



Lone Worker Policy

Summary

As part of our routine risk assessment process, Mossley Hill Parish Church 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 member of the clergy returning to the church building after a pastoral visit or meeting; volunteers carrying out work whilst the building is empty and the organist coming into church to practice .

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 MHPC as an employer.

Working alone is an essential practice for many 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 that there may be risks, and tries to minimise them using appropriate measures.

Authorisation

This policy is authorised by the PCC and will be reviewed annually.

Who does this include?

The Rector and other clergy

Church

Wardens

The

Church

administrator

Anyone on the cleaning teams

Those

locking

the

church

Those

doing

maintenance

in

church

Someone doing a solo pastoral visit to people's homes

Volunteers taking cash to the bank

Other volunteers who come into church to sort out the flowers, clean the brass or prepare the church for special services.

Church hall coordinators

Volunteers for the coffee bar or special events

The church organist

No person under the age of 18 or who themselves is classified as a vulnerable person may undertake lone working. Volunteers from the church congregation who undertake befriending visits for Linking lives must follow the policies set by Linking Lives.

The Policy

The purpose of this lone worker policy is to ensure that all church members are aware of the specific risks 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 church members will abide by this policy.

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 / volunteers when there are no witnesses
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media

Responsibilities

The PCC / Church Wardens

They 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 advice from Health and Safety resources.

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 and First Aid boxes are in place at various points in the building and that these are clearly marked.

To equip staff with appropriate communications tools so they can summon help when needed. For example personal alarms for staff working alone in the office in the building or 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 ensure that the church Safe Guarding Policy is followed in the event of any incident.

To insist that everyone follow the guidelines laid down on safe solo working

To ensure that all people covered under this policy have seen it and are aware of their responsibilities and the actions required.

Individuals (staff and volunteers)

They need to ensure that they do not put themselves in unnecessary danger. If possible do visits in pairs. Do not agree to meet anyone in an isolated place. Consider carrying a personal alarm.

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

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

Advice

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.

If 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.

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.

Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone.

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 can't contact you, to raise the alarm.

Carry a charged mobile phone with you at all times, to use in case of emergency.

If working in church after dark, lock the doors. However where possible organise work so it does not have to be done alone at night.

Choose different routes to the bank when taking cash or eliminate the risk by going in pairs.

If a safeguarding issue is raised in any form of meeting or conversation the matter must be recorded and reported accordingly.

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