

Lone Worker Policy



Church of the
Good Shepherd

1. Summary

1.1 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.

1.2 The purpose of this lone working 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 everyone to minimise such risks.

1.3 This policy is not intended to be restrictive or provide definitive guidance for every individual situation or set of circumstances.

1.4 This procedure is effective from July 2023 as approved by the PCC.

2. Applicability

2.1 This policy affects the following roles, though this is not a definitive list.

- The Vicar and other clergy/ministers
- Church and hall cleaners
- Church gardeners
- Volunteers who come into church to sort out sacristy, the flowers, prepare the church for services
- Those opening and/or locking the church
- Those doing maintenance in church
- Someone doing a solo pastoral visit to people's homes
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank
- Musicians or choir members rehearsing

3. The Risks

3.1 This list 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, 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

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The PCC are responsible for:

4.1.1 Showing that “reasonably foreseeable risks” have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them.

4.1.2 Introducing safe systems/procedures which ensure reasonable precautions are taken to maintain their safety.

4.1.3 Ensuring that every member of the church feels that the PCC has taken all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.

4.2 Individuals (Staff and volunteers) are responsible for:

4.2.1 Ensuring that they don't put themselves in unnecessary danger. E.g. Consider visiting in pairs or in a public space; do not agree to meet anyone in an isolated place; consider carrying a charged mobile phone or personal alarm.

4.2.2 Being 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.

4.2.3 Informing the vicar or wardens of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to them.

5. Principles

5.1 A lone worker can be anyone who works by themselves.

5.2 The PCC, church wardens and individual must work closely together to share the responsibility of identifying concerns and issues of risk and taking steps to minimise these risks.

5.3 Individuals should remain alert to their own security and should not take unnecessary risks. Where an employee or volunteer believes that they are in serious or imminent danger they should where possible, cease or postpone the work activity and should remove themselves to a place of safety. The individual should inform the vicar or church warden of any such situation at the earliest opportunity.

6. Summary of Advice for Lone workers

6.1 If you have any concerns about your intended church work/visit make sure someone else knows where you are, and what time you are due home. Get them to check on you if you are not home when expected and if they can't contact you, to raise the alarm.

6.2 Carry a charged mobile phone with you, to use in case of emergency.

6.3 Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone.

6.4 Consider making pastoral visits in pairs, especially if it is a person who is new to you. Or consider meeting in a public space rather than in a home.

6.5 If working in church after dark, lock the doors.

6.6 Consider choosing different routes to the bank, when taking cash.

6.7 Be aware of where the First Aid boxes are located.

7. Review

7.1 This procedure will be reviewed to respond to any changes in circumstances at least every three years.