

Personal Safety for Tameside Councillors – a checklist

This checklist will help you to think about the risks you face and some strategies to help protect your Personal Safety. Many things are ‘common sense’ but be honest – do you do them all the time? Take some time to complete the checklist and then make a note of some actions that you need to integrate into your daily practices.

Working Alone

- ▶ Do you carry out a general risk assessment on all activities?
- ▶ Do you ensure someone always knows where you are?
- ▶ If you change your plans, do you let someone know?
- ▶ Is your mobile accessible, switched on and charged?
- ▶ Do you carry a personal alarm or have a personal safety app?
- ▶ Do you vary your routines when you park or walk?
- ▶ Have you a buddy you can work alongside or keep in touch with?

Ward Surgeries

- ▶ Have you carried out a risk assessment on the venue and room you are using in terms of Personal Safety?
- ▶ Are Tameside Council staff/friends/family aware of where and when you are holding your surgery?
- ▶ Have you considered other options to working alone, such as a fellow Tameside Councillor supporting you during the surgery or using Tameside Council premises?
- ▶ Have people been 'vetted' before attending?
- ▶ Are staff or helpers around you aware of safety procedures and know how to raise an alarm?
- ▶ Do you have a Personal Safety alarm or panic button that is working?
- ▶ Can you see the reception area from your room so that you are forewarned of any unusual behaviour?
- ▶ Have you removed any items that could be used as a weapon?
- ▶ Is your chair nearest the door, so you can get out quickly if you need to?
- ▶ Are you aware of the quickest way out of the area or building?
- ▶ Is there a safe location identified for you to go to in case of any issues?

Home Visits

- ▶ Do you vet people you are about to visit?
- ▶ Do you arrange visits during normal working and daylight hours?
- ▶ Do you let somebody know who you are visiting, where, when and the duration of the visit?
- ▶ Do you contact the person before the meeting to confirm arrangements and establish their mood/state of mind?
- ▶ Do you have a code word or phrase for use on your mobile that you can use to raise the alarm?
- ▶ Do you park in a well-lit area near other vehicles and in a way so you can easily get away?
- ▶ Do you take as little with you as possible, so your hands are free, and hide any valuables?
- ▶ Do you ensure your mobile is fully charged and available in a pocket?
- ▶ Do you have a prepared excuse to leave if you need to?
- ▶ After knocking at the door do you always stand back and to the side of the door?

Attending Meetings

- ▶ Do you risk assess the mood of any members of the public who attend a meeting?
- ▶ If there is a risk of members of the public being angry, do you take avoiding action?
- ▶ Do you check out alternative exits from buildings?
- ▶ Do you park in well-lit areas or car parks with CCTV?
- ▶ Do you vary your routes when walking to or from meetings or using public transport?

Receiving callers at your home

- ▶ Do you use the Town Hall address instead of your personal address?
- ▶ Do you and other family members screen callers at the house through a window, spyhole, or camera prior to opening the door?
- ▶ Have you checked your social media settings and ensured they are private?
- ▶ Have you removed any photos from social media that give information about where you live or where family members go to work or school?
- ▶ Have you taken measures to make your home safe and secure?

Driving

- ▶ Do you have your car keys in your hand or easily accessible when approaching your vehicle?
- ▶ Do you park under good lighting and not in dark, deserted streets or isolated car parks?
- ▶ Do you always lock the car doors and windows when you get into the car and when leaving it?
- ▶ Do you approach your vehicle cautiously and check inside it?
- ▶ Do you avoid placing handbags, valuables, personal papers or other such items on the passenger seats?
- ▶ Do you park so you can easily drive off?
- ▶ Do you always have sufficient fuel or charge for the journey and refuel during daylight hours?
- ▶ Do you keep your vehicle in good working order?
- ▶ Are you a member of a vehicle breakdown organisation?

Public transport and taxis

- ▶ Do you check timetables and routes before you travel?
- ▶ Do you wait for a bus or train in a well-lit place near other people and pay attention to your environment?
- ▶ Do you avoid empty train carriages and sit on the lower deck, near the driver if a bus is empty or it is after dark?
- ▶ Do you have the telephone number of a trusted, licensed taxi company with you?
- ▶ Do you ensure the taxi is genuine before entering?
- ▶ Do you sit in the back of the taxi?

Walking

- ▶ Do you check your route beforehand and know where you are going?
- ▶ Do you avoid taking short cuts through parks, alleys, waste ground or deserted carparks?
- ▶ Do you wear comfortable shoes that you can move quickly in?
- ▶ Do you carry any bag or handbag across your shoulder and tuck in scarves or long hair?

Social Media

- ▶ Have you recently checked and updated your privacy settings on Facebook or other social media platforms that you use?
- ▶ Do you ensure that there are no photographs or personal information on websites or social media that would allow your home or family members to be identified?
- ▶ Do you ensure that you don't give away too much information on social media about your movements locally that would allow people to stalk you or premeditate an attack?

Action Plan

AREA	ACTIONS	HELP NEEDED	BY WHEN?
e.g. Ward surgeries	Find several new venues with better security and staff available Look at how we advertise surgeries	Talk to other ward Tameside Councillors	By next month