

Parochial Church Council LEOMINSTER

LONE WORKING POLICY

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Lone Working Policy

Leominster Parochial Church Council (PCC) is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all its clergy, staff and volunteers who, in the course of their work and ministry, may have to work alone. This policy provides a framework for managing the risks presented by lone working, as well as identifying the responsibilities each person has in this situation. This policy relates to all church personnel who work out in the community or alone in churches, and may be physically isolated from colleagues or family, without access to immediate assistance. Working in other people's homes is covered in the Pastoral Visiting Policy.

1 Principles

It is recognised that lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers, and it is therefore important that the additional risks that arise from this are fully understood, with appropriate risk management put in place in order that they can go about their work in relative safety. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Church of England Code of Safer Working Practice, which also sets out appropriate boundaries for preventing misunderstandings and reducing risks.

All workers and volunteers should avoid working alone if it is not necessary, working with others where possible. If this isn't feasible, they should be aware of the importance of personal safety and take all reasonable precautions to protect themselves from harm. Steps should be taken to facilitate discussion with lone workers to raise awareness and identify risks.

The PCC is responsible for ensuring that all lone working activities within the church are identified and risk assessments are undertaken to reduce the risks that lone working presents. The risk assessment should consider the place of meeting, security, the risk of violence, and the nature of the task or activity alongside any other factors specific to the activity.

Everyone perceives risk differently, so it is important that the risk assessment communicates what risks are identified for the role. This will enable the individual to recognise the risks and take responsibility for their own safety and security.

All risks identified which arise from lone working must be recorded in accordance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

2 Procedure

It is important to not create an unnecessary culture of fear that is disproportionate to the risk. However, lone workers do face increased risks if an incident occurs when they are isolated.

Working alone in Church or at another building

PCC should ensure that they:

- Undertake a risk assessment on building safety to determine if the church/building needs extra security. For example CCTV, spy holes, camera doorbells, additional lighting can all help to identify visitors
- Consider how lone workers will raise an alarm if necessary, and ensure they have a means of communicating with others
- Agree a protocol for visitors to the building, deciding what circumstances might preclude visitors.

No worker should ever plan to be alone on church premises with children or young people. However, if they should find themselves in this situation, it is important another adult is made aware as soon as possible. The worker should also assess the risks involved in sending the child or young person home against the risk of being alone with them.

Personal Safety

PCC has a responsibility to ensure lone workers' health, safety and welfare, but individuals can also do things to take reasonable care of themselves. This should be discussed with the lone workers.

- Lone workers should never put themselves at risk. If a situation arises where they feel unsafe, they should withdraw and seek further advice and guidance.
- Staff and volunteers should undertake their own risk assessment when working alone to help them decide on the safety of the situation and how to avoid danger.
- Lone workers should be aware of themselves, their behaviour and the signals they may be giving, and to think about their body language, tone of voice and the choice of words used to avoid appearing confrontational.
- Staff and volunteers also need to be aware of changes in the behaviour of the person they are with, especially if they are becoming agitated.
- If an incident occurs – even if considered minor – the activity leader, Churchwardens and Parish Safeguarding Officer should be informed as soon as possible (within 24 hours) in order that appropriate follow up action is taken.

Signed:..... (Chair of PCC)

Date:.....

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