

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Lone Working Policy

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all its clergy, staff and volunteers who, through necessity, may have to work alone. This policy relates to all church workers who work out in the community and/or in other people's homes, or who work alone in churches or other establishments. It is recognised that lone working is an everyday and often essential practice for clergy and church workers, and it is therefore important that the additional risks that arise from this are fully understood, and appropriate risk management is put in place. This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with the Church of England Code of Safer Working Practice, which also sets out the appropriate boundaries for preventing misunderstandings and reducing risks.

All people should avoid working alone if it is not necessary, and work with others where possible. However, if this is not possible, they should be aware of the importance of personal safety and take all reasonable precautions to safeguard themselves from harm, as they would in any other circumstance. No person under the age of 18, one who is classified as vulnerable themselves, or one who has a health condition which may impact their ability to follow health and safety procedures may undertake lone working.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for ensuring that all lone working activities within the church are formally identified, and appropriate risk assessments are undertaken to identify and reduce the risks which lone working may present. Perception of risk can vary, and, therefore, it is important that all Lone Workers receive/collate relevant information about the identified risks within their role, in order that they are equipped to recognise these, and are enabled to take responsibility for their own safety and security. For example, an inexperienced or highly experienced Lone Worker may underestimate the risks of an activity. Some people, especially those in urban parishes may feel particularly vulnerable to violence after dark, or a medical condition may make it unsafe for an individual to work alone. Lone Workers should consider these factors and assess the particular risks in their parish environment. Appropriate steps should be taken to reduce the risk, particularly where the environment is quiet, poorly lit and / or in an area where criminal activity is more likely.

All risks identified arising from lone working must be recorded, in accordance with requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Parishes should ensure they have adequate insurance in place to cover all lone working activities which have been formally identified by a risk assessment. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a Lone Worker, consideration should be given by the parish to undertake other arrangements to complete the task or activity, such as ensuring individuals work in pairs.

Many parishioners will be well known to the Lone Worker and where there have been no previous concerns, the level of risk to the Lone Worker or parishioner during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a Lone Worker at risk. For example, the unexpected presence in the home of a relative or friend with a history of violence or threatening behaviour. Unfortunately, case histories also show that a parishioner may be at risk from the Lone Worker. For these reasons it is very important to ensure that church officers and parishioners are as safe as they can be, and that there is accountability and transparency in the way church officers engage in lone working.

Home visits can be potentially risky situations, and therefore the PCC is responsible for ensuring that appropriate risk management measures are in place before a home visit is undertaken, which may include ensuring that staff and volunteers work in pairs on a first visit. Lone Workers should also be aware of their responsibilities in ensuring their personal safety when visiting people in their own homes. Lone Workers should always ensure that someone else is aware of their visits, and have made proper attempts to assess risks, please refer to the lone working tools at the end of this policy.

Where possible, any visits/activities completed by a Lone Worker should be conducted during the morning or early afternoon to prevent the Lone Worker travelling in the dark through areas that they may not know or feel comfortable in. If this is not possible, working in pairs should be considered. Lone Workers under no circumstances should conduct a visit with a child or a person under the age of 18 in their home unless another adult is present. The Lone Worker should not call unannounced; instead call by appointment if appropriate, telephoning the person just before visiting; be clear about what support they can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that is available. It is recommended to develop a discreet alert system to signal the need for help, such as using a predetermined phrase during a phone call. Lone Workers should be alert to any signs of potential danger during visits and be prepared to leave immediately if they have any concerns. Confrontation should always be avoided, and Lone Workers should never assume that violence will not happen, as while there are many home visits/ lone working situations safely undertaken every day, personal safety is paramount.

The Lone Worker must make a record of the date and time when visiting people, and report back to the named contact once they have left. Lone Workers will keep a regular record of pastoral encounters, including details such as date, time, subject, and any actions to be taken. It is important to keep factual records and separate these from any opinions expressed; store records securely in line with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Lone Worker will report safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or incumbent or directly to the DSO as soon as possible and within 24 hours. When working alone in the church building the Lone Worker may lock themselves in the church while working, but must inform someone of their location, carry a mobile phone, and be familiar with exit routes.

Date of adoption:

Next Review Date:

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Signed by:

[Full Name] & Position

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Lone Working Checklist

Lone working should be avoided, however when it is necessary and unavoidable, appropriate steps should be taken to keep everyone safe. This Lone Working Checklist refers specifically to unaccompanied visits undertaken for pastoral and safeguarding reasons. Also refer to the quick guide: Lone Working Flow Chart and Lone Working: Wise Working wallet card.

If your answer raises any issues that might affect your visit, please review and consider additional measures, e.g. reschedule the visit to a public place, replan the visit for when you are with someone else, contact emergency services if required.

Before the visit				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are you aware of any known concerns regarding the person you are visiting? If yes, then this is not suitable to attend as a lone visit. If this is the first time you're visiting this person, make sure you refer to the lone working flow chart.				
Are you medically and emotionally fit to work alone? Visits can be tiring and emotionally draining.				
It is recommended to always carry a phone. Have you fully charged your phone before leaving the house?				
Have you thought about your journey before you leave home? (Plan how you are going to get there, plan your route, check if the area is well lit, check if there is suitable parking) Consider using What3words app.				
You should have an identified contact. Have you contacted a family member, friend or 'work buddy' to let them know where you are going and how long you are going to be there? You should give them your contact information and vehicle details.				
Have you agreed how frequently you will check in with your identified contact and what they will do, if they do not hear from you?				

On Arrival				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Can you enter and leave the property safely? It is recommended to be aware of your quickest route out of the location.				
Does the person seem to be in a good frame of mind to receive a visit? If the answer is no, do not enter and contact the appropriate organisation.				
Some residencies require you to follow signing in procedures. This helps to maintain safety and to make sure everyone is accounted for in the event of a fire. Have you followed the procedures?				
During the visit				
Are there any concerns regarding animals at the location?				
Do you know what to do during a visit if you feel unsafe, or threatened? If you feel unsafe or threatened, make excuses and leave the location as soon as possible.				
Have you agreed a safe word which you could use to alert your identified contact to make them aware that you're feeling unsafe? Does your contact know how to respond to this?				
Have you listened to/ recorded any concerns that have arisen? These will need to be passed on to the appropriate person.				

In summary:

ALWAYS let someone know your whereabouts.

LOCATION- Plan your route, transport, appropriate street lighting.

WHERE TO FIND YOU- What3words app can be used to help emergency services to pinpoint your location.

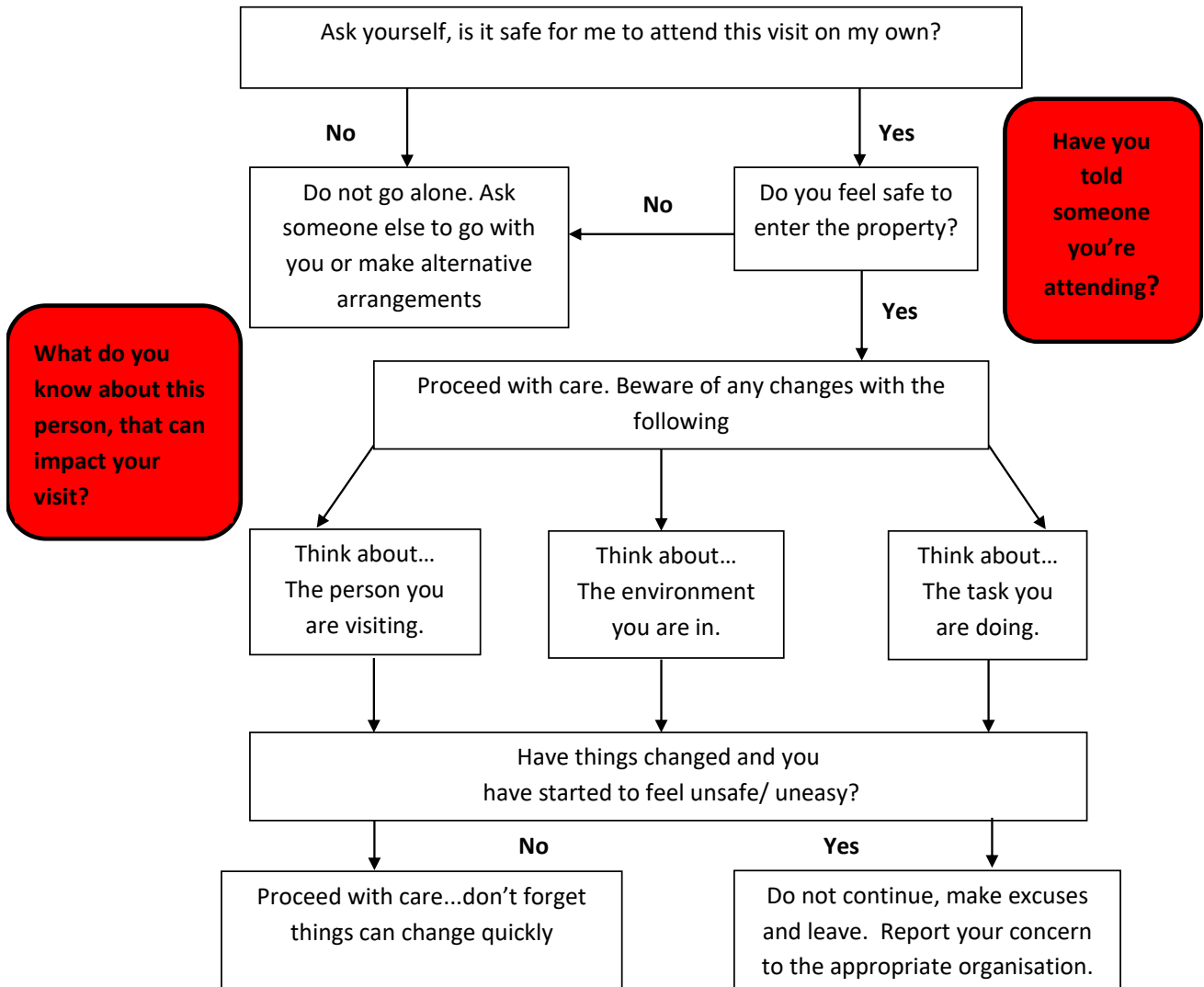
ALERT- If you feel unsafe, try and leave as soon as possible, if you are in immediate risk of harm, alert emergency services.

YOU HAVE CONCERNS- Speak to the appropriate person

SAFE WORD- word to use during a phone call/ message to let contact know that you're feeling unsafe.

Lone Working Risk assessment

Use this as a guide to think about your environment, the situation and working practices.



Safeguarding Contact List:

Karen Galloway (DSO)- karen.galloway@cofesuffolk.org – 07785621319 (available Tues- Fri 9am-17:00)

Shelly Thomas (ADSO)- shelly.thomas@cofesuffolk.org – 07795974734 (available Mon- Thurs 9am-16:30)

Immediate harm to self or others (emergency services)- 999

Non-emergency (Police)- 101

Non- emergency (Ambulance)- 111

Children's Social Care (Customer First)- 0808 800 4005

Adult Social Care (Customer First)- 0800 917 1109

What3 words is a free app. It can be used to identify your exact location, to both your identified contact and emergency services.

Diocesan Office, St Nicholas Centre, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich IP1 1UQ

Tel: +44 (0)1473 298500 | Email: dbf@cofesuffolk.org | Website: www.cofesuffolk.org

Lone Working: Wise Working Wallet Card example

If you would like to use any copies of these, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.



The image shows the front of a blue wallet card. At the top left is the Church of England Suffolk logo. Below it is a white icon of a person walking. The text reads: "Lone Working: Wise Working" and "Safeguard Every Step". Below this is a light blue box with three lines for contact information: "My contact:", "Name:", and "Number:". At the bottom of the card, it says "Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Karen Galloway | 07785621319".

Lone Working: Wise Working Wallet Card, Side 1



The image shows the back of the blue wallet card. At the top, it says "Safe steps for Safeguarding your visits". Below this is a light blue box containing a list of four bullet points: "• If it is safe to go alone, identify your contact and tell them where you will be, and how long you will be", "• Only enter the property if safe and appropriate to do so", "• Following the visit, let your contact know you're safe", and "• Write up any notes and report concerns to the appropriate person". To the right of the list is a white icon of a person walking.

Lone Working: Wise Working Wallet Card, Side 2