



How to – Safeguarding Considerations for Lone Working

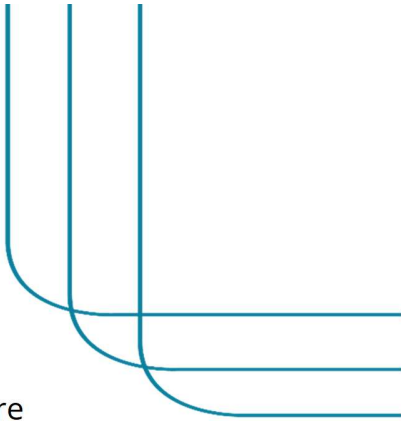
Key Principles

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.
- The safety and wellbeing of the lone worker is as important as the safety of the person being supported.
- Physical contact with a child/young person should always be refrained from unless absolutely necessary. Where it is necessary, ensure that physical contact is in response to the child/young person initiating it and keep hands visible to others.
- Risk Assessments (*currently being developed*) need to be carried out for all activities. Please be aware that risk assessments cover far more than just safeguarding, and appropriate other advice (e.g. health and safety) should be sought.
- Further information is available in the New Guidance for Safer Working Practices.

Lone Working in a Church Building

There may be people who enter a church in distress, in need of comfort, and/or be experiencing major life events or traumas. It is therefore important that they can raise their worries in privacy and with dignity, but this cannot be at the expense of safety. The following should be considered:

- If there are other people present in the church or building and if it is possible take the person to a place that provides confidentiality but remains visible.
- If that is not possible, take the person to a side room and leave the door open.
- Let someone else know where you will be and ensure the person who wishes to talk knows that you have let someone know where you will be.

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- If there is no one else in the church or building, and if it is appropriate, ask the person if they wish to continue or if they wish to return when someone else can be present.
 - If they wish to continue, it is strongly recommended to make a note of the time and date of the interaction, the fact that there was no-one else present, and that the person chose to continue with the conversation.
 - If at any point you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, you may end the conversation, move it to a safer location, or leave the building.

1:1 Lessons

- Wherever possible, 1:1 lessons should be carried out in the presence of another person (e.g. parent/carer).
- Wherever possible, CCTV should be installed in the room where 1:1 lessons take place.
- Where these are not possible and the decision is made to proceed, the reasons why they cannot be applied and the reasons why the decision to proceed has been taken should be documented.
 - The parent, guardian or carer needs to complete a parental agreement form (*to be developed*) consenting to the lone working arrangement. This should also be signed by the person giving the lessons and retained by the church.
 - Information should be displayed in the room (at least when teaching is taking place) as to how to report a concern, e.g. with a QR code or clear website/phone number.
 - A record of what sessions are taking place needs to be kept.
 - Where the session is being run by a Church Officer, [Safer Recruitment and People Management Code of Practice](#), including DBS, checks must apply.

- Where the session is being run by a third party, e.g. the local school is hiring the room for music or singing lessons:
 - The safeguarding part of the Room Hire Agreement needs to be followed.
 - The third party must confirm that safer recruitment took place, and the appropriate level of DBS check has been undertaken and is clear.
- For specific topics related to bellringing, please see the ['Central Council of Church Bell Ringers: General statement on Safeguarding Children in Towers'](#).

Awareness of Self When Lone Working

When you encounter someone and are working alone, think about the following (your own and other people's):

- Body language. Is your posture relaxed and welcoming or closed and tense? Are you leaning over someone?
- Tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic, patronising, discriminatory or any form of sexual innuendo, bearing in mind that different people will have different views on these issues.
- What you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? Is it appropriate? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf, tie or necklace offer opportunity to an assailant?
- Your own potential triggers - the things that make you angry or upset.

Awareness of Other People

- Take note of their non-verbal signals.
- Be aware of their triggers.

- Do not crowd people - allow them space.
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something.
- Do not make promises which cannot be kept, either on your own or on someone else's behalf.
- Be aware of the context of your meeting - are they already angry or upset before you meet and for what reasons?
- Listen to them and show you are listening.

Pastoral/Home Visits – Lay Visitors or Clergy

- Working in pairs may be more appropriate in general and is recommended good practice for a first visit. Either way, a risk assessment should be undertaken before the visit.
- Lone workers should always inform the person in charge of pastoral visiting or another colleague of date/time/venue of the visit. They should always confirm when the meeting/visit is completed.
- Unannounced visits should only happen in rare and specific circumstances, e.g. the person is housebound and has no phone. In all other cases, visits must be prearranged, and if appropriate, telephone the person just prior to the visit.
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose/limitations of any pastoral/care support that is available.
- Anyone undertaking visits should ensure they have access to a mobile phone.
- All home visits should be clearly recorded in writing in detail to prevent problems in the future.

- No-one should ever visit a child or young person in their home unless another adult is present, e.g. parent/guardian/social worker.
- Lone workers must be alert to any signs of danger during a home visit and be prepared to leave immediately if they have any concerns about their own safety. Confrontation should always be avoided, but workers should never assume that violence will not happen. Many home visits are made safely every day, but personal safety is paramount. Any incidents should be reported to the Pastoral Leader and/or the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, as well as to the emergency services where necessary, e.g. police or ambulance service.
- Always check the layout of the room and look for exits to leave the premises if necessary. Wherever possible, situate yourself close to the exit and preferably without the recipient of the visit blocking your exit path.
- Those undertaking visits should also ask the person they are visiting if they can secure any pets, they may have that could present a safety risk.
- Where possible home visits should be made in daylight hours so that lone workers can avoid travelling in the dark, particularly in areas they do not know, or do not feel comfortable in. This can apply to both lone workers and those working in pairs.
- If, during the course of a visit, you become concerned about the persons welfare, the procedure set out in the Reporting Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Code of Practice must be followed, including if it is an emergency, you must contact statutory services. If it is not an emergency, you generally cannot make referrals without the consent of the individual, but further information on these situations is available in the Code.
- Never offer “over the counter” remedies to people when on visits, or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept gifts to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family.

- If someone wishes to make a donation to the church, it must be put in an envelope, marked as a donation and a receipt obtained from the Treasurer. You can carry some envelopes and get the person to sign to say they have given it to you at the time.
- Remember if you are in their home, they may consider it a safe space/place - do not make any comments that may upset their view. Any concerns refer back to PSO if you feel it is necessary.
- Visits to individuals who are subject to safeguarding agreements or known risks must only take place with the knowledge of the PSO and/or DSO and strictly in line with agreed conditions.

Records

- Make a note of the date when people are visited, report back about the visit to the agreed Pastoral Lead and say what is concerning you or going well. They will report safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or incumbent or directly to the DSO if they are not available.
- Clergy and church workers should keep a regular record of pastoral encounters, including details, such as date, time, subject and actions to be taken. It is important to keep the records factual and separate them from any opinions expressed.
- All records should be held in a secure locked cabinet in the parish and retained in line with GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) requirements.

Lone Working with Children and Young People

Where possible, work with children and young people should be completed by at least two people. In instances where this is not possible or appropriate, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Staff and volunteers must never meet with a child or young person on a 1:1 basis in a private place. Any meeting should be conducted in a public or open place e.g. café, park, and where possible within sight of others.
- Parents must be informed of all 1:1 sessions, and permission should be sought in advance except where a 1:1 conversation arises unexpectedly.
- All 1:1 sessions and conversations must be summarised in writing, which is agreed by the child or young person, and a copy stored according to the churches protocols and a copy given to the child or young person.
- 1:1 sessions should be reserved, except in the case of a pastoral emergency, for children or young people aged 11 upwards. These sessions should be occasional or as one offs, if there is a need for more regular support consideration should be given to setting up a small group session.

For planned 1:1 conversations or sessions:

- Ensure the team member is the same gender as the child or young person. On rare occasions a senior youth leader or member of clergy may be best suited to meet with the child or young person, even though they are of the opposite gender (an example being if meeting for a theological discussion). These instances must only happen during work hours, with permission from the parent/carer and with other people in the vicinity.

For unplanned 1:1 conversations (such as directly after a group session):

- Ensure another team member is nearby, they are aware that the 1:1 conversation is happening and they have a line of sight to the conversation. If in a separate room ensure the room remains open.
- If the child or young person is a member of the opposite gender, ask another leader to join the conversation before continuing, this should also happen if you are going to pray for the child or young person.

- Consider suggesting scheduling a meeting with the child or young person, rather than having the conversation immediately, to enable another team member to be present.

