

Lone Working Policy



SUMMARY

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers.

The Parochial Church Council of Christ Church, Weston-super-Mare ("the PCC") acknowledges that there are possible dangers for someone working alone in church or in the community. This Lone Working Policy outlines the actions being taken by the PCC in relation to our staff and volunteers, who may at any time work alone, together with the actions we expect such workers themselves to take to minimise risks. This Policy applies to both salaried and voluntary workers equally.

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

EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE WHO MAY WORK ALONE

- our Vicar and other clergy;
- our Church Administrator;
- our Family Ministry Worker;
- our Church Wardens;
- cleaners and flower arrangers;
- musicians;
- anyone setting-up before or clearing-up after a meeting;
- anyone working on maintenance or in the grounds of the church;
- a solo pastoral visitor going into someone's home.

THE RISKS

Risks include (but are not limited to) the following:

- physical accident (from injury, fire, a fall, or when using maintenance equipment) when there is no one available to fetch help if necessary;
- sudden illness where there is no-one else around to raise the alarm;
- physical violence or threat of abuse in any form;
- sexual behaviour or inappropriate or threatening advances towards any staff/volunteer;
- false accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour by staff/volunteers when there are no witnesses;
- stress caused by working in isolation;
- anxiety caused from abusive phone calls or digital media.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PCC

1. To show that “reasonable foreseeable risks” have been identified and appropriate action has been taken to minimise them (e.g. accidents - accident book/Health & Safety Policy, intruders – alarms installed/safety doors in place/personal alarm being made available, leaving the church in the dark – security lights installed, etc);
2. To ensure that relevant standard practices are adhered to (e.g. an accident book is properly maintained, the Health & Safety Policy is reviewed annually, etc);
3. To install all reasonable security equipment and systems after professional advice has been taken;
4. To advise staff/volunteers in vulnerable positions to have appropriate communication tools to ensure that they can summon help when needed (e.g. mobile phones);
5. To ensure that all staff, volunteers, and key holders feel that the PCC has taken all reasonable steps to ensure their safety;
6. To offer appropriate training in personal safety where necessary, to include things such as what to do in the case of fire or suspicion of intruders, how to exit the building safely, and where to find first aid kits;
7. Keep on file employee next of kin details and contact numbers;
8. To insist that all staff and volunteers take some responsibility for their own safety, examples of which are set out below.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

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

1. To avoid placing themselves in unnecessarily dangerous situations;
2. To be alert to possible dangers and to minimise the risk by their own behaviour;
3. To inform others of their movements when appropriate to do so (e.g. if making a solo pastoral visit) and to put in place appropriate measures to ensure their safety (e.g. arranging to phone a colleague, relative, or friend when the visit begins and ends, visiting in pairs, or meeting in a public place);
4. To inform appropriate colleagues of any suspicious behaviour noted or threats made to them;
5. Consider the Personal Safety Risk Assessment Flow Chart attached;
6. To be familiar with the current Health & Safety Policy and comply with any recommendations contained therein;
7. To drive responsibly and, where appropriate, to keep their vehicle properly insured for business use, MOT'd and serviced, and have breakdown cover in place.

This Policy document should be reviewed by the PCC every three years.

Date of last review: PCC Meeting July 2024

Date of next review: PCC Meeting July 2027

Personal Safety Risk Assessment Flow Chart

Use this flow chart for your own personal safety to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.

