

## **LONE WORKER POLICY & PROCEDURE**

### **All Souls Parish Church Harlesden**

PCC is aware of possible dangers for those who work alone in church buildings and is mindful of its responsibility to care for and protect all its clergy, authorised ministers, employees and volunteers. On this basis, this Policy offers guidance to all those who find themselves working alone in the church or the church hall, or visiting adults who may be vulnerable in their homes (or nursing homes) on behalf of the Parish.

Lone workers should be familiar with the Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policies and any other policies relevant to their role.

#### **Working alone in church or church hall**

Before commencing any work in church or hall, the person involved should familiarise themselves with the appropriate risk assessment document and undertake visual checks before working.

1. Lone workers should ensure they know where all exits are situated.
2. Lone workers must ensure that someone knows where they are, what you are doing, and for how long you expect to be there. This person would most likely be a family member, but if this were not the case, it could be a friend or one of the people listed below:  
Fr Adam Dobrzynski (Vicar) or Lewis Evans (Churchwarden).  
When leaving the premises, the person you have informed should be made aware of that.
3. Lone workers must always ensure they have a charged mobile phone with them.
4. Lone workers planning to work for an extended period (e.g., beyond half a day), should arrange to make calls at frequent intervals.
5. Whilst working alone in the building at night, all external doors must be kept locked for security and safety reasons; keys should not be left in locks.
6. Ladders and power tools must not be used whilst working alone.
7. Exiting and locking up the church and/or hall after an event should, if possible, be undertaken by two people.

#### **Visiting adults alone in their homes or nursing homes**

Visiting adults who may be vulnerable in their homes (or nursing homes), is an essential element of many church officers' roles. The Church of England defines a church officer as "anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether ordained or lay, paid or unpaid." Many parishioners will be well known to the church officer, and where there have been no previous concerns about the level of risk to the church officer or parishioner during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a church officer at risk. For example, the unexpected presence in the home of a relative or friend with a history of violence or threatening behaviour. Unfortunately, case histories also show that a parishioner may be at risk from a church officer. For these reasons, it is imperative to ensure that church officers and parishioners are as safe as they can be, and that there is accountability and transparency in how church officers engage in lone working or visits to residential homes.

1. A risk assessment should always be undertaken for a first visit, whether the person to be visited is known or not; further risk assessments will need to be undertaken if there are any material changes in circumstances.
2. If there are any concerns or risks known, a risk assessment should be undertaken prior to each visit, using the questions below (see appendix). In these circumstances, careful consideration should be given as to whether the visit is absolutely necessary, or whether it would be better to be accompanied by another adult.
3. Risk assessments should be undertaken periodically (at least once a year) in relation to all parishioners visited at home.
4. A written record should be kept by the Parish Safeguarding Officer of all risk assessments undertaken.

To assure the person being visited of their safety and for the safety of the church officer, and irrespective of whether a risk assessment has been made:

1. A charged mobile phone should always be carried on a home (and nursing home) visit.
2. The church officer should tell someone where they are going and when they are expected to return.
3. Wherever possible, the church officer should avoid calling unannounced but by arrangement (this may be a telephone call just before going).
4. If the church officer is not known to the person they are visiting, they should carry identification, photographic, if possible, or a note of introduction from the church.
5. The church officer should always knock on the door before entering a room or home, respecting the person's home and possessions.
6. If appropriate and necessary, the church officer might leave information about how and where they can be contacted (by telephone or email) and a central contact point for the church (incumbent). Unless absolutely necessary they should not give their home address.
7. The church officer should always endeavour to be clear about what behaviour from a vulnerable adult is acceptable and what is not, as well as about the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that they are able to offer.
8. The church officer must never offer 'over the counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked.
9. The church officer should not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, it should be put in an envelope, marked on the outside as a donation, and a receipt (e.g., a handwritten note) given to the donor.
10. Where the church officer considers it necessary to refer the person to an external agency, they should, in the first instance, speak with the Safeguarding Officer and/or the Incumbent (unless there is an immediate danger). They should then discuss this with the vulnerable adult, seeking their permission before passing on personal information. If it is more appropriate for the vulnerable adult to do so themselves, make sure they have all the information they need and that their contact will be expected. If the church officer is concerned about a person and they do not wish to be referred, they should consult with the Safeguarding Officer who may contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
11. If the church officer is uncertain about what to do, they should seek advice from the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or Incumbent, either of whom may subsequently seek further advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

This Policy was last discussed and approved by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) on 11th September 2024

Signed: *Revd Dr Adam Dobrzynski*

APPENDIX

RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR LONE HOME (AND NURSING HOME) VISITS

Name of adult to be visited: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Does the adult have a history of violence or threatening behaviour?**

Yes / No / Not known

If yes, please detail.

**2. Is the adult a risk to themselves?**

Yes / No / Not known

If yes, please detail.

**3. Does anyone living in the house have a history of violence or threatening behaviour?**

Yes / No / Not known

If yes, please detail.

**4. Does anyone who visits the adult have a history of violence or threatening behaviour?**

Yes / No / Not known

If yes, please detail.

**5. Does the adult have any vulnerabilities that would make it inappropriate for him/her to be visited alone (e.g. by a single male or female?)**

Yes / No / Not known

If yes, please detail.

**6. Does the adult have any health problems that may cause unpredictable behaviour?**

Yes / No / Not known

If yes, please detail.

**7. Are there any health risks associated with visiting the adult at home? (Examples might be infestation, smoking, intravenous drug use, infectious diseases, dangerous pets?)**

Yes / No / Not known

If yes, please detail.

**8. Is the adult's home in a well-lit area?**

Yes / No / Not known

Please detail any difficulties you are aware of.

**9. Is there suitable parking nearby, is this well-lit?**

Yes / No / Not known

If known, please state the best place to park.

**10. Is there easy access to and exit from the home, with more than one exit route and unobstructed doors?**

Yes / No / Not known

If no, please detail.

**11. Are there any other risk factors or hazards (including mental health, substance/alcohol misuse)?**

Yes / No / Not known

If yes, please detail.

Please detail any other information you think is important.

Risk assessment completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy given to the Parish Safeguarding Officer

## RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK(S)	RISK (L, M or H) *	CONTROL MEASURES TAKEN	RISK AFTER CONTROL (L, M or H)*
<b>The worker</b> Identify any risks specific to the individual, which may create particular risks for lone workers (e.g., medical conditions, female, age, inexperience, etc.)			
<b>Working off premises</b> Identify any risks specific to working off premises (e.g., home visits), which may create particular risks for lone workers.			
<b>Location and premises</b> Identify any risks specific to the workplace / environment, which may create particular risks for lone workers.			
<b>Process</b> Identify any risks specific to the work process, which may create particular risks for lone workers.			
<b>Work activity</b> Consider how the lone worker's work activity integrates with those of other workers, in terms of both time and geography.			
<b>Equipment</b> Identify any risks specific to the work equipment, which may create particular risks for lone workers (e.g., working at height).			
<b>Violence</b> Identify the potential risk of violence/ security/intruders.			
<b>Training</b> Identify necessary information, instruction and training.			
<b>Other</b> Please specify:			

\*L=Low, M=Medium or H=High

## POTENTIAL RISKS TO LONE WORKERS

The worker	RISK	CONTROL MEASURE
	<p><b>Medical Fitness</b> Is the worker subject to any medical condition that may place them at increased risk when working alone?</p>	<p>The worker must ensure that any medical conditions which might be relevant to their working alone are fully discussed with the relevant church officer and, if necessary, their own GP. Individuals must not work alone if any such condition is assessed as placing them at increased risk. Any person who requires assistance to get out of the building in an emergency must not work alone.</p>
	<p><b>Supervision</b> What arrangements are in place to maintain contact with the worker?</p>	<p>When working on or off premises, ensure that a system is in place so that the safety contact knows that a worker is safe (e.g., a telephone call or visit). The worker must comply with any out-of-hours log-in/out arrangements in operation within the building. Emergency contact arrangements must be set up with church officers and family members.</p>
	<p><b>Training and competency</b> Has necessary information, instruction and training been given to the worker, and is the worker competent to carry out the work alone?</p>	<p>Any person authorised to be in the building outside normal hours must be fully competent to carry out the work safely and be fully conversant with emergency procedures.</p>
	<p><b>One-to-one contact with individuals</b> Is the worker aware of the risks?</p>	<p>The worker must consider their physical environment should they find that they are alone with an individual. It is essential to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries. Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection are to be avoided.</p>
<b>Working off premises</b>	<p><b>Personal safety</b> Does someone know where the worker is at all times (e.g., where they will be visiting, the arranged time of the visit, when they are expected to return home or to the premises)?</p>	<p>The worker must make sure that someone knows where they are going and for what time. The worker should 'check in' when they return home or to the premises. The worker must have a fully charged mobile phone with them and switched on at all times. The worker should consider use of a personal attack alarm.</p>
	<p><b>Keeping in contact</b></p>	<p>Ensure that a system is in place so that the safety contact knows that a worker is safe.</p>
	<p><b>Violence and aggressive incidents</b> What to do if any incidents happen?</p>	<p>The worker must report any incidents of violence or aggression to the relevant church officer.</p>
<b>Location and premises</b>	<p><b>Building security</b> Is the building secure?</p>	<p>Access to the building is restricted to authorised church officers outside normal hours. In the event that the worker has concerns about security or suspects there is an intruder in the building they must <b>contact emergency services immediately</b>. They must not confront the intruder. They should ensure that they are in a secure room where they can lock the door (e.g., the church office) and await arrival of the emergency services.</p>

	<p><b>Access</b> Is there a safe means of access/ egress for the worker (e.g. lighting, personal security issues, means of escape in emergency)?</p>	Entrances in the vicinity of the building and car park are well lit. The worker should plan how to get to car/public transport after leaving, taking account of potential personal safety issues. The worker should consider use of a personal attack alarm.
	<p><b>Emergencies</b> Does the worker have access to emergency warning devices to raise the alarm in event of emergency (e.g., fire alarm, motion sensors, panic alarms)?</p>	The worker must know local arrangements on how to respond in event of fire or other emergency.
	<p><b>First Aid</b> Are there arrangements in place to deal with a situation where the employee becomes ill or has an accident, including access to a First Aid Kit and/or First Aiders and facilities?</p>	First Aiders are unlikely to be present. First Aid Kits are available and contents checked regularly. In the event of a lone worker feeling unwell, they should if possible, return home or contact member of the family, the relevant church officer and, if necessary, their own GP for assistance.
	<p><b>Welfare Facilities</b> Is there adequate heating, lighting, access to drinking water and toilets?</p>	The worker may need to be aware that heating/cooling in the area may be much reduced unless the need for after-hours working has been established.
<b>Process / Work Activity</b>	<p><b>Use of computers and general office equipment</b></p>	The worker should ensure their work station is set up in accordance with local standards for display screen equipment. The worker should take regular breaks from display screen equipment work.
	<p><b>Slip/trips/falls</b></p>	Regular inspection of the site to ensure that any trip hazards (e.g., torn carpets, uneven flooring, trailing cables, etc.) receive prompt attention. Individuals with temporarily impaired mobility must not work alone.
	<p><b>Electrical equipment</b></p>	Ensure all equipment is electrically tested in accordance with recognised procedures. Electrical cables and plugs should be visually inspected for damage. Do not interfere with plugs or any power supply.
	<p><b>Work with hazardous substances and or machinery</b></p>	If this is a requirement of a role, specific risk assessment and procedures are to be put in place.
	<p><b>Single-handed lifting or handling of any load that is of such a weight as to cause injury</b></p>	If this is a requirement of a role, specific risk assessment and procedures are to be put in place.
	<p><b>Handling cash</b></p>	If this is a requirement of a role, specific risk assessment and procedures are to be put in place.