

Bamber Bridge Methodist Church Lone Worker Policy

1. Introduction

At times, many church employees will be in situations where they are a 'lone worker'. The recommendations below try to be realistic about what can and cannot be put in place. Whilst it must be recognised that the Church, as an employer, does not have the structure associated with a large business, its aim is to be a good employer, concerned about the safety of employees.

Many lay employees work on a part-time basis from their own home and are entitled to expect systems to account for their safety there too.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the employer has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work.

Additional information can be downloaded from the website of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust at www.suzylamplugh.org.uk under Campaigns & Community, and a guide to undertaking a risk assessment can be downloaded from the Methodist website at <http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=churchlife.content&cmid=578>

2. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of Bamber Bridge Methodist Church.

'Lone worker' includes:

Those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is working on the premises
- People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations
- People working outside normal hours, e.g. cleaners

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- One person is visiting another premises or meeting venue
- One person is making a home visit to an individual
- One person is working from their own home.

3. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to: -

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working;

4. Responsibilities

The Church is responsible for:

- Assessing 'reasonably foreseeable risks' – identifying, evaluating and managing risks associated with lone working; including consideration of alternative arrangements
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigation and recording and this is reviewed on an incident taking place or every 12 months whichever is the sooner. This review will take place at the relevant committee as decided by the minister.
- Ensuring that employees or volunteers have a means of summoning assistance.
- Providing safe areas with the Church buildings. These will be the church office and the quiet room both of which can be locked from the inside without a key.
- Providing a list of contacts. In an emergency the lone worker should ring 999 first. A list to be provided of local individuals who are willing to respond in non-emergency situations or when safe to do so. (Local individuals should be made aware of the type of incident and not put themselves into danger)
- Providing a mobile phone, and other personal safety equipment, where this identified as necessary.
- Ensuring that contact details for the employee and their next of kin are kept on file. The line managers will have a copy of this for lay employees. For all employees, lay and ordained, details will be kept on the secure staff area of the circuit drop box file which can only be accessed by circuit employees.
- Ensuring an assessment of an individual health needs prior to lone working to assess if this affects their ability to work alone.
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice;
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy;
- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident;
- Ensuring that users of the building show responsibility towards maintaining safety of employees and keeping the building secure both during and after activities. They must inform other users/workers when they are leaving and ensure that the building is left secure with the magnetic locks on.

- Ensuring that the code to the magnetic lock is known only to identified persons. This code to be changed if it is identified as a cause of entry in an incident or every 12 months whichever is the sooner.

Employees and volunteers are responsible for: -

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;
- Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working;
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone;
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate;
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.

5. **Guidance for Risk Assessments of Lone Working**

- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Are there adequate channels of communication in an emergency?
- Does the workplace or task present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Is any known risk attached to a home visit?
- Has an alternative to a home visit been considered?
- Has safe travelling between appointments been arranged?
- Have reporting and recording arrangements been made where appropriate?
- Can the whereabouts of the lone worker be traced?

6. **Good Practice for Lone Workers**

- When arranging one-to-one meetings, Lone Workers should consider whether contact could take place in an environment where confidentiality could be maintained but others would be in the vicinity.
- Lone Workers should consider introducing a 'call in' or 'buddy' system where the individual agrees to contact and confirm they are ok at set times or at specific points of work – for example beginning of each day, arrival at a different location and end of work day, including if contact has not been received what action should be taken. In order to maintain confidentiality of visit details, addresses etc, this may need to happen between staff colleagues.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first-aid facilities.
- Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- Where workers are alone in a church building, they will keep outside doors of the building on the magnetic locks.