

Stoneleigh Methodist Church Lone Worker Policy

1. Introduction

At times, many church employees/volunteers will be in situations where they are a 'lone worker'. The recommendations below try to be realistic about what can and cannot be put in place. Whilst it must be recognised that the Church, as an employer, does not have the structure associated with a large business, its aim is to be a good employer, concerned about the safety of employees.

Many lay employees work on a part-time basis from their own home and are entitled to expect systems to account for their safety there too.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the employer has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

2. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of Stoneleigh Methodist Church.

'Lone worker' includes volunteers and contractors such as:

Those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is working on the premises;
- People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations;
- People working outside normal hours, e.g. cleaners.

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- One person is visiting other premises or meeting venue;
- One person is making a home visit to an individual;
- One person is working from their own home.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to: -

- Increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;

- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working;
- Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

4. Responsibilities

The Church is responsible for:

- Assessing 'reasonably foreseeable risks' – identifying, evaluating and managing risks associated with lone working;
- Ensuring that employees or volunteers have a means of summoning help if necessary;
- Ensuring that contact details for the employee and their next of kin are kept on file;
- Keeping a record of any health issues that might affect someone's ability to work alone safely;
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice;
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed;
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy;
- Identifying situations where people work alone and considering alternative arrangements, where appropriate;
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents;
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident;
- Providing personal safety equipment, where this is felt to be desirable.

Employees and volunteers are responsible for: -

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone;
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate;
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.

5. Guidance for Risk Assessments of Lone Working

- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Are there adequate channels of communication in an emergency?
- Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Is any known risk attached to a home visit?
- Has an alternative to a home visit been considered?
- Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged?
- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?
- Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?

6. Good Practice for Lone Workers

- All staff leaving the workplace (or home) to undertake work-related tasks alone should consider leaving details of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back at base.
- When arranging one-to-one meetings, staff should consider whether contact could take place in an environment where confidentiality could be maintained but others would be in the vicinity.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities.
- Lone workers should carry a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.

Children and Vulnerable Adults – Please refer to the relevant policies.