



St. Guthlac's Church PCC, Market Deeping

Lone Working Policy

Who approves the policy?	PCC of St. Guthlac's Church, Market Deeping
Who is responsible for updating the policy?	PCC of St. Guthlac's Church, Market Deeping
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Revised By	PCC of St. Guthlac's Church, Market Deeping
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Related Documents	Safeguarding Policy
Where to find a copy of the policy	St. Guthlac's Church Dropbox
Scope	This Policy applies to all PCC of St. Guthlac's Church, Market Deeping employees and volunteers who may work alone or visit people on behalf of the church.
Extensions	None
Exclusions	None

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1 Introduction

This is a framework for considering how to minimise the possible risks when working alone in the Church building or when visiting on behalf of the church.

This policy is intended to support clergy, employees and volunteers who may find themselves working alone. It does not remove the need for individual judgement: where circumstances change or a particular concern is known, additional precautions should be considered.

Lone working is a part of the essential support given to St Guthlac's church community but the PCC recognizes possible risks and provides advice to minimize the risks. The PCC will also take reasonable steps to reduce the risks associated with lone working. The PCC will review this policy annually and following any significant incident or change in circumstances.

2 Examples of lone working

Examples of lone working are:

- Within the church building, e.g. Church administrator, Cleaners, Flower arrangers, Organist
- Taking cash to a bank
- Reading morning or evening prayer alone
- Solo visiting people's homes, e.g. funeral arrangements, pastoral visits

These examples are not exhaustive; any activity undertaken alone on behalf of the church should be considered under this policy.

3 Risks

These include:

- Physical accident, e.g. fall, fire when there is no-one to fetch help if necessary
- Sudden illness where no-one to raise the alarm
- Physical violence or threat of abuse in any form from a visitor
- Sexual advances or behaviour deemed inappropriate or threatening
- Accusations by a visitor or member of the congregation of inappropriate behaviour by staff or volunteers when there are no witnesses
- Risk may also arise from an unfamiliar environment, a person whose behaviour is unpredictable, poor mobile phone reception, or being unable to summon assistance.

4 Physical Safety measures

The following measures are in place to reduce the risks associated with lone working:

- Presence of CCTV with notices
- Church open during daylight hours but closed at dusk
- Lights to be turned on
- First aid box and fire extinguishers available in the Church
- Lockable clergy vestry and choir vestry
- Ensure maintenance of and safety of equipment and premises
- Ensure that anyone likely to find themselves working alone has access to a mobile phone
- Where appropriate, a personal alarm may also be carried

- Lone workers should not put themselves at risk in order to assist another person or protect property

5 Responsibilities

- To inform someone of their plans, including where they will be working or visiting and when they expect to return, and to agree what action should be taken if they fail to return or make contact.
- To avoid working alone where possible, e.g. ask a friend to help, to be at church too, or visit as a pair
- Not to work alone if you are feeling unwell or are not fit to do so.
- To carry a mobile phone, and where appropriate, a personal alarm
- Where possible, avoid meeting people alone in dark or isolated places; where this is necessary, consider what precautions are appropriate.
- If a lone worker does not return or make contact as expected, the person who is expecting the contact should first try to contact them and, if necessary, take appropriate steps to establish that they are safe.
- If there is an immediate threat to life or safety, contact the emergency services.

6 When working alone in church

The following precautions should be taken when working alone in the church:

- Know where all exits are located
- Ensure that someone knows where you are working and when you expect to return
- Where working alone after dark is necessary, take appropriate precautions, including ensuring that the church and access routes are adequately lit and that someone knows you are there and when you expect to leave.
- When locking up the Church or Green School after an event, consider the risks of doing so alone, particularly after dark, and take appropriate precautions.
- Keep the church tower door and choir vestry door locked
- When working alone in the church, consider whether the main doors should be open or locked, taking account of the time of day, whether the church is open to visitors, weather conditions and personal safety.
- If an unexpected visitor makes you feel unsafe, you do not have to allow them access to areas of the church or continue the interaction; move to a safe place and seek assistance.
- If you feel unsafe or concerned, leave the building if possible, secure it if appropriate, and seek assistance.
- Do not undertake work involving significant risk, including work at height, heavy lifting or work with potentially hazardous equipment, while alone unless the activity has been specifically assessed as safe.

7 Visiting adults alone at home

Home visiting is a vital part of the clergy role and is usually low risk. However, there may be unexpected risks, including from a violent or threatening family member or other person present at the property.

It is important to try and minimize risk when visiting. This should be done, by:

- Keep a note in your diary or other personal record of who you are visiting and when.
- Carry a charged mobile phone.
- Where appropriate, ideally visit people who may be particularly vulnerable, for example because of age, illness, disability or other circumstances, in pairs.
- Before a first visit, consider any known risks and whether any additional precautions are needed
- If there is any concern consider whether a visit is absolutely necessary or whether there should be two people on the visit
- Before entering a property, consider how you would leave safely if circumstances change or you begin to feel unsafe.
- Where possible, make an appointment before visiting. However, clergy may make unannounced pastoral visits where appropriate.
- Carry identification if the person being visited doesn't know you
- Be clear about the purpose of any visit and limits of any pastoral care/support you can give
- If given a donation of money make sure it is clearly labelled in an envelope and given to the treasurer and a receipt given
- If you consider the person is vulnerable or requires referring to another agency, discuss with the person and ask for permission before passing on personal information. Consult the PSO or in an emergency contact the relevant agencies (police, social services, medical)
- When travelling to or from a visit, take account of weather and road conditions and avoid unnecessary risk.

The policy does not apply to ordinary friendship visits. When a person is visiting or providing pastoral support on behalf of the church, the safeguards in this section apply.

8 Emergency and incident arrangements

The following arrangements should be followed in an emergency or if an incident occurs while working alone:

- If a lone worker is injured, becomes unwell, feels threatened, or is unable to leave safely, they should move to a safe place where possible and call the emergency services if required.
- Any incident, accident, near miss or safeguarding concern arising from lone working should be reported to the PSO as soon as possible and recorded in accordance with the church's relevant procedures.
- Lone workers should not investigate or confront a person who is behaving aggressively or threateningly.
- Where a pattern of risk becomes apparent, the PCC should consider whether additional controls or a change to the working arrangement are required.