



Romford

BAPTIST CHURCH

Lone Worker Policy

1. Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the church has adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers as far as is reasonably practicable, including staff working alone on-site and those undertaking work for the church away from base.

This policy applies to all ministers, employees, volunteers and charity trustees.

2. Background

The church understands that the term "lone workers" refers to ministers or members of staff or volunteers or charity trustees who work without close or direct supervision or company for substantial periods of time. Lone working is common in churches and where it does occur individuals working alone in potentially isolated conditions have no immediate backup or support and so are at a potentially greater general risk than others (for example a minister returning to the church building after a pastoral visit or meeting; the Caretaker carrying out work whilst the building is empty or a member of staff carrying out administrative duties when other staff have gone home).

Risks include injury through an accident or illness or as a result of aggression or violence directed towards them.

Younger or less experienced staff are often at a greater risk when working alone than more experienced staff. Such workers also need to rely on their own judgment and initiative and may be at a greater risk of making mistakes or errors which could prove costly to the organisation.

The church recognises its responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its ministers and staff and its responsibility under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) to identify significant risks within the organisation and implement suitable measures to reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable. The church recognises that this responsibility applies to lone workers and accepts that it is the employer's duty to assess any risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary.

The church accepts that lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. It recognises that this may require extra risk-control measures to be put into place, including such things as training, supervision, protective equipment, better means of communication, better security measures or means of raising the alarm in case of emergencies. Other ways of reducing the risks are to work in pairs when visiting a home or a member of staff meeting a member of the public in a coffee shop or if working alone, then a risk assessment is completed and to ensure others know of their whereabouts and who they are meeting. A mobile phone must be available if required to make either a call to the designated point of contact or emergency services.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the church has adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers as far as is reasonably practicable, including its ministers and staff working alone on-site and those undertaking work for the church away from base.

This policy applies to all ministers and staff who are employed by the church and individuals that are performing voluntary roles in their service to the church.

The church notes that it is not always possible (and could be inhibitive to mission and ministry) to avoid all risks and therefore the Minister or staff member or volunteer needs to make an assessment of potential risks before embarking on an activity. For example, "Is the member of public or church member well known or indeed are they themselves vulnerable?".

3. Procedures

1. All roles will be assessed for risk by the line manager and where a lone working risk is identified the church will work with the ministers or members of staff concerned to reduce the risk to acceptable levels.
2. Where a risk is identified, extra risk-control measures may be required to be put into place, including:
 - a. adjusting working hours to ensure those identified are not left alone. If this cannot be averted, individuals must always keep their mobile phones on their possession.
 - b. If individuals need to work alone due to their working patterns, they must contact one of the following when they leave the building to advise that they are leaving or giving an anticipated time when they will leave. If the latter, a further call should be made to confirm that they have left. The points of contact are:
 - i. Within normal working office hours (8.30am to 5pm): the Operations Manager or in their absence the Minister – Team Leader
 - ii. Outside of normal working office hours (i.e. evenings or weekend working): a member of that individual's family, a friend or a pre-agreed contact which will be agreed before the event.
 - c. encouraging those identified working alone to lock themselves in
 - d. providing additional training in personal safety
 - e. providing additional supervision whereby a line manager or those responsible for the group being run can check on the lone worker
 - f. ensuring that staff work together
 - g. issuing protective equipment such as personal alarms or mobile phones
 - h. improving means of communication
 - i. improving security measures such as access controls to buildings by which lone workers can screen visitors at the door without letting them in, ie with an intercom or CCTV system
 - j. improving means of raising the alarm in case of emergencies such as panic alarms

- k. operating check-in systems whereby staff working alone off-site call in.
3. All lone working risk assessments should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still adequate and that all risks are appropriately covered. If the risk assessment indicates that it is not safe for the employee / volunteer to be working alone but the activity must be undertaken, another person must agree to be present whilst the work is carried out.
4. All members of staff / volunteers who are lone working must advise a designated person of the date and times of starting and finishing. On completion of the activity they should send a message to that person by text or phone call on leaving the building. If the designated person has not heard from the lone worker within 30 minutes of the anticipated leaving time, they must initiate contact with the lone worker and, if unable to make contact, must advise the Minister (Team Leader) or another Trustee.
5. Ministers and staff will be expected to report to their line manager any situation where lone working risks cannot be controlled. They will be expected to comply with all precautionary and safety measures including guidelines laid down.
6. No person under the age of 18 or who themselves is classified as a vulnerable person may undertake lone working. Further details regarding vulnerable persons can be found in the Joint Protection and Policy & Procedures.
7. Any staff member with a known health condition which could lead to a sudden collapse or inability to manage routine exit procedures should not be allowed to engage in lone working, unless authorised by the Minister – Team Leader.
8. Individuals must not undertake repairs to any building owned by the church if they are alone, or if nobody else knows that they are in the building. This is especially important if the task involves ladders, working at height or with dangerous substances and electrical appliances.
9. If equipment is needed for an event, ensure that it is moved whilst others are in the building.

Family members can become vulnerable to outside interference when the Minister(s) or other church members are away at a conference or camp. In normal family life this would not be a problem and the information would be shared with family members / friends. Churches have a very visible public profile and RBC should consider whether the use of public spaces (e.g. prayer points) in these circumstances carries a risk.

4. Reporting and Recording Breaches of Security

Any breach of security or potential breach of security involving a lone worker should be reported immediately to their line manager or the church secretary. Upon notification the line manager or church secretary will:

- where appropriate report the incident to the police and obtain a crime reference number
- complete a confidential crime report form.

All incidents, no matter how minor, should be discussed with the Minister (Team Leader) and recorded in the incident book and an incident report form completed as necessary. Forms should be signed by a witness.

Security incident forms and reports of security incidents should be reviewed on a regular basis and analysed to look for patterns, trends and repeat offenders. This information will then be used by the trustees to tighten security further and make any necessary adjustments to lone working patterns.

5. Training

All new staff will receive induction training which will include a thorough tour of the premises and thorough guidance on security systems and procedures. Training should be given to all appropriate staff in all aspects of the security implementation at the premises. This is particularly important with respect to security systems which need to be operated both routinely and in the event of an incident.

Staff should sign to acknowledge that they have been given and have understood this training.

Signed: Hayley Ayriss

Dated: 5 January 2025

Policy review date: January 2027

Version Control

1 – new policy – June 2021

2 – amended policy January 2024 – to include “volunteers” under section 1 and 2 and the amendment of the Property & Facilities Assistance job role title to Caretaker.