

Lone Working Policy

1. Be prepared

Prior to making an appointment with someone you do not know, obtain as much information as possible about the person you are meeting, and ideally arrange to meet the person on church premises or at a public space. Ring back the telephone number you have been given to confirm the appointment (and to confirm that it is a legitimate phone number).

You should be alert and assess potential risks to both you and the client, noting changes and recording any identified risk. (This could be vital if someone else visits that client later.)

Be aware that one of the biggest dangers is complacency. Knowing your client for months or years is no guarantee of safety.

If visiting, let your team leader or a family member know where you are going, and with whom, also what time you are expecting to return. If you think that you are going to run over your original timescales, let someone know.

If you are at all concerned about the visit, please discuss this with your team leader.

Personal checklist:

- If possible carry some ID, ready to show at the door straight away.
- Ensure you possess all necessary documentation for the visit.
- Carry a mobile phone and program in key numbers including In Case of Emergency – ICE number.
- If you have a personal alarm, carry that
- Carry a torch if likely to be out in the dark

2. On Your Approach

- Select your parking spot carefully and position for a quick exit
- Assess the environment before committing yourself
- Wait outside and listen before knocking on the door
- Be purposeful and confident as this can deter illegitimate interest

3. Trust Your Instincts

- When you arrive at someone's home, have a brief conversation on the doorstep to gauge the mental state of the occupant before you enter. Remain on guard and listen for any signs of trouble.
- If you feel uncomfortable or think that something is "not quite right", leave immediately – do not take risks.
- If you are in crisis and for some reason you cannot leave, consider the following options: either dial 999 or 112 and ask for the police, or if you feel that this option would put yourself in greater danger because of the person who is a threat to you, ring the church office and say, **"Tell Daniel I am running late."** The person who receives this message should ring the police

immediately with details of the address being visited. The use of the word 'Daniel' should be easy to remember – think of the lion's den and danger.

4. In the home

- Keep a clear path to the door so that you don't allow yourself to become trapped in.
- Sit in a hard-backed chair if you can, as this makes it easier to get up quickly.
- Avoid meeting in a kitchen (too many potential weapons!)
- Have an exit excuse prepared in case you do not feel comfortable
- Show respect for other people, their property and cultural differences

5. On return

- Ensure information concerning risk is passed to other colleagues and must be added to the notes section of ChurchSuite.
- Report any incident.
- Review safe practices with colleagues at team meetings

6. Travel safety

- Consider personal safety when making travel arrangements
- Keep valuables out of sight
- Ensure your car is serviced and has sufficient fuel
- If you break down use your mobile phone. On a motorway stand in a safe place on the embankment. Wear your high viz jacket. Elsewhere lock yourself in the car and if someone approaches talk through a small gap in the window
- On buses and trains select your seat carefully - near others - and be prepared to move
- Possess taxi numbers, and ascertain the details of the driver being sent to collect you
- Carry enough cash for your journey and some extra for emergencies

7. Vehicle safety with clients

This should be read in conjunction with the church's Using your car Policy and Guidelines.

To ensure the safety of volunteers when travelling with clients in vehicles, the following procedures must be followed:

- If a client needs to be taken or accompanied to an appointment it should be arranged in advance and the office made aware that this is happening.
- Avoid being a passenger in a client's vehicle.
- Before the journey, be mindful of potential risks (e.g. frailty, erratic behaviour etc.). If you are unsure, please talk to your team leader. A risk assessment may be advisable.
- You can refuse to take a client in your vehicle if you believe that you are putting yourself or others at risk.
- All those in the vehicle must always use seat belts whether sitting in the front or back. It is a legal requirement where seat belts are fitted to use them.

- Children must be restrained using appropriate safety booster seats/restraints.
- You should not carry clients or their children if they refuse to wear a seat belt or do not have a child's seat/booster seat appropriate to the age/weight of the child.

8. Further information

You can read up to date advice on lone working provided by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust which can be found at www.suzylamplugh.org