Lone working Guidelines

Introduction

As an organisation, we have a duty of care to those who work for us, whether paid or volunteers. Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, for example:

- Pastoral care volunteers*
- Parish Administrator
- Youth and children's workers
- Church cleaners
- Flower arrangers
- Maintenance team
- Clergy
- Parish Safeguarding officer (PSO)

There will always be greater risks for those working alone without direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong. There are a number of particular risks that they can face within our church context:

- Injury from an accident in the church buildings whilst alone
- Injury or threatening behaviour from a member of the public
- Injury or threatening behaviour from someone they are visiting

In order to minimize the risks to our employees and volunteers we have created the following guidelines which are designed to help us consider the risks and work out how to make lone working as safe as possible.

Try to avoid the need to work alone – where possible we encourage people to avoid lone working; flower arrangers can work in pairs; those doing maintenance can ask someone else to be present in church whilst working; pastoral visits can be done by more than one person – this may be particularly advisable when visiting a new person. Some pastoral visiting can be done in a public setting rather than a private home.

We acknowledge that there are many times however, where it is impossible, impractical or inappropriate to have someone else around, in which case the following measures should be put in place

We encourage our pastoral care volunteers and clergy who are making a pastoral visit to a person's home to do the following:

Where possible, they should inform someone else (spouse, family member, trusted friend) where they are going, and when they expect to be back. If visiting someone new to the church or a member of the community who does not usually attend church (funeral visit, baptism visit etc) it may also be appropriate to let the vicar know.

Make sure they have a working mobile phone with them, that it is charged and on.

Assess the risk as they enter someone's home – if they are unsure for any reason, they should not enter the person's home but politely leave. If they feel that the person they are visiting may be in immediate danger they should call the police.

Once they have entered they should encourage the person they are visiting to enter the room first and seat themselves close to the door remaining mindful of their exit route.

If they feel at all unsafe, they should make their excuses and leave immediately.

They should inform the vicar or churchwardens immediately if there were any issues. It is good practice for individuals to keep a personal record of the time, date and details of any issues that arise in a book that they keep in a secure location. We do not anticipate that this would be relevant for most pastoral care visits.

**We acknowledge that pastoral care visiting covers a wide range of interactions from popping in to see a friend from church or a member of a home group to visiting a newly bereaved person from the village who has never been to church, and that these different situations carry different levels of risk. We encourage those representing church to always be mindful of potential situations that may arise. Even visiting someone you see regularly can carry a level of risk.*

For working alone in the church

The parish administrator, clergy, youth and children's workers, PSO and maintenance team may all find themselves needing to work alone in the church. There are a number of risks involved in this that can be reduced with some simple measures.

Those working in the church alone should let someone else know they are going to be there.

They should carry a mobile phone that is charged and switched on.

No activities involving ladders or working from height should be done when alone. Work on the bells should not be done alone.

Since we have a church that is open to the public during daylight hours, anyone working in the church alone should remain alert. If someone enters that makes them uncomfortable they should leave the building. If they are working early in the morning or later in the evening it may be wise to shut the doors so no-one can enter unless they have a key.

When anyone is working from the office, they should ensure that the CCTV system is working and the screen in the office is on so they can see if someone enters the church. If they are concerned for their safety they should ensure the door of the office is shut and call for help.

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