

# **Lone Working Policy Statement**

## **Updated October 2019**

For safety reasons North Plymouth Community Church aims to ensure that no staff or volunteers are ever at risk working alone.

Staff and volunteers should avoid visiting North Plymouth Community Church when no-one else is present. If it is necessary to do so, they must notify a member of the church Leadership Team of their arrival, and again when they leave or are joined by a colleague.

Appropriate security measures must be taken when working alone such as locking doors/shutters, carrying a mobile phone, remaining in well-lit locations and wearing/carrying personal alarms.

Ladders, steps and other equipment such as pallet lifters and steps must never be used unaccompanied.

Lone workers must not exceed safe lifting weights, even if this means that a job will have to wait until other workers are present.

Foodbank deliveries to clients' home addresses must not be undertaken unless closely accompanied by another adult at all times. Foodbank workers must have the permission of the Project Manager before making a delivery. Foodbank centre sessions require more than one adult worker to be present at all times when open to the public.

Risk assessments covering any potential lone working should be undertaken. The risk assessments should establish the appropriate security measures necessary to improve the safety of a lone worker in a particular location. The North Plymouth Community Church policy specific to "home visits" is as follows:

### **Home Visits**

Home visits can be potentially risky situations, and therefore the Church leadership is responsible for ensuring that appropriate risk management measures are in place before a home visit is undertaken. Lone workers should also be aware of their responsibilities in ensuring their personal safety when visiting people in their own homes.

- Lone workers should always ensure that someone else, i.e. either a member of the church leadership and/or family member, is aware of their movements. This means providing them with the address of where they will be visiting, details of the person

they are visiting, telephone numbers if known and expected arrival and departure times.

- All staff and volunteers who undertake home visits should ensure that they have access to a mobile phone at all times, which is in good working order.
- Before entering the premises consider the presentation, disposition and demeanour of the occupant. Do not enter the property if you feel unsure or uncomfortable with the situation.
- Upon entering the room consider where the talk is to be conducted and try and position yourself in easy reach of an exit. Do not go upstairs or into any bedrooms.
- If the person is confined to bed either regularly or temporarily then remember to knock & wait before entering the bedroom. Sit on a chair not on the bed and leave the door ajar.
- Staff and volunteers who undertake home visits should ask the person they are visiting if they can secure any pets they may have, which may present a safety risk.
- No staff or volunteers should ever undertake a visit to a child or young person in their home unless another adult is present.
- Visiting in pairs is best practice. If you do not have the luxury of taking a second person with you each time but there are any doubts in your mind then consider if two people should go for at least the first visit. Where there are concerns about visiting someone of the opposite sex then the team member should discuss this with a member of the church leadership, in order that they may make alternative arrangements or, after consideration, authorise the visit to go ahead.
- Volunteers who undertake a visit should take time to record visits in a notebook – date, times, people present, any concerns to pass on to the church leadership. This is especially important if they think there may be safeguarding issues present but is also good practice generally.
- Lone workers should be alert to any signs of potential danger during a home visit, and be prepared to leave immediately if they have any concerns. Confrontation should always be avoided, and lone workers should never assume that violence won't happen, as while there are many home visits made safely every day, personal safety is paramount. Any incidents should be reported to a member of the church leadership as soon as possible.
- Where possible, home visits should be conducted in the morning or early afternoon, rather than the evening or late afternoon, in order that lone workers can avoid travelling in the dark, particularly in areas that they don't know, or may feel uncomfortable in. If this is not feasible, consideration should be given to working in pairs.