

The Parish of Swaythling

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Lone Working Policy

Summary

This Lone Working Policy ('the policy') outlines the actions being taken by Swaythling Parish ('the employer') in relation to our staff, volunteers and visitors ('lone workers') who may at any time work alone undertaking church activities, together with the actions the employer expects the workers to take themselves to minimise risks. The policy applies to **all staff and all volunteers** undertaking activities alone on church business either on, or away from, church premises.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to

- (a) ensure all lone workers are aware of the specific risks in so doing, and
- (b) set out the respective responsibilities of the employer and lone workers to minimise such risks.

The PCC commit to carrying out their responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way to

- (i.) protect lone workers, as far as is possible,
- (ii.) ensure lone workers are aware of the risks, and
- (iii.) to provide advice and guidance on what actions lone workers should take to protect themselves. It is a condition of employment that staff will abide by this policy and that failure to do so may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Who Works Alone?

Many people work alone such as:

- an administrator working in a church office when no one else is in the building or even in that part of the building;
- any other staff or volunteers, including caretakers/cleaners/caterers, working alone within a church building;
- those working at an entry point to a building with no one else in sight;
- a volunteer or Youth Worker alone with one or more teenagers whether in a public place, in a school or on private property;
- anyone working on maintenance or in the grounds of a church on their own;

- a solo pastoral visitor going to people's homes;
- one volunteer taking cash to the bank;
- members of staff (including Minister) who work from home, alone;
- members of staff travelling by car or public transport on their own in the course of their work.

The Risks

Risks include the following:

- 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 phone calls or digital media.

Responsibilities of the Employer

1. To ensure that 'reasonably foreseeable risks' have been identified, through risk assessments, with appropriate action(s) taken to minimise them
2. To ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all lone working with standard health and safety practices adhered to.
3. To install all reasonable security equipment, systems and procedures, in consultation with lone workers.
4. To ensure lone workers in vulnerable positions have adequate communication tools and techniques to ensure they can summon help when needed.
5. To offer appropriate training in personal safety [and on all other aspects of health and safety] - to include; what to do in the event of fire, suspicion of intruders, how to exit the buildings quickly and safely and where to locate first aid kits.
6. To keep proper records of all lone workers with next-of-kin, emergency contact information etc.
7. To ensure all lone workers have a copy of, or access to, this policy and follow best practice.
8. To ensure that each and every lone worker feels that the employer has taken all reasonable steps to protect their safety.

Responsibilities of Lone Workers

1. To avoid placing themselves in unnecessarily dangerous situations. For example, by visiting in pairs where felt necessary, by not agreeing to meet anyone in an isolated place, by carrying a personal phone, by placing themselves near an exit when dealing with someone who might be violent.
2. To be alert to possible dangers and to minimise risk by their own behaviour. For example, keeping lights on until a building is completely vacated, choosing different routes at different

times when taking cash to the bank, placing safety guards in position when using power tools.

3. If in a church building alone, and not in sight of the main door, to lock the door from the inside.
4. For potentially difficult visits, to inform others of their movements and time expected back with an agreed action plan should the worker not communicate on time.
5. To inform church staff or church wardens of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to them.
6. To complete all appropriate training opportunities provided by the church/diocese.
7. To drive responsibly and to keep their vehicle properly insured, tested and maintained, with a current breakdown insurance, always with adequate petrol in the tank, and to park in well-lit areas.

Particular Factors to be Taken into Account

All of these will affect the level of risk in the above cases.

1. The health of the worker, physically, mentally and emotionally.
2. The needs of the worker if English is not their first language.
3. The location and remoteness of the workplace.
4. The maintenance and safety of all equipment and premises.
5. The need to lift heavy objects when alone.
6. The provision of first aid cover and help that can be summoned easily and quickly.

Resources

Other relevant policies and guidance (available on our website) to be aware of:

- Swaythling Parish Safeguarding Policy
- Swaythling Parish Key Policy and Procedures
- Swaythling Parish Health and Safety Policy
- Swaythling Parish Code of Conduct
- Terms and Conditions of hire (for bookings of St Alban's and of Parish Hall)