



## Lone Working Policy

This policy covers all lone workers who operate on behalf of St Michael's church, whether as employed members of staff or as volunteers.

For the purposes of the policy, lone workers are defined according to the Health and Safety Executive as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'.

For the benefit of St Michael's Church this policy relates particularly to all workers, paid or unpaid, who will be operating on the church premises alone, when agreed in advance with your volunteer coordinator supervisor or minister while the building is open to the public.

When operating outside of the church premises visiting is expected to take place in pairs if conducted in the name of St Michael's Church. The exception to this may be times when licensed ministers (e.g Ordained clergy, Reader's) complete pastoral visits in their role and do so alone.

While it is legal to work alone, and often safe to do so, 'employers have a duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary' (Health and Safety Executive).

This policy sets out those steps.

### **Key Principle:**

The main principle of this policy is that the safety of lone workers is paramount. If a lone worker finds themselves in a situation that makes them uncomfortable or frightened, they should remove themselves from that situation as quickly as possible and report it as appropriate (see below). Where actions are suggested below, these do not override the importance of workers' safety – workers should always put their safety first and use their discretion in any given situation.

### **1. Awareness of other policies**

Lone workers should be familiar with the Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policies, as well as any other policies relevant to their role.

## **2. Working alone**

### **2.1 Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment should be carried out with all individual workers by their line managers or appropriate other when they start their employment/voluntary work to assess any particular risks that they might face, including lone working. These risks could be related to the tasks they are asked to perform or their personal circumstances (e.g., medical conditions).

Line managers must ensure workers who may be working alone are given a copy of this policy. They should identify any additional steps that should be taken to manage risk for the specific individual that may not be covered in this policy.

### **2.2 Personal safety**

Lone workers both **on and off** the church premises should carry a charged mobile phone with the mobile numbers of at least the minister and churchwardens, and if working on the church premises have set of keys comprising at least the main key and Vallange key at all times.

Lone workers **on and off** the church premises should ensure that someone else who can raise the alarm if necessary knows of their whereabouts and how long they will be working alone, this applies to Pastoral visits. This person does not have to be a member of church – it could be for example a partner, family, friend etc.

Workers on the church premises should be familiar with the location of the first aid box and the accident book for minor injuries, as well as the location of the fire escapes and extinguishers.

When someone is lone working they should inform someone that they have arrived and when they leave. If this is not a family member it should be a churchwarden, minister or staff team member.

### **2.3 Meetings**

When lone workers are arranging to meet others one-to-one in the church, where possible they should arrange to meet when someone else is in the building at the same time. If this is not possible, they must ensure that someone else knows of their whereabouts as per 2.2 and can raise the alarm if needed.

### **2.4 Callers in church**

Lone workers are not expected to provide drinks or food for callers. If a caller is asking to speak to someone, please pass on the minister's contact details. If a caller becomes aggressive or abusive and refuses to leave, the worker should ensure they are themselves in a safe place (such as the Vallange Room) or leave the building by the nearest exit and call the police on 101 or 999, depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of the individual. They should remain in that

place until the police arrive, even if it appears quiet, and inform the minister. In addition to the police taking a statement, the incident must be recorded as per 2.6.

### **2.5 Locking the church when working alone**

Lone workers who do not have public-facing roles may lock themselves in the church when working alone. However, if they do so, they must ensure that someone else is aware of their whereabouts as per 2.2, they must always carry a mobile phone and they must be aware of the location of fire escapes. Additional steps may need to be taken depending on the risk assessment with their line manager (for example regarding existing medical conditions)

### **2.6 Recording and reporting of incidents**

Lone workers should keep records of all incidents that occur, including the following details:

- Date of incident
- Time of incident
- Who was involved
- Brief summary of what happened
- Any action taken

The record should be submitted to the churchwardens and minister in the first instance, who will pass the information on to any other relevant parties.

Lone workers should be aware of who to report incidents to. In the first instance, this should be their line manager, the churchwardens, and the incumbent but, depending on the incident, this may also include the Safeguarding Officer, PCC or others.

Contact numbers for the churchwardens and minister are on the notice board

## **3. Support and training**

Relevant training and support should be provided to lone workers as identified by the risk assessment. All lone workers should complete annual fire safety training so they are aware of what to do in case of a fire.

Lone workers should receive regular supervision from a named person to ensure their wellbeing, monitoring of their role and identification of any support needs. This should be negotiated between the worker and their supervisor and reviewed at least annually. They should be in regular contact with their supervisor in between formal supervision meetings so that day-to-day issues are dealt with appropriately and efficiently.

Approved by the PCC and signed on its behalf:



Date: May 2023

