Lone Working Policy

This section should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- **Stratford-upon-Avon Health and Safety Policy**
- **Stratford-upon-Avon PCC Safeguarding Policy**
- **The Church of England Code of Safer Working Practice**

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy, church employees and volunteers.

The Parish of Stratford- upon- Avon recognises that clergy, employees, and volunteers may find themselves working alone. This may be in church premises, visiting individuals in their homes, or receiving people in their own home. This may occur regularly or occasionally but will be a necessary part of the role. Where the work involves home visits, the safety of both the visitor and the person being visited is paramount.

Lone worker includes:

Those working /volunteering where:

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

The Parochial Church Council should show that "reasonably foreseeable risks" have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them. This can be done in conjunction with the Parish Officer.

They have the responsibility to ensure that Lone Worker procedures are implemented to ensure that all church staff and volunteers:

- Think about how to undertake lone working safely.
- Assess the risks of situations where a threat to personal safety could occur (Risk assessments should be undertaken where appropriate)
- Reduce those risks through appropriate procedures and control measures

The Risks

This list is not exhaustive but identifies some of the risks faced.

- Physical accident (from injury, fire, etc such as when using kitchen or maintenance equipment when there is no one available to fetch help if necessary)
- Sudden illness, again when there is no one to raise the alarm.
- Physical violence or threat of abuse in any form from a visitor.
- Sexual behaviour or advances deemed to be inappropriate or threatening.
- Accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour by staff / volunteers when there are no witnesses.
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media.

Procedures When Working Alone

People should not work on their own unless they have a means of communication and have notified a colleague of the details of the work being undertaken and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on.

When working alone volunteers and staff should be alert to possible dangers and minimise them by:

1. Telling someone where they are working (Ask them to check on you if you are not home when expected and if they can't contact you, to raise the alarm).

2. Always carry a fully charged mobile phone.

3. If working in church alone and it is appropriate, lock the doors

4. Be aware of all the exits so you can leave by another exit if necessary.

5. Report any defects to the building i.e., trip hazards etc. to the Parish Officer

6. Report any incidents to the Parish Officer /Churchwardens.

7. Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone, use safety guards on power tools – and do not use them when in the building alone.

8. Inform the Parish Officer, Safeguarding officer, Vicar of any suspicious behaviour noted, or any threats made.

Undertaking specific Pastoral Duties / offering pastoral support.

One to one contact with individuals in the context of pastoral support should be properly planned, risk assessed and recorded.

It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries. Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection are to be avoided.

Consider - What, why, who, when, where, how: -

- **What** is the nature of the contact? Pastoral, supportive, mentoring. Make the purpose of the meeting clear at the outset and the time available for the discussion.

- **Why** is one to one necessary? Confidentiality should not be confused with secrecy or privacy. It is possible to hold a confidential conversation in a public area, where there is privacy.
- **Who** is involved? Provider, Receiver, others with knowledge of arrangements
- **When** will the contact take place? The timing of contact and meeting is important to ensure actions are not misinterpreted. Whenever possible make prior arrangements to meet rather than meet 'on demand'.
- **Where** will the contact take place? Can a public venue that affords privacy be used, or if a private venue is used there is a need to ensure it is not secretive.
- **How** will the needs of safeguarding all involved be addressed?

N.B. Openness with others in awareness of the contact arrangements supports all involved. Deviation from this principle should be exception and justified by compelling circumstances which must be recorded in a risk assessment.

Some simple tips

- Try to have someone else in the next room or nearby whenever possible.
- Don't take any unnecessary risks – if you feel uncomfortable at all, end the meeting. and report your concerns to your Safeguarding Officer
- Respect personal space and never do or say anything that could be misinterpreted. If there is any known risk, complete a risk assessment to ensure you remain safe.
- If meeting off-site, ensure someone knows where you are and what time you expect to return; you should carry a mobile phone.

If there are particular factors which add to the vulnerability of either party, a full risk assessment should be completed.

Next Policy Review Date: September 2027

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