

Lone Working Policy

As part of our routine risk assessment process, Christchurch Baptist Church (CBC) needs to consider the particular risks that arise for lone workers whether staff or volunteers. A lone worker is defined as, *'anyone whose work includes a large portion of their time in situations where there is no close, frequent or regular involvement with other workers'*. Examples would include a Minister returning to the church building after a pastoral visit or meeting; the caretaker or cleaner carrying out work whilst the building is empty; or a member of office staff carrying out administrative duties when other staff have gone home.

This policy sets out practices to follow to minimise risks. Whilst it covers working from church premises, the principles should also be applied to lone working from home in order to meet the responsibilities under law of CBC as employer.

Wherever possible, lone working should be avoided by adopting avoidance strategies. For example, these would include the pastoral team working in pairs when visiting a home or a member of staff meeting a member of the public in a coffee shop. Clearly it is not possible, (and would be inhibitive to mission and ministry), to avoid all risks and therefore the staff member or volunteer needs to make an assessment of potential risks before embarking on an activity. For example: *"Is the member of the public or Church Member well known or indeed are they themselves vulnerable?"*

A prerequisite of lone working is that all staff are aware of and can activate the health and safety procedures in the event of a fire, ill health or of the presence of an intruder. These include updated knowledge of how to exit from each church premises and a list of key telephone numbers (public and church) to phone in the event of an emergency. Staff and volunteers must know where to find the first aid kit and be familiar with the contents. All first aid kits must be clearly sign posted.

The Trustees of CBC have responsibility for the lone worker policy and any queries or concerns should be addressed to them via the Minister (Team Leader).

The following lone worker guidelines must be followed:

- (1) all staff or volunteers must be advised of the potential risks before engaging on any lone working task. They also have a responsibility for their own well-being or of anyone else who might be affected by what they do or do not do. This is covered under section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act.
- (2) if there is any element of doubt about whether lone working would present unacceptable risks, the staff member/volunteer should seek guidance from their line-manager and if

he/she assesses the activity as an unacceptable risk, lone working will not be allowed for that activity.

- (3) all members of staff/volunteers who are lone working must advise a designated person of the date and the times of starting and finishing. On completion of the activity he/she should send a message to that person by text or phone call on leaving the building. If the designated person has not heard from the lone worker within 30 minutes of the anticipated leaving time, they must initiate contact with the lone worker and, if unable to make contact, must advise the Minister (Team Leader) or another Trustee.
- (4) no person under the age of 18 or who themselves is classified as a vulnerable person may undertake lone working. Further details regarding vulnerable persons can be found in the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.
- (5) no person with a known health condition which could lead to a sudden collapse or inability to manage routine exit procedures should be allowed to engage in lone working.
- (6) if the risk assessment indicates that it is not safe for the employee/volunteer to be working alone but the activity must be undertaken, another person must agree to be present whilst the work is carried out.
- (7) people should not undertake repairs in a building if they are alone, or if nobody else knows that they are in the building. This is especially important if the task involves ladders, working at height or with dangerous substances and electrical appliances.
- (8) staff or volunteers alone in the building must take precautions to safeguard their safety. These would include not allowing a member of the public to sit between them and the exit door of an office and having a mobile phone easily to hand if needed.

Family members can become vulnerable to outside interference when the Minister(s) or other church members are away at a conference or camp. In normal family life this would not be a problem and the information would be shared with family members/friends. Churches have a very visible public profile and CBC should consider whether the use of public notices (e.g. prayer points) in these circumstances carries a risk.

Any concerns or incidents should be discussed with the Minister (Team Leader) and a Reported Incidents Form completed as soon as practicable. This can be obtained from the Church Office. The goal is to learn from these and take appropriate action to avoid them happening in future.