



## **Lone Working Policy**

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers including youth workers, children's workers, volunteers and parish visitors. Home working, working alone in an office, work travel and working at remote locations, such as home visits, could all constitute lone working.

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

- consider how to undertake lone working safely,
- assess the risks of situations where a threat to personal safety could occur
- reduce those risks through appropriate procedures and control measure
- Carry out risk assessments where appropriate.

### **Who is a lone worker?**

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

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- One person is visiting another premises or meeting venue
- One person is making a home visit to an individual
- One person is working from their own home.

They could be:

- Vicar and other clergy
- Church Administrator
- Cleaner
- Church Wardens
- Volunteers who open the parish hall and churches
- 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 4
- People giving home communion
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank
- The vicar working at home
- Bell ringers

### **The Risks**

This list is not exhaustive but identifies some of the potential risks faced when working alone.

- Accidents or sudden illness when there is no-one to summon help or first aid.
- Violence or abusive behaviour or the threat of this.
- Allegations of inappropriate and/or abusive behaviour.
- Fire or other threat.
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, e.g. heavy lifting, or use of certain equipment.
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building (e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in).
- Travelling, particularly in bad weather.
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media

### **Procedures When Working Alone**

People should avoid working on their own unless they have a means of communication and have informed someone of their whereabouts.

1. Tell someone where they are working and when they expect to be home.
2. Carry a mobile phone if possible.
3. If working in church or parish hall alone, 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/Incumbent/PSO as appropriate.



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.

### **Lone working – For those in licensed and authorised ministry, in their specific Pastoral Duties**

One to one contact with individuals in the context of pastoral support should be properly planned, risk assessed and recorded. It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries. Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection are to be avoided.

### **Some simple tips to mitigate risk**

- Make the purpose of the meeting clear at the outset and the time available for the discussion
- Try to have someone else in the next room or nearby whenever possible.
- Don't take any unnecessary risks – if you feel uncomfortable at all, end the meeting and report your concerns to your PSO/ Archdeacon
- Respect personal space and never do or say anything that could be misinterpreted
- If there is any known risk, complete a risk assessment to ensure you remain safe.
- Confidentiality should not be confused with secrecy or privacy. It is possible to hold a confidential conversation in a public area, where there is privacy.
- The timing of contact and meeting is important to ensure actions are not misinterpreted. Whenever possible make prior arrangements to meet rather than meet 'on demand'
- If meeting off-site, ensure someone knows where you are and what time you expect to return; you should carry a mobile phone



- If there are there particular factors which add to the vulnerability of either party, a full risk assessment should be completed.

## **Risk Assessments**

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. eg

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



## **Using your own home for Activities**

Where activities are formally organised by the parish, the following guidance should be noted. If however informal groups are organised by parents / other members of the congregation (e.g. baby-sitting circles or home groups), the responsibility remains with those organising the group to ensure that the activity and those leading it are safe.

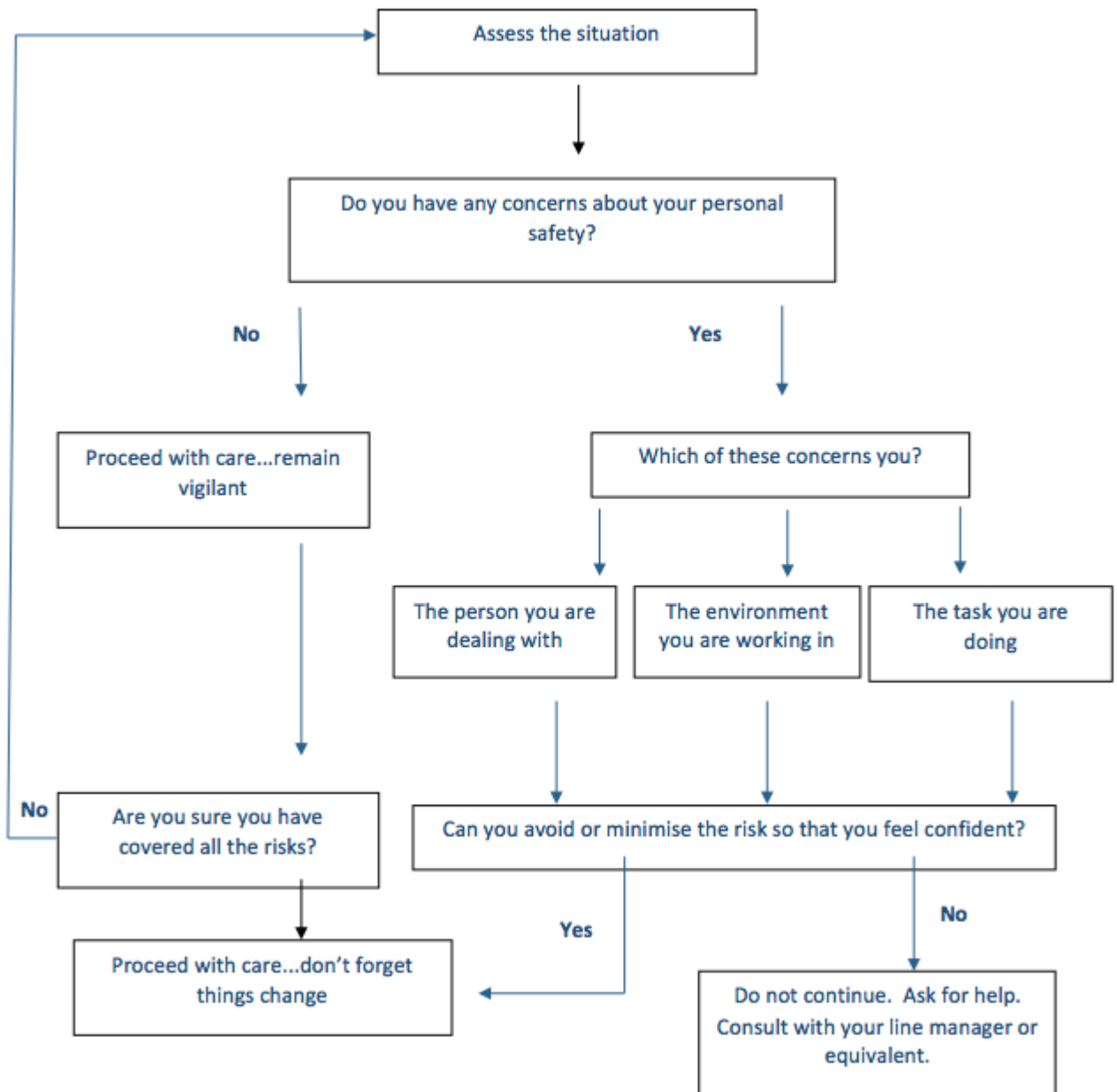
Activities for at risk groups will normally take place on church premises however if meetings are to be held in a leader's own home the following points need to be considered:

- Ensure you have the consent of your parish priest for the activity to take place and that there is adequate insurance cover
- Ensure that a risk assessment of the room(s) to be used has been carried out
- Ensure that two unrelated adults are present at all times (arriving before the first group member and not leaving until after the last group member has left)
- Never use inappropriate rooms i.e. bedrooms
- Ensure that the Diocesan and parish policies for at risk groups are followed.



## Personal Safety Risk Assessment

Use this to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.



From Personal Safety at Work, Suzy Lamplugh Trust 2006, revised 2008