

Working Alone in Church or at another Building

Within this document, lone working refers to situations where individuals, in the course of their duties, work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. In this regard, PCC's should ensure that they:

- Undertake a risk assessment on building safety to determine if the church/building needs extra security. For example, spy holes, door chains or outside lighting can all help to safely identify callers.
- Consider how lone workers will raise the alarm if necessary, and ensure they have a means of communicating with others in the event a problem arises.
- Agree a protocol for visitors to the building; and decide whether or not to allow visitors in when only one person is there.

No worker should ever plan to be alone on church premises with children or young people. However, if they should find themselves in this situation, it is important that another adult is made aware immediately. The worker should also assess the risks involved in sending the child or young person home, against the risks and vulnerability of being alone with them.

Personal Safety

Whilst the PCC has a responsibility to ensure their lone workers' health, safety and welfare, there are also a number of things individuals can do to take reasonable care of themselves.

- Lone workers should never put themselves at risk. If a situation arises that they are unfamiliar with, or in which they feel unsafe, they should withdraw and seek further advice or assistance.
- Staff and volunteers should conduct their own risk assessment on the occasions when they are working alone, which will help them to decide how safe a situation is and what action should be taken to avoid danger.
- Lone workers should be aware of themselves, their behaviour and the signals they may be giving, and to think about their body language, tone of voice and the choice of words they use with others that could be taken as confrontational.
- Staff and volunteers who work alone also need to be aware of changes in the behaviour of the person they are with, especially if they seem to become more angry or threatening.
- If an incident occurs – even if it is considered a minor incident – the worker should make their Pastoral Team Leader and/or Incumbent, and/or Safeguarding Representative know as soon as possible in order that the appropriate risk assessment and follow-up action can be taken.
- Staff and volunteers should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that they do not disclose their personal details, such as address and telephone number or their social networking profile, without good reason.

Home Visits

Home visits can be potentially risky situations, and therefore the PCC is responsible for ensuring that appropriate risk management measures are in place before a home visit is undertaken, which may include ensuring that staff and volunteers work in pairs on a first visit. Lone workers should also be aware of their responsibilities in ensuring their personal safety when visiting people in their own homes.

- Lone workers should always ensure that someone else, i.e. either their Group Leader and/or colleague/family member, is aware of their movements. This means providing them with the address of where they will be visiting, details of the person they are visiting, telephone numbers if known and expected arrival and departure times.
- All staff and volunteers who work in the community and undertake home visits should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times, which is in good working order.
- All home visits should be recorded, as clear and detailed record keeping may prevent problems in the future.
- No staff or volunteers should ever undertake a visit to a child or young person in their home unless another adult is present.
- Lone workers should be alert to any signs of potential danger during a home visit and be prepared to leave immediately if they have any concerns. Confrontation should always be avoided, and lone workers should never assume that violence won't happen, as while there are many home visits made safely every day, personal safety is paramount. Any incidents should be reported to the Pastoral Team Leader and/or the Parish Safeguarding Representative as soon as possible.
- Staff and volunteers who undertake home visits should ask the person they are visiting if they can secure any pets they may have which may present a safety risk.
- Where possible, home visits should be conducted in the morning or early afternoon, rather than the evening or late afternoon, in order that lone workers can avoid travelling in the dark, particularly in areas that they don't know, or may feel uncomfortable in. If this is not feasible, consideration should be given to working in pairs.

Records

Clergy and church workers should keep a regular record of pastoral encounters, including details such as date, time, subject and actions to be taken. It is important to keep factual records and separate these from any opinions expressed.

All records should be held in a secure, locked cabinet in the parish and retained in line with the guidance provided in the Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook.

Review

The Lone Working Policy will be reviewed and revised annually in response to new legislation, policies or guidance, or specific demand and feedback.

Further guidance from Church of England 'Parish Safeguarding Handbook':

To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your own as a church officer:

- If possible, undertake a risk assessment before an initial visit, especially if you do not know the person. If there are any concerns or risks known before a visit is made, you are advised always to undertake a risk assessment (see Model Risk Assessment Checklist for Home Visiting). In these circumstances, consider whether the visit is necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another church officer. In addition, visiting in pairs may be advisable, especially if the adult is perceived to be vulnerable.
- Do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephone the person just before visiting.
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
- Never offer 'over-the-counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Treasurer.
- Make a note of the date when you visit people, report back about the visit to the agreed named person and say what is concerning or going well. They will report safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or incumbent or directly to the DSA if they are not available.

Note 1:

Anything that could cause harm, e.g. equipment or conditions (steps; uneven floors or paths; tower stairs; change of floor levels; heavy doors; changing lightbulbs at height; faulty electrical equipment; items stored at height, asbestos; fire; vehicle movement; working alone; food poisoning/allergic reactions; threatening/abusive behaviour; allegations).

Note 2:

Examples include: volunteers; people with disabilities; elderly people; young children; pregnant women; casual unsupervised visitors; members of the public

Note 3:

Signage; information; training; procedures; protective equipment/clothing; monitoring/regular inspection; instruction, maintenance.

Note 4:

First aid box; written guidance/expectations; parent consent forms; carry ID/mobile phone

Aid 3 Model Home Visiting Risk Assessment Checklist



(adapted from Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook)

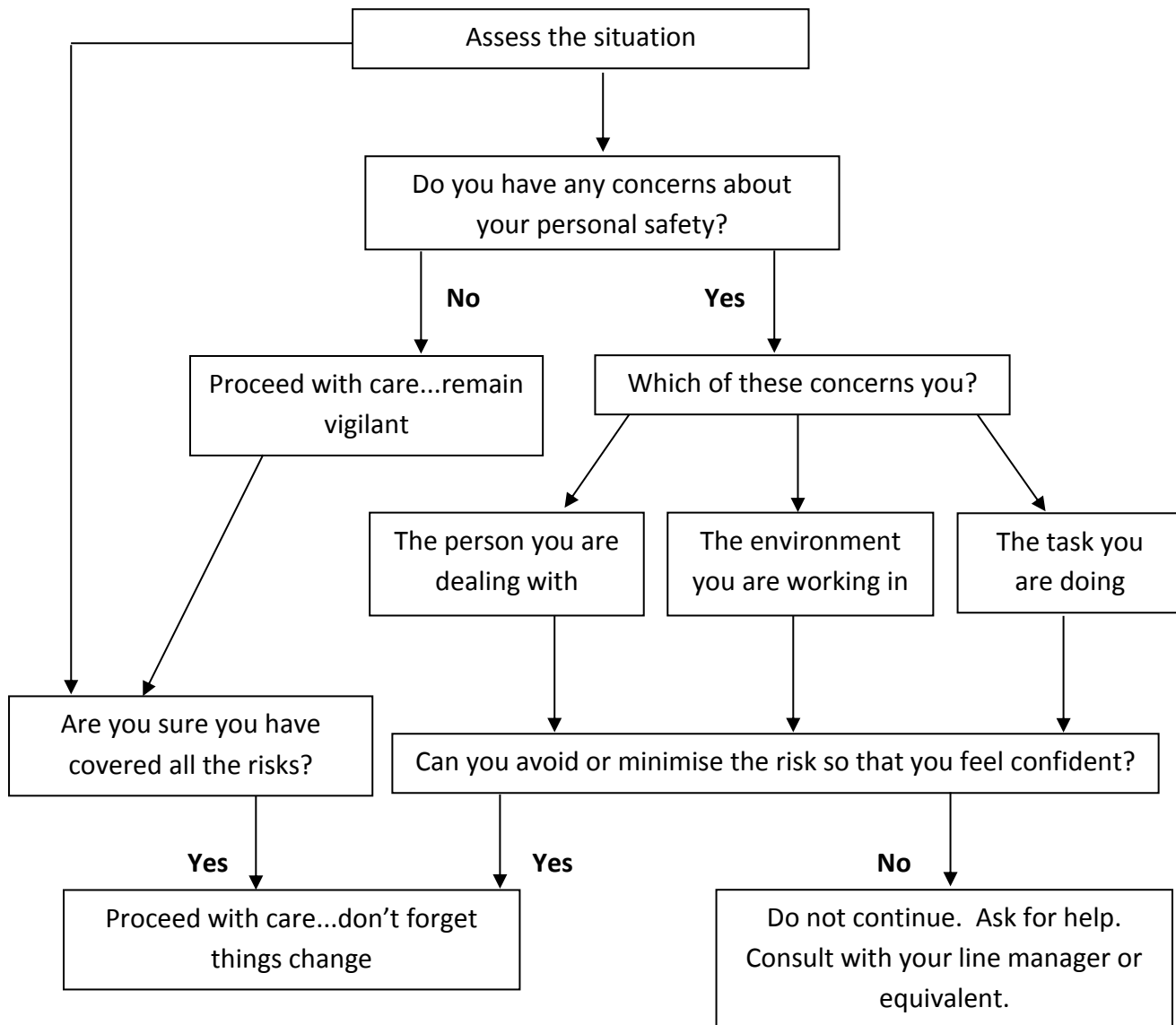
Name of adult to be visited

1. Does the adult have a history of violence, or threatening behaviour? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not known
2. Is the adult a risk to themselves?	Yes/No Not known
3. Does anyone living in the house have a history of violence or threatening behaviour? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not known
4. Does anyone who visits the adult have a history of violence or threatening behaviour? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not known
5. Does the adult have any vulnerabilities that would make it inappropriate for him/ her to be visited alone (eg by a single male or female?)	Yes/No Not known
6. Does the adult have any health problems that may cause unpredictable behaviour? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not known
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?) <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not known
8. Is the adult's home in a well-lit area? <i>Please detail below any difficulties you are aware of.</i>	Yes/No Not known

(adapted from Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook)

Risk assessment

Use this to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.



From Personal Safety at Work, Suzy Lamplugh Trust 2006, revised 2008

Introduction

Visiting is a gift of God's grace and love. Members of **N** Church Visiting Team are approved by **N** PCC and commissioned having completed the Diocesan Exploring Pastoral Care Course or other recognised programme of training. This document sets out the boundaries in which visitors work and the support visitors can expect from the Church.

Boundaries

The Church visitor needs to respect the autonomy of the person they are visiting. This means that the person has the freedom to say at all times whether or not they want a visit and to reach their own decisions during the visit.

The visitor can also expect to be treated with respect by those they visit and by the Pastoral Care team.

Safeguards around visiting

Visiting will often be carried out alone and to vulnerable people. In order to protect the visitor and those they visit, each visitor will be expected to:

- be accountable to a named person (usually the incumbent), on behalf of the PCC and Church
- have agreed to comply with safe recruitment policy
- implement agreed policy regarding record keeping

Confidentiality

Confidentiality needs to be respected, although each visitor is subject to over-riding legal constraints.

- The visitor needs to tell the person about the need to share information with the Incumbent if what is disclosed comes under the areas of child protection; prevention of terrorism; drug trafficking; or road traffic offences. This should happen before the person makes a full disclosure.
- The visitor needs to share their concern with the Incumbent or his or her associate, if there is an overt or suspected risk of self-harm, suicide or of harm being done to others.
- At the start of a listening situation, the visitor should make it clear that they are subject to supervision in which situations, but not people's names, may be shared.

Prayer

An active prayer life is a key part of this work, and a visitor needs to be attentive to this important part of their life. In relation to prayer, the following needs to be drawn to people's attention:

- In order to protect confidentiality and the person's anonymity if desired, care must be taken not to record prayer in the Church prayer book or to pray publicly for the person without their permission.

- Sometimes people will want a visitor to pray with them and sometimes they won't – this needs to be respected. It should be seen as the visitor's responsibility to pray for a person privately before and after the visit in order to hold the visit and the person being visited before God.
- Visitors should also be aware they are regularly prayed for by the Pastoral Care team and the Church staff team.
- The Church is open for visitors to use each day should they wish to use it (*if applicable*).
- Visitors are always very welcome to attend Morning Prayer at **N** time on **N** days - *insert or delete whatever is applicable in your context* or to discuss any aspect of their spiritual life as a visitor with the Incumbent or with other ministers in the team.

Referral

There will be times when the best course of action will be to refer the person to someone with different expertise. This is a responsible decision and not something to feel bad about – it is a positive step to ensure the well-being of the person concerned.

Referral should only be done with the full agreement of the person being visited and in conjunction with the pastoral care team leader and/or incumbent.

Personal Safety

Visitors should be aware of issues of **personal safety** when carrying out visits alone.

Should there be any cause for concern this needs to be shared with the incumbent or pastoral care team leader at the earliest opportunity.

Visiting hospitals or residential/nursing homes

When visiting hospitals or residential/nursing homes, the visitor must:

- where possible do so with the permission of the person's relatives
- sign in and make their presence known to a member of staff
- follow good hygiene practice (e.g. washing hands before and after visits and avoiding visiting if unwell)
- if there are concerns about the care a person is receiving, visitors should liaise with the person's family and if appropriate follow the complaints procedure of the home/hospital and inform the incumbent or pastoral care team leader if such action has been necessary

What the visitor can expect

Support, training and supervision will be available to visitors at **N** intervals. Each visitor is part of a team and is not alone or unsupported. Pastoral care team leaders are available to listen more frequently if needed.

It is appreciated that visitors are often busy people and that sometimes life is more hectic than at other times. Therefore, visitors will be able to say how much time they feel able to give in any period without being made to feel awkward about the time they may or may not be able to offer.

The pastoral care team leader will make available any information about training events that may be of interest to visitors.

To discuss any aspect of this agreement please contact the pastoral care team leader or incumbent.