

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy, church staff and volunteers. This Lone Working Guidance is for those working alone in the church or when visiting parishioners in a work capacity.

For the purposes of the policy, lone workers are defined according to the definition put forward by the Health and Safety Executive as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'.

While it is legal to work alone, and often safe to do so, 'employers have a duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary' (Health and Safety Executive). This policy sets out those steps.

Key Principle

The main principle of this policy is that the safety of lone workers is paramount. If a lone worker finds themselves in a situation that makes them uncomfortable or frightened, they should remove themselves from that situation as quickly as possible and report it as appropriate (see below). Where actions are suggested below, these **do not** override the importance of workers' safety – workers should **always** put their safety first and use their discretion in any given situation.

1. Awareness of other policies

Lone workers should be familiar with the Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policies, as well as any other policies relevant to their role.

2.1 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should be carried out with all individual workers by their line managers or appropriate other when they start their employment/voluntary work to assess particular risks that they might face, including lone working. These risks could be related to the tasks they are asked to perform or their personal circumstances (eg medical conditions).

Line managers must ensure workers who may be working alone are given a copy of this policy. They should identify any additional steps that should be taken to manage risk for the specific individual that may not be covered in this policy.

2.2 Personal safety

Lone workers both on and off the church premises should

- carry a charged mobile phone with the mobile numbers of at least the clergy and churchwardens, and a set of keys comprising at least the general key at all times.
- ensure that someone else who can raise the alarm if necessary knows of their whereabouts and how long they will be working alone. This person does not have to be a member of church – it could be for example a partner, family, friend etc.
- be familiar with the location of the first aid box (in the downstairs kitchen or in the mower shed for gardeners) and the accident book (in the vestry) for minor injuries, as well as the location of all of the fire escapes.

2.3 Meetings

When lone workers are arranging to meet others one-to-one in the church, where possible they should arrange to meet when someone else is in the building at the same time. If this is not possible, they must ensure that someone else knows of their whereabouts as per 2.2, and can raise the alarm if alerted.

Consider a "safe" way to alert someone that you need assistance. Eg You need to explain that you're calling X in order to ask them to turn the oven off. X knows this means that you need help. X is the person who knows your whereabouts and who you are with.

2.4 Callers in church

Lone workers are not expected to provide drinks or food for callers. If a caller is asking to speak to someone, please try to contact a member of clergy but make no promises to the caller.

If someone becomes aggressive or abusive and refuses to leave, the worker should ensure their own safety and call the police on 101 or 999, depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of the individual. They should remain in that place until the police arrive, even if it appears quiet, and inform the clergy. As well as the police taking a statement, the incident must be recorded as per 2.7.

2.5 Lift

Lone workers should use the stairs where possible. If using the lift, they should check the door at the end of the corridor is open before getting into the lift.

The lift should only be used if the lone worker has a mobile phone on them.

If the lift breaks down while a lone worker is in it, they should use the bell on the lift to call for assistance and if signal allows let someone else know where they are using their mobile phone.

2.6 Locking the church when working alone

Lone workers who do not have public-facing roles may lock themselves in the church when working alone. However if they do so, they must ensure that someone else is aware of their whereabouts as per 2.2, they must carry a mobile phone at all times and they must be aware of the location of fire escapes. Additional steps may need to be taken depending on the risk assessment with their line manager (for example regarding existing medical conditions).

2.7 Recording and reporting of incidents

Lone workers should keep records of all incidents that occur, including the following details:

- 2.7.1 Date of incident
- 2.7.2 Time of incident
- 2.7.3 Who was involved
- 2.7.4 Brief summary of what happened
- 2.7.5 Any action taken

Lone workers should be aware of who to report incidents to. In the first instance, this should be the churchwardens and clergy, but depending on the incident this may also include the Safeguarding Officer, Health and Safety Officer, Standing Committee or others.

An incident report must be stored either on paper or digitally.

Contact numbers for the churchwardens and clergy will be available in the vestry and in the mower shed.

3 Support and training

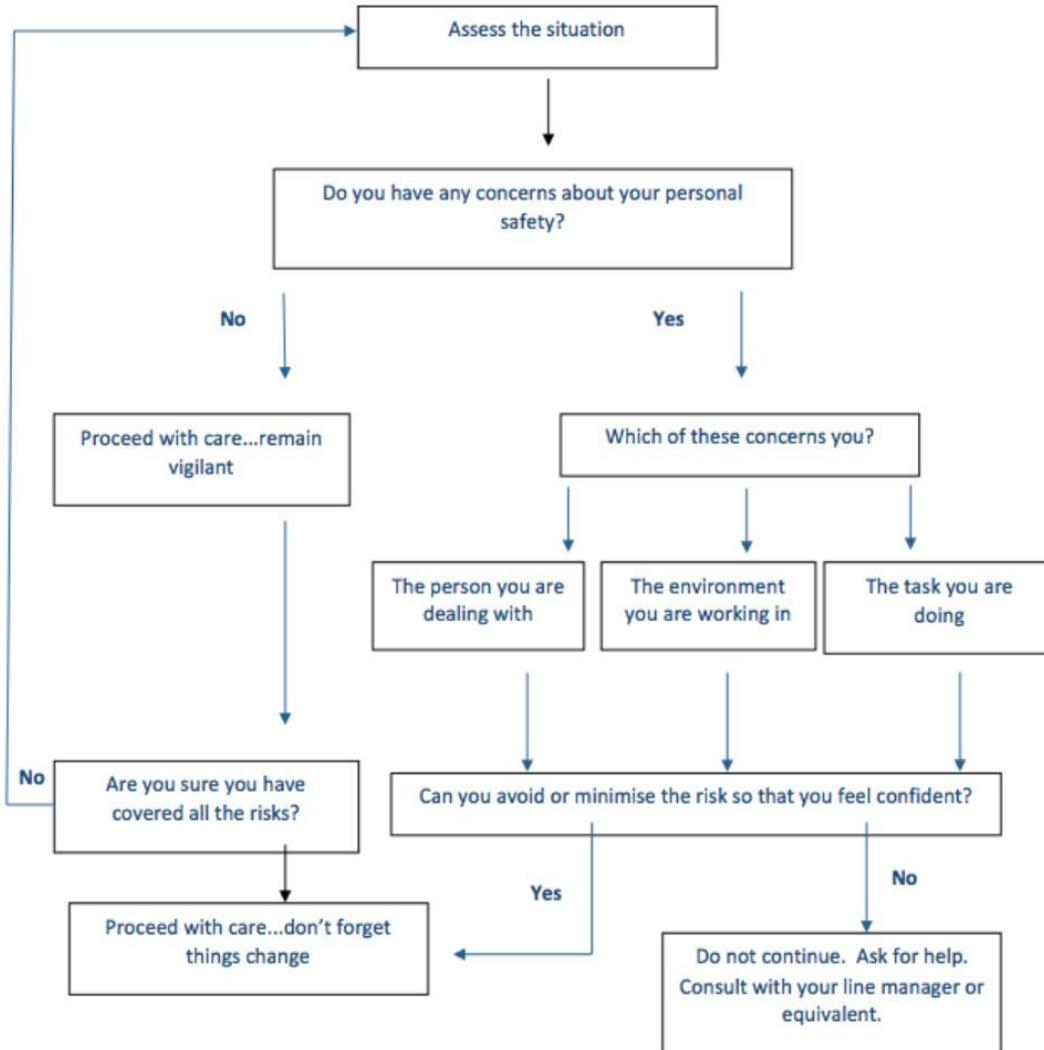
Relevant training and support should be provided to lone workers as identified by the risk assessment. All lone workers should complete annual fire safety training so they are aware of what to do in case of a fire.

Lone workers should receive regular supervision from a named person to ensure their wellbeing, monitoring of their role and identification of any support needs. This should be negotiated between the worker and their supervisor and reviewed at least annually. They should be in regular contact with their supervisor in between formal supervision meetings so that day-to-day issues are dealt with appropriately and efficiently.

St Mark's Sheffield - Lone Worker Policy

Personal Safety Risk Assessment

Use the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Personal Safety at Work (2016) flowchart to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.



Signed:

Vicar, Date 25 September 2023

Churchwarden, Date 25 September 2023

Date of review: September 2024