

THE JOINT COUNCIL OF HOLY TRINITY AND ST JAMES'

LONE WORKER POLICY

The following policy was agreed at the Joint Church Council (JCC) meeting held on 27th May 2025.

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers. Home working, working alone in an office, work travel and working at remote locations, such as home visits, could all constitute lone working.

Lone worker includes those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is working on the premises
- People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations People working outside normal hours, e.g. cleaners

The Joint Church Council /Church Wardens should show that “reasonably foreseeable risks” have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them. This can be done in conjunction with the Health and Safety officer.

They have the responsibility to ensure that Lone Worker procedures are implemented in order to ensure that all church volunteers and staff:

- Think about how to undertake lone working safely.
- Assess the risks of situations where a threat to personal safety could occur (Risk assessments should be undertaken where appropriate).
- Reduce those risks through appropriate procedures and control measure.

Who does this affect?

- Vicar and other clergy
- Church Administrator
- Cleaner
- Church Hall manager
- Other volunteers who come into church to sort out, the flowers, clean the brass or prepare the church for special services
- Those locking the church
- Those doing maintenance in church
- Someone doing a solo pastoral visit to people's homes
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank
- The vicar working at home
- Musicians who use the church for Practice

The Risks

This list is not exhaustive but identifies some of the risks faced.

- Physical accident (from injury, fire, etc such as when using kitchen or maintenance equipment when there is no one available to fetch help if necessary).
- Sudden illness, again when there is no one to raise the alarm.
- Physical violence or threat of abuse in any form from a visitor.
- Sexual behaviour or advances deemed to be inappropriate or threatening.

- Accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour by staff / volunteers when there are no witnesses.
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media.
- A member of the public in the churchyard or sat on the entrance steps to the vestry.

Good Practice Guidelines

Procedures When Working Alone

People should not work on their own unless they have a means of communication and have notified a colleague of the details of the work being undertaken and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on.

When working alone volunteers and staff should be alert to possible dangers and minimise them by:

1. Telling someone where they are working (Ask them to check on you if you are not home when expected and if they can't contact you, to raise the alarm).
2. Always carry a fully charged mobile phone.
3. If working in church after dark and it is appropriate, lock the doors.
4. Carry keys so they can leave by another exit if necessary.
5. Report any defects to the building i.e. trip hazards etc. to the Churchwardens.
6. Report any incidents to the Churchwardens.
7. Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone, use safety guards on power tools – and do not use them when in the building alone.
8. Choose different routes to the bank, when taking cash.
9. Inform the Church Wardens or Vicar of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made.
10. Text a nominated person when entering the building and again when leaving the building.

Record Keeping

Records should be maintained that are relevant to the contact. Minimum recording requirements for all one to one visits include:

- Date and time;
- persons present;
- venue;
- nature of contact.

It may be pertinent to record in more detail if there is any indication that this person, the context or content of the meeting has a heightened vulnerability either before or during the meeting:

- When and where the meeting / discussion took place.
- Purpose of the meeting / discussion.
- The time you / the other person arrived and left.
- Who else was present (if applicable).
- A brief, factual account of what was discussed / agreed.
- Any potential or actual safeguarding concerns identified.
- Any actions taken / to be taken and any decisions made, including advice taken and who shared with.
- Sign and date the record and store securely.

It is good practice to check with the person concerned at the start, midway through and at the end of the meeting that they are comfortable with the arrangement and process of the meeting.

Incumbent: Revd Rebecca Elliott