



The Methodist Church

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[Safeguarding in Lincolnshire District](#)

September 1st 2021

Lone Working Policy

Introduction

Lone Working is not covered by any specific legislation but the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply.

This legislation states that “It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all of his employees” and “It shall be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with”.

Employers and employees therefore have a duty to themselves and others with regard to safety and there is an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when they work remotely from other colleagues or other persons and/or outside ‘normal’ working hours.

The definition of a lone worker is “*Those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision*”.

Covid Pandemic

The pandemic has inevitably affected working arrangements of all kinds. Lone Working from home anyway has become the situation for so many. As restrictions are lifted and arrangements remain constantly under review, the principles in this Policy should be considered and made relevant to new or revised arrangements.

Persons at Risk

Those who work alone in buildings and from home will be in need of the appropriate support and supervision to ensure that they are able to manage their roles operationally but also are feeling well and capable enough given what can be isolated working environments.

Safer Recruitment to a role involving Lone Working.

Early risk assessment

As per the District Safer Recruitment, 2021 all role outlines will now contain a section on whether Lone Working is involved. If so, it will be at the outset of knowing this is required that early consideration should be given to lone working arrangements rather than wait for someone to commence in post.

Selection process.

It will be essential to consider the need to assess whether a candidate for any role, paid or otherwise, has an understanding of Lone Working and the risks it may involve and where possible, ascertain how they would manage in such a situation.

Training.

Where possible, any training that is available to help inform someone in a lone working role and those supervising should be taken up to help understanding and improved practice.

Lone Working Risk assessment – Hazards and Controls

Hazards

These may include, for example:

- A potential for violence or threatening behaviour towards an individual carrying cash or high value equipment.
- The use of machinery, electrical or other equipment or chemicals.
- Working in remote areas, particularly after dark and outside normal working hours.
- Encountering intruders.
- Working at heights, using ladders and lifting.
- Competency, ability and medical condition of the individual.

This is not an exhaustive list; individuals are expected to discuss any potential lone working with their immediate line manager so the risk can be assessed and any necessary control measures applied.

Control Measures

It should be encouraged, where possible, to standardise working hours and patterns to try to avoid one person either opening up or locking the office alone. Where this is not possible, the following steps should be taken:

- You should inform and seek approval from your line manager if you are likely to be staying late or make it known to the last person to leave the office before you;
- If you are one of only a few people in the office at the end of the working day you should advise remaining staff when you leave, this is especially important if not all working areas are visible to staff from all desk locations;
- Do not turn lights off in central areas if there is someone else in another part of the office as this is a Health and Safety risk;
- Do not let anyone into the building whilst you are lone working, unless you are satisfied that they do not pose any risk. In buildings where staff are working and have no control over who enters the building staff should use any security measures which are in place, i.e. key pads which limit access to offices;
- Ensure that no one else can enter the building (making sure that this does not compromise evacuation in the event of an emergency);
- You should contact a family member or colleague when you are leaving the building so that someone is aware you are on your way home;
- Whilst travelling to and from work areas and across car parks, you should remain alert and observant; and
- You should familiarise yourself with the location and general office instructions to ensure that you are aware of any office closing procedures if you are the last person in the office.

Where possible outside of normal working hours, staff should arrange to be in the building with others. Keyholders are also advised to inform someone when they are attending an alarm call out. Staff should inform someone when they are on the premises and when they are leaving. It is also advisable that staff inform someone at home that they are working out of normal hours.

Staff movements

To ensure that the organisation is always aware of staff, workers and volunteer's whereabouts, local reporting systems should be put in place for each individual attending an off-site appointment. All employees are required to update their calendars and/or public folders where applicable with all off-site appointments ensuring the records also state the location and date/time of any visits or events they will be attending away from their standard place of work.

For employees and volunteers who work out of office hours, in either the evenings or weekends, there must be an agreed local protocol in place for informing line managers of their whereabouts, which is specific to the service/line manager.

Lone Working risk assessment – support, supervision and safety.

It should never be assumed that those working alone can cope with what this brings. Many people will appreciate working in their own space either in an office or at home but from time to time, it may be that the lack of contact with others or the need to feel part of a team may affect someone.

It will be policy that whoever line manages a Lone Working role will make it their responsibility to support that person in asking direct questions as to how they are coping, what they might need to feel supported and consider effective ways of connecting to others to avoid isolation in the role.

Buddying

Where possible, employees should be teamed with a nominated person (or 'buddy') within their team/at their office or work location for them to contact before and after the lone working visit. This will ensure, for example, if an employee is attending an off-site visit they are able to advise their buddy of the appointment/visit/event they are attending and what time they would expect to return to their work location/office/home. The employee would then let their buddy know when they have returned safely. Notification could take the form of a brief phone call or mobile phone text to confirm that they have returned from their visit.

Lone Working in general.

This Policy takes regard to all those who are lone workers by the very nature of their role e.g. Ministers and other office holders who work from home day to day. Even when there are others in the home, the nature of the work may have an impact on someone in this situation given they have to work and live from the same environment.

In particular, Ministers and others who live alone should as part of any supervision or line management support to them be supported in what this may mean for them and additional considerations put in place as appropriate or necessary.

Lone Working but connected to others.

A lone working role should not be disconnected from others in the life of the church, Circuit or District. Experience has shown that such an arrangement does not need to result in isolation in that role if others ensure it is connected to others, even if that involves calls and contacts to ensure all is well.

Policy to be reviewed August 2022