

Lone Working Policy for the Walgrave Benefice

1. Introduction

The safety and well-being of staff, volunteers, and visitors are of paramount importance to [Parish Church Name]. This policy provides guidance on how to ensure the safety of individuals working alone, whether in the church building, parish hall, or other related premises. Lone working may involve staff, volunteers, contractors, or visitors who work alone in the church or other facilities outside of normal hours, or during times when other people are not present.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all individuals working alone within the church premises, including:

- Staff members (paid and voluntary)
- Volunteers (e.g., for administrative tasks, cleaning, maintenance)
- Contractors (e.g., repair workers, cleaning staff)
- Clergy and church leaders

It also applies to work carried out in the church office, building, or other church properties, whether during office hours or outside of normal working times.

3. Definitions

- **Lone Worker:** An individual who works by themselves without close or direct supervision.
- **Lone Working:** When an employee or volunteer is required to work alone in a place of work where there are no other persons present.

4. Risk Assessment

Before any lone working activities are undertaken, a **risk assessment** must be carried out to identify potential hazards. The risk assessment should consider:

- The location of the work
- The type of work being carried out
- Potential risks to safety and well-being
- The health and abilities of the individual working alone
- The availability of emergency assistance and communication methods

If any risks are identified, they must be mitigated as far as possible. If the risks cannot be sufficiently managed, lone working should not proceed.

5. Responsibilities

- **Parish Leadership/Churchwardens:**
 - Ensure that all staff, volunteers, and contractors are informed of the lone working policy.
 - Conduct regular risk assessments for lone working scenarios and address any identified risks.
 - Ensure that appropriate support systems (e.g., check-in procedures, emergency contact numbers) are in place for lone workers.
- **Lone Workers:**

- Familiarise themselves with the lone working policy and risk assessments.
- Follow all safety procedures outlined in the policy.
- Inform a designated person (e.g., churchwarden, colleague, family member) of their whereabouts and expected working hours before starting any lone work.
- **Supervisors/Managers:**
 - Ensure that lone workers are trained and adequately prepared for working alone.
 - Provide support and oversight, including monitoring check-in procedures.

6. Safe Practices for Lone Working

- **Pre-work Preparation:**
 - Inform a designated contact person (e.g., churchwarden, colleague) of the work to be done, its location, and expected duration.
 - Carry a fully charged mobile phone and ensure the contact number is accessible to others.
 - Ensure the area is safe, with no immediate risks such as blocked exits or exposed electrical wires.
 - Ensure that doors are secured and that there is a clear route for emergency exits.
- **Emergency Procedures:**
 - Lone workers must know the location of fire exits, alarms, and first-aid kits.
 - Establish a check-in system to ensure that someone is aware of the lone worker's status (e.g., phone calls or messages at agreed intervals).
 - In case of an emergency (e.g., injury, medical issue, fire), the lone worker should call emergency services immediately (dial 999).
 - Church personnel should have a system to respond quickly in case of an emergency (e.g., designated emergency contacts).
- **Communication:**
 - When working alone, maintain regular contact with a designated person, especially when working in isolated areas or after hours.
 - Set up a communication schedule, such as a phone call or text check-in at regular intervals (e.g., every 30 minutes to an hour).

7. Training

- Staff and volunteers who are required to work alone must receive proper training on health and safety, including the risks associated with lone working and the procedures to follow in case of an emergency.
- Regular refresher training should be provided to ensure that all staff and volunteers remain aware of the policy and any new risks that may arise.

8. Supervision and Monitoring

- Although lone working is sometimes necessary, regular monitoring of those working alone is essential. Designated supervisors should regularly check in with those who are working alone, either through scheduled calls or visits.
- If lone working is scheduled for longer periods (e.g., overnight or weekend), supervisors should ensure there is a system of escalation in case of non-communication or emergency.

9. Health and Well-being

Lone workers should ensure their own well-being, including:

- Not working alone if feeling unwell or if there is a possibility that the work could lead to injury or illness.
- Ensuring that they have access to breaks, water, and appropriate rest.
- Reporting any mental health concerns or issues related to working alone, so appropriate support can be provided.

10. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of the lone working policy will be reviewed annually or following any incident or near-miss involving lone workers. This review will include:

- A review of risk assessments
- Feedback from lone workers and supervisors
- Identification of areas for improvement
- Updates to procedures if necessary

11. Policy Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary action, as working alone without following appropriate safety procedures can pose significant risks. All staff and volunteers must adhere to the guidelines to ensure a safe working environment for everyone.

12. Conclusion

[Parish Church Name] is committed to providing a safe working environment for all individuals. This Lone Working Policy ensures that risks associated with working alone are minimized, that there is clear communication, and that effective support is in place. By following this policy, we can ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Date Approved:

Review Date:

Approved By: Churchwardens

Signed