

Working Alone Policy and Guidance

Why we have a policy

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers, employed and volunteer. Working alone may result in increased risks, including physical, mental and emotional risks. The PCCs of St. Leonards and St. Peter's take the well being and safety of our staff and volunteers very seriously and have developed this policy and guidance for all who work for us.

Definition of Working Alone

Home working, working alone in an office, church buildings or churchyard, work travel, working at remote or isolated locations and home visits all constitute lone working.

Who this policy applies to

This applies to the vicar, to all those employed by the church and to all those volunteering for the church in an official capacity. The PCC has a responsibility to ensure that Lone Worker procedures are implemented.

The Benefice also has in place a '**Lone Working Risk Assessment**' that should be read alongside this policy and adhered to by all those who may, as part of their role as an employee or a volunteer, work alone in any context. Those working alone are required to consider the implementation of such precautions as are necessary as set out in the 'Lone Working Risk Assessment'.

The potential risks of lone working

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.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Procedures when working alone (Office/Church/Travel/Churchyard)

The safety of employees and volunteers is paramount. Where an individual is working alone, or will be alone on church premises, or travel alone on church business, they should consider their situation carefully and take any necessary reasonable steps to avoid risks to their wellbeing which might result from not being able to summon help from others if needed.

- **CHECK IN:** make sure a friend, family member or team member knows they are likely to be travelling, working, or in a building on their own and when they are expecting to be home. Ensure they will take action if you do not return.
- **MOBILE:** have access to a fully charged mobile telephone with them.
- **LIGHTS:** keep the lights on or carry a torch when it is dark, particularly in corridors, stairways or outdoors, and particularly in Cassington where there are no street lights.
- **LIFTING:** where possible, avoid lifting or moving heavy items or equipment or engaging in any activity which might cause injury.
- **THREAT:** telephone the police if they suspect there is an intruder; or move to, or remain in, a safe area (car/building) if they feel under threat.
- **FIRST AID:** make themselves aware of where First Aid and fire fighting equipment can be found and of the fire evacuation route and procedures.
- **FUEL:** make sure that their car has sufficient fuel for the journey.

Additional procedures for pastoral and home visits and one-to-one meetings

One-to-one contact with individuals in the context of Church pastoral support should be properly planned, risk assessed and recorded. Establishing details regarding the person being visited will enable particular risks to be identified e.g. poor mental health, risk of violence. The procedures above should be followed as well as those below.

- Wherever possible, an individual should **avoid being alone with someone who is not known to them**, or whose circumstances may present any kind of risk. Where the risks are considered greater than might generally be expected as part of an individual's role they should not visit unaccompanied. Either arrangements could be made for the visit to take place in a public place, or with another adult present.
- **Pastoral visits with under 18s should not happen** without a second person present or in the close vicinity. Visits should always take place in a public place, or where others are close at hand.
- Arrangements for pastoral visits, or for meetings related to church matters, should be **unambiguous concerning purpose, what kind of assistance can be offered and the time available** for discussion.

- Individuals should **recognise appropriate physical boundaries** and be aware of how words and actions may be interpreted, particularly by those who are vulnerable in any way. **Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection should be avoided.**
- **Confidentiality** should not be confused with secrecy or privacy. Safeguarding procedures concerning confidentiality should be followed.
- **ID, with role and full name on badge or lanyard**, should be worn to prevent misunderstandings and to clearly identify the person representing the Church.

Record keeping

- Employees should keep a record of planned visits/meetings on their work calendar, including the time and location of the meeting.
- Where an employee or volunteer is meeting with a young person they must inform the youth worker and provide them with a reason for the meeting. A record of all one to one meetings with young people should be kept by the youth worker and made available to the Vicar or PSO on request.
- Pastoral visitors should keep a record of visits in line with pastoral team guidance. The minimum recording requirements are:
 - Date and time;
 - Persons present;
 - Venue;
 - Nature of contact;
 - Other brief factual notes and any further actions specified if there is an indication that this person has a heightened vulnerability.

More detailed guidance and training for pastoral visitors may be provided by the pastoral team.

Emergency Procedure

In the event that an individual does not 'check in' by the required time/as expected

- The friend/family member or team member should attempt to contact them on their mobile.
- If no contact is made a repeated attempt should be made 10 minutes later and their home number should also be tried.
- If the individual is still not contactable the police should be called.

In the event that an individual is trapped in a residence, or in danger:

- They should phone the police directly.
- Or, where an individual is not able to phone the police directly but is able to make a call they should call a friend/family member, team member and use the phrase 'RED FOLDER'. The phrase 'RED FOLDER' should only be used as a clear indicator that urgent help is required. The person who has taken the call during which the phrase 'RED FOLDER' has been used should contact the police immediately.

DATE PCC APPROVED:..... **DATE to be REVIEWED:**.....

APPENDIX 1: Helpful guidance for when making a home visit

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qbkIKy2tVvPd3susbKRNeTZ-8k-tddMfBGUpCDY6oQ/edit?usp=sharing>

APPENDIX B: Risk Assessment for Lone working

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FHWIJQe-pNKst3ZSw1V7kMVx3RJUmall3UGzMa2fdXY/edit?usp=sharing>
