

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF SWANAGE

LONE WORKERS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

1. PREAMBLE

The PCC of Swanage has a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety Regulations 1999 to provide a safe, secure environment for every member of staff. The PCC of Swanage recognises that working alone can bring additional risks to a work activity and has developed policies and procedures to control the risks and protect employees. All staff working on their own should understand and follow these guidelines.

2. DEFINITION OF 'LONE WORKER'

The term 'working alone' is used to define any working practice which involves an employee undertaking duties not in the presence of or easily accessible to other employees. This can also apply to a small group of employees when they are working within isolated locations and when carrying out known high risk activities such as:

- Working with individuals who have known risks, e.g. violence and/or aggression
- Carrying significant cash or banking
- Travelling between various locations and/or when making visits to external locations
- Carrying equipment or valuables

3. GUIDELINES

3.1 Staff or volunteers who are likely to be working alone should ensure that:

- They have the knowledge and competencies to undertake their duties safely
- They have comprehensive knowledge and awareness of the hazards and risks to which they may be exposed
- That they know what to do if something goes wrong
- Someone else knows their whereabouts, what he/she is doing and when they should be expected back to their normal working base

Staff should bear in mind that although it is the legal responsibility of the employer to provide safe systems of work, individual staff have a responsibility to follow safe working practices.

If an employee has any concerns whatsoever about working alone in a particular situation, they should discuss them with their team leader/line manager.

3.2 Staff who are required to work alone should:

- Ensure that they do not take unnecessary risks
- Make their managers aware of any medical conditions that may have developed which could increase the risks of working alone
- Follow all health and safety procedures including good practice in personal safety and awareness
- Ensure that a colleague is aware of their location in any potentially high risk or dangerous situation
- Report promptly any threats or potentially dangerous situations

4. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty upon employers to ensure that employees are given sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to work with a minimum of risk to health and safety. Lone workers may be at greater risk and therefore particular care must be taken to

ensure that a safe system of work has been devised and that the worker fully understands the relevant safety arrangements.

5. EMPLOYEES

Lone workers should not be at any greater risk than other employees. Precautions should take account of known situations and potential risks.

5.1 A lone worker should be able to function without risk and with confidence and to facilitate this he/she will need to understand:

- The hazards and risks associated with the intended activity
- The steps that have been taken to reduce risks to the lowest extent reasonably practicable
- Any written instructions for the task, including contingency measures for foreseeable problems and the employees duty to follow procedures
- The steps to be taken when a problem is encountered
- Where appropriate, steps to minimise the risk of violence, such as when working late at night, handling cash, working in isolated areas or when accompanying individuals alone in vehicles
- Emergency arrangements for illness or injury
- The location of the colleague or responsible person who will understand the situation and can offer assistance
- Importance of providing contact information

6. LINE MANAGERS AND RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

Line managers and responsible persons must understand:

- The importance of ensuring that hazards and risks are correctly evaluated
- How to obtain professional advice and assistance when problems arise
- The legal implications of lone working
- Diocesan guidelines and how they should be implemented

7. TRAINING

Where there is limited supervision to guide and help staff during work, training and guidance is particularly important. Lone workers need to be competent and have sufficient experience to understand any risks that may arise and the precautions they need to take. Management must ensure that staff working on their own are trained and competent to carry out the work activity.

8. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring Risk Assessments are completed for their areas of responsibility. They are also responsible for reviewing these risk assessments annually, or as required in the assessment and/or:

- after any accident or incident is reported
- if there are any significant changes to activities, people, equipment or work environments

Line Managers are additionally responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of and understand the requirement for Risk Assessments relevant to their work.

8.1 When carrying out risk assessments for lone working the following should always be considered:

- Is the member of staff working alone competent to carry out the task
- Is he/she medically fit to do the task
- Is he/she aware of the risks
- Is he/she able to cope and knows how to get assistance if a crisis occurs
- Is cash being handed or will he/she be at risk of violence

- Is he/she known to be reliable and will actively seek help when reaching the limit of their knowledge or experience
- Has he/she any concerns about carrying out the task
- Is there a need to carry a mobile phone or alarm
- Is training up to date

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

To minimise potential risk, managers should ensure that:

- Suitable systems and guidance are in place and followed
- Staff are informed of any potential risk
- Staff leave a daily or weekly programme giving their whereabouts and a contact number with an appropriate member of staff
- Staff are supported in the realistic assessment of the risk
- Staff are accompanied by a colleague to any potentially difficult situation
- Staff are adequately trained (e.g. Personal Safety & Awareness Training)
- Incident reporting systems are fully utilised as part of risk management

10. LONE WORKER CHECKLIST

This checklist is not exhaustive but provides examples of the types of actions which contribute to a safe working environment.

10.1 Before setting out:

- Be aware of the weather forecast and do not risk being caught up in severe weather conditions
- Ensure that vehicle has sufficient fuel and is well-maintained
- Allow sufficient time for the journey so as to avoid rushing
- Secure bags or equipment out of sight
- Maintain a diary of all proposed visits
- Ensure that colleagues can make contact with you if there are concerns
- Ensure that any personal safety alarm or mobile phone is in working order and fully charged
- Plan your route to avoid where possible, mobile phone transmission 'dead spots'
- Carry a torch particularly when conducting evening visits
- Ensure that a friend, relative or colleague is aware of the visit including reason for the visit, who you will be visiting and anticipated time of arrival/departure
- Always inform your Line Manager and other colleagues of potentially difficult situations or dangers

10.2 Whilst travelling:

- Lock your door when driving particularly late at night
- Do not use your mobile phone or other hand-held device when driving

10.3 At the location:

- Park as near as possible to the location address
- At night, park in a lighted area
- Avoid as far as possible waste ground, isolated pathways, subways and heavily wooded areas
- Assess the situation on approach. If you are in any way unhappy be prepared to abandon or postpone the visit. Do not compromise your own safety
- Do not enter the premises if you feel any cause for alarm

10.4 If an incident occurs:

- Put your own safety first. Leave a situation if you feel unsafe. On no account should you jeopardise your own safety; it is better to leave and arrange an alternative visit
- If you encounter aggressive behaviour, do not be confrontational. Maintain a calm persona and encourage ways to defuse the situation or to allow a controlled exit
- Use a panic alarm only in situations where there is a clear escape route and for surprise only. Do not rely on the alarm as a means to summon assistance
- Call for assistance from the police or your preferred contact

10.5 After the incident:

- Communicate with your preferred contact and leave the visit
 - Allow sufficient time to recover from the incident and if necessary, seek practical support from colleagues
 - Contact the police if appropriate
 - Report the incident to your Line Manager as soon as possible after the event. Any incident should be recorded and where appropriate, investigated further; it may also be necessary to modify safety procedures to ensure adequate protection for you and other staff in the future.
- to abide by this policy.

This policy will be reviewed in 24 months or after an incident whichever is sooner.

The Policy was adopted by PCC on: 23.03.2023

Date for Next Review: March 2025

**PCC of Swanage
Charity Registration Number 1134114**