

St Barnabas PCC Lone Working Policy 2025

1. Introduction

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy, church workers and volunteers in service and ministry. However, it is important to recognise that working alone increases some risks, due to physical isolation and the inability to get assistance from colleagues in an emergency.

Lone living and working is also an everyday experience and practice for many in our church and society, and this policy is not intended to address those general societal risks.

2. Scope: Who is this policy for?

All clergy, church staff and volunteers who carry out work on behalf of the church in such a way that they may find themselves physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. Specifically, those:

- Working alone on the church premises, including out of hours work e.g. cleaning, security, maintenance
- Working at home*
- Travelling for work
- Working at remote locations such as home visits

This policy is specifically addressing issues specifically associated with lone working, rather than the risks associated with jobs themselves. Many jobs have inherent risks associated with the task and it is not part of the scope of this policy to provide risk assessments for these. The full list of identified potential lone worker roles is in Appendix 2.

If you are a lone worker who undertakes home visits as part of your role, please refer to separate guidance from the Vicar and Parish Safeguarding Officers.

*It should be noted that many individuals live alone and spend much time at home alone and that therefore doing some work associated with the church such as clerical, preparing crafts, preparing food are in practice no different to general home life, and it is not the intent of this policy to regulate those activities. In the context of this Lone Working Policy, working at home applies to clergy and paid staff members who undertake contractual church work in the home.

3. Lone Working Hazards

The major issues associated with lone working are:

- 3.1 Interaction with vulnerable people (either planned or unplanned) with the potential for risk to personal safety or unfounded accusations.
- 3.2 An accident, illness or incident happening where the lone worker has no back-up to provide aid or assistance.
- 3.3 The vulnerability of the worker / volunteer feeling isolated, anxious or stressed.

4. PCC responsibilities

St Barnabas PCC is responsible for identifying “reasonably foreseeable risks” and updating these regularly, and taking appropriate action taken to minimise such risks. This will be done in conjunction with the Health and Safety committee and church office. The vehicle for this is the “[Lone Working Risk Assessment](#)”.

Resulting from this, the following section 5 gives requirements for lone working.

Additionally, the PCC will:

- Formally undertake a three yearly review of church premises, including assessment of building safety and determination of whether extra security is needed as part of a three yearly review of this document. In the event of any significant incident or learning in the meantime this document will be reviewed and any appropriate measures taken. This review includes the protocols for visitors to the church buildings especially in relation to lone working
- Provide access to this policy and the generic risk assessment via the church website for reference by lone workers (<https://st-barnabas.net/policies/>)
- Ensure that all routine lone worker activities within the church are formally identified and appropriate risk assessments are undertaken to identify and reduce the lone working risk, and provide generic risk assessment for general activities.
- For routine lone working jobs St Barnabas PCC will provide lone workers with a Lone Worker Risk Assessment, available on request from the church office. The lone worker should review this and add any additional information required based on the risks identified in their specific lone working activity. A signed copy of this should be returned to the church office where it will be filed.

St Barnabas PCC reserves the right to limit or prohibit specific lone working activities undertaken on behalf of the church. In such situations we would seek to discuss this with the individual and find a reasonable alternative.

5. Lone Worker Responsibilities

- 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
- All lone workers on church premises shall have a charged mobile phone on their person to enable them to raise the alarm and gain assistance in the event of illness or accident. Assistance may be requested from the Community Grocery during their working hours (Monday to Friday, 09:30-16:30) or from emergency services 999 or 112. It should be noted that where the worker is incapacitated and there is an issue about the emergency services gaining access, the worker if possible should also call another keyholder. See Appendix 3 for list of additional local keyholder phone numbers. It is recommended that the worker has at least one of these numbers in their mobile phone address book.
- All lone workers should be familiar with this policy and the risk assessment as a means of understanding how to undertake lone work safely, and understand the required procedures and control measures to reduce risk.
- Where appropriate, 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 let the activity leader and/or Parish Safeguarding Officer know as soon as possible in order that the appropriate risk assessment and follow-up action can be taken
- Lone workers are expected to review their working location and keep it in good order, free from obvious hazards such as tripping hazards (e.g. trailing cables) and know where any necessary safety equipment – exits, fire alarms, first aid kits, fire extinguishers etc. – are located.
- Lone workers in the church building are expected to follow the security protocols of having the church or church hall inner door locked behind them. N.B. when working in the church, the lights in the narthex shall be left on to indicate to people that there is someone in the building. When leaving either building it is the responsibility of anyone setting the alarm to ensure that there is no one else left in the building.
- Lone workers doing approved regular lone working shall review the generic risk assessment and add any additional information required based on the risks identified in their specific lone working activity. A signed copy of this should be returned to the church office where it will be filed. See Appendix 1 for guidance on risk assessment.

NB. No worker should ever plan to be alone on church premises with children or young people. Should you find yourself in this situation, please contact a member of staff, church warden or Parish Safeguarding Officer immediately to advise on the next steps (contact details below).

Vicarage: 01642 817306 / david@st-barnabas.net

Church Administrator: 01642 812622 / 07935360798 / office@st-barnabas.net

Parish Safeguarding Officers: fiona@st-barnabas.net / stuart@st-barnabas.net

6. Approval and review

Version	2
Approved by	St Barnabas PCC
Policy owner	Imogen Burgess-Hale, Senior Administrator
Policy author	Imogen Burgess-Hale, Senior Administrator
Date	1st December 2025
Review date	1st December 2026

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Assessing and reducing risk

When completing a risk assessment, please use the matrix below to consider risk likelihood and impact. You should also identify appropriate actions you will take to reduce those risks.

Risk Likelihood	Risk Impact
Low May only occur in exceptional circumstances.	Low The impact is small and easily managed.
Medium Expected to occur in some circumstances	Medium The risk event could have a meaningful effect upon the individual/parish in terms of cost, health, reputation, etc.
High Expected to occur in many/most circumstances	High The risk event could have a devastating effect upon the individual or parish in terms of cost, health, reputation, etc.

Appendix 2. Identified Potential Lone Working Activities at St Barnabas Linthorpe

Role	Location(s)	Responsibilities / Tasks
Clergy	Church, church hall, vicarages	Includes administration, service preparation, interviews, meetings and callers at the vicarage (see below re. home visits)*
Church Staff	Church, church hall, private homes	As per job descriptions
Cleaners	Church, church hall	Ensuring church / hall buildings are kept clean and smart (including all communal areas, toilets and kitchens) and replenishing cleaning stock
Church volunteers	Church, church hall	Flower arranging, cleaning equipment, preparing the church for special services, preparing food, setting up for events
Maintenance	Church, church hall	Includes routine checks, small and large maintenance jobs, allowing access to contractors and checking work is completed

Security	Church, church hall	Unlocking / locking up the premises, attending to security alerts
Pastoral and Holy Communion home visits*	Various including private homes and care homes, where the church worker/volunteer may be 1-1 with a parishioner	Visiting parishioners for pastoral care visits and provision of Holy Communion (includes adults who may be vulnerable due to frailty, age, health or personal circumstances)

This list is not exhaustive but covers the most common and likely instances of lone working on behalf of St Barnabas. St Barnabas PCC reserves the right to amend this list with the approval of the PCC.

*Please refer to the specific guidance surrounding home visits.

Appendix 3. Key holder phone numbers

Middlesbrough Community Grocery (Mon-Fri, 09:30-16:30):	01642 925110
Peter Wallace, Facilities:	07766542427
Tony Hutchings, Facilities:	07771978184
David & Lindsey Goodhew, Vicarage:	01642 817306
Immy Burgess-Hale, Church Administrator:	07935360798

Appendix 4. Further information

If you have any further questions regarding this policy, please contact:

- Your ministry team leader / line manager
- Church wardens (wardens@st-barnabas.net)
- Church office (office@st-barnabas.net)

St Barnabas is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all those working and volunteering on behalf of the church. This policy is designed to clarify what constitutes lone working, outline St Barnabas PCC's responsibilities to its lone workers, and provide clear guidance and expectations to lone workers on how to operate within this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

1. The [Diocese of York's Lone Working Policy](#) This document provides some good advice on personal safety in relation to interacting with others.
2. The [Church of England Code of Safer Working Practice](#), which sets out the appropriate boundaries for preventing misunderstandings and reducing risks