



Great Gonerby Parish Council

Home working policy

1. **Council's responsibilities.** As the Council has no office, the business of the Clerk is conducted primarily from home. The Council has a duty of care to the Clerk to ensure that their working arrangements are safe and sustainable. While the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) considers office work to be low-risk, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and deal with, any of the health and safety risks for employees working from home.
2. **Clerk's responsibilities.** As an employee, the Clerk has responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the health and safety of others affected by what they do. The Clerk is also responsible for reporting all employment related incidents or hazards to the Council: this includes those relating to home working.
3. **Assessing risks.** The Clerk is to complete a risk questionnaire related to the risks associated with the use of their home as an office: this must be reviewed and updated on any change to the home working environment and updated at least every 4 years. An example is attached and an MS Word document template is available on the HSE Website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm>. The completed questionnaire is to be passed to the Staffing Committee for review.
4. **Risk questionnaire.** The risk questionnaire should cover: slips and trips; manual handling; health of workers in the office environment; computers, laptops and similar equipment (including the need for a work station assessment); fire; work equipment (the Council is only responsible for the equipment it supplies, however the questionnaire covers all office equipment used in the course of the Clerk's work); and lone working (see also the Council's lone working policy).
5. **Addressing risks.** Any risks identified through the questionnaire are to be reviewed jointly by the Staffing Committee members and the Clerk and appropriate action agreed. If deemed necessary, a member of the Staffing Committee will conduct a review of the home-working conditions, with prior agreement from the Clerk.
6. **Office equipment.** The Council will provide any office equipment required for the Clerk to complete their duties or agree with the Clerk a suitable sum to cover the use of their own equipment. This should be claimed monthly in arrears.
7. **Display screen equipment.** The Clerk is to complete a display screen equipment assessment to ensure that their workspace is appropriate for use of the Council-provided

laptop. The attached example from the HSE website is to be used and a copy retained when completed.

8. **Insurance.** The Council will ensure that employers' liability insurance and public liability insurance to cover employees working from home are in place. The Clerk is to ensure any tenancy agreement or home insurance does not prohibit home working. Meetings with the public or Councillors at the Clerks' home are to be discouraged to ensure the safety of those involved.

9. **Reporting.** As an employer, the Council has a duty to report and keep a record of accidents, injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences associated with their activities. There is also a duty, under social security legislation, for the Council to record accidents involving personal injury (the Statutory Accident Book requirement). Therefore, the Clerk is to report such incidents relating to their home working to the Staffing Committee who will brief the Council at the earliest opportunity and take appropriate action to reduce the risk of them happening again to an acceptable level.

10. **Lone working – professional engagement.** The Council will ensure measures are in place to prevent the Clerk from being isolated from the rest of their professional community. Means are in place as part of the job description for membership of the professional body the Society of Local Council Clerks. Attendance at training courses and other events organised by the District and County Councils is to be encouraged.

11. **Lone working – Council engagement.** The Staffing Committee Chair will conduct regular discussions with the Clerk (at least monthly at the main Council meetings), to ensure that they are not feeling isolated from the rest of the Council, to discuss work progress and any associated limitations and to resolve any potential risks to output or home-working issues.

12. **Further information.** Free leaflets are available on the HSE website (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/leaflets.htm>) that provide further information relating to home working, manual handling, computers and working with display screen equipment.

Enclosures:

1. HSE example risk questionnaire.
2. HSE display screen equipment assessment.