The Parish of Central Exeter

Lone Working Policy

The PCC is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all its clergy, staff and volunteers who, in the course of their work and ministry, may have to work alone. This policy provides a framework for managing the risks presented by lone working. This policy relates to all church personnel who work out in the community and/or in other people's homes, or who work alone in churches or other establishments and maybe physically isolated from colleagues or family, without immediate access to immediate assistance.

It is recognised that lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy, staff and volunteers and it is therefore important that the additional risks arising from this are fully understood, in order that they can go about their daily work in relative safety.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our parish Safeguarding Policy which sets out the appropriate boundaries for preventing misunderstandings and reducing risks. All workers and volunteers should avoid working alone if it is not necessary and work with others where possible. However, if this is not feasible they should be aware of the importance of personal safety and take all reasonable precautions.

Guidelines for working alone:

The following points are for when working alone in any of our church buildings (St Stephen's, St Olave's, St Pancras' and St Petrock's), and when making visits to members of the parish.

1. **Lone working in the church buildings:**
   This includes but is not limited to our caretakers, cleaner, flower arrangers, building officer, clergy and administrator etc.

   You should ensure that:-
   - You carry a mobile phone so you can call for help if needed
   - You carry a personal attack alarm (optional) or access the one kept in the flower cupboard
   - You face the exits as much as possible when working so you can see who is entering the space and assess body language
   - The main door is closed and/or bolted if preferred
   - All keys are secured and inaccessible to visitors
   - On entering always carry out a visual check of the building to check for any visitors
   - You carry out a mental risk assessment for anything that makes you feel uneasy
   - You are aware of where keys are stored (eg padlock key at end of servery)

- **If there is an unwanted visitor and/or behaviour and you are threatened call 999**

2. **Managing significant incidents:**
   This is important as we had such an incident in St Stephen's church in September 2025. Briefly, a man refused to leave the church as our caretaker came to lock up at the end of the day.

   You should ensure that:-
   - You have a fully charged mobile phone on you
   - If you feel threatened and it is safe to do so leave the space
   - You seek support from a colleague or member of the public
   - If you have no success on using verbal persuasion to encourage the person to leave **call 999** or other security offices

3. **Visiting parishioners at home:**
   Home visits can be potentially risky situations so it may be advisable to visit in a pair especially for a first visit.

   You should ensure that:-
   - Someone knows who you are visiting and where you are going
   - Your expected time of return is known by someone at home
   - If the plan changes someone is aware of what is happening
   - You always have a fully charged mobile phone with you
   - You call by appointment when possible
   - You are prepared to leave if you have any concerns
   - Visiting takes place in the morning or early afternoon in daylight hours
   - You never accept any gifts other than token items to avoid misunderstandings. If someone wishes to donate to the church put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the treasurer.

4. **Useful telephone Numbers:**
   - **Princesshay Security:** 01392 456546
   - **Guildhall Security:** 01392 202757 (but only useful if working in St Pancras)
   - **Community Safety Team at Exeter City Council:** 01392 665008
   - **Police:** 999

This Policy was approved by the parish of Central Exeter PCC on: **Wednesday 4th March 2026** and is to be reviewed annually.

Signed: …….. (Revd Sheila Swarbrick)