

# LONE WORKING POLICY FOR THE HALDON TEAM

This policy covers people who are working alone on behalf of any or all of the six churches in the Haldon Team: St James the Less, Teignmouth; St John the Baptist, Bishopsteignton; St John the Evangelist, Luton; St Mary the Virgin, Ideford; St Michael the Archangel, Teignmouth; St Nectan, Ashcombe

Terms used in the policy:

- 'The Team' refer to any or all of the Haldon Team of churches as described above.
- 'Employer' refers to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of any or all of the Haldon Team of churches
- 'Employee' includes any directly employed by one or all of the 'The Team' and those paid an honorarium or fee (e.g. organists). It does not include clergy, who have their own professional guidelines, nor contractors working in Team premises. It does not include volunteers or members of congregations for whom separate guidance will be provided.

## 1. Policy Statement

The Team has a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees under Health and Safety legislation. These responsibilities apply equally to those who, for whatever reason, work alone. It is the employer's duty to assess the risks to lone workers and take steps to remove or control risks as far as possible. The principle of this policy is to ensure that risks associated with lone working are managed in accordance with good practice and legislation.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for dealing with and managing the potential risks associated with lone working. It also provides guidelines which offer support and practical guidance for employees who find themselves working alone either in their normal place of work or whilst out on Team business for some or all of the working day.

This policy is not intended to be restrictive or provide definitive guidance for every individual situation or set of circumstances.

In the event that this policy and the law conflict, the law shall take precedence. If employees are in any doubt as to what their rights are they are directed to discuss matters with their manager. If this policy changes as a result of amendments in the law, the changes will be notified to the employee via their manager.

This policy does not form part of a contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

This policy is effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 and will be reviewed by 1 January 2023.

## 2. Who is Covered by the Policy?

Employees of the Team who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. Lone working also covers employees who because of their role and responsibilities, on occasions work late in the office or church building, work from home on their own, travel to external meetings at night and at weekends, where there is the potential to be alone with a member of the public or other unknown professional, make home visits or are out in locations with which they are unfamiliar.

This policy does not cover clergy as they are covered by specific policies and procedures (see 'Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy' © The Convocations of Canterbury and York. Published by Church House Publishing 2015.)

Clergy and employees of The Team must work closely together to share the responsibility of identifying concerns and issues of risk and taking steps to minimise these risks.

Where working alone in the workplace is identified, the employing PCC has a duty to identify issues, assess risk and put measures in place to avoid, or control risks.

At all times employees should remain alert to their own security and should not take unnecessary risks. Where employees believe they are in serious or imminent danger they should, where possible, cease or postpone the work activity and should remove themselves to a place of safety. They should inform the Team Rector (or in vacancy or absence, the Team Vicar or as delegated when appropriate) of any such situation and the reasons for their actions at the earliest opportunity.

Under no circumstances will employees be required to attend an event/travel where there are known high risks to personal safety and security.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The employer (or delegate as noted above) is responsible for:

- Considering the wellbeing and safety of any of their employees who may be subject to lone working.
- Ensuring employees are made aware of the Lone Working Policy and Procedures before any lone working commences and at regular refresher intervals thereafter.
- Assessing risks associated with lone working for paid employees.
- Introducing safe systems/procedures for members of their teams which ensure reasonable precautions are taken to maintain their safety, and control risk where this is necessary.
- Ensuring systems are in place for lone workers to be traced and that these systems are regularly checked.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of precautionary control measures and making adaptations where measures or strategies are not working.
- Providing advice and guidance on this policy.
- Updating this policy as appropriate to ensure compliance with legislation.

Employees who are lone working are responsible for:

- Making sure they are aware of this policy and procedures relating to lone working and comply with them at all times.
- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their work and to co-operate with the employer in meeting their legal obligations with regards to Health and Safety and other legislation.
- Raising concerns and highlighting risks associated with lone working with your manager.
- Following practical steps set out by the employer to ensure their safety and taking every general precaution for their safety when the employee is out and about fulfilling the duties of their role.

### **4. Assessing Risk and Determining Precautions**

Risks can be associated with many types of work but it is generally assumed that lone workers face increased risk due to the isolated nature of their work. Risks can also take different forms, for example we must consider risks in terms of the potential for physical harm but also the risk of being more vulnerable to false accusations. It is therefore imperative that all lone workers are vigilant and conduct their duties with safety in mind at all times. It is recognised that different roles place some lone workers at a greater potential risk than others. Most risks come from the unknown, but trying to identify risks in advance is an essential tool in managing risk. All lone workers should be familiar with the good practice guidelines contained in this policy.

Due to the increased vulnerability of lone workers it is essential for personal safety, that people who are lone working can be located. To facilitate this, the lone working procedures must be observed at all times. Failure to comply with the lone working procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken.

**Use of Telephone Numbers:** The Team Rector and any agreed representative of the employer will store details of lone workers' emergency contacts and other details (personal description, car registration, home phone number, etc) and they will only be used in circumstances when the lone worker has not followed the Lone Working procedure, or we are unable to contact them and therefore have concerns for their safety. Such information will be held in accordance with normal legislation and rules regarding the storage of data.

Where lone working is likely to occur the Team Rector (or delegate) should discuss with the employee what risks might exist, the level of risk and as a result any possible precautions that can be taken to minimise risk.

When carrying out an assessment of the risks to which a lone worker may be exposed the following are to be considered:

- The individual's ability to carry out their activities safely on their own in their environment.
- The potential for the individual to be subject to violence.
- The individual's ability to request assistance or to withdraw safely from a dangerous situation.
- The individual's medical fitness to carry out the work alone.
- What would happen in the case of sudden illness or emergencies.
- Who the individual should call upon for assistance.
- Effects of social isolation.
- Risks related to driving.
- Fire safety.
- Any existing precautionary measures and emergency arrangements.

Examples of precautions which may be appropriate to minimise risk include:

- Leaving clear details with work colleagues about where you are going, who you are meeting, the time of the meeting and a contact number.
- Parking somewhere where people are about and in well-lit areas when it is dark.
- Setting up a 'buddy system' with set call times to ensure personal safety.
- Agreement of a distress code word.
- Deciding that lone working is not appropriate for a particular task and therefore two employees must carry out the activity.
- Training on dealing with violent/aggressive people.
- Clear understanding of emergency procedures and locking up protocols.
- Ensuring the availability of first aid facilities, which might include carrying one in your car.
- Recommending breakdown cover insurance is in place .
- Carrying a mobile phone which is charged.
- Carrying a panic alarm when on a visit particularly late at night.

## **5. Incident Reporting**

In order to maintain appropriate records of incidents involving lone workers, it is essential that all incidents are reported to the Team Rector and an agreed representative of the employer. Lone workers must ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe are reported even if this was not a tangible event or experience. Reports of these incidents are imperative in informing future visits, meetings, etc and will help to inform lone working policies and procedures. All incidents will be discussed at a debriefing session, notes of which will be kept on the employee's file.

## **6. Lone Working Procedures**

The following guidelines are good practice and must be considered when employees are likely to be in a lone working situation. It is easy to focus on the risk of potential physical harm but we must also bear in

mind the risk of false accusations. It is therefore imperative that all lone workers are vigilant and conduct their duties with safety in mind at all times.

It is **essential** that the following procedures are adhered to by employees and any deviation from these procedures must be supported by a risk assessment being completed prior to the lone working taking place, if reasonable practicable to do so. Failure to comply with these procedures or to conduct a risk assessment when it was reasonably practicable to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken. For Teams with employees who frequently work alone, a short and tailored risk assessment can be designed which addresses the typical and known risks involved. Conducting such an assessment should therefore be brief, workable and proportionate the risks involved.

Employees must endeavour to keep their calendar up to date at all times, but at a bare minimum ensure that planned visits for the next working day are entered before the end of your last working day.

Where it is not possible to enter planned visits due to arrangements being made on the day, then the individual lone worker is expected to use their judgement and common sense. For example, a text can be sent to the Team Rector (or delegate) or Team Administrator confirming arrangements for visits made on the day when away from the office, especially when the visit is to a new location and/or with an unfamiliar person. A local agreement about a workable keeping in touch arrangement for updating on their whereabouts could also be agreed. Such a keeping in touch arrangement would encompass a risk assessment and broad agreement with the Team Rector. Any arrangement should be reviewed at least annually or when there is any significant change to the employee's role or (as relevant) personal circumstances such as ill health or injury etc.

Calendar entries must include the names of individuals to be visited and the destination ( address); travel time must also be entered in the calendar.

**Lone workers should take particular note of the Good Practice Procedures shown on the next page.**

**Revd Jane Frost**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Frost". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a plus sign at the end.

**Team Vicar**

**December 2020**

## **Good Practice Procedures**

### ***In advance of the meeting or visit:***

- If you have any concerns about your safety, then discuss these with the Team Rector or appropriate person.
- Keep the the Team Rector or appropriate person informed of your whereabouts.
- If travelling by car, park as close to your meeting point as practically possible. This could provide you with a safe haven if you need to withdraw from a dangerous situation.
- If you are travelling by car and will be returning to your vehicle after dark, where possible, park in an area that will be well lit and populated on your return.

### ***During the meeting or visit:***

- Ensure you have your mobile phone with you, it is charged and it is switched ON.
- Identify yourself clearly.
- Only carry information that is necessary for the visits you are making that day.
- Do not carry any unnecessary valuables.
- When travelling in your car, keep any belongings, especially valuables, hidden.
- Always leave a clear exit route between you and the person you are meeting.
- If in doubt leave and rearrange the appointment for another time, when someone can accompany you.

### ***In the event of an incident occurring:***

- Try to avoid confrontation, stay calm and try to pacify the individual.
- If violence is threatened or you feel uncomfortable withdraw from the situation as soon as possible.
- If appropriate and you are able to, call the police on 999.
- On your return to the office, notify the Team Rector of any incident.
- Write up details of the incident as soon possible, including date, times, place(s) and a description of what happened and what was said by whom and to whom. While such incidents can be distressing please endeavour to be as objective as possible.

### ***In the event of an accident, vehicle breakdown or other emergency:***

- Call the emergency services if necessary (police, ambulance, etc).
- Contact the Team Rector or appropriate person as soon as possible with information on your whereabouts and ask for further assistance if necessary.
- Contact the individuals you are due to visit afterwards to arrange another visit, or ask someone else to do this for you.

### ***When working alone in the main office, church building or from home:***

- Ensure the premises are secure.
- Do not allow entry to an unknown person.
- Should an incident occur, call the police immediately on 999.