



## Policy – Lone Working

The following Policy has been written in order to minimise risks for staff conducting lone work. Under the Health & safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 it is the employer's duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risk where necessary. Employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of them and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

The PCC will regularly review the policy to ensure its implementation and to ensure that it is relevant to working practice. In addition, the PCC has a responsibility to undertake risk assessments with staff that may be at risk from lone working and to put in place safe working practices that take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. Examples of lone working are given below.

- A staff member/volunteer working alone in an office or area of the premises.
- Anyone who works at home on a regular basis.
- People working outside normal hours, e.g. staff working late.
- A staff member/volunteer who is required to travel alone to and from a fixed base to another place of work or to a meetings etc.
- Working practices that may require staff to work one to one with children and young people.

### **Potential Risks**

- Unknown members of the public.
- A Requirement to lock up when leaving a building.
- Poorly lit entrance/exits.
- Handling Money.
- Using certain pieces of equipment.
- Being taken ill whilst working alone.
- Lack of knowledge re Health & Safety procedures.

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## **REQUIREMENTS**

### **Procedures for staff working in fixed establishments**

Staff should always adhere to the following guidelines in order to minimise personal risks when working alone at any fixed establishments. Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone is sufficient safeguard in itself. Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances

- Avoid unnecessary 'out of normal office hours' working where ever possible.
- Notify your team leader if you are intending to work 'out of normal office hours'.
- Familiarise yourself with the layout of the buildings. Ensure you have keys. Lock all doors that allow direct access to the building/floor/office you are working in.
- Familiarise yourself with the Fire Safety Procedures and identify escape routes.
- Do not answer the door to unexpected visitors, e.g. in the case of contractors, ask for identification and don't let them in until you have checked it out if you are at all unsure.
- Do not use lonely exit routes if there are safer alternatives.
- If possible, avoid parking your car in badly lit areas, move it nearer to the place you exit the building if possible.
- Carry a torch and personal alarm if working late, or early mornings.
- Notify people at home when you intend leaving work and what time to expect you home.
- Preferably two people should be involved in counting and recording money.
- Preferably only ever count and record money in a locked room and away from public view.
- Should you feel ill whilst working alone – seek help immediately – dial 999 if necessary.
- If you have any concerns undertake a risk assessment for lone working with your line manager Report any concerns, hazards or potential risks to your line manager immediately.
- Use the Whiteboard signing in/out system next to the church operations managers office.

### **Procedures for workers working away from their fixed base**

The nature of the work in All Saints' is such that some staff may conduct their work at a variety of sites. This can mean working at other offices, community organisation sites or other meeting places/venues that are unfamiliar to some staff members.

Keeping track of individual movements is sometimes difficult but it is the responsibility of the staff member and their team leader to identify potential risks in carrying out their work and to minimise these risks, by maintaining regular communication.

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- All staff should leave written details of their movements and give an idea of how long they are going to be away from base and when they expect to be back. If plans change the staff member must ring in to let their team leader or office based staff know.
  - Details of the venue being visited, the contact being visited and a contact number should always be provided on the White board system.
  - Also record the names of the main contact you are planning to meet.
  - Always meet unfamiliar people in a public area.

### **Personal Safety**

It is not wise to rely on alarm systems or breakaway techniques to get you out of trouble – there are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place. The PCC has a responsibility as an employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, but employees also have a duty to take reasonable care themselves.

This is not about raising anxiety levels, but about recognising potential dangers and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for service users in your care.

### **Be aware of the environment**

- Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
- Make sure that your car and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use, and ensure that faults are reported /dealt with.
- If your work takes you into areas which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates, arrange to check in when the visit is over, or work with a partner.
- If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.
- Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings you control.

### **Be aware of yourself**

- Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.
- Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

**Be aware of other people**

- Take note of their non-verbal signals.
- Be aware of their triggers.
- Don't crowd people – allow them space.
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and don't make promises which can't be kept, either on your own or someone else's behalf.
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
- Listen to them, and show them you are listening.

**Driving**

(Please read driving policy in conjunction with this).

Common sense strategies can help you to stay safe when travelling alone by car.

- Plan your route in advance and have a map handy so you don't have to ask directions. Allow yourself plenty of time to travel.
- Tell people your destination and what time you expect to arrive.
- Check your fuel, oil and tyres and think through what you would do if you had to change a tyre, particularly when making a long journey.
- Check your breakdown organisation membership is up to date and keep your card handy.
- Carry a safety-approved can of petrol.
- Carry a basic survival kit, particularly when travelling in rural and isolated areas – e.g. blanket, torch, hazard triangle and first aid kit and some loose change or BT charge card.
- Do not keep your registration, MOT, or insurance documentation in the car; it could help a thief to sell your car.
- Do not keep valuable items on view within the car (laptops and other equipment).
- Never pick up hitch-hikers.

**If your car breaks down**

- Pull off the road as far as you can and switch on your hazard warning lights.

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- Try to assess whether it is safer to stay in your car or get out. Take account of how isolated you are and the time of day. If you have to start out for assistance, make a note of the surroundings, names of streets or landmarks, so you can easily relocate your car.
  - Call your breakdown organisation or the Police.
  - If you have a mobile phone you must give your location so note the road name or any landmarks.
  - If you breakdown in a rural isolated area and you cannot get a signal on your mobile phone, then stay inside the car, lock the door and display a 'HELP' notice in the window.
  - If someone stops to offer help, roll down the window just enough to ask them to contact the recovery service or the police.
  - Never accept a lift from a stranger.

### **Parking**

- Always park your car in a well lit area – especially if you intend returning to it after dark. If possible ask someone you know to accompany you to the car.
- If this is not possible carry a small torch and personal alarm with you.

### **Overnight Stays**

- Book accommodation in advance.
- Let someone know where you will be staying and contact them on arrival.
- If you are unhappy about the location of your room ask for a replacement as soon as possible.
- Check all security locks on doors and windows and familiarise yourself with the fire exits.
- Don't answer your room door without first putting the deadlock or chain on.
- Ask reception not to give your room number to anyone without your permission.
- Do not give your room number when you answer the room phone.
- Keep all valuables with you or in the hotel safe.
- If you hear any disturbance, stay in your room and telephone for help.
- If you would rather not be seen dining alone, order your meal in your room.

### **Buildings/meetings at unfamiliar venues**

- Report to reception on arrival and always sign in and out of the building.

- Ask the receptionist to notify the person you are meeting.

### **Isolated locations/unfamiliar people**

- Avoid meetings in isolated locations; suggest a public place to meet such as a coffee bar etc. If this cannot be avoided then where possible do not go alone and always notify office based staff when you arrive and leave.
- Check out the person/people you are meeting.
- Avoid walking alone at night.

### **Travelling by public transport**

- Before starting a journey on a train or bus, check the timetable for departure and arrival times.
- Try to travel at times when there are likely to be more people around, avoid travelling late at night. If this cannot be avoided, sit near the bus driver or in a carriage with other people. Arrange to be met at your destination.
- Make sure you have the means of contacting someone to let them know if your train or bus is cancelled or late. (Mobile phone/phone card).
- If you need to take a taxi/mini cab – use a reputable firm. Seek advice and telephone numbers before leaving for your destination.

### **Planning and Communication**

- By thinking things through and planning for the unexpected it will help you to remain confident when faced with an emergency.
- If you work alone on a regular basis, assess any risks with your line manager and identify any measures needed to ensure your personal safety.
- Communicate your whereabouts – this is crucial – don't forget to tell someone about your plans.

### **Reporting an incident**

It is important to report any incident that occurs to you, whether it is aggression, violence, a transport breakdown or a personal accident to your Team leader. In this way, a full investigation can be made to assess any further potential risks and identify any additional safety procedures needed in order to prevent a similar incident happening to somebody else.

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