

Lone Working Policy for those working for the Church

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers. Including youth and children workers, parish administrators and parish visitors.

Home working, working alone in an office, work travel and working at remote locations, such as home visits could all constitute lone working. The aim of this policy is to help everyone think how to undertake lone working safely.

One to one contact with individuals in the context of pastoral care should be properly planned and any risks considered and recorded effectively. It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries.

Planning lone working: considerations for risk assessment

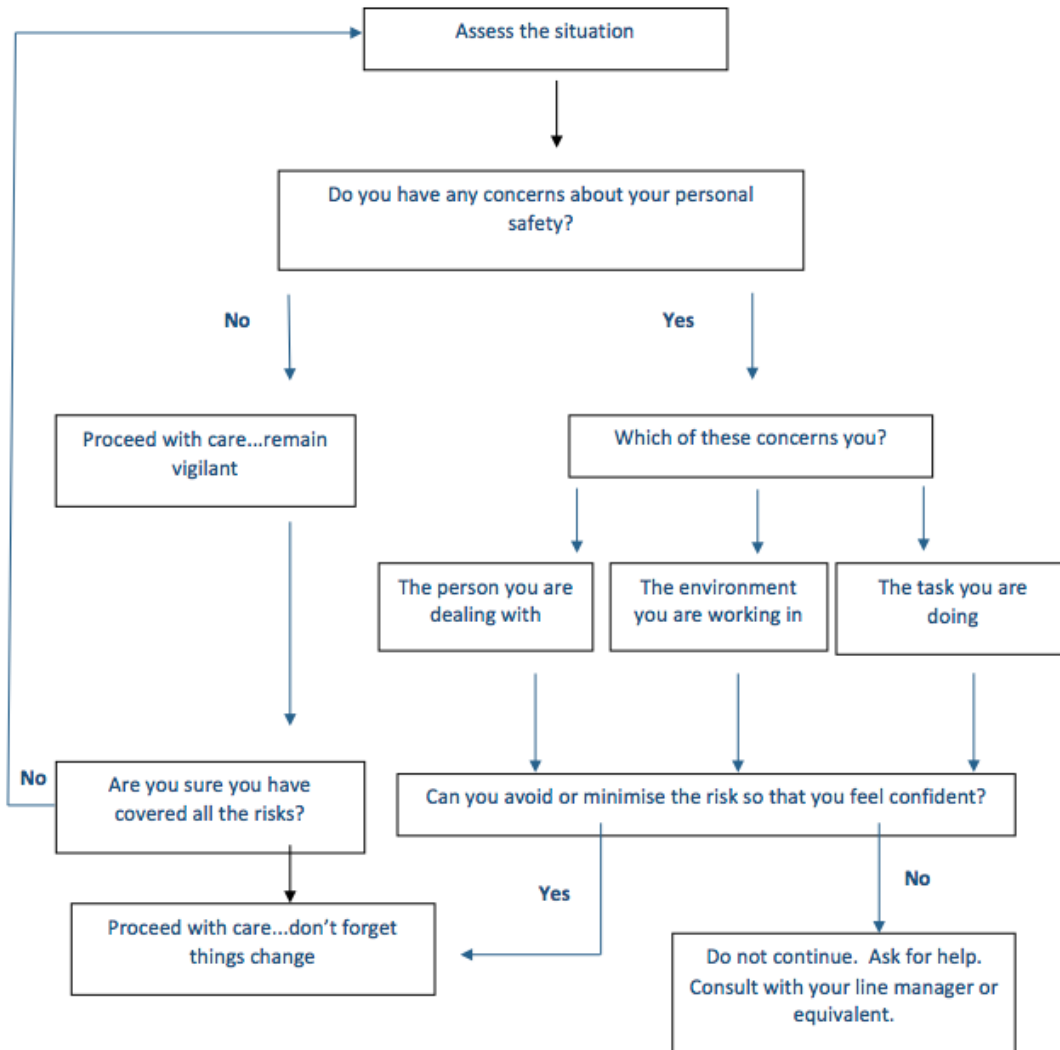
- Is lone working necessary? Can confidentiality be assured with other people within reach.
- Assess any foreseeable risks – for example is there glass in the office door so that all callers can be seen before the door is opened? Does the youth group finish at the same time as the local pub? Does the cleaner work late at night and needs to use an un-lit passageway to get home?
- Who will be involved? And who else should know about it?
- When and where will it take place? Avoid making arrangements which could be misinterpreted.
- Is there a risk of violence? A good working definition of violence is: *Any behaviour which produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or mentally, on people.*
- Are there any increased risks to the particular worker?
- Are there any known medical or other factors which could make either party more vulnerable?
- Are the locations accessible – if not, is it suitable to be carried out by only one person?

Control measures

- The proposed lone working should be planned in advance and noted in an appropriate diary or other record. Where possible it should be notified to an appropriate person. (This is not necessary when work is done at home and does not involve face to face contact with other people.)
- Some of the people the lone worker is at risk of meeting are those who, through medical reasons or substance abuse, are liable to mood swings leading to physical violence. It is recommended good practice to encourage the person you are meeting to enter a room first and for the lone worker to seat themselves closest to the door. Should the situation lead to risk of violence, the lone worker then has a higher chance of withdrawing safely.
- The lone worker must have access to a landline phone or carry a charged mobile phone and be accustomed to use it. Carry a torch.
- Automatic warning devices can be obtained for use in risky places or activities such as Personal Shriek alarm
- Keep on file employee, next of kin contact numbers and car details
- Don't call on people unannounced – call by arrangement, if appropriate telephoning the person just before you go
- All those working for the church know where to access a first aid kit and it is kept fully stocked. Ensure an Accident book is kept up to date.
- When driving alone ensure the vehicle is properly insured, MOT`d, serviced and is roadworthy with sufficient fuel. Ensure you know the route, keep doors locked when driving, park in well-lit areas and subscribe to a breakdown service.
- It may be appropriate for lone workers to be asked to contact someone once they have completed their task or have safely reached their home following it.

Personal Safety Risk Assessment¹

You can use the following to assess your environment, and your working practice as well as for an instant assessment of a situation:



¹ Suzy Lamplugh Trust www.suzylamplugh.org

Assessing Risks

The law² states that when an organisation employs more than five people, a simple risk assessment should be recorded and control measures identified for their work. Therefore parishes or benefices running pastoral visiting schemes working regularly with five or more employees or volunteers working alone should undertake such an assessment. There is a model Risk Assessment Form attached to this policy, but it is not obligatory to use this format.

² Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999