

St John the Baptist Westbourne - Lone Worker Policy

This document explains how the Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist Westbourne ("PCC") will protect staff as far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with any health and safety risks for people working alone.

Purpose

The PCC is committed to providing a safe working environment as far as reasonably practical that meets the needs of its staff and any volunteers. Consideration shall therefore be given to the health and safety implications in respect of lone working.

Policy

All staff and volunteers should be made aware of this policy. Anyone who is or who potentially may be a lone worker shall receive information, instruction and relevant training in respect of all identified hazards and the risks involved and all associated risks. This may include aggression or violence.

- It is the responsibility of the Rector (or in the absence of the Rector the designated Churchwarden) to coordinate the risk assessment for any lone worker;
- A person who is lone working shall be provided with a communication link to a third person usually the Rector or a churchwarden. In the case of a person working alone in the Rectory the link will be the Rectory landline and for the hall the hall landline. The lone worker will be free to use his/her own mobile phone and in the event of any such use the cost of the use will be refunded by the PCC;
- Anyone who is lone working shall be given the opportunity to be provided with a personal alarm;
- Lone workers shall follow all instructions contained in the procedures below;
- It is the responsibility of the PCC to regularly re-assess risks;
- It is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure that workers do not suffer from undue stress as a consequence of lone working;
- It is recognised that it is possible that an employee may in some circumstances work alone for significant periods of time without direct supervision (such as in the case of a vacancy) and in these situations, the PCC will ensure that adequate support is provided.

Definition of lone working

Individuals are alone at work when they are on their own, they cannot be seen or heard by another worker, cannot expect a visit from another worker for some time and/or where assistance is not readily available when needed. Therefore, lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. For the PCC this is likely to be an employee or volunteer working in the Rectory office, the hall office or the Church. As such there may be:

- Only one person working on those premises
- One person working separately from others

- One person working outside normal hours

Aims of the policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- Ensure that the risks of lone working are assessed regularly and that systems are put in place to minimise the risk as far as is practical;
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to staff and volunteers that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working and reduce the number of incidents/injuries relating to lone working.

Risk assessment

Risk assessments must be carried out for and by all individuals whose working practice makes them vulnerable and recommendations should be made to eliminate or reduce the risk as far as possible.

Procedure

Individuals will receive information, instruction and supervision in respect of the hazards and risks associated with lone working. All individuals are to take relevant and sensible precautionary measures whilst lone working. If a person feels that they are putting themselves at risk through lone working, they should discuss the situation with the Rector or a Churchwarden. Further efforts by the PCC if reasonable will then be made to eliminate or reduce hazards starting with a process of reassessment of the task.

Risks of lone working

Risk assessments for premises based lone workers must include:

- Safe entry and exit
- Location, eg remoteness, transport, parking
- Risk of violence
- Safety of equipment for individual use
- Channels of communication in an emergency
- Security of the premises
- Security arrangements ie alarm systems and response to personal alarms
- Level and adequacy of on/off supervision

Risk assessments for any person lone working not in either the hall or Rectory offices or the Church must include:

- Premises risk assessment where applicable
- Reporting and recording arrangements
- Communication and traceability
- Personal safety and security

Following completion of risk assessment, consideration must be given to any appropriate action that is required.

Premises based staff or volunteers

It may not be practical for a person working in either the hall or Rectory offices to have a third person present on the premises. A person should avoid if possible working in the Church without another person being present. The PCC recognises that this is not always practical and anyone working in the Church should ensure that he/she carries a mobile phone at all times and is fully aware of the available entry and exit points. No person should engage in any work requiring ladder access without another person being present.

The door to the Rectory and the Hall should at all times be kept locked. In the event of any unrecognised person (not obviously in an official capacity e.g. post person, approaching the Rectory or the Hall whilst a lone worker is present no access should be given to that person until identity and purpose of visit has been properly established. This will usually be by verbal communication through the door (with security chain in place in the case of the Rectory).

If an employee is meeting a person on their own in the office they should ensure the person does not sit between them and the door and that they have clear access to leave via the door. It is also advisable to tell someone they are meeting with a third party on their own. If there are concerns about any person who is to be met, they should be seen only with someone else present.

General Support for Staff and Volunteers

All new staff and volunteers should receive an induction, including reference to the lone worker policy.

Staff and volunteers should know that their safety comes first. They should be aware of how to deal with situations in which they feel at risk or unsafe. They should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. All lone workers' training needs are to be assessed and any appropriate training must be given.

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