

# **Lone Working**

## **Policy and Procedure 2016**

Diocese of Liverpool



## **Guidelines for lone working**

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for some clergy, pastoral workers, youth and children's workers and parish visitors. Home working, working alone in an office, work travel and working at remote locations (such as home visits) can all be forms of lone working. The aim of these guidelines is to help everyone think how to undertake lone working safely.

## **Thinking about lone working**

When thinking about working or meeting people on your own you may want to consider:

- Is lone working necessary? Are there ways of organising things so you're not on your own?
- If you are on your own and there is someone at the door have you got the right kinds of precautions in place (see leaflet Caller at the Vicarage, which can be downloaded from the Diocese Web Site)?
- If you're meeting someone is everyone absolutely clear when and where it will take place? Could any of the arrangements be misinterpreted?
- Are there particular risks to the individual worker? Is there a risk of violence? Are there any known medical or other factors which could make either party more vulnerable (some medical conditions can lead to disinhibition)?

## **Ways of making things safer**

The following may help make things both feel and more importantly be safer:

- Plans things in advance.
- Note things in your diary or another appropriate record.
- Tell someone.
- Carry a mobile phone and make sure you can use it.
- Set up a system with someone so they know your plans for the day.
- If you are working alone for long periods check in with someone every now and again (eg. when you have completed your task or got home safely). Equally, if you are aware that a colleague is working alone check in with them periodically (eg. when they should have completed a task or when they should have got home safely).
- When visiting someone new think about asking someone to call you 10 minutes into the first meeting to check you are ok and feel comfortable with them. Have a predetermined code word ready in case you want to summon help.
- If you have people visiting your home, use rooms that are as professional looking as possible.

### **Potentially difficult meetings**

- You may be at risk of meeting someone who, through medical reasons or substance abuse, is liable to mood swings leading to physical violence. If so encourage the person you are meeting to enter a room first and make sure you sit closest to the door so you can withdraw quickly if needs be.
- Conduct your own risk assessment on the door step before you enter someone's home. If you feel uncomfortable or unsure for any reason, make an excuse and leave. Trust your instincts.
- Automatic warning devices can be obtained for use in risky places or activities.

### **Making records**

It's advisable to make records of appropriate meetings. Records should include dates and times of meetings or conversations and anything of particular significance raised or discussed or anything unusual or of concern. You should consider making notes of:

- Home or hospital visits (unless to a friend rather than in the name of the church)
- Baptismal, wedding and funeral visits.
- Home Communion visits (which should also be recorded in a log in the vestry including the names of individuals visited or the location of the visit to a care home)

### ***You will want to keep:***

- Significant e-mails (you need to judge which ones to keep – you may wish to keep hard copies of particularly important or sensitive emails)
- A record of cards ('get well', condolence, congratulations etc.) and letters sent. If they contain anything sensitive then again you may wish to keep hard copies.

### ***You probably won't want to keep***

Unless there is anything of real concern raised you generally don't need to make notes of:

- A brief conversation at morning worship or in the high street
- Straightforward telephone calls

**If a safeguarding issue is raised in any form of meeting or conversation the matter must be recorded and reported accordingly.**

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