

All Saints' Laleham Lone Worker Policy

This policy covers the following situations where clergy, church employees, contractors and volunteers may find themselves working alone.

In church premises: church, church office, Youth Centre, curate's home and vicarage

Visiting people's homes: both clergy and volunteers may be involved.

The aim of this policy is to encourage appropriate consideration of each situation, potential risks from accident or another person and any actions required to mitigate potential reputational or personal safety risks. It is important that a balanced approach is taken to avoid excessive caution for an individual's safety damaging All Saint's ability to provide appropriate pastoral and spiritual care. Reference to safeguarding and health and safety policies may also be required. Provision of personal alarms may be appropriate in some situations.

Lone working in church or youth centre – Clergy, staff, volunteers, and contractors

- Let someone know where you are going and how long you expect to be or leave a note saying where you are going in the place where people would expect you to be, e.g. admin staff to leave note in office before visiting other premises.
- If you have one, take mobile phone so can call for assistance if necessary due to accident or unwelcome visitors
- All doors of the premises should be locked unless impractical (e.g. delivering items) to ensure personal safety and security of the contents and fabric
- Consider whether activity is safe to undertake on your own (e.g. working at height, moving heavy or unstable items). Seek appropriate guidance if unsure and consult church health and safety policies.
- If someone seeks access, are they expected? If not, are they sufficiently well known to you that you feel comfortable to admit them? Even if they are well known, if it is not convenient it is OK to say so.
- When opening for services in the church, wait until others arrive before unlocking the various exit doors.
- If someone does come into the premises without your agreement and you feel unsafe, leave. Your safety is more important than risk of theft or damage.

Lone working in church office

Door security system allows callers to be viewed and spoken to without having to go to the door. Standard practice should be to only admit those with whom you feel comfortable, whether known or not. A personal alarm to be left hanging by the front door in case of need at the office or for staff to take with them when visiting the youth centre or church.

If arranging appointments when working alone consider:

- Do I know this person?
- What information do I have about them if they are unknown to me?
- Can the issue be dealt with at the door rather than needing to go into the office itself?
- Am I comfortable to have this person in the office when lone working?
- It is ok to explain that due to workload it is not possible to deal with their enquiry at that time and arrange another time when not working alone

Discretion should be used for unexpected callers and requests to enter can be politely declined. Consider:

- Are they known to me?
- Are they alone? If not, does this increase the potential risk?
- Do they appear intoxicated in some way?
- Are they experiencing strong emotions which indicate a potential threat?
- If a caller appears to be in distress and in need of immediate support or assistance use discretion to decide appropriate action, (e.g. someone who has fallen and needs immediate help; someone who appears confused or aggressive) including calling emergency services or phoning for assistance from another staff or church member. If necessary, lock the door on them or walk away from the building.

Lone working in vicarage/curate's house

If it is necessary to meet with an individual alone in either of these settings, is it possible for another adult to be present in the home and within earshot? Consideration should also be given to who else is in the house and would there be any risk to them?

Similar issues arise as for visitors, pre-arranged or otherwise, to the church office.

- How well do I know this person?
- If not known personally, what information do I have and what are the circumstances around the need for this meeting?
- Do I need to arrange for someone else to be present, either at the meeting or within earshot?

If not comfortable to proceed, consider what is required to make it possible to go ahead? E.g. Is it possible to get more background information? Do I need to have someone else present in the meeting and/or change the venue?

Visiting people at home

Clergy and lay staff visits will largely be to those who are known to us, either as members of the congregation or those with whom we have had contact over time through weddings, baptisms, funerals, or school applications. More rarely the person to be visited will not be known to us but rather be someone who has been referred to us to take a funeral; is seeking to have a wedding or baptism, or support in some other way.

Volunteer pastoral visitors are not usually involved in visiting those not known to them and the church and any guidance given here is not intended to interfere with long-standing friendships.

Issues to consider:

- Is this person well known to me?
- Are they a known member of our church?
- Have I visited them at home before?
- Has there been any change in circumstances which need to be considered before visiting/visiting again?
- Are there any reasons to be accompanied on this visit? E.g., emotional or mental health issues of the person to be visited; risk of unhelpful levels of dependency developing;

concerns of person's family; change in their situation – e.g. purchase of poorly controlled dog!

- Consider whether it is necessary to leave a note as to where you are going and expected time of return, or to arrange with someone to check-in by a certain time when expect visit to be over.

If no concerns arise having made this review, visits can be undertaken either singly or in pairs or appropriate precautions taken.

If any concerns do arise refer to pastoral group/ministry team for guidance.

Reviewed and approved. 19th January 2024.