

Safeguarding guidance for undertaking activities in your own home, and lone working.

Lone working is an everyday and practice for clergy and some church workers (for instance pastoral visitors) and working from home, being alone in an office and attending remote locations (for example carrying out a home visit) could all constitute lone working. The aim of this guidance is to help everyone think about how to undertake lone working safely.

Pastoral Care / visits

One to one contact with individuals in the context of pastoral care should be properly planned, its risks considered and recorded effectively. It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries – inappropriate touching or gestures of affection must be avoided.

Some simple tips

- Whenever possible make prior arrangements to meet rather than meet ‘on demand’
- Try to have someone else in the next room or nearby whenever possible
- Make the purpose of the meeting clear at the outset and the time available for the discussion
- Don’t take any unnecessary risks – if you feel uncomfortable at all, end the meeting and report your concerns to your Church Safeguarding Officer / Supervisor / Archdeacon
- Respect personal space and never do or say anything that could be misinterpreted
- 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 is any known risk, complete a risk assessment to ensure you remain safe (see ‘Guidance on Risk Assessment’) and the ‘**personal safety risk assessment**’ located in the safeguarding toolkit
- Supervisors of pastoral visitors should occasionally visit, accompany or observe lone workers to ensure safe practice
- Automatic warning devices can be obtained for use in risky places or activities
- It may be appropriate for lone workers to be asked to check in once they have completed their task or have safely reached their home following it.
- After the pastoral encounter (face-to-face, emails, texts, telephone calls), always make a record – this can be in a diary or electronically – the following details should be included:

- When and where the meeting / discussion took place
- Purpose of the meeting / discussion
- The time you / the other person arrived and left
- Who else was present (if applicable)
- A brief, factual account of what was discussed / agreed
- Any potential or actual safeguarding concerns identified
- Any actions taken / to be taken and any decisions made, including advice taken and who shared with
- Sign and date the record and store securely

Responding to safeguarding issues raised during a pastoral encounter

A safeguarding issue is one where an individual, child or adult, may appear to be at risk of abuse, or may present a risk to others. Such issues cannot be kept confidential. They have to be raised with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and may have to be reported to statutory authorities. If the person discloses or discusses matters on which the visitor needs to take action, a fuller note must be made of what it was and what action was taken. Taking action refers to raising or referring the matter to anyone else for discussion and possible action. If the matter is urgent, contact should be made with the police or another statutory agency. Action can always be taken and information shared if the person reasonably believes that this will help safeguard another person or prevent a crime. Remember we have to:

RECOGNISE RESPOND RECORD REPORT REFER

Planning lone working: considerations for risk assessment

- Is lone working necessary? Confidentiality can be assured with other people within reach.
- If there are casual callers take precautions before opening the door. E.g. the use of a door chain.
- Who will be involved? And who else should know about it?
- When and where will it take place? Avoid making arrangements which could be misinterpreted.
- Is there a risk of violence? A good working definition of violence is: *Any behaviour which produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or mentally, on people.*
- Are there any increased risks to the particular worker?

- Are there any known medical or other factors which could make either party more vulnerable? Some medical conditions can lead to disinhibition.

Using your own home for Activities

Where activities are formally organised by the parish, the following guidance should be noted. If however informal groups are organised by parents / other members of the congregation (e.g. baby-sitting circles or home groups), the responsibility remains with parents to ensure that the activity and those leading it are safe.

Activities for vulnerable groups will normally take place on church premises however if meetings are to be held in a leader's own home the following points need to be considered:

- Ensure you have the consent of your parish priest for the activity to take place and that there is adequate insurance cover
- Ensure that a risk assessment of the room(s) to be used has been carried out
- Ensure that two unrelated adults are present at all times (arriving before the first group member and not leaving until after the last group member has left)
- Never use inappropriate rooms i.e. bedrooms
- Ensure that the Diocesan and parish policies for vulnerable groups are followed