

LONE WORKER POLICY

PARISH OF HERTFORD ST ANDREW

This Policy was adopted at a
Parochial Church Council meeting held in-person at St Andrew's Church on July 10th 2023

Rev. Alan Stewart

Rev. Alan Stewart

Summary

This Lone Worker Policy outlines the actions being taken by the PCC of Hertford St Andrew in relation to our staff (incumbent, curate and lay readers), employees (those with contracts with the church), volunteers and visitors who may at any time work alone on church activity, together with the actions we expect such workers to take themselves to minimise risks.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

People in our church who work alone

- Parish Administrator
- Incumbent when working at home alone
- Volunteers eg flower arrangers
- Church cleaner
- Parish visitors
- St Andrew's Centre administrator
- Anyone working on maintenance or in the grounds of a church on their own
- Treasurer or volunteer taking cash to the bank
- Volunteers opening and locking the church, particularly after dark
- Members of staff and employees travelling by car or public transport on their own in the course of their work

This list demonstrates that lone working is necessary practice for many of our church workers and may take place on church property, in their own home or in others' homes. These situations cannot always be avoided, but the PCC has sought to minimise the risks by common sense and appropriate measures.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Lone Worker Policy is to ensure all staff, employees and volunteers are aware of the specific risks in working alone and to set out the respective responsibilities of employer and staff/volunteers to minimise such risks. The PCC commit to carrying out their responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way. It is a condition of employment that staff will abide by this policy.

Potential Risks

Potential Risks include the following:

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

Particular factors to be taken into account which affect the level of risk:

- The health of the worker, physically, mentally and emotionally
- The needs of the worker if English is not their first language
- The location and remoteness of the workplace
- The maintenance and safety of all equipment and premises
- The need to lift heavy objects (including boxes of stationery) when alone
- The provision of first aid cover and help that can be summoned easily and quickly

Responsibilities of the PCC

To show that ‘reasonably foreseeable risks’ have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them eg:

- Lighting in churchyard
- Office rota to ensure administrator is not alone for long periods of time

To ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all lone working with standard practices adhered to and that an accident book is properly maintained.

To install all reasonable security equipment and systems eg:

- CCTV in church
- Church alarm which is maintained regularly
- Locked doors when anyone is working in church office alone

To equip staff, employees and volunteers in vulnerable positions with communication tools to ensure they can summon help when needed eg:

- Personal alarm for those working in church alone which can be found in the cupboard under the flower arrangement as you come into the church
- Ensure staff have mobile phones (always charged up) when driving or working alone

To ensure that each member of staff, employee or volunteer feels that the PCC has taken all reasonable steps to ensure their safety eg:

- Regular checks with each person concerned with proper line management or supervision in place

To offer appropriate training in personal safety to those who work alone (and on all other issues of health and safety). This is to include what to do in the case of fire or suspicion of intruders, how to exit the building quickly and safely, and where to find first aid kits.

To insist that staff, employees and volunteers follow the guidelines laid down on safe solo working eg:

- Not to undertake maintenance work at heights when alone
- To visit certain parishioners in pairs
- Always ensure church doors are locked after dark

Responsibilities of staff, employees and volunteers

All staff and volunteers should:

- Avoid placing themselves in unnecessarily dangerous situations eg:
 - by visiting in pairs where felt necessary
 - by not agreeing to meet anyone in an isolated place
 - by carrying a personal alarm
 - by placing themselves near an exit when dealing with someone who might be violent
- Be alert to possible dangers and to minimise risk by their own behaviour eg:
 - keeping lights on until a building is completely vacated
 - choosing different routes at different times when taking cash to the bank
 - placing safety guards in position when using power tools
- Inform others of their movements by keeping a register at a central location of visits being made, and informing others of time expected back for potentially difficult visits, with an agreed action plan should the worker not communicate on time.
- Inform the Church Warden(s) if they feel uncomfortable whilst working alone in the church so that arrangements can be made for an additional person(s) to be there too.
- Inform one's line manager and other staff of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to them.
- Avail themselves of all training opportunities provided by the church.
- Drive responsibly and keep their vehicle properly insured, tested and maintained, with current breakdown insurance, always with adequate petrol in the tank, and park in well-lit areas.