



Lone Working Policy

Summary

Working alone is an essential practice for many in our church, either within the church buildings, in their own homes or other people's homes. Lone working cannot always be avoided. However this policy recognises the risks, and tries to minimise them by common sense and appropriate measures.

Authorisation

This policy was last updated in July 2023; it was originally authorised by the PCC on 20 May 2015 and will be reviewed annually by the Health and Safety Officer and Church Wardens. It forms one part of our wider Church Health and Safety at Work Policy which is available from the Parish Office, along with our current insurance policies and risk assessments.

Who does this affect?

- The Vicar and other clergy
- The Church administrator
- The Church cleaner
- The Church Hall cleaner
- Other volunteers who come into church to sort out sacristy, the flowers, clean the brass or prepare the church for special services
- Those locking the church
- Those doing maintenance in church
- Someone doing a solo pastoral visit to people's homes
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank
- The vicar / curate working at home
- Helping Hands Volunteers

The Policy

The purpose of this lone worker policy is to ensure that all church members are aware of the specific risk in working alone and to set out the respective responsibilities of the PCC and each individual to minimise such risks. The PCC commit to carrying out their responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way. It is expected that all church members will abide by this policy.

Please see also the Lone Working risk assessment.

The Risks

This list is not exhaustive but identifies some of the risks faced.

- Physical accident (from injury, fire, etc such as when using kitchen or maintenance equipment when there is no one available to fetch help if necessary)
- Sudden illness, again when there is no one to raise the alarm
- Physical violence or threat of abuse in any form from a visitor
- Sexual behaviour or advances deemed to be inappropriate or threatening
- Accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour by staff / volunteers when there are no witnesses
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media

Responsibilities

The PCC / Church Wardens – should show that “reasonably foreseeable risks” have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them. This can be done in conjunction with the Health and Safety officer.

They should also ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all lone working, with standard practices adhered to. For example the accident books are in place and properly monitored.

To equip vulnerable staff with appropriate communications tools so they can summon help when needed. For example personal alarms for staff in the office alone, or visiting homes.

To ensure that every member of the church feels that the PCC has taken all reasonable steps to ensure their safety. For paid staff this should happen during their reviews.

To be offered appropriate training as required.

To insist that everyone follow the guidelines laid down on safe solo working.

Individuals (staff and volunteers) – also need to ensure that they don't put themselves in unnecessary danger. If possible do visits in pairs. Do not agree to meet anyone in an isolated place. Consider carrying a personal alarm.

Be alert to possible dangers and minimise them – for example keep lights on until a building is completely vacated; using safety guards on power tools – and not using them when in the building alone.

Inform the Co-Ordinators, Wardens or Vicar of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to them.

Advice

- When working in the church alone or visiting someone in their home, make sure someone else knows where you are, and what time you are due leave. For Pastoral Visits or Helping Hands call the Co-ordinator as soon as you have left. If no call is received the Co-ordinator will either ring you or raise the alarm if they can't contact you.
- Carry a charged mobile phone with you, to use in case of emergency.
- Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone.
- For Helping Hand visits do not visit people in their homes alone.
- If working in church after dark, lock the doors.
- Choose different routes to the bank, when taking cash.
- Make sure you have sufficient knowledge (e.g. safeguarding/practical skills etc.) for the task in hand when going into people's homes, and apply it.
- Maintain a good distance between yourselves and the other person.
- Put yourself in a position for easy exit if needed.
- Be cautious of the things you say to avoid allegations arising from misunderstandings.
- Do not give or lend money if by yourself, especially if you expect it to be repaid.
- Have a good understanding about how to challenge appropriately
- Do not share your own food, think about unknown allergies.
- **Be cautious about touching; always ask permission, and ensure it is completely appropriate.**
- **Pastoral visitors should be fastidious in logging their dates of visits and any other information they deem necessary to record. If anything unusual happens they should inform the Pastoral Co-ordinator immediately and make comprehensive notes. When they cease to be pastoral visitors, they should hand their diaries and any notes to the Church Administrator to retain for the required time.**
- Have appropriate training certification as per Church guidelines (DBS, safeguarding).

For Youth Work Skill Project

- Sufficient skills for the job requested.
- Have a basic understanding around common drug use.
- Don't share own food.
- Don't lend / give money whilst by yourself.
- Secure personal valuables.
- There should be clear and precise instructions about any cleaning materials to be used.
- There should be clear and precise instructions about any machinery / tools to be used.

- There should be clear instructions about the job being requested to do, (remember the person doing the job may have a different mindset to you or may never have done that job before).
- Have clear rules about smoking whilst at work and areas of work and disposal of cigarette butts etc.
- Ensure adequate washing and toilet facilities are available.