

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St. Paul's Barton, Newport, Isle of Wight Lone Working Policy

Summary

Working alone may be a practice for some people in our church, either within the church buildings, in their own homes or other people's homes. Lone working cannot always be avoided. However, this policy recognises the risks, and tries to minimise them by common sense and appropriate measures. Advice and practice are based on the **Diocese of Portsmouth Lone Working Policy (November 2016)** which should be read in conjunction with his document.

Authorisation

This policy was approved and authorised by the PCC on 18th August 2020 and will be reviewed annually by the Health and Safety Officer and Church Wardens.

It forms one part of our wider Church Health and Safety Policy which is available from the PCC Secretary, along with our current insurance policies and risk assessments.

Who works alone?

- The Vicar and other clergy.
- The Children's, Youth and Families Worker.
- The Churchwardens.
- Members of the PCC.
- The Verger and Assistant Verger
- Those locking and unlocking the church
- Members of the congregation or other volunteers undertaking tasks in or around the church or church grounds e.g. cleaning or maintenance.
- Other volunteers who come into church to sort out sacristy, the flowers, clean the brass or prepare the church for special services.
- Those doing gardening or maintenance in church or grounds.
- Anyone doing a solo pastoral visit to people's homes.
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank.
- The Vicar and the Children's, Youth and Families Worker working at home.
- Those working alone welcoming or meeting any unauthorised visitors to the church building.

The Policy

The purpose of this lone worker 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 each individual to minimise such risks. The PCC commit to carrying out their responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way. It is expected that all staff, church members and volunteers will abide by this policy.

What are the risks?

This list is not exhaustive but 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, again 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 or volunteers when there are no witnesses.
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media.
- Health and Safety risks from or exposure to Covid-19.

Responsibilities

The PCC / Churchwardens – should show that “reasonably foreseeable risks” have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them. This can be done in conjunction with the **PCC Health and Safety Officer**.

They should also ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all lone working, with standard practices adhered to. For example, the **Accident Books** are in place and properly monitored.

To equip vulnerable staff with appropriate communications tools so they can summon help when needed. For example personal alarms may be appropriate for staff working in an office alone, or when visiting homes.

To ensure that every member of the church feels that the PCC has taken all reasonable steps to ensure their safety. For paid staff this should happen during their reviews.

To insist that everyone follows the guidelines laid down for safe solo working.

Individuals (staff and volunteers) – also need to ensure that they do not put themselves in unnecessary danger

If possible:

- Visit in pairs.
- Do not agree to meet anyone in an isolated place.
- Consider carrying a personal alarm.
- Be alert and aware of current social distancing and other guidelines in relation to the transmission of Covid-19.

Be alert to possible dangers and minimise them – for example keep lights on until a building is completely vacated; make use of appropriate security devices and locks; using safety guards on power tools – and not using them when in the building alone.

Inform the Churchwardens or Vicar of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to them.

Advice

- When working in the church alone (or visiting someone in their home) 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 cannot contact you, to raise the alarm.
- Keep records of pastoral encounters.
- Carry a charged mobile phone with you, to use in case of emergency.
- Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone.
- For pastoral or assistance visits do not visit people in their homes alone.
- If working in church alone or after dark, lock the doors.
- Choose different routes to the bank, when taking cash.
- Do not be alone with children or young people on the premises unless authorised by the PCC.
- Be aware of the location of the First Aid kit and know how to summon help in the event of an emergency.
- Sign in and out of buildings and undertake other safe practices as required to minimise the transmission of or exposure to Covid-19.