

**PARISH OF ST. HILDA, WARLEY WOODS, DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM**

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE SAFETY OF LONE WORKERS**

This policy statement was adopted on behalf of all members of the congregation of St. Hilda at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on 19 October 2015.

**Signed:**

Incumbent: ..... *A. J. H. M. A.* ..... Date: *16/1/18*.....

Churchwarden: ..... *[Signature]* ..... Date: *16/1/18*.....

Churchwarden: ..... *G. S. Pool* ..... Date: *16/1/18*.....

This policy will be reviewed each year to monitor the progress which has been achieved. The next review is due in January 2019.

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**1. Introduction: Why do we need a policy for the safety of lone workers?**

This policy arises from concern for ensuring the safety of people who are in situations of working alone at St Hilda's. It applies to employees, sessional workers and volunteers. It recognises that both the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the individuals to whom this policy applies have responsibilities to be aware of risks and to make decisions about any practical measures which will be taken to manage those risks.

Our Ecclesiastical Insurance includes cover for people who work alone. Insurance guidance about personal safety advises that risk assessments need to be undertaken to assess the risks to persons working alone in the church, travelling to and from church, accepting people into their homes and handling cash and other valuables.

This St Hilda's policy for the safety of lone workers starts with principles, derived from relevant law and guidance, on which the policy is based. It contains a summary of relevant legislation and definitions of the terms used. It lists the jobs and roles within the Church and church premises which involve working alone for at least some of the time.

The second part of the policy provides guidance on the usual process to be followed when completing a risk assessment. The first stage of a risk assessment is to identify the hazards or main sources of potential harm or adverse health effects arising from working alone. The second stage is to identify the risks arising from each role and activity and to consider the severity of those risks.

The third stage of a risk assessment is to decide how each risk will be managed i.e. whether it can be reduced or removed or whether it is acceptable for it to continue, but with a heightened level awareness and all possible safety measures in place. The fourth stage is the recording of a personal safety plan for each role. A generic personal safety plan can be done for a group of people who have similar roles and responsibilities, but each person needs to be aware of what this contains, needs to indicate what they agree to follow, and needs to have scope to add any risks and safety measures which apply specifically to that individual.

The fifth stage is implementation of the personal protection plan. Some of the safety measures can be put in place by the individuals concerned, and some which involve decisions and/or allocation of resources will require approval and action from the PCC. The sixth and final stage will be to review each risk assessment, at regular, specified intervals and whenever there is a change of risks, roles or responsibilities or person.

Appendix A shows Ecclesiastical Insurance's guidance on 'a personal safety plan for Church People'. Appendix B is a risk assessment check list, designed to help a person or persons to work through the stages of a risk assessment for lone workers at St Hilda's, and to have a record which can be retained centrally and personally, for future reference. This risk assessment check list is divided into sections for identifying hazards, risks, personal safety measures and PCC safety measures. It is in the form of tick boxes so that it is easier to use. The statements in the tick boxes are partly derived from Ecclesiastical Insurance's personal safety plan (Appendix A).

It is only necessary to tick those boxes which apply to the particular risk assessment, and there are spaces at the bottom of each section to include any hazards, risks and safety measures which apply specifically to that individual. The suggested statements in the tick boxes and the content of any completed risk assessments should not be confused with the policy itself. The policy for the safety of lone workers is a statement of principles, strategy and procedures, approved by the PCC and reviewed annually. The content of each risk assessment can be reviewed and changed at any time and it does not need to go to the PCC for approval unless decisions and/or allocation of resources are required from the PCC.

## **2. Statement of Principles**

2.1 This policy applies to all employed people and all people working on a voluntary basis in the Church, Church Hall, grounds and other premises for which the Parochial Church Council of St. Hilda's holds responsibility.

2.2 Lone workers should not be put at more risk than other employees.

2.3 The Law (see Section 2. below) requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone

2.4 A sensible and proportionate approach should be taken by all who are involved in the risk assessment process

2.5 Every person, who works alone in the premises or grounds of St Hilda's should be aware of their own responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and of other people affected by their activities. They should be aware of hazards and risks and take all possible safety measures.

2.6 Each person should be consulted about the risk assessment for their own areas of work because this is the Law and because they best know about any hazards and risks.

2.7 For each person who works alone, there should be a systematic, written individual assessment of hazards, risks and a personal safety plan

2.8 The process should be overseen and co-ordinated by a person or a group of persons, on behalf of the Parochial Church Council which has overall responsibility for the health and safety of employees and volunteers who work alone in the Church grounds or premises.

## **3. Relevant Law**

### **3.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**

This applies to employees. It is criminal law aimed at protecting employees and others who may be affected by work activities. It is enforced mainly by the Health and Safety Executive and local authorities. It includes an employer's duty to assess and control any risks from lone working. It also requires employers to protect people other than those at work, including volunteers and members of the public from risks to their health and safety arising out of, or in connection, with their work activities. Section 2 requires an employer to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. Section 3 defines similar duties which are owed to other workers, such as temporary, agency workers, contractors and self employed people working for them.

### **3.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

These also apply to employees and state how risk assessments are to be carried out, taking into account any special needs such as pregnancy and young workers. Employers who have five or more employees must record the significant findings of all risk assessments.

### **3.3 Civil Law and the Duty of Care**

Under the common law, voluntary organisations and individual volunteers have a duty of care to each other and to others who may be affected by their activities. When something goes wrong, individuals can sometimes sue for damages using the civil law. For a negligence claim to succeed, the injured person must show that the defendant had a duty to take reasonable care towards them, and that they have suffered injury through a breach of that duty.

## **4. Definitions**

### **4.1 A Lone Worker**

A Lone Worker is an individual who spends all or some of their time working alone, either as an employee or as a volunteer.

### **4.2 A Hazard**

A hazard is a potential source of harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons.

### **4.3 A Risk**

A risk is the likelihood that a person may be harmed or may suffer adverse health effects if exposed to a hazard.

## **5. Job and Voluntary Roles which include Lone Working at St Hilda's**

### **5.1 Employees**

Current employees on the pay roll of St Hilda's or Church of England, Birmingham, whose job roles sometimes involve them being alone on Church premises or in the grounds, are: the Vicar, the Curate, the Parish Administrator, the two Organists, the Church Hall Cleaner, and the Children and Families' Missioner.

### **5.2 Self Employed People and Contracted Workers**

This includes people who are paid on a sessional basis and whose roles sometimes involve them being alone on Church premises or in the grounds, for example the two Vergers, and Visiting Clergy.

### **5.3 Volunteers**

People who work at St Hilda's as volunteers and whose roles sometimes involve them being alone on Church premises or in the grounds include: the two Church Wardens, the Site Supervisor, the sound and vision Technician, Lay Readers, Church cleaners and all other people who have duties of a voluntary nature.

## **6. Identification of Hazards for Lone Workers at St Hilda's**

The main sources of potential harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons arising from lone working are:

- **Accessibility to all members of the public**
- **The unpredictable behaviour of some members of the public**
- **Limitations on ability to call for assistance when needed due to illness, injury, threat, attack or (inadvertently or deliberately) being locked in.**

## **7. Assessment of Risks**

### **7.1 Identification of the Risks**

For each role and activity, whether the person is employed, self employed or a volunteer, and in consultation with that person, there should be a systematic written identification of the risks i.e. the different likelihoods that the person may be harmed or may suffer adverse health effects if exposed to one of the hazards of lone working.

### **7.2 Assessment of the Risks**

It might be helpful to consider each risk in terms of whether it has a low, medium or high likelihood of something happening, together with a high, medium or low grading of the possible severity of the impact. This can sometimes help to decide both the priority rating of a risk and the resulting level of action which might be required. Risk rating matrixes are available as additional tools for an assessment of this kind.

## **8. Safety Actions and Measures**

### **8.1 Safety Measures**

After completing a risk assessment, the next step is to put in place safety measures, and to be clear about the extent to which each of these will remove, reduce or manage each identified risk.

### **8.2 A 'Personal Safety Plan for Church People'**

Ecclesiastical Insurance, in their Policy and Guidance Notes also provide an outline of a 'Personal Safety Plan for Church People' which should be made known to all to whom the content would apply.

## **9. Regular Reviews of Risk Assessments and Personal Safety Plans**

### **9.1 Annual Review**

For each risk assessment and personal safety plan, there should be an annual review which is recorded in writing.

### **9.2 Changes of Role or Personnel**

The risk assessment, personal safety plan and wider safety measures should be reviewed every time there is a change to the nature of a role which involves lone working and also every time there is a change of the person who is within that role.

## **10. References**

In addition to sharing from our work experience, the following references have been used in writing this policy:

- [HSE: Information about health and safety at work www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- <http://www.ecclesiastical.com/ChurchMatters/Images/Church%20insurance%20health%20and%20safety%20policy%20with%20guidance%20notes.pdf>
- <http://www.ecclesiastical.com/ChurchMatters/Images/Personal%20safety%20plan.pdf>
- 'Practical Church Management. A Guide for Every Parish' James Behrans (2008)

**Appendix A:  
A Risk Assessment Record and Personal Safety Plan for Lone Workers  
in the premises and grounds of St Hilda's Parish Church**

Name of Worker ..... Employee/ Sessional Worker or Volunteer?

Role ..... Location .....

Details of Lone Working  
.....  
.....

<b>Hazard</b>		Tick if applicable
H1	Accessibility to all members of the public.	
H2	The unpredictable behaviour of some members of the public.	
H3	Limitations on ability to call for assistance when needed due to illness, injury, threat or attack.	
H4		
H5		
H6		

<b>Risk</b>		Tick if applicable
R1	a sudden onset of illness	
R2	an episode or worsening of an existing illness	
R3	injury due to falling	
R4	injury due to an accident	
R5	injury due to an unexpected assault	
R6	Lack of escape route	
R7	inability to call for help	
R8	inability to receive a response to a call for help	
R9	other people unlocking a locked door without your knowledge	
R10	lack of access to keys to lock or unlock a door	
R11	a key which does not unlock the door from the inside	
R12	feeling trapped in an unsolicited conversation	
R13	being alone with an angry person	
R14	feeling threatened, pressurised or afraid	
R15	being asked for help in ways which are beyond your scope or means	
R16		
R17		
R18		
R19		
R20		

<b>Personal Safety Measures</b>		Tick if applicable
PS1	Never be alone in the Church or Church Hall with the doors unlocked, no matter for how short a time.	
PS2	Whenever possible, have someone else with you.	
PS3	Do not leave keys lying around.	
PS4	Ensure you have an escape route.	
PS5	Ensure that someone else knows where you are.	
PS6	Always have a mobile phone with you and ensure that it is easily accessible	
PS7	Ensure that you know how to speed dial the emergency services from your phone.	
PS8	Ensure you have access to a personal attack alarm if these are provided.	
PS9	Attend any training or awareness sessions offered to you about managing risk and about how to respond to angry or potentially violent people and about first aid.	
PS10	Ensure that you know where the first aid equipment is and how to use it.	
PS11		

<b>Parochial Church Council Safety Measures</b>		Tick if applicable
PCC1	A clear policy that no one should be alone in the Church or Church Hall with the doors unlocked, no matter for how short a time.	
PCC2	A policy of ensuring that in consultation with the individuals concerned, risk assessments are completed and safety measures are put in place for all employees, temporary workers, sessional workers and volunteers whose duties include lone working.	
PCC3	A policy of ensuring that risk assessments and safety measures are regularly reviewed.	
PCC4	An intercom, or security chain on the Church Hall door, so that the Parish Administrator and the Children and Families' Missioner can know who is at the door.	
PCC5	An inventory of who holds keys to the Church and Church Hall.	
PCC6	A quality check of these keys to ensure that the door keys work for both locking and unlocking from the inside as well as the outside.	
PCC7	Provision of personal attack alarms to all who might need them.	
PCC8	Provision of training or awareness sessions about managing risk and about how to respond to angry or potentially violent people and about first aid.	
PS9	Access to adequate first aid equipment	
PCC10	Provision of CCTV cameras from Spring 2017	

# APPENDIX B

## Personal Safety Plan for Church People

### Personal Safety - Issues to Consider

#### Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you know how you would react if faced with a situation where your personal safety was in danger?
- What about if this threatened your family or others you are responsible for?
- Have you thought about this in advance or would you simply rely on instinct?
- Do you have a personal safety plan? If not, why not? If you do, do others know what it includes and how they can help you?

#### Personal Safety Plans should:

- Include an assessment of the hazards and risks encountered
- Be sensitive to location / activity
- Be clear and easy to understand
- Outline safety actions / control measures
- Be made known to all who need to know the content
- Be regularly reviewed

**Remember – it is OK to put the safety of yourself (and family) above the needs of others!**

**Remember – You should take suitable precautions to prevent an accusation of inappropriate behaviour with a child or vulnerable adult.**

### Some Suggested Control Measures/Actions

#### At Home/Office

- Complete a security assessment of the property (i.e. are boundaries, doors and windows adequately secure; is there security lighting/an intruder alarm / CCTV fitted, as appropriate), Financial support may be available from the diocese
- Check who is at the door before opening (i.e. use a spyhole or security chain)
- Ensure keys to the home and car and not obviously visible or easily accessible from the door / windows
- Consider whether you need to let uninvited callers in to the home (i.e. could you have seating outside, in clear view of the house, where you could sit and talk)
- Plan how you will deal with requests for food / money from uninvited visitors (i.e. place in a bag so that you can pass it to them with one hand, leaving the other free to close the door quickly, should you need to. Keep your foot or a doorstop planted firmly behind the open door to prevent it being forced open)
- Keep the office separate from the home, where possible
- Don't leave visitors alone in your home / office
- Read the situation / visitor – have a prepared excuse to terminate the meeting i.e. "I've got another meeting now so need to leave; can we re-schedule for another time?"
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- Establish an emergency code / phrase with your family so that they know you are concerned (i.e. "I am expecting a call from John Smith, could you let me know when he calls?") and that they know what to do if you say it
- Try to plan meetings when others will be at home
- Do not let uninvited callers know that you are alone in the house
- Keep a record book for visitors who are unexpected

#### At Cathedrals/Church/Churchyard

- Try not to be in situations where you are alone at the church
- Ensure someone knows when to expect you home
- Ensure your car keys are to hand and you are parked so that you can get away easily
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- Ensure that my mobile phone is easily accessible and in good working order
- If worried about a situation take whatever action you need to escape to safety
- Be aware of your surroundings and visitors unknown to you
- Have you been given information/instructions when working alone?
- Are suitable first aid facilities available?

#### Visiting Others (at their homes and elsewhere)

- Ensure my family and others know where I am and when to expect me to return
- Ensure that my mobile phone is easily accessible and in good working order
- Ensure that I have emergency contact telephone numbers programmed in to my mobile phone (if possible, consider adding these as "speed dial" shortcuts)
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- If possible try to meet people in public locations, rather than a location that you are unfamiliar with
- Consider carefully whether it is safe to accept food or drink from a person that is not known well to you
- Establish an emergency code / phrase with your family so that they know you are concerned (i.e. "I am expecting a call from John Smith, could you let me know when he calls?") and that they know what to do if you say it
- Read the situation / visitor – have a prepared excuse to terminate the meeting i.e. "I've got another meeting now so need to leave; can we re-schedule for another time?"
- Arrange for a family member (or another person) to call me at regular intervals to check that I am safe (NB: ensure that this conversation does not further alarm an agitated person or worsen a situation, by using agreed coded messages)
- If worried about a situation take whatever action you need to escape to safety
- If meeting at someone's home, make a mental note of the layout and how to escape quickly if you need to. Be aware of how the door locks/unlocks.
- Allow the host to lead the way, so that doors cannot be locked behind you
- Sit as close to the door as possible

**Remember - always report any suspicious incidents or persons to the Police, your Archdeacon and/or others that might need to know.**