

CONTACT DETAILS

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WORKING ALONE ADVICE

ST ANDREW'S, OMBERSLEY



Summary

Working alone is an essential practice for many in our church, either within the church buildings, in their own homes or other people's homes. Lone working cannot always be avoided. However this advice recognises the risks, and tries to minimise them by common sense and appropriate measures.

Authorisation

This advice complements the church's Health & Safety policy section 12 and also the Safeguarding Policy. (see below)

Who does this affect?

- The rector and other clergy, licensed and authorised lay ministers
- The 7 Parishes administrator
- The vergers
- The flower arrangers
- The cleaners
- Volunteers for various events eg rota for Easter Reflection
- Those doing maintenance in church
- Someone carrying out a solo pastoral visit to people's homes
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank
- The rector working at home

The purpose of the advice is to ensure that all church members are aware of the specific risk in working alone and to set out the respective responsibilities of the PCC and each individual to minimise such risks. The PCC commit to carrying out their responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way. It is expected that all church members will abide by the policy and this advice.

The Risks

This list is not exhaustive but identifies some of the risks faced.

- 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 calls or digital media

Advice

- Individuals need to ensure that they don't put themselves in unnecessary danger. If possible carry out visits in pairs. Do not agree to meet anyone in an isolated place. Consider carrying a personal alarm.
- Be alert to possible dangers and minimise them – for example keep lights on until a building is completely vacated; using safety guards on power tools – and don't use them when in the building alone.
- Inform the wardens, vergers or rector of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to you.

- When working in the church alone (or visiting someone in their home) make sure someone else knows where you are, and what time you are due home. Get them to check on you if you are not home when expected and if they can't contact you, to raise the alarm.
- Carry a charged mobile phone with you, to use in case of emergency, *but be aware that the mobile coverage in the church is patchy*
- Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone.
- If working in church after dark, lock the doors, but ensure that you have the key with you.
- Choose different routes to the bank, when taking cash.

The accident book and first aid box are located in the drawer of the long table in the Narthex. These are regularly monitored.

Health & Safety Policy section 11

Personal safety

Working alone in the church or churchyard is discouraged, but it is recognised that in many cases there is no practical alternative. Volunteers who are in the position of working alone must ensure that either they have ready access to a mobile telephone at all times, or arrange for some other person to check periodically on their welfare.

Safeguarding Policy extract:

8. We will safeguard ourselves by ensuring that we take note and do our best to comply with guidance such as that given in the Health & Safety Policy and the Lone Working Guidance and that received from safeguarding training.