



Lone Working Guidance

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers including youth workers, children's workers, parish visitors and volunteers. Home working, working alone in a church or office, and working at remote locations, such as home visits, could all constitute lone working.

Procedures When Working Alone

People should not work on their own unless they have a means of communication and have notified someone of the details of the work being undertaken and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on.

When working alone volunteers and staff should be alert to possible dangers and minimise them by:

1. Telling someone where they are working. Ask them to check on you if you are not home when expected and if they can't contact you, to raise the alarm.
2. Always carry a fully charged mobile phone.
3. If working in church after dark and it is appropriate, lock the doors.
4. Carry keys so they can leave by another exit if necessary.
5. Report any defects to the building i.e., trip hazards etc. to the Churchwardens.
6. Report any incidents to the Churchwardens.
7. Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone, use safety guards on power tools – and do not use them when in the building alone.
8. Inform the Churchwardens or Vicar of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made.

Lone working – For those carrying out specific pastoral duties

One to one contact with individuals in the context of pastoral support should be properly planned, risk assessed and recorded.

It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological boundaries. Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection are to be avoided. Consider: what, why, who, when, where, how.

- **What** is the nature of the contact?

Pastoral, supportive, mentoring.

Make the purpose of the meeting clear at the outset and the time available for the discussion

- **Why** is one to one necessary?

Confidentiality should not be confused with secrecy or privacy. It is possible to hold a confidential conversation in a public area, where there is privacy.

- **Who** is involved?

Provider, receiver, others with knowledge of arrangements.

- **When** will the contact take place?

The timing of contact and meeting is important to ensure actions are not misinterpreted. Whenever possible make prior arrangements to meet rather than meet 'on demand'

- **Where** will the contact take place?

Can a public venue that affords privacy be used? If a private venue is used there is a need to ensure it is not secretive. Openness with others in awareness of the contact arrangements supports all involved. Deviation from this principle should be exception and justified by compelling circumstances which must be recorded in a risk assessment.

- **How** will the needs of safeguarding **all** involved be addressed?

Are there particular factors which add to the vulnerability of either party? If so, a full risk assessment should be completed.

Some simple tips

- Try to have someone else in the next room or nearby whenever possible.
- Don't take any unnecessary risks – if you feel uncomfortable at all, end the meeting and report your concerns to your PSO/Vicar/Archdeacon.
- Respect personal space and never do or say anything that could be misinterpreted.
- If there is any known risk, complete a risk assessment to ensure you remain safe.
- If meeting off-site, ensure someone knows where you are and what time you expect to return; you should carry a mobile phone.

Record Keeping

Records should be maintained that are relevant to the contact. **Minimum recording requirements for all one-to-one visits include date and time; persons present; venue; nature of contact.**

It may be pertinent to record in more detail if there is any indication that this person, the context or content of the meeting has a heightened vulnerability either before or during the meeting.

It is good practice to check with the person concerned at the start, midway through and at the end of the meeting that they are comfortable with the arrangement and process of the meeting.