

This document explains how WRBC will protect their staff and volunteers as far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working. Working alone is not in itself against the law and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with any health and safety risks for people working alone.

Purpose

WRBC is committed to providing a safe working environment as far as reasonably practical that meets the needs of its staff and volunteers. Consideration shall therefore be given to the health and safety implications in respect of lone working.

Policy

All staff and volunteers should be made aware of this policy. Anyone who is or who potentially may be a lone worker shall receive information, instruction and relevant training in respect of identified hazards and the risks involved.

- It is the responsibility of line managers to coordinate the risk assessment for lone workers in consultation with the Deacons;
- Anyone who is lone working should ensure that they have their mobile phone available;
- Lone workers shall follow all instructions contained in the procedures below;
- It is the responsibility of the line manager to regularly re-assess risks, reporting the time and dates of monitoring and any changes as found to the Deacons;
- It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that workers do not suffer from undue stress as a consequence of lone working;
- It is recognised that some workers are required to work alone for significant periods of time without direct supervision and in these situations, WRBC will ensure that adequate support is provided.

Definition of lone working

Individuals are alone at work when they are on their own, they cannot be seen or heard by another worker, cannot expect a visit from another worker for some time and/or where assistance is not readily available when needed. Therefore, lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. This includes establishments where:

- Only one person works on the premises
- One person works separately from others
- One person works outside normal hours

Aims of the policy

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- Ensure that the risks of lone working are assessed regularly and that systems are put in place to minimise the risk as far as is practical;
- Ensure that appropriate training is available to staff and volunteers 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 and reduce the number of incidents/injuries relating to lone working.

Risk assessment

Risk assessments must be carried out for and by all individuals whose working practice makes them vulnerable and recommendations should be made to eliminate or reduce the risk as far as possible.

Procedure Overview

Individuals will receive information, instruction and supervision in respect of the hazards and risks associated with lone working. All individuals are to take relevant and sensible precautionary measures whilst lone working. If a member of staff feels that they are putting themselves at risk through lone working, they should discuss the situation with their line manager. Further efforts by the line manager shall be made to eliminate or reduce hazards starting with a process of reassessment of the task.

Risks of lone working

Risk assessments for lone workers should include:

- Safe entry and exit
- Location, e.g. remoteness, transport, parking
- Risk of violence
- Safety of equipment for individual use
- Channels of communication in an emergency
- Site security
- Security arrangements e.g. alarm systems and response to personal alarms
- Level and adequacy of supervision

Following completion of risk assessment, consideration must be given to any appropriate action that is required.

Support for Staff and Volunteers

All new staff and volunteers at WRBC should receive an induction, including reference to the lone worker policy.

Staff and volunteers working for WRBC should know that their safety comes first. They should be aware of how to deal with situations in which they feel at risk or unsafe. Managers should therefore ensure that all lone workers' training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

Lone Working inside the Church

The following is a list of approaches that should be adopted by staff and volunteers working alone within the church buildings.

1. If a staff member or volunteers has a concern about the safety or security of lone working on Church premises, they should raise those concerns as soon as possible with their Line Manager, the Minister or one of the Deacons.
2. Staff & volunteers should park on site which is in a well-lit and visible location.
3. Entry/exit doors should be locked after entry to ensure that unauthorised people cannot enter the building.
4. If an unexpected or unknown person wishes to enter the building, the staff member/volunteer should view them first through the glass front doors to ensure that they are a bona fide visitor and should, if necessary, ask for suitable identification before opening the door.
5. Where practical, internal doors can also remain locked to segregate different groups of people who may be working in different parts of the building.
6. Staff members/volunteers should keep their own charged mobile telephone (including appropriate emergency contact information) with them whilst working in the building.
7. Activities which carry risk of injury or damage should be avoided whilst working alone; such as electrical work, activities involving heating (e.g. paint stripping with a heat gun), work involving ladders, etc.
8. Staff members/volunteers should be aware of the fire alarm system and the location of fire exits and fire extinguishers. They should also be aware of the location of the first aid kit and the defibrillator unit.
9. Staff members/volunteers should avoid handling cash or other valuables when working alone, both from a possible robbery perspective and for security of the church's funds.
10. From a Safeguarding point of view, staff / volunteers should avoid meeting with children or vulnerable adults when working alone. If such a meeting is unavoidable; for example, a visitor arrives unannounced but needs to be seen, then such a meeting should be kept as brief as possible and should be held in a visible place.
11. If a worker is meeting a client on their own in the office they should ensure the client does not sit between them and the door and that they have clear access to leave via the door. It is also advisable to tell someone they are meeting with a client on their own.
 - If there are concerns about a client, they should be seen in a larger office with someone else present
 - If this is not possible, make sure that the door is left open
 - If a member of staff is seeing clients in the office when no one else is around, check someone else is in the building and make sure the office door is left open