PeopleSafe - Lone Working Devices

Information:

Each employee in the SD Department has historically been required to wear a lone working device for various Health and Safety reasons.

The Town Council were advised the contract for 10 out of 13 devices was due to end on the 18th March 2022. Due to this information being received a review of the service, devices and requirements were undertaken by the Administration Officer in conjunction with the Service Delivery Manager.

Health and Safety Guidance for Lone Working:

The Health and Safety Act 1974 defines a lone worker as '"... those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision."

The law requires employers to consider their employees' working conditions carefully, and then deal with any health and safety risks for those working alone.

A lone worker policy is one which is established by the employer to ensure that all necessary measures relating to safety are in place for the employee working alone, either on site or offsite.

The Town Council already cover lone working in both the Employee Handbook and Health and Safety Manual therefore a lone working policy is not required but worth noting when considering the provisions of lone working devices.

HSE.gov states the following:

Establishing a healthy and safe working environment for lone workers can be different from organising the health and safety of other workers. Some things to consider in ensuring lone workers are not put at risk include:

- assessing areas of risk including violence, manual handling, the medical suitability of the individual to work alone and whether the workplace itself presents a risk to them;
- requirements for training, levels of experience and how best to monitor and supervise them;
- having systems in place to keep in touch with them and respond to any incident.

The HSE advises the following when monitoring and keeping in touch with lone workers:

- Technology advances mean there is a wide range of systems and devices available to employers to monitor lone workers. Any monitoring system needs to be embedded into an organisation so it is well understood by workers. You must put clear procedures in place because effective means of communication are essential. These may include:
- supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone;
- pre-agreed intervals of regular contact between the lone worker and employer, using phones, radios, email etc, bearing in mind the worker's understanding of English;
- other devices designed to raise the alarm in an emergency which can be operated manually or automatically;
- implementing a robust system to ensure a lone worker has returned to their base or home once their work is completed.

You should regularly test technical solutions and all emergency procedures to ensure lone workers can be reached or contacted if a problem or emergency is identified.

Research:

The Admin Officer contacted the following local authorities to investigate their policies and protocols for lone worker employees:

Plymouth City Council:
Information unobtainable. Called twice with over hour and half wait times.

Cornwall Council:
Advised to call CORMAC but no number for the department we would require speaking to was provided. Tried to contact various CORMAC offices available on the website and was unable to get a response to calls made.

Truro City Council
The Compliance Officer for Truro City Council provided lots of invaluable information on the processes and policies in place for Truro's Park Department and Maintenance Teams.

Truro ensure thorough risk assessments are in place for every task. Staff have access to body cameras available in the communal office for any staff member who may be undertaking duties that are lone working and in which they may feel vulnerable (Enforcement or closure of public assets such as parks after hours).

The Managers provide a schedule of works for the day and know where each employee is via regular telecommunications contact. The staff have routine breaks in staff communal areas and therefore if a member of staff were to not be in contact it would be highly noticeable. Crib sheets are available on various staff notice boards and explain procedures in the event of an emergency.

Evidence of RA's have been provided for reference but are P&C and not for the public domain.

<u>Torpoint</u>
Torpoint Operation Manager provided information on the systems in place to protect staff.

Torpoint offer Town Council mobile phones to any staff member who may require one. With regular contact maintained with all staff throughout the day staff felt it was not necessary for a lone working device.

Torpoint TC did look at radios for all staff but due to signals and costs did not pursue. Due to much of the work undertaken by the team at Torpoint it was felt that staff were at low risk and did not need a lone working device.

Enforcement officers are pro0vided body cameras if they wish.

Due to the machinery being situated in a public place and being used in sociable hours the risk remained low should any staff have an accident.

Finance Information:

Currently the Town Council spends the following each year:
- 13 devices in contract

- £210.00 per device

This is made up by £168 per Microguard device and then £42 per roaming sim card.

Total Annual Cost: £2,730.00
Budget Code: 6214 PF Health and Safety
Available Budget: £5,047.00

Recommendation:

10 devices are on a rolling month by month contract as of Thursday 18th August 2022. Technology has advanced in recent years with Mobile Phone Applications that are believed to be suitable for lone working requirements. Further details to be provided in terms of Mobile Phone Applications.

The SDM has consulted with the newly appointed Health and Safety Consultant and will report back to the Town Council upon further information and associated costs being obtained for a lone working application.

The recommendation is to terminate the contract with Peoplesafe for the 10 devices soon to be out of contract. A cost saving of £2,100 for the year 2022-23. The rationale behind this recommendation is outlined in the report and includes:

- Thorough RA's are in place for each task
- Regular supervision and contact with management is maintained throughout the day
- Suitable applications for contracted mobiles are available for the limited lone working duties SDGA's undertake in remote working conditions.

Due to three devices still remaining in contract over the next two years the recommendation to trial a 'pool' system would ensure the Town Council obtains best value for money for the existing contract period.

The three remaining devices could be better utilised in a 'pool' system subject to the employee undertaking identified high risk duties that would require a lone working device to be with a person.

A 'pool' system would require a slight change to the administration processes which can be administered by the Administration Assistant in the SD Department to ensure accuracy and safety of those undertaking lone working.

End of Report
Administration Officer