

St Peter's Church Guidance for Lone Workers

Lone working is an everyday practice for clergy and for some church workers, including volunteers. This can include being alone in the Church or office; working from home for example as a lay pastoral assistant; or visiting locations in the community such as private homes or care homes.

Under the Health and Safety Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the employer (the PCC) has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers, whether paid or volunteers, when they undertake duties by themselves. In addition, St Peter's is required to have adequate employer's liability insurance: volunteers for this purpose are classed as employees.

However, lone workers also have a responsibility to take care of themselves and others affected by their actions; to report any dangers or potential dangers they may identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone; to report all incidents which may affect the health and safety of themselves or others; and to ask for guidance as appropriate.

The aim of this guidance is to help everyone think about how to undertake lone working safely. It complements St Peter's Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which is available from the Parish H&S Officer Mark Heritage lovejoy242@hotmail.com

General advice

Always ensure someone knows where you are and at what time you expect to return; carry a mobile phone which is switched on at all times. If in the Church, make sure you know where the first aid kit and fire equipment are located.

Do not take risks with your own safety: be vigilant. If you feel uncomfortable or are involved in an incident of concern, eg you feel at risk of verbal or physical violence, leave the location as quickly as practicable. Immediately make a full record of the circumstances and inform the Safeguarding Representative Catherine Makepeace cath.makepeace@btinternet.com and/or the Rector.

Pastoral care visits

One to one contacts with individuals in the context of pastoral care should be properly planned, any risks considered, and recorded effectively. Whenever possible, make prior arrangements to meet, and try to have someone else in the next room or nearby. Make the purpose and duration of the meeting clear at the outset.

It is essential to acknowledge physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries: inappropriate touching or gestures of affection must be avoided as these can be misconstrued. It is best not to touch personal belongings such as handbags: be aware you could be accused if something goes missing.

Do not accept gifts. Donations to the church should be placed in an envelope and sealed in the presence of the donor, with their name, the recipient's name, the date, and amount of donation. The envelope should be placed in the floor safe of the church as soon as possible. Donations received in this manner will be recorded by the Cashier.

Any individual who has concerns about lone working is encouraged to discuss these with the Safeguarding Representative Catherine Makepeace or the Rector.

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