

St John's Church Harpenden
Lone Working Policy

Last adopted by PCC resolution

Sept 2025

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, and this policy provides a framework for managing the risks presented by lone working.

Workers and volunteers should 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 to safeguard themselves from harm, as they would in any other circumstances.

- Lone workers should never put themselves at risk. If a situation arises that they are unfamiliar with, or in which they feel unsafe, they should withdraw and seek further advice or assistance.
- Staff and volunteers should conduct their own risk assessment on the occasions when they are working alone, which will help them to decide how safe a situation is and what action should be taken to avoid danger.
- If an incident occurs – even if it is considered a minor incident – the worker should make the Vicar, Churchwarden and Safeguarding Officer know as soon as possible in order that the appropriate risk assessment and follow-up action can be taken.

Potential hazards of lone working

The perception of risk can be seen differently by each individual, and so it is important that all lone workers receive 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.

There are a number of potential hazards:

- accidents or sudden illness when there is no-one to summon help or first aid
- violence or the threat of violence
- allegations of inappropriate and/or abusive behaviour
- fire or other threat
- attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, eg, heavy lifting
- lack of safe way in or out of a building (eg, danger of being accidentally locked in).

Measures to minimise risk

There are a number of things which can be done to minimise risks when working alone:

- know as much about as possible about any potentially risky situation
- avoid, as far as possible, situations with significant risk of vulnerability

- consider a strategy for a swift exit if a situation changes
- ensure you have a mobile phone with you
- let someone else know where you are going and when you will be back.