>Cash Handling</b>	Thief Assault	See separate cash handling assessment				

**Risk Assessment Form**

**Activity: Lone Working**      **Assessment Date:**      **Review Date:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Hazards and Risks</b>	<b>Optional Controls</b>	<b>Our Controls</b>	<b>Our Future Controls</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Target date &amp; by whom</b>
<b>Using equipment</b>	Illness/injury/accident/death	Only trained operatives use equipment. Some equipment use prohibited when lone working e.g. chainsaws, ladders, etc All equipment well maintained and recorded as such. Equipment inspected by operative prior to each use. Log in/out procedure used. 'No show' procedure in place. Call in system used. Communications available.	Dangerous plant and tools prohibited when lone working. Mobile phone provided Only trained operatives use equipment. Some equipment use prohibited when lone working e.g. chainsaws, ladders, etc All equipment well maintained and recorded as such. Equipment inspected by operative prior to each use. Log in/out procedure used. 'No show' procedure in place. Call in system used. Communications available. Defect reporting			

Assessor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk's signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## RISK ASSESSMENT

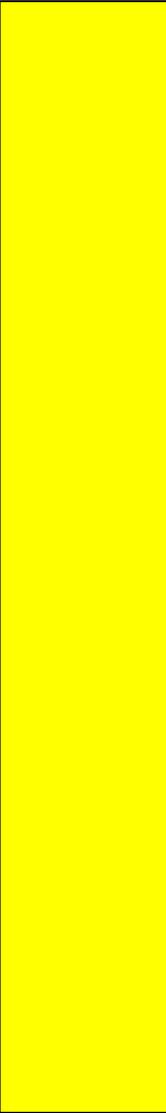
	<u>Serial Number:</u>	<u>LRTC/RA/09</u>	<u>Date: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018</u>
	<u>Activity/Situation:</u>	<u>LONE WORKING</u>	
	<u>Management Acceptance</u>	<u>John Wright (Proper Officer)</u>	 <u>Signature:</u>

<u>Step 1</u> Identify the Hazards and Potential Harm	<u>Step 2</u> Who Might be Harmed <sup>1</sup>	<u>Step 3</u> Existing Control Measures	<u>Step 4<sup>2</sup></u> Risk Rating (Table 1)	<u>Step 5</u> Additional Controls Required	<u>Step 6</u> Revised Risk Rating	<u>Step 7</u> Action By (Name and Date)
<p><b><u>Staff Working Alone.</u></b></p> <p><u>Risks of injury or ill health from:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Fire.</u></li> <li>• <u>Theft/intruders.</u></li> <li>• <u>Sudden illness.</u></li> <li>• <u>Accident.</u></li> <li>• <u>The effects of social isolation.</u></li> <li>• <u>Lack of training and supervision.</u></li> </ul>	<u>Lone Workers.</u>	<p><u>Discussions involving potential lone workers are undertaken when considering any such activity.</u></p> <p><u>Consideration of normal work and foreseeable emergencies have been considered, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. The following subjects were included:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Is there a safe way in and out of the work areas for a lone worker, e.g. for a person working out of hours?</u></li> </ul>	<p><b>2 x 4 = 8</b> <b>(Medium)</b></p>	<p><u>Set up a system of pre-agreed intervals for regular contact between the lone worker and another member of staff, using phones (including text), radios or email.</u></p> <p><u>Consider the procurement of a manually operated or automatic warning device, which triggers an alert if</u></p>	<p><b>1 x 4 = 4</b> <b>(Low)</b></p>	<p><u>Matt Adamson-Drage</u> <u>(Operations Manager)</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>January 2019</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Brought to H&amp;S meeting 4.3.2019 – system of texts from Lone Workers to Ops Mgr implemented</u></p>

<sup>1</sup> Staff, Friends (Museum Volunteers), Contractors, Visitors (Official), Public, Young Persons (including Children), Vulnerable Persons (Other than Young Persons, i.e. Elderly and Disabled).

<sup>2</sup> Risk rating calculated taking into account all existing control measures at Step 2 are in place.

- Is there machinery involved in the work that a single person cannot operate safely when working alone?
  - Are chemicals or hazardous substances being used that may pose a particular risk to the lone worker?
  - Does the work involve lifting objects too large for one person?
  - Is there a risk of violence/aggression, e.g. during a robbery?
  - Are there any reasons why the individual might be more vulnerable than others and be particularly at risk if they work alone, for example if they are young, pregnant, disabled or a trainee?
  - If the lone worker's first language is not English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communications, especially in an emergency situation?
- Steps are taken to ensure risks are removed where possible, or control measures are put in place, e.g. the careful selection of work equipment to ensure the worker is able to perform the required tasks safely.
- When it is not possible for the work to be conducted by a lone worker in a safe way



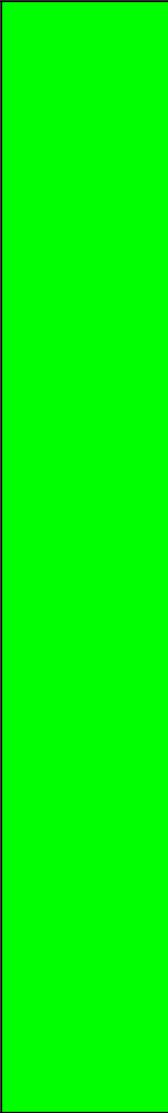
specific signals aren't received from the lone worker, i.e. a staff personal security system.

Implement a system to ensure that a lone worker has returned to their home once they have finished work.

Limits to be set, with regards to what cannot be done when working alone. Lone workers are to be competent to deal with the requirements of the job and are able to recognise when to seek advice from elsewhere.

Medical advice is to be sought if necessary, after consideration of both routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the lone worker.

Additional training is to be considered with regards to enabling people to cope in unexpected circumstances and with



		<p><u>and without risks to health, residual risks are addressed and arrangements to provide help or back-up put in place, or the work is not allowed to continue</u></p> <p><u>Lone workers are provided with information, instruction and training.</u></p> <p><u>Information regarding emergency procedures is given to lone workers.</u></p> <p><u>Lone workers have immediate access to first-aid kits and/or receive first-aid training.</u></p> <p><u>Where a worker is new to the job, undergoing training, doing a job that presents specific risks or dealing with new situations they are supervised.</u></p> <p><u>This risk assessment is reviewed periodically or when there has been a significant change in working practices which may affect lone workers.</u></p>		<p><u>potential exposure to violence and aggression.</u></p>		
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This Risk Assessment is to be reviewed:

- Annually.
- If there is reason to doubt the effectiveness of the assessment.
- Following an accident or near miss.
- Following significant changes to the task, process, procedure or line management.
- Following the introduction of more vulnerable personnel.

### Risk Assessment Review

<u>Review Date</u>	<u>13 January 2019</u>	<u>13 January 2020</u>	<u>13 January 2021</u>	<u>13 January 2022</u>	<u>Next: 13 January 2023</u>
<u>Chief Executive Name:</u>	<u>John Wright</u>	<u>John Wright</u>	<u>John Wright</u>	<u>John Wright</u>	
<u>Chief Executive Signature</u>					

		Risk Rating					
Likelihood	Frequent: Expected Regularly	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>25</u>
	Probable: Will Occur More than Once	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>20</u>
	Possible:	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>15</u>

<u>Could Occur Sometime Remote:</u> <u>Unlikely but Not Improbable</u> <u>Improbable:</u> <u>Unlikely to Occur</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Multiply the Likelihood</u> <u>X</u> <u>Severity / Consequence</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
	<u>Trivial and No Injury / No Damage or Loss</u>	<u>Minor Injury / Some Damage or Loss</u>	<u>Serious Injury or Temporary Disability / Serious Damage or Loss</u>	<u>Major Injury or Permanent Disability or Health / Major Damage/Loss</u>	<u>Possible Fatality or Catastrophic Damage or Loss</u>	
						<u>Severity / Consequence</u>

<u>Risk Statements</u>	
<u>1 to 6</u>	<u>Low – Acceptable: No actions as long as control measures are consistent with "Reasonably Practicable."</u>
<u>8 to 10</u>	<u>Medium – Medium Risk: Review or devise improved control measures. Provide training or information for where necessary and ensure adequate supervision.</u>
<u>12 to 16</u>	<u>High - High risk and unacceptable: Possible serious &amp; imminent danger. Safe systems to be in place, competent &amp; trained personnel &amp; increased supervision.</u>
<u>20 to 25</u>	<u>Very High - Unacceptable under any circumstances. Stop immediately, implement additional controls &amp; reassess. Ensure additional safeguards are in place. Emergency procedures to be practiced &amp; recorded. All staff to be highly trained / maximum supervision required.</u>

## **Retirement Policy and Procedure**

### **~~1. Policy purpose and scope~~**

- ~~1.2 This policy provides a statement of the council's approach to employee retirement.~~
- ~~1.3 With effect from 6 April 2011, the council no longer specifies a fixed retirement age and employees are no longer required to retire at a specific age.~~
- ~~1.4 The council recognises the valuable contribution made by all its employees and, wherever possible, wishes to retain the skills and expertise of all employees. However, employees can choose to retire should they wish to do so.~~
- ~~1.5 The council suggests that before making any firm decisions that advice is sought regarding any pension provisions and that independent financial advice is obtained.~~

### **~~2. Retirement procedure~~**

- ~~2.1 When an employee makes the decision to retire they are required to give at least their contractual notice to the council. Any decision should be given formally in writing to their manager confirming their intention to retire and confirming the date on which they will leave employment.~~
- ~~2.2 The council will write to the employee to invite them to attend a meeting to discuss any queries or questions that they may have in relation to their retirement and to plan any necessary arrangements. Arrangements may have to be made to ensure a smooth handover of the role and responsibilities or any financial arrangements may need to be discussed and arrangements made, i.e. with regards to pensions.~~
- ~~2.3 Following the meeting, the council will write to the employee to formally accept the notice of intention of retire and to confirm the date on which employment will end.~~

### **1. Purpose**

- ~~1.1 To allow the council to operate within current legislation and best practice.~~

### **2. Policy and Legal Context**

- ~~2.1 In the light of changing demographics, and the cost of supporting retirees or the economically inactive, successive governments have encouraged individuals to continue working in the belief this has positive benefits for older workers and enables employers to retain experienced and skilled staff.~~
- ~~2.2 The default retirement age, set at 65 years in 2006, was repealed on 6 October 2011 and phased out.~~

2.3 Employers cannot require employees to retire and must allow them to stay on until they choose to retire unless they can identify legitimate business reasons why a particular retirement age is justified, necessary and appropriate for their organisation<sup>3</sup>, and they are able to defend this retirement age in the event of age discrimination and unfair dismissal claims.

2.4 Older employees may still voluntarily retire at a time of their choosing and draw any occupational pension to which they are entitled under the scheme's rules.

2.5 The supporting retirement procedure is informed by Dorset Council's Pension Fund's Statement of Policy on The Local Government Pension Fund Pension Scheme 2014 Discretions and prevailing national insurance regulations.

### **3. Procedure**

3.1 Older workers are only required to inform their employer of their intention to retire in accordance with the notice provisions in their contract of employment<sup>4</sup>.

3.2 Notwithstanding this, the employee's manager should aim to organise a discussion three months ahead of an employee's statutory pension age<sup>5</sup>, and where appropriate, review this annually to explore older workers' career plans, to enquire about when they wish to retire, and to enable the council to manage resources and budgets.

3.3 The initial discussion will also trigger an instruction to the finance team to adjust the employee's national insurance contributions; employees stop paying Class 1 national insurance contributions when they reach state pension age, even if they are still working

3.4 The discussions can also explore opportunities for flexible working.

3.5 These discussions must avoid making assumptions that an employee's performance may decline due to age.

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<sup>3</sup> In some cases, an employer can force an employee to retire at a certain age, known as 'compulsory retirement age'. If they do, the employer must give a good reason why, such as the job requires certain physical abilities, e.g., in the construction industry, or the job has an age limit set by law e.g., the fire and rescue service.

<sup>4</sup> The town clerk, deputy town clerk, operations manager, support services manager and finance manager posts require three months' notice. All other posts require one month's notice.

<sup>5</sup> The state pension entitlement age is currently 66 for both men and women but will start gradually increasing again from 66 to 67 by 2028. The state pension age was planned to increase between 2044 and 2046 but the government is now looking at recommendations in an independent review to implement the increases between 2037 and 2039.

## **Leavers Policy and Procedure**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The policy sets out to ensure that when employees leave the council's service, appropriate actions are taken to safeguard the interests of the employee and the council. In particular, the employee receives all monies they are due to date, suffers no inconvenience, and the financial interest and security of the council and its assets is maintained.
- 1.2 This policy applies to employees who leave the council's employment through voluntary resignation. It does not apply to an employee summarily dismissed or whose employment is terminated on grounds of capability.

### **2. Associated Policies and Procedures**

- 2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the council's learning and development policy.

### **3. Procedure**

- 3.1 When an employee resigns, their manager will notify the finance manager to arrange for their final salary to be calculated and a P45 issued. The employee's resignation letter will be retained on their personnel file.
- 3.2 The manager will also determine any leave and time-off-in-lieu entitlement due and clarify with the leaver when they intend to take off any time owed to them. If the employee has taken more leave than their entitlement, the manager will liaise with the finance manager who will adjust the leavers' final salary payment accordingly.
- 3.3 The leaver's line manager will also inform the finance manager if the leaver is undertaking or has recently completed a training programme paid for by the council. In accordance with the council's learning and development policy, the council may recharge the leaver for the whole or part of the cost of their study. Any such adjustment will be made to the leaver's final salary payment.
- 3.4 Members will be notified that an employee has resigned and, if assessed appropriate, the leaver's manager will commence the recruitment process to appoint a new employee.
- 3.5 The leaver's manager will arrange for any computer access passwords to be deleted at the end of the employee's last day of service. Code access to the council's building will also be reprogrammed and all relevant employees will be notified of this change.
- 3.6 At the end of an employee's last day of employment, the leaver's manager will arrange for the return of their ID badge, mobile phone, laptop, uniform, keys, car park permit, and personal protection equipment.
- 3.7 During the leaver's notice period, their line manager will conduct an exit interview to establish why they are leaving, their new employment and any feedback they have about their employment with the council.

3.8 An employee may request their interview takes place with another manager if they do not feel comfortable having the discussion with their line manager.

3.9 The interview will be confidential to the employee and their line manager. Any relevant issues which require action will be dealt with by the employee's line manager or if required, brought to the council's attention.