

LONE WORKING POLICY

Parish of St Davids Exeter

The PCC is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all its clergy and volunteers who, in the course of their work and ministry, may have to work alone, and these guidelines provides a framework for managing the risks presented by lone working. This policy relates to all church staff and volunteers who work out in the community and/or in other people's homes, or who work alone in churches or other establishments and are physically isolated from colleagues or family, without access to immediate assistance.

It is recognised that lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and volunteers, and it is therefore important that the additional risks that arise from this are fully understood, in order that they can go about their daily work in relative safety.

This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy which sets out the appropriate boundaries for preventing misunderstandings and reducing risks. All workers and volunteers should avoid working alone if it is not necessary, and work with others where possible, however, if this is not feasible, they should be aware of the importance of personal safety, and take all reasonable precautions

Guidelines for working alone

These guidelines apply when working alone at either Church, or when making home visits to Church members or members of the public or attending other meetings/activities away from the Churches.

These guidelines have been drawn up to minimise the risk of problems that may arise from accidents, from seeing members of the public, either through allegations being made or having to deal with unwelcome/unacceptable behaviour.

The Church will make risk assessments of any role that requires a volunteer or employee to work alone on regular basis. Training will be provided to help minimise risk to volunteers and employees.

NB: No person should work alone with young people or children

Lone working at the Church

While on many occasions there is more than one person in the building there are times where you may find yourself alone, particularly when opening or locking up.

When working alone you should ensure that: -

- No high level working is undertaken;
- No working with power tools such as drills, saws, grinders etc;
- The keys are secured and inaccessible to visitors;
- You can call for back up if anything happens that you do not feel able to deal with alone
- Carry a mobile phone with you so you can call for help if needed;
- If you are meeting someone in an office/meeting room the seating arrangements allow you to exit the room leaving the person behind.

If you are the last person in the building or responsible for locking up you should ensure that: -

All windows and doors are secured to prevent unauthorised access so that the environment is as safe as possible;

If you suspect there is an intruder: -

- Carry out visual check of the building to check for an intruder.
- If you feel it is safe to do so, carry out an internal inspection, so far as you can.
- Do not put yourself at any unnecessary risk.
- Inspect the building externally if that is the safer option. If an intruder(s) is suspected call the police.
- Leave the building and secure the door behind you so the suspected intruder is locked in and wait for back up to arrive. Do not re-enter the building alone.

Visiting people and places who are known to you

If working alone away from the Churches you should consider if your visit might present a risk to you. Most working away from the Church Centre including home visits are likely to be 'low risk' as most of the people and places staff and volunteers visit are likely to be known to the Church. However this is not always the case.

It is good practice to tell colleagues before you go out on a visit. You should always aim to do the following: -

- let your colleagues know where you are going;
- make a note in your office diary of who and where you are visiting;
- the nature and location of the meeting or activity;
- your estimated time of return to the office or home;
- If your plan changes you should contact a work colleague or family member to let them know what is happening and that you are safe.
- Make sure that you have a mobile phone with you.
- Only visit a person who has been allocated to you via the Pastoral Visiting Group (clergy excepted)

Visiting people and places that are not known to you and may present a risk

If you have any concerns for your safety then it is advisable to get a colleague to come with you. If this is not possible, it is important that a colleague or family member knows your whereabouts, where you are meeting the person, how long you expect to be and when you expect to return.

You should also:-

- Keep the mobile phone on during the meeting so that you can use it quickly in an emergency.
- Always follow the person into the building and ask that any dogs are removed from the room.
- Familiarise yourself with the quickest means of exit should you need to.
- Ensure that you seat yourself near to the door so you can exit quickly if needed.

Emergency contacts

If there is an intruder or you are threatened dial 999, give the address of the Church

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