

Lone Worker Policy

The Lone Worker Policy, which is set within the Health and Safety Policy, outlines the actions being taken by the PCC in relation to our staff, volunteers and visitors who may at any time work alone on church activity, together with the actions we expect such workers to take themselves to minimise risks.

The purpose of this Lone Worker Policy is to ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the specific risks in working alone and to set out the respective responsibilities of the PCC and staff/volunteers to minimise such risks. The PCC commit to carrying out their responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way.

People who work alone in our church:-

- Church Administrator working in the church office when no one else is in the building or even in that part of the building;
- Other staff or volunteers working alone within the church buildings including:- Members of the church opening/locking up. Cleaners. Flower arrangers. People practising on the organ. Caterers.
- Anyone working on maintenance or in the grounds of the church on their own; (Monday morning group)
- Youth Minister alone with one or more teenagers whether in a public place, in a school or on private property;
- A solo pastoral visitor going to people's homes;
- One volunteer taking cash to the bank;
- Members of staff (including Minister)/Volunteers who work from home, alone;
- Members of staff travelling by car or public transport on their own in the course of their work.

The risks

Risks include the following:

- Physical accident (from injury, such as when using kitchen or maintenance equipment when there is no one available to fetch help if necessary);
- Fire;
- Sudden illness, when there is no one to raise the alarm;
- Physical violence or threat of abuse in any form from a visitor;
- Accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour by staff/volunteers when there are no witnesses; Sexual behaviour or advances deemed to be inappropriate or threatening;
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive phone calls or digital media or fear that they may not be safe.

The responsibilities of the PCC

- 1 To show that 'reasonably foreseeable risks' have been identified (by a risk assessment) and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them.
- 2 To ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all lone working.

3 To install and maintain reasonable security equipment and systems, including: a door entry system; suitable outdoor lighting; secure doors & windows; offices/rooms with clear glass

4 To equip staff in vulnerable positions with communication tools to ensure they can summon help when needed, including checking that staff has access to a mobile phone; that signal reception is adequate; that staff know emergency contact numbers; that staff know the 'Purple Folder' protocol;

5 To ensure that each member of staff feels that the PCC has taken all reasonable steps to ensure their safety

6 To offer appropriate training in personal safety to, and inspection of, those who work alone.

7 To issue guidelines and insist that staff follow those guidelines laid down on safe solo working and, if they are at all unsure, to err on the side of caution and not put themselves in a potentially vulnerable situation.

The responsibilities of staff and volunteers

There needs to be an understanding that the PCC can only do so much. The behaviour and actions of the employees and volunteers can make a significant difference to the level of their own safety.

1 To avoid placing themselves in unnecessarily dangerous situations.

2 To be alert to possible dangers and to minimise risk by their own behaviour.

3 To inform others of their movements especially if the visit may be potentially difficult,

4 To inform a warden and other staff of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to them.

5 To avail themselves of all training opportunities provided by the church, which might include fire safety; personal safety; first aid; lone-working best practice.

6 To drive responsibly and to keep their vehicle properly insured [including insurance for business use], tested and maintained.

Particular factors to be taken into account

All of these will affect the level of risk to lone workers.

1 the health of the worker, physically, mentally and emotionally;

2 the location and remoteness of the workplace;

4 the maintenance and safety of all equipment and premises;

5 the need to lift heavy objects (including boxes of stationery) when alone [should be avoided];

6 the provision of first aid cover and help that can be summoned easily and quickly;

7 For staff living alone, checking in (e.g. by calling another member of staff) when they have set off for home and when they have arrived home).

This policy was last updated and authorised by PCC on 23rd November 2021 and will be reviewed every three years by the PCC.

It forms one part of our wider Church Health and Safety at Work Policy which is set out at the church web site.